

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP project

“Consolidating, Running and Implementing a World Water Quality Alliance” (operationalised under “Assessing key environmental issues and providing focused outlooks to strengthen science-based policy and decision making” PIMS 2041)

Section 1: PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

1. Project General Information

Table 1. Project summary

UNEP PIMS ID/SMA ¹ ID:	2041 (January 2019 – 31 Dec 2023) PPP: 177344 (1 January – 31 October 2024)	Grant ID (if applicable):	Abbreviated to WWQA
UNEP Management (Division/Branch/Unit):	Early Warning and Assessment Division		
Implementing Partners:	IHE-Delft, Wageningen University, UFZ Helmholtz Centre for the Environment,		
Sources of Funding:	Country: Switzerland	Institution ² Name/Type: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)	
Relevant SDG(s):	6 Clean Water and Sanitation - 6.3.2		
MTS (all that apply):	2018-21; 2022-25	UNEP approval date:	Not applicable as this is a grant under a PRC-approved project
POW Output(s) number/reference (applicable for projects approved pre-2022)	<i>POW Output:</i> 1.1 Policymaking and decision-making for climate action are informed by the latest science-based analysis and data generation. 1.2 Integration of the Early Warning platform into the wider overarching platform of the One UN Geospatial Situation Room, coordinating action on geospatial across 40 UN entities.	POW Expected Accomplishment(s) number/reference (applicable for projects approved pre-2022):	<i>POW Expected Accomplishment:</i> SP7-EA (a): Governments and other stakeholders use quality open environmental data, analyses and participatory processes that strengthen the science-policy interface to generate evidence-based environmental assessments, identify emerging issues and foster policy action

¹ SMA refers to the ID provided by the Integrated Planning, Management and Reporting Solution (IPMR) system, which was introduced by UNEP in July 2023.

² Indicate where funding institutions are any/all of the following: Foundation/NGO; Private Sector; UN Body; Multilateral Fund; Environment Fund; Other.

	2.7 Natural assets are valued, monitored and sustainably managed. 2.9 Institutional capacity to adopt and act on national and international commitments is enhanced and accountability frameworks are strengthened. 2.14 Fair and equitable access and benefit-sharing frameworks are advanced.		
Sub-programme:	7 - Environment under Review (EuR)	Programme Coordination Project:	<i>Science for Policy and Action Programme PCP</i>
Expected start date:	Nov 2019 (WWQA)	Actual start date:	28 Jan 2020
Planned completion date:	Oct 2023 (WWQA)	Actual operational completion date:	October 2024
Planned total project budget ³ at approval:	\$1,800,000 (WWQA)	Actual total expenditures reported as of [16/01/2024]:	1,321,158.04
Planned Extra-budgetary Funds ⁴ :	Cash: 1,800,000 In-kind: 5,151,154	Secured Extra-budgetary Funds:	Cash: 1,800,000 In-kind: tbc
		Actual Extra-budgetary Funds expenditures reported as of [date]:	Cash: 1,800,000 ⁵ 2,516,208
First disbursement:	\$505,000 (WWQA)	Planned date of financial closure:	Estimated 1 year after operational completion.
No. of formal project revisions:	1 - no cost extension of 1 year	Date of last approved project revision:	
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	NA - no steering committee (WWQA has an Advisory Committee)	Date of Last Steering Committee meeting:	NA
Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (planned date):	PIMS ID 2041/SMA ID 45773 MTR took place in Q4 2023-Q1 2024	Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (actual date):	February 2024 (MTR of PIMS 02041 project, not WWQA specific MTR)
Terminal Evaluation (planned date):	post-October 2024	Terminal Evaluation (actual date):	Jan – June 2025

³ Total budget may include; Regular Budget, Environment Fund, Extra-Budgetary, including 'softly-earmarked' etc.

⁴ Extra-budgetary funds may include co-finance (cash/in-kind).

⁵ A total of actual expenditure is \$ 2,516,208. \$716,208 was spent from other funding sources.

Coverage – Implementing Country(ies):	Global	Coverage – Implementing Region(s):	Global
Dates of previous project phases:	NA	Status of future project phases:	Early Warning Global Environmental Monitoring Services, from 1 st Jan 2025.

2. Project Rationale

UNEP Milestones:

1. In 2016, UNEP published a preliminary study entitled '*World Water Quality Assessment: A Snapshot of the World's Water Quality: Towards a Global Assessment*,' which highlighted the critical need to address global water pollution as it posed significant threats to human and ecosystem health, emphasizing the urgent need for a comprehensive understanding of global water quality.
2. At UNEA 3, UNEP was asked to build on the findings of the Snapshot Report and to cooperate with UN-Water members to develop a full World Water Quality Assessment for consideration at UNEA-5 in 2021, taking into account the recommendations made by the UN-Water Analytical Brief '*Towards a Worldwide Assessment of Freshwater Quality*.' This request came in recognition of the increasing complexity of water quality issues, which required a collaborative, international response that leveraged new technologies and data sources to improve water quality monitoring and management globally.
3. A Freshwater Strategy was developed, acknowledging that addressing the global water quality crisis necessitated a strategic and coordinated response that could adapt to the dynamic nature of water-related challenges. This Strategy focused on integrating water quality issues into broader environmental and sustainable development frameworks.
4. The Swiss agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) entered into a grant agreement with UNEP in 2019 to launch and oversee initiatives under the World Water Quality Alliance (WWQA). This partnership aimed to provide both financial and strategic support, ensuring that the Alliance could effectively implement its objectives and contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals related to water and sanitation (SDG 6).
5. The WWQA was formed in 2018, consisting of multiple stakeholders including UN agencies, governmental organizations, the private sector, civil society, and academic institutions. This Alliance was designed to foster a participatory and interdisciplinary approach, allowing for the effective integration of diverse knowledge systems and technologies to enhance global water quality assessments and solutions.
6. There was a historic relationship between the WWQA, and the work called GEMS. The Global Environment Monitoring System for Freshwater (GEMS/Water) had been instrumental in providing data to the global WWQA, facilitating a better understanding of water quality trends and supporting evidence-based policymaking.

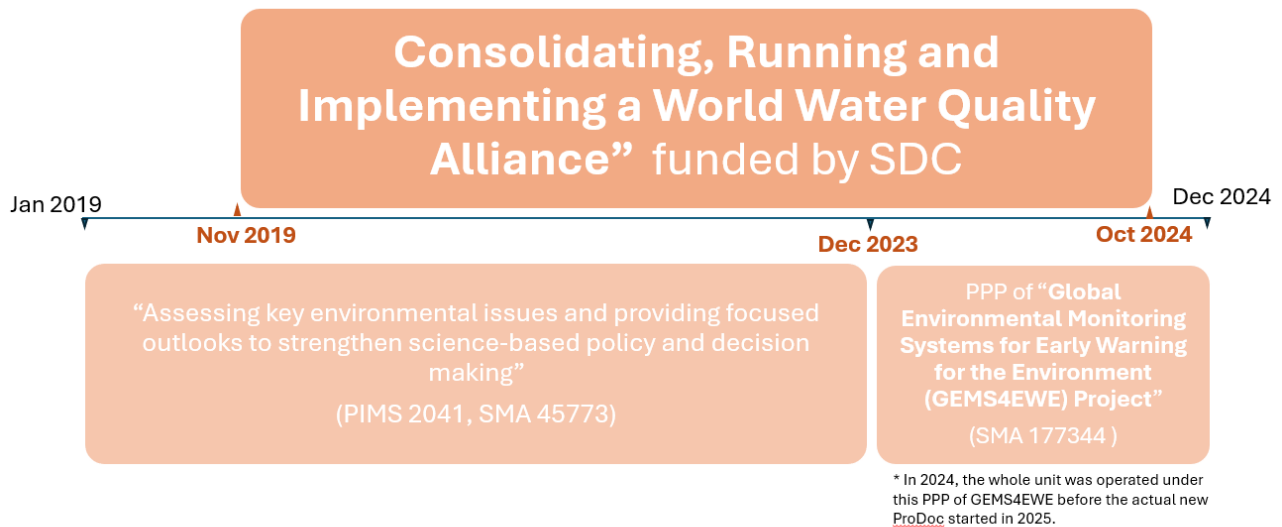
Swiss grant under evaluation:

7. A grant of USD 1.8m was received from the Swiss agency for Development and Corporation (SDC) for the work being evaluated: "*Consolidating, Running and Implementing a World Water Quality Alliance*" (hereinafter WWQA grant or 'the project'), which was operationalized within UNEP under the PRC⁶-approved Project: "*Assessing key environmental issues and providing focused outlooks to strengthen science-based policy and decision making*" PIMS 2041. **The WWQA grant was expected to contribute to Outputs A, B and C of the PIMS 2041 project (see below).** A decision was taken together with the SP7⁷ sub-programme coordinator in the course of 2023 to develop a separate GEMS-focused project document to convene all GEMS areas (GEMS/Water, GEMS/Oceans, GEMS/Air, including WWQA) under one focused project document focusing on GEMS and Early Warning for Environment (EWE) as of 1 January 2024. For the period 1 January 2024 to 31 October 2024 (closure of the WWQA grant) it

⁶ Project Review Committee (PRC)

⁷ SP7 is one of UNEP's Subprogrammes, initially called 'Environment Under Review' and renamed, in 2022 as 'Science-Policy'.

is included under the Project Preparation Proposal (PPP)⁸ entitled "Global Environmental Monitoring Systems for Early Warning for the Environment (GEMS4EWE)". Following the conclusion of the PPP, a project document "Early Warning Global Environmental Monitoring Services" has been approved that will be under implementation from 1 Jan 2025 under which WWQA has been included.



⁸ During 2024, the whole unit was operated under this PPP before the actual new approved ProDoc started in 2025.

3. Project Results Frameworks

8. There are two results frameworks (RF) to be considered in the assessment of the performance of this grant. The UNEP host project RF (PIMS 2041) has a single outcome and 5 outputs. The Swiss grant RF (WWQA grant) has a single, but different, outcome and 3 outputs, the first three of which are identified in the outputs of PIMS 2041 and the fourth of which had a separate funding source:

PIMS 2041 Outcome: UN Agencies, MEAs, UNEP Divisions, Regional Offices and State and non-state actors across regions participate in the co-creation of EWE for the GEMS4EWE project document.

WWQA Grant Outcome: A global Alliance of experts, public, private and civil society partners, focusing on water quality science, technology innovation and governance, provides Governments and other stakeholders with: i) globally, regionally and locally relevant evidence-based assessments, scenarios, solutions and services on water quality issues, and ii) analyses and advice on persistent and emerging water quality issues of socio-environmental concern, to foster policy action.

9. *In this evaluation the RF for the WWQA Grant is taken as the relevant Framework against which the project's performance should be assessed. Strategic questions referring to the relationship between the project implementation and results of this Grant and those of the PRC-Approved Project will be addressed in an Annex to the Terminal Evaluation report.*

a) Overall Results Framework⁹ of: “Assessing key environmental issues and providing focused outlooks to strengthen science-based policy and decision making” (PIMS 2041)

OUTPUT	INDICATORS	ASSESSMENT COMPONENTS
Output A: Environmental Assessments publications, technical and scientific services and data ¹⁰ , made accessible and available to member states and scientific community in support of SDG indicator measurements.	- Number of regional and national forums and institutions using world oceans assessment & SDG related data on environmental trends. [Baseline: 2, Target =2] - Number of countries using technical science products from assessments (BREO; AARG-ADA; WWQA; CLIMASCI) conducted reported on the on-line platform(s) that house the relevant thematic environmental assessments. [Baseline: 0, Target: 5 (to be determined thematically and geographically)] - Countries using AMPPAC assessment report for influencing policies, guidelines and/or instruments that strengthen the science-policy interface and contribute to reduction of marine plastic litter. [Baseline: 0, Target: 5]	WOA, BREO, AARG-ADA, WWQA , AMPPAC and CLIMASCI

⁹ ProDoc-2019

¹⁰ WOA, BREO, AARG-ADA, WWQA, AMPPAC and CLIMASCI: these environmental assessments are detailed in the workplan

Output B: Standards and principles for environmental information systems and data for assessments (WOA, BREO, AARG-ADA, WWQA) provided and their related web-based knowledge platforms being used	- Number of technical and scientific services provided to the Regular Process Secretariat¹¹ - and sets of projections established and policy pathways created. [Baseline: 0, Target: 2] - Number of African countries, institutions, with both complex and non-complex datasets, acknowledging use of open data information ¹² for the management of African rangelands, grasslands and deserts [Baseline: 0, Target:15] - Number of new countries submitting water quality data with the GEMS/Water¹³ [Baseline: 0, Target: 10]	WOA, BREO, AARG-ADA, WWQA
Output C: Technical early warning information provided to countries and institutions on emerging issues through reports and forums.	- Number of yearly published frontiers report [Baseline: 0, Target: 4] - Number of institutions that are accessing the frontiers report. [Target 10] - Number of relevant global, regional and national forums and institutions referring to or using the analyses of emerging issues as presented in the Frontiers publication [Baseline: 15*, Target: 25] * This is the obtained target from June 2018 of the Project 721.1 Emerging Issues (PoW 2014-2015 and 2016-2017). - WOA - Number of technical and scientific services provided to the Regular Process Secretariat. [baseline 0; Target 2] Workshop reports and publication. [Baseline: 0, Target: 2] - AARG-ADA – Information repository. [Baseline:0 , Target: 1] - WWQA - Published Scenario Analyses. [Baseline:0 , Target:1]	(WOA, WWQA, AARG-ADA and FRONTIERS)
Output D: Built capacity in countries and institutions to further produce and improve scientific assessment and early warning information and to uses online platforms and data.	- Number of regional institutional actors reached through capacity building expert services provided to the Regular Process Secretariat (WOA)-. [Baseline: 0,Target: 20]	BREO

¹¹ BREO – Belt and Road Environmental Outlook

¹² from AARG-ADA – Atlas on African Rangelands and Grasslands and Africa Deserts Atlas

¹³ WWQA – The World Water Quality Assessment

	- Number of countries using the on-line platform(s) that house the relevant thematic environmental assessments (BREO), data, information, summaries, synthesis, and outlooks [Baseline: 0, Target*: 5] * to be determined thematically and geographically - Number of countries using the on-line platform(s) on the Rangeland and Desert Atlases emanating from environmental assessments, and shared data, information, summaries, and their synthesis. [Baseline: 0, Target: 25] - Number of countries participating in capacity building (WWQA). [Baseline: 0, Target: 12]	
Output E: Participatory Communities of Practices formed and operational for the following assessments: WOA, BREO, AARG-ADA	- Number of meetings of Group of Experts on Scientific Aspects of Marine Environment Protection (WOA) [Baseline*: 0, Target: 3] *baseline sponsored by GESAMP with results of the working group of 40 study harmonizing assessments and monitoring - Number of consultative meetings held and environmental assessments (BREO) prepared, both in hard copy and on-line platform of thematic assessments, data and information. [Baseline:0, Target: 3] - Number of Evidence-based decision and policy-making reports prepared on grasslands and rangelands (AARG-ADA) derived from participation by communities of practice	WOA, BREO, AARG-ADA

Figure 1: Results framework from PIMS 2041 project document (A3)

b) Results Framework¹⁴ for UNEP's Project "Consolidating, Running and Implementing a World Water Quality Alliance", funded by SDC.

The global, regional and local impact during the 4-year timeframe was intended to focus on the following outputs:

Project Outcome: A global Alliance of experts, public, private and civil society partners, focusing on water quality science, technology innovation and governance, provides Governments and other stakeholders with: i. globally, regionally and locally relevant evidence-based assessments, scenarios, solutions and services on water quality issues, and ii. <i>analyses and advice on persistent and emerging water quality issues of socio-environmental concern, to foster policy action.</i>	
Project Outputs	Indicators
OUTPUT 1:	Number of Alliance and Committee Meetings (virtual or face-to-face) [Baseline in June 2019: 1, Target in December 2023: 9]

¹⁴SDC UNEP Donor Agreement 2019

(FRAMEWORK OUTPUT): WORLD WATER QUALITY ALLIANCE OPERATIONAL AND MANAGED - incl. Expert Group on Water Quality/Waste Water; Advisory Bodies (TAC/SAC), Thematic WGs; STI and agenda-setting platform	
OUTPUT 2: GLOBAL WATER QUALITY ASSESSMENT: A global water quality baseline is provided; reflecting data fusion/modelling innovation and providing scenarios, causal chain illustrations and solution pathways in cases for upscaling	Number of World Water Quality Assessments produced [Baseline on June 2019: 0, Target by December 2023: 2 (draft/interim and full assessment)]
OUTPUT 3: GLOBALLY RECOGNIZED AGENDA SETTING PLATFORM: Analysis, synthesis and products on persistent and emerging water quality issues of socioenvironmental concern developed and communicated into national, regional and global science-policy processes	Number of targeted communication and outreach products developed both traditional products as well as innovative and interactive products [Baseline in June 2019: 0, Target December 2023: 6-8]
OUTPUT 4 (from separate funding 2019/2020): Demonstration Use Cases of in-country application of Alliance products and services - Case studies, such as Alliance Africa Use Cases; Activities contributing to this output come from a separate funding source, such as the Switzerland FOEN (Africa Pilot Use Cases), Globe WQ (Germany). Arrangements for other possible Demonstrations/Case Studies are being explored.	

4. Executing Arrangements

10. Overall management of the project was to be led by UNEP, Early Warning and Assessment Division.

11. The World Water Quality Alliance (WWQA) was expected to be steered by a consortium of UN-Water organizations and scientific organizations under the leadership of UNEP and coordination of the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research (UFZ). An Executive Steering Group was to be set up with representatives from a small number of UN Water members, organizations and stakeholders. Within UNEP, the Global Programme Co-ordination Unit (GCPU) of the GEMS/Water Programme was to oversee the overall coordination of the WWQA, in close collaboration with the UFZ. The GCPU was expected to liaise with other UN-Water members, as appropriate, and support the work of the Steering Group. Some partners in the UN Water Consortium are IHE Delft, AquaFed, Gender and Water Alliance, Global Water Partnership, Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council, among others.

12. As it stands, the World Water Quality Alliance is an open network/ Community of Practice, focused on assessment, innovation, and the evolution of use cases demonstrating data uptake and solution co-creation based on cross-societal consensus ('Quintuple Helix'). It has been supported by a Strategic Advisory Committee (SAC) and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) from the beginning.

Partner	Expertise	Strength	Agreed roles/responsibilities in project implementation	Date of UNEP partnership approval/Due diligence process
<i>Helmholtz-Centre for Environmental Research-UFZ, Germany</i>	Water assessment; modelling	Involvement in the pre-study (2016)	Coordination of the scientific work	
<i>Federal Institute of Hydrology (BfG), Germany; International Centre for Water Resources and Global Change</i>	Water Quality Data Management	The centre hosts the GEMS tat global water quality data base of the GEMS/Water Programme, as well as the Global runoff database – enabling links between water quality and quantity and the Global Terrestrial Network of Hydrology	Monitoring data acquisition, processing – the global WWQA will rely on data derived from the GEMS tat, SDG indicator 6.3.2 data, as well as other sources including Earth Observations and Citizen Science.	2015

5. Project Cost and Financing

13. The Budget shown below is in USD (SDC contribution and co-funding sources)

Expenditures SDC Contribution	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		TOTAL USD	%
	From To	1- Nov- 19 31- Oct- 20	From To	1- Nov- 20 31- Oct- 21	From To	1- Nov- 21 31- Oct- 22	From To	1- Nov- 22 31- Oct- 23		
Personnel (Professional Staff - UNEP Science Division)		160,000		160,000		160,000		160,000	640,000	35.2%
Travel and subsistence - (1) Staff Travel		19,500		19,500		19,500		19,500	78,000	4.3%
Travel and subsistence - (2) Developing Country Participants (annual meetings)		25,000		25,000		25,000		25,000	100,000	5.5%
Travel and subsistence - (3) Civil Society Engagement Workshops; Sessions at relevant conferences; roundtables		15,000		15,000		15,000		15,000	60,000	3.3%
External assistance - Contracts with implementing partners on development of thematic products (approx. 2 agreement p/a)		188,978		191,978		191,978			572,934	31.5%
External assistance - Outreach and Communication (innovative approaches to dissemination of interactive products; knowledge management and publication)		25,000		25,000		25,000		10,000	85,000	4.7%
Equipment		3,000							3,000	0.2%
Consumables - Operating Costs		6,000		6,000		6,000		5,987	23,987	1.3%
Other costs - Terminal Evaluation								30,000	30,000	1.7%
Overhead max. 13%		57,522		57,522		57,522		34,513	207,080	11.4%
Total Expenditures		500,000		500,000		500,000		300,000	1,800,000	99.0%
Coordination Levy (1% of 1,818,000)		5,000		5,000		5,000		3,000	18,000	1.0%
TOTAL		505,000		505,000		505,000		303,000	1,818,000	100.0%

Figure 2: Original budget for SDC contribution (p.40, Fig 5.2 from original UNEP-SDC donor agreement)

14. An updated proposed budget was submitted for the one year no cost extension as per the following:

Expenditures SDC Contribution	Total expenditures as at 30 April 2023 (Nov2019-April 2023)	Forecast 1 May 2023- 31 Oct 2023	Year 5 Budget (1 Nov 2023 - 31 Oct 2024)	Total revised Budget
Personnel (UNEP Staffing Component)	331'657	96'000	233'328	660'985
Total Travel (Staff travel, Developing Country Participants (annual meetings), Civil Society Engagement workshops; Sessions at relevant conferences, roundtables)	60'125	60'000	40'000	160'125
Contractual Services	60'025	30'000		90'025
Grants Out to Implementing Partners (External Assistance - contracts with Implementing Partners on development of thematic products)	377'918	263'769		641'687
Equipment	98			98
Operating Costs				
Other costs - Terminal Evaluation			40'000	40'000
Total Expenditures	829'823	449'769	313'328	1'592'920
Overhead max. 13%	107'877	58'470	40'733	207'080
Total Expenditures +PSC Costs	937'700	508'239	354'061	1'800'000
Coordination Levy (1%)	9'377	5'082	3'541	18'000
TOTAL	947'077	513'321	357'601	1'818'000

Figure 3: Updated budget contained in the no-cost extension (p.8)

6. Implementation Issues

15. The project obtained a one-year no cost extension (to extend the end of the grant from 31 October 2023 to 31 October 2024) that had a slightly updated budget and final activities plan for the rest of its duration¹⁵. The overall work packages as laid out in the original donor agreement remained the same in the no-cost extension. The start of the project, following receipt of the initial funds instalment from SDC in late 2019, was hampered by the onset of Covid-19 that shut down all travel by the end of Q1 2020 (at a time when several in-person meetings with corresponding budget for travel had been initially planned). In addition, the recruitment of the WWQA Coordinator (UNEP staff post) took a long time, with nearly one year between advertising the post and onboarding of the coordinator.

16. There was no project-specific mid-term review required as per the donor agreement. However, a mid-term review¹⁶ was undertaken for the project of 'Assessing key environmental issues and providing focused outlooks to strengthen science-based policy and decision making (PIMS 2041)' for which the world water quality assessment was consulted. This was finalized in Q1 2024. The review also reported that the COVID-19 pandemic crisis slowed down the work of the WWQA to some degree as it was more difficult to function without holding in-person meetings.

Section 2. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

(Apart from section 9, where you could insert up to 5 strategic questions that are in addition to the evaluation criteria, this section is standard and does not need to be revised for each project)

7. Objective of the Evaluation

17. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy¹⁷ and the UNEP Programme and Project Management Manual¹⁸, 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 and main project partners. 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, especially where the setting up/convening and operationalization of global thematic alliances is concerned.

8. Key Evaluation Principles

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

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

20. Attribution, Contribution and Credible Association: In order to *attribute* any outcomes and impacts to a project intervention, one needs to consider the difference between what has happened with, and what would have happened without, the project (i.e. take account of changes over time and between contexts in order to isolate the effects of an intervention). This requires appropriate baseline data and the identification of a relevant counterfactual, both of which are frequently not available for evaluations. Establishing the

¹⁵ Relevant documents were uploaded on the Sharepoint drive

¹⁶ Mid-Term Review of the UNEP Project : Assessing key environmental issues and providing focused outlooks to strengthen science-based policy and decision-making, February 2024

¹⁷ <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/41114>

¹⁸ <https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/42752>

contribution made by a project in a complex change process relies heavily on prior intentionality (e.g. approved project design documentation, logical framework) and the articulation of causality (e.g. narrative and/or illustration of the Theory of Change). Robust evidence that a project was delivered as designed and that the expected causal pathways developed supports claims of contribution and this is strengthened where an alternative theory of change can be excluded. A *credible association* between the implementation of a project and observed positive effects can be made where a strong causal narrative, although not explicitly articulated, can be inferred by the chronological sequence of events, active involvement of key actors and engagement in critical processes.

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

9. Key Strategic Questions

22. In addition to the evaluation criteria outlined in Section 10 below, the Evaluation will address the **strategic questions** listed below, presenting the answers in summary form in the TE report Conclusions and providing more detailed answers as an Annex to the report.

- a) **What other grants/initiatives were operated under PIMS 2041?**
- b) **What % of the total funds of PIMS 2041 does the SWISS Grant represent?**
- c) **What is the connection, from a results perspective, between the SWISS Grant and the PIMS project (e.g. WWQA contributed to Outputs A, B and C of the PIMS 2041 project), and b) the achievement of the PPP entitled Global Environmental Monitoring Systems for Early Warning for the Environment (GEMS4EWE,SMA 177344) ?**
- d) **What contribution, from a results perspective, did the WWQA grant make to the PIMS project and, by extension, UNEP's Programme of Work and implementation of UNEA Resolution 3/10 (as well as other associated resolutions namely Sustainable Lake Management, and UNEA 6/Res.13 on water)?**
- e) **To what extent has UNEP been positioned to convene such a global thematic Alliance composed of diverse stakeholders working on water quality?**
- f) **How has the global thematic Alliance such as the WWQA contributed to leveraging partners' in-kind resources to help progress the implementation of UNEP's mandate?**

10. Evaluation Criteria

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

A. Strategic Relevance

24. The Evaluation will assess the extent to which the activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the donors, implementing regions/countries and the target beneficiaries. The Evaluation will include an assessment of the project's relevance in relation to UNEP's mandate and its alignment with UNEP's policies and strategies at the time of project approval. Under strategic relevance an assessment of the complementarity of the project with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups will be made. This criterion comprises four elements:

i. Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy¹⁹ (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities

25. The Evaluation should assess the project's alignment with the MTS and POW under which the project was approved and include, in its narrative, reflections on the scale and scope of any contributions made to the planned results reflected in the relevant MTS and POW. UNEP strategic priorities include the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building²⁰ (BSP) and South-South Cooperation (S-SC). The BSP relates to the capacity of governments to: comply with international agreements and obligations at the national level; promote, facilitate and finance environmentally sound technologies and to strengthen frameworks for developing coherent international environmental policies. S-SC is regarded as the exchange of resources, technology and knowledge between developing countries.

26. Alignment to Donor/Partner Strategic Priorities

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

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

27. The Evaluation will assess the alignment of the project with global priorities such as the SDGs and Agenda 2030. The extent to which the intervention is suited, or responding to, the stated environmental concerns and needs of the countries, sub-regions or regions where it is being implemented will be considered. Examples may include: UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCF) or national or sub-national development plans, poverty reduction strategies or Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action (NAMA) plans or regional agreements etc. Within this section consideration will be given to whether the needs of all beneficiary groups are being met and reflects the current policy priority to leave no one behind.

iii. Complementarity with Relevant Existing Interventions/Coherence²¹

28. An assessment will be made of how well the project, either at design stage or during the project inception or mobilization²², took account of ongoing and planned initiatives (under the same sub-programme, other UNEP sub-programmes, or being implemented by other agencies within the same country, sector or institution) that address similar needs of the same target groups. The Evaluation will consider if the project team, in collaboration with Regional Offices and Sub-Programme Coordinators, made efforts to ensure their own intervention was complementary to other interventions, optimized any synergies and avoided duplication of effort. Examples may include UNDAFs or One UN programming. Linkages with other interventions should be described and instances where UNEP's comparative advantage has been particularly well applied should be highlighted.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

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

B. Quality of Project Design

29. The quality of project design is assessed using an agreed template during the evaluation inception phase, ratings are attributed to identified criteria and an overall Project Design Quality rating is established. The complete Project Design Quality template should be annexed in the Evaluation Inception Report. Later, the overall Project Design Quality rating²³ should be entered in the final evaluation ratings table (as item B) in the Main Evaluation Report and a summary of the project's strengths and weaknesses at design stage should be included within the body of the report.

¹⁹ UNEP's Medium Term Strategy (MTS) is a document that guides UNEP's programme planning over a four-year period. It identifies UNEP's thematic priorities, known as Sub-programmes (SP), and sets out the desired outcomes, known as POW Outcomes and POW Direct Outcomes of the Sub-programmes <https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/our-evaluation-approach/un-environment-documents>

²⁰ <http://www.unep.fr/ozonaction/about/bsp.htm>

²¹ This sub-category is consistent with the new criterion of 'Coherence' introduced by the OECD-DAC in 2019.

²² 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.

²³ In some instances, based on data collected during the evaluation process, the assessment of the project's design quality may change from Inception Report to Main Evaluation Report.

Factors affecting this criterion may include (at the design stage):

- Stakeholders participation and cooperation
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality

C. Nature of External Context

30. At evaluation inception stage a rating is established for the project's external operating context (considering the prevalence of conflict, natural disasters and political upheaval²⁴). This rating is entered in the final evaluation ratings table as item C. Where a project has been rated as facing either an Unfavourable or Highly Unfavourable external operating context, and/or a negative external event has occurred during project implementation, the ratings for Effectiveness, Efficiency and/or Sustainability may be increased at the discretion of the Evaluation Consultant and Evaluation Manager together. A justification for such an increase must be given.

D. Effectiveness

iv. Availability of Outputs²⁵

31. The Evaluation will assess the project's success in producing the programmed outputs and making them available to the intended beneficiaries as well as its success in achieving milestones as per the project design document (ProDoc). Any formal modifications/revisions made during project implementation will be considered part of the project design. Where the project outputs are inappropriately or inaccurately stated in the ProDoc, reformulations may be necessary in the reconstruction of the Theory of Change (TOC). In such cases a table should be provided showing the original and the reformulation of the outputs for transparency. 32. The availability of outputs will be assessed in terms of both quantity and quality, and the assessment will consider their ownership by, and usefulness to, intended beneficiaries and the timeliness of their provision. It is noted that emphasis is placed on the performance of those outputs that are most important to achieve outcomes. The Evaluation will briefly explain the reasons behind the success or shortcomings of the project in delivering its programmed outputs and meeting expected quality standards.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Preparation and readiness
- Quality of project management and supervision²⁶

v. Achievement of Project Outcomes²⁷

33. The achievement of project outcomes is assessed as performance against the project outcomes as defined in the reconstructed²⁸ Theory of Change. These are outcomes that are intended to be achieved by the end of the project timeframe and within the project's resource envelope. Emphasis is placed on the achievement of project outcomes that are most important for attaining intermediate states. As with outputs, a table can be used where substantive amendments to the formulation of project outcomes is necessary to allow for an assessment of performance. The Evaluation should report evidence of attribution between UNEP's intervention and the project outcomes. In cases of normative work or where several actors are collaborating to achieve common outcomes, evidence of the nature and magnitude of UNEP's 'substantive contribution' should be included and/or 'credible association' established between project efforts and the project outcomes realised.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Quality of project management and supervision
- Stakeholders' participation and cooperation

²⁴ 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 by the project team. From March 2020 this should include the effects of COVID-19.

²⁵ Outputs are the availability (for intended beneficiaries/users) of new products and services and/or gains in knowledge, abilities and awareness of individuals or within institutions (UNEP, 2023)

²⁶ 'Project management and supervision' refers to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments.

²⁷ An outcome is a change at institutional level, or changes in behaviors, attitudes or conditions achieved from the use (i.e., uptake, adoption, application) of outputs by intended beneficiaries. (UNEP, 2023)

²⁸ All submitted UNEP project documents are required to present a Theory of Change. The level of 'reconstruction' needed during an evaluation will depend on the quality of this initial TOC, the time that has lapsed between project design and implementation (which may be related to securing and disbursing funds) and the level of any formal changes made to the project design. In the case of projects pre-dating 2016 the intervention logic is often represented in a logical framework and a TOC will need to be constructed in the inception stage of the review

- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality
- Communication and public awareness

vi. Likelihood of Impact

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

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

36. The Evaluation will consider the extent to which the project has played a catalytic role²⁹ or has promoted scaling up and/or replication as part of its Theory of Change (either explicitly as in a project with a demonstration component or implicitly as expressed in the drivers required to move to outcome levels) and as factors that are likely to contribute to greater or long-lasting impact.

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

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

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

E. Financial Management

38. Financial management will be assessed under three themes: *adherence* to UNEP's financial policies and procedures, *completeness* of financial information and *communication* between financial and project management staff. The Evaluation will establish the actual spend across the life of the project of funds secured from all donors. This expenditure will be reported, where possible, at output/component level and will be compared with the approved budget. The Evaluation will verify the application of proper financial management standards and adherence to UNEP's financial management policies. Any financial management issues that have affected the timely delivery of the project or the quality of its performance will be highlighted.

39. The Evaluation will record where standard financial documentation is missing, inaccurate, incomplete or unavailable in a timely manner. The Evaluation will assess the level of communication between the Project Manager and the Fund Management Officer as it relates to the effective delivery of the planned project and the needs of a responsive, adaptive management approach.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Preparation and readiness

²⁹ The terms catalytic effect, scaling up and replication are inter-related and generally refer to extending the coverage or magnitude of the effects of a project. Catalytic effect is associated with triggering additional actions that are not directly funded by the project – these effects can be both concrete or less tangible, can be intentionally caused by the project or implied in the design and reflected in the TOC drivers, or can be unintentional and can rely on funding from another source or have no financial requirements. Scaling up and Replication require more intentionality for projects, or individual components and approaches, to be reproduced in other similar contexts. Scaling up suggests a substantive increase in the number of new beneficiaries reached/involved and may require adapted delivery mechanisms while Replication suggests the repetition of an approach or component at a similar scale but among different beneficiaries. Even with highly technical work, where scaling up or replication involves working with a new community, some consideration of the new context should take place and adjustments made as necessary.

- Quality of project management and supervision

F. Efficiency

40. Under the efficiency criterion, the Evaluation will assess the extent to which the project delivered maximum results from the given resources. This will include an assessment of the cost-effectiveness and timeliness of project execution.

41. Focussing on the translation of inputs into outputs, *cost-effectiveness* is the extent to which an intervention has achieved, or is expected to achieve, its results at the lowest possible cost. *Timeliness* refers to whether planned activities were delivered according to expected timeframes as well as whether events were sequenced efficiently. The Evaluation will also assess to what extent any project extension could have been avoided through stronger project management and identify any negative impacts caused by project delays or extensions. The Evaluation will describe any cost or time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe and consider whether the project was implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternative interventions or approaches.

42. The Evaluation will give special attention to efforts made by the project teams during project implementation to make use of/build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities³⁰ with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency.

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

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

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

G. Monitoring and Reporting

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

i. Monitoring Design and Budgeting

44. Each project should be supported by a sound monitoring plan that is designed to track progress against SMART³¹ results towards the provision of the project's outputs and achievement of project outcomes, including at a level disaggregated by gender, marginalisation or vulnerability, including those living with disabilities. In particular, the Evaluation will assess the relevance and appropriateness of the project indicators as well as the methods used for tracking progress against them as part of conscious results-based management. The Evaluation will assess the quality of the design of the monitoring plan as well as the funds allocated for its implementation. The adequacy of resources for Mid-Term and Terminal Evaluation/Review should be discussed if applicable.

ii. Monitoring of Project Implementation

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

iii. Project Reporting

³⁰ Complementarity with other interventions during project design, inception or mobilization is considered under Strategic Relevance above.

³¹ SMART refers to results that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-oriented. Indicators help to make results measurable.

46. UNEP has a centralised project information management system³² in which project managers upload six-monthly progress reports against agreed project milestones. This information will be provided to the Evaluation Consultant(s) by the Evaluation Manager. Some projects have additional requirements to report regularly to funding partners, which will be supplied by the project team. The Evaluation will assess the extent to which both UNEP and donor reporting commitments have been fulfilled. Consideration will be given as to whether reporting has been carried out with respect to the effects of the initiative on disaggregated groups.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

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

H. Sustainability

47. Sustainability³³ is understood as the probability of the benefits derived from the achievement of project outcomes being maintained and developed after the close of the intervention. The Evaluation will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the endurance of achieved project outcomes (i.e. 'assumptions' and 'drivers'). Some factors of sustainability may be embedded in the project design and implementation approaches while others may be contextual circumstances or conditions that evolve over the life of the intervention. Where applicable an assessment of bio-physical factors that may affect the sustainability of project outcomes may also be included.

i. Socio-political Sustainability

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

ii. Financial Sustainability

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

iii. Institutional Sustainability

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

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

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

I. Factors Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

³² Prior to 2022 it was the Project Information Management System (PIMS) and from 2022 UNEP has the Integrated Planning Monitoring and Reporting (IPMR) solution.

³³ As used here, 'sustainability' means the long-lasting maintenance of outcomes and consequent impacts, whether environmental or not. This is distinct from the concept of sustainability in the terms 'environmental sustainability' or 'sustainable development', which imply 'not living beyond our means' or 'not diminishing global environmental benefits' (GEF STAP Paper, 2019, Achieving More Enduring Outcomes from GEF Investment).

51. *These factors are rated in the ratings table but are discussed within the Main Evaluation Report as cross-cutting themes as appropriate under the other evaluation criteria, above. If these issues have not been addressed under the evaluation criteria above, then independent summaries of their status within the evaluated project should be given.)*

i. Preparation and Readiness

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

ii. Quality of Project Management and Supervision

53. In some cases 'project management and supervision' may refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments while in others, it may refer to the project management performance of an implementing partner and the technical backstopping and supervision provided by UNEP. The performance of parties playing different roles should be discussed and a rating provided for both types of supervision (UNEP/Implementing Agency; Partner/Executing Agency) and the overall rating for this sub-category established as a simple average of the two.

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

iii. Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation

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

iv. Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality

55. The Evaluation will ascertain to what extent the project has applied the UN Common Understanding on the human rights-based approach (HRBA) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.

Within this human rights context, the Evaluation will assess to what extent the intervention, following an adequate gender analysis at design stage, has implemented the identified actions and/or applied adaptive management to ensure that Gender Equality and Human Rights are adequately taken into account and the intervention adheres to UNEP's Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment³⁴. In particular the Evaluation will consider to what extent project design, implementation and monitoring have taken into consideration: (i) possible inequalities (especially those related to gender) in access to, and the control over, natural resources; (ii) specific vulnerabilities of disadvantaged groups (especially women, youth and children and those living with disabilities) to environmental degradation or disasters; and (iii) the role of disadvantaged groups (especially women, youth and children and those living with disabilities) in mitigating or adapting to environmental changes and engaging in environmental protection and rehabilitation.

56. Note that the project's effect on equality (i.e. promoting human rights, gender equality and inclusion of those living with disabilities and/or belonging to marginalised/vulnerable groups) should be included within the TOC as a general driver or assumption where there is no dedicated result within the results framework. If

³⁴The Evaluation Office notes that Gender Equality was first introduced in the UNEP Project Review Committee Checklist in 2010 and, therefore, provides a criterion rating on gender for projects approved from 2010 onwards. Equally, it is noted that policy documents, operational guidelines and other capacity building efforts have only been developed since then and have evolved over time. https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/7655/-Gender_equality_and_the_environment_Policy_and_strategy-2015_Gender_equality_and_the_environment_policy_and_strategy.pdf.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y

an explicit commitment on this topic is made within the project document then the driver/assumption should also be specific to the described intentions.

v. Environmental and Social Safeguards

57. UNEP projects address environmental and social safeguards primarily through the process of environmental and social screening at the project approval stage, risk assessment and management (avoidance, minimization, mitigation or, in exceptional cases, offsetting) of potential environmental and social risks and impacts associated with project and programme activities. The Evaluation will confirm whether UNEP requirements³⁵ were met to: *review* risk ratings on a regular basis; *monitor* project implementation for possible safeguard issues; *respond* (where relevant) to safeguard issues through risk avoidance, minimization, mitigation or offsetting and *report* on the implementation of safeguard management measures taken. UNEP requirements for proposed projects to be screened for any safeguarding issues; for sound environmental and social risk assessments to be conducted and initial risk ratings to be assigned, are evaluated above under Quality of Project Design).

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

vi. Country Ownership and Driven-ness

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

vii. Communication and Public Awareness

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

Section 3. EVALUATION APPROACH, METHODS AND DELIVERABLES

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

The findings of the Evaluation will be based on the following:

- (a) A **desk review** of:
 - Relevant background documentation, inter alia

³⁵ For the review of project concepts and proposals, the Safeguard Risk Identification Form (SRIF) was introduced in 2019 and replaced the Environmental, Social and Economic Review note (ESERN), which had been in place since 2016. In GEF projects safeguards have been considered in project design since 2011.

- Project design documents (including minutes of the project design review meeting at approval); Annual Work Plans and Budgets or equivalent, revisions to the project (Project Document Supplement), the logical framework and its budget;
 - Project reports such as six-monthly progress and financial reports, progress reports from collaborating partners, meeting minutes, relevant correspondence etc.;
 - Project deliverables: [list];
 - Mid-Term Review or Mid-Term Evaluation of the project;
 - Evaluations/reviews of similar projects.
- (b) **Interviews** (individual or in group) with:
- UNEP Project Manager (PM);
 - Project management team, where appropriate;
 - UNEP Fund Management Officer (FMO);
 - Project partners, including [list];
 - Sub-Programme Coordinator;
 - Relevant resource persons;
 - Representatives from civil society and specialist groups (such as women's, farmers and trade associations etc).
- (c) **Surveys**
- (d) **Other data collection tools**

11. Evaluation Deliverables and Review Procedures

62. The Evaluation Team will prepare:

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

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

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

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

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

67. At the end of the evaluation process, the Evaluation Office will prepare a **Recommendations Implementation Plan** in the format of a table, to be completed and updated at regular intervals by the Project Manager. The Evaluation Office will track compliance against this plan on a six-monthly basis for a maximum of 12 months.

12. The Evaluation Team/Evaluation Consultant

68. For this Evaluation, the Evaluation Consultant will consist of an Evaluation Specialist who will work under the overall responsibility of the Evaluation Office represented by an Evaluation Manager Su Jin PAK, in consultation with the UNEP Project Manager, Nina Raasakka and Anham Salyani from the WWQA Coordination Team under the supervision of Richard Munang as HoU GEMS4EWE. Fund Management Officer TBC Nada Matta and the Sub-programme Coordinator of the Science Policy Programme of Work, Rula Qalyoubi. The consultant will liaise with the Evaluation Manager on any procedural and methodological matters related to the Evaluation, including travel. It is, however, each consultants' individual responsibility (where applicable) to arrange for their visas and immunizations as well as to plan meetings with stakeholders, organize online surveys, obtain documentary evidence and any other logistical matters related to the assignment. The UNEP Project Manager and project team will, where possible, provide logistical support (introductions, meetings etc.) allowing the consultants to conduct the Evaluation as efficiently and independently as possible.

69. The Evaluation Consultant will be hired over a period of 6 months from 1st December 2024 to 31st May 2025 and should have the following:

- a) a university degree in environmental sciences, environmental management, development studies, international development or other relevant environmental or social sciences area is required and an advanced degree in the same areas is desirable;
- b) a minimum of 5 years of technical / evaluation experience is required, preferably including evaluating large, regional or global programmes/alliances and using a Theory of Change approach;
- c) a good/broad understanding of ambient water quality monitoring and/or sustainable water management and global policy context around freshwater. Experience in building multi-stakeholder partnerships for advancing environmental goals and sustainability is desired.
- d) English and French are the working languages of the United Nations Secretariat. For this consultancy, fluency in oral and written English is a requirement.
- e) Working knowledge of the UN system and specifically the work of UNEP is an added advantage. The work will be home-based with possible field visits.

70. The Evaluation Consultant will be responsible, in close consultation with the Evaluation Office of UNEP for overall management of the Evaluation and timely provision of its outputs, described above in Section 11 Evaluation Deliverables. The Evaluation Specialist will make substantive and high- quality contributions to the evaluation process and outputs. The consultant will ensure together that all evaluation criteria and questions are adequately covered.

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

Inception phase of the Evaluation, including:

- preliminary desk review and introductory interviews with project staff;
- draft the reconstructed Theory of Change of the project;
- prepare the evaluation framework;
- develop the desk review and interview protocols;
- draft the survey protocols (if relevant);
- develop and present criteria for country and/or site selection for the evaluation mission;
- plan the evaluation schedule;
- prepare the Inception Report, incorporating comments until approved by the Evaluation Manager

Data collection and analysis phase of the Evaluation, including:

- conduct further desk review and in-depth interviews with project implementing and executing agencies, project partners and project stakeholders;
- (where appropriate and agreed) conduct an evaluation mission(s) to selected countries, visit the project locations, interview project partners and stakeholders, including a good representation of local communities. Ensure independence of the Evaluation and confidentiality of evaluation interviews.
- regularly report back to the Evaluation Manager on progress and inform of any possible problems or issues encountered and;
- keep the Project Manager informed of the evaluation progress.

Reporting phase, including:

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

Managing relations, including:

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

13. Schedule of the Evaluation

72. The table below presents the tentative schedule for the Evaluation.

Table 3. Tentative schedule for the Evaluation

Milestone	Tentative Dates
Evaluation Initiation Meeting	24 February 2025
Inception Report	13 March 2025
Evaluation Mission and/or E-based interviews, surveys etc.	14-27 March 2025
Powerpoint/presentation on preliminary findings and recommendations	28 March 2025
Draft report to Evaluation Manager (and Peer Reviewer)	18 April 2025
Draft Report shared with UNEP Project Manager and team	2 May 2025
Draft Report shared with wider group of stakeholders	2 June 2025
Final Report and evaluation brief	13 June 2025
Final Report shared with all respondents	16-27 June 2025

14. Contractual Arrangements

73. Evaluation Consultants will be selected and recruited by the Evaluation Office of UNEP under an individual Special Service Agreement (SSA) on a "fees only" basis (see below). By signing the service contract with UNEP/UNON, the consultant(s) certify that they have not been associated with the design and implementation of the project in any way which may jeopardize their independence and impartiality towards project achievements and project partner performance. In addition, they will not have any future interests (within six months after completion of the contract) with the project's executing or implementing units. All consultants are required to sign the Code of Conduct Agreement Form.

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

Schedule of Payment for the [Evaluation Consultant/Principal Evaluator]:

Deliverable	Percentage Payment
Approved Inception Report (<i>as per Guidance Note</i>)	30%
Approved Draft Main Evaluation Report (<i>as per Guidance Note</i>)	30%
Approved Final Main Evaluation Report (<i>as per Guidance Note</i>)	40%

Fees only contracts: Where applicable, air tickets will be purchased by UNEP and 75% of the Daily Subsistence Allowance for each authorised travel mission will be paid up front. Local in-country travel will only be reimbursed where agreed in advance with the Evaluation Manager and on the production of acceptable receipts. Terminal expenses and residual DSA entitlements (25%) will be paid after mission completion.

75. The consultants may be provided with access to UNEP's information management systems (e.g PIMS, Anubis, Sharepoint etc.) and if such access is granted, the consultants agree not to disclose information from that system to third parties beyond information required for, and included in, the evaluation report.

76. In case the consultants are not able to provide the deliverables in accordance with these guidelines, and in line with the expected quality standards by the UNEP Evaluation Office, payment may be withheld at the discretion of the Director of the Evaluation Office until the consultants have improved the deliverables to meet UNEP's quality standards.

77. If the consultant(s) fail to submit a satisfactory final product to UNEP in a timely manner, i.e. before the end date of their contract, the Evaluation Office reserves the right to employ additional human resources to finalize the report, and to reduce the consultants' fees by an amount equal to the additional costs borne by the Evaluation Office to bring the report up to standard³⁶.

³⁶This may include contract cancellation in-line with prevailing UN Secretariat rules.

Annex 1: Tools, Templates and Guidance Notes for use in the Evaluation

The tools, templates and guidance notes listed in the table below, and available from the Evaluation Manager, are intended to help Evaluation Managers and Evaluation Consultants to produce evaluation products that are consistent with each other and which can be compiled into a biennial Evaluation Synthesis Report. The biennial summary is used to provide an overview of progress to UNEP and the UN Environmental Assembly.

This suite of documents is also intended to make the evaluation process as transparent as possible so that all those involved in the process can participate on an informed basis. It is recognised that the evaluation needs of projects and portfolio vary and adjustments may be necessary so that the purpose of the evaluation process (broadly, accountability and lesson learning), can be met. Such adjustments should be decided between the Evaluation Manager and the Evaluation Consultants in order to produce evaluation reports that are both useful to project implementers and that produce credible findings.

ADVICE TO CONSULTANTS: As our tools, templates and guidance notes are updated on a continuous basis, kindly download documents from the link below and use those versions throughout the Evaluation.

<https://communities.unep.org/display/EOU/INDEPENDENT+EVALUATION+TOOLS+AND+TEMPLATES>

List of tools, templates and guidance notes available:

Terminal Evaluation Essential Tools

-  00 Evaluation Tools Description 09.11.21
-  00a_UNEP Glossary of results definitions_December 2023
-  00b_List of Documents for Evaluation 31.01.2024
-  01_Evaluation Criteria 31.01.2024
-  02_Criterion Rating Descriptions Matrix 31.01.2024
-  03_Evaluation Criteria Ratings Table 31.01.2024
-  04_Weighted Ratings Table 31.01.2024
-  05_Evaluation Methodology Guidance 31.01.2024

Terminal Evaluation Inception Report

-  06_Project Identification Table 31.01.2024
-  07_Inception Report Structure and Contents 31.01.2024
-  08_TOC Reformulation Justification Table 31.01.2024
-  09_Quality of Project Design Table 31.01.2024
-  09a_Quality of Project Design Template 31.01.2024
-  10_Stakeholder Analysis Guidance 31.01.2024
-  11_Gender Methods Guidance 31.01.2024
-  12_Safeguards Assessment Template 31.01.2024

Terminal Evaluation Main Evaluation Report

-  13_Evaluation Report Structure and Contents 10.05.22
-  14_Use of TOC in Project Evaluation 31.01.2024
-  15_Financial Tables 31.01.2024
-  16_Likelihood of impact Flow Chart 31.01.2024
-  16a_Likelihood of impact Test Case 31.01.2024
-  17_GEF_Evaluation Main Report Template 31.01.2024
-  18_NonGEF Evaluation Main Report Template 31.01.2024
-  19_Quality Of Eval Report FINAL ONLY 31.01.2024 FOR USE BY UNEP
-  20_Recommendations Quality Guidance 31.01.2024
-  20a_In Report Template Presenting Recs and LL 31.01.2024
-  21_GEF Portal Annex Template 31.01.2024

Terminal Evaluation Process Guidance

-  Process 1_Evaluation Process Guidelines for Consultants 31.01.2024
-  Process 2_Template for Attestation Letter 31.01.2024
-  Process 3_Evaluation Consultants Agreement Form 31.01.2024
-  Process 4_Guidelines for Field Work During Coronavirus 31.01.2024
-  Process 5_Evaluation Consultants Team Roles 31.01.2024
-  Process 6_ Template for Reference Checks 31.01.2024
-  Process 7_Letter of Introduction for Visa Applications Template 31.01.2024

- ANNEX 2. Result framework of **“Assessing key environmental issues and providing focused outlooks to strengthen science-based policy and decision making” (SMA 217083)**

Project Objective ³⁷ :			Subprogramme:	
To enhance uptake by internal and external stakeholders of aggregated, coherent monitoring data/analytics for early warning targeting nature, biodiversity loss, pollution, and the cascading risks of the triple planetary crises.			Science-Policy ☒ Environmental Governance ☒	
1. Project Outcome	Indicators ³⁸	Relevant PoW Outcome(s) and indicator(s) ³⁹	Relevant target(s) and indicators	SDG and Outcome risks
UN Agencies, MEAs, UNEP Divisions, Regional Offices and State and non-state actors across regions participate in the co-creation of EWE for the GEMS4EWE project document	% of EWE co-creators contributing to the co-creation of the GEMS4EWE project endorsing submission to PRC Baseline: 0 Target: 100%	PoW Outcome 1A (iv), 2C(iv), (v), and 3C (ii),(iv) Science Policy indicators i, ii and iii Environmental Governance: iv	SDG 6 (6.3.2) SDG 13 (13.1, 13.3), SDG 14 (14.1, 14.5.1) SDG 15 (15.1, 15.2, 15.3, 15.5), SDG 17 (17.6, 17.8, 17.I)	Competition for funding -Technical and technological limitations among preferred stakeholders,
	% of planned budget secured by December 2025 Baseline: 20% Target: 60%	PoW Outcome 1A, 2B and 3C Science Policy indicators i, ii and iii Environmental Governance: iv		

³⁷ The project objective is the intended physical, financial, institutional, social, environmental, or other development result to which the project is expected to contribute. The project objective should be obtained from either: the Intermediate state of the project's ToC; the 2025 PoW Outcome to which it best contributes to, or alternatively, the Direct Outcome of the PoW, if pertinent.

³⁸ Relevant projects that have a spatial information management plan need to include at least one spatial indicator per outcome. **The project contributes to IMPR reporting on under all four outputs (Output A,B,C,D)**

³⁹ When a project is relevant to more than one PoW outcome indicator, provide outcomes and outputs for each indicator in order to enable budget details per output and PoW Outcome.

Project outcome milestones (specify which indicator each milestone refers to)			Milestone attainment date ⁴⁰	
M1 At least 50% of EWE creators provide inputs on relevant actions carried out and on requirements for GEMS4All (Indicator 1)			June 2024	
M2 Funding mobilised by EW4All to deliver on its Pillar 2 that can be leveraged for implemented EWE Analytics is identified (Indicator 2)			December 2024	
M3 All UNEP Regional Office provided feedback to improve the design of the EWA Analytics platform (Indicator 1)			June 2025	
M4 The Resource mobilisation strategy captured in the project document reflects an agreed approach to mobilise the funds planned to deliver the agreed project results.			December 2025	
2. Project Outputs	Indicators	Relevant PoW Direct Outcome(s)	Relevant target(s) and indicators	SDG and Output risks
A. UNEP Divisions, UN Agencies, and MEAs participating in the EWE co-creation process contribute to adjusting/validating the parameters being currently monitored by GEMS Water, GEMS Air, and GEMS Ocean for EWE and in drafting the GEMS4EWE full project document	% of partners per region participating in the co-creation process providing information on parameters currently being monitored to inform the situation analysis section. Baseline 0, Target 10	As in the outcome	As in the outcome	As in the outcome
B. Establish the kind of support needed to integrate GEMS data providers into a 1 Stop Platform for EWE to ensure GEMS Water, GEMS Air, and GEMS Ocean generate scientifically sound and timely warnings	Number of stakeholders identified to support the development of a 1-stop platform to be developed by the Data Analytics for EWE project. Baseline 0, Target at least 1 representative each from partners within the UN and without	As in the outcome	As in the outcome	As in the outcome

⁴⁰ 1 per reporting period: June and December of each year

C. Establish gender-sensitive knowledge products to be developed and availed through GEMS Water, GEMS Air, and GEMS	Number of gender suitable knowledge product types documented capturing lessons learned and identifying drivers and assumptions that need to be in place to sustain anticipated changes: Baseline 0, Target 3	As in the outcome	As in the outcome	As in the outcome
D. Map out state and non-state actors in regions to be trained and guided in translating environmental warnings into positive actions to tackle the triple planetary crisis and to contribute to the co-creation of GEMS4EWE	Number of state and non-state actors mapped for training by region Baseline (2023) Baseline 0, Target 12 (2 per region)	As in the outcome	As in the outcome	As in the outcome