

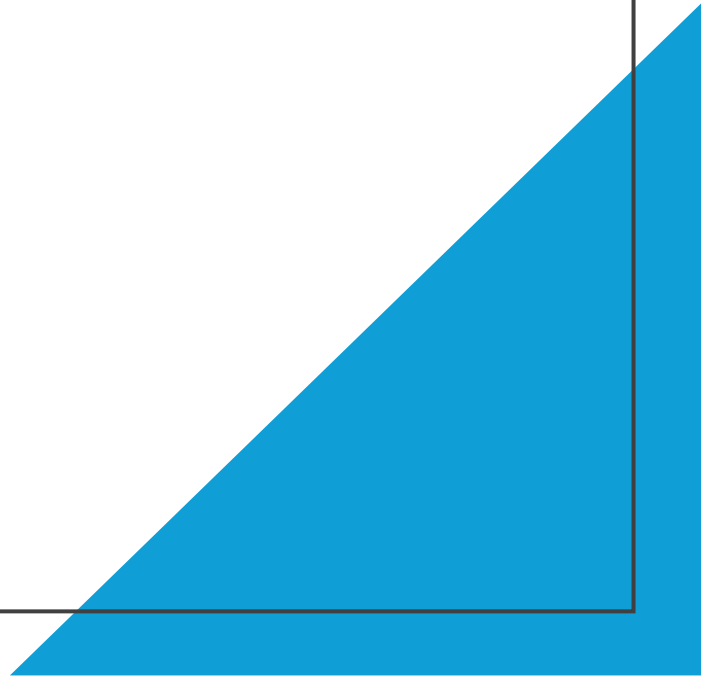
Environment in UN80

WP 27

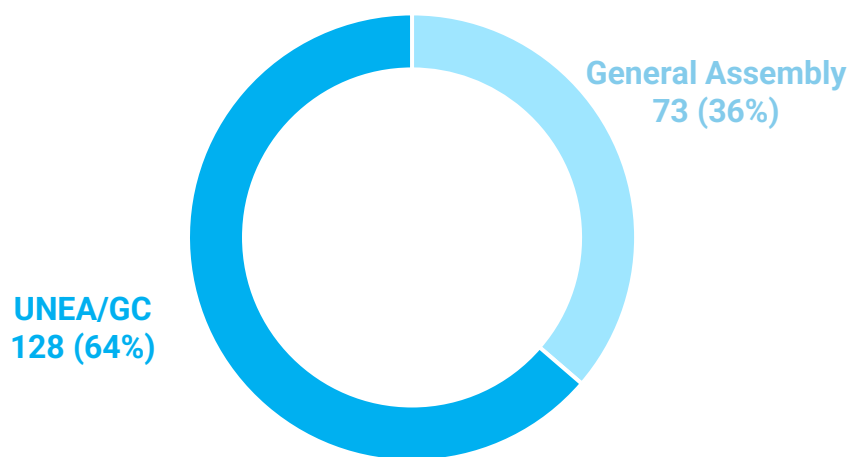
Leads: UNEP and UNFCCC

Secretariat briefing

23 April 2026

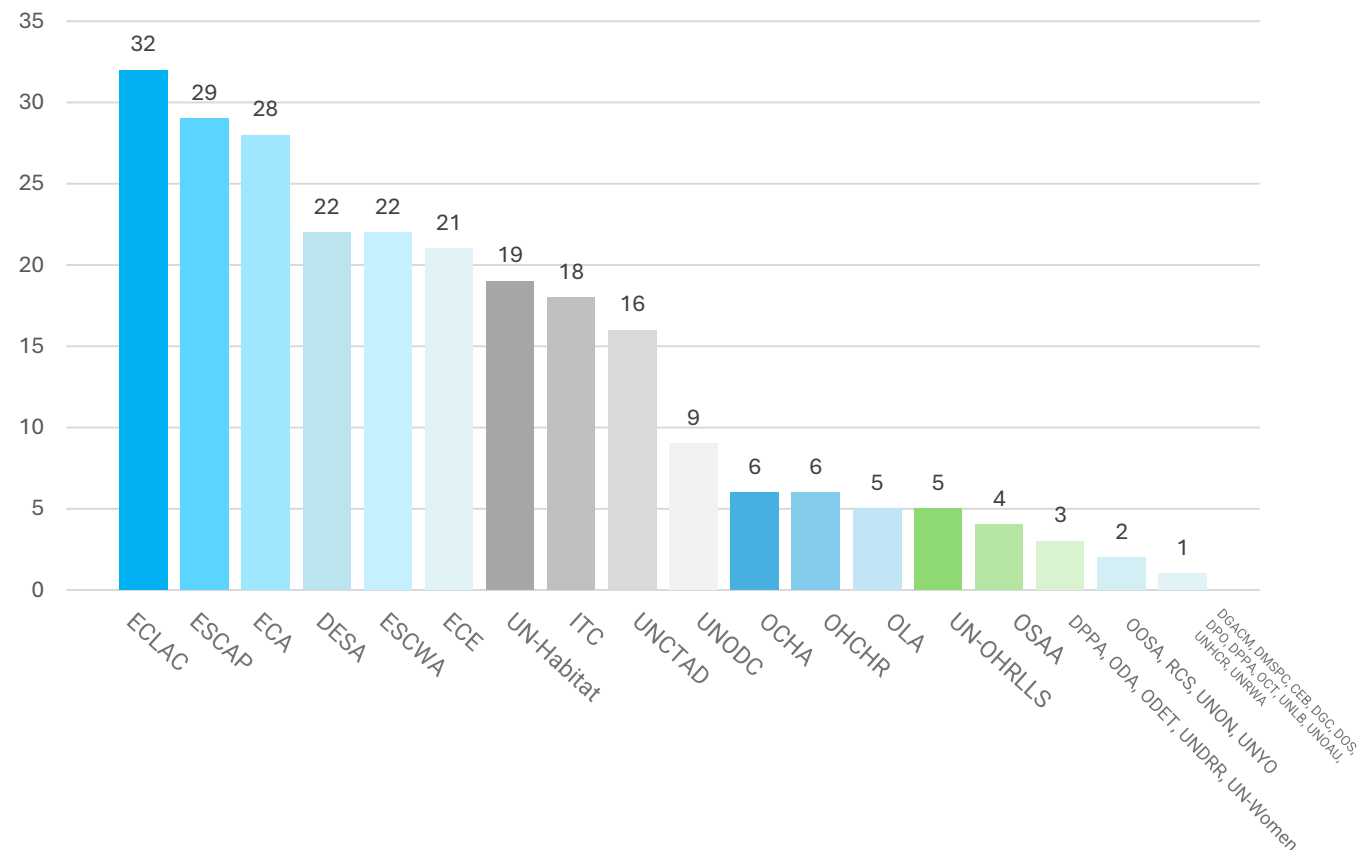


UNEP Mandates are mostly from UNEA but also from UNGA



Source: Analysis done of the Mandate review dashboard

Many UN entities cite Environmental Mandates



cited by UN entities in support of resource requirements in the UN's Proposed Programme Budget for 2026

*UNEP has 146 mandates where it is the sole entity

UNGA resolution on Mandate lifecycle followed the SG's Mandate Implementation Review Report

- 31 July 2025 – [SG report on Mandate Implementation Review](#), focuses on systemic challenges –and offers proposals for improvement across the full lifecycle of mandates.
- 27 August – GA [decision 79/571](#) establishes *informal ad hoc working group* to consider in its scope the proposals contained in the report of the Secretary-General and to identify principles and follow-up actions in order to improve the creation, delivery and review of mandates.
- September - 5 December 2025 – Discovery phase. UNEP was invited to present UNEA practices on mandate creation, implementation, review and monitoring.
- January-March 2026 – Consultations on a draft resolution.
- 31 March – General Assembly adopted [resolution 80/251](#) on *mandate creation, implementation and review for an efficient and effective United Nations*

UNGA resolution 80/251 includes many existing UNEA practices

- **Key elements:**
 - **A more structured approach across the full the mandate life cycle – from design to implementation to review**
 - **Increased emphasis on systematic mandate review cycles** (3–5 years), the potential for the sunset or adjustment of mandates, and the identification of duplicative or inactive mandates.
 - **Increased transparency through further development of a UN system-wide mandate registry** as a critical reference tool
- **Member States**
 - to undertake **collective mandate implementation reviews across intergovernmental organs** and clustered mandate implementation reviews of similar or related mandates.
- **Secretary-General**
 - **to facilitate coordination and the assignment of implementation responsibilities** across the UN system, based on comparative and collaborative advantage, and consistent with decisions of the respective intergovernmental mandating organs.
 - **To Strengthen and harmonize of management for results mechanisms across the UN system.**
 - **to regularly review coordination mechanisms to enhance strategic coordination and coherence.**
- The **GA Ad Hoc Working Group will continue** its work until 30 April 2027

Strong alignment with existing UNEA practices (concept notes for new mandates, consolidation of proposals, Secretariat technical support, and a growing emphasis on evidence-based decision-making, clear articulation of expected impact and indicative financial implications of mandates)

Environmental support needs to be streamlined for more impactful action

Objective and activity of WP 27

Para 47

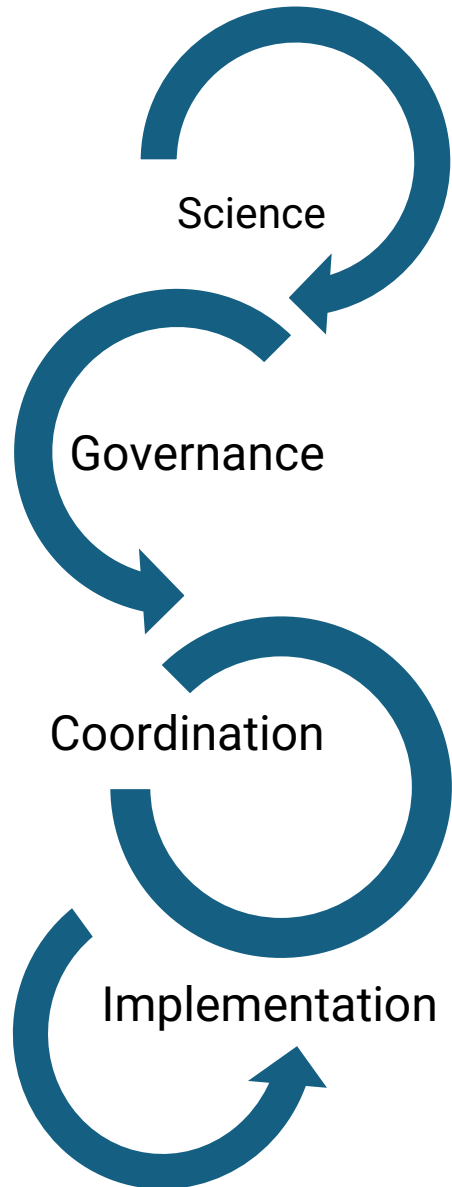
“Environmental issues are growing in importance, and environmental responsibilities are dispersed across UN entities. We will undertake a thorough assessment of current arrangements and make proposals on possible structural changes and programme realignments on environmental issues” [UN80_WS3-1_250921_1238 \(1\).pdf](#), p 22

Indicative activity

Undertake a thorough assessment of current arrangements and make proposals on possible structural changes and programme realignments on environmental issues.

Strengthening each link – and its interconnections – critical for transformative change to tackle environmental challenges

WP 27 ToRs



Science

- The importance of a healthy environment to the 3 UN pillars is recognized and environmental science is better coordinated and translated into policy action and brought to country level

Governance

- Strengthen environmental governance to accelerate synergistic action and collaboration of UN work on environment across UN entities.

Coordination

- Strengthen coordination and collaboration of UN work on environment to enhance policy coherence in support of implementation of environmental commitments Implementation

Implementation

- Strengthen UN system support to MEA implementation and environmental action by Member States

Broad engagement of UN system in WP 27

Co-chairs

- ☐ UNEP Executive Director
- ☐ UNFCCC Executive Secretary

Participants

- ☐ 20 entities from UN Secretariat; specialized agencies; funds and programs; regional economic commissions; MEAs; and coordinating mechanisms.

Multiple methods used in the assessments of current arrangements

Phases:

- **Discovery**
- **Ideation**
- **Drafting**

- **Literature review**
- **Survey of UN agencies' work in science**
- **Mapping :**
 - of system wide engagement on environmental matters
 - of existing processes (administrative, programmatic) supporting synergies across MEAs
- **Case examples** of existing initiatives to foster programmatic cooperation among MEAs.
- **Case studies to study good practices** in delivery and support of MEA commitments in countries
- **Stock-take of existing UNEA processes and opportunities**
- **Landscape assessment** of existing support mechanisms for implementation.

Consultations based on working papers drawing from above assessments

Delivering environmental science, foresight, and vulnerability assessments better to support pillars of the UN charter across the UN system

Issue Area A. Science (Lead: Andrea Hinwood, UNEP, Chief Scientist)

What do we want to achieve?

- Determine how environmental science is generated, brokered, coordinated and translated into policy action across the three pillars of the UN Charter
- Map existing environmental science related activities

Key issues in discussions:

- Common understanding of “**environmental science**”..
- Entitles conduct a wide range of **science functions**, reflecting specialization, comparative advantage but also recognizing this leads to duplication, fragmentation and reduced visibility.
- Strengthened **environmental science “translation”** – “So, what am I supposed to do with this information?”

Key findings – Science

- **The health and stability of the environment sit at the core of all three pillars of the United Nations Charter.** A stable and healthy environment underpins social and economic systems, while its degradation acts as a multiplier of risk, exacerbating conflict, displacement and inequality.
- **Environmental science is therefore a vital component of the UN system's ability to address these challenges. Environmental science is also central to realizing the right to a healthy environment and the right to benefit from scientific progress and its applications.**
- Environmental science is often **produced/used in parallel, with limited systematic reliance on each other's outputs, leading to duplication, inefficiencies, and missed opportunities for collaboration.**
- Although scientific production processes are broadly similar across entities and often rely on external expertise, this can result in underutilization of in-house UN capacities and limited collaboration.
- The **translation of global scientific outputs into actionable insights at the country level is lacking.**
- Limited engagement across entities in the **development of environmental benchmarks**, despite their importance for mainstreaming environmental considerations.
- Overall, the **UN system does not require major structural reforms in environmental science.** Instead, the greatest gains lie in better connecting, aligning, and leveraging existing capacities.

Strengthen environmental governance to accelerate synergistic action and collaboration of UN work on environment across UN entities

Issue Area B. Governance (Lead: Astrid Schomaker, Executive Secretary, CBD)

What do we want to achieve?

- Greater synergies among MEAs, considering the way the MEAs work together and how 'synergies' could lead to administrative cost savings and can increase impact on the ground.
- UNEA serves as a stronger environmental platform for collective action.
- Identification of opportunities for programmatic realignments where this can enhance coherence and synergy.

Key issues under discussion

- **Administrative synergies and efficiencies** - Operational efficiencies for more cost-effective delivery and reduced overlaps. Existing initiatives that can be scaled up.
- **Programmatic synergies** - How can existing synergy processes within and across clusters be strengthened and greater ambition beyond existing processes be considered?
- **Adapting UNEA to global environmental governance needs** - How can UNEA's role and policy impact be strengthened in particular as regards promoting synergies across MEAs? How could UNEA be elevated as convening platform for collective action ? Desirable future outcomes of MEAs Day .
- **Data, harmonized monitoring and reporting** - existing opportunities and how to create new opportunities for more harmonized approaches in monitoring and reporting? Existing toolbox that we can build on and scale up for greater impact?

Key findings – Governance (MEAs)

- ❑ **The MEA landscape is complex, with both overlap and gaps** across processes, support structures, mandates, memberships and policy agendas.
- ❑ **Reporting demands across multiple MEAs impose a significant burden on Member States.**
- ❑ **MEAs have catalyzed focused action, results and systemic changes...**
 - **Successful processes** (Party-led and Secretariat-driven) have enabled greater administrative and programmatic synergies across MEAs.
 - **Diversity of initiatives** remains, ranging from stakeholder engagement to capacity building and fundraising, knowledge management and digital tools. This can create competition instead of mutual supportiveness. Efficiencies and co-benefits can be strengthened in how the UN system supports national-level implementation.

Key findings – Governance (UNEA)

❑ UNEA's system-wide convening potential remains underutilized

- UNEA has yet to fully realize its potential to act as the highest-level convening platform for coherent, system-wide environmental action, including through
 - reinforcing its institutional linkages with other intergovernmental processes; and,
 - strengthening its engagement with MEAs and their governing bodies, to promote greater coherence and synergies in implementation

❑ Clear opportunities to advance greater coherence and strengthen global environmental governance through a system-wide outlook

Strengthen coordination and collaboration of UN work on environment to enhance policy coherence in support of implementation of commitments

Issue Area C – Coordination and collaboration (Lead: Ligia Noronha, ASG and Secretary EMG)

What do we want to achieve?

- Enhanced science - policy - action coherence on the environment in the UN system via a strengthened and better-connected UN Environmental Management Group (EMG)
- A more effective leverage of the UN Development system (UNDS), including UN regional architecture and processes and the UN Country teams in support of improved delivery

Key issues in discussions:

- How to strengthen the UN EMG in its role of environmental coordination mechanism in the UN system
- Reflect on successful approaches, that would serve the need for a stronger policy coherence, integration and implementation;
- How to leverage the UN system regional and country assets so global guidance can be translated effectively in ground-based solutions and define ways to track progress

Key findings – Coordination

The 51 UN EMG Members are active across environmental and other SDGs

- The UN system engagement on the environment shows high concentration on climate and biodiversity actions; less so on pollution actions

The UN EMG holds greater potential than it is currently able to deliver

- Can benefit from better and higher-level institutional anchoring in the UN system
- Needs more structured collaboration with coordination mechanisms and system wide platforms
- Its global approaches need to bring stronger science-policy coherence and to be designed for implementation at the global-regional-country levels to ensure science-policy-action continuum

Strengthening connections between science-policy is essential to translate global priorities into coordinated support for Member States, via the regional level, and to enable feedback from country actions back to global level

- Diverse case studies of successful actions suggest that the integration of environment in the work of UN agencies is more successful when global norms and guidance are translated into action via region and country-specific thematic entry points and feedback from country and region is reflected upon at global level

The financing architecture can at times drive coordination, however fragmented funding often undermines system collaboration, regardless of good intentions.

- Vertical funds often drive competitive behavior among agencies

Strengthen UN system support to MEA implementation and environmental action by Member States

Issue Area D. Implementation (Lead: UNFCCC, James Grabert; Co-lead: UNEP, Martin Krause)

What do we want to achieve?

- Effective national level implementation of MEA decisions and other multilaterally agreed environmental policies
- Increased coherence and effectiveness in UN support to member states.
- Effective engagement of real economy actors to catalyze support to MEA implementation.

Key issues for discussion

- **Connecting MEAs to real economy, financial architecture, country ownership, UNCT, country typology, incentives to collaborate**
- **Strengthen the policy–implementation nexus**
- **Establish shared support mechanisms**
One-stop shop for information and support (joint help desks, targeted knowledge products, etc)
- **Mobilize private and blended finance**
Structured approach to private sector engagement

Key findings – Implementation

Assessments around complexity, information, capacity, aligning country needs and global commitments, transaction costs

- Member states are required to navigate increasingly complex, multiple, often connected, MEA commitments.
- Access to information and technical support to identify and implement cross-cutting solutions often insufficient.
- As MEAs move into implementation, engagement and support from real economy actors is often lacking, particularly around collaboration and practical solutions.
- Duplication and transaction costs in the support provided by UN at global, regional and national levels impact implementation delivery.
- National implementation capacity for connected MEA commitments not always benefiting from aligned and coordinated UN support.

Key findings – Implementation

Assessments around financing needs

- MEAs increasingly require large-scale transformation of economic systems to address growing risks from climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.
- While governments remain responsible for implementing MEA commitments, achieving the scale of transformation required will depend heavily on private sector investment and action across key sectors of the economy.
- The financing needs associated with some of MEAs (UNFCCC, Kunming-Montreal Protocol, and BRS conventions) is expected to require at least \$5–7 trillion per year in redirected and new investment globally.
- Public finance alone cannot meet this demand. Most analyses indicate that the majority of required capital must come from private sector investment, with public finance playing a catalytic role in reducing risk and enabling new markets.
- Despite this reality, engagement between MEAs and the private sector remains limited and fragmented. Many MEA processes focus primarily on intergovernmental negotiation and reporting structures, while the actors responsible for delivering many of the required transformations - companies, investors, and supply chains - are not systematically engaged.

Other UN 80 Work packages are also of relevance to support environmental action



WP 5–Country configuration



WP 6 Regional reset



WP 7 – Joint Knowledge hubs



WP 8 - Expertise on demand



WP 9 - Human Rights Group



WP 15 - Technology accelerator platforms



WP 16 - Data Commons: Data, analytics, and measuring impact



WP 18 - Funding mechanisms

Based on the findings of our assessments, your guidance on the following will be very welcome

- ☐ How can we elevate UNEA in the multilateral system? How can science-policy-action be strengthened through UNEA?
- ☐ What pathways do you see for the MEAs to address the issues of fragmentation and dispersion of environmental governance?
- ☐ Do you have any suggestions to strengthen environmental coordination and collaboration for science -policy-action in the UN and beyond through UNEP, through the EMG?
- ☐ How can we highlight the positive multiplier effect of a healthy environment to development, peace and achievement of human rights?
- ☐ Do you have any suggestions on structural changes or programmatic alignments?



Thank you