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Desk-based Study of the UNEP/GEF Project "Addressing Marine Plastics – A Systemic Approach" GEF ID 9681 (2017-2020)

UN environment programme

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Evaluation Office of the United Nations Environment Programme

Distributed: June 2024

Photos Credits:
Front image: Publication cover: Addressing marine plastics: A Roadmap to a Circular Economy (GRID-Arendal)

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Addressing Marine Plastics – A Systemic Approach
GEF ID 9681
May 2024

Acknowledgements

This desk-based study was prepared for UNEP by Sherry Heileman, as an independent consultant.

The consultant thanks Ms Isabelle Vanderbeck (UNEP Task Manager), Ms Liana McManus (Project Coordinator), and Ms Tiina Kurvit (Project Advisor, GRID Arendal) for their valuable contribution and collaboration throughout the study including their review of the draft desk study report. The consultant would also like to thank Mr Christopher Corbin (Coordinator, Cartagena Convention Secretariat, UNEP Ecosystems Division) and Ms Taylor Clayton (Regional Project Manager, Cartagena Convention Secretariat) for kindly providing information on the LAC Cities Project and for their comments on the draft report.

Sincere appreciation is also extended to Ms Karen Villafana (Evaluation Manager at the UNEP Evaluation Office) for her unfailing support throughout the process and her contribution to the report, including to the reconstructed Theory of Change and review of the draft report. Thanks also to Ms Mela Shah (UNEP Evaluation Office) for her valuable assistance.

The consultant hopes that the findings, conclusions, and recommendations will contribute to the continuous improvement of similar projects in the future.

Study team
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Brief consultant biography

Sherry Heileman has been an independent international consultant since 2003, and has previously worked with UNEP (Nairobi), among others. As a consultant she has worked extensively in conducting project evaluations particularly of GEF International Waters projects around the world. She has significant experience in project design and project coordination as well as in marine environmental assessments (regional and global) including land-based marine pollution (Wider Caribbean) and has contributed to several landmark projects and publications. Her academic qualifications include a PhD degree in Marine Biology and Fisheries from the University of Miami Rosenstiel School of Marine, Atmospheric and Earth Science. She is from Trinidad and Tobago and is currently based in Panama.

About the Desk Study

Joint Evaluation: No

Report Language: English

Evaluation Type: Desk-based study

Brief Description: This report is a desk-based study of the UNEP/GEF marine plastics project (GEF project ID 9681) implemented from 2017 to 2020. The project's overall development goal was to capitalize on a growing baseline of knowledge on marine plastics sources, pathways, and environmental impacts to inform the GEF and the application of a systemic approach to global plastic issues. The study 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 study has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, and the relevant agencies of the project.

Sources of Funding by Institution Type:

Foundation/NGO	Yes
Private Sector	No
UN Body	Yes
Multilateral Fund	Yes
Environment Fund	No

Key words: Plastics; Marine plastics; Marine pollution; Circular economy; Plastics commitment; Marine ecosystem; Strategic roadmap

Primary data collection period: Remote interviews and document analysis between December 2023 – March 2024

Field mission dates: No field missions were undertaken.

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
CCOF	Circulate Capital Ocean Fund
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CGF	Consumer Goods Forum
COBSEA	Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization
EA	Executing Agency
ELA	Experimental Lakes Area
EMF	Ellen MacArthur Foundation
EoL	End of Life
EoP	End of Project
ESS	Environmental and Social Safeguards
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GPA	Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities
GPML	Global Partnership on Marine Litter
GPP	Global Plastics Protocol
GRIDA	GRID Arendal
IA	Implementing Agency
ICA	Internal Cooperation Agreement
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IW	International Waters
IWLEARN	International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network
LAC	Latin America and Caribbean
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MSP	Medium Size Project
MTS	Medium Term Strategy
NCEAS	National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NPEC	New Plastics Economy Initiative
OC	Ocean Conservancy
PCA	Project Cooperation Agreement
PCU	Project Coordination Unit
PIF	Project Information Form
PIR	Project Implementation Review
POP	Persistent Organic Pollutant

PoW	Programme of Work
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
ProDoc	Project Document
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RFP	Request for Proposal
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Oriented (indicator)
SP	Subprogramme
TFSA	Trash Free Seas® Alliance
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDAF	UN Development Assistance Framework
UNEA	United Nations Environment Assembly
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WEF	World Economic Forum
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

Project identification table

Table 1. Project identification table

GEF Project ID:	9681		
Implementing Agency:	UNEP Ecosystem Division UNEP GEF International Waters Unit[1]	**Executing Agencies:**	Ellen MacArthur Foundation; Ocean Conservancy; UNEP Economy Division; GRID Arendal
Relevant SDG(s) and indicator(s):	**SDG 14:** Life below water **14.1:** By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution		
Sub-programme:	MTS 2014–2017 Subprogramme 3: Ecosystem management[2] Subprogramme 5: Chemicals and waste [3] MTS 2018-2021 Subprogramme 3: Healthy and productive ecosystems[4] Subprogramme 4: Environmental governance Subprogramme 5: Chemicals, waste and air quality[5]	**Expected Accomplishment(s):**	POW 2016-2017 Subprogramme 3 - EA (b) Use of the ecosystem approach in countries to sustain ecosystem services from coastal and marine systems is increased Subprogramme 5 - EA (c) Countries, including major groups and stakeholders, increasingly use the scientific and technical knowledge and tools needed to implement sound waste management and the related multilateral environmental agreements POW 2018-2019 Subprogramme 3 - EA (b) Policymakers in the public and private sectors test the inclusion of the health and productivity of ecosystems in economic decision-making Subprogramme 4 - EA (a)

[1] Now called Marine and International Water Unit
[2] Now called "Nature Action"
[3] Now called "Chemicals & Pollution Action"
[4] Now called "Nature Action"
[5] Now called "Chemicals & Pollution Action"

			The international community increasingly converges on common and integrated approaches to achieve environmental objectives and implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Subprogramme 5 - EA (b) Policies and legal and institutional and fiscal strategies and mechanisms for waste prevention and sound management developed or implemented in countries within the framework of relevant multilateral environmental agreements
UNEP approval date:	June 23, 2017	**Programme of Work Output(s):**	POW 2016-2017 Subprogramme 3 – EA (b) Outputs 1, 2, 3, 4, Subprogramme 5 – EA (c) Outputs 1, 2, 3, 4 POW 2018-2019 Subprogramme 3 – EA (b) Outputs 1, 2, 4 and 5 Subprogramme 4 – EA (a) Outputs 1, 2, 3 and 4 Subprogramme 5 – EA (b) Outputs 1, 2, 4 and 5
GEF approval date:	June 23, 2017	**Project type:**	Medium Size Project
GEF Operational Programme #:	GEF 6	**Focal Area(s):**	International Waters
GEF Strategic Priority:	GEF 6 International Waters Strategy Objective 3: Enhance multi-state cooperation and catalyse investments to foster sustainable fisheries, restore and protect coastal habitats, and reduce pollution of coasts and Large Marine Ecosystems Strategic Program 6: – Preventing the Loss and Degradation of Coastal Habitats		
***Expected* start date:**	N/A	**Actual start date:**	October 2017
***Planned* completion date:**	30 September 2019	**Actual operational completion date:**	31 December 2020
***Planned* project budget at approval:**	USD 12,932,645	**Actual total expenditures**	USD 14,853,226

		reported as of 31 December 2022:		
GEF grant allocation:	USD 2,000,000	**GEF grant expenditures reported as of 31 December 2020:**	USD 1,974,579	
Project Preparation Grant - GEF financing:	USD 54,750[6]	**Project Preparation Grant - co-financing:**	USD 0	
***Expected* Medium-Size Project/Full-Size Project co-financing:**	USD 10,932,645	**Secured Medium-Size Project/Full-Size Project co-financing:**	USD 12,878,647[7]	
First disbursement:	UNEP Economy division 01/11/2017; Ellen McArthur Foundation 28/02/2018; Ocean Conservancy 28/11/2017; GRIDA 16/01/2018	**Planned date of financial closure:**	31 December 2021	
No. of formal project revisions:	Two[8]	**Date of last approved project revision:**	31 July 2020	
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	11[9]	**Date of last/next Steering Committee meeting:**	**Last:** September 2019 (Final project meeting held as webinar on 18 November 2020)	**Next:** N/A
Mid-term Review/ Evaluation *(planned date):*	N/A	**Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (actual date):**	N/A	
Terminal Evaluation *(planned date):*	Q4 2019	**Terminal Evaluation (actual date):**	April 2024	
Coverage - Country(ies):	**Global**; some activities with geographical focus in **Indonesia**, **Vietnam**, the **Philippines**	**Coverage - Region(s):**	**Global**; some component activities with geographical focus in **APEC** and **Southeast Asia**	
Dates of previous project phases:	N/A	**Status of future project phases:**	N/A	

[6] For a follow-on project, which did not materialize.
[7] Corrected amount provided by the project Coordinator, 6 Feb 2024
[8] Two no-cost extensions – refer Section 3.5.
[9] One face to face Project Steering Committee meeting and 10 face-to-face or virtual meetings of Component Leaders functioning as the project Steering Committee.

Executive Summary

Project background

1. Plastics are ubiquitous in the ocean and have potentially significant ecological, social, and economic impacts. However, approaches to addressing marine plastics tend to be disconnected, either targeting upstream challenges of the plastics value chain or end-of-pipe solutions such as ocean clean-up. There is a pressing need to integrate solutions that target the entire global plastics value chain through a holistic, systemic approach. In 2017, the UNEP/GEF project "Addressing Marine Plastics–A Systemic Approach" was launched, with the objective to capitalize on a growing baseline of knowledge on marine plastics sources, pathways, and environmental impacts to inform the GEF and the application of a systemic approach to global plastic issues. This is to be used by the GEF and other stakeholders to guide the effective prioritization of investments and interventions for marine plastic debris and waste management.

2. The medium size, 2-year project received a GEF grant of USD 2 million as catalytic funding and was implemented by UNEP. The four project components and respective executing agencies were:

    - Component 1: Global alliance platform to reconsider the design, use, reuse, and disposal of plastics (Ellen MacArthur Foundation)
    - Component 2: Advanced waste management solutions in Asia-Pacific (Ocean Conservancy)
    - Component 3: GEF and partners strategy development (UNEP Economy Division)
    - Component 4: Knowledge sharing and project co-ordination (GRID Arendal)

3. The project's overall scope was global, with activities in three APEC countries (Indonesia, The Philippines, and Vietnam). Implementation began in October 2017 and ended in December 2020 following two no-cost extensions.

This study

4. This study was conducted by an independent consultant as a desk-based exercise from December 2023 to April 2024. Its objectives were to assess project performance and to determine outcomes and impacts stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The study collected evidence from project documentation and semi-structured remote interviews with three (former) project personnel. A key limitation was the unavailability of project partners for interviews and consultations, mainly due to changes that occurred during the nearly four years since the project ended.

Key findings

5. The project is strongly aligned with the subprogrammes and Expected Accomplishments of UNEP 2014-2017 Medium Term Strategy and biennial Programme of Work 2016-2017

(specifically subprogramme 3 on Ecosystem management; subprogramme 4 on Environmental governance; and subprogramme 5 on Chemicals and waste). In addition, it explicitly supports the United Nations Environment Assembly Resolutions on marine plastic litter and microplastics. Further, the project is consistent with GEF 6 International Waters Strategy Objective 3 (specifically reducing pollution of coasts and large marine ecosystems) and its Strategic Program 6 (Preventing the loss and degradation of coastal habitats). The project is fully aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 14, specifically the Target 'Reduce Marine Pollution'. Both marine debris and improved waste management are relevant to priorities for APEC economies including the three participating countries.

6. Project design strengths include its flexibility; an adequate problem and situation analysis; a comprehensive results framework; appropriate governance and supervision arrangements; capitalizing on the work and expertise of partner agencies; and engagement of key stakeholders across the entire plastic value chain. On the other hand, weaknesses in the original design include its complexity with three independent technical components and many diverse outputs for the short duration and limited budget; non-alignment of several outputs and outcomes with UNEP's definition; lack of assumptions and impact drivers in the theory of change; cursory consideration of gender/minority/vulnerable groups; and no time and budget allocation for a synthesis phase to produce a roadmap, which was critical to attainment of the project objective.

7. The project achieved all the planned outputs and outcomes and exceeded expectations with over 90% of end-of-project targets exceeded/fully achieved. Among the notable achievements are the mobilization of unprecedented levels of commitment from stakeholders across the plastics value chain to the New Global Plastics Commitment with its time-bound targets; a public-private sector blended finance partnership and Ocean Fund with more than USD 100 million for financing of waste management and circular economy start-ups in South and Southeast Asia; strategic recommendations and innovative solutions; and strengthened knowledge including on the role of gender in waste management in India, Indonesia, The Philippines, and Vietnam. The component results provided the building blocks for a strategic roadmap–Addressing Marine Plastics - A Roadmap to a Circular Economy– to be used by the GEF, UNEP, and others in prioritizing their investments and interventions to address marine plastics. This attests to the successful attainment of the project's ultimate objective.

8. Although significant effort was required to build a true partnership among the project partners, the project effectively capitalized on their work and expertise, enhancing efficiency. While the project was completed within budget, three budget revisions were necessary due to factors such as a slow start up phase (preparation and readiness), necessary modifications to the results framework and retrofitting of workplans, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite time saving measures implemented by the Project Coordinating Unit, two no-cost extensions were unavoidable.

9. Monitoring and reporting of project implementation were fully compliant with UNEP and GEF requirements. Nevertheless, the study noted some areas that could be improved such as

reporting of the end-of-project targets only for outcomes but not for outputs; reporting of expenditures according to UNEP budget line rather than by outputs; and unavailability of official reports of some of the Project Steering Committee/Component Leaders meetings.

10. The project established a strong foundation for socio-political sustainability particularly through endorsement of the Global Plastics Commitment by countries, the private sector, and other stakeholders along the plastics value chain. However, some signatories have fallen short of meeting the Commitment targets, jeopardizing socio-political sustainability. GEF, private sector, and others have committed substantial financial resources to addressing marine plastics, enhancing financial sustainability. There is strong institutional support by GEF, UNEP, and the executing partners for building on and sustaining the project results. The study identified three causal pathways towards the intermediate states and the long-term impact, with impact drivers generally in place and assumptions partially holding.

11. Factors such as the high quality of management and supervision by UNEP and the executing partners as well as effective stakeholder engagement and communication also contributed to the project's overall good performance.

Conclusions

12. The project was highly responsive to GEF's need for strategic guidance on prioritizing interventions and investments to address the marine plastics issue. Not only did it meet its overall objective, but it surpassed expectations with many targets exceeded despite the complex design, short timeframe, slow start, and other challenges encountered including disruptions caused by COVID-19. Collectively, the project results enhance the enabling conditions that are crucial for a transformative change towards a circular plastics economy.

13. There are good prospects for financial and institutional sustainability of the project's results but less so for socio-political sustainability. Preliminary indications are that the three causal pathways towards intermediate states and impact are generally operative with the drivers and assumptions partially or fully in place.

14. Instrumental to the project's success was the bringing together of disparate agencies with the appropriate experience, expertise, and stakeholder networks to implement and execute the project. Another factor that contributed to the project's achievements was the extensive engagement and commitment of stakeholders across the global plastic value chain including public and private sectors, which is essential for a systemic approach to the marine plastic issue. The high quality of the leadership and management by the PCU within an operationally complex and changing internal and external environment was central to the successful completion of the project. Areas in which the project would have benefited from greater attention are those relating to preparation and readiness, project design including greater attention to gender and human rights, reporting, and efficiency.

15. The study findings indicate that the project's level of performance is Satisfactory. A table of ratings against the study criteria is presented in Conclusions (Section 6.1).

Lessons Learned

16. **Lesson 1**: Partnerships and coalitions with institutional strengths, credible platforms, supportive networks, and with evidence-based action agenda, and multi-stakeholder engagement are essential to steer the transformative steps necessary to move a linear economy towards circularity, to free the ocean of plastics.

17. **Lesson 2**: It is important that the project design is streamlined and not overly complex and is appropriate for its budget and duration and sufficiently flexible to accommodate unanticipated but necessary changes. Allocation of adequate time and financial resources for all project outputs, including for a synthesis phase where relevant, is also vital.

18. **Lesson 3**: Underestimation of the time required for project start-up following approval can result in lengthy delays with knock-on effects on implementation, especially for a project of short duration and a complex design and multiple executing partners. Adequate preparation and readiness for implementation requires considerable time and effort, which must be accommodated in the overall project workplan.

19. **Lesson 4**: Engaging multiple executing agencies each working independently does not automatically constitute a true partnership especially where partners have divergent visions, organizational priorities, and stakeholder networks, and have never previously worked together. Building a partnership to achieve a common vision requires major effort, and having an individual with the required skills in building partnerships and who appears 'neutral' to lead the process is crucial.

20. **Lesson 5**: Official reports of Project Steering Committee meetings showing decisions taken with the underlying discussions and documentation are critical to ensure transparency and accountability and facilitate project monitoring and evaluation.

Recommendations

21. **Recommendation 1**: UNEP and GEF should reinforce the importance of good quality project design that is realistic, streamlined, and flexible, with a robust theory of change analysis and clarity about the ultimate project goal(s) with adequate time and budget allocation from the start.

22. **Recommendation 2**: UNEP and GEF should accelerate the project approval process and start up (inception) phase to ensure adequate time for preparation and readiness and minimize the delay in the start of substantive activities especially for projects of relatively short duration, complex design, and multiple executing partners.

23. **Recommendation 3**: UNEP and GEF should consider making the necessary modifications to the reporting templates to ensure clearer/ more detailed and transparent progress and financial reporting; avoid introducing new reporting templates during implementation; and from the start provide clear guidance to EAs on reporting.

24. **Recommendation 4**: UNEP and GEF should ensure that their future interventions to address marine plastics adequately incorporate human rights and gender dimensions including consideration of minority/vulnerable/disadvantaged groups.

25. **Recommendation 5**: UNEP, GEF and executing partners should facilitate/support the translation of the Roadmap and other key project reports into appropriate languages to promote uptake by other stakeholders and amplify project impact. Consideration can be given, e.g., to translation of the Roadmap within a bigger GEF initiative; and tailoring of the Roadmap by marine litter/ plastics projects to their needs and have such version translated. The UNEP project team should pass on this recommendation effectively to the executing partners.

INTRODUCTION

26. This report presents the results of the desk-based study conducted for the terminal evaluation of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)/ Global Environment Facility (GEF) project (GEF project ID 9681) entitled "Addressing Marine Plastics – A Systemic Approach" (hereinafter "the GEF marine plastics project" or "the project"). The project received catalytic funding of USD 2,000,000 from the GEF and was implemented by UNEP Ecosystems Division, GEF International Waters Unit.[10] It was executed by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation (EMF), Ocean Conservancy (OC), UNEP Economy Division, and GRID Arendal (GRIDA). Co-finance committed amounted to USD 10,932,645 at endorsement by the GEF Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

27. The project aimed to capitalize on a growing baseline of knowledge on marine plastics sources, pathways, and environmental impacts to inform the GEF and the application of a systemic approach to global plastic issues. It contributed towards UNEP's 2016-2017 Program of Work (PoW) and Expected Accomplishments, as follows: Subprogramme (SP) 3 Expected Accomplishment (b)- Use of the ecosystem approach in countries to sustain ecosystem services from coastal and marine systems is increased; and SP 5 Expected Accomplishment (c)- Countries, including major groups and stakeholders, increasingly use the scientific and technical knowledge and tools needed to implement sound waste management and the related multilateral environmental agreements. While the project's overall geographic scope was global, activities of one of its four Components (Component 2) focused on three countries in Southeast Asia (Indonesia, The Philippines, and Vietnam).

28. The project was designed as a two-year, medium size (MSP) project and went through a one-step approval process, wherein no project information form (PIF) is required. Following approval by the GEF CEO in June 2017, it officially started in October 2017 with a planned operational completion date of 30 September 2019. However, because of the slow substantive start and the COVID-19 pandemic, two no-cost extensions were necessary, and the actual completion date was 31 December 2019 for Components 1, 2 and 3; and 31 December 2020 for Component 4.

29. In accordance with the UNEP Evaluation Policy and the UNEP Programme Manual, this study[11] was conducted between December 2023 and April 2024. The objectives of the study were to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency), and to determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The study serves two primary purposes: (a) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (b) to promote operational

[10] Now called Marine and International Water Unit.

[11] This study was preceded by an attempt by UNEP to conduct a terminal evaluation of the project through another consultant, who completed the Inception Phase. Subsequently, UNEP hired the current consultant to conduct this desk-based study in place of the terminal evaluation.

improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, EMF, OC and GRIDA. Therefore, the study identified lessons and recommendations of operational relevance for the formulation and implementation of future projects, targeted to the GEF, UNEP and project partners. Since the project was designed as a 2-year project, a mid-term review was not conducted nor required.

30. The primary audience for this study is UNEP, GEF and the Executing Agencies (EA). Among the secondary audience are other project partners and stakeholders. The report will also serve to inform a wider community of interested stakeholders by communicating the project's accomplishments and challenges.

31. Annex VI presents the terms of reference (ToR) for the desk study.

DESK STUDY METHODS

Collection of data and information

32. The study gathered data and information principally through a review of documentation but also through interviews with former members of the Project Coordination Unit (PCU) and the UNEP Task Manager.

- Documentation review: UNEP Evaluation Office and the former Project Coordinator made available a substantial volume of project documentation for the study (via Sharepoint and Dropbox). Among these were core documents such as the project document and results framework, project budget and budget revisions, quarterly progress reports and annual project implementation reviews (PIR), component and consolidated final reports, component and consolidated quarterly and annual expenditure reports and co-finance reports, legal agreements, and minutes of Project Steering Committee (PSC) meetings and Component Leaders meetings. These documents along with a subset of the written outputs, reports and publications from each project Component was reviewed. Relevant information was also obtained from UNEP's and the EAs' websites. A list of the key documents consulted is given in Annex II.

- Interviews: Because of the long period of time between the end of the project and start of the desk study, some project partners were not available to participate in interviews. Semi-structured interviews and consultations were held virtually with three individuals (individually and collectively): the former Project Coordinator and Technical Advisor, both of whom were also regularly consulted by email during the course of the study, and the UNEP Task Manager (Annex III). The consultant also obtained information via email from personnel in the UNEP Caribbean Environment Programme/Cartagena Convention Secretariat (Annex III).

33. Information from the terminal evaluation Inception Report prepared by another consultant prior to this study was used as appropriate (e.g., assessment of project design). No field visits were conducted for the study since most of the project results were deemed high-level and not requiring physical inspection or observation.

Data analysis

34. The document review provided qualitative and quantitative information, which was used to codify evidence to inform the evaluation criteria (as required by UNEP and the GEF): Strategic Relevance; Quality of Project Design; Nature of External Context; Effectiveness, which comprises assessments of the availability of outputs, achievement of outcomes and likelihood of impact; Financial Management; Efficiency; Monitoring and Reporting; Sustainability; and Factors Affecting Project Performance. Each evaluation criterion was

rated using the UNEP six-point scale (highly unsatisfactory to highly satisfactory)[12] for rating of performance except Sustainability, which was rated according to likelihood (Highly Unlikely to Highly Likely); and External context, which was rated as Favourable or Unfavourable.

35. Each category of the rating scale was assigned a numerical score between 1-6 (with 1=highly unsatisfactory and 6=highly satisfactory), each of which was weighted[13] to obtain an overall rating for the project as a whole. Similarly, for assessment of the quality of project design, a rating on a six-point scale and the corresponding numerical score were assigned to each criterion and a weighted overall score was determined.

36. The information obtained from the document review contributed to the reconstruction of a theory of change (ToC) for the project. This allowed the identification of the causal pathways between the different outputs and outcomes and the ultimate impact of the project.

37. For assessment of the achievement of outputs (Effectiveness), to supplement the qualitative information, quantitative analysis was done to determine the level of achievement (as a percentage) of the end-of-project targets by project component and the project as a whole. The results are presented graphically. Triangulation of the information collected from the various sources was applied to validate the evidence and support the study's conclusions and recommendations.

38. It should be noted that neither the project nor this study disaggregated data and information by gender and minority/disadvantaged/vulnerable groups. The geographic scope of this project was largely global (with limited activities in Indonesia, The Philippines, and Vietnam), with the main objective to provide guidance to the GEF. There was no on-the-ground implementation of circular plastics economy solutions. The issue of gender and minority/disadvantaged/vulnerable groups in the context of waste management will be relevant in the development of solutions at the national/local scale (post-project).

Definitions

39. UNEP and GEF have their own definitions for key evaluation terms with slightly different definitions for output, outcome, intermediate states, and impact. The UNEP definitions are as follows:

> **Output** is the availability (for intended beneficiaries/users) of new products and services and/or gains in knowledge, abilities and awareness of individuals or within institutions. For example, access by the intended user to a report; new knowledge held by a workshop

[12] 1=Highly Unsatisfactory, 2=Unsatisfactory, 3= Moderately Unsatisfactory, 4= Moderately Satisfactory, 5=Satisfactory, 6= Highly Satisfactory

[13] Using the template provided by UNEP Evaluation Office

participant at the end of a training event. (Outputs are viewed from the perspective of the intended beneficiary or user of the output rather than the provider. While the main project beneficiary is the GEF, other direct beneficiaries include the three southeast Asian countries).

Outcome is the use (i.e., uptake, adoption, application) of an output by intended beneficiaries, observed as a change in institutions or behaviours, attitudes or conditions.

Intermediate states are changes (i.e. changes at the outcome level) beyond the project Outcome(s) that are required to contribute towards the achievement of a project's intended impact.

Impacts are long-lasting results arising, directly or indirectly from a project. Impacts are intended and positive changes and must relate to UNEP's mandate.

40. The desk study adopted the UNEP definitions and with the help of the UNEP Evaluation Office Evaluation Manager, reformulated some of the project outputs and outcomes accordingly.

Limitations

41. A key limitation in the study was the unavailability of project partners for interviews and consultations, mainly due to the long-elapsed time between the project's end and the start of the study. As such, the study had to rely on the written documentation retained and made available by the PCU, corroborated as far as possible through the interviews and email correspondence with the three individuals mentioned above, as well as from information available on the partners' websites. Similarly, the project Coordinator's emails as a source of important information were no longer accessible on the GRIDA server since her contract had ended. Some of the discussions between the PCU and EAs were also confidential and therefore not available to the study.

42. Because the study had to rely on inputs from only three key people, it ran the risk of being skewed towards their particular views in interpretation of the information provided. To address this, as far as possible the study validated the information they provided by identifying commonalities/differences among their inputs and using information in the documentation.

THE PROJECT

1.1 Context

43. Plastics are the workhorse material of the modern economy because of their combination of properties and low cost. However, this leads to significant degradation of natural resources - it relies on virgin petro-based materials as feedstock, suffers from significant leakage and low rates of material recovery, and results in marine plastics debris. Such debris of different sizes has been found throughout the world's oceans, from the surface to the sea floor, and from urbanized coastlines to remote, unpopulated islands. It comes from land and sea-based sources and can be carried by ocean currents and even the wind. Plastics enter the ocean in a variety of forms, including microbeads used in personal care and cosmetics products, pre-production pellets (i.e. nurdles), synthetic clothing fibres, and a wide range of consumer products. While some plastic washes ashore or sinks, much of it fragments into small pieces (generally less than 5 mm), which are defined as microplastics.

44. The impacts of marine plastic pollution range from ecological to social and economic.[14] For example, plastic can adsorb harmful substances such as persistent organic pollutants (POP) and heavy metals, which may be released to biota when ingested, with potential adverse effects on biota and human health. Floating plastics can transport non-native species and harmful bacteria, and affect marine fauna (e.g., turtles and marine mammals) through entanglement and strangulation. A major concern is the significant carbon impact of plastic production, since over 90% of plastics are derived from virgin fossil feedstocks. The global economic cost of marine plastic pollution is substantial, estimated at USD 8 billion per year including costs associated with clean-up and its effect on sectors such as tourism and fisheries.

45. The ubiquity of plastics throughout the marine and coastal environment–whether on beaches, on the ocean surface, in the water column, on the seafloor or in biota–is a symptom of our failure to reduce and properly manage the amounts of plastics that we have produced. Beyond this approach, it reflects our failure to put in place frameworks addressing the entire value chain of plastics in order to close the material loop. Indeed, marine plastics is a global, complex, social, economic, and environmental problem that requires holistic solutions.

46. When the project was designed, the current approaches to addressing the issue of marine plastics were disconnected, and either targeted upstream challenges of the value chain for specific types of plastics (e.g. from design and production), or end-of-pipe solutions such as ocean clean-up. However, the upstream prevention strategies were not fully integrated and linked with the downstream disposal and clean-up actions. There was also a strong need to integrate solutions that target the global value chain of marine plastics, as the

[14] Source: Project document

product life cycle of plastics are cross-boundary and cut across policy, technology, management, economics, awareness-raising, and behaviour change. To develop a systemic approach, a critical input from science to analyse and map the sources, flows, pathways, and magnitude of the impacts of plastics are needed. Critical analysis is essential to assist in the identification of strategic intervention areas to be prioritized for action, through a fact-finding and consensus-building process.

47. Therefore UNEP, with the catalytic help of the GEF, launched a project in 2017 entitled "Addressing Marine Plastics – A Systemic Approach" (GEF ID 9681). This project was driven by the following principles: based on the scientific analysis and consensus-building on prioritizing actions, solutions touching the key hotspots of the full life cycle of plastics and products would generate the most cost-effective result. To achieve this, an integration of upstream, midstream, and downstream actions is required. The systemic approach would capture the current generation of plastics waste entering the marine environment, touch on the areas of cleaning up the existing plastics and prevent future plastic streams from entering the ocean. Concerted solutions stemming from governments, the business sector, advocacy organizations, scientists and many other stakeholders would be based on a systemic and integrated value-chain approach, following a waste hierarchy and within the framework of the UNEP Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML).

1.2 Results Framework

48. The objective of the GEF marine plastics project was to capitalize on a growing baseline of knowledge on marine plastics sources, pathways, and environmental impacts to inform the GEF and the application of a systemic approach to global plastic issues. This would assist the GEF in effective prioritization of solutions and interventions for marine plastic debris and waste management. Delivery of the objective was through four inter-linked components, each executed by one of the partner agencies, and coordinated by a crosscutting project management sub-component:

    - Component 1: Global alliance platform to reconsider the design, use, reuse and disposal of plastics (executed by EMF)
    - Component 2: Advanced waste management solutions in Asia-Pacific (executed by OC)
    - Component 3: GEF and partners strategy development (executed by UNEP Economy Division)
    - Component 4: Knowledge sharing (executed by OC) and project co-ordination (executed by GRIDA)

49. The four components consisted of six outcomes and 17 outputs, as presented in Table 2. This table also indicates the outcomes and outputs that were revised by the project team

during implementation and during the desk study.[15] Components 1-3 were considered technical components.

50. The results framework is based on the recognition that solutions to ocean plastics requires a holistic strategy and must simultaneously (i) create the enabling conditions for systemic change in the medium-to long-term towards a circular system where plastics never become waste, through cross-value chain collaboration, innovation, re-design, definition of standards and the creation of markets; and (ii) implement in the short-term the most efficient, locally appropriate integrated waste management concepts in the places that need it most, to stop the deluge of plastic waste currently in the system from entering waterways and the ocean. Component 1 (with the overall aim to create enablers for systemic change towards a circular model) and Component 2 (with the overall aim to mobilize investment in waste management infrastructure) provide the holistic strategy to address ocean plastics on a short, medium and long-term time scale. The results are integrated in the analysis conducted by Component 3, which aims to develop a roadmap for GEF engagement on the reduction and sound management of marine plastics.

51. Execution of these complementary components are expected to yield positive impacts to marine ecosystems and communities that depend on them, while at the same time shifting the global paradigm for how plastics are manufactured, used, and disposed. This is in line with the impact statement presented in the original ToC (ProDoc): 'Reduced marine pollution, improved ecosystem status and enhanced livelihoods of stakeholders (including countries) dependent on marine resources'.

Table 2. Original and revised project results framework

Original results statement (ProDoc)		Reformulated by project team during implementation	Reformulated during desk study
Impact	Reduced marine plastic pollution, improved marine ecosystem status and enhanced livelihoods of stakeholders dependent on living marine resources	No change	No change
Intermediate State	Countries, producers, academics, users, civil society able to identify solutions to marine plastic pollution	No change	Countries, producers, users, civil society, etc. implement solutions based on a circular economy approach across the entire value chain.
			APEC stakeholders (government, corporations, civil society) utilize

[15] By the Consultant and UNEP Evaluation Manager to align the outputs and outcomes with UNEP's definitions

Original results statement (ProDoc)		Reformulated by project team during implementation	Reformulated during desk study
			increased investments and implement circular economy solutions toward reducing marine plastics pollution at local, national / regional levels.
			Interventions supported by GEF, UNEP and other agencies are implemented, replicated and upscaled at appropriate geographic scales.
Outcome 1.1	Towards a more informed and robust approach to a new plastics economy through a global alliance of producers, users and disposers of plastics; including advancing innovative solutions; and strengthening public –private partnership with the national and regional policy makers	No change	Demonstrated progress towards a more informed and robust new plastics economy through a global alliance of producers, users and disposers of plastics, including partnerships with policy makers
Output 1.1.1	An operational alliance from across the entire value chain (including major plastic producing and plastic using corporations as well as governments, cities, collection, sorting and reprocessing companies) and advancing development and uptake of recommendations	No change	Public and private sector actors (including major plastic producing and plastic using corporations as well as governments, cities, collection, sorting and reprocessing companies) are engaged in an operational alliance across the entire value chain and advancing development and uptake of recommendations
Output 1.1.2	Summaries presenting policy/public-private engagement efforts, lessons and recommendations for policy makers and other stake holders	No change	No change
Output 1.1.3	Large scale innovations mobilised through competitive actions to promote a generation of new approaches to address plastics issues catalytically building on existing approaches	No change	No change

Original results statement (ProDoc)		Reformulated by project team during implementation	Reformulated during desk study
Output 1.1.4	First set of Global Plastics Protocol /Guidelines published on the redesign of materials, formats, use and after-use systems	Significant commitment by private and public sector to take action towards a circular economy for plastics at global scale, based on a common vision and direction and underpinned by clear definitions laid out in a Global Plastics Protocol	A Global Plastics Commitment (which includes a global plastics protocol with clear definitions) that provides a common vision and direction for private and public sector stakeholders to commit to a circular economy for plastics at a global scale
Output 1.1.5	An economic and scientific evidence base to inform the GEF	No change	No change
Outcome 2.1	APEC region countries (Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam) are better positioned to secure financing and make policy commitments to address marine plastic issues and waste management	No change	No change
Output 2.1.1	Landscape analyses to highlight waste management financing opportunities, barriers to implementation and relevant gender issues in key Asia Pacific economies, to inform GEF	Analyses to highlight waste management policy and financing opportunities, barriers to implementation and relevant gender issues in key Asia Pacific economies, international policy fora such as APEC and G7, corporate and government programs, and/or actions on the ground	Analyses to highlight waste management policy and financing opportunities, barriers to implementation and relevant gender issues in key Asia Pacific economies, international policy fora such as APEC and G7, corporate and government programs, and/or actions on the ground to inform GEF and other agencies
Output 2.1.2	Development of a documented baseline on marine plastics and waste management conditions at selected sites in the target region	Development of a documented baseline on marine plastics and waste management conditions at selected sites in the target region or other geographies with comparable site characteristics	Development of a documented baseline on marine plastics and waste management conditions at selected sites in the target region or other geographies with comparable site characteristics to inform GEF and other agencies
Output 2.1.3	A series of country and region-specific recommendations (Indonesia, COBSEA, etc.) developed to address marine plastic and waste management challenges, to inform GEF	A series of country and region-specific recommendations (for eg, APEC, G7, Indonesia, COBSEA, etc.) developed to address marine plastic and waste management challenges, to inform donors and/or actions on the ground	No change

Original results statement (ProDoc)		Reformulated by project team during implementation	Reformulated during desk study
Output 2.1.4	Documented recommendations on how to engage plastics makers, consumer product companies, and retailers on corporate support for waste management to reduce marine plastics	Documented recommendations on how to engage plastics makers, consumer product companies, and retailers on reducing marine plastics through corporate support for waste management, increased goals for recycling and use of recycled content, etc.	No change
Output 2.1.5	Locally appropriate marine plastic and waste management solutions engaging local civil society stakeholders promoting a bottom up approach	No change	No change
Output 2.1.6	Peer reviewed publications identifying the most efficient volunteer monitoring protocols for measuring marine debris, development and deployment of a monitoring framework to CSOs in APEC region	Publications identifying the most efficient volunteer monitoring protocols for measuring marine debris, development and deployment of a monitoring framework for CSOs in APEC region and comparable geographies	No change
Outcome 3.1	Improved understanding of priority strategic intervention points (“hotspots”) related to marine plastics, through existing and new knowledge and, the integration of all project outputs	No change	The GEF and other agencies have an improved understanding of priority strategic intervention points (“hotspots”) related to marine plastics, through existing and new knowledge and, the integration of all project outputs
Output 3.1.1	Stocktaking analysis on existing actors, initiatives, policy frameworks associated with key sources and sectors responsible for macro and micro marine plastic pollution including the identification of strategic intervention points (“hotspots”) and specific knowledge gaps as well as recommendations on a full life-cycle approach	No change	No change

Original results statement (ProDoc)		Reformulated by project team during implementation	Reformulated during desk study
Outcome 3.2	Integrated strategic guidance provided on the reduction and sound management of marine plastics into project objective and outcomes in components 1-3	No change	Integrated strategic guidance provided to GEF on the reduction and sound management of marine plastics into project objective and outcomes in components 1-3
Output 3.2.1	Position paper/report to GEF on findings from outputs 3.1.1 and preliminary findings from C1 and C2	No change	No change
Output 3.2.2	Report of technical consultation meeting	No change	No change
Output 3.2.3	Strategic guidance to the GEF on the reduction and sound management of marine plastics	Merged with Output 3.2.1	No change
Outcome 4.1	Up scaled evidence base - including lessons learned and best practices identified resulting in effective prioritization of solutions and interventions for marine debris and waste management for GEF	Up scaled evidence base - resulting in effective prioritization of solutions and interventions for marine debris and waste management for GEF	Up scaled evidence base contributes to effective prioritization of solutions and interventions for marine debris and waste management by the GEF
Output 4.1.1	Dialogue for leading researchers on emerging marine plastics science to address knowledge gaps in the areas of sources, distribution, fates and impacts of plastics in the ocean	No change	
Output 4.1.2	A communications strategy integrating novel waste management, finance and science findings that fosters awareness, encourages public adoption of key concepts, and secures high quality media coverage on solutions to ocean plastics	No change	A communications strategy integrating novel waste management, finance and science findings that fosters awareness among stakeholders, encourages public adoption of key concepts, and secures high quality media coverage on solutions to ocean plastics
Outcome 4.2	Successful delivery of the project objective and outcomes in components 1-3	No change	No change

Original results statement (ProDoc)		Reformulated by project team during implementation	Reformulated during desk study
Output 4.2.1	Integration of scientific knowledge and research	Omitted with the non-establishment of the Scientific Advisory Group	
Output 4.2.2	Integration of Industry	Omitted with the non-establishment of the Technical Advisory Group	
Output 4.2.3	Effective co-ordination of project activities, monitoring and reporting to UNEP and GEF	No change. Reallocation of PCU resources to provide for two project-wide, cross-component Synthesis Workshops (October 2018, January 2019) to draft the Strategic Roadmap	No change

1.3 Stakeholders

52. Integral to a circular plastics economy is the collaboration of diverse stakeholders along the entire plastics value chain, with different roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities, and from global to regional/sub-regional, national, and local scales. The project aimed to bring together different stakeholder groups to develop and implement solutions to address marine plastic pollution. Its Mapping report[16] provides an overview of key value chain stages and stakeholders/interest groups associated with each stage (Figure 1). The key stakeholders are associated with plastic production, consumption, and end-of-life (EoL) waste management services (

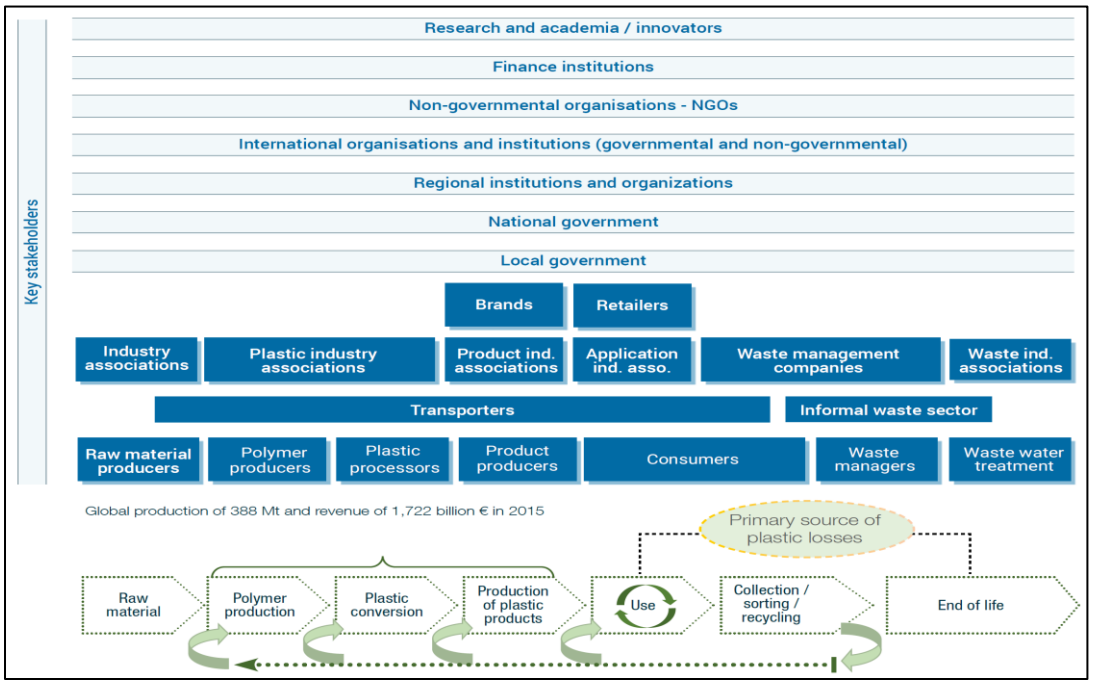
53. Table 3). Other important stakeholders are national, regional, and international governmental and non-governmental institutions, industry associations, civil society, finance institutions, and academia/innovators.

54. Important stakeholders also include groups and individuals who are disproportionately affected by plastic pollution such as: Indigenous, tribal, and traditional peoples; rural and coastal communities; women and gender-diverse persons; ethnic, racial, and other minorities; persons living in poverty; the disabled; formal and informal workers; and children

[16] UN Environment (2018). Mapping of global plastics value chain and plastics losses to the environment (with a particular focus on marine environment). Ryberg, M., Laurent, A., Hauschild, M. United Nations Environment Programme. Nairobi, Kenya.

and future generations.[17] Among informal workers are waste collectors (waste pickers) and recyclers, many of whom are women.

Figure 1. Overview of key plastics value chain and stakeholders/interest groups



(Source: UN Environment 2018, Mapping report)

55. The project is expected to positively affect the GEF (the main beneficiary) and the three southeast Asian countries (Indonesia, The Philippines, and Vietnam) as well as those to whom specific recommendations are targeted such as G7 and G20 members. The project itself is not expected to have negative effects on any stakeholder group(s). However, implementation of solutions (post-project) to reduce plastic waste and address marine plastics pollution could potentially have negative effects on certain groups, such as women and minority/disadvantaged/vulnerable groups, e.g., where individuals from these groups may be involved as plastic recyclers and waste pickers (e.g., due to reduction in the availability of 'raw material'). As such, considerations of these groups including equality and inclusion will be important in the development and implementation of solutions to address plastic waste. The project recognized the importance of these stakeholder groups particularly women, and explored key gender aspects of addressing waste management, resulting in the identification of priority dimensions for future consideration, e.g., in the assessment of environmental and social safeguards (ESS) and Output 2.1.1.

[17] UNEP (2022). Plastics, Human Rights, and Business Responsibilities, Issue Brief. United Nations Environment Programme Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok.

Table 3. Key stakeholder groups and their roles in the plastics life cycle and the GEF marine plastics project

Stakeholder group	Role in the plastics life cycle	Role in the GEF marine plastics project
Producers	Include companies that extract and refine the fossil fuels used to make plastic as well as those that manufacture the final plastic products. They determine the design, composition, and production processes of plastic products. Multinational corporations that produce and distribute large volumes of plastic have greater responsibility and accountability for the environmental and social impact of their products than individual consumers.	Signatories to the Global Plastics Commitment established under the project (Component 1) include many plastic producers (e.g., Amcor and Berry Global). OC engaged with a large number of plastic producers (e.g., through its Trash Free Seas Alliance and Closed Loop Partners) many of whom are engaged in or considering mechanisms to reduce marine plastics (Component 2)
Consumers of plastics	Consumers (citizens, industries and corporations) are key stakeholders in the plastic lifecycle, as they are the ones who use and dispose of plastic products. Based on their consumption choices, consumers can influence the demand for sustainable products, and recycle plastic waste or reduce their plastic consumption altogether. The transition to a circular economy cannot take place without the participation of private citizens. By adopting responsible consumption practices, they can urge businesses to develop products and services that better meet sustainability criteria.	Circulate Capital (investment management firm dedicated to financing companies and infrastructure that prevent ocean plastic in South and Southeast Asia) was launched by OC and partners in 2018 (Component 2). Circulate Capital Ocean Fund received private sector support from global brands including PepsiCo, Procter & Gamble, Danone, Unilever and Coca-Cola Co (plastic consumers).
End-of-life (EoL) actors	EoL actors are the companies and governments responsible for managing plastic waste. Waste management companies are responsible for collecting, sorting, and disposing of plastic waste, and can develop effective waste management solutions. They can also provide recycling services and educate consumers on proper waste management practices. National and local government deal with consumer-citizen plastic waste, which is often collected as part of municipal solid waste.	A number of collecting, sorting and recycling companies are signatories to the Global Commitment (Component 1). OC engaged with EoL actors in Southeast Asia (Component 2).
Governments (Public Sector /Policy makers at national and regional	Running across the entire value chain is the group of stakeholders comprising national and regional governmental bodies. The government/ public sector plays a crucial role in correcting inherent	The project relied strongly on the engagement and commitment of public sector stakeholders to promote mainstreaming of closed material loops practices in policy planning and

Stakeholder group	Role in the plastics life cycle	Role in the GEF marine plastics project
levels)- Primary duty bearers.	market failures associated with sustainability and commercialization of new solutions through offering incentives and removing entry barriers. Further, they play a critical role in regulating the production and use of plastic and can influence all stages of the plastic value chain through different measures such as implementing legislation and imposing taxes and regulations or applying pressure on the involved actors. Governments can also incentivize sustainable plastic production practices and invest in waste management infrastructure. Provincial governments can build support for financial and policy commitments and are also responsible for collection of municipal solid waste (see under EoL above).	implementation. Among these were APEC, G7, G20, EU representatives. Collaborations with national governments included numerous meetings/consultations with policy makers including Environmental Ministries in Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam. In Vietnam, baseline research on marine debris was conducted in collaboration with the Vietnam Institute of Seas and Islands and Vietnamese Centre for Marine Life Conservation and Community Development (Component 2). A number of governments are signatories to the Global Plastics Commitment (Component 1).
Civil Society	Non-governmental organizations (NGO), Civil Society Organizations (CSO), trade and industry associations and other civil society stakeholders are important stakeholders in the plastic lifecycle, as they can advocate for policy changes, raise awareness of plastic pollution, and promote sustainable consumer behaviour. They can also collaborate with other stakeholders to develop solutions to plastic pollution. In terms of advocacy, civil society and NGOs have launched campaigns aimed at reducing disposable, single-use plastic items; promoting product and material design for a circular economy; and improving waste collection and recycling. NGOs have a long history of engagement and advocacy e.g., through beach cleanups.	Under Component 2, OC engaged extensively with civil society, e.g., 128 entities in South and Southeast Asia and the Vietnamese Centre for Marine Life Conservation and Community Development (see above). The GPML includes over 45 NGO partners. GPML was engaged in meetings and consultations (Component 3).
International & intergovernmental organizations & international NGOs	These entities and their multistakeholder platforms can help catalyse action and facilitate engagement with national-level leadership and others while contributing knowledge, expertise and problem-solving e.g., UNEP, GPA, GPML, EMF, OC, World Wildlife Fund (WWF), World Economic Forum (WEF)	The project was implemented by UNEP Ecosystems Division GEF International Waters Unit. Two of the project's Executing Partners were international NGOs: EMF and OC along with GRIDA and UNEP Economy Division. Inter-governmental and multistakeholder networks and platforms that were engaged by the EAs and who provided inputs to the project include UNEP and its Regional Seas Programme, GPA and GPML (Component 3 benefited from baseline information on marine plastics

Stakeholder group	Role in the plastics life cycle	Role in the GEF marine plastics project
		analysed and collected by GPA and GPML); and Trash Free Seas Alliance (OC) through which the project partnered with NGOs such as WWF, the Marine Mammal Centre and Project AWARE. EMF closely engaged with the World Economic Forum.
Finance institutions	Financial institutions play a pivotal role in redirecting financial flows to plastics circularity solutions, thereby activating investment opportunities and creating a positive impact on the environment. Among these are commercial and development banks and international donors such as the GEF and World Bank. Collaboration between private and public actors (blended finance) is essential to redirect financial flows and close the financing gap to solve plastic pollution.	GEF provided catalytic funding for the project and helped to steer its implementation through regular reporting and feedback and through the PSC. GEF is using the strategic Roadmap, the ultimate project deliverable, to guide its investments in addressing marine plastics. Through a blended finance partnership with Circulate Capital, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) provided up to USD 35 million to support recycling in Asia. Circulate Capital received private sector support from global brands including PepsiCo, Procter & Gamble, Danone, Unilever and Coca-Cola Co (Component 2).
Research and academia/Innovators	Contribute expertise, scientific data and knowledge to inform policy decisions and innovations. Innovators are vital to develop creative and sustainable solutions to address the plastic pollution problem.	The project engaged with research and academia to produce technical outputs, e.g., the Rochman Lab (University of Toronto) engaged with the Government of Vietnam to identify appropriate interventions for plastic leakage (Component 2). Dialogue workshops were convened with leading researchers in the marine debris field (Component 4). A USD2 million innovation prize was launched, and 11 winners awarded (Component 1).

1.4 Project Implementation Structure and Partners

56. The project management structure and arrangements are illustrated in Figure 2. The project's Implementing Agency (IA) was UNEP GEF International Waters Unit[18] of UNEP Ecosystem Division. In its role as GEF IA, UNEP GEF International Waters Unit was responsible for project oversight to ensure that the project adhered to GEF policies and

[18] Now called Marine and International Water Unit.

criteria and that it met the objectives and achieved the expected results in an efficient and effective manner.

57. The project had four EAs, each responsible for one of the four components as follows:

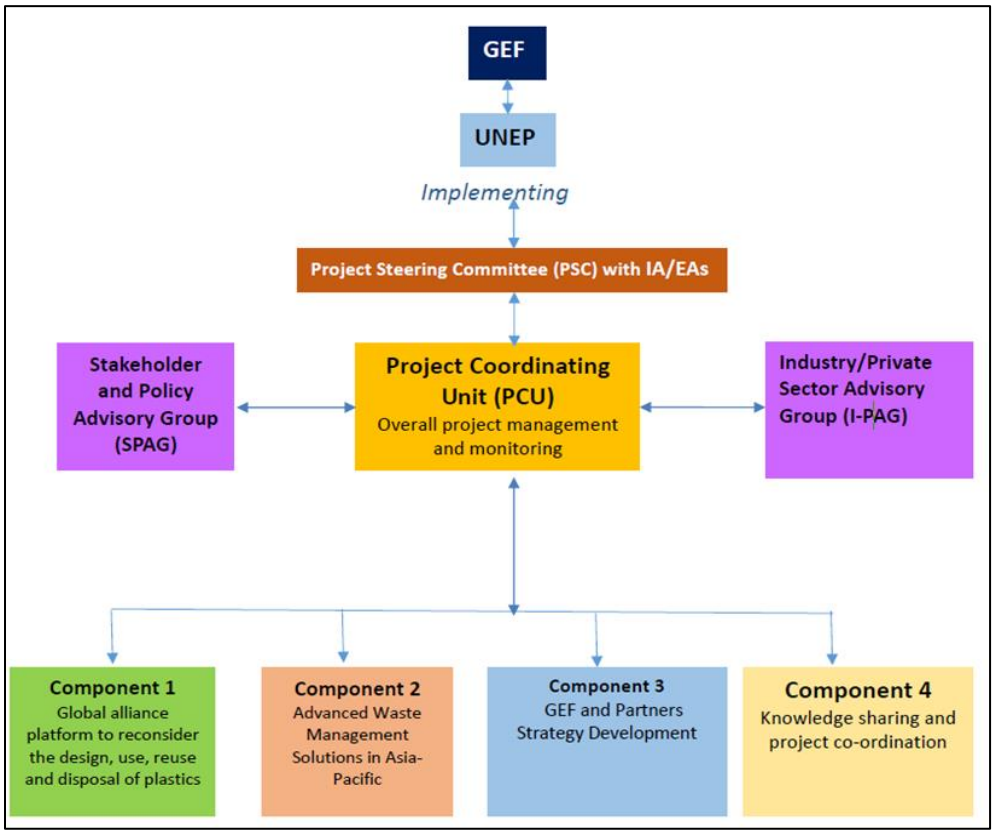
- Component 1 was executed by EMF under a Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) signed with UNEP Ecosystem Division on 21 December 2017.
- Component 2 and Activity 4.1 of Component 4 (related to Outcome 4.1) were executed by OC under a PCA signed with UNEP Ecosystem Division signed on 25 October 2017.
- Component 3 was executed by UNEP Economy Division and its Consumption and Production Unit under an Internal Cooperation Agreement (ICA) signed with UNEP Ecosystem Division on 23 October 2017.
- Activity 4.2 (related to Outcome 4.2) of Component 4 was executed by GRIDA under a PCA signed with UNEP Ecosystem Division on 5 December 2017. GRIDA was responsible for overall project coordination, ensuring the timely implementation of all component activities, the integration of outputs, and identification of product synergies, as building blocks in the development of a collective strategic framework.

58. A project Coordinator was contracted and paid by the project and attached to the PCU hosted by GRIDA. The project Coordinator was to ensure successful implementation of the project and to coordinate on a day-to-day basis the different activities. In addition to the project Coordinator, a project Manager was assigned by GRIDA to follow the project within GRIDA.

59. A PSC was established to oversee the project and was to be composed of the key project partners (UNEP, EMF, OC and GRIDA) and relevant observers (the GEF Secretariat, industry, civil society, GPML, and academic and governmental representatives).

60. Two Advisory Groups were to be formed to advise on scientific and technical issues and industry related issues. They were to be composed of both partner and external experts/representatives to provide advice on direction and outputs to the PSC, PCU and project partners. These Groups were not convened since this capacity was already well addressed by EMF, OC, and UNEP Economy Division own networks.

Figure 2: Organigram of the project management arrangements as in the ProDoc



1.5 Changes in Design during Implementation

61. Changes made to the outcomes and outputs of the original results framework during implementation and during the evaluation inception phase and desk study are shown in Table 2. For progress reporting, the EAs used the results framework that was revised by the project team at the start of implementation.

62. Other major changes made during implementation were:

- Within Component 1, the original output 1.1.3 of a largescale innovation prize competition was reduced in scope since the competition was run in 2017, prior to GEF contracting. Information from this was included in a summary report; Output 1.1.4 of a Plastics Protocol was significantly expanded to a Global Plastics Declaration or Commitment, with the protocol as a part;

- Change (by GEF) to omit the preparation of a follow-on umbrella project on marine plastics and its presentation to potential donors as a project deliverable;

- Three budget revisions were made, as described in Section 5.5 on Financial Management;

- The project duration was extended through two no-cost extensions, as described in Section 5.6 on Efficiency.

63. While most of the reformulations of the original outputs and outcomes (to align with UNEP's definitions) did not alter them substantively, the first two changes listed above changed the scope of the project. The Plastics Protocol was intended to be a descriptive document but the change to a global declaration involved additional activities including more extensive stakeholder engagement and negotiations for endorsement of the declaration (expanded scope). The change to output 1.1.3 listed above slightly reduced the scope.

1.6 Project Financing

64. The project was financed by a GEF grant of USD 2 million (as catalytic funding). The estimated cost at design and total expenditures at the conclusion of the project for the GEF funds by Component is shown in Table 4.[19] See also Section 5.5 on Financial Management.

Table 4. Estimated cost at design and final total expenditure by project Component (GEF funds only)

Component/sub-component	Estimated cost at design (USD)	Actual Cost/ expenditure (USD)	Expenditure ratio (actual/planned)
Component 1 (EMF)	702,500	702,500	100%
Component 2 (OC)	519,161	519,161	100%
Component 3 (UNEP Economy Div.)	200,000	199,579	99.8%
Component 4a (OC)	183,339	183,339	100%
Component 4b (GRIDA)	395.000	370,000	96%
Total	**2,000,000**	**1,974,579**	**98.7%**

Co-finance

65. At GEF CEO endorsement, the expected co-financing was USD 10,932,645, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Expected co-financing at GEF CEO endorsement

Sources of co-financing	Name of co-financier	Type of co-financing	Amount (USD)
GEF Agency	UNEP Economy Division	In-kind	700,000
GEF Agency	UNEP Global Programme of Action (GPA)	In-kind	630,000
GEF Agency	UNEP North America Office	In-kind	151,500
Others	Ocean Conservancy	In-kind	5,047,030
Others	Ellen MacArthur Foundation	Grants	3,624,515

[19] Source: EAs' final expenditure reports

Others	National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)	Grants	400,000
Others	Recycling and Economic Development Initiative of South Africa	Grants	150,000
GEF Agency	World Wildlife Fund (WWF)	In-kind	109,600
Others	Consumer Goods Forum	Grants	120,000
TOTAL			**10,932,645**

(Source: CEO Endorsement Document)

66. The co-financing realized was USD 12,878,647, as shown in Table 6. The source of these figures is the project Final Report, with Component 4 total corrected by the former project Coordinator during this study.

Table 6. Leveraged co-financing from project partners

Total Co-Finance (cash and in-kind)	**$12,878,647**
Component 1, Total	**$4,803,225**
Mava	$1,046,947
Schmidt Foundation	$1,483,877
Oak Foundation	$555,974
PPL	$105,492
AMCOR	$723,645
Veolia	$373,645
Mars	$373,645
Unilever	$140,000
Component 2, Total	**$6,940,735**
Consumer Goods Forum	$120,000
REDISA	$150,000
WWF	$109,600
NOAA	$400,000
OC	$6,161,135
Component 3, Total	**$1,074,351**
UNEP Ecosystem Division	$293,000
UNEP Economy Division	$781,351
Component 4, Total	**$60,336**
GRIDA	$60,336

THEORY OF CHANGE AT EVALUATION

67. The ProDoc includes a preliminary ToC analysis (as Appendix 15), which consists of a schematic representation of the project, largely summarizing the project framework but without assumptions and drivers. As mentioned in the Desk Study Methods section, during the study several of the outputs and outcomes were reformulated to: a) align the definition of outputs and outcomes with UNEP's definition, and b) clarify the intent and introduce additional detail from the project framework (see Table 2). A reconstructed ToC for the project was prepared during the evaluation inception phase,[20] with the assumptions and drivers drawn from the 'assumptions' and 'risks' in the original project results framework. The desk study modified the reconstructed ToC (as presented in Figure 3) to refine the assumptions, drivers, and intermediate states.[21] It should be noted that the assumptions and drivers between outputs and outcomes are relevant to the time period when the project was designed and implemented although changes might have taken place since the project ended.

68. The ultimate project objective is to inform the GEF (and other organizations including UNEP) on the application of a systemic approach to global plastic issues by capitalizing on a growing baseline of knowledge on marine plastics sources, pathways, and environmental impacts. Since the resulting strategic Roadmap was not meant to be implemented during the project lifespan, the ToC, in principle progressed only up to the outcome stage during the MSP. However, for the reconstructed ToC, three Intermediate States are described including the single one given in the ProDoc ToC. The Impact is described as 'Reduced marine plastic pollution, improved marine ecosystem status and enhanced livelihoods of stakeholders dependent on living marine resources'.

69. The reconstructed ToC comprises three distinct 'big-picture' causal pathways corresponding to project components 1-3 and incorporating component 4 as part of the building block for the Roadmap in component 3 (illustrated by the three red arrows in Figure 3). The first two pathways are based on the contribution of the work programmes of EMF and OC to Components 1 and 2, respectively. Among the outputs of each Component are key outputs that are crucial to the achievement of the Component outcome and ultimate progress towards the Intermediate States. For example, in the first causal pathway represented by Component 1, key outputs are the global alliance of stakeholders along the plastics value chain and the Global Plastics Commitment (Declaration) as well as large scale innovations to address plastics. The other outputs such as summaries of policy/public-private engagement efforts, recommendations, and evidence base help to create a more informed plastics economy. For this first pathway, the assumptions are key

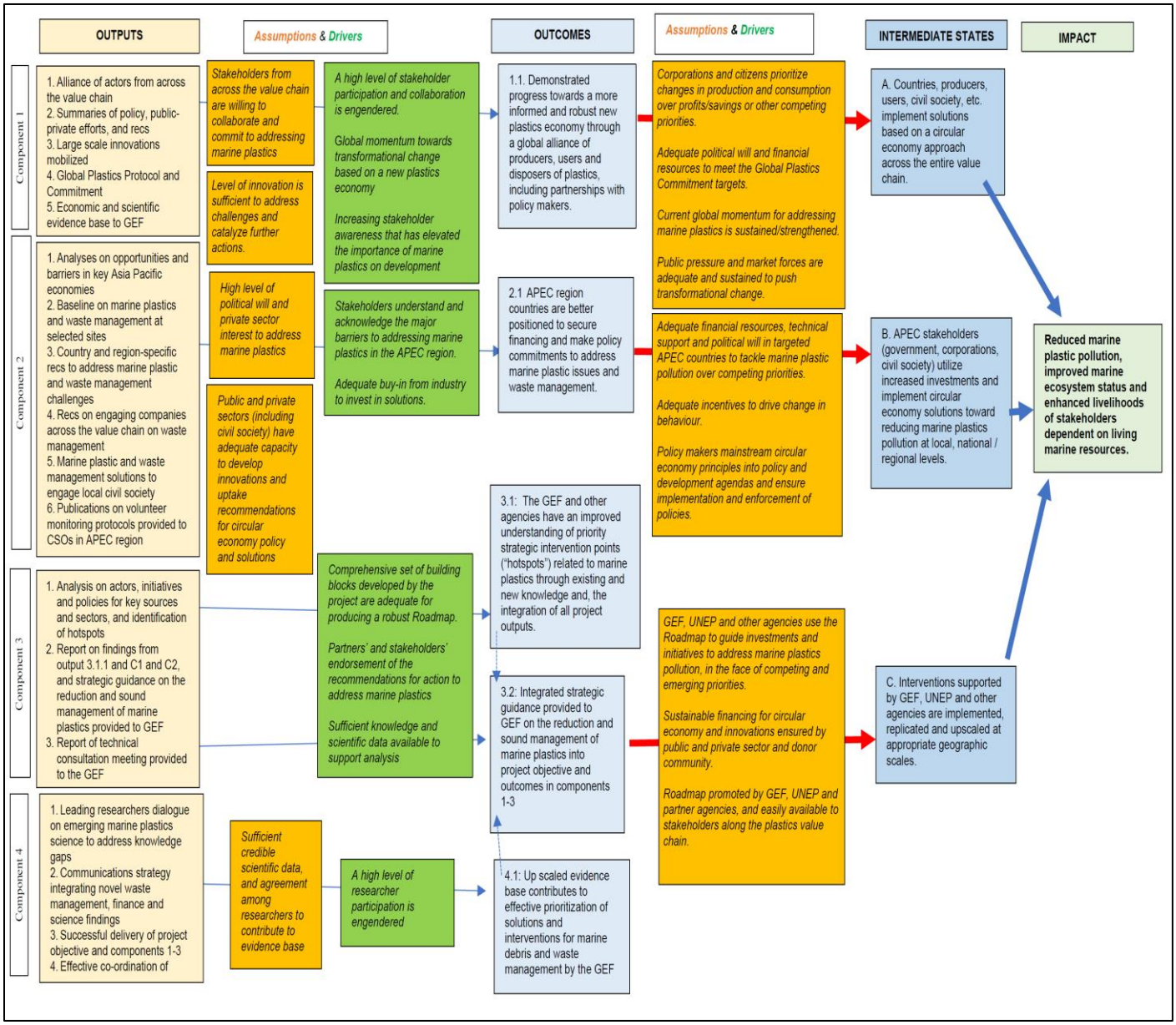
[20] Prepared by the former evaluation consultant with the assistance of the UNEP Evaluation Manager

[21] With inputs from the UNEP Evaluation Manager

stakeholders are willing to commit to addressing marine plastics, and the level of innovation is adequate.

Figure 3. Theory of change for the marine plastics project (GEF ID 9681) reconstructed at evaluation.

(See text for Intermediate State Drivers)



70. The main drivers are the high level of stakeholder participation and collaboration that the project has been able to engender and increasing stakeholder awareness and global momentum towards a new plastics economy, to which project partners have contributed through their past and ongoing initiatives and networks as well as extensive outreach and stakeholder engagement during the project. With these drivers and assumptions holding, the outputs collectively lead to the outcome (Demonstrated progress towards a more informed and robust new plastics economy through a global alliance of producers, users and disposers of plastics, including partnerships with policy makers. These are the key actors in the change process). Contingent on the ToC assumptions holding, the outcome is expected to lead to the Intermediate State in which countries, plastics producers, users and others implement solutions based on a circular economy approach across the entire value chain and meet the Global Plastics Commitment targets.

71. The second causal pathway is based on the contributions of Component 2, of which the outputs consist of a series of analyses on waste management policy, financing opportunities and barriers, etc.; baseline on waste management conditions at selected sites; innovative solutions; and key outputs such as the Circulate Capital Ocean Fund (CCOF) to support locally appropriate waste management solutions in Asia, and recommendations to inform policy and on-the-ground actions to address marine plastic and waste management challenges. The key actors in the change process of this casual pathway include Asia-Pacific policy makers, private sector, and CSOs. The outputs are expected to lead to the planned outcome based on the assumptions that there is adequate political will and private sector interest to address marine plastics, and adequate technological knowledge and capacity to develop innovative solutions as well as capacity for the uptake of recommendations in policy and waste management solutions in the region.

72. The main drivers are stakeholders' acknowledgement of the major barriers to addressing marine plastics in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) region and buy-in from industry to invest in solutions. The project influenced these drivers through, for example, extensive engagement with local, national, and regional stakeholders including the private sector and policy makers; and a bottom-up approach to developing solutions and recommendations that are appropriate to the local and national scale. With these drivers in place and assumptions holding, the outputs are expected to collectively lead to the outcome (APEC region countries are better positioned to secure financing and make policy commitments to address marine plastic issues and waste management). Contingent on the ToC assumptions holding, this outcome will lead to the Intermediate State in which APEC stakeholders (government, corporations, civil society) utilize increased investments and implement circular economy solutions toward reducing marine plastics pollution at local, national / regional levels.

73. The third causal pathway is based on the joint activities and technical outputs under Components 3 and 4. As illustrated by the dashed vertical arrows in Figure 3, Outcome 3.1 (Improved understanding of priority strategic intervention points ("hotspots") related to marine plastics and Outcome 4.1 (Up scaled evidence base contributes to effective prioritization of solutions and interventions for marine debris and waste management by

the GEF) are integrated along with results from Components 1 and 2 to produce Outcome 3.2 (Integrated strategic guidance provided to GEF on the reduction and sound management of marine plastics into project objective and outcomes in Components 1-3). This is based on the assumptions that there is sufficient knowledge, understanding, and scientific data to develop a credible evidence base and researchers are willing to contribute. The driver is the high level of researcher participation engendered. The key actors in this change process include the GEF, UNEP, project EAs, and scientific community as well as other stakeholders whose endorsement of the Roadmap will be important.

74. Drivers towards the long-term Impact include the support among stakeholders for the Global Plastics Commitment and endorsement of the Roadmap by GEF, UNEP and others, as well as the enabling conditions established for a circular economy including the epistemic communities and platforms through which EAs continue the global movement towards a circular plastics economy, well beyond the short lifespan of this project. The key actors in this change process include GEF, UNEP, and relevant international organizations as well as the public and private sectors, and CSOs. The assumptions include adequate political will and financial resources to meet the Global Plastics Commitment targets, and the use of the Roadmap by the GEF, UNEP and other agencies to guide investments to address marine plastics pollution in the face of competing and emerging priorities, and sustainable financing for circular economy and innovations ensured by public and private sector and donor community.

75. Each of the three pathways is independent of each other in terms of activities and outputs, assumptions, and drivers (although some of the assumptions and drivers are similar but operate at different scales) but coalesce to produce the Impact. The integration of the collective Component contributions as building blocks was essential for the development of a strategic Roadmap that is grounded in science and collaboration among stakeholders along the plastics value chain.

76. Regarding the project's effect on women/minority/disadvantaged/vulnerable groups, as previously mentioned (Methodology and Stakeholders sections), consideration of these groups will be important in the development and implementation of solutions to address plastics waste in the post-project period.

EVALUATION FINDINGS

1.7 Strategic Relevance

1.7.1 Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities

77. The desk study reviewed 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 (i.e., June 2017), as articulated in UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS) 2014-2017 and biennial Programme of Work (POW) 2016-2017. For the period 2014–2017, the key objective pursued by UNEP was to catalyse a transition towards low-carbon, low-emission, resource-efficient and equitable development based on the protection and sustainable use of ecosystem services, coherent and improved environmental governance, and the reduction of environmental risks. The ultimate goal was to contribute to the well-being of current and future generations and the attainment of global environmental goals in order to contribute to sustainable development.

78. The project is strongly aligned with the following subprogrammes (SP) and Expected Accomplishments of the 2014-2017 MTS, as described in Table 7. Note that the UNEP POW SP indicators were not used in the design of the GEF marine plastics project.

Table 7. Alignment of the project with UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities

Subprogramme and objective	Expected Accomplishment	POW 2016-2017 Indicator	Project's contribution
SP 3 Ecosystem Management: To promote a transition to integrating the management of land, water and living resources, with a view to maintaining biodiversity and providing ecosystem services sustainably and equitably among countries.	Marine issues: Increased use is made of the ecosystem approach to sustain ecosystem services from coastal and marine systems.	Increased percentage of countries and corporations adopting action plans to reduce marine litter and wastewater in coastal and marine ecosystems, with the assistance of UNEP.	Component 2 strengthened the position of APEC countries (Indonesia, Philippines, and Vietnam) to secure financing and make policy commitments to address marine plastic issues and waste management; and assisted Vietnam in developing its national action plan for marine debris. Component 1 facilitated the establishment of National Plastic Pacts in several countries.
SP 4 Environmental Governance: To strengthen synergies and coherence in environmental governance, with a view to facilitating the transition towards environmental sustainability in the context of sustainable development.	Coherence and synergies: The UN system and the multilateral environmental agreements demonstrate increasing coherence and synergy of actions on environmental issues.	Increased number of policy instruments or action plans adopted by Governments and UN Bodies pursuant to the post-2015 development framework, including the sustainable development goals, that incorporate	Under Component 1, the project helped to establish enabling conditions with upstream approaches such as the Global Plastic Commitment, which garnered over 450 signatories including many countries.

Subprogramme and objective	Expected Accomplishment	POW 2016-2017 Indicator	Project's contribution
		environmental objectives.	
SP 5 Chemicals and Waste: To promote a transition among countries to the sound management of chemicals and waste, with a view to minimizing impacts on the environment and human health. The 2014–2017 MTS focused on working with partners and countries to manage chemicals and wastes in an integrated manner, through assessments, monitoring, guidance on best use, management and disposal to catalyse transformative change.	Waste: Countries, including major groups and stakeholders, make increasing use of the scientific and technical knowledge and tools needed to implement sound waste management and the related multilateral environmental agreements.	• Increased number and percentage of Governments addressing priority waste issues…. …through the use of tools and methodologies provided by UNEP. • Increased number of businesses and industries addressing priority waste issues, through the use of tools and methodologies provided by UNEP.	The project helped to set enabling conditions e.g., by providing an expanded knowledge base and tools such as voluntary marine debris monitoring tool. The Strategic Roadmap represents an important tool to assist GEF and others to prioritize investments. The project also pioneered innovative solutions to address marine plastics and engaged governments (e.g. APEC countries, G7 and G20) in developing recommendations and implementing actions to address waste management. The project engaged extensively with the private sector along the plastics value chain, with a significant number of businesses (including global corporations) endorsing the Global Plastics Commitment and contributing to the Circulate Capital Ocean Fund.

79. The project is strongly aligned with United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) Resolutions on marine plastic litter and microplastics. For example, Resolution 1/6, adopted in 2014, notably called for long-term solutions leaning towards the adoption of a circular economy approach as well as immediate, short-term actions concerning the improvement of waste management. The follow-up Resolution UNEA 2/11 on Marine plastic litter and microplastics was adopted in 2016 encouraging Governments, industry and civil society to collaborate through the GPML in efforts to reduce the input, level, and impact of plastic debris and microplastics in the oceans. Outcomes of the GEF Marine Plastics projects actively support the UNEA-4 Resolution on Marine Plastics Litter and Microplastics. In particular, the project is aligned with actions towards:

- prioritizing a full life cycle approach and resource efficiency, building on existing initiatives and instruments, and supported by and grounded in science, international cooperation and multi-stakeholder engagement (*via the Strategic Roadmap*);

- strengthening scientific and technological knowledge with regard to marine litter, including marine plastic litter and microplastics (*via numerous technical publications*);

- strengthening coordination and cooperation by establishing….a multi-stakeholder platform within the UNEP to take immediate action towards the long-term elimination,

through a life-cycle approach, of discharges of litter and microplastics into the oceans (*via the multi-stakeholder networking through the GPML, which has piloted a methodology to conduct national marine debris and policy inventories so that local and national marine litter action plans can be based on evidence by design and implementation. Also, as a partner of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation New Plastic Economy Global Commitment, UNEP leads in engaging governments to commit to the Global Commitment Targets that are scaled to national, sub-national and local capacities and needs*.)

Rating for Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities: Highly Satisfactory

1.7.2 Alignment to GEF Strategic Priorities

80. Although this project was developed under GEF 6, the GEF 6 core indicators were not applicable since this is a global MSP with little on-the-ground implementation. The alignment with the GEF 7 core indicators is described in Table 8.[22]

Table 8. Alignment of the plastics project with GEF Core Indicators

GEF Core Indicators	**Indicative expected Results**
Core Indicator 4.1. Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity (e.g. trash-free, improved waste management)	NA – project helped to set enabling conditions with upstream approaches such as the Global Plastic Declaration, National Plastic Pacts, and national landscape analysis.
Core Indicator 5.2. Number of large marine ecosystems with reduced pollution and hypoxia	NA – project helped to set enabling conditions through expanding knowledge base and tools such as plastics leakage hotspots mapping, voluntary marine debris monitoring tools.
Core Indicator 5.3. Amount of marine litter avoided	NA – project helped to set enabling conditions; Preliminary modelled estimates of leakages of both micro- and macro-plastics by geography provide initial estimates of the amount of litter to be avoided.
Core Indicator 9.1. Solid and liquid POPs removed or disposed (POPs type)	NA – project helped to set enabling conditions through expanding the knowledge base on marine debris science.
Core Indicator 9.4. Number of countries with legislation and policy implemented to control chemicals and waste	NA – project helped to set enabling conditions in Indonesia, Vietnam, Philippines and India; and through the GPML analyses of legal and policy capacities for marine debris management.
Core Indicator 11. Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment	Surabaya Women's local waste collection, sorting and recycling communities were recipients of Circulate Capital investment. A study on the role of gender in waste management in Asia provides preliminary important findings.

81. The GEF investment in the area of marine debris has been indirectly addressed through the Chemical and Waste focal area to reduce the release of POPs from manufacturing of

[22] Based on the 2020 PIR

plastics and unsound waste management and recycling practices. The approaches implemented through the Chemical and Waste focal area have narrowly focused on addressing air pollution impacts and not on biodiversity and aquatic ecosystems. This project is aligned with the GEF 6 International Waters Strategy Objective 3: Enhance multi-state cooperation and catalyze investments to foster sustainable fisheries, restore and protect coastal habitats, and reduce pollution of coasts and Large Marine Ecosystems, specifically Strategic Program 6: Preventing Loss and Degradation of Coastal Habitats. In addition, the project's objectives, outcomes, and outputs also have multi-focal benefits to GEF's strategies including Biodiversity Objective 4; Climate Change Mitigation Objective 1; and the GEF Chemicals and Waste Objective 2.

Rating for Alignment to UNEP/GEF/Donor Strategic Priorities: Highly Satisfactory

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

82. Global priority regarding marine plastic pollution is explicitly addressed in Agenda 2030. The project is fully aligned with Agenda 2030 and in particular the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 Life Below Water (Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development) and its Target SDG 14.1 Reduce Marine Pollution (By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution). The project has established enabling conditions for countries, industries and other stakeholders along the plastics value chain to prevent and reduce marine plastics pollution through a circular economy approach, through for example, a Global Plastics Commitment whereby signatories commit to specific quantitative and timebound targets regarding marine plastic pollution, supporting innovative solutions through pioneer projects and an investment fund, and strengthening the position of APEC countries to access financing and make policy commitments to address marine plastic issues and waste management. An important project achievement is the development of a strategic roadmap that aims to reduce the leakage of plastics into the marine environment as well as its associated impacts and improve the circularity of the plastics value chain. Tackling the marine plastic debris issue is also relevant to a number of other SDGs and Targets.

83. Plastic debris is explicitly mentioned in the SDG 14 Indicator (Index of coastal eutrophication and floating plastic debris density). Through the GEF marine plastics project, the collection of quantitative data on marine debris, notably plastic waste, is enabled through a number of activities and outputs such as establishing baselines of plastic pollution at selected sites, mapping of plastics leakage hotspots globally and by region, and development of a monitoring toolkit.

84. Regarding relevance to regional priorities, Component 2 focuses on the APEC region and countries (Indonesia, The Philippines, and Vietnam). As mentioned in the ProDoc, APEC has highlighted both marine debris and improved waste management as regional priorities for APEC economies. This is supported by, for example, the formation of a Virtual Working Group on Marine Debris to promote innovative solutions to the issue of marine debris; and

a regional action plan for addressing marine litter in the region, which was issued in 2008 by the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA)–a UNEP Regional Seas Programme.

85. The project's relevance to national priorities can be articulated through its linkages with the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) in APEC countries. UNDAF broadly targets environmental sustainability–protection and conservation of the environment and natural resources, including enhancing the resilience of marine ecosystems and coastal societies in the wake of climate change and disasters. Component 2 activities, executed by Ocean Conservancy in Indonesia, The Philippines, and Vietnam, targeted the improvement of solid waste management to reduce marine plastics at the sub-national and national scales. Plastics and waste management issues are particularly relevant to these countries considering that 82% of marine plastic leakage globally occurs in Asia.[23] The project links with specific UNDAF Outcome or Focus Areas in these three countries:

    - Indonesia UNDAF, 2016-2020: Outcome 3: Environmental sustainability and enhanced resilience to shocks;
    - Philippines UNDAF 2012-2018: Outcome Area 4: Resilience toward disasters and climate change; Strategic Objective 4.3. Environment and natural resources protection and conservation;
    - Vietnam UNDAF 2017-2021: Focus Area 2: Ensuring climate resilience and environmental sustainability.

86. The countries also have national policies and plans prioritizing waste management such as the Philippines National Solid Waste Management Strategy for 2012-2016, and Indonesia National Waste Management Policy established in 2008.

Rating for Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Priorities: Highly Satisfactory

1.7.4 Complementarity with Existing Interventions/ Coherence

87. The project aimed to capitalize on a growing baseline of knowledge on marine plastics sources, pathways and environmental impacts to inform the GEF and the application of a systemic approach to global plastic issues. To achieve this objective, GEF provided catalytic funding to build on the work of global leaders such as UNEP, EMF, OC and GRIDA. As such, the project showed full complementarity of results but no duplication with other ongoing or planned interventions by UNEP or the partner organizations working on marine plastics issues. Importantly, the project design anticipated identified benefits to collaboration with the interventions and networks of UNEP and partners, which was central to the project's objective. These are considered in detail in the ProDoc and include UNEP's core work on

[23] Jambeck et al. 2015, quoted in the ProDoc

marine plastics through the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA)/GPML and its Economy Division's activities that support efforts to tackle the plastics issue from an upstream perspective; EMF's New Plastics Economy Initiative (NPEC); and OC's International Coastal Clean-up and Trash Free Seas® Alliance (TFSA) as well as its work in the APEC region.

Rating for Complementarity with Existing Interventions/ Coherence: Highly Satisfactory

Overall Rating for Strategic Relevance: Highly Satisfactory

1.8 Quality of Project Design

88. For the assessment of the quality of project design, the study made some modifications to the results from the project terminal evaluation inception report (prepared by the previous consultant). The quality of project design was reviewed using the Quality of Project Design Template provided by UNEP Evaluation Office. The results are shown in Table 9 below and the completed assessment in Annex IV. The overall weighted score for the quality of project design is 4.2, which indicates a rating of 'Moderately Satisfactory'.

Table 9. Quality of project design ratings and scores

	SECTION	RATING	SCORE (1-6)	WEIGHTING	TOTAL (Rating x Weighting/10)
A	Operating Context	Satisfactory	5	**0.4**	**0.2**
B	Project Preparation	Moderately Satisfactory	4	**1.2**	**0.48**
C	Strategic Relevance	Satisfactory	5	**0.8**	**0.4**
D	Intended Results and Causality	Moderately Unsatisfactory	3	**1.6**	**0.48**
E	Logical Framework and Monitoring	Moderately Satisfactory	4	**0.8**	**0.32**
F	Governance and Supervision Arrangements	Satisfactory	5	**0.4**	**0.2**
G	Partnerships	Moderately Satisfactory	4	**0.8**	**0.32**
H	Learning, Communication and Outreach	Satisfactory	5	**0.4**	**0.2**
I	Financial Planning / Budgeting	Satisfactory	5	**0.4**	**0.2**
J	Efficiency	Satisfactory	5	**0.8**	**0.4**

K	Risk identification and Social Safeguards	Moderately Satisfactory	4	**0.8**	**0.32**
L	Sustainability / Replication and Catalytic Effects	Moderately Satisfactory	4	**1.2**	**0.48**
M	Identified Project Design Weaknesses/Gaps	Satisfactory	5	**0.4**	**0.2**
				TOTAL SCORE Sum Totals	**4.2**

89. Among the key strengths in project design are:

- A clear and adequate problem and situation analysis.
- A flexible and comprehensive results framework with baselines, quantitative end-of-project targets, indicators, sources of verification, and risks and assumptions.
- Appropriate governance and supervision arrangements.
- Engagement of key stakeholders across the entire plastic value chain.
- Capitalizing on the work of key agencies with different areas of expertise and stakeholder networks across the plastics value chain.
- Integrating essential elements such as science, policy, stakeholder engagement, innovative solutions, and opportunities for financing, to develop guidance for the GEF.

90. Areas of weakness in project design include:

- Complex design for the short duration and limited budget.
- Lack of clarity about the causal pathway(s) between the project and its ultimate impact; the theory of change does not specify assumptions and drivers.
- Similarity in the end-of-project targets for outcomes and outputs; unrealistic target regarding adoption of policy.
- Cursory consideration of gender/minority/vulnerable groups.
- Non-alignment of results framework indicators with UNEP POW and GEF core indicators, which were required to be addressed in project reporting. Indicative expected results against the GEF indicators were not specified at project design.
- Limited engagement with stakeholders beyond the implementing agency and executing partners in project design and preparation.
- Lack of time and budget allocation for synthesizing information from the various outputs to produce the roadmap.
- No exit strategy.

Rating for Quality of Project Design: Moderately Satisfactory

1.9 Nature of the External Context

91. While the project was largely free of disruptions due to the external operating context, certain planned activities were affected by unforeseen negative external events that occurred during its implementation:

    - Labour unrest in France in 2019 resulted in the cancellation of the final project meeting that was scheduled for late 2019 in Paris (the meeting was eventually held in November 2020 as a live webinar – see below);

    - The COVID-19 pandemic partially disrupted the concluding activities during the project extension period in 2020. This led to the decision to hold the final project event and launch of the Roadmap as a live webinar in November 2020.

92. While these events resulted in the re-scheduling of some of the planned activities and no-cost extensions, they did not significantly affect project performance. The project operations were not affected by climatic events, security issues or economic and political conditions.

Rating for Nature of the external context: Favourable

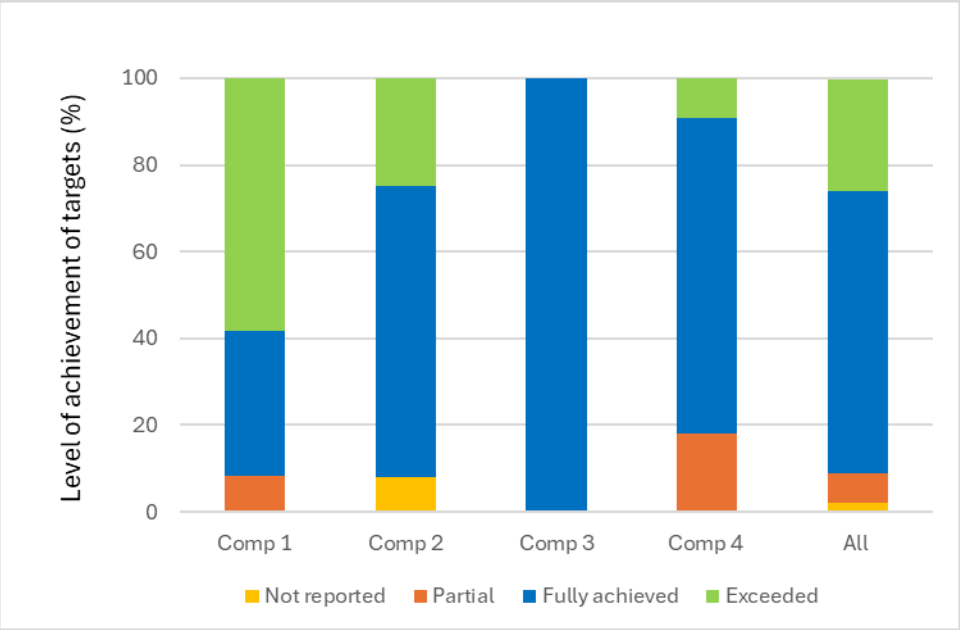
1.10 Effectiveness

1.10.1 Availability of Outputs

93. The project results framework consisted of four components comprised of six outcomes and 17 outputs. Of the latter, 15 are considered by the desk study to be technical outputs and are the focus of this section. The two non-technical outputs are the communications strategy (Output 4.1.2) and Effective coordination and monitoring and reporting (Output 4.2.3). The assessment of Effectiveness is based on a review of the quarterly progress reports, the annual PIRs, the final project synthesis report and PSC meeting reports as well as other project documentation including the technical reports produced. Particular attention was paid to the level of achievement of the end of project (EoP) targets as described in the results framework. The study noted that progress towards the EoP targets is reported only for the outcomes in the PIRs, but not for the outputs. Further, within each Component many of the EoP targets for the outcomes and outputs are similar (i.e., a general compilation of the outputs EoP targets for outcomes). (See Section 5.7 on Monitoring and Reporting)

94. A review of the level of achievement of the EoP targets under each component and at the project level is presented in Figure 4 and in Annex V. According to the 2020 PIR and final project report, all the planned outputs were 100% completed. Based on the analysis conducted by this study, of the total of 43 EoP targets, 65% have been fully achieved, 26% exceeded, 7% partially achieved, and 2% (one target) not explicitly reported and unable to be verified by the study (one Output 2.1.4 target - % companies engaged actively considering mechanisms to reduce marine plastics).

Figure 4. Level of achievement of end-of-project targets (%)



95. Most of the technical outputs were produced using bottom-up approaches via workshops and multi-stakeholder meetings convened by Components 1, 2, and 3. For Components 1 (EMF), 2 (OC) and 3 (UNEP Economy Division), the outputs included technical/ workshop reports and journal publications, a plastics declaration, and a blended finance partnership as well as pioneer projects. The review process for the technical/ workshop reports was coordinated by each EA using their own respective networks (since the published outputs were multi-funded), while the journal publications went through the conventional review process. The PCU was involved in editing/ reviewing formally the following component outputs prior to their release: OC report on The Role of Gender in Waste Management (as requested by OC); Component 3 Workshop Reports (February 2018, January-February 2019) and the Strategic Roadmap (led by Component 3 and co-facilitated by the PCU). The development of the Roadmap had a bottom-up approach across all Components, based on workshops held in October 2018 and January 2019. It was finalized in May 2020 after all the deliverables were completed. No further review was conducted as the technical portion of the project was completed by June. The Roadmap was circulated to invitees to the webinar held in November 2020, but no impact statistics were collected post-webinar.

96. The technical products consisting of reports and publications are available on the project website (https://gefmarineplastics.org/publication_list_by_project_component). The Roadmap is also available on UNEP's and GRIDA websites. Based on feedback from project personnel interviewed and the study's assessment, the quality of the technical reports is deemed high.

97. A review of achievement of planned outputs for each project component is provided below.

Component 1. Global alliance platform to reconsider the design, use, reuse and disposal of plastics (EMF)

98. Component 1 was executed by EMF through its New Plastics Economy Initiative, which was launched in 2016. This Component consists of one outcome and five outputs. The scope and ambition of four of the outputs along with the associated budget were modified significantly in the first year:

- Output 1.1.1. The budget was increased by 64% from USD 200,000 to USD 327,500 to reflect the level of support required alongside the increased scope and ambition of output 1.1.4, as described below.
- Output 1.1.3. A largescale innovation prize competition was run in 2017, prior to the start of the GEF marine plastics project. Therefore, the budget was reduced by 64% from USD 140,000 to USD 50,000.
- Output 1.1.4 was expanded from a global plastics protocol (GPP) to a Global Commitment with the protocol as part of the Global Commitment. The budget was increased by 43% from USD 140,000 to USD 200,000.
- Output 1.1.5. Significant evidence base work was done in 2017, prior to the start of the GEF marine plastics project. Therefore, the budget was reduced by 52% from USD 187,500 to USD 90,000.

99. All the planned outputs were achieved, with 33% of EoP targets fully achieved, 58% exceeded, and 8% partially achieved (3 out of target of 4 workshops were held under output 1.1.1) (Figure 4 and Annex V). Collectively, the five outputs make a crucial, direct contribution to achievement of the component outcome of advancing towards a more informed and robust approach to a new plastics economy (through a global alliance of producers, users and disposers of plastics; including advancing innovative solutions; and strengthening public-private partnerships with the national and regional policy makers). This component outputs and outcomes have been transformational in promoting a global movement towards a new plastics economy.

100. Based on its NPEC initiative, EMF convened the world's leading circular economy network (Alliance) consisting of representatives from across the entire plastics value chain (**Output 1.1.1**). At project close, there were 48 Alliance participants with engagement expanded to more than 400 organizations through the Global Plastics Commitment (Output 1.1.4, see below), significantly surpassing the EoP target of 40 participants. Through this Alliance, seven pioneer (demonstration) projects addressing different aspects of the circular economy for plastics were launched (surpassing the target of one project), with four projects concluded in 2019 and summary reports published (surpassing the target of 2). Recommendations and lessons from these projects were incorporated into the Roadmap.

101. A major effort was in policy and public-private engagement and sharing of lessons and recommendations for policy makers and other stakeholders on a circular economy for

plastics (**Output 1.1.2**). During this project, EMF continued its effort since 2016 in engaging with policy makers around the world through mechanisms including the New Plastics Economy Global Commitment and Plastics Pacts. The project exceeded its target of 5 meetings with policy makers by holding 12 meetings (Annex V). In the 2016-2019 period, policy maker engagement audiences included the European Union, OECD, G7, and G20. At least 55 governments[24] have taken action, signed the Global Commitment and/or launched a Plastics Pact. Along with the reports of the meetings held, a combined report was also produced summarizing multiple policy/public-private engagement efforts with lessons as well as recommendations for policy makers and other stakeholders (exceeding the target of 2 summaries).

102. In May 2017 (prior to GEF contracting), EMF launched a USD 2 million New Plastics Economy innovation prize that called for innovators, designers, scientists, and entrepreneurs to help create solutions to keep plastics out of the ocean (**Output 1.1.3**). The project leveraged this initiative by including information in a summary report prepared for the project. In addition, under the project the 11 winners who were awarded prizes completed a 12-month accelerator programme that ended in December 2018 to up-scale their innovations and accelerate the path to commercial viability.

103. Launched in October 2018, the New Plastics Economy Global Commitment or Declaration (**Output 1.1.4**) is led by EMF, in collaboration with UNEP. As mentioned above, the scope and ambition of this output was expanded significantly, from a protocol with definitions/guidance, to a Global Commitment on Plastics with the protocol as a part. EMF engaged in extensive discussions with policy makers during 2018 (e.g., several G7 countries; Plastics Pact network; and outreach to a broad range of governments and cities to invite them to join the Global Commitment). This helped to garner significant, time-bound commitments by the private and public sectors to take action towards a circular economy for plastics. At project close, the Global Commitment had over 450 signatories (surpassing the EoP target of 40), including close to 200 businesses representing over 20% of all plastics packaging produced globally, as well as governments, NGOs, universities, industry associations, investors, WWF, WEF, Consumer Goods Forum (CGF), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and others. According to the EMF website, as of February 2024, this unprecedented global cross-value chain collaboration consists of over 200 members from businesses, policy makers, financial institutions and academia, plus more than one thousand organizations constituting a diverse community for knowledge sharing and collaboration.[25] The Global Commitment is complemented by Plastics Pacts (created by EMF's NPEC initiative), which are innovative, multi-stakeholder collaborations that help to accelerate the transition to a circular economy for plastic in their designated country or region within a specified timeframe.[26] The first report laying out the definitions and

[24] Source: EMF website, 14 February 2024. https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/network/who-is-in-the-network
[25] Source: EMF website, 14 February 2024. https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/network/who-is-in-the-network
[26] The Plastic Pact Network, convened by EMF and the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), includes national plastic pacts in the UK, France, Chile, the Netherlands, South Africa, Portugal, the US, Poland and Canada, Colombia and India. Regional pacts include the Australia, New Zealand and Pacific Islands Plastics Pact.

targets/plans of the Global Commitment signatories- the Global Plastics Protocol- was launched in 2019.

104. As part of its NPEC initiative, EMF produced a report with a synthesis of the economic and scientific evidence base to inform the GEF (**Output 1.1.5**), based on research carried out by EMF and collaborators (prior to the GEF marine plastics project) and an overview of reach and impact of these evidence pieces. A research paper on the social costs of marine plastics was completed with the Portsmouth Marine Laboratory and published in the Marine Pollution Bulletin in March 2019.[27] The study notes that there is no mention of the GEF plastics project in this publication, although it is reported in the PIRs and progress reports as a project output.

Component 2. Advanced Waste Management Solutions in Asia-Pacific.

105. Component 2 focused on mobilizing investment, science, governments, and civil society in implementing effective waste management to address current waste streams in the APEC region. It was executed by OC, building on its past and ongoing work with APEC countries and a range of partnerships and networks. It consists of one outcome geared towards strengthening the position of APEC countries (Indonesia, The Philippines, Vietnam) to secure financing and make policy commitments to address marine plastic issues and waste management; and six outputs, the latter consisting mainly of reports/publications and assessments as well as recommendations focusing on Indonesia and Vietnam, and G7 and G20 countries; and an investment fund to support waste management and recycling in Southeast Asia.

106. An important element was the stakeholder engagement processes by which the outputs were produced, i.e., engagement by OC of a range of partners in implementing Component 2 activities including APEC stakeholders, Trash Free Seas Alliance®, corporate partners, governments, NGOs, CSOs, individual donors, and Closed Loop Partners among others. These engagements were done through forums such as APEC meetings and Our Ocean Conference Youth Leadership Summit (2018). The outcomes of some of these meetings were documented by OC and made available to the PCU. All planned outputs were delivered, with 67% of EoP targets achieved, 25% exceeded, and 8% not reported (one target -% of companies engaged actively considering mechanisms to reduce marine plastics) (Figure 4 and Annex V).

107. To deliver **Output 2.1.1** (Analyses of waste management policy and financing opportunities, barriers to implementation, and relevant gender issues in key Asia Pacific economies), OC engaged a broad range of stakeholders in various forums including APEC meetings. Four reports (meeting the target of 2-4 reports) were produced that highlight waste management policy and financing opportunities and challenges in APEC countries. Three of these reports

[27] Global ecological, social and economic impacts of marine plastic. Marine Pollution Bulletin 142 (2019) 189–195. Beaumont et al.

are Circulate Capital Handbook Summary and full report; The Sum of Our Parts: Coordinated Action to Solve Ocean Plastic; and Outcomes of APEC Stakeholder Meeting on Improving Data and Coordination. The fourth report on the role of gender in waste management explores key gender aspects in southeast Asia and identifies priority dimensions for future consideration. These reports have been made available to stakeholders e.g., by sharing at meetings and conferences and through the project website. The effect of the project on minority/disadvantaged/vulnerable groups were not explicitly addressed (see the Methodology and Stakeholders Sections).

108. For **Output 2.1.2**, OC conducted baseline studies of plastic pollution in two sites (meeting the target of at least 2 sites): St. Helena Island (a remote island in the South Atlantic Ocean); and the Red River Delta in Vietnam, focusing on the sources, quantities, and effects of marine debris. The latter was done through a collaboration between OC and Vietnamese institutions (Centre for Marinelife Conservation and Community Development, and the Vietnam Administration of Seas and Islands). In addition to providing quantitative data, the initiative aimed to increase capacity building among local practitioners and to inform the development of a national strategy for marine debris in Vietnam. These baseline assessments contributed to Outcome 3.1.

109. Five sets of recommendations (surpassing the EoP target of four) to address marine plastic and waste management challenges (**Output 2.1.3**) were produced. These consisted of two sets of recommendations at the global scale (G7 and G20) and three sets at the regional/country scale (APEC; Vietnam's national action plan for marine debris; and opportunities to maximize efficacy of waste management systems in Labuan Bajo, Indonesia). Recommendations were also developed for engagement of the private sector (**Output 2.1.4**) and published in GreenBiz.[28] One of the two EoP targets for this output (75% of companies engaged actively considering mechanisms to reduce marine plastics) was not explicitly reported by the project team. Nevertheless, the study considers that this does not affect the achievement of the output.

110. In 2018, OC and partners established the investment management firm Circulate Capital dedicated to incubating and financing companies and infrastructure that prevent ocean plastic, initially focusing on South and Southeast Asia. Subsequently, the CCOF was established and reached USD 106 million as of December 2019. CCOF's aim is to provide financing to waste management, recycling and circular economy start-ups in the region, which contributed to **Output 2.1.5** (promoting locally appropriate marine plastic and waste management solutions engaging local civil society stakeholders). Circulate Capital released a Request for Proposal (RFP) to solicit applications for financing waste management, recycling, and circular economy projects in the region. Over 200 proposals were received in response to the RFP and in 2020 the first investments in recycling supply chains (Indonesia and India) were made,[29] surpassing the EoP target (one locally appropriate solution

[28] https://www.greenbiz.com/article/will-corporate-action-ocean-plastic-make-impact-6-ways-tell
[29] Circulate Capital website: https://www.circulatecapital.com/about-us/our-story/.

approved for financing). OC also engaged extensively with CSOs and others in the region, e.g., during Circulate Capital Landscape Analysis Trip, exchanges were held with 128 entities, surpassing the EoP target of 30 CSOs.

111. To assist volunteers in identifying appropriate survey protocols for measuring marine debris, OC published a Marine Debris Monitoring Toolkit, which was shared with CSOs in the APEC region. The Toolkit consists of three different monitoring protocols that can be used to track marine debris under a diverse set of investment, rigor and expected outcomes (**Output 2.1.6**). Two of the protocols are based on OC's International Coastal Cleanup initiative and the third on the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO) protocol.

Component 3. GEF and Partners Strategy Development

112. Component 3 was executed by UNEP Economy Division and consisted of two outcomes with three outputs, the latter consisting mainly of technical reports and publications based on desktop studies and technical consultation workshops carried out under Component 3 and on outputs of Components 1 and 2 as well as on previous studies and publications (e.g., UNEA-2 study of Marine Plastic Debris and Microplastics 2016; UNEP Monitoring and Modelling publication; EMF report "The New Plastics Economy: Rethinking the future of plastics"). Component 3 also benefited from baseline information on marine plastics collected and analyzed by the GPA, GPML and UNEP North America office. Other UNEP personnel in particular in the Ecosystem Division working on the GPA and GPML were closely involved in the multistakeholder consultations and report review under Component 3. All outputs and EoP targets were achieved, contributing to an expanding knowledge base. (Figure 4 and Annex V).

113. The stocktaking and hotspots mapping technical reports (**Output 3.1.1**) were completed and have been published on the project website. UNEP Economy Division convened two multi-stakeholder consultation workshops (February 2018 and January 2019) that each brought together around 40 participants including from industry, academia, NGOs, not-for-profits, regional and national governments and intergovernmental organizations from marine litter and life cycle/circular economy plastics backgrounds. The workshops addressed a range of topics as part of a stocktaking exercise, including prioritization of key intervention points along the global plastics value chain, and identification of current gaps in knowledge, barriers, enabling frameworks and opportunities for action. This information was integrated with the desktop findings. These results are incorporated in the final report 'Addressing marine plastics: A systemic approach- Recommendations for action', which was published in December 2019. An article 'Global environmental losses of plastics across their value chains' was published in the journal Resources, Conservation & Recycling.[30]

[30]Global environmental losses of plastics across their value chains. Resources, Conservation & Recycling vol. 151. Ryberg et al. 2019.

114. **Output 3.2.1** (led by UNEP Economy Division and GRIDA) integrated inputs from the other project components to produce guidance (in the form of a roadmap) for the GEF on a systemic approach to global plastic issues, which was the ultimate project objective. The resulting Roadmap (Addressing Marine Plastics: A Roadmap to a Circular Economy) identifies a core set of priority solutions to be implemented by targeted stakeholders along the entire plastics value chain under different time horizons and at different geographical scales. It aims to reduce the leakage of plastics into the environment as well as its associated impacts and improve the circularity of the plastics value chain. Reports of the two multi-stakeholder consultation workshops (mentioned above) were prepared (exceeding the EoP target of at least one workshop) and published on the project website (**Output 3.2.2**).

115. The Roadmap was to be launched at the final project meeting scheduled to be held in Paris in December 2019. However, due to labour unrest in France, the final face-to-face meeting was cancelled and instead it was held as a live webinar on 18 November 2020 during which the Roadmap was launched. About 145 participants representing 45 countries joined the webinar. A recording of the event can be found at https://gefmarineplastics.org/webinar.

Component 4. Knowledge sharing and project co-ordination

116. Component 4 consisted of two outcomes each with a different EA. Outcome 4.1 was executed by OC and dealt with upscaling the evidence base for effective prioritization of solutions and interventions for marine debris and waste management, with a substantive output (Output 4.1.1) and a communication strategy (Output 4.1.2). Outcome 4.2 was executed by GRIDA and addressed the successful delivery of the project objective and outcomes, with a single output on coordination of project activities, and monitoring and reporting to UNEP and GEF. All the outputs were achieved, with 73% of targets fully achieved, 9% exceeded, and 18% (2 targets) partially achieved (Figure 4 and Annex V). The budget for Component 4 was modified with the largest budget line change (220% increase from USD25,000 to USD80,000) to accommodate Component Leaders face-to-face meetings to develop the Roadmap, and give a presentation to potential donors, which were not included in the original budget. (See Section 5.5 on Financial Management for other changes to this component budget).

117. Two workshops were convened with researchers for dialogue on emerging marine plastics science to address knowledge gaps on sources, distribution, fates, and impacts of plastics in the ocean; and workshop summaries were prepared (**Output 4.1.1**):

- August 2018: A global estimate of all sources of plastic debris into the ocean. Participants drafted the outline of a paper on this topic to be published. Convened by OC and based on work of the National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis (NCEAS) Marine Debris Working Group;
- December 2018: Ecosystem level effects of microplastics in the Experimental Lakes Area (ELA) of Canada. Convened by OC and the University of Toronto.

118. A communication strategy was prepared and according to the final project report, more than 11,000 publications and media stories were published in global outlets and more than 250 in regional outlets (**Output 4.1.2**). These numbers greatly exceed the EoP target of at least 500 publications and media stories globally and 125 regionally. **Output 4.2.1** (GRIDA) on effective coordination of project activities, monitoring and reporting to UNEP and GEF is discussed in Section 5.7 on Monitoring and reporting, and Section 5.9 on Factors affecting performance. Other elements of this output were successfully completed and included development of the project website, preparation of a Results Note and an Experience Note (these were not published on GEF International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network (IWLEARN) due to changes in IWLEARN staff at the time), publication of one article in the IWLEARN Portfolio Bulletin[31], and participation in GEF International Waters (IW) activities (e.g., biennial conference).

Rating for Availability of Outputs: Highly Satisfactory

1.10.2 Achievement of Project Outcomes

119. The project result framework consists of six outcomes across the four Components (Table 2). One of the Outcomes (4.2) deals with successful delivery of the project objective and outcomes in Components 1-3 and is discussed in Section 5.9 on Factors affecting performance. In this study, Outcomes 1.1, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1 and 4.1 were reformulated (as described in Section 3.2 and Table 2 on Results framework). As previously mentioned, the study noted that in the original project design the EoP targets for each outcome are similar to those of the associated outputs. Moreover, outcome 1.1 and output 1.1.1 are similar in how they are expressed. The PIRs only report on the indicators and EoP targets for the outcomes (not for outputs) while the quarterly progress reports do not report on outcomes.

120. The following discussion draws on the reconstructed ToC and examines the extent to which the assumptions and drivers contribute to the achievement of each outcome. It highlights the key outputs that are considered by the study to be the most important for the achievement of each outcome. In addition, emphasis is also placed on the achievement of project outcomes that are most important for attaining intermediate states (in accordance with UNEP evaluation guidance). Based on a review of the PIRs, quarterly progress reports and project documentation (technical reports, meeting summaries, partners' websites, etc.) the study found that all the five outcomes were fully achieved (Annex V).

121. The project succeeded in advancing progress towards a more informed and robust new plastics economy through the establishment of a global alliance of producers, users and disposers of plastics, including partnerships with policy makers (**Outcome 1.1**), through all the outputs successfully delivered under Component 1, and especially the New Global Plastics Commitment and Plastics Pacts, which have helped to mobilize and inform

[31] https://news.iwlearn.net/addressing-marine-plastics-a-roadmap-to-a-circular-economy?source=share-iwlearn

stakeholders. As discussed above under Output 1.1.4, the Global Commitment has mobilized unprecedented levels of commitment among stakeholders to address the marine plastics issue. This achievement demonstrates that the ToC assumptions hold (e.g., stakeholders from across the plastics value chain are willing to collaborate and commit to a new plastics economy). Similarly, the drivers have also been in place, e.g., EMF has mobilized stakeholders along the plastics value chain and strengthened the momentum towards a new plastics economy through extensive engagement with stakeholders at all levels and utilizing different forums (see Output 1.1.1) and the foundation established through its past and ongoing initiatives and networks. This outcome (Alliance) is critical for attaining the intermediate state as described in the reconstructed ToC (Countries, producers, users, civil society, etc. implement solutions based on a circular economy approach across the entire value chain).

122. The project, through the work of OC, aimed to strengthen the position of APEC countries (Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam) to secure financing and make policy commitments to address marine plastic issues and waste management as well as improve monitoring of plastics (**Outcome 2.1**). Regarding policy commitments, the study notes that the PIRs and project reports use 'recommendations' instead of 'policies' (which is reasonable because policy adoption may not be possible within the short time frame of the project). This outcome has been achieved, as demonstrated by, e.g., improved knowledge base on waste management policy and financing opportunities, barriers to implementation, and relevant gender issues; national and regional recommendations; establishment of a joint investment fund for waste management; and availability of volunteer monitoring protocols (Annex V). A major transformative achievement is the establishment of the CCOF for financing waste management, recycling, and circular economy start-ups in the region.

123. The ToC assumptions hold (Public and private sectors have adequate capacity to develop innovations and uptake recommendations, and high level of political will and stakeholder commitment to address marine plastics), as demonstrated, e.g., by the overwhelming response to the RFP with over 200 proposals submitted, development of the Vietnam national action plan for marine debris, and acceptance by APEC and the three participating countries of the regional and national level recommendations, respectively. The ToC drivers were in place e.g., industry willing to invest in transformational change, as demonstrated by private sector contribution to the CCOF of more than USD100 million by global brands including PepsiCo, Procter & Gamble, Danone, Unilever and Coca-Cola Co. This is enhanced through a blended finance partnership with the US Agency for International Development (USAID), which committed to providing up to USD 35 million to incentivize private capital investment and new business development in the recycling value chain in the APEC region.

124. OC's adoption of a bottom-up approach with extensive engagement and collaboration with a range of national and regional APEC stakeholders, including policy makers, national institutes, NGOs and CSOs as well as with global corporate stakeholders (such as PepsiCo, Procter & Gamble, Danone, Unilever and Coca-Cola Co) and foreign agencies such as USAID influenced a key driver in the achievement of this outcome (industry willingness to invest in solutions).

125. **Outcome 3.1** (The GEF and other agencies have an improved understanding of priority strategic intervention points ["hotspots"] related to marine plastics through existing and new knowledge and, the integration of all project outputs) was fully achieved, with the ToC drivers in place (e.g., Building blocks developed by the project are adequate for producing a robust Roadmap; Partners' and stakeholders' endorsement of the recommendations; and Sufficient knowledge and scientific data available). The stocktaking analysis and hotspots mapping, the results of which are presented in technical reports along with two workshop reports, contribute to an expanding knowledge base, which has improved the understanding of strategic intervention points for marine plastics. A key product is the report 'Addressing marine plastics: A systemic approach- Recommendations for action'. This report identifies recommended actions, from a circular economy perspective, to be taken by different stakeholders and sectors where plastic losses are substantial and/or impacts on the environment are high. Outcome 3.1 is crucial to the attainment of the intermediate states but not directly on its own. As illustrated in the ToC diagram (Figure 3), Outcome 3.1 makes a direct contribution to Outcome 3.2.

126. **Outcome 3.2** was also fully achieved, with the finalization and publication of the Roadmap (Addressing Marine Plastics: A Roadmap to a Circular Economy), the ultimate project objective. The Roadmap identifies a core set of priority solutions to be implemented by targeted stakeholders from the whole plastics value chain under different time horizons and at different geographical scales. It aims to reduce the leakage of plastics into the environment as well as its associated impacts and improve the circularity of the plastics value chain. The recommendations presented are comprehensive, based on extensive consultations, knowledge and viewpoints that were collected from a range of stakeholders including public institutions, governments, private sector and NGOs as well as through desktop studies. As illustrated in the ToC diagram (Figure 3), Outcome 3.2 is crucial for the attainment of intermediate states through investments by the GEF, UNEP, and other agencies in solutions that are ultimately replicated and upscaled.

127. **Outcome 4.1** was fully achieved. Dialogue among leading researchers on emerging marine plastics science contributed to addressing gaps in knowledge in the areas of sources, distribution, fates and impacts of plastics in the ocean. The two resulting publications represent an important evidence base to guide the prioritization of interventions by GEF, UNEP, and others. However, like Outcome 3.1, this outcome is crucial to the attainment of the intermediate states but not directly on its own. As illustrated in the ToC diagram, Outcome 4.1 makes a direct contribution to Outcome 3.2. Under this Outcome, an effective communications strategy integrating novel waste management, finance and science findings helped to foster awareness and encourage public adoption of key concepts.

Rating for Achievement of Project Outcomes: Highly Satisfactory

1.10.3 Achievement of Likelihood of Impact

128. Conducting this study four years following project close provides a unique opportunity to review developments since then to help in assessing the likelihood of impact. As set out in

the ToC, the anticipated long-term impact is 'Reduced marine plastic pollution, improved marine ecosystem status and enhanced livelihoods of stakeholders dependent on living marine resources'. For the impact to be achieved, intermediate states are necessary whereby the project results are utilized and further interventions are developed, implemented, replicated, and upscaled. As illustrated in the ToC diagram (Figure 3), three main Intermediate States are identified along three main causal pathways:

- Countries, producers, users, civil society, etc. implement solutions based on a circular economy approach across the entire value chain and meeting the Global Plastics Commitment targets.
- APEC stakeholders (government, corporations, civil society) utilize increased investments and implement circular economy solutions toward reducing marine plastics pollution at local, national / regional levels.
- Interventions supported by GEF, UNEP and other agencies are implemented, replicated, and upscaled at appropriate geographic scales.

129. Among the assumptions for the first causal pathway towards Intermediate State A are Corporations and citizens prioritize changes in production and consumption over profits/savings and other competing priorities; Adequate political will and financial resources; Current global momentum on addressing marine plastics is sustained/strengthened; and Public pressure and market forces are adequate to push transformational change. The enabling conditions established by the project coupled with the substantial continuing efforts (post-project) by the project partners and others in the transition to a circular economy represent strong drivers to support the attainment of the Intermediate State.

130. The project has had a catalytic effect in strengthening support globally for a transition to a circular economy through the Global Plastics Commitment. According to the EMF website,[32] the Global Commitment has mobilized over 1,000 organizations who are working towards the same common vision and 2025 targets. Signatories include:

    - 250+ businesses representing 20% of all plastic packaging globally, across the value chain and the world (the majority of business signatories are active across four or more continents);
    - 55 governments representing over 1 billion people, across five continents;
    - 200+ endorsing signatories, including 27 financial institutions with a combined USD 4 trillion of assets under management; leading institutions such as CGF, IUCN, National Geographic, the Waste and Resources Action Programme, WEF, and

[32] https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/global-commitment/overview, 14 March 2024

WWF; and 50 academics, universities, and other educational and research organizations; and

- 800+ organizations that are members of one or more of the 11 Plastics Pacts around the world.

131. The Global Commitment 2023 Progress Report[33] shows that the vast majority (88%) of original signatories (from 2019) have consistently reported progress against the targets over five years, indicating that it is possible to make meaningful progress in tackling plastic waste and pollution. Moreover, the Global Commitment has catalysed change beyond its signatory group, for example, by laying the foundations for the Business Coalition for a Global Plastics Treaty as well as for 11 national and regional Plastics Pacts. However, as the Progress Report mentions, with a large part of industry not yet taking action and signatories likely to miss key 2025 targets, the world is off track to eliminate plastic waste and pollution (assumption partially holds). Currently, 80% of the global plastic packaging market is not covered by the Global Commitment and performing, on average, much worse than the 20% who have signed up. Therefore, this analysis suggests that the ToC assumptions for Intermediate State A partially hold.

132. Assumptions for the second pathway towards Intermediate State B include Adequate technical support and financial resources and political will in targeted APEC countries to tackle marine plastic pollution over competing priorities; Adequate incentives to drive change in behaviour; and Policy makers mainstream circular economy principles into policy and development agendas and ensure implementation and enforcement of policies. The continuing (post-project) work of OC with APEC and other countries demonstrate some progress towards Intermediate State B. For example, the Urban Ocean program,[34] a capacity-building and accelerator program (that builds on the work of the GEF plastics Project) supports cities to develop projects that address the interrelated challenges of ocean plastics and resilience. Since 2019, the program has been jointly implemented in twelve cities (two of which are in Indonesia and Vietnam, which participated in the GEF marine plastics project) by the Resilient Cities Network, OC and The Circulate Initiative. Similarly, building on the report produced by OC under the GEF plastics Project (The Role of Gender in Waste Management), OC is implementing the project 'Solutions to Plastic Pollution through Inclusive Recycling' in Vietnam and Colombia.[35] It is also supporting the implementation of Vietnam National Action Plan on Marine Plastic Waste Management. This analysis suggests that the ToC assumptions for Intermediate State B partially hold at least in the countries that were targeted by the project.

133. Intermediate State C will require that interventions to address marine plastics are implemented at the appropriate geographic scale, with replication and upscaling where necessary. It must be recognized that there will be a time lag before the impact is evident

[33] Global Commitment Five Years In: Executive Summary.pdf
[34] https://oceanconservancy.org/trash-free-seas/plastics-in-the-ocean/urban-ocean/
[35] https://oceanconservancy.org/trash-free-seas/plastics-in-the-ocean/sppire/

in marine ecosystems, and that other external factors (such as climate change and unsustainable exploitation of marine resources) also cumulatively affect the status of marine ecosystems. As such, distinguishing the effect of each factor on the health of marine ecosystems will be a significant challenge.

134. Assumptions for the third causal pathway towards Intermediate State C include GEF, UNEP, and other agencies use the Roadmap to guide investments and interventions to address marine plastics pollution; and Sustainable financing for circular economy and innovations ensured by public and private sector and donor community. For Intermediate State C, indications are that the causal links are in place. As discussed in Section 5.8 on Sustainability, GEF has adopted an increasing focus on marine plastics, as can be seen in the GEF funding priorities for GEF 7 and GEF 8. Recognizing the need to transform the entire life cycle of plastics to reduce marine plastic pollution, under GEF 7, the GEF will invest in strategic circular economy initiatives to promote the adoption of closed loop production and consumption patterns instead of traditional linear approaches. Investments will focus on public-private investments to transform the plastic life cycle, combined with coordination and knowledge sharing with other GEF 7 Circular Economy initiatives. Under the GEF 8 'Circular Solutions to Plastic Pollution Integrated Program', GEF will support global, regional, national and city-level projects. Importantly, in 2023 GEF cleared Indicative GEF Program Financing from the GEF Trust Fund of USD96,280,581 for the June 2023 work program under this Integrated Program.[36]

135. Another indication of the assumptions for the third pathway holding is the development of new projects on circular economy for plastics by UNEP, based on the outputs of Component 3, as stated in the UNEP Economy Division final report and confirmed by the UNEP Task Manager during interviews for the desk study. This is elaborated further in Section 5.8 on Sustainability. UNEP is also developing a national guidance on plastic pollution hot spotting and action in collaboration with IUCN. As discussed under Financial sustainability (Section 5.8), there are indications that the assumption on sustainable financing is likely to hold. Given the above, it is likely that the third pathway will contribute towards project impact.

136. Based on the project ratings table, the likelihood of impact of the project as a whole is rated Moderately Likely.

Rating for Achievement of Likelihood of Impact: Moderately Likely

Rating for Effectiveness: Highly Satisfactory

[36] As per letter of 1st June 2023 from GEF CEO to UNIDO, UNDP, UNEP and WWF-US. https://files.worldwildlife.org/wwfcmsprod/files/Publication/file/3jja4b0fcq_11181_Global_PFD_clearance_letter_PPG_Approval_letter_GEF_TF.pdf?_ga=2.54380584.1462716612.1709838366-1056981535.1709838366

1.11 Financial Management

1.11.1 Adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures

137. As specified in the ProDoc, the EAs' work programmes, budgets and outputs would be subjected to oversight by the PSC. In addition, the ProDoc specified that key financial parameters would be monitored quarterly, and that the project Coordinator would be responsible for the initial screening of the financial and administrative reports from the core partners prior to their submission to the Finance and Management Divisions of the United Nations Office at Nairobi. Subsequently, the EA agreements laid out the obligations of each party regarding financial matters. Each agreement specified obligations for both parties (UNEP and the EAs) with regard to cash advances and procurement, and in addition for the EAs on cost overruns, project management costs, unspent balances, financial reporting and annual audit requirements (the latter was not required for UNEP Economy Division). The project supervision plan (annexed to each agreement) specified the financial reporting requirements including the periodicity and the officer (Task Manager or Fund Management Officer) to review and clear each report.

138. Based on the financial and progress reports and interviews with former members of the PCU, it is evident that in general proper financial management standards were applied, and the provisions specified in the PCAs/ICA were adhered to throughout implementation. Expenditures were within the approved annual budget, as recorded in the quarterly and annual expenditure reports (see section below on Completeness of financial information). Project staff cost for one component was approved at a level exceeding 10%, and which could not be reduced after the fact. Hence, the ratio of project management cost to total budget exceeded 10% in this case (see Budget revisions below). There was no evidence of any major financial management issues that affected the timely delivery of the project or the quality of its performance. The following briefly discusses financial management with respect to budget revisions, financial reporting and audits and procurement.

Budget revisions

139. Three budget revisions were made during the course of the project (Table 10), the first having been made and approved by the PSC at the project inception meeting held in February 2018.[37] In the first revision, the key changes were in Component 4 executed by GRIDA, and included the removal of the budget lines for the two advisory groups (USD 25,000 each) and redistribution of the funds as shown in Table 10; splitting of the budget line 'Establishment and operation of the project Coordinating Unit, including appointment and retention of Project Manager' to produce a separate (new) budget line 'Establishment and operation of a PCU within Grid; and inclusion of USD 25,000 in the budget line 'Project Steering Committee and Component Leaders' Meetings' to retrospectively account for a

[37] Source document: 02 – Appendix 1 and 2 – Costed Outline – UNEP itemised budget with PPG – FNL2.

Project Preparation Grant (PPG) to prepare a follow-on GEF programme on marine plastics.[38]

140. The second set of revisions[39] included major reallocation of funds within Component 1 to account for changes to the results framework and workplan. These included a 64% increase in the budget line for an operational alliance to reflect the level of support required alongside the increased GPP focus (i.e., a Global Plastics Commitment or Declaration with the protocol as a part); and significant reductions in the budget lines for activities that were completed by EMF in 2017, prior to GEF contracting (i.e., reductions by 64% and 52% in the budgets for innovations and evidence base work, respectively). The final set of changes were incorporated in a letter dated 15 July 2020 from GRIDA to the Task Manager requesting an extension to the technical closure of the project from 31 July 2020 to 30 November 2020 to allow time to hold a virtual closing event in late Q3 or early Q4 2020. The necessary changes to the budget[40] and workplan were made (with most of the changes resulting from savings in holding an in-person final event) as follows:

- Line 1200: additional funds (USD 20,000 from line 3300) to hire the (former) Project Manager to help coordinate the final virtual event;
- Line 2200: additional funds for the PCU for coordination and communications relating to the final virtual event; and
- Line 3300: reduce funds for in-person meeting but leave funds to support hiring a professional to run the final virtual event.

[38] These funds were used to hire a consultant but it did not result in a funded project due to a decision by the GEF to not pursue this.
[39] Source document: Justification of 02 GEF Marine Plastics Revised Costed Outline and Budget 20June 2018.
[40] Reported in the quarterly expenditure report of Q4 2019

Table 10. Budget revisions

(consolidated by desk study)

Project Components/Activities/Sub-activities (shortened)		GEF Funding	Original Budget	Variance	Justification
Sub-Activity 1.1.1	An operational alliance	327,500	200,000	64%	Budget increased to reflect the level of support required alongside the increased GPP focus
Sub activity 1.1.3	Large scale innovations	50,000	140,000	-64%	A largescale innovation prize competition ran in 2017, prior to GEF contracting
Sub-Activity 1.1.4	Global Plastics Protocol /Guidelines	200,000	140,000	43%	The scope and ambition level of this output was expanded significantly
Sub activity 1.1.5	Economic and scientific evidence base	90,000	187,500	-52%	Significant evidence base work was done in 2017, prior to GEF contracting
Sub-Activity 4.2.1	Establishment and operation of a Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (annual meetings)	0	25,000	-100%	Original allocation was USD25,000 each. The PSC agreed that these committees would not be established and instead members of the EAs own networks would fulfil these roles.
Sub-Activity 4.2.2	Establishment and operation of an Industry/Private Sector Advisory Committee (annual meetings)	0	25,000	-100%	
New	Establishment and operation of a PCU in GRID	55,000	60,000	-8%	Channeled to Component Leaders' meetings
	Travel for PCU and PM (included in Meetings)	0	20,000	-100%	Channeled to the Component Leaders' Meetings
	Project outreach	15,000	10,000	50%	To allow for the production of infographics & outreach materials
Sub-Activity 4.2.4	Project Steering Committee and Component Leaders' Meetings	80,000	25,000	220%	The Component Leaders' meetings included two synthesis workshops (October 2018 and January 2019) to draft the roadmap, incl. a presentation to donors; not previously included in budget. Includes USD25,000 for PPG
Sub-Activity 4.2.5	Kick-off meeting, Inception workshop and closing event	40,000	75,000	-47%	Reduced to provide for the Closing Project Meeting and Component Leaders' Meeting

Financial reporting and audits

141. Quarterly Expenditure Statements and Unliquidated Obligations Reports (in the prescribed template/format) were consolidated by the PCU into a summary report each quarter and annually along with the PIR. In general, the EAs complied with the PCA/ICA requirements in relation to financial reporting and audits. Each EA submitted cash advance requests directly

to the Task Manager, who provided the PCU with copies once cleared, along with direct communications with the respective EA's finance personnel. Regarding timeliness of cash replenishment, as mentioned in the 2020 PIR, there was one instance of a delay in cash replenishment (to EMF) but this in no way hampered the project activities. The study learned from the interviews that this arose when EMF's finance office was not aware that they could apply for replenishment even when they had about 10% remaining for quarterly tasks. The PCU had to alert EMF when they had not asked for replenishment at the beginning of year 2.

142. The EAs submitted their respective quarterly financial reports showing cumulative expenditures and unliquidated obligations to date, in a timely manner (as noted by the desk study by the dates on which the reports were signed and confirmed by former PCU members) and using the UNEP reporting template. However, the expenditures were not reported by planned outputs, but rather by UNEP budget line[41] according to different categories such as project personnel, consultants, travel, meetings/conferences (as per the reporting template). This made it impossible to track actual expenditures by outputs, which would have facilitated a more quantitative and objective approach to monitoring of progress towards the achievement of outputs. It also made it difficult to determine which outputs were covered by GEF funds and the level of funding as opposed to co-finance.

143. Three annual co-finance reports were submitted in a timely manner to the Task Manager (2018, 2019 and 2020) – see 'Completeness of financial information' below. Regarding financial audits, EFM, OC and GRIDA submitted independent annual audit reports for 2018 and 2019, as required under the PCAs.

Procurement

144. The PCAs made provisions for the procurement of goods and consulting services financed by GEF funds, and a procurement plan template was included in each EA's signature package. The template states that the plan is 'To be completed during inception if at all necessary'. None of the EAs provided a procurement plan during or after the inception meeting. For the project, procurement for goods (equipment) was zero while expenditures for services were mainly for consultants, which constituted slightly over 20% of the overall GEF budget. In email communication shared by the former Project Coordinator for this study, the Task Manager clarified that this was in line with prior experience with GEF IW funding whereby the procurement plan is considered only for procurement of goods, of which this Project did not have any [procurement of goods]. Hence, procurement plans were not prepared.

145. The EAs' quarterly expenditure reports show that a significant proportion of expenditure went towards procurement of services through sub-contracting, consultancies or contracting staff, none of which was subject to prior checking by UNEP. Such expenditures were covered substantively 'post facto' in the progress and financial reporting and on that

[41] The desk study was informed that this has been addressed in the new generations of GEF projects.

basis, no prior approval was sought or given for expenditures by the EAs, other than by way of discussion / agreement on intentions and activities through PSC or Component Leaders meetings. This appears consistent with the way the project ran whereby approval was implied by receipt of the progress and financial reports without objection by UNEP or the PCU. If the assumption that a procurement plan was not necessary, as per the annotation in the procurement plan template that a procurement plan is 'to be completed during inception if at all necessary', the study concludes that the approach followed was entirely appropriate.

Rating for Adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures: Satisfactory

1.11.2 Completeness of Financial Information

146. The study had access to standard financial documentation through UNEP Sharepoint (Evaluation Manager) and Dropbox (former Project Coordinator). These included overall costed outline and budget (GEF funds) in UNEP format (original and revised), budget revisions with justifications, quarterly and annual consolidated expenditure statements and unliquidated obligations reports, cash advance requests (EMF and OC), audit reports and annual co-finance reports.

147. The final total expenditure for GEF funds by Component is presented in Table 4 in Section 3.6 on Project financing. As can be seen, the expenditure ratio is nearly 99%. The final total co-finance realized by project Component is presented in Table 6 in Section 3.6 on Project financing. Of the USD 12,878,647 of co-financing realized, USD 10,975,625 (85%) represented cash co-finance, attributed mainly to project personnel and consultants. Additional funds leveraged through the project but not recorded as co-finance consisted of USD 15.9 million raised by EMF NPEC Initiative (Component 1) over the 3-year project period. This included USD 5.5 million from corporate VIK and USD 10.4 million cash from corporate and philanthropic donations.[42]

Rating for Completeness of project financial information: Satisfactory

1.11.3 Communication Between Finance and Project Management Staff

148. The study had limited access to records of communication between finance and project management (considering the time that had elapsed since the project ended and the confidential nature of some of the communication). Copies of communication available for the study (via Sharepoint/Dropbox) included emails between the PCU and EAs on audit requirements, between the project Coordinator and EMF on cash advances including receipts, and between the Task Manager and PCU on financial oversight. The Components Leaders' meetings and PSC meetings presented opportunities for communication between finance and project management staff. For example, as informed by the former Project Coordinator, during Year 1 of the project, the PCU usually timed the Component Leaders meetings roughly a month in advance of the quarterly or PIR reporting, and also flagged the

[42] Source: Project Final Synthesis Report

Components for audited financial reports for the end-of-project requirements. It is clear that there would have been regular communication between finance and project management staff as part of a responsive, adaptive management approach demonstrated by the PCU, considering that no major issues in financial management were encountered and there was effective delivery of the planned outputs and outcomes. This was confirmed based on interviews with PCU members for this study.

Rating for Communication Between Finance and Project Management Staff: Satisfactory

Rating for Financial Management: Satisfactory

1.12 Efficiency

149. The GEF marine plastics project was approved by the UNEP Project Review Committee on 10 October 2016 and submitted to the GEF Secretariat at the end of November the same year. It was endorsed by the GEF CEO on 23 June 2017. With an expected duration of 24 months, the implementation start date was 30 October 2017 and expected completion date 30 September 2019. However, the project was granted two no-cost extensions, as discussed below. PCAs were signed between UNEP Ecosystems Division and the EAs as follows: 25 October 2017 with OC, 15 December 2017 with GRIDA and 21 December 2017 with EMF. In addition, an ICA was signed between UNEP Ecosystems Division and UNEP Economy Division (as an EA) on 23 October 2017 (Ecosystems Division signed on 17 October 2017). Following signing of these agreements, the first disbursement of funds was made to UNEP Economy Division and OC in November 2017; to GRIDA in January 2018; and to EMF in February 2018.

150. Following the signing of the PCA with GRIDA in December 2017, the PCU was established in February 2018 with the hiring of the project Technical Coordinator and assignments of the project Adviser and Project Manager. This 8-month delay between GEF CEO endorsement and establishment of the PCU was significant for a project with an expected duration of only two years. As a consequence, a no-cost extension was unavoidable and in December 2019 the project was extended to 31 December 2020 to facilitate a technical closure on 31 July 2020 and a financial closure on 31 December 2020. In July 2020 a further no-cost extension was granted for a technical closure (from 31 July 2020) to 30 November 2020, to accommodate a closing event that had to be postponed twice due to circumstances outside of the project's control. The physical closing event was initially planned for December 2019 in Paris but had to be cancelled due to labour unrest in France at the time. It was further postponed because of the global COVID-19 pandemic and was subsequently held as a live webinar on 18 November 2020.

151. The first PSC/inception meeting was held in February 2018 in Paris, where the workplan for each Component was reviewed and updated and areas of alignment among the project Components and partners identified and addressed. Two major changes had to be accommodated in the workplan and budget. In 2018, GEF indicated that it did not wish to see a follow-on GEF programme developed under the project, with the strategic roadmap

the major deliverable.[43] However, initially there were no time or budget allocations for a synthesis phase to integrate the outputs into a strategic roadmap. Consequently, the PCU had to amend and synchronize the overall work plan implementation and to adjust the budget (See Section 5.5. on Financial Management).

152. Once the activities got off the ground, some 'fine tuning' was needed to get partners who were not used to working together (except UNEP Economy Division and GRIDA) or with UNEP and GEF projects (EMF and OC) to cooperate as a team to achieve a common objective. As reported in the 2018 PIR and confirmed in interviews, the project components were contractually independent of each other, and trust and cohesion among them was low at project start-up. However, these issues were mitigated by open and honest communication between the PCU, executing partners and the Task Manager's Office. Over time and largely through bilateral and monthly Component Leaders' Meetings convened by the PCU, cohesion among the partners increased around a common project vision.

153. The time and effort taken to address the above challenges resulted in a slow substantive start to the project, which contributed to the need for no-cost extensions, which reduced efficiency. Nevertheless, the majority of the planned reports and publications were delivered by June 2019,[44] and by the end of 2019 the EAs for the three technical components had concluded their work and delivered all their respective outputs.[45] This is not surprising given that some of the EAs' outputs had been already started or completed prior to their contracting for the GEF plastics project and they (the EAs) had already generated significant momentum at global and regional levels towards addressing marine plastics. For example, EMF had undertaken significant evidence base work and ran a largescale innovation prize competition in 2017, prior to GEF contracting. Another factor that contributed to efficiency was the use by EMF and OC of their own networks, in place of the two advisory committees that were initially planned.

154. At a broader scale, all three EAs already had established a strong foundation upon which the project capitalized, contributing to cost-effectiveness and efficiency and mitigating to some extent the impact of the slow start. For example, EMF's effort behind the Global Plastics Commitment predates the project and was already entrenched among participating groups.[46] OC brings 30 years of practical experience, partnerships, scientific expertise and engagement with the private sector, governments, scientists and other stakeholders. Its TFSA is a high-level forum through which industry leaders, scientists and conservationists work collectively to identify and implement solutions to the ocean trash problem. UNEP Economy Division has several programmes and activities that substantially support the efforts to tackle the issue from an upstream perspective. Notable is its GPML, an international coordinating forum that brings together governments, NGOs, academia and the private sector to collaborate in finding solutions to the marine plastics issue. The project used the intergovernmental stakeholder platforms of the GPML and the UNEP Regional

[43] 2018 PIR
[44] PIR FY 2019
[45] Quarterly Progress Reports Q4 2019
[46] Components leaders meeting, April 2018

Seas Programme, among others, to ensure broad representation in identifying strategic guidelines for the Roadmap.

155. The project was completed within budget (in terms of the GEF grant). Apart from capitalizing on the work of the EAs, other cost-saving measures included the use of online platforms for virtual meetings instead of face-to-face meetings that would require travel. Such a measure allowed greater interaction on a regular basis between the PCU and EAs and among project partners in a more cost-effective manner. In addition, the use of virtual meetings allowed the involvement of a larger number of participants in meetings and workshops more cost-effectively. Another cost-saving measure was the holding of Component Leads meetings on the margins of other face-to-face meetings attended by project personnel. The result of such cost-savings measures is reflected, for example, in the revised budget (July 2020) where most of the savings from holding an in-person final event were used to hire the former Project Manager to help coordinate and run the final virtual event, and for GRIDA for coordination and communications relating to the event.

Rating for Efficiency: Moderately Satisfactory

1.13 Monitoring and Reporting

1.13.1 Monitoring Design and Budgeting

156. The project results framework, the principal instrument for monitoring implementation progress, consists of key indicators, baseline and end of project targets for the objective, outcomes and outputs, means of verification, and risk and assumptions. A comprehensive "Costed Monitoring and Evaluation Plan" is presented as Appendix 7 to the ProDoc. The Plan includes monitoring and evaluation (M & E) responsibilities and activities, M & E reporting, key performance indicators and means of verification, M & E financing, results framework with indicators, baselines and end of project (EoP) targets for outcomes and outputs. The Plan specifies that day-to-day monitoring of implementation progress will be the responsibility of the project Coordinator (based on the project's annual work plan and its indicators), whereas periodic monitoring of implementation progress will be undertaken by UNEP and the Component Leads through half-yearly progress reports. The Plan also specifies the monitoring reports to be produced and their frequency, including project inception report, half-yearly progress reports and annual PIRs (in the required templates), periodic thematic and technical reports, project terminal report and terminal evaluation report.

157. On 3 July 2019, the UNEP Task Manager transmitted a new PIR template to the PCU. Content-wise, the template required discussion of additional indicators such as UNEP Sub-programme Indicators based on the 2018-2019 Biennium PoW and the GEF Core Indicators as well as linkages with UNDAF. While some of these indicators are relevant to the project, a discussion of these post-project conceptualization would have been counterproductive and added a significant amount of time in PIR report preparation. The revised PIR template would have been more useful for newly implemented projects and not for ongoing ones such as the GEF marine plastics project. Indicators relevant to the project were identified

during the design phase and are more meaningful for evaluating the success of the project in meeting its stated goal/s and objectives.

158. Key performance indicators are included for all four project Components based on a sub-set of the output indicators in the results framework along with parameters to be measured and means of verification. As discussed in Section 5.2 on Quality of project design, most of the output indicators are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-oriented, with the timeframe presumed in the desk study to coincide with the end of project). Data collection methods are not explicitly specified although these are reflected in the preparation and submission of the progress reports and PIRs. The frequency of reporting is specified in the Indicative M & E activities and responsibilities table in the Costed M & E Plan, which also designates the persons responsible for measurement of indicators in the project results framework as UNEP Task Manager and project partners in collaboration with the PCU. The Task Manager reviews the PIRs and assigns ratings for progress made on the individual project outputs and the outcomes. The ICA and each PCA contains a supervision plan (Annex 5) that specifies the responsibilities for reviewing and clearing the various M & E reports and financial reports between the Task Manager and FMO, as well as the timeline for each report.

159. The M&E Plan is not disaggregated by relevant stakeholder groups including gender and minority/disadvantaged groups nor are gender-specific indicators developed (see Methodology and Stakeholder Sections).

160. The M & E Plan provides for financing of USD183,000 for four M & E activities as follows:

- Inception workshop, annual PSC and final workshop- USD75,000
- Technical Advisory Committees- USD50,000
- Terminal external evaluation- USD50,000
- Audit- USD 8,000

No funds were specifically allocated for the conduct of day-to-day monitoring activities by the project Coordinator.

161. The funds for the terminal evaluation (this study) are considered adequate by the UNEP Evaluation Office (and are available for the evaluation).

Rating for Monitoring Design and Budgeting: Satisfactory

1.13.2 Monitoring of Project Implementation

162. At the first PSC meeting held in February 2018, the monitoring and reporting plan was discussed to familiarize the EAs with the reporting protocols. Discussions on reporting were also held during the monthly Component Leaders meetings, some of which were convened roughly one month before quarterly or PIR reporting. The PCU also flagged Components for audited financial reports. Based on desk study interviews, the EAs initially perceived the use of the reporting templates for technical deliverables and for financial expenditures to be too bureaucratic.

163. A summary of M & E activities undertaken during the project implementation period is provided in Table 11 below.

Table 11. Progress against indicative M&E activities in the Costed M & E Plan

	Type of M&E activity	Status at end of project
1	Inception Workshop, annual PSC and final workshop	Inception meeting (face-to-face) was held as the 1st PSC meeting in February 2018. Two other face-to-face meetings were held in October 2018 and January 2019 as synthesis workshops for development of the roadmap (minutes available). The Component Leaders meetings served as the PSC meetings (most held virtually, with recordings available). Minutes were not available for all Component Leaders meetings. The final PSC meeting/ workshop was scheduled for December 2019 in Paris but had to be cancelled due to labour unrest in France. The workshop was held as a webinar on 18 November 2020 and a report produced. The webinar report and recordings are available on the project website.
2	Inception Report	Inception meeting report prepared but covers only technical discussions in detail, not management decisions taken.
3	Measurement of indicators set in the project Results Framework	PIRs report against the indicators and EoP targets in the project results framework, but only at the outcome level, not for outputs.
4	APR and PIR	PIRs submitted annually by each EA and consolidated by GRIDA
5	Periodic status reports	Other status reports prepared by the EAs were quarterly (instead of half-yearly) progress reports.
6	Technical advisory committees	The two planned Technical Advisory Committees were not convened because EFM and OC each used their respective networks in these roles (approved by the PSC)
7	Terminal External Evaluation	Carried out through UNEP Evaluation Office after project closure (2023-2024).
8	Terminal Report	Prepared by GRIDA based on EAs' final reports.
9	Lessons Learned	Lessons learned included in Component progress reports, Final Synthesis Report, Experience Note and Results Note.
10	Audit	Annual financial audits conducted for OC, EFM and GRIDA and reports submitted to the PCU.

164. The project results framework contains comprehensive baseline information, which the desk study found to be adequate. No additional baseline information was collected during implementation.

Rating for Monitoring of Project Implementation: Satisfactory

1.13.3 Project Reporting

165. Throughout the project, the EAs and the PCU diligently implemented the M & E Plan. All the progress reports were compliant with UNEP and GEF reporting requirements (Table 11) and their submission timely. Reporting adequately reflected the project scope of work, having

been based on the project results framework. EMF, OC and UNEP Economy Division ceased reporting at the conclusion of their respective technical components at the end of 2019. GRIDA continued with reporting until the end of 2020. Quarterly progress and financial reports as well as the PIRs were submitted by the EAs to both the Task Manager and the PCU, which were consolidated by the latter into a single report for submission to UNEP.

166. Substantial documentation of project progress is available in the various reports (quarterly progress reports from each EA, annual PIRs [2108, 2019 and 2020] consolidated across all four Components, quarterly expenditure statements and unliquidated obligations reports from each EA, which were consolidated into an annual expenditure report by the PCU, and minutes of PSC meetings). The quarterly progress reports and PIRs are comprehensive and in general provide an accurate overview of the project's status in terms of progress towards the achievement of the planned outcomes and outputs. There is consistency between implementation progress described in the reports and the available evidence (e.g., as described in technical reports and workshop reports).

167. For the outputs, the PIR requires the 'Implementation status' in the previous and current year (%), 'Progress rating' (from highly satisfactory to highly unsatisfactory, to be provided by the UNEP Task Manager) and 'Progress rating justification'. For the latter, in certain cases, some details are provided that facilitate determination of progress towards some of the EoP targets, but the individual targets are not explicitly mentioned and matched with the achievement of the output, and the details are sometimes too vague to allow determination of the progress towards achievement of the targets. Similarly, the quarterly progress reports (and the final synthesis report) do not include the EoP targets. The quarterly progress reports only require the implementation status for each output at the end of the reporting period, expressed as a percentage (the template states that implementation may be assessed by qualitative assessments, percentage of delivery, and/or budget expenditure planned and actually spent).

168. Other information presented in the PIRs include risks to the delivery of results and agreed recommended actions; problems/risks to implementation along with agreed recommended actions and person responsible and timeframe. This and other information provided in the PIRs were used by the PCU to inform adaptive management and improve project execution. For example, the PIRs indicate where actions recommended to address the problems/ risks identified were taken or completed.

169. The study noted some gaps and shortcomings in the PIRs in that the EoP targets are reported only for outcomes, not for outputs (although the results framework includes such targets for each output). Implementation status of each output is indicated in terms of a percentage (which may have an inherent element of subjectivity), with a rating (satisfactory, etc.) assigned by the Task Manager, and a justification given for the rating. Only in some cases does the justification make reference to EoP targets. In the PIRs, reporting on outcomes for each Component largely repeats what is reported for the outputs since the outcome indicators and some of the EoP targets are similar to those for the outputs (a project design weakness, see Section 5.2 on project design). The study had to review in detail a significant number of reports produced by the Components to determine the extent

to which each of the EoP targets was achieved. A similar situation was observed with financial reporting. As discussed in Section 5.5. on Financial Management, in the financial reporting the expenditures are not reported by outputs but according to UNEP budget line.

170. The situation described above presents difficulty in tracking progress and expenditures by outputs in a more objective, quantitative, and transparent way. It largely stems from the format of the UNEP reporting templates, which the EAs were required to use. Adequate reporting on the EoP targets for the outputs and on expenditures by outputs will facilitate improved monitoring of the implementation status and greater transparency in reporting.

171. The study also noted some inconsistencies in reporting across project Components regarding use of the results framework. For example, in the 2019 PIR, Component 1 reported on activities under each output, not on the actual outputs. Similarly, Component 4 reported on activities for Outcome 4.2. Outcome 3.1 of Component 3 has a single output whereas the PIR reported on seven outputs under this outcome; these 'outputs' appear to be activities (a difference in the terminology used).

172. Other observations on reporting include:

- For only a few of the PSC/Components Leaders' meetings are written records of decisions taken available. For example, the (draft) minutes of the first PSC/inception meeting held in February 2018 consist largely of a summary of ongoing and planned activities by each EA (within and outside of the project), with no record of decisions taken and the underlying discussions.

- Many of the virtual Component Leaders' meetings were recorded and the link circulated to participants after the event. In other cases, workshop records include visual images (whiteboard and 'sticky notes', etc.), which are not readily interpretable in retrospect. While these records may have been appropriate for the project as it progressed, for the desk study there was no way of accessing the records or documenting a trail of decisions on project delivery. The PSC/Component Leaders made decisions on priorities, budgets, scheduling and reporting on several occasions, but in some cases evidence of these is found in annotated versions of the project budget or progress reports, not from official meeting records. From an evaluation perspective, this is unsatisfactory, and should be addressed in future by ensuring that for decision-making meetings an official report is prepared and agreed by the relevant parties, and archived in a format that is retrievable for subsequent review / evaluation.

- The GEF IW Tracking Tool is attached to the ProDoc as Appendix 14 with the requirement that it be implemented at the start of the project and updated at mid-term and at the end of the project and made available to the GEF Secretariat along with the PIR report. However, the Tool was not used in progress reporting, since according to the 2019 and 2020 PIRs, the core indicators were not applicable to the project's results framework (except for Core Indicator 11- Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment). In the 2019 and 2020 PIRs, the GEF 7 Core indicators are used although these indicators were not part of the project design as a GEF 6 project.

173. The financial reports do not provide expenditures by outputs, only by UNEP budget line. As mentioned above, there were inconsistencies in reporting across the four Components whereby Component 1 reported by activities and not outputs, while others reported by outputs. For the PIRs, the indicators and EoP targets are only reported at the outcome level, not at the output level (although this is mitigated to some extent by the targets for outcomes and outputs being similar).

174. The desk study was not able to ascertain if there was substantial collaboration and communication with appropriate UNEP colleagues. However, as previously mentioned, the PCU provided continuous guidance to the EAs on project reporting requirements including at the first PSC meeting and at Component Leaders' meetings.

175. Monitoring data collected was not disaggregated by gender/vulnerable/marginalized groups (see the Methodology and Stakeholders Sections). However, for the Core indicator 11, the PIRs report where activities include a gender dimension (Surabaya Women's local waste collection, sorting and recycling communities were recipient of Circulate Capital investment funds; and a study on the role of gender in waste management in Asia, which provides important preliminary findings that should be integrated in smart waste management solutions).

Rating for Project Reporting: Moderately Satisfactory

Rating for Monitoring and Reporting: Satisfactory

1.14 Sustainability

1.14.1 Socio-political Sustainability

176. Social and political factors will play a crucial role in the sustainability of the project outcomes. This is particularly relevant for Outcome 1.1(Progress towards a more informed and robust new plastics economy through a global alliance of producers, users and disposers of plastics, including partnerships with policy makers) and Outcome 2.1 (APEC region countries [Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam] are better positioned to secure financing and make policy commitments to address marine plastic issues and waste management). Together the executing partners are changing the way that the world thinks about the ocean plastics crisis and are promoting systemic solutions. Moreover, this Project has generated significant political support and industry commitments. Through Outcome 1.1, the project has aligned a critical mass of stakeholders behind a common vision and mobilized unprecedented levels of commitment from stakeholders along the entire plastics value chain and partnerships with policy makers.

177. Building on the growing momentum to address the plastics issue through a circular economy, the project has laid a strong foundation for socio-political sustainability as demonstrated by the high level of commitment among governments, private sector, NGOs, CSOs, etc. to the New Plastics Economy Global Commitment. The signatories, the number

of which continued to grow even after the project ended (from about 450 at project end to over one thousand, as reported on the EMF website), have committed to a set of ambitious 2025 targets specified in the Global Commitment and the global alliance encourages such commitments to be incrementally increased over time to meet collective milestone goals by 2025 and 2030. In addition to the Global Commitment, the EMF NPEC Initiative encourages national alliances across the plastic waste value chain to commit to national Plastics Pacts. Nevertheless, as discussed above (Likelihood of impact section), the world is off track to eliminate plastic waste and pollution since many industries are not yet taking action and Global Commitment signatories are likely to miss key targets.

178. OC adopted a bottom-up approach for Component 2, closely engaging with policy makers, CSOs and industries among others, and enlisting local partners to serve in lead roles for some of the project activities. This has promoted local buy-in and interest in continuing the work after the project ended. Further, strengthening of national policy frameworks such as Vietnam's national action plan for marine debris, and acceptance of recommendations to reduce marine debris by political grouping such as APEC, G7 and G20 will contribute to socio-political sustainability. Component 2 activities targeting the improvement of solid waste management at the subnational and national scales in Southeast Asian countries link appropriately with their respective UNDAFs, which is another mechanism to sustain project outcomes. As previously mentioned, OC has launched a new initiative called Urban Ocean, which was borne out of this GEF plastics Project. Through this initiative, OC will bring mayors and city leaders together with private companies, NGOs and academics to develop innovative solutions to end the flow of plastic into the ocean and build more resilient, sustainable cities.

Rating for Socio-political Sustainability: Moderately Likely

1.14.2 Financial Sustainability

179. Sustaining project outcomes has a high dependency on future funding / financial flows, particularly from the GEF since providing strategic guidance to the GEF for its investments to address marine plastics was a central aim of the project. GEF and project partners have endorsed the Roadmap and the GEF (GEF 7 and GEF 8) has since invested an additional USD36 million in projects ('cousin projects') to address plastic pollution in Asia, Africa, eastern Europe and Latin America. One such project is the (GEF 7) Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) Cities project,[47] which is currently being implemented by UNEP and executed by the Cartagena Convention Secretariat based in Jamaica. The PIF and ProDoc of the LAC Cities project make explicit reference to the GEF marine plastics project. Under the GEF 8 'Circular Solutions to Plastic Pollution Integrated Program', GEF will support global, regional, national and city-level projects. In 2023, GEF cleared Indicative GEF

[47] Reduce marine plastics and plastic pollution in Latin American and Caribbean cities through a circular economy approach. GEF ID 10547. Participating countries Colombia, Jamaica, and Panama.

Program Financing from the GEF Trust Fund of USD96,280,581 for the June 2023 work program under the Circular Solutions to Plastic Pollution Integrated Program.[48]

180. Other initiatives that promote financial sustainability include the CCOF established by OC and partners. OC is continuing its engagement with Circulate Capital (the investment management firm it co-founded) to ensure that investments are made to finance bottom-up waste management solutions and recycling infrastructure across South and Southeast Asia.

181. While the project did not prepare an exit strategy with a financial component, the Roadmap serves as such (according to feedback from the interviews). The Roadmap, however, does not have a financial component.

Rating for Financial Sustainability: Moderately Likely

1.14.3 Institutional Sustainability

182. The existing institutional framework is appropriate for the uptake of and building on the project outcomes. This discussion focuses on the GEF and project partners (UNEP, EFM, OC) as examples. There is direct evidence that GEF has adopted an increasing focus on addressing marine plastics, as can be seen in the GEF funding priorities for GEF 7 and GEF 8 that explicitly incorporate a circular economy approach to addressing marine plastics, for example:

- GEF 7: The GEF will invest in strategic Circular Economy initiatives to promote the adoption of closed loop production and consumption patterns instead of traditional linear take-make-waste approaches.

- GEF 8: The Circular Solutions to Plastic Pollution Integrated Program tackles plastic pollution using a circular economy approach. Interventions will cross the entire plastic value chain—from production to consumption to disposal.

183. UNEP's commitment to addressing marine plastics is articulated, for example, in UNEA Resolutions on marine plastics: Resolutions 1/6, 2/11 and 4/6 on Marine plastic litter and microplastics. For example, Resolution 4/6 calls upon Member States and other actors to address the problem of marine litter and microplastics, prioritizing a whole-life-cycle approach and resource efficiency. UNEP provides the intergovernmental context to the plastics issue through the GPA and the GPML, and Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans. GPML activities reflect UNEA policy guidance and priorities with respect to marine litter action plan formulation and implementation.

184. Being among the world leaders for the transition to a circular plastics economy, there is strong institutional support by EMF and OC for building on and sustaining the project

[48] As per letter of 1st June 2023 from GEF CEO to UNIDO, UNDP, UNEP and WWF-US. https://files.worldwildlife.org/wwfcmsprod/files/Publication/file/3jja4b0fcq_11181_Global_PFD_clearance_letter_PPG_Approval_letter_GEF_TF.pdf?_ga=2.54380584.1462716612.1709838366-1056981535.1709838366

outcomes. Addressing marine plastics through a circular economy is firmly integrated in the work of these two organizations, including through their respective initiatives and well-established stakeholder networks. Each of the partner agencies has established epistemic communities and platforms through which they continue the global movement towards a circular plastics economy beyond the project's lifespan. With GEF catalytic funding, the project capitalized on the work of EMF, OC and UNEP among others, to develop the Roadmap. EMF's NPEC initiative will continue until at least 2025, building directly on the work co-funded by GEF. As mentioned under Financial sustainability, OC is continuing its work on marine plastics through its Urban Ocean initiative and its engagement with Circulate Capital. Another institutional mechanism to sustain project results is GRIDA's Waste and Marine Litter Programme. For example, GRIDA works closely with UNEP and Regional Seas Conventions to support countries to identify sources and pathways of plastic pollution.

185. An exit strategy with an institutional component was not prepared but the Roadmap, which serves as an exit strategy, designates the broad groups of leading and supporting stakeholders for each type of recommended action.

Rating for Institutional Sustainability: Likely

Rating for Sustainability: Moderately Likely

1.15 Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

1.15.1 Preparation and Readiness

186. The project was endorsed by the GEF CEO on 23 June 2017 and implementation was expected to start on 30 October 2017. However, it was not until between October-December 2017 that the PCAs and ICA were signed. The first disbursement of funds was made nearly five months after CEO endorsement on 16 November 2017 and the PCU was established in February 2018 when the Technical Coordinator, Project Adviser, and Project Manager came on board. This eight-month delay between GEF CEO endorsement and staffing of the PCU resulted in a slow substantive start to the project, which was significant considering that the project expected duration was only two years (see also Section 5.6 on Efficiency).

187. A major challenge at the start was that the project as designed had no time or budget allocation for a synthesis phase to produce a strategic roadmap to address marine plastics holistically, based on the Components' results. This meant that the original work plans, particularly for Components 1 and 2, consumed the entire project lifespan with no accommodation of a synthesis phase. The study learned that there was initial push-back among EAs as this involved additional workload and time commitments. In addition, there was a legacy of asynchrony in that partner agencies had negotiated their contracts two years before, and certain products initially targeted for this project had already been completed.

188. Documentation of project outputs, while work was ongoing, should have been timed to coincide with periodic integration exercises in the form of workshops or meetings. When

the GEF funding came through in delayed mode, as a mitigation measure, the PCU had to work with the EAs to identify a new set of interim products for key milestone synthesis activities, such as workshops and meetings. Consequently, the PCU had to retrofit workplans to accommodate two additional workshops and to encourage EAs to document outputs on a rolling basis to form the building blocks of periodic integration project-wide. Without such retrofit, the delivery of the roadmap would have been jeopardized if integration was left for the very end of the project when there would have been no project team to integrate the outputs and no mechanism through which to vet and fund the Roadmap.

189. The impact of the slow substantive start was mitigated to some extent by some of the work of the EAs that had already started or was completed before the actual start of the project. Thus, the executing partners had some degree of readiness (individually) when the project got off the ground. The challenge, however, was that considerable effort was needed to get partners who were not used to working together to collaborate as a team (see Section 5.9.2.2 below).

Rating for Preparation and Readiness: Moderately Unsatisfactory

1.15.2 Quality of Project Management and Supervision

1.15.2.1 UNEP/Implementing Agency:

190. The roles and responsibilities for project management and supervision presented in the ProDoc (Appendix 10) and the project supervision plan (Annex in the PCAs and ICA) were closely followed throughout project implementation. UNEP as the GEF Implementing Agency provided oversight (through its Task Manager) to ensure that the project met UNEP's and GEF's policies and procedures. Although based in different geographical locations, the Task Manager, Project Coordinator and other members of the PCU (Technical Advisor and Project Manager), constituted an effective and efficient functional team. Under the direct supervision of the PSC and the UNEP Task Manager, the PCU/Project Coordinator provided day-to-day management and execution, and efficiently co-ordinated the activities of the three project Components, ensuring that the project's outputs and outcomes were achieved and delivered according to the agreed workplan. The PCU also provided excellent technical backstopping, oversight and administrative support.

191. As discussed under Preparation and readiness above, soon after its establishment, the PCU quickly implemented adaptive management measures such as adjusting the workplan and budget to accommodate changes made by the GEF to the ultimate project output (Roadmap); and convening regular Component Leaders' meetings to monitor progress and identify and address any problems. An important role played by the PCU was to foster a collaborative spirit among the EAs (as discussed under Preparation and readiness above). Based on the minutes of the PSC and Component Leaders' meetings and other information provided by the PCU for this study, the Task Manager and PCU undoubtedly provided excellent guidance and leadership to the EAs throughout the project. The PCU continuously employed adaptive management within an operationally complex (e.g., multiple EAs initially operating independently) and changing internal and external environment (e.g., change in the ultimate project output by the GEF, labour unrest in France and the COVID-19 pandemic).

The quarterly reports and PIRs were effectively used by UNEP as a project management tool to monitor progress and to identify problems and risks to implementation and achievement of planned outputs and outcomes. As shown in the PIRs, the identified problems and risks were usually accompanied by recommended mitigatory actions and person(s) responsible, and status of action taken (completed, ongoing).

192. Oversight was also provided by the PSC, which held three face-to-face meetings. Some of the Component Leaders' meetings also served as PSC meetings. Through these meetings (face-to-face and virtual) as well as bilateral meetings between the PCU and individual EAs in addition to email exchanges, there was a significant level of regular and constructive information exchange among the project team. Overall, the quality of project management and supervision was of a high standard.

Rating for UNEP/Implementing Agency: Highly Satisfactory

1.15.2.2 Partners/Executing Agency:

193. The project engaged three disparate external partners (EMF, OC, and GRIDA) and one internal partner (UNEP Economy Division) to execute the four project Components. Each partner contributed its unique expertise, experience, activities, and stakeholder networks, which the project was able to leverage with catalytic funding from the GEF. Despite the slow start of the project and challenges in building a true partnership (discussed below), the EAs delivered most of the planned outputs by the end of 2019, with the Roadmap (the major output) delivered in 2020.

194. Some challenges were encountered in building a true partnership among the EAs who had divergent visions and different sets of organizational priorities and stakeholder networks. Further, EMF and OC had little prior experience with GEF projects or working with each other or with UNEP, which created some challenges in the initial stages of the project. As reported in the 2018 PIR and highlighted in discussions with the PCU members for this study, the project Components were contractually independent of each other and trust and cohesion among them was low at the start. Nurturing a more collaborative spirit and building a true partnership required considerable effort. This included bilateral meetings between the PCU and individual EAs as well as monthly Component Leaders meetings in addition to the PSC meetings. Under the leadership of the PCU and the project Coordinator in particular, these issues were gradually resolved and the partners were able to collaborate as a team towards a common vision, which was instrumental in the project's success.

195. In some cases, the EAs followed their own internal institutional policies and procedures. For example, it was agreed by the PSC that the two Advisory Groups (as specified in the ProDoc) would not be convened since the EAs for Components 1, 2 and 3 had their own respective mechanisms (e.g., working groups) to serve in these roles, thus additional advisory groups would be redundant. Similarly, since each EA had its own mechanism for the review of technical reports, a formal review mechanism was not established under the project. However, the PCU reviewed a sub-set of documents prepared at the component level (as well as project level, such as the Roadmap). One issue was the sharing of information under the EA's internal institutional policies, as demonstrated for example, by EMF invoking the

Chatham House Rule[49] in the Q3 2018 quarterly progress report whereby under 'List of meeting participants' it is mentioned 'EMF Advisory board meetings and participant workshops are under Chatham House Rules…'; and the debrief of the May 2018 workshop (confidential / Chatham House Rules).

196. While the above can potentially raise concern about the EAs' adherence to the PCA clauses "UNEP will review materials which will be published under this project prepared by the Executing Agency before publication, and review and agree (acting reasonably) any publishing contracts"; and "The EA will not seek nor accept instructions regarding the activities under the present Agreement from any Government or authority external to UN Environment", these issues did not affect the project's performance and in fact contributed to a more efficient process.

197. EMF and OC also wished to retain the continuity and branding of their pre-existing work programmes that were leveraged by the project. The final project report observed that "building [partnerships] while maintaining branding and institutional identities can prove tricky." The issue of branding was actively debated in the early stages of the project, largely due to the wish of the EAs (in particular for Component 1). As a result, few outputs produced by EMF under the project and available to the study included the project logo. EMF conducted a series of Alliance Participant Workshops under the project but the debrief of these workshops displayed the GEF logo without mention of the GEF marine plastics project. From the interviews conducted, the study understands that this practice could be attributed largely to the fact that the EA had other major donors (apart from the GEF) who co-funded some of the activities.

Rating for Partners/Executing Agency: Highly Satisfactory

Rating for Quality of Project Management and Supervision: Highly Satisfactory

1.15.3 Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation

198. Stakeholder participation and cooperation were central to the project design. The three technical project Components engaged extensively with stakeholders across the plastics value chain, a requisite in delivering systemic solutions for marine plastics. UNEP was mainly responsible for the government-side of the Global Commitment (onboarding of and annual reporting by government signatories while EMF (through its NPEC) mobilized businesses including global brands and OC engaged with CSOs, local leaders and APEC governments. Component 1 with its Global Plastics Declaration; Component 2 with APEC, G7 and Joint Investment Venture; Component 3 with GPA/GPML networks and technical consultation workshops, are testaments of substantial and effective stakeholder

[49] "When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed." https://www.chathamhouse.org/about-us/chatham-house-rule

engagement in forging inclusive and systemic solutions and actions to address marine plastics.

199. Through a blended finance partnership, USAID will provide up to a $35 million, 50% loan-portfolio guarantee through the Development Credit Authority to incentivize private capital investment and new business development in the recycling value chain in the region. The public sector support from the USAID partnership enhances the private sector support that Circulate Capital has received and which amounts to more than $100 million from global brands including PepsiCo, Procter & Gamble, Danone, Unilever and Coca-Cola Co.

200. Stakeholder participation and cooperation was instrumental in the successful delivery of several of the project's outputs and outcomes. For example, establishment of a global Alliance of major plastic-producing and plastic-using corporations as well as governments and others, overwhelming endorsement of the Global Plastics Commitment, and more than 12 meetings with policy makers with a report summarising the policy/public-private engagement efforts, lessons and recommendations for policy makers and other stakeholders (Component 1); a blended finance partnership between USAID and Circulate Capital; engagement of national, regional and global stakeholders (APEC countries, NGOs, CSOs, G7 and G20 members) to develop recommendations and conduct assessments, and engagement of global corporations such as PepsiCo, Procter & Gamble, Unilever and Coca-Cola Co, which helped to leverage significant investments to reduce ocean plastic pollution (Component 2). Component 3 benefited from baseline information on marine plastics analyzed and collected by UNEP's GPA and GPML as well as its North America Office.

201. In other cases, stakeholder engagement included the participation of technical personnel and scientists at workshops, for example, multi-stakeholder consultation workshops convened in 2018 and 2019 by UNEP Economy Division to develop the Roadmap (Component 3), and dialogue workshops with leading researchers in the marine debris field (Component 4).

Rating for Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation: Highly Satisfactory

1.15.4 Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality

202. The ProDoc includes completed ESS checklists (as Appendices) for Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam as well as the project level. Questions and responses in the ESS checklist that are relevant to this criterion include:

- Does the project respect internationally proclaimed human rights including dignity, cultural property and uniqueness and rights of indigenous people? *Response: Yes, In exploring dimensions of waste management sector reform, the project will consider human rights, labour rights and gender dimensions of waste pickers and their role in a reorganized sector*,

- Will the project cause disproportionate impact to women or other disadvantaged or vulnerable groups? Response: *No, It is the hypothesis of this project that improvements to waste management infrastructure will ultimately improve outcomes for women and*

other vulnerable groups, but it is a dimension that we will explore in further detail through one of our project outputs.

203. OC conducted a significant study on the role of gender in waste management in selected APEC countries (Component 2, Output 2.1.1). The study[50] provides important insights into the role of women and men along the waste value chain, their perceptions and functions, and resulting social and economic impacts. Moreover, it shows that engaging women in South and Southeast Asia may be critical in reducing mismanaged plastic waste in the region - a key contributor to the ocean plastic crisis. In addition, the Surabaya (Indonesia) Women's local waste collection, sorting and recycling communities were recipients of Circulate Capital investment funds. The project also looked at implications to waste pickers in the context of waste management sector reform and made recommendations for ensuring that any such reforms support their livelihoods.

204. The gender study is referenced in the Roadmap, which states that 'In developing countries where over half of the world's plastic waste originate, a large portion of the recovery and recycling of plastic waste are done by waste pickers, sorters and community-based recycling enterprises without formal oversight for just compensation or environmental protection. Formal recognition and full support of this labor sector, including promotion of gender parity, are essential in improving waste-based livelihoods and reducing leakage of plastics in developing economies and globally.' In addition, the Roadmap includes the following Key Action: 'Develop and implement policy to incentivize the organization of informal waste collectors and sorters that can operate with independent financing with fair wage and thus not vulnerable to unscrupulous middlemen waste collectors.' Other than the above statements, the Roadmap does not explicitly address gender or human rights issues, or provide any insights on socio/economic or cultural impacts in developing countries. It is important that GEF and UNEP encourage explicit activities related to gender/ minority/disadvantaged/vulnerable groups in the development of marine plastics projects.

205. No information was available to the desk study on the application of a 'Gender Score' during review of the project design within UNEP, nor on the participation of women in the execution of project activities. The relevant category for the Gender Scoring is: *1: gender partially mainstreamed: Gender is reflected in the context, implementation, logframe,* ***or*** *the budget*. Gender is mentioned in the ProDoc including in relation to the study on the role of gender under Component 2, and as mentioned above, in the ESS checklists. Progress reporting did not disaggregate data according to gender.

Rating for Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality: Moderately Satisfactory[51]

1.15.5 Environmental and Social Safeguards

[50] The role of gender in waste management – gender perspective on waste in India, Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam

[51] Note that the UNEP rating matrix requires a comparison with the UNEP 'Gender Score' applied to the project at design. This Gender Score was not available to the desk study. Consequently, the rating was assigned without this input.

206. Not assessed by the study (on the advice of UNEP Evaluation Manager). However, during the project design phase, ESS checklists were prepared for the project as well as for Indonesia, The Philippines, and Vietnam.

1.15.6 Country Ownership and Driven-ness

207. Country ownership and driven-ness was promoted by strong engagement of governments/public sector agencies, particularly in Components 1 and 2. This is demonstrated by, for example, the overwhelming endorsement of the Global Plastics Commitment by governments (Component 1); and the involvement of APEC countries (Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam); and acceptance of recommendations by G7 and G20 (Component 2).

208. Another mechanism that fostered Country ownership and driven-ness was through countries' UNDAF[52]. For example, Component 2 activities in Southeast Asian countries including Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam targeted the improvement of solid waste management that would reduce marine plastics significantly at the subnational and national scales. This is linked with specific UNDAF Outcome or Focus Areas in these three countries that relate to environmental sustainability.

Rating for Country Ownership and Driven-ness: Satisfactory

1.15.7 Communication and Public Awareness

209. Component 4 included an output (Output 4.1.2) and associated budget allocation for communications, fostering awareness and media coverage on solutions to ocean plastics. A comprehensive communications strategy was prepared and reviewed at the first PSC meeting, and implemented throughout the project implementation period. Stakeholder feedback was facilitated through the various meetings and workshops convened at the component and project-wide levels.

210. OC reported that 11,000 publications and media stories were published globally and more than 250 publications and media stories regionally. GRIDA established a project website with links to partner websites, each with dedicated web resources on the project. In addition to posters, presentations and other publications, GRIDA also generated content (Results Note and Experience Note) for IWLEARN, but as the Task Manager informed, these were not published on the IWLEARN website or newsletter due to IWLEARN staff turnover at the time. However, an article on the project was published in the IW Bulletin. Other events and products included participation of the project Coordinator in the 2018 GEF IWC9 with Project pecha kucha presentation and panel talk on Circular Economy, and the 2018 International Marine Debris Conference, and presentations, posters and flyers.

211. The Roadmap was launched in November 2020 at a live webinar, which attracted over 350 registrants. About 145 participants representing 45 countries joined the webinar, which was

[52] UNDAF broadly targets environmental sustainability – protection and conservation of the environment and natural resources, including enhancing the resilience of marine ecosystems and coastal societies in the wake of climate change and disasters.

conducted and recorded on GRIDA's YouTube Channel. As stated in the webinar report, some registrants who did not attend the live airing requested the link to the recording. The Roadmap, webinar recording and presentations are available at: https://gefmarineplastics.org/webinar. The Roadmap is also available for download on GRIDA's website (https://www.grida.no/publications/540) and UNEP's website (https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/32533). There is no tracking of the number of views or downloads of the Roadmap or any other project outputs.

212. Neither the Roadmap nor other project written outputs have been translated into other languages due to the limited budget (although the EMF progress report states that New Plastics Economy reports have been translated into French and Chinese, the desk study did not locate such translations). It is important that the Roadmap and other key project reports, which constitute an important knowledge resource, are translated and widely disseminated to promote their uptake by a broader range of stakeholders. UNEP or GEF should take responsibility for this exercise and identify the required financial resources.

Rating for Communication and Public Awareness: Satisfactory

Rating for Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues: Satisfactory

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1.16 Conclusions

213. The project was highly responsive to GEF's need for strategic guidance on prioritizing interventions and investments to address the marine plastics issue through a circular economy approach. This will enhance the role of the GEF as well as of UNEP and others in freeing the global ocean of plastics, which is even more crucial in the face of the worsening global marine plastic pollution crisis. The project surpassed expectations having exceeded many of the end-of-project targets and delivering all the planned outputs and outcomes. Moreover, it met its overall objective of capitalizing on a growing baseline of knowledge on marine plastics sources, pathways and environmental impacts to inform the GEF and the application of a systemic approach to global plastic issues. This is encapsulated in the Strategic Roadmap and its endorsement by the GEF, UNEP and project partners by the end of the project.

214. The project's accomplishments, however, extend beyond the Roadmap, exceeding expectations with respect to the New Global Plastics Commitment, which has mobilized unprecedented levels of commitment from stakeholders across the plastics value chain; a public-private sector blended finance partnership and Joint Investment Circulate Capital Ocean Fund with more than USD 100 million; innovative solutions; and establishing an epistemic community with key plastics value chain stakeholders. Collectively, these results enhance the enabling conditions that are crucial for a transformative change towards a circular plastics economy. In addition, the series of studies and reports produced represents a significant knowledge resource for project partners and other stakeholders that will serve them well into the future. There is value in translating the Roadmap and other key documents to other languages to promote wider uptake by diverse stakeholders and amplify project impact at different scales, and to meet the differentiated needs of women/minority/marginalized/vulnerable groups.

215. Instrumental to the project's success was undoubtedly the engagement of global leaders to implement and execute the project. Their expertise, experience, strong stakeholder networks, and importantly embedding Project activities in their work on marine plastics constituted one of the project's greatest strengths and contributed to project efficiency. The collective expertise of the partner agencies helped to shape the high quality of the outputs, and such value-added could not be captured by co-finance accounting alone. The partners also benefitted from GEF support since it contributed to advancing their own work. The project has clearly demonstrated how disparate agencies can successfully come together to address an issue of such magnitude as the marine plastic issue, which is pervasive, complex and multi-scalar. Maintaining the partnership is vital to continue the trajectory towards circularity in addressing marine plastics.

216. The partnership, however, was a 'double-edged sword', since some of the partners (EMF and OC) each worked independently and were not very familiar with GEF and UNEP policies and procedures, which required considerable time and effort by the PCU to build trust and

nurture the partnership. Clearly, the project design did not anticipate the high level of effort that would be necessary to establish an effective partnership. Moreover, the partners' use of their own internal mechanisms in advisory/ oversight roles and their internal policies (e.g., Chatham House Rule - EMF) raise concerns about the potential for conflict of interest and accountability gaps between them and the IA.

217. Another factor that was central to the project's success, and at the broader level to the transition towards a circular economy on the longer term, was the extensive engagement of stakeholders across the plastic value chain. Here again, the executing agencies played an essential role through their various stakeholder networks and platforms. Given the holistic / systemic nature of the project concept, multi-stakeholder engagement was critical and proved to be highly beneficial. Knowledge and viewpoints collected from public institutions, governments, private sector and NGOs among others enhanced the comprehensiveness of the recommendations.

218. On-the-ground activities incorporating women and minority/disadvantaged/vulnerable groups were outside the project's scope. Nevertheless, the project recognized the importance of gender and its study on the role of gender in waste management in APEC countries provides important insights into the role of women and men along the waste value chain. Importantly, the Key Action in the Roadmap (Develop and implement policy to incentivize the organization of informal waste collectors and sorters that can operate with independent financing with fair wage and thus not vulnerable to unscrupulous middlemen waste collectors') provides critical guidance for incorporating considerations of gender and minority/disadvantaged/vulnerable groups in the development of solutions to address marine plastics.

219. Project implementation was not without other challenges. For a project of its size (in terms of funding) and short timeframe, the design was overly complex with three independent technical components and many diverse outputs, but no time or budget allocation for a synthesis phase to integrate all the results to produce a roadmap. Preparation and readiness was inadequate and the slow start following CEO endorsement was compounded by a range of factors such as:

    - the need for revision of the budget and results framework
    - synchronizing workplans due to issues such as the prior completion by EMF and OC of certain products initially targeted for this Project when their contracts were negotiated two years before
    - effort required to build partnerships
    - significant expansion of one of the outputs (from a protocol to a Global Commitment on Plastics), and
    - unforeseen external circumstances (labour unrest in France in 2019 followed by the COVID-19 pandemic).

220. These factors reduced efficiency in implementation. The high quality of leadership and management by the PCU within an operationally complex and changing internal and external environment was central to the successful completion of the project, albeit within a delayed mode.

221. In general, the executing partners were compliant with progress and financial monitoring and reporting requirements and while no major irregularities were identified, the study noted some issues that would benefit from UNEP's greater attention going forward. Progress reporting (PIR) had some gaps and weakness in terms of content and consistency among executing partners particularly with respect to reporting on the EoP targets and use in the PIRs of the same terminology for outputs as in the results framework. In some cases, it was not possible to identify if a particular product was generated under the GEF Project or entirely under the EA's own workstream but reported under the project. The requirement to report on expenditures on the GEF grant according to UNEP budget line (using the UNEP template) rather than by planned output masked the final cost of each output in relation to the original allocation as laid out in the original costed workplan and budget, making it difficult to attribute outputs and activities to GEF funds. This can be further complicated in cases where the cost is partially covered by co-financing. Reporting of expenditures by outputs will be an important project management tool to monitor expenditures. Another shortcoming was the general unavailability of official PSC meeting reports particularly with records of key management decisions, budget revisions, etc. and underlying discussions.

222. Conducting this study nearly four years after the project ended provided an excellent opportunity to assess whether the project outcomes are actually being sustained and the likelihood of the intermediate states and long-term impact being attained. There are good prospects for financial, socio-political and institutional sustainability of the project's results, as evident for example, in the increased explicit focus by the GEF on marine plastics in GEF 7 and GEF 8 and the continuing activities of UNEP and project partners on marine plastics post-project, some building on the project's results. Preliminary indications are that the three causal pathways towards intermediate states and impact are generally operative with the assumptions and drivers partially or fully in place.

223. Table 12 below provides a summary of the ratings and findings discussed in the *Evaluation Findings* Chapter. Overall, the project demonstrates a rating of 'Satisfactory'.

Table 12. Summary of project findings and ratings

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
Strategic Relevance	Overall rating for Strategic Relevance: Highly Satisfactory	**HS**
1. Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities	Closely aligned with UNEP MTS and POW at the time it was designed.	**HS**
2. Alignment to UNEP Donor/GEF/Partner strategic priorities	The project was aligned with GEF's strategic priorities. Its aim was to provide strategic guidance to GEF	**HS**

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
3. Relevance to global, regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities	Closely aligned with global (e.g. SDG 14), regional, sub-regional and national priorities (e.g. UNDAF)	HS
4. Complementarity with existing interventions/ Coherence	Project was built around existing work programs of the EAs and was complementary with concurrent programs elsewhere.	HS
Quality of Project Design	Project design had some strengths and shortcomings.	MS
Nature of External Context	External context had little impact on the project except in the last year with labour unrest in France and the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in cancellation of the final face-to-face project meeting	F
Effectiveness	Overall rating for Effectiveness	HS
1. Availability of outputs	All programmed outputs were delivered and some EoP targets were exceeded. Overall, the quality of the outputs was high.	HS
2. Achievement of project outcomes	All planned outcomes were achieved.	HS
3. Likelihood of impact	Evidence suggests that the assumptions for the three main causal pathways towards impact partially hold and drivers are in place.	ML
Financial Management	Overall rating for Financial Management	S
1. Adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures	The EAs were compliant with UNEP's financial policies and procedures. No irregularities in financial management were identified by the study.	S
2. Completeness of project financial information	Information provided on budget revisions and annual expenditures (GEF funds) as well as on co-finance realized was complete. However, expenditure was reported by UNEP budget lines not by outputs, making it impossible to determine the actual cost of each output. Since this was due to the design of the reporting template, the rating was not affected.	S
3. Communication between finance and project management staff	No difficulties identified in this area.	S
Efficiency	Delivered within budget. Project effectively utilized the work, expertise and networks of executing partners to produce the programmed outputs and outcomes and meet the ultimate objective. Some factors reduced efficiency (slow start and need for revisions to the result framework and certain activities), which resulted in the need for project no-cost extensions.	MS
Monitoring and Reporting	Overall Rating for Monitoring and Reporting	S
1. Monitoring design and budgeting	The ProDoc contains an adequate M & E plan with budget and roles and responsibilities.	S
2. Monitoring of project implementation	Project monitoring was carried out diligently by the PCU and the EAs were compliant with reporting requirements.	S
3. Project reporting	Reporting was comprehensive, but some inconsistencies across partners' reports and gaps in reporting on EoP targets. The financial reports do not provide expenditures by output but by UNEP budget line.	MS

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
Sustainability	Overall rating for Sustainability	**ML**
1. Socio-political sustainability	The project has established a strong foundation for socio-political sustainability through e.g., the Global Plastics Commitment, through which the project has mobilized unprecedented levels of commitment from stakeholders along the plastics value chain. However, many signatories are falling short of meeting the targets.	**ML**
2. Financial sustainability	GEF has already committed substantial financial resources to addressing marine plastics (GEF 7 and GEF 8). OC is continuing its engagement with Circulate Capital for investments to finance bottom-up waste management solutions across South and Southeast Asia.	**ML**
3. Institutional sustainability	GEF, UNEP, and the EAs have endorsed the Roadmap and continue to support the transition to a circular economy through their programmes and networks.	**L**
Factors Affecting Performance		**S**
1. Preparation and readiness	An eight-month delay between GEF CEO endorsement and establishment of the PCU resulted in a slow substantive start to the project compounded by the need to address several other issues before activities could actually start.	**MU**
2. Quality of project management and supervision		**HS**
2.1 UNEP/Implementing Agency:	Good management and supervision by UNEP within an operationally complex and changing internal and external environment was a crucial factor in the project's success	***HS***
2.2 Partners/Executing Agency:	The EAs successfully delivered the planned outcomes and outputs for their respective components within budget, and significantly building on their own work.	***HS***
3. Stakeholders' participation and cooperation	Project components showed excellent stakeholder engagement across the plastics value chain, a requisite in delivering systemic solutions for marine plastics.	**HS**
4. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality	Limited to a study on gender in Asia and receipt by a women's waste cycling community in Indonesia of Circulate Capital investment funds. The Roadmap does not explicitly address gender or human rights issues and progress reporting did not disaggregate data by gender	**MS**
5. Environmental and social safeguards	Not assessed (as advised by UNEP Evaluation Manager)	**NA**
6. Country ownership and driven-ness	Strong engagement of governments/public sector agencies, particularly in Components 1 and 2 as demonstrated by, e.g. overwhelming endorsement of the Global Plastics Commitment by governments (Component 1); and the involvement of APEC countries (Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam) and acceptance of recommendations by G7 and G20 (Component 2).	**S**
7. Communication and public awareness	A communications strategy was prepared and implemented throughout implementation. Need to translate key project outputs.	**S**
Overall Project Performance Rating (based on weighted ratings template)		**S**

1.17 Lessons learned

224. Each of the EAs provided their own lessons learned in their respective final reports and in the Experience and Results Notes. The following lessons based on the implementation of the plastics project were distilled by the study.

Lesson Learned #1:	Partnerships and coalitions with institutional strengths, credible platforms, supportive networks, and with evidence-based action agenda, and multi-stakeholder engagement are essential to steer the transformative steps necessary to move a linear economy towards circularity, to free the ocean of plastics.
Context/comment:	Given the holistic / systemic approach needed to address the marine plastics issues, no one agency on its own can implement such an approach. Engagement of appropriate partners to execute the four project components, each with its own multi-stakeholder platforms and networks, etc. was instrumental in the project's success. It is crucial that such partnerships continue after project close and are established for future similar projects.

Lesson Learned #2:	It is important that the project design is streamlined and not overly complex and is appropriate for its budget and duration and sufficiently flexible to accommodate unanticipated but necessary changes. Allocation of adequate time and financial resources for all project outputs, including for a synthesis phase where relevant, is also vital.
Context/comment:	The project results framework required several changes at the start of implementation. However, this did not jeopardize delivery which may be partly attributed to flexibility in the project design. On the other hand, implementation of a project of such complexity (many diverse outputs and multiple partners working independently, etc.) within two years is unrealistic and does not allow for unforeseen circumstances with inevitable no-cost extensions and budget revisions. The many diverse planned outputs, which were produced independently by multiple partners, were to be integrated to produce the Strategic Roadmap but there was no time or budget allocation for a synthesis phase within the original workplan and budget. This jeopardized the delivery of the Roadmap and contributed to the need for budget revisions and no-cost extensions of the project.

Lesson Learned #3:	Underestimation of the time required for project start-up following approval can result in lengthy delays with knock-on effects on implementation, especially for a project of short duration and a complex

	design and multiple executing partners. Adequate preparation and readiness for implementation requires considerable time and effort, which must be accommodated in the overall project workplan.
Context/comment:	The long delay between GEF CEO endorsement and establishment of the PCU resulted in an 8-month delay before the start of substantive activities, which is nearly half of the project planned duration. Once the PCU became functional, it had to quickly address several issues such as building partnerships, synchronization of EAs' workplans and revision of the results framework and budget.

Lesson Learned #4:	Engaging multiple executing agencies each working independently does not automatically constitute a true partnership especially where partners have divergent visions, organizational priorities, and stakeholder networks, and have never previously worked together. Building a partnership to achieve a common vision requires major effort, and having an individual with the required skills in building partnerships and who appears 'neutral' to lead the process is crucial.
Context/comment:	Some challenges were encountered in building a true partnership among the disparate EAs to execute the project components that were contractually independent of each other. EMF and OC had little prior experience with GEF projects or working with each other or with UNEP. Building trust and a true partnership required considerable effort at the start of the project. Under the leadership of the PCU and the project Coordinator in particular, these issues were gradually resolved and the partners were able to collaborate as a team towards a common vision, which was instrumental in the project's success.

Lesson Learned #5:	Official reports of Project Steering Committee meetings showing decisions taken with the underlying discussions and documentation are critical to ensure transparency and accountability and facilitate project monitoring and evaluation.
Context/comment:	The PSC's role was in effect taken over by an informal mechanism consisting of Component Leaders. Discussions at the three PSC meetings included monitoring the production of project outputs and how they morphed throughout component execution, reporting deadlines, vetting the production of communication materials, synthesis of outputs for the Roadmap (2nd and 3rd PSC meetings), etc. Official written PSC meeting reports particularly with records of key decisions, budget revisions, etc. and underlying discussions were not available except (partially) for the second meeting. Deliberations of some of the meetings are summarized in draft meeting minutes (which do not explicitly show

	the decisions) or recorded in personal notes and emails from the PCU to the executing partners (not generally available after project close). For some meetings, audio recordings are available but these are inadequate as official records. Minutes of some of the Component Leaders' meetings are available but these focus on technical discussions and production of project outputs, etc.

1.18 Recommendations

Recommendation #1: Project design	UNEP and GEF should reinforce the importance of good quality project design that is realistic, streamlined and flexible, with a robust theory of change analysis and clarity about the ultimate project goal(s) with adequate time and budget allocation from the start.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Some specific issues associated with the project design were: - Complex design with multiple partners working independently and many diverse outputs but no time or budget allocated initially for a synthesis phase to integrate project results. To accommodate this exercise, the PCU had to retrofit work plans or else the delivery of the roadmap would have been jeopardized if integration was left for the very end of the project when all outputs would have been completed but no project team available to integrate them and no process through which to vet and fund the roadmap. There was initial push back among components as this meant additional workload and time commitments. - The theory of change analysis of the project at design was inadequate. - Non-alignment or little relevance of results framework indicators with UNEP POW and GEF core indicators, which were required to be addressed in project reporting. Indicative expected results against the GEF indicators were not specified at project design. - Similar end-of-project targets and indicators for outcomes and outputs, making it challenging to determine the extent to which the outcomes were actually achieved. - Inconsistent language for outputs and outcomes, complicated by differing definitions used by UNEP and the GEF. - Limited focus on human rights, gender and diversity.
Priority Level:	Important
Type of Recommendation	UNEP-wide and GEF
Responsibility:	UNEP

Proposed implementation time-frame:	Future projects (as appropriate)

Recommendation #: 2 **Preparation and readiness, start-up delays**	UNEP and GEF should accelerate the project approval process and start up (inception) phase to ensure adequate time for preparation and readiness and minimize the delay in the start of substantive activities especially for projects of relatively short duration, complex design, and multiple executing partners.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Project start up is inherently fraught with various hurdles (administrative, institutional, etc.) especially with a complex project design and multiple executing partners requiring time and effort to build partnership. Addressing these require considerable time and effort before the project can get off the ground. Underestimation of the time and effort needed can have knock-on effects on implementation. For the GEF plastics project, the first disbursement of funds was made nearly 5 months after GEF CEO endorsement and the PCU was established 8 months after endorsement. This slow substantive start was significant for a project with an expected duration of two years, resulting in the need for no-cost extensions. This was compounded by external factors (labour unrest in France and COVID-19 pandemic) in the second year which resulted in the postponement (twice) of the final project meeting.
Priority Level:	Important
Type of Recommendation	UNEP-wide and GEF
Responsibility:	UNEP and GEF
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Future projects

Recommendation #: 3 **Monitoring and reporting**	UNEP and GEF should consider making the necessary modifications to the reporting templates to ensure clearer/ more detailed and transparent progress and financial reporting; avoid introducing new reporting templates during implementation; and from the start provide clear guidance to EAs on reporting.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	- Gaps and inconsistencies in content and terminology were evident in implementation progress reporting among executing partners. - End-of-project targets for outputs were not reported on (not required in the PIR and quarterly progress report templates). - Reporting on expenditures according to UNEP budget line rather than by planned output as laid out in the original costed workplan and budget made it impossible to attribute outputs and activities to GEF funds. This is further complicated in cases where the cost is partially covered by co-financing.

	- In 2019 UNEP introduced a new PIR template to the PCU, which was counterproductive. While some of the required indicators are relevant to the project, a discussion of them post-project conceptualization would have been counterproductive and added a significant amount of time to reporting.
Priority Level:	Important
Type of Recommendation	UNEP-wide and GEF
Responsibility:	UNEP
Proposed implementation time-frame:	1 year and future projects

Recommendation #: 4 Gender	UNEP and GEF should ensure that their future interventions to address marine plastics adequately incorporate human rights and gender dimensions including consideration of minority/vulnerable/disadvantaged groups.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Solutions to reduce plastic waste and address marine plastics pollution could potentially have negative effects on certain groups (such as women and minority/disadvantaged/vulnerable groups, e.g., where individuals may be involved as plastic recyclers and waste pickers). As such, considerations of these groups including equality and inclusion will be important in the development and implementation of solutions to address plastic waste. It is important that GEF and UNEP encourage explicit activities related to human rights and gender/ minority/disadvantaged/vulnerable groups in the development of marine plastics projects.
Priority Level:	Important
Type of Recommendation	UNEP-wide and GEF
Responsibility:	UNEP Marine & International Water Unit
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Future projects

Recommendation #: 5 Translation of reports	UNEP, GEF and executing partners should facilitate/support the translation of the Roadmap and other key project reports into appropriate languages to promote uptake by other stakeholders and amplify project impact. Consideration can be given, e.g., to translation of the Roadmap within a bigger GEF initiative; and tailoring of the Roadmap by marine litter/ plastics projects to their needs and have such version translated. The UNEP project team should pass on this recommendation effectively to the executing partners.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	In addition to the Roadmap, the project has generated a considerable volume of studies and reports, which constitute a valuable resource for use by stakeholders. However, no funds were available for translation of the key documents, which is necessary for wider uptake by diverse stakeholders.

Priority Level:	Important
Type of Recommendation	Project level and partners
Responsibility:	UNEP, GEF, EMF, OC, GRIDA
Proposed implementation time-frame:	1 year

ANNEX I. RESPONSE TO STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

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

Page Reference	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator(s) Response
Page 14 para 6- Executive Summary, and page 47 para 89	It might be best to qualify this as adjustments in time and resources to allocate for synthesis process towards a Road Map was done from inception. Specifically in year 1, Component Leaders Meeting were convened monthly, and a Synthesis workshop was set-up. On year 2, a second synthesis workshop, was convened. Thus, if a project design weakness was mitigated throughout project implementation, I would not consider it a project weakness; though such flaw in project design can still be highlighted. I tend to agree with Liana especially as it met the design criteria of UNEP at the time and had been cleared by PRC. Please see previous comment. Synthesis was achieved, but dissemination beyond the webinar was not possible past project completion. Please rephrase. (page 47 para 89)	This relates to the quality of the **original project design**, not steps taken to mitigate design weakness during implementation. Text in Executive Summary has been amended to indicate this. No change made on page 47 para 89 for the same reason. (Mitigation steps are discussed in the Section on Quality of Project Management and Supervision).
Page 14 para 9- Executive Summary	A shortcoming of budget back in the days which has since been addressed in new generations of GEF projects	Text amended: 'shortcomings' changed to 'areas that could be improved'. Footnote to this effect added to the corresponding statement in the report (Section on Financial reporting, page 63 para 141).
Page 15 para 11- Executive Summary	Isn't it a bit harsh - especially given para 6 above "Project design strengths include its flexibility; an adequate problem and situation analysis; a comprehensive results framework; appropriate governance and supervision arrangements; capitalizing on the work and expertise of partner agencies; and engagement of key stakeholders across the entire plastic value chain"… but also noting that we were under time pressure by GEF sec and that we had no PPG per se. This was a one step MSP.	Deleted and incorporated in paragraph 8 and 'inadequate' changed to 'slow'. 'Moderately unsatisfactory' rating for Preparation and readiness retained. Justification for this rating include (para 148-152): • The long delay between CEO approval and start of substantive activities. • The project inception meeting was held in February 2018, after the first disbursement and 8 months after project approval. • The workplan and budget lacked provision for a synthesis phase to produce a strategic roadmap, a key project product (para 186 - 187).

Page Reference	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator(s) Response
		• None of the EAs provided a procurement plan during or after the inception meeting (para 143). • Partner agreements were only signed between October-December 2017; not very timely given that they had been in communication 2 years prior to the project commencing. • PCU staffing mobilisation was not undertaken in a timely manner. • The capacity of partners had been generally confirmed, but their availability/willingness to coordinate on the synthesis of information for the roadmap had not been confirmed (para 186).
Page 54- Component 4 and para 115; and page 54 para 117. Knowledge sharing and project co-ordination	Please separate this into 2 as the Knowledge Sharing was executed by OC, and the Project Coordination by GRIDA.	Section heading: Original text retained for consistency with the title of the Component as per the ProDoc. Distinction between OC and GRIDA contribution to Component 4 was already included but text slightly amended for emphasis. Project coordination is discussed in the Section on Quality of Project Management and Supervision (as indicated in the paragraph). This section on availability of outputs focuses on the technical outputs (as indicated).
Page 54, para 115	This needs some clarification	Text amended accordingly. See also the preceding comment and response on the same issue.
Page 55, rating for Achievement of availability of outputs	It might be best to disaggregate the rating for Output 4.1.2 from that for Output 4.2.1, as these were executed by two different EAs.	No amendments made. The rating is an overall rating for outputs across all four project Components and all the EAs, which are not rated individually. In any case, the rating for each EA will be the same (highly satisfactory).
Page 62- Table 10	These were the two Synthesis Workshops (Oct 2018 and Jan 2019) convened to draft the Strategic Roadmap.	Clarification added.
Page 30- Table 3 Stakeholders	Suggest splitting producers and distributors, as they play very distinct roles in the plastics value chain. They also have disproportionate influence, so this distinction would be merited.	Distributors as a separate group removed from the table since they are not explicitly addressed in the ProDoc.

ANNEX II. KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

Project planning and reporting documents

1. Project document (One Step MSP Request Document)
2. Project Cooperation Agreements (GRIDA, EMF, OC)
3. Internal Cooperation Agreement (UNEP Economy Division)
4. Revised results framework
5. Project Implementation Review reports (2018, 2019, 2020)
6. Quarterly progress reports
7. Costed outline and budget (original and revised)
8. Quarterly expenditure statements
9. Annual co-finance reports
10. Audit reports (EMF, OC, GRIDA)
11. Cash advance requests (EMF & OC)
12. PSC meeting minutes
13. Component Leaders' meeting reports
14. Project final reports (Components and Project level)

Project outputs: Overall

1. Addressing marine plastics: A Roadmap to a Circular Economy
2. Webinar report- virtual launch of the Roadmap "Addressing Marine Plastics: A Roadmap to a Circular Economy". Project website: https://gefmarineplastics.org/webinar (with presentations given).

Project outputs: Component 1 (Ellen MacArthur Foundation)

1. New Plastics Economy. Workshop Debrief Dec 2018
2. Lodestar - A case study for plastics recycling
3. Summary of Policy Engagement
4. NPEC Innovation prize Accelerator programme - impact & learnings
5. Report: New Plastics Economy Global Commitment
6. Report: Global Commitment definitions
7. Report: A Vision of a Circular Economy for Plastics
8. Synthesis report of Evidence Base (plus Appendices with executive summaries of various reports and publications)
9. The New Plastics Economy Global Commitment: https://www.unep.org/new-plastics-economy-global-commitment
10. Global ecological, social and economic impacts of marine plastic. Marine Pollution Bulletin 142 (2019) 189–195. Beaumont et al.
11. Global commitment signatory pack- businesses
12. Global commitment signatory pack
13. Engaging Policymakers - Summary of events
14. Workshop debrief documents: New Plastics Economy Participants Workshops (May 2018, Dec 2018, May 2019)

Project outputs: Component 2 (Ocean Conservancy)

1. Investing to Reduce Plastic Pollution in South and Southeast Asia- A Summary of Circulate Capital's Handbook for Action
2. Sum of Our Parts. Coordinated Action to Solve Ocean Plastic
3. Filling the Gap: Opportunities to maximize efficacy of waste management systems in Labuan Bajo, Indonesia
4. Recommendations for Vietnam's National Action Plan on Marine Debris
5. Workshop Summary: A global estimate of all sources of plastic debris into the ocean
6. Informing Japan's G20 Chairmanship
7. Informing Canada's G7 Presidency- A workshop on global marine plastics solutions
8. Green Biz article (Will corporate action on ocean plastics make an impact? 6 ways to tell)
9. Trash Free Seas Alliance™ Membership Principles: An overview
10. The role of gender in waste management. Gender perspectives on waste in India, Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam
11. Engaging Civil Society Organizations: Summary of Circulate Capital Landscape Analysis Trip
12. Engaging Civil Society Organizations: Summary of Our Ocean Conference Youth Leadership Summit
13. Outcomes of APEC stakeholder meeting on improving data and coordination and developing new partnerships
14. Circulate Capital Request for proposals
15. Baseline marine debris assessments for Red River Delta, Vietnam; and St. Helena Island
16. Marine Debris Monitoring Toolkit

Project outputs: Component 3 (UNEP Economy Division)

1. Addressing marine plastics: A systemic approach - Stocktaking report
2. Mapping of global plastics value chain and plastics losses to the environment - With a particular focus on marine environment
3. Mapping of plastic leakage hotspots. Resources, Conservation and Recycling Vol. 151, Dec 2019
4. Report: Addressing marine plastics: A systemic approach - Recommendations for action
5. Global environmental losses of plastics across their value chains. Resources, Conservation and Recycling, Volume 151, December 2019. Ryberg et al.

Project outputs: Component 4 (GRID Arendal)

1. Draft communication and publication guidelines V1, March 2018
2. Multi-stakeholder consultation workshop 15-16 February 2018. Final workshop report
3. Draft minutes of the second synthesis meeting for a Strategic Roadmap on Addressing Marine Plastics 29-30 January 2019
4. Workshop Summary: A global estimate of all sources of plastic debris into the ocean
5. Workshop Summary: Ecosystem level effects of microplastics in the Experimental Lakes Area (ELA) of Canada
6. Addressing marine plastics: A Roadmap to a circular economy. GEF IWLEARN Portfolio Bulletin Issue 2020.05, 23 Dec 2020

7. International Waters Results Note (Addressing marine plastics: A systemic approach)
8. International Waters Experience Note (What is a systemic approach for addressing marine plastics and why we need to keep at it)
9. Project website https://gefmarineplastics.org/
10. GEF IWC9 Presentation 1. Circular economy principles for addressing marine plastics
11. GEF IWC9 Poster 1. Losses of plastics to the global environment in a currently linear economy
12. Video: https://news.iwlearn.net/circular-plastics-economy-from-source-to-sea

Reference documents

1. Terminal evaluation inception report (GEF marine plastics project)
2. UNEP Medium Term Strategy 2014-2017
3. UNEP Proposed biennial programme of work and budget for 2016–2017. Report of the Executive Director. UNEP/EA.1/7. April 2014
4. Resolution adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly on 15 March 2019, 4/6. Marine plastic litter and microplastics
5. The Global Commitment 2023 Progress Report. https://emf.thirdlight.com/file/24/K6LOnIrK6TiV5CaK63uPKX6taWr/The%20Global%20Commitment%202023%20Progress%20Report.pdf
6. Global Commitment Five Years In: Executive Summary
7. Plastic waste inputs from land into the ocean. Science Vol 347, Issue 6223, Jambeck et al. 2015
8. Ellen MacArthur Foundation, The New Plastics Economy: Rethinking the future of plastics & catalysing action (2017)
9. Ellen MacArthur Foundation website: https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/network/who-is-in-the-network
10. Ellen MacArthur Foundation's Plastics Pact Network: https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/the-plastics-pact-network
11. Circulate Capital website: https://www.circulatecapital.com/about-us/our-story
12. Urban Ocean: https://oceanconservancy.org/trash-free-seas/plastics-in-the-ocean/urban-ocean/
13. Letter of 1st June 2023 from GEF CEO to UNIDO, UNDP, UNEP and WWF-US. https://files.worldwildlife.org/wwfcmsprod/files/Publication/file/3jja4b0fcq_11181_Global_PFD_clearance_letter_PPG_Approval_letter_GEF_TF.pdf?_ga=2.54380584.1462716612.1709838366-1056981535.1709838366
14. ProDoc and PIF: Reduce marine plastics and plastic pollution in Latin American and Caribbean cities through a circular economy approach. GEF ID 10547
15. List of 'cousins projects'
16. GEF 7 and GEF 8 funding priorities
17. Environmental and Social Safeguards Checklists for Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Project level (Appendix to ProDoc)

ANNEX III. PEOPLE CONSULTED DURING THE EVALUATION

Organisation	Name	Position	Gender
UNEP	Liana McManus	Project Coordinator	F
UNEP	Isabelle Vanderbeck	Task Manager	F
GRID Arendal	Tiina Kurvits	Technical Advisor	F
UNEP (Ecosystems Division, Cartagena Convention Secretariat)	Christopher Corbin	Coordinator, Cartagena Convention Secretariat	M
UNEP Cartagena Convention Secretariat	Taylor Clayton	Regional Project Manager (LAC Cities plastic project)	F

ANNEX IV. ASSESSMENT OF PROJECT DESIGN QUALITY

(From terminal evaluation inception report and modified by this study)

A.	**Operating Context**		**YES/NO**	**Comments/Implications for the evaluation design** *(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)*	**Section Rating:** *(see footnote 2)*
1	Does the project document identify any unusually challenging operational factors that are likely to negatively affect project performance?	i)Ongoing/high likelihood of conflict?	Partial	These external factors were not discussed, which is reasonable given the project content, and are not an indicator of project design quality. This project was global in scope with some national level activities in Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam. The ESS checklists (Project level, Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam) recognize that political instability and social unrest are factors that can jeopardize project progress. Operational factors were not explicitly assessed at project design. The desk Study examined the nature of the external operating context.	5- Satisfactory
		ii)Ongoing/high likelihood of natural disaster?	(n/a)		
		iii)Ongoing/high likelihood of change in national government?	Yes		
B.	**Project Preparation**		**YES/NO**	**Comments/Implications for the evaluation design** *(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)*	**Section Rating:** *(see footnote 2)*
2	Does the project document entail clear and adequate problem and situation analyses?		Yes	ProDoc has an extensive discussion of marine plastics and their adverse economic, social, and (marine) environmental effects, as well as the need for circular economy solutions.	4 – Moderately satisfactory
3	Does the project document include a clear and adequate stakeholder analysis, including by gender/minority groupings or indigenous peoples?		Partial	ProDoc includes a description of major stakeholder categories and their respective roles in the project. The ProDoc as well as the ESS	

				checklists recognize the role of women and other vulnerable groups and the need to examine the implications for women and waste pickers in the context of waste management sector reform and make recommendations for ensuring that any such reforms support their livelihoods. No specific reference to minority groupings or indigenous people.	
4	*If yes to Q3:* Does the project document provide a description of stakeholder consultation/participation during project design process? *(If yes, were any key groups overlooked: government, private sector, civil society, gendered groups and those who will potentially be negatively affected)*			No	Consultation during the design phase was limited to GEF, the immediate project implementing agency (UNEP) and executing partners.
5	Does the project document identify concerns with respect to human rights, including in relation to sustainable development? (e.g. integrated approach to human/natural systems; gender perspectives, rights of indigenous people).			Yes	Cursory discussion of gender perspectives. Nothing explicit on rights of indigenous people. The ProDoc recognizes the potential social impacts of plastic pollution and that poor and vulnerable groups including women in many developing country contexts are disproportionally affected by the consequences of unsustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems. Output 2.1.1 includes an analysis of relevant gender issues in Asia Pacific economies. The ESS checklists for Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam and project level include questions relevant to human rights including of women/ other disadvantaged or vulnerable groups.
C	**Strategic Relevance**			**YES/NO**	**Comments/Implications for the evaluation design** *(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)*	**Section Rating:**
6	Is the project document clear in terms of its	i) UNEP MTS, PoW and Strategic Priorities (including		No	UNEP's relevant activities discussed but not explicitly its MTS, PoW or Strategic Priorities	5- Satisfactory

	alignment and relevance to:	Bali Strategic Plan and South-South Cooperation)			
		ii) GEF/Donor strategic priorities	Yes	GEF Focal Area Strategies and the Project's relevance to the GEF are discussed	
		iii) Regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities?	Yes	Regional and national actions in APEC region and three APEC countries (Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam) described.	
		iv. Complementarity with other interventions	Yes	Substantial listing of other activities in relation to marine plastics.	
D	**Intended Results and Causality**		**YES/NO**	**Comments/Implications for the evaluation design** *(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)*	**Section Rating:**
7	Are the causal pathways from project outputs (Availability of goods and services to intended beneficiaries) through outcomes (changes in stakeholder behaviour) towards impacts (long lasting, collective change of state) clearly and convincingly described in either the logframe or the TOC? *(NOTE if there is no TOC in the project design documents a reconstructed TOC at Evaluation Inception will be needed)*		Partial	The marine plastics problem and the justification for an integrated, systemic value chain approach are adequately presented. The causal pathways are clearly captured in the logframe but only as far as outcomes. The TOC consists of only a diagram showing outputs, outcomes, intermediate state and impact, without drivers and assumptions or further discussion.	3- Moderately unsatisfactory
8	Are impact drivers and assumptions clearly described for each key causal pathway?		No	Risks and assumptions are included in the results framework for the key causal pathways but no impact drivers are identified.	
9	Are the roles of key actors and stakeholders, including gendered/minority groups, clearly described for each key causal pathway?		Partial	The potential role of different stakeholder groups and how the project will engage them are described in general, not for each causal pathway. The role of gendered/minority groups is not described.	
10	Are the outcomes realistic with respect to the timeframe and scale of the intervention?		Yes	The outcomes are realistic and appropriate to achieve the project's main objective.	
E	**Logical Framework and Monitoring**		**YES/NO**	**Comments/Implications for the evaluation design**	**Section Rating:**

				(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)	
11	Does the logical framework …	i)Capture the key elements of the Theory of Change/ intervention logic for the project?	Yes	The framework elaborates on all the key elements of the ToC.	4- Moderately satisfactory
		ii)Have appropriate and 'SMART' results at output level?	Partial	The results indicators are appropriate and sufficiently 'SMART' but the output statements are not compliant with the UNEP definition for 'outputs'. Many focus on what is to be produced, for example: 1.1.4: First set of global plastics Protocol / Guidelines published on the redesign of materials, formats, use and after-use systems. Note that there are inconsistencies between the 'Project Results Framework' (Appendix 4 to the Prodoc), and the 'Key Deliverables' (Appendix 6). Some of the deliverables appear to be due prior to project commencement (October 2017) – the project builds on the work done by EMF and OC, which had continued in the interim period between project design and actual start.	
		iii)Have appropriate and 'SMART' results at outcome level?	Partial	The results indicators are appropriate and sufficiently 'SMART' but the outcome statements are not compliant with the UNEP definition for 'outcomes'. For example: Outcome 1.1 Towards a more informed and robust approach to a new plastics economy through a global alliance of producers, users and disposers of plastics; including advancing innovative solutions; and strengthening public-private partnership with the national and regional policy makers	

		iv)Reflect the project's scope of work and ambitions?	Yes	The results framework adequately reflects the project's scope of work and ambitions.	
12	Is there baseline information in relation to key performance indicators?		Partial	Baselines are included for some of the indicators but are mostly qualitative. Baselines for other indicators are to be determined at project start.	
13	Has the desired level of achievement (targets) been specified for indicators of outputs and outcomes?		Yes	Quantitative end-of-project targets are presented.	
14	Are the milestones in the monitoring plan appropriate and sufficient to track progress and foster management towards outputs and outcomes?		Yes	The results framework includes relevant indicators and end-of-project targets. Appendix 6 presents the key deliverables, benchmarks and timeframes.	
15	Have responsibilities for monitoring activities been made clear?		Yes	The main prodoc and Appendix 07 describe indicative M & E activities and responsibilities.	
16	Has a budget been allocated for monitoring project progress?		Yes	The indicative M & E plan includes a budget (GEF funds) for some activities.	
17	Is the workplan clear, adequate and realistic? *(e.g. Adequate time between capacity building and take up etc)*		Yes	Workplan (Appendix 05) presents the schedule for the outputs (but not activities) by quarter across the two years.	
F	**Governance and Supervision Arrangements**		**YES/NO**	**Comments/Implications for the evaluation design** *(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)*	**Section Rating:**
18	Is the project governance and supervision model comprehensive, clear and appropriate? *(Steering Committee, partner consultations etc.)*		Yes	The institutional arrangements are described and also presented schematically. Alignment of the EAs with the project components is described in the description of the project components, outputs, outcomes, and activities.	5- Satisfactory
19	Are roles and responsibilities within UNEP clearly defined? *(If there are no stated responsibilities for UNEP Regional Offices, note where Regional Offices should be consulted prior to, and during, the evaluation)*		Yes	The dual role of UNEP as IA and EA (including the role of the GPA and GPML) are clearly defined.	
G	**Partnerships**		**YES/NO**	**Comments/Implications for the evaluation design** *(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)*	**Section Rating:**

20	Have the capacities of partners been adequately assessed? *(CHECK if partner capacity was assessed during inception/mobilisation where partners were either not known or changed after project design approval)*	Partial	The capacities of the executing partners (except GRID Arendal) are adequately assessed and described.	4 – Moderately satisfactory
21	Are the roles and responsibilities of external partners properly specified and appropriate to their capacities?	Partial	Roles and responsibilities of the EAs (except GRID Arendal) are described with respect to the component for which they are responsible, and are appropriate.	
H	**Learning, Communication and Outreach**	**YES/NO**	**Comments/Implications for the evaluation design** *(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)*	**Section Rating:**
22	Does the project have a clear and adequate knowledge management approach?	Yes	The prodoc describes the project's knowledge management approach, which is implemented by Component 4. The PCU prepared a comprehensive communications and knowledge management strategy at the start of the project.	5- Satisfactory
23	Has the project identified appropriate methods for communication with key stakeholders, including gendered/minority groups, during the project life? *If yes, do the plans build on an analysis of existing communication channels and networks used by key stakeholders?*	Partial	General communications addressed; no specific focus on gendered/minority groups.	
24	Are plans in place for dissemination of results and lesson sharing at the end of the project? *If yes, do they build on an analysis of existing communication channels and networks?*	Yes	The project specifically provides for this in output 4.1.2: A communications strategy integrating novel waste management, finance and science findings that fosters awareness, encourages public adoption of key concepts, and secures high quality media coverage on solutions to ocean plastics.	
I	**Financial Planning / Budgeting**	**YES/NO**	**Comments/Implications for the evaluation design** *(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)*	**Section Rating:**
25	Are the budgets / financial planning adequate at design stage? *(coherence of the budget, do figures add up etc.)*	Yes	Budgets /financial planning are adequate (including high level of co-financing committed).	5- Satisfactory

26	Is the resource mobilization strategy reasonable/realistic? *(E.g. If the expectations are over-ambitious the delivery of the project outcomes may be undermined or if under-ambitious may lead to repeated no cost extensions)*	n/a		
J	**Efficiency**	**YES/NO**	**Comments/Implications for the evaluation design** *(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)*	**Section Rating:**
27	Has the project been appropriately designed/adapted in relation to the duration and/or levels of secured funding?	Yes		5- Satisfactory
28	Does the project design make use of / build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency?	Yes	High level of dependence on existing work and expertise, etc. of UNEP and executing partners.	
29	Does the project document refer to any value for money strategies (i.e. increasing economy, efficiency and/or cost-effectiveness)?	Partial	The prodoc briefly explains how cost-effectiveness is reflected in the project design (e.g., by building on the extensive baseline and cofinanced activities being implemented by UNEP, EMF and OC). Also implicit in role of UNEP and executing partners.	
30	Has the project been extended beyond its original end date? *(If yes, explore the reasons for delays and no-cost extensions during the evaluation)*	Yes	Two no-cost extensions were granted (due to late start and COVID-19)	
K	**Risk identification and Social Safeguards**	**YES/NO**	**Comments/Implications for the evaluation design** *(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)*	**Section Rating:**
31	Are risks appropriately identified in both the TOC/logic framework and the risk table? *(If no, include key assumptions in reconstructed TOC at Evaluation Inception)*	Partial	The brief risk assessment in the Prodoc focusses on issues around the Roadmap/policies (such as lack of engagement or negative perceptions of the	4- Moderately satisfactory

			project content). Some assumptions and additional risks included in Project Results Framework.	
32	Are potentially negative environmental, economic and social impacts of the project identified and is the mitigation strategy adequate*? (consider unintended impacts)*	Yes	Addressed in ESS checklists (project level, Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam).	
33	Does the project have adequate mechanisms to reduce its negative environmental foot-print? *(including in relation to project management and work implemented by UNEP partners)*	Yes	Addressed in ESS checklists (project level, Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam). Project is largely built on strengthening stakeholder networks and generating knowledge, with limited on-the-ground activity (in SE Asia).	
L	**Sustainability / Replication and Catalytic Effects**	**YES/NO**	**Comments/Implications for the evaluation design** *(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)*	**Section Rating:**
34	Did the design address any/all of the following: socio-political, financial, institutional and environmental sustainability issues?	Partial	The prodoc includes a brief general discussion of sustainability.	4 – Moderately satisfactory
35	Was there a credible sustainability strategy and/or appropriate exit strategy at design stage?	Partial	No explicit strategy but follow up expected from external actors.	
36	Does the project design present strategies to promote/support scaling up, replication and/or catalytic action? *(if yes, capture this feature in the reconstructed TOC at Evaluation Inception)*	Yes	Expected to catalyse increase in flow of resources to address marine plastics / circular economy.	
M	**Identified Project Design Weaknesses/Gaps**	**YES/NO**	**Comments/Implications for the evaluation design** *(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)*	**Section Rating:**
37	Were recommendations made by the PRC adopted in the final project design? If no, what were the critical issues raised by PRC that were not addressed.	Yes	Multiple suggested changes – incorporated into ProDoc text (GEF Secretariat review sheet)	5 – Satisfactory
38	Were there any critical issues not flagged by PRC? (If yes, what were they?)			**No rating applicable.**
N	**Gender Marker Score**	**SCORE**	**Comments**	**No rating applicable.**

39	What is the Gender Marker Score applied by UNEP during project approval? *(This applies for projects approved from 2017 onwards)*		TE not aware what gender marker score was applied by UNEP	

ANNEX V. ACHIEVEMENT OF OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS

PLANNED OUTCOMES/OUTPUTS	PROJECT END TARGETS (*target achieved; ** target exceeded)	RESULTS/OUTCOMES (compiled by desk Study based on Project final synthesis report, PIRs, EAs' final reports, and verified from review of reports and publications produced by the Project, and partners' websites)	DESK STUDY ASSESSMENT OF ACHIEVEMENT
Outcome 1.1 Towards a more informed and robust approach to a new plastics economy through a global alliance of producers, users and disposers of plastics; including advancing innovative solutions; and strengthening public-private partnerships with the national and regional policy makers. Reconstructed ToC: Demonstrated progress towards a more informed and robust new plastics economy through a global alliance of producers, users and disposers of plastics, including partnerships with policy makers.	• Increase of formal participants of alliance to 40 (from different parts of the plastics production/use/disposal cycle); key stakeholders attend 2 alliance workshops per year. • Two demonstration projects launched, operational and delivering recommendations to inform GEF. • At least 5 meetings per year to inform policymakers and resulting summary reports of communications /policy engagement effort. • Innovative solutions adopted by project in process of being up-scaled and learnings/recommendations provided to the GEF. • Declaration (commitments) based on clear definitions (Global Plastics Commitment) driving significant progress to redesign plastics system. • Guidelines /Global Plastics Protocol used to redesign materials and help to reduce marine plastic issues.	All EoP targets achieved. See achievement of Outputs and the respective EoP targets below.	Outcome achieved based on EoP targets

Output 1.1.1: An operational alliance from across the entire value chain (including major plastic producing and plastic using corporations as well as governments, cities, collection, sorting and reprocessing companies) and advancing development and uptake of recommendations.	• 40 key stakeholders engaged** • 80 participants at workshops, demonstration projects etc.** • 4 bi-annual workshops to define, agree and advance overall the new plastic economy concept (partial). • One demonstration project launched in year 1 based on recommendations from Alliance workshops and the other launched in year 2 adopting lessons from the first demonstration project.** • 2 summaries of achievements reports (published annually) as input to the GEF.**	• Alliance participants increased to 48 and engagement was expanded to 400+ organizations through the New Global Plastics Commitment. • Three NPEC participant workshops were held in May 2018, Dec 2018 and May 2019, with ~ 80-100 participants; Participant workshop debrief documents have been provided to the PCU. 7 pioneer (demonstration) projects were launched: - #Lodestar- A case for Plastics Recycling combining mechanical and chemical recycling; project brief available - #Proof- plastic-based flexible packaging solution for non-food end use and food end-use applications - #Holy Grail- investigate the role of tracers and markers in a circular economy for plastics - #Barrier– guidelines for recycling-ready plastic-based flexible barrier packaging - CPO- high quality recycling of polyolefins - 42- scalable solution for mixed waste plastic as feedstock for new plastics via chemical recycling (pyrolysis) - SEA- publicly available assessment framework for mapping out plastic material flows within a geographical region 4 pioneer projects# have concluded with outcome reports published in 2019 on EMF website and shared with PCU.	Output achieved. 4 out of 5 targets exceeded.**
Output 1.1.2: Summaries presenting policy/public-private engagement efforts, lessons and recommendations for policy makers and other stakeholders	• 5 meetings per year with EU (and/or other policy bodies).** • 2 annual summaries of communications /policy engagement effort.**	More than 12 meetings with policy makers have taken place and reports have been completed that summarize the communications/engagement efforts. Another report was produced summarizing the multiple policy/public-private engagement efforts with lessons and recommendations for policy makers and other stakeholders that have been	Output achieved. All targets exceeded.

		undertaken as part of the project. The lessons learned from these efforts have been fed into the final strategic roadmap.	
Output 1.1.3: Large scale innovations mobilised through competitive actions to promote a generation of new approaches to address plastics issues catalytically building on existing approaches	Two innovative approaches (for example material redesign and business model) to stimulate new approaches and documented learning.**	A USD2 million innovation prize was launched, and 11 winners awarded. Winners completed a 12-month accelerator programme in 2018 to up-scale their innovations.	Output achieved. Target exceeded.
Output 1.1.4: Significant commitment by private and public sector to take action towards a circular economy for plastics at global scale, based on a common vision and direction and underpinned by clear definitions laid out in a Global Plastics Protocol.	Global Plastics Commitment/ Common Definitions published.*	• The Global Commitment, including clear definitions and targets for industry, was launched in Oct 2018 and has over 450 signatories, including 150 business representing over 20% of global plastics packaging. • The first report laying out the targets/plans of the Global Commitment signatories was launched in 2019. The first progress report was published in October 2019 (the most recent in 2023).	Output fully achieved. The planned output was expanded from a Global Plastics Protocol to a Global Plastics Commitment, with the Protocol in the form of guidelines as part of the Commitment. Target exceeded
Output 1.1.5: An economic and scientific evidence base to inform the GEF	• Update report prepared for World Economic Forum 2017.* • A draft synthesis report available by June 2017 and the final version by the end of the project as to assist the GEF.* • Documented key enablers and methodologies to enact systemic change in the global plastics economy.*	• Evidence base was created and a synthesis report of the evidence base was produced. Overview of reach and impact of these evidence pieces was prepared. • Research paper with Portsmouth Marine Laboratory on the social costs of marine plastics completed and published in March 2019 (Marine Pollution Bulletin). Note: GEF Plastics Project is not mentioned or acknowledged in this publication. • Report for WEF 2016 was updated and presented at WEF 2017.	Output achieved.
Outcome 2.1: APEC region countries (Indonesia, Philippines, and Vietnam) are better positioned to secure financing and make policy commitments to address marine plastic issues and waste management.	• At least 3 countries adopt revised/new policies that will reduce marine plastic pollution. • Analyses to highlight waste management policy and financing opportunities and challenges.	All EoP targets for this outcome achieved. See achievement of outputs and the respective EoP targets below.	Outcome achieved based on EoP targets. Note: Regarding adoption of policies, based on Output 2.1.3 as well as information in the PIRs and reports produced, the

	• Baseline assessments completed for two locations. • Agreement at regional fora to adopt at least 2 new policies on marine plastic pollution reduction resulting from briefing papers. • At least 1 project achieves financing, with additional projects in the pipeline for financing. • Joint investment fund designed to fund bottom-up solutions. • Volunteer monitoring protocols developed and deployed.		project team refers to recommendations instead of policies (this is reasonable since it is not realistic to expect policies to be adopted in a short time of less than 2 years).
Output 2.1.1: Analyses to highlight waste management policy and financing opportunities, barriers to implementation and relevant gender issues in key Asia Pacific economies, international fora such as APEC and GEF 7, corporate and government programs, and/or actions on the ground.	• 2-4 white papers finalised (finance, fund design, gender, etc.).* • Baseline findings presented at regional meetings.* • Joint Investment Fund design options launched.*	• The Role of Gender in Waste Management published and media event hosted. • Ocean Conservancy convened a broad range of NGOs and private sector companies in Washington, D.C., on September 21, 2018 for a meeting ("Sum of Our Parts"). The report "The Sum of Our Parts: Coordinated Action to Solve Ocean Plastic" was published. • Circulate Capital's 'Handbook for Action' was published and publicized, and a summary of the handbook 'Investing to Reduce Plastic Pollution in South and Southeast Asia' was prepared. • Engagement in APEC meetings, and a compilation of outcomes of APEC Stakeholder Meetings on Improving Data and Coordination and Developing New Partnerships. • OC and the Trash Free Seas Alliance™ partnered with USAID and the US Department of State to host a 2-day stakeholder meeting, focused on improving data and coordination and developing new partnerships for reducing marine debris in the APEC region. The meeting was held on	Output achieved.

		the margins of the 'Our Ocean Conference' held in November 2018 in Indonesia. Among the approximately 80 participants were representatives from government, academia, NGOs, multilateral development banks, impact investors, consumer goods companies, treatment technology providers and others.	
Output 2.1.2: Development of a documented baseline on marine plastics and waste management conditions at selected sites in the target region or other geographies with comparable site characteristics	Baseline identified and assessments completed for at least 2 priority sites (providing contribution to outcome 3.1).*	Baseline marine debris assessments performed for: - Red River delta, Xuan Thuy National Park, Nam Dinh, Vietnam. - St. Helena Island, a remote island in the South Atlantic Ocean.	Output achieved.
Output 2.1.3: A series of forum, country and region-specific recommendations (for example, APEC, G7, Indonesia, COBSEA) developed to address marine plastic and waste management challenges, to inform donors and/or actions on the ground.	2 country specific and 2 regionally accepted recommendations provided and accepted by countries to improve plastic waste management.**	Recommendations to reduce marine debris produced: • At global scale: - G7 Group (Canada G7 presidency) - G20 (Japan Chairmanship) • At regional/country scale: - APEC recommendations. - Vietnam's national action plan for marine debris. - Filling the gap: opportunities to maximize efficacy of waste management systems in Labuan Bajo, Indonesia.	Output achieved. EoP target exceeded (5 sets of recommendations instead of 4).
Output 2.1.4: Documented recommendations on how to engage plastics makers, consumer product companies, and/or retailers on reducing marine plastics through corporate support for waste management, increased goals for recycling and use of recycled content, etc.	• Article published with recommendations for private sector engagement.* • 75% of companies engaged actively considering mechanisms to reduce marine plastics (% not reported by project)	• Green Biz article published (Will Corporate Action on Ocean Plastics Make an Impact? 6 Ways to Tell) and Summary and Reporting Guidelines for Trash Free Seas Alliance™ Impact and Commitments completed. • OC has engaged with many companies (e.g., through its Trash Free Seas Alliance™ and Closed Loop Partners) including with the Coca-Cola Company and plastic producers, consumer products companies, and retailers in Asia Pacific. Many of these are actively engaged in or considering	Output achieved. The EoP target on % of companies actively considering mechanisms to reduce marine plastics was not explicitly reported by the project. However, the desk study considers that this does not affect the

		mechanisms to reduce marine plastics (number not reported by the project). • Membership in Trash Free Seas Alliance™ at least 36. • Published 'Trash Free Seas Alliance™ Membership Principles: An Overview' (documents the impact and commitments of corporate Alliance members in reducing ocean plastic).	achievement or quality of the output.
Output 2.1.5: Locally appropriate marine plastic and waste management solutions engaging local civil society stakeholders promoting a bottom-up approach.	• At least 1 locally appropriate solution approved for financing.** • 30 civil society groups have had contact with the project.**	• Circulate Capital, an investment management firm dedicated to incubating and financing companies and infrastructure that prevent ocean plastic in South and Southeast Asia, was launched by OC and partners in July 2018. Its Circulate Capital Ocean Fund (CCOF) reached US$ 106 M as of December 2019. CCOF will provide financing to waste management, recycling and circular economy start-ups in the region, from where 60% of global ocean plastics originate. • Circulate Capital chose India and Indonesia as the first countries for investment and subsequently released a Request for Proposal (RFP) in 2018 to solicit applications for financing waste management, recycling and circular economy projects in Asia Pacific. • Circulate Capital received funding from the U.S. Department of State for a new initiative in Vietnam (blended financial partnership). • Two documents were published that reflect engagement of Civil Society Organizations in the region: 1. Engaging Civil Society Organizations: Summary of Circulate Capital Landscape Analysis Trip – shows that exchanges were held with 128 entities plus 7 consultants in south and SE Asia. 2. Summary of Our Ocean Conference Youth Leadership Summit. The 3rd Our Ocean Youth Leadership Summit took place on October 29-30, 2018 in Indonesia. Through funding from the GEF, OC sponsored travel for 21 young	Output achieved. Both EoP targets exceeded. Over 200 proposals were received in response to the Circulate Capital RFP (not reported in PIR or progress report). In 2020 the first investments in recycling supply chains (Indonesia and India) were made (Source: Circulate Capital website: https://www.circulatecapital.com/about-us/our-story/).

		professionals and academics working in the field of marine pollution from Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam.	
Output 2.1.6: Publications identifying effective volunteer monitoring protocols for measuring marine debris, development and deployment of a monitoring framework to CSOs in APEC region and comparable geographies.	• Report published on volunteer monitoring, monitoring frameworks, data handling, training programmes for civil society, etc.* • Co-finance activities with NOAA and CSIRO guide monitoring protocols to be deployed.* • Monitoring toolkit and training materials developed.*	• Marine Debris Monitoring Toolkit (which includes multiple protocols/frameworks to address different purposes and approaches to data collection) published and shared with CSOs. • From 2015 to 2017, OC, NOAA and CSIRO worked together to model a national picture of marine debris in the US. CSIRO's survey methodology has been used to complete national surveys in Australia and the US.	Output achieved.
Outcome 3.1: Improved understanding of strategic intervention points ("hotspots") related to marine plastics through existing and new knowledge and the integration of all project outputs.	• A summary report to increase awareness and knowledge of a range of stakeholders in addressing technical options, financing, knowledge gaps, hotspots, etc. • Marine debris data baselines established in at least 3 APEC geographies. • Science-policy guidance documents to address marine plastic issues. • One recommendation paper for action on marine plastics.	All EoP targets for this outcome achieved. See achievement of outputs and the respective EoP targets below.	Outcome achieved
Output 3.1.1: Stocktaking analysis on existing actors, initiatives, policy frameworks associated with key sources and sectors responsible for macro and micro marine plastic pollution including the identification of strategic intervention points ("hotspots") and specific knowledge	• 1 hotspot analysis study identifying key hotspots for strategic intervention.* • One desktop study identifying all of the following*: (1) International and national legal frameworks with circular economy and life-cycle approaches focusing	• The 1st multi-stakeholder consultation workshop was held in February 2018 and workshop report produced. A prioritization of key intervention (or leverage) points along the value chain was conducted during the workshop, which also identified current gaps in knowledge, barriers, enabling frameworks and opportunities for action.	Output achieved.

gaps as well as recommendations on a full life-cycle approach.	on value chains and integrating regional and international initiatives (2) Current international governance frameworks on marine plastics (3) Legal and policy approaches toward responsible production, waste management, use of plastics • One desktop study/report/recommendations including gaps, barriers, opportunities and recommendations for actions to address marine plastics.* • Strategic mapping study of the governance, policy frameworks, initiatives and actors on problematic polymers products on the issue of marine plastic.* • Stakeholders attend workshop.*	• At the 2nd workshop held in January 2019, prioritization of actions for specific focus areas and sectors was further conducted and consultations held on the identified barriers and opportunities. • These results are included in the final report on Recommendations for action. Titles of reports and publications: 1. Addressing marine plastics: A systemic approach - Stocktaking report (Sept 2018). 2. Mapping of global plastics value chain and plastics losses to the environment -With a particular focus on marine environment. 3. Addressing marine plastics: A systemic approach - Recommendations for action. 4. Addressing marine plastics: A Roadmap to a Circular Economy 5. Report of multi-stakeholder consultation workshop on a systemic approach to marine plastics, 15-16 February 2018. 6. Report of the second multi-stakeholder consultation workshop on a systemic approach to marine plastics, 31 January-1 February 2019. 7. Ryberg, M. et al. Global environmental losses of plastics across their value chains. Resources, Conservation and Recycling, Vol. 151, December 2019, 1 04459. 8. Journal publication of Mapping of plastic leakage hotspots in Resources, Conservation and Recycling (Volume 151, December 2019) in addition to the report.	
Outcome 3.2: Integrated strategic guidance provided on the reduction and sound management of marine plastics into project objective and outcomes in Components 1-3	Strategic guidance to the GEF on the reduction and sound management of marine plastics*	Strategic guidance developed for the GEF and presented in the roadmap 'Addressing Marine Plastics - A Roadmap to a Circular Economy' and the report 'Addressing marine plastics: A systemic approach- Recommendations for action'.	Outcome achieved.

Output 3.2.1: Position paper / report to GEF on findings from outputs 3.1.1. and preliminary findings from C1 and C2. (In the revised results framework, this is merged with the original output 3.2.3 on strategic framework).	1 final position paper by 3Q 2019.*	• The report 'Addressing marine plastics: A systemic approach- Recommendations for action' was prepared. • The strategic framework 'Addressing Marine Plastics - A Roadmap to a Circular Economy' has been completed, based on inputs from all Components, and launched in November 2020.	Output achieved. The Roadmap is the ultimate Project output, which is based on other outputs.
Output 3.2.2: Report of Technical Consultation Meeting.	At least 1 or more consultation meeting (possible back to back with partner events).*	Two multi-stakeholder consultation workshops were held by UNEP on 15-16 February 2018 and 31 January-1 February 2019 (see Output 3.1.1 above). The workshop reports were completed and published on the project website https://gefmarineplastics.org/publications	Output achieved
Outcome 4.1: Up-scaled evidence base resulting in effective prioritization of solutions and interventions for marine debris and waste management for GEF	• At least 10 beneficial lessons and experiences prepared as GEF "Experience Notes." • Two dialogue workshops completed. • At least 500 publications and media stories per year globally and 125 regionally.	EoP targets achieved. See achievement of Outputs and the respective EoP targets below.	Outcome achieved.
Output 4.1.1: Dialogue for leading researchers on emerging marine plastics science to address knowledge gaps in the areas of sources, distribution, fates and impacts of plastics in the ocean	• Two workshops completed.* • At least 50 researchers/ stakeholders attend meetings. (partially achieved) • Report on the key findings published and provided as input for GEF.*	Two dialogue workshops were convened and summaries prepared: - Workshop Summary: A global estimate of all sources of plastic debris into the ocean. (5 participants) - Workshop Summary: Ecosystem level effects of microplastics in the Experimental Lakes Area (ELA) of Canada. (8 participants)	Output achieved. Total number of meeting participants 13 (less than EoP target of 50, but desk study considers that this does not affect the output or its quality.
Output 4.1.2: A communications strategy integrating novel waste management, finance and science findings that fosters awareness, encourages public adoption of key concepts, and	At least 500 publications and media stories per year globally and 125 regionally.**	11,000 publications and media stories globally and more than 250 publications and media stories regionally (Project final report)	EoP target exceeded (Study unable to independently verify the number of stories).

secures high-quality media coverage on solutions to ocean plastics			
Outcome 4.2. Successful delivery of the project objective and outcomes in Components 1, 2 and 3.	Successful completion of project with achievement of Outcomes from Components 1-3	Project was successfully completed with all outcomes achieved. See achievement of Output and EoP targets below.	Achieved – to the extent this was under the control of the EA (GRIDA)
Output 4.2.1: Effective coordination of project activities, monitoring and reporting to UNEP and GEF.	• PIR delivered to UNEP in July 2018 and July 2019.* • All project components follow agreed M&E.* • PSC meetings completed and reported as planned.* • Project website completed and linked to partner websites.* • 1 Results note developed.* • Publication of 2 news articles in IWLearn Newsletter. (partially achieved) • Participation in GEF IW activities (biennial conference, CSO session, I Learn, video production).*	• PIR delivered to UNEP in July 2018 and July 2019. • All project components follow agreed M&E. • PSC meetings (i.e. Component Leaders Meetings) completed and reported as planned. • Project website completed and linked to partner websites. • An Experience Note and a Results Note with lessons were prepared. • PCU assisted Component 3 in the facilitating the development of the strategic roadmap by convening 2 synthesis workshops to coincide with face-to-face PSC meetings in Oct 2018 and Jan 2019; and Project Coordinator is co-editor of the Roadmap. • 1 article was published as part of GEF IWLEARN Portfolio Bulletin Issue 2020.05, 23 Dec 2020 (https://news.iwlearn.net/addressing-marine-plastics-a-roadmap-to-a-circular-economy?source=share-iwlearn). • Participation in GEF IW activities (biennial conference with delivery of Project pecha kucha presentation and panel member talk on Circular Economy, CSO session, IWLearn, video production). • A Final Project Meeting was originally planned for Dec 10-11, 2019, but social unrest in France resulted in cancelation of the meeting. The subsequent COVID-19 pandemic precluded rescheduling a face-to-face meeting. The initial version of the Strategic Roadmap was distributed to prospective participants by email and via the project website. A virtual closing event was held on 18 November 2020. A recording of	Output achieved. Only one article was published in IWLEARN Newsletter .

		the event, Addressing Marine Plastics: A Roadmap to a Circular Economy, can be found here: https://gefmarineplastics.org/webinar	

ANNEX VI. EVALUATION TERMS OF REFERENCE

Job Opening number: 23-United Nations Environment Programme-220343-Consultant

Job Title: Consultant for Desk-Based Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project "Addressing Marine Plastics - A Systematic Approach" GEF Id no 9681

General Expertise: Environmental Affairs

Category: Evaluation

Department/ Office: United Nations Environment Programme

Organizational Unit: UNEP EOU

Purpose

The Desk-Based Evaluation will be in-depth. Both quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods will be used as appropriate to determine project achievements against the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts. It is recommended that the consultant maintains some communication with the project manager to increase their ownership of the evaluation findings.

Duties and Responsibilities

Org. Setting

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the United Nations systems designated entity for addressing environmental issues at the global and regional level. Its mandate is to coordinate the development of environmental policy consensus by keeping the global environment under review and bringing emerging issues to the attention of governments and the international community for action. This consultancy is located at Headquarters in the Evaluation Office which reports directly to the Executive Director. The consultant reports to the Evaluation Officer (Karen Villafana) managing the project and the Director (Michael Spilsbury) of the Evaluation Office (EO).

The project

The Terminal Evaluation is undertaken at operational completion of the project 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 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, Ellen MacArthur Foundation, Ocean Conservancy and GRID Arendal. Therefore, the Evaluation will identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation, especially where a second phase of the project is being considered. Recommendations relevant to the whole house may also be identified during the evaluation process.

The Evaluation

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:

Data collection and analysis phase of the Evaluation, including:

• Reviewing and analyzing project documents;
- Regulary report back to the Evaluation Manager on progress and inform of any possible problems or issues encountered and;
• keep the project/Task 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:
• communicate in a timely manner with the Evaluation Manager on any issues requiring its attention and intervention.

Ultimate result of service

The consultant will submit a draft main evaluation report and a final main evaluation report.

Travel Details
N/A

Output/Work Assignments

The Evaluation Consultant will prepare and will be paid US $15,000:

Draft Evaluation Report - 50% - US $7,500
Final Evaluation Report - 50% - US $7,500

The duration of the contract will be for 5 months starting 1 December 2023 to 30 April 2024

Contract Duration

Overall Contract Duration: 5 months

Estimated amount of actual time to worked (days, weeks, months): Regular Working Hours

(if applicable):

Total Remuneration: US $15,000

Payment Terms: Upon Deliverables

Qualification Requirements/Evaluation Criteria

Education:
A university degree in environmental sciences, international development or other relevant political or social sciences area is required. An advanced degree in the same areas is desirable.

Language:
English and French are the working languages of the United Nations Secretariat. For this consultancy, fluency in oral and written English is a requirement.

JFQ/JSQ:
A minimum of 4 years of experience working in activities related to the mitigation of plastic pollution (ideally marine plastic pollution) is required.

A good broad understanding of the Circular Economy is desired.

Technical / evaluation experience is required, preferably including evaluating large, regional or global programmes and using a Theory of Change approach

ANNEX VII. BRIEF CV OF THE EVALUATOR

Name	Sherry Heileman
Profession	Independent International Consultant
Nationality	Trinidad & Tobago/France
Country experience	• Europe: France, Greece, Croatia, Italy, Montenegro • Africa: Kenya, Ghana, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Burkina Faso, Benin, Cameroon, The Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Nigeria, Senegal, Seychelles (lived in Equatorial Guinea and Comoros), • Americas: Trinidad & Tobago, Mexico, Panama, Colombia, Jamaica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Wider Caribbean (regional projects) • Asia: Thailand, Sri Lanka, India, Myanmar, The Philippines, Bangladesh
Education	• PhD degree, Marine Biology and Fisheries (Rosenstiel School of Marine, Atmospheric and Earth Science, Univ. of Miami, Florida) • MPhil. degree, Zoology/Fisheries Biology (Univ. of the West Indies, Trinidad & Tobago) • BSc degree, Natural Science (Univ. of the West Indies, Trinidad & Tobago)

Short biography

Ms Sherry Heileman is an independent international consultant since 2003. She has previously worked with UNEP (Nairobi) as well as nationally, regionally (Wider Caribbean), and globally. As a consultant she has worked extensively in conducting project evaluations particularly of GEF International Waters Projects around the world. She has significant experience in project design and project coordination as well as in conducting marine environmental assessments (regional and global) including land-based marine pollution (Wider Caribbean). Her academic qualifications include a PhD degree in Marine Biology and Fisheries from the University of Miami Rosenstiel School of Marine, Atmospheric and Earth Science. She is from Trinidad and Tobago and is currently based in Panama.

Key specialties and capabilities include:

- Project evaluations (mid-term and terminal)
- Project design/project coordination
- Marine environmental assessments & reporting
- Assessment and management of large marine ecosystems (LME) and Small Island Developing States
- Ecosystem approach to fisheries, marine/fisheries ecology
- Indicators development and monitoring (socio-economic, environmental indicators)
- Writing & editing, analytical skills, communication
- Languages: English (native), Spanish, French

Selected assignments and experiences

- Experience at national, regional, and global levels
- Conducted several project evaluations with UNEP and FAO, and helped to design projects (mainly GEF projects); conducted transboundary diagnostic analyses and contributed to development of strategic action programmes (Caribbean and Benguela Current LMEs)
- Was lead or co-lead for landmark global and regional projects and publications e.g.: global GEF/UNEP/IOC-UNESCO Transboundary Waters Assessment Project (LME component); Co-lead for the development of a Regional Nutrient Pollution Reduction Strategy and Action Plan for the Wider Caribbean Region (adopted by the Cartagena Convention Conference of Parties in July 2021); Assessment of the State of the Cartagena Convention Area with respect to land-based sources of pollution (UNEP/ Caribbean Environment Programme).

ANNEX VIII. GEF PORTAL INPUTS

Question: What was the performance at the project's completion against Core Indicator Targets? (For projects approved prior to GEF-7[53], these indicators will be identified retrospectively and comments on performance provided[54]).

Response: (Might be drawn from Monitoring and Reporting section)

GEF Core Indicators	Indicative expected Results
Core Indicator 4.1. Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity (e.g. trash-free, improved waste management)	NA – project helped to set enabling conditions with upstream approaches such as the Global Plastic Declaration, National Plastic Pacts, and national landscape analysis.
Core Indicator 5.2. Number of large marine ecosystems with reduced pollution and hypoxia	NA – project helped to set enabling conditions through expanding knowledge base and tools such as plastics leakage hotspots mapping, voluntary marine debris monitoring tools.
Core Indicator 5.3. Amount of marine litter avoided	NA – project helped to set enabling conditions; Preliminary modelled estimates of leakages of both micro- and macro-plastics by geography provide initial estimates of the amount of litter to be avoided.
Core Indicator 9.1. Solid and liquid POPs removed or disposed (POPs type)	NA – project helped to set enabling conditions through expanding the knowledge base on marine debris science.
Core Indicator 9.4. Number of countries with legislation and policy implemented to control chemicals and waste	NA – project helped to set enabling conditions in Indonesia, Vietnam, Philippines and India; and through the GPML analyses of legal and policy capacities for marine debris management.
Core Indicator 11. Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment	Surabaya (Indonesia) Women's local waste collection, sorting and recycling communities were recipients of Circulate Capital investment funds. A study on the role of gender in waste management in Asia provides important preliminary findings.

The GEF IW Tracking Tool was not used in progress reporting since the core indicators were not applicable to the project's results framework (except for Core Indicator 11- Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment). Monitoring data collected was not disaggregated by gender/vulnerable/marginalized groups (see the Methodology and Stakeholders Sections). However, for the Core indicator 11, project activities include a gender dimension (Surabaya Women's local waste collection, sorting and recycling communities were recipient of Circulate Capital investment funds. A study on the role of gender in waste management in Asia provides important preliminary findings that should be integrated in smart waste management solutions).

Paragraph 79, Table 8, paragrah 171 (third bullet), and paragraph 174.

Question: What were the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program as evolved from the time of the MTR? *(This should be based on the description included in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan or equivalent documentation submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval)*

Response: (Might be drawn from Factors Affecting Performance section)

Stakeholder participation and cooperation were central to the project design. The three technical project Components engaged extensively with stakeholders across the plastics value chain, a requisite for delivering

[53] The GEF is currently operating under the seventh replenishment period of the GEF Trust Fund covering the period July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2022. The GEF Portal Reporting Guide for FY20 Reporting Process indicates that GEF-6 projects that have yet to map existing indicators to GEF-7 Core Indicators need to do so at MTR stage or (if already there) at the time of the TE. .(i.e. not GEF projects approved before GEF-6)

[54] This is not applicable for Enabling Activities

systemic solutions for marine plastics. UNEP was mainly responsible for engaging governments in the Global Commitment while EMF mobilized businesses including global brands, and OC engaged with CSOs, local leaders, and APEC governments. Component 1 with its Global Plastics Commitment (Declaration); Component 2 with APEC, G7 and Joint Investment Venture; Component 3 with GPA/GPML networks and technical consultation workshops, are testaments of substantial and effective stakeholder engagement in forging inclusive and systemic solutions and actions to address marine plastics. Paragraph 197
Question: What were the completed gender-responsive measures and, if applicable, actual gender result areas? *(This should be based on the documentation at CEO Endorsement/Approval, including gender-sensitive indicators contained in the project results framework or gender action plan or equivalent)*
Response: (Might be drawn from Factors Affecting Performance section) The project was relevant to Core Indicator 11 (Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment) although monitoring data collected was not disaggregated by gender/vulnerable/marginalized groups. However, for the Core indicator 11, project activities include a gender dimension (The Surabaya Women's local waste collection, sorting and recycling communities were recipients of Circulate Capital investment funds. The project conducted a study on the role of gender in waste management in selected APEC countries. The study provides important insights into the role of women and men along the waste value chain, their perceptions and functions, and resulting social and economic impacts. Moreover, it shows that engaging women in South and Southeast Asia may be critical in reducing mismanaged plastic waste in the region). The project also looked at implications to waste pickers in the context of waste management sector reform and made recommendations for ensuring that any such reforms support their livelihoods. The gender study is referenced in the Strategic Roadmap, which states that 'In developing countries where over half of the world's plastic waste originate, a large portion of the recovery and recycling of plastic waste are done by waste pickers, sorters and community-based recycling enterprises without formal oversight for just compensation or environmental protection. Formal recognition and full support of this labor sector, including promotion of gender parity, are essential in improving waste-based livelihoods and reducing leakage of plastics in developing economies and globally.' In addition, the Roadmap includes the following Key Action: 'Develop and implement policy to incentivize the organization of informal waste collectors and sorters that can operate with independent financing with fair wage and thus not vulnerable to unscrupulous middlemen waste collectors.' Table 8- Core Indicator 11, and paragraphs 201- 203
Question: What was the progress made in the implementation of the management measures against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval? The risk classifications reported in the latest PIR report should be verified and the findings of the effectiveness of any measures or lessons learned taken to address identified risks assessed. *(Any supporting documents gathered by the Consultant during this review should be shared with the Task Manager for uploading in the GEF Portal)*
Response: (Might be drawn from Factors Affecting Performance section) During the project design phase, Environmental and Social Safeguards checklists were prepared for the project as well as for Indonesia, The Philippines, and Vietnam. See the response to the preceding question. Table 8- Core Indicator 11, and paragraphs 201- 203; Paragraphs 54, 205
Question: What were the challenges and outcomes regarding the project's completed Knowledge Management Approach, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables (e.g. website/platform development); Knowledge Products/Events; Communication Strategy; Lessons Learned and Good Practice;

Adaptive Management Actions? *(This should be based on the documentation approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval)*

Response: (Might be drawn from Factors Affecting Performance section)

A comprehensive communications strategy was prepared and implemented throughout the project implementation period. Stakeholder feedback was facilitated through the various meetings and workshops convened at the component and project-wide levels. 11,000 publications and media stories were published globally and more than 250 publications and media stories regionally. A project website was established with links to partner websites, each with dedicated web resources on the project. In addition to posters, presentations and other publications, a Results Note and an Experience Note were prepared for IWLEARN and an article on the project was published in the IW Bulletin. Other events and products included participation of the project Coordinator in the 2018 GEF IWC9 with Project pecha kucha presentation and panel talk on Circular Economy, and the 2018 International Marine Debris Conference.

The Roadmap was launched in November 2020 at a live webinar, which attracted over 350 registrants. About 145 participants representing 45 countries joined the webinar, which was conducted and recorded on GRID Arendal's YouTube Channel. The Roadmap, webinar recording and presentations are available at: https://gefmarineplastics.org/webinar. The Roadmap is also available for download on GRID's website (https://www.grida.no/publications/540) and UNEP's website (https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/32533).

Paragraphs 208-211, paragraphs 117 and 126.

Question: What are the main findings of the evaluation?

Response:

The project was highly responsive to GEF's need for strategic guidance on prioritizing interventions and investments to address the marine plastics issue. Collectively, the project results enhance the enabling conditions that are crucial for a transformative change towards a circular plastics economy.

The project is strongly aligned with the subprogrammes and Expected Accomplishments of UNEP 2014-2017 Medium Term Strategy and biennial Programme of Work 2016-2017. In addition, it explicitly supports the United Nations Environment Assembly Resolutions on marine plastic litter and microplastics. Further, the project is consistent with GEF 6 International Waters Strategy Objective 3 (specifically reducing pollution of coasts and large marine ecosystems) and its Strategic Program 6 (Preventing the loss and degradation of coastal habitats). Both marine debris and improved waste management are relevant to priorities for APEC economies including the three participating countries.

Project design strengths include its flexibility; an adequate problem and situation analysis; a comprehensive results framework; appropriate governance and supervision arrangements; capitalizing on the work and expertise of partner agencies; and engagement of key stakeholders across the entire plastic value chain. Areas of design weakness include its complexity for the short duration and limited budget; lack of assumptions and impact drivers in the theory of change; cursory consideration of gender/minority/vulnerable groups; and no time and budget allocation for a synthesis phase to produce a roadmap, a key project product.

The project achieved all the planned outputs and outcomes and exceeded expectations with over 90% of end-of-project targets exceeded/fully achieved. Notable achievements are the mobilization of unprecedented levels of commitment from stakeholders across the plastics value chain to the

New Global Plastics Commitment; a public-private sector blended finance partnership and Ocean Fund with more than USD 100 million for financing of waste management and circular economy start-ups in South and Southeast Asia; strategic recommendations and innovative solutions; and a strengthened knowledge base. The component results provided the building blocks for a strategic roadmap–Addressing Marine Plastics - A Roadmap to a Circular Economy– to be used by the GEF, UNEP, and others in prioritizing their investments and interventions to address marine plastics.

Although significant effort was required to build a true partnership among the project partners, the project effectively capitalized on their work and expertise. While the project was completed within budget, three budget revisions were necessary due to factors such as a slow start up phase, necessary modifications to the results framework and retrofitting of workplans, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite time saving measures implemented by the Project Coordinating Unit, two no-cost extensions were unavoidable.

Monitoring and reporting of project implementation were fully compliant with UNEP and GEF requirements. Nevertheless, some shortcomings were noted such as reporting of the end-of-project targets only for outcomes but not for outputs; reporting of expenditures according to UNEP budget line rather than by outputs; and unavailability of official reports of some of the Project Steering Committee/Component Leaders meetings.

The project established a strong foundation for socio-political sustainability particularly through endorsement of the Global Plastics Commitment by countries, the private sector, and other stakeholders along the plastics value chain. However, some signatories have fallen short of meeting the Commitment targets, jeopardizing socio-political sustainability. GEF, private sector, and others have committed substantial financial resources to addressing marine plastics, enhancing financial sustainability. There is strong institutional support by GEF, UNEP, and the executing partners for building on and sustaining the project results.

Factors such as the high quality of management and supervision by UNEP and the executing partners as well as effective stakeholder engagement and communication contributed to the project's overall good performance. The overall project performance rating is Satisfactory.

ANNEX IX. QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF THE EVALUATION REPORT

Terminal Evaluation: Addressing Marine Plastics – A Systemic Approach, GEF ID 9681

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
Report Quality Criteria		
Quality of the Executive Summary Purpose: acts as a stand alone and accurate summary of the main evaluation product, especially for senior management. To include: • 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 • reference to where the evaluation ratings table can be found within the report • summary response to key strategic evaluation questions • summary of the main findings of the exercise/synthesis of main conclusions • summary of lessons learned and recommendations.	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* The section includes the required information. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses)*: The section accurately and concisely highlights the report's findings on the project's key strengths and weaknesses, including how the project may have contributed to global efforts to reduce marine plastics.	6
Quality of the 'Introduction' Section Purpose: introduces/situates the evaluand in its institutional context, establishes its main parameters (time, value, results, geography) and the purpose of the evaluation itself. To include: • institutional context of the project (sub-programme, Division, Branch etc) • date of PRC approval, project duration and start/end dates • number of project phases (where appropriate) • results frameworks to which it contributes (e.g. POW Direct Outcome) • coverage of the evaluation (regions/countries where implemented) • implementing and funding partners • total secured budget • whether the project has been evaluated in the past (e.g. mid-term, external agency etc.) • concise statement of the purpose of the evaluation and the key intended audience for the findings.	Draft report *(coverage/omissions):* The section includes the required information. Draft report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The section adequately and concisely describes the project and Study objectives.	6

Quality of the 'Evaluation Methods' Section Purpose: provides reader with clear and comprehensive description of evaluation methods, demonstrates the credibility of the findings and performance ratings. To include: • description of evaluation data collection methods and information sources • justification for methods used (e.g. qualitative/ quantitative; electronic/face-to-face) • number and type of respondents *(see table template)* • selection criteria used to identify respondents, case studies or sites/countries visited • strategies used to increase stakeholder engagement and consultation • methods to include the voices/experiences of different and potentially excluded groups (e.g. vulnerable, gender, marginalised etc) • details of how data were verified (e.g. triangulation, review by stakeholders etc.) • methods used to analyse data (scoring, coding, thematic analysis etc) • evaluation limitations (e.g. low/ imbalanced response rates across different groups; gaps in documentation; language barriers etc) • ethics and human rights issues should be highlighted including: how anonymity and confidentiality were protected. 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.*	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* The section includes the required information. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The Study methods and limitations are described clearly. The section does a good job of explaining why certain aspects of the methods were not applicable. For example, due to the nature of the project, there was no disaggregation of data by gender or vulnerable groups. Additionally, the unavailability of many stakeholders rendered this Study primarily a document review that did not require "strategies to increase stakeholder engagement" nor "ethics/confidentiality" applications.	6
Quality of the 'Project' Section Purpose: describes and verifies key dimensions of the evaluand relevant to assessing its performance. To 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:* 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	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* The section includes the required information. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* This section describes all key aspects of the project.	6

• *Project financing:* completed tables of: (a) budget at design and expenditure by components (b) planned and actual sources of funding/co-financing		
Quality of the Theory of Change Purpose: to set out the TOC at Evaluation in diagrammatic and narrative forms to support consistent project performance; to articulate the causal pathways with drivers and assumptions and justify any reconstruction necessary to assess the project's performance. To include: • description of how the *TOC at Evaluation*[55] was designed (who was involved etc) • confirmation/reconstruction of results in accordance with UNEP definitions • articulation of causal pathways • identification of drivers and assumptions • identification of key actors in the change process • summary of the reconstruction/results re-formulation in tabular form. *The two results hierarchies (original/formal revision and reconstructed) 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 Evaluation report.	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* The section includes the required information. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The section effectively describes the causal pathways in diagram and narrative form, identifying drivers, assumptions, and key actors. The table summarizing the reformulation of result statements during the Desk Study is in the *Results Framework* section (table 2).	6
Quality of Key Findings within the Report Presentation of evidence: nature of evidence should be clear (interview, document, survey, observation, online resources etc) and evidence should be explicitly triangulated unless noted as having a single source. Consistency within the report: all parts of the report should form consistent support for findings and performance ratings, which should be in line with UNEP's Criteria Ratings Matrix. Findings Statements (where applicable): The frame of reference for a finding should be an individual evaluation criterion or a strategic question from the	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* The evidence is presented clearly and consistently throughout the report. The report does not have any explicitly labelled findings. However, some paragraphs throughout the report contain bottom-line statements presenting high-level analysis of Study observations.	6

[55] 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*.

TOR. **A finding should go beyond description and uses analysis to provide insights that aid learning specific to the evaluand.** In some cases a findings statement may articulate a key element that has determined the performance rating of a criterion. Findings will frequently provide insight into 'how' and/or 'why' questions.		
Quality of 'Strategic Relevance' Section Purpose: to present evidence and analysis of project strategic relevance with respect to UNEP, partner and geographic policies and strategies at the time of project approval. To include: Assessment of the evaluand's relevance vis-à-vis: • Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities • Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partners Strategic Priorities • Relevance to Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities • Complementarity with Existing Interventions: complementarity of the project at design (or during inception/mobilisation[56]), with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups.	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* The section includes the required information. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The section provides a very thorough analysis and description of the project's relevance vis-a-vis the appropriate entities and policies.	6
Quality of the 'Quality of Project Design' Section Purpose: to present a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the project design, on the basis that the detailed assessment was presented in the Inception Report.	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* The section includes the required information. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The section succinctly lists key project designs strengths and weaknesses.	5
Quality of the 'Nature of the External Context' Section Purpose: to describe and recognise, when appropriate, key external features of the project's implementing context that limited the project's performance (e.g. conflict, natural disaster, political upheaval[57]), and how they affected performance.	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* The section includes the required information. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The section adequately describes two external events that affected some project activities.	5

[56] 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.

[57] 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.

While additional details of the implementing context may be informative, this section should clearly record whether or not a major and unexpected disrupting event took place during the project's life in the implementing sites.		
Quality of 'Effectiveness' Section **(i) Availability of Outputs:** Purpose: to present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the outputs made available to the intended beneficiaries. To include: • a convincing, evidence-supported and clear presentation of the outputs made available by the project compared to its approved plans and budget • assessment of the nature and scale of outputs versus the project indicators and targets • assessment of the timeliness, quality and utility of outputs to intended beneficiaries • identification of positive or negative effects of the project on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* The section includes the required information. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The section presents a clear and evidence-based discussion of the availability of outputs. It effectively presents the nature, scale, and utility for most of the outputs delivered. However, a few indicator targets are missing in the discussions of some Outputs (e.g., for 1.1.3, 3.1.1, and 4.1.1), limiting appreciation for the level of delivery compared with project goals.	6
ii) Achievement of Project Outcomes: Purpose: to present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the uptake, adoption and/or implementation of outputs by the intended beneficiaries. This may include behaviour changes at an individual or collective level. To include: • a convincing and evidence-supported analysis of the uptake of outputs by intended beneficiaries • assessment of the nature, depth and scale of outcomes versus the project indicators and targets • discussion of the contribution, credible association and/or attribution of outcome level changes to the work of the project itself • any constraints to attributing effects to the projects' work • identification of positive or negative effects of the project on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* The section includes the required information. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The section presents a clear and evidence-based discussion of the achievement of outcomes, including the uptake of outputs by intended beneficiaries and the role of assumptions and drivers.	6
(iii) Likelihood of Impact: Purpose: to present an integrated analysis, guided by the causal pathways represented by the TOC, of all evidence relating to likelihood of impact, including an assessment of the extent to which drivers and	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* The section includes the required information. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The section presents a clear analysis of the causal pathways of the TOC to	6

assumptions necessary for change to happen, were seen to be holding. To include: • an explanation of how causal pathways emerged and change processes can be shown • an explanation of the roles played by key actors and change agents • explicit discussion of how drivers and assumptions played out • identification of any unintended negative effects of the project, especially on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).	attainment of the intermediate states and impact. It presents evidence that certain assumptions and drivers held or did not hold.	
Quality of 'Financial Management' Section Purpose: to present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under financial management and include a completed 'financial management' table (may be annexed). 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	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* The section includes the required information. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The section adequately describes the project's financial management activities. It includes a detailed analysis of the budget revisions, financial audits and reporting, and procurement issues, noting that there were four executing agencies that added to the complexity of these activities.	6
Quality of 'Efficiency' Section Purpose: to present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under efficiency (i.e. the primary categories of cost-effectiveness and timeliness). To include: • 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. • implications of any delays and no cost extensions • the extent to which the management of the project minimised UNEP's environmental footprint.	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* The section includes the required information. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The section adequately describes various factors that affected the project's efficiency or lack thereof.	6
Quality of 'Monitoring and Reporting' Section Purpose: to present well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the evaluand's monitoring and reporting. Consider how well the report addresses the following: • quality of the monitoring design and budgeting *(including SMART results with measurable indicators, resources for MTE/R etc.)*	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* The section includes the required information. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The section describes the quality of (1) the monitoring design and budget and (2) project report well, going into detailed discussion about strengths and weaknesses. However, it could	5

• quality of monitoring of project implementation *(including use of monitoring data for adaptive management)* • quality of project reporting *(e.g. PIMS and donor reports)* |	have benefitted from a more detailed discussion on the quality of *Monitoring of Project Implementation*.	
Quality of 'Sustainability' Section Purpose: to present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under sustainability (i.e. the endurance of benefits achieved at outcome level). Consider how well the report addresses the following: • socio-political sustainability • financial sustainability • institutional sustainability	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* The section includes the required information. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The section provides a detailed analysis of each of the dimensions of sustainability.	6
Quality of Factors Affecting Performance Section Purpose: These factors are not always discussed in stand-alone sections and may be integrated in the other performance criteria as appropriate. However, if not addressed substantively in this section, a cross reference must be given to where the topic is addressed and that entry must be sufficient to justify the performance rating for these factors. Consider how well the evaluation report, either in this section or in cross-referenced sections, covers the following cross-cutting themes: • preparation and readiness • quality of project management and supervision[58] • 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 *(coverage/omissions):* The section includes the required information. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The section covers all factors well.	6
Quality of the Conclusions Section **(i) Conclusions Narrative:** Purpose: to present summative statements reflecting on prominent aspects of the performance of the evaluand as a whole, they should be derived from the synthesized analysis of evidence gathered during the evaluation process. To include: • compelling narrative providing an integrated summary of the strengths and weakness in	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* The section includes the required information. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The section presents a compelling narrative of the project's implementation and performance, based on summative observations derived from the Study's findings.	6

[58] 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.

overall performance (achievements and limitations) of the project • clear and succinct response to the key strategic questions • human rights and gender dimensions of the intervention should be discussed explicitly (e.g. how these dimensions were considered, addressed or impacted on)		
ii) Utility of the Lessons: Purpose: to present both positive and negative lessons that have potential for wider application and use (replication and generalization) Consider how well the lessons achieve the following: • are rooted in real project experiences (i.e. derived from explicit evaluation findings or from problems encountered and mistakes made that should be avoided in the future) • briefly describe the context from which they are derived and those contexts in which they may be useful • do not duplicate recommendations	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* The report lists five lessons learned. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The section provides useful lessons rooted in observed project experiences. There is some overlap and duplication with the recommendations.	5
(iii) Utility and Actionability of the Recommendations: Purpose: to present 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. Consider how well the lessons achieve the following: • are feasible to implement within the timeframe and resources available (including local capacities) and specific in terms of who would do what and when • include at least one recommendation relating to strengthening the human rights and gender dimensions of UNEP interventions • represent a measurable performance target in order that the Evaluation Office can monitor and assess compliance with the recommendations. NOTES: **(i)** 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. **(ii)** 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 *(coverage/omissions):* The report lists five recommendations. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* Some recommendations do not have a proposed timeframe for compliance, suggesting that the recommendations be applied to 'future projects'. Some recommendations do not have clear measurable performance targets because they relate to broad processes, such as improving the quality of project design.	4
Quality of Report Structure and Presentation **(i) Structure and completeness of the report:** To what extent does the report follow the Evaluation	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* The report includes the required elements and is complete.	6

Office structure and formatting guidelines? Are all requested Annexes included and complete?	Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The report follows the Evaluation Office structure and guidelines and includes all the required Annexes.	
(ii) 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?	Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The report is excellently written and adequate in tone.	6
OVERALL REPORT QUALITY RATING		**5.7** **Highly Satisfactory**

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.