

Validated Terminal Review of the UNEP Project
Coherent Integration of the Environmental Dimension
of the Sustainable Development Goals in Regional and
National Policy Frameworks in Africa
(PDF-SDG-2021-06)

2022-2024



UNEP Africa Office

Validation Date: January 2026



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Front cover: Sketch map of Africa and a listing of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals

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This report has been prepared by an external consultant. It is a product of a Management-led Terminal Review exercise, which is a management-led process to assess performance at the project's operational completion. UNEP Evaluation Office provides templates and tools to support the review process and provides a formal assessment of the quality of the Review report, which is provided within this report's annexed material. In addition, the Evaluation Office formally validates the report by ensuring that the performance judgments made are consistent with evidence presented in the Review report and in-line with the performance standards set out for independent evaluations. As such the project performance ratings presented in this Review report may be adjusted by the Evaluation Office. The findings and conclusions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the Member States or the United Nations Environment Programme Senior Management.

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Coherent Integration of the Environmental Dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals in Regional and National Policy Frameworks in Africa -(ref. # PDF-SDG-2021-06)

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17/09/2025

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Acknowledgements

This terminal review report was prepared for UNEP Africa Office by Ms. Nyawira Muthui, an independent international expert on project and programme reviews and evaluation.

The reviewer would like to express their gratitude to all persons met and who contributed to this review, as listed in Annex 3. In particular, the reviewer thanks the project team led by Mr. Robert Wabunoha, for their contribution and collaboration throughout the review process. Sincere appreciation is also expressed to the Project Management implementation partners who took time to provide information and to provide comments to the draft report.

The review consultant hopes that the findings, conclusions and recommendations will contribute to the successful finalisation of the current project, formulation of a next phase and to the continuous improvement of similar projects in other countries and regions.

BRIEF EXTERNAL CONSULTANT(S) BIOGRAPHY

The evaluation was undertaken by Ms. Muthui, a senior natural resources management professional, with 25 years' experience facilitating African governments and local communities to mainstream environment, natural resources management and climate risks into development planning programmes, projects and policies, gathered from United Nations, international non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and civil society (Brief CV in Annex 9). From 2006 to October 2014, Ms. Muthui was a Technical Advisor on Land/Forest Management, Ecosystems and Biodiversity at the UNDP-GEF, a unit that assists African governments to programme and access resources from the Global Environment Facility, Least Developed Country Fund for Adaptation, the Green Climate Fund, and other international and bilateral funds. Before that she managed a consulting company that primarily developed and supervised implementation of environmental projects in Eastern and Southern Africa (2004-2006). Prior to that, she worked for the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) at regional and global levels (1997-2003). Ms. Muthui worked with the University of Nairobi between 1993 and 1995, and was a member of a UNESCO Research Team in Northern Kenya between 1987 and 1992. Ms. Muthui has therefore formulated and supervised the implementation of, and evaluated numerous projects throughout Africa, many of them addressing climate change adaptation, biodiversity conservation, sustainable land and forest management.

Reviewer

Nyawira Muthui
International Consultant

Signed by me, Nyawira Muthui



on 25/09/2025

ABOUT THE REVIEW

Joint Review: No

Report Language: English.

Review Type: Terminal Review

Brief Description: This report is a management-led Terminal Review of a UNEP project implemented between 2022 and 2024, titled '*Coherent Integration of the Environmental Dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals in National Policy Frameworks in Africa*'. The project's overall development goal was to enhance the capacities of countries in Africa to implement SDGs in a more innovative manner by integrating environmental sustainability and resilience into policies, strategies and action plans. The review sought to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The review has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, project donors and the relevant agencies of the project participating countries.

Source(s) of Funding by Country: N/A

Source(s) of Funding by Institution Type: (indicate all that apply)

Foundation/NGO	No
Private Sector	No
UN Body	Yes (UN Peace and Development Trust Fund administered by United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA))
Multilateral Fund	No
Environment Fund	No

Key words¹:

NES (National Environment Summaries)
MATATU (data platform)
SGR (Sustainability Gap Report)
NSO (National Statistics Office)
EPA (Environment Protection Agencies)

Data collection period: March to June 2025

Field mission dates: N/A

¹ Please provide maximum five key words, which are not already in the project title.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CCA	Common Country Analysis
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
EPA	Environment Protection Agency
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NES	National Environment Summaries
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PIMS	Programme and Information Management System (UN Environment)
PMT	Project Management Team
POW	Programme of Work (UN Environment)
Prodoc	Project Document
PSC	Programme Support Cost Project Steering Committee
RCO	Resident Coordinator Office
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TOC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
TR	Terminal Review
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNEA	United Nations Environment Assembly
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNSDG	United Nations Sustainable Development Group
VNR	Voluntary National Review

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION TABLE

Table 1: Project General Information

UNEP PIMS ID	PIMS-02086	Grant ID2	PDF-SDG-2021-06
UNEP Management (Division/Branch/Unit):	Africa Office of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)		
Implementing Partners:	None		
Relevant Sustainable development goals (SDG):	25 core indicators for environmental SDG targets across SDG Goals 6, 8, 12, 14, 15, and 17 in the Global Framework for the 2030 Agenda.		
Medium-term strategy (MTS) (all that apply):		UNEP approval date: Jan 2022	
Programme of Work (POW) Direct Outcome(s) number/reference	POW Direct Outcome:	MTS 2025 Outcomes number/reference	MTS 2025 Outcome: Science-policy
	POW Output: Policymaking and decision-making for climate action are informed by the latest science-based analysis and data generation.		POW Expected Accomplishment: Data & scientific knowledge persuasively translated into feasible policy instruments and action plans.
Sub-programme:		Programme Coordination	
Expected start date:	January 2022	Actual start date:	January 2022
Planned completion date:	December 2024	Actual operational completion date:	December 2024
Planned UNPDF grant value		Actual UNPDF grant value as of Dec 2024	US\$ 790,205.52
Planned total project budget ³ at approval:	US\$ 813,000 (including 7% Programme Support Cost split 4% UNEP, 3% UNDESA)	Actual total expenditures reported as of Dec 2024	US\$ 790,205.52
Planned Extra-budgetary Funds ⁴ :	Cash: Not Applicable (N/A) In-kind: N/A	Secured Extra-budgetary Funds:	Cash: N/A In-kind: N/A
		Actual Extra-budgetary Funds expenditures reported as of [date]: March 2025	Cash: N/A
First disbursement:	31 December 2021	Planned date of financial closure:	Estimated 1 year after operational completion.
No. of formal project revisions:	N/A	Date of last approved project revision:	N/A
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	N/A	Date of Last Steering Committee meeting:	N/A
Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (planned date):	N/A	Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (actual date):	N/A
Terminal Evaluation (planned date):	March 2025	Terminal Review (actual date):	March-June 2025
Coverage – Implementing Countries:	Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia	Coverage – Implementing Region:	Africa
Dates of previous project phases:		Status of future project phases:	

² For example, ID references from EC, IKI, , Adaptation Fund, GCF.

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)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. Project background

- | Outcome | Outputs |
|--|--|
| Outcome 1: Enhanced capacity (skills, information/data, data processing, storage and use platforms) of NSOs, EPAs, UNCTs and selected UNEP managers formation (at least 19 African countries). | Output 1.1: Skills development: NSOs, EPAs, UNCTs and other relevant national stakeholders skilled on the generation and use of updated, relevant data/information for the integration of environmental considerations in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of SDG programs and strategies. |
| | Output 1.2: Data platforms and repositories: Environmental data and statistics platforms and repositories to support CCA and UNSDCF processes developed |
| Outcome 2: CCAs & UNSDCFs of 19 countries integrate environmental dimensions of SDGs | Output 2.1: Integration of environmental dimensions: CCAs and UNSDCFs integrate environmental dimensions of SDGs in 19 countries |
| | Output 2.2: Experiences and lessons learned in capacity development of National Institutions documented and disseminated |
- The objective of this project was “to foster coherent integration of environmental dimensions of Sustainable Development Goals in regional and national policy frameworks through capacity development for environmental data, statistics and reporting for strengthened science-policy nexus”. This was achieved by enhancing capacities (skills and open data platforms with Artificial Intelligence (AI) functions) of national-level actors, namely National Statistics Offices (NSOs), Environment Protection Agencies (EPAs) and United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs) in nineteen countries⁵, and selected Project Managers in UNEP Africa Office to integrate environmental considerations into country-level planning and programming, particularly within the context of achieving the SDGs.
 - The project was financed by the United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund under the auspices of the Government of the People’s Republic of China via a grant of PDF-SDG-2021-06 managed by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA). The total budget for the project was US\$ 813,000 (including 7% Programme Support Cost (PSC), split UNEP commissioned a Management-led Terminal Review (TR), that was undertaken in line with 4% UNEP, 3% United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) (Table 1).

B. This Review

- the UN Development Account Project Evaluation Guidelines⁶ harmonised with the Guidance Note on Planning and Conducting Terminal Evaluations of 11th Tranche projects and the UNEP Evaluation Policy⁷. The review assesses project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determines outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability.
- The Review 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 stakeholders involved in implementing the project, primarily UNEP ROA, Environment Protection Agencies (EPAs) and National Statistics Offices (NSO) from the 19 project countries (include Botswana, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia) and United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs) of the target countries. Other entities that will benefit from the lessons are UNEP staff active in similar areas of work, UNCT Focal Points and heads of out-posted offices, as well as other countries and organisations implementing work with the funding.

C. Key findings

- Based on the findings from this review, the project demonstrates performance at the ‘Satisfactory’ level (Table 2). The project performed strongly on strategic relevance, effectiveness, likelihood of

⁵ The original 19 countries are Botswana, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia).

⁶ Available from the UNEP Evaluation Office

⁷ UNEP Evaluation Policy: <https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/41114>

impacts, efficiency, sustainability and stakeholder engagement. Areas that could have benefited from further attention are quality of project design and reporting. The strengths and weaknesses are summarised below.

6. **Strategic relevance:** The project is highly relevant to UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2018-20217 and MTS 2022-2025, the mandate of UNDESA, and the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN). Being implemented by UNEP Africa Office, there were no issues affecting its planning and implementation. Implementation started immediately after the conclusion of the financing agreement and the whole project was completed within the stipulated time and budget, scoring HS on effectiveness.
7. **Effectiveness:** All the activities were concluded and all but one of the programme outputs were delivered within time and budgets. Indeed, it exceeded targets on all the three targets of output 2.1. furthermore, the project surpassed targets for 4 of its 5 achievement indicators. It reported zero achievement on its 5th indicator (amount of financial and other resources mobilized by country partners and stakeholders that include governmental authorities and UNCTs, to support the continuity of interventions on coherent integration of environmental data and statistics at the national level). The reviewer's view is that the real challenge is the difficulty of monitoring the indicator and not that partners did not make financial contributions.
8. **Likelihood of impacts:** The project impacts are likely to be achieved in the long-term. The project exceeded targets for the three most critical indicators of achievement. The drivers to support transition from outputs to project outcomes, outcomes to intermediate states and intermediate states to impacts are in place, the assumptions for the change process from outputs to project outcomes, outcomes to intermediate states and intermediate states to impacts have held and are likely to continue holding. Indeed, there is already evidence that the quality of data and its use in monitoring SDG progress have improved in Sub-Sahara Africa and at the global level. Furthermore, the project exceeded targets for the two most critical indicators of achievement.
9. **Efficiency:** The project design embedded efficiency through integrating environmental sustainability and resilience into national SDG planning, implementation and monitoring vehicles, using existing structures.
10. **M&E and reporting:** The TR finds that the monitoring system was operational and facilitated the timely tracking of results and progress towards projects objectives throughout the project implementation period, except the indicator on financial resources generated by the partners for further SDG support. However, the annual project reports are very sketchy, largely filled into the targets' column of the Logical Framework Analysis (LFA), rarely accompanied by informative narratives that give detailed accounts of project implementation and achievements. A final project report was not availed to the review.
11. **Sustainability:** The project build on existing programs of relevant partners, targeting policies and existing policy frameworks, working through the institutions with recognized mandate for policy and development; and, it delivered structures, guidelines and curriculums for continued use by those mandated to support implementation of SDGs and Agenda 2063. In addition, it mainstreamed the use of scientific information thorough the UNSDCF's, which will ensure that all the UN and national budgets for the SDG programmes will sustain the science-policy nexus. Furthermore, majority of the institutions with the responsibility of sustaining the project outcomes were engaged in the project implementation and have demonstrated strong ownership and interest in the project.
12. **Stakeholder engagement:** Stakeholders' identification and the importance of clear stakeholder engagement in project implementation and achievement and sustainability of project results was mainstreamed throughout the project design. There is evidence that the project was integrated into the programmes of partner institutions, including UNCTs that support the African countries on the development of the UNSDCF's. This engendered high levels of ownership by project partners.

D. Weaknesses

13. **Quality of project design:** The TOC was poorly described, the LFA was weak, results did not always comply with the "smartness" criteria, the indicators were repeated across outcomes, there were no output indicators and no evidence was provided to show that the project design was reviewed by

the UNEP Project Review Committee, which would likely have recommended improvement of the integrity of the project document.

14. The project did not provide a gender score and does not specifically state that it would take a human rights approach to implementation. However, the project was designed by UNEP Africa Office, in compliance with UNEP guidelines, which integrates human rights and gender equity.
15. The project did not conduct environmental and social safeguards and there is evidence provided to the reviewer that these were monitored or reported on. However, it can be argued that given the nature of the project – no activities on the ground – and the fact that it was designed and managed by UNEP, it is unlikely that the ESS would have triggered any risks that would require specific management

E. Conclusions:

16. Despite the few weaknesses discussed above, this project made remarkable progress towards enhancing the capacities of national institutions to effectively manage, access, and harmonize environmental information. This highlights the critical importance of well-structured environmental information systems in enabling evidence-based decision-making, strategic planning, and compliance with both national and international reporting obligations. By proactively addressing existing gaps and building institutional strengths, the project has steadily established a robust framework that empowers institutions to generate, analyse, and disseminate high-quality environmental data, an essential step toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Table 2: Summary of project findings and ratings criterion

Evaluation criteria	Rating
Strategic Relevance	
Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and strategic priorities	HS
Alignment to Donor/Partner strategic priorities	HS
Relevance to global, regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities	HS
Complementarity with relevant existing interventions/coherence	MS
Quality of Project Design	MS
Nature of External Context	
Effectiveness	HS
Availability of outputs	HS
Achievement of project outcomes	S
Likelihood of impact	L
Financial Management	S
Adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures	S
Completeness of project financial information	S
Communication between finance and project management staff	S
Efficiency	S
Monitoring and Reporting	MS
Monitoring design and budgeting	MS
Monitoring of project implementation	MS
Project reporting	MS
Sustainability	Likely
Socio-political sustainability	Likely
Financial sustainability	S
Institutional sustainability	Likely
Factors Affecting Performance	
Preparation and readiness	MS
Quality of project management and supervision	S
2.1 UNEP/Implementing Agency:	S
2.2 Partners/Executing Agency:	MS
Stakeholders' participation and cooperation	MS
Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality	S
Environmental and social safeguards	S
Country ownership and driven-ness	MS
Communication and public awareness	S
Overall Project Performance Rating	Satisfactory

F. Lessons Learned

- **Lesson 1:** Well-positioned, modest investments can have far reaching, transformative results, when the right partnerships target strategic policy processes and empower the most relevant drivers of economic development.
- **Lesson 2:** Targeting institutions with the mandate for project initiatives is a win-win strategy.
- **Lesson 3:** Emerging technologies and AI can leap-frog availability and use of scientifically sound quality data in the planning, implementation and monitoring of SDGs in Africa.
- **Lesson 4:** Flexibility in project design is essential to accommodate emerging needs and challenges, particularly with high staff turn-over in the NSOs, EPAs and UNCTs.
- **Lesson 5:** Early and sustained engagement with the technical and political actors ensures ownership.
- **Lesson 6:** Regional collaboration offers valuable peer learning opportunities and strengthens collective action on environmental sustainability.

G. Recommendations

- **Recommendation 1:** All partners (governments, UNEP and other development partners) should improve internet connectivity in government (NSOs, EPAs) offices for effective use of the open data platforms.
- **Recommendation 2:** Avail resources (financial, continued skills development, networking) post project
- **Recommendation 3:** Launch the MATATU platform at a meeting of the Africa Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN).
- **Recommendation 4:** Scale up the MATATU platform to provide more data types and AI functions
- **Recommendation 5:** Strengthen in-country resource mobilisation in all the countries to continue support (skills development, expanding and maintaining the open data platforms and its use).

Validation

The report has been subject to an independent validation exercise performed by UNEP's Evaluation Office. The performance ratings for the project, set out in the Conclusions and Recommendations section, have been adjusted as a result. The overall project performance is validated at the '**Satisfactory**' level. Moreover, the Evaluation Office has found the overall quality of the report to be '**Satisfactory**' (see Annex XII).

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The project titled "Coherent integration of the environmental dimension of the sustainable development goals in regional and national policy frameworks in Africa" (PIMS-02086 and Reference number PDF-SDG-2021-06) was designed and implemented by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Science-Policy Unit of Africa Office. Funded by the United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund managed by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the total project budget was US\$ \$ 813,000.00. While the project was approved in September 2021, the financing contract was signed in December 2021 and actual implementation started in January/February 2022. The project was presented in a template provided by the Trust Fund's secretariat.
2. UNEP has commissioned a Management-led Terminal Review (TR), undertaken in line with the UNDESA 2030 Agenda Sub-Fund's Guidelines harmonised with the Guidance Note on Planning and Conducting Terminal Evaluations of 11th Tranche projects and the UNEP Evaluation Policy⁸. The review will 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.
3. The Review 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 stakeholders involved in implementing the project, primarily UNEP ROA, Environment Protection Agencies (EPAs) and National Statistics Offices (NSO) from the 19 project countries (include Botswana, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia) and United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs) of the target countries. Other entities that will benefit from the lessons are UNEP staff active in similar areas of work, UNCT Focal Points and heads of out-posted offices, as well as other countries and organisations implementing work with UNPDF funding.

Review process

4. **Planning and Initiation:** The evaluation was carried out in line with the steps described in Fig. 1. This evaluation adopted a participatory approach, consulting with project team members, partners and beneficiaries at several stages throughout the process. During Stage 1 (Planning and Initiation), the UNEP Evaluation Office, together with the project partners agreed on the purpose and scope of the evaluation as well as the timeframe and budget, all of which were expressed in the ToRs.
5. **Inception Phase:** The intention of the inception phase was to build common understanding amongst the parties; clarify key issues; set out an approach and timeline for data-gathering, data analysis, and report writing; document deliverables and key milestones; and gain feedback to refine the evaluation approach. During the inception phase, the consultant undertook a desk-top review of project documents and reports and undertook an initial analysis of quality of project design and stakeholder participation in the design and implementation of the project. Central to this analysis was the review and reconstruction of the project's TOC. In addition to in-depth review of the project design, consultations were held with those engaged in the implementation of the project to arrive at a nuanced understanding of how the project intended to drive change and what contributing conditions ('assumptions' and 'drivers') would need to be in place to support such change. The final iteration of the TOC is presented in Figure 3.
6. The consultant then prepared an Evaluation Matrix⁸ together with the envisaged sources of data to address the questions and indicators that could be expected to provide concrete evidence of achieved results and impacts. These aspects were undertaken to assure a robust foundation for the evaluation.
7. **Data collection Phase:** Data collection took place from March to June 2025. No field missions were anticipated, due to the nature of the project. To deepen understanding and triangulate results, data was sought from a variety of perspectives using multiple means. A desk review was undertaken of all key project documentation supplied by UNEP, including project approval documents, annual

⁸UNEP Evaluation Policy: <https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/41114>

work plans, meeting reports, annual monitoring reports, financial reports, technical papers, reports and strategies (e.g. National Environment Summaries (NES, Measuring SDG Progress reports and United Nation's Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks for countries benefiting from the project and a sample of those that were not part of the project). This was complemented by the use of a questionnaire to obtain feedback from those that closely participated in the project implementation (list of correspondents in Table 12).

8. The reviewer undertook the following measures to assure the quality of data collection: i) the Evaluation Matrix organised along the required 9 categories for evaluation, together with an interview guideline (adapted according to respondent) was kept on hand as a reference, thereby maintaining focus on the purpose and scope of data gathering; ii) data collected through interviews was simultaneously noted down and clarifications were sought at the time or shortly afterwards by email, as deemed necessary; iii) interview notes were subsequently reviewed and corrected, where deemed necessary; iv) facts were checked with relevant actors and verified with additional sources, as appropriate; v) to preserve the integrity of the evaluation process and enhance freedom of expression, respondents were assured of the anonymity and confidentiality of their input.
9. Evaluation judgments are, therefore, based on sound evidence, applying the Evaluation Office's "Evaluation Criteria Ratings Matrix", leading to the conclusions and recommendations as well as lessons learned included in this evaluation report. The analysis was built on sound evaluation principles including integrity, honesty, confidentiality, systematic inquiry and cultural sensitivity.
10. Management Response: Once the TR final report is approved, the UNEP Evaluation Office will guide the project partners to generate a management response. They will discuss the TRs recommendations and lessons learnt and formulate an action plan to implement the recommendations, which will clearly indicate management actions with a compliance assessment plan. This will be followed by corporate reporting on the TR. The ultimate goal is that the findings from this TR, especially the lessons learnt, will be applied to improve project design, implementation and results of other similar projects.

II. REVIEW METHODS

Definitions of Review criteria

11. The review was guided by the TOR (Annex 13) and the process outlined in Fig. 1. In line with these guidelines, the TR has been carried out using a set of 9 review criteria which include: (1) Strategic Relevance⁹, (2) Quality of Project Design, (3) Nature of External Context, (4) Effectiveness (including availability of outputs; achievement of outcomes and likelihood of impact), (5) Financial Management, (6) Efficiency, (7) Monitoring and Reporting, (8) Sustainability and (9) Factors Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues.
12. Most review criteria are rated on a six-point scale as follows: Highly Satisfactory (HS); Satisfactory (S); Moderately Satisfactory (MS); Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU); Unsatisfactory (U); Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). Sustainability and Likelihood of Impact are rated from Highly Likely (HL) down to Highly Unlikely (HU) and Nature of External Context is rated from Highly Favourable (HF) to Highly Unfavourable (HU). The ratings against each criterion are 'weighted' to derive the Overall Project Performance Rating. The greatest weight is placed on the achievement of outcomes, followed by dimensions of sustainability.
13. **Matrix of ratings levels for each criterion:** The UNEP Evaluation Office has developed detailed descriptions of the main elements required to be demonstrated at each level (i.e. Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory) for each review criterion. The evaluator considered all the evidence gathered during the review in relation to this matrix in order to generate evidence-based review criteria performance ratings.

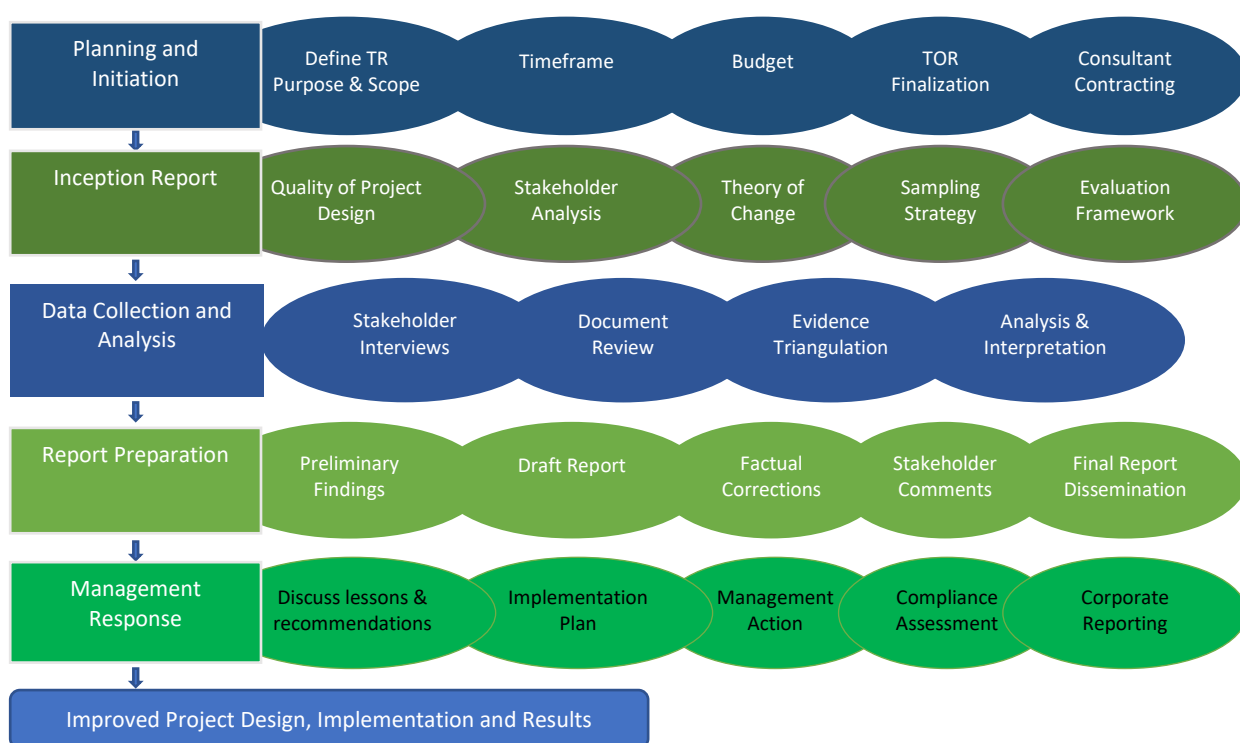


Figure 1: Review Process

⁹ This criterion includes a sub-category on Complementarity, which closely reflects the OECD-DAC criterion of 'Coherence', introduced in 2019. Complementarity with other initiatives is assessed with respect to the project's design. In addition, complementarity with other initiatives during the project's implementation is assessed under the criterion of Efficiency.

14. The TR also addressed the strategic questions listed below.

- **Capacity Building and Institutional Strengthening:** Has the project effectively strengthened the capacity of NSOs and EPAs in the 19 project countries, leading to measurable improvements in environmental data management and policy integration?
- **Policy Frameworks and Legislative Integration:** To what extent have national policy frameworks, strategies, and legislation incorporated environmental considerations due to project support, and what are the tangible outcomes?
- **Data Platforms and Technological Infrastructure:** Are the established open data platforms fully functional, actively used, and contributing to better decision-making, and what challenges remain in their sustainability?
- **Impact Assessment and Utilization of Reports:** Have these National Environment Summaries (NES) and Sustainability Gap reports influenced national policies, planning, and public awareness, and how effectively have they been utilized?
- **Integration with UN Systems and Regional Cooperation:** Has the project successfully integrated environmental sustainability into UNSDCF's and CCAs, and has it enhanced the capacity of UNCTs and regional stakeholders to address environmental challenges?
- **What adjustments, if any, were made** to the project as a direct consequence of the COVID-19 situation, and to what extent did the adjustments allow the project to effectively respond to the new priorities of Member States that emerged in relation to COVID-19?
- How did the adjustments affect the achievement of the project's expected results as stated in its original results framework?

15. The responses to these questions are integrated into the review report.

Limitations of the Review

16. The project is **so tightly integrated into the regular programmes of UNEP** and its partners, such that non-UNEP partners found it difficult to separate the project from regular UNEP technical assistance, especially since it was executed by UNEP.
17. **There was no provision for field missions.** The review relied on virtual meetings and structured discussions with key informants, via the questionnaire in Table 14. Although this was appropriate given the nature of the project, respondents needed several rounds of reminders to return the questionnaires, thereby dealing the progress of the review.

III. THE PROJECT

A. Context

18. At the time of formulating the project, there was recognition of the fact that the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is one of the key planks contributing to efforts for accelerating Africa's socio-economic progress. Urgent action was deemed necessary towards the SDGs as emphasized by the Decade of Action to deliver the Global Goals <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/decade-of-action/>. However, external socio-economic and environmental shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic and locusts' invasion in the Horn of Africa in 2020 as well as the devastating 2019 Tropical cyclones, continued to sound the alarm on the inadequate and need for, proactive measures for building resilient socio-ecological systems. The urgency for such Africa-specific interventions was espoused by various reports of the AUDA-NEPAD, including on the continent's digital divide. Nevertheless, development partners continue to invest in sustainable development programmes, particularly those prioritized via the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs).
19. While indicators of progress and the associated data are vital in monitoring the trends in the environmental dimension of sustainable development, there is a dearth of reliable, timely and up-to-date data to enable countries and partners to account for every level of progress, including on areas that require more enhanced domestic, continental partnerships and other interventions to move forward. This is exacerbated by low levels of capacities of national bodies mandated to generate such data and indicators. Indeed, crucial reports and statistics such as the 2020 Africa SDG Index and Dashboards², AUDA-NEPAD's 'African Innovation Outlook III' of 2020³, and the UNEP's 2021 report on "Measuring Progress: Environment and the SDGs"⁴ indicate inadequate data as one of the major bottlenecks that hamper the monitoring of progress in Africa. This is in addition to affecting the formulation of policies that would otherwise help bolster the continent's transformative progress.
20. Several steps have been undertaken to improve the quality of information and the capacity to utilize environmental data to support evidence-based decisions, including the establishment of national statistical and data focal points, multi-stakeholder partnerships including National Environment Information Networks, and open data platforms. As a result, actions to enhance the integration of environmental data, statistics and reporting for evidence-based policy formulation in national policy frameworks are nascent in many countries and required further technical and financial boost.

B. Objectives and components

21. Recognizing the centrality of environmental sustainability and climate action in attaining holistic prosperity, the project aimed to strengthen the capacities of national institutions towards coherent and integrated implementation and monitoring of the environmental dimensions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It aimed to build the capacity of the national teams responsible for the generation and utilization of environmental information in development in nineteen countries, in order to increase evidence-based decisions on the environment, guaranteeing significant integration of the environmental dimension of sustainable development. This would ensure that policymaking and stakeholder actions towards implementation of the SDGs are guided by the latest and high-quality environmental data, statistics, and information.
22. The project objective was therefore "To foster coherent integration of environmental dimensions of Sustainable Development Goals in national policy frameworks through capacity development for environmental data, statistics and reporting for strengthened science-policy nexus". The project design identified three outcomes through which the objective would be achieved¹⁰, namely: (i) Enhanced capacity in National Statistics Offices (NSOs) and National Environment Protection Agencies (EPAs) of at least 19 African countries on environmental statistics; (ii) Evidence-based national development and/or transformation of national frameworks and long-term development strategies in at least 19 African countries -based on scientific analysis of the environmental integrity and dynamics in each country; (iii) Enhanced capacity of UNCTs and other country-level and regional environmental stakeholders in at least 19 African countries through the integration of environmental dimensions of SDGs in their respective Common Country Assessments (CCAs) and

¹⁰ These outcomes have been slightly modified during the reconstruction of a theory of change – see Chapter 3 of this report.

United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCFs). The table below shows the outputs under each outcome.

Table 3: Original Results Framework

Logic intervention	Outputs	Outcome indicators ¹¹
Objective: To strengthen science-policy nexus through provision of environmental data, statistics, and reporting capacity for countries to foster coherent integration of environmental dimensions of Sustainable Development Goals		
Outcome 1: Enhanced capacity in National Statistics Offices (NSOs) and National Environmental Protection Agencies (EPAs) of at least 19 African countries on environmental statistics and digital innovation.	Output 1.1: Country capacity needs for Africa region's environmental data and statistics assessed by UNEP Output 1.2: Capacity development training provided to NSOs, EPAs, and other national stakeholders on environmental statistics and digital innovation Output 1.3: Adequate technical backstopping on environmental dimensions of SDGs provided to countries and partners by UNEP staff Output 1.4: Experiences and lessons learned in capacity development of National Institutions documented and disseminated	IA 1.1: Number of national policy frameworks, papers, strategies, legislations, etc. that integrate environmental dimensions through the leadership of the supported National Statistics Offices, National Environmental Protection Agencies, and Africa's Regional Economic Communities (RECs). <i>Baseline: 5 (June 2021)</i> <i>Targets: +15 (September-December 2024)</i> IA 1.2: Number of countries with established open data platforms and other integrated systems that feature national environmental data and statistics, as a result of enhanced capacities of National Statistics Offices and National Environmental Protection Agencies. <i>Baseline: 4 ((June 2021)</i> <i>Targets: +15 (September-Dec. 2024)</i>
Outcome 2: EO2. National development strategies (CCAs, UNSDCF, others) integrate environmental dimensions of SDGs using the capacities and up to date relevant data/information generated via outcome 1 – in 19 countries quality	Output 2.1: Provide support to countries and stakeholders on environmental data and statistics through the NES and Sustainability Gap reports Output 2.2: Provide support for the use of digital innovations and platforms in the provisioning of wider access and dissemination of NES and Sustainability Gap reports	IA 2.1: National policies and institutional frameworks that take into account the findings of the project-supported National Environment Summaries (NES) and sustainability Gap reports. <i>Baseline: 5 (June 2021)</i> <i>Targets: +19 (September 2024)</i> IA 2.2: Public awareness platforms, events and media engagements that cite the findings of the project's resultant National Environment Summaries (NES) and sustainability Gap reports. <i>Baseline: 3 (June 2021)</i> <i>Targets: +19 (September 2024)</i>
Outcome 3: Enhanced capacity of UNCTs and other country-level and regional environmental stakeholders in at least 19 African countries through the integration of environmental dimensions of SDGs in their respective CCAs and UNSDCF.	Output 3.1: Support provided to the UNCTs and country partners on the integration of environmental dimensions of SDGs Output 3.2: Environmental data and statistics platforms and repositories to support CCA and UNSDCF processes developed	IA 3.1: Number of CCAs and UNSDCF supported to integrate environmental sustainability and climate resilience. <i>Baseline: 10 (June 2021)</i> <i>Targets: +19 (September 2024)</i> IA 3.2: Amount of financial and other resources mobilized by country partners and stakeholders that include governmental authorities and UNCT, to support the continuity of interventions on coherent integration of environmental data and statistics at the national level. <i>Baseline: 0 (June 2021)</i> <i>Targets: +19 (September 2024)</i>

¹¹ The project design did not provide output indicators

C. Stakeholders

Stakeholders	Stake in the project and the topic that the project addresses	Level of influence over topic and project / Ways in which affected by topic and project	Expected use of the review results	Way(s) to involve this stakeholder in the review process
Polymakers in the environment, finance, and planning	They develop national policy, hold consultative meetings that affect the environment and engage in regional and global discussions.	High Role in national development planning policies and priorities	Publication and dissemination of their impact in shaping the implementation of the agenda 2030 at national and regional levels	Provide expertise and support to the work of the reviewer on the impact of the project so far
Business/ private sector	Integrating environmental sustainability in their business operations	Low Influencing consumer preferences and behaviours	Technical advice on resource-efficient interventions with greater cost-savings to the business while benefiting the environment	Express how their engagement with the project has seen business growth from environmental degradation and climate risks
Media	Dissemination of project's achievements and impacts at the national, and regional levels.	Medium The media influence and shape public opinion. They also put pressure on politicians, decision-makers or people in positions of power	Increased engagement to participate in UNEP's events, meetings, and training of media personnel on	To get clearer insights on how environmental reporting has enhanced dissemination of the project's accomplishments, experiences, and lessons learned
Civil Society Groups	Reviewing and dissemination of the project's accomplishments	Medium Educating the public and holding policymakers to account	Increased engagement to participate in UNEP's events, meetings, and training of media personnel on environmental reporting	To get insights on how their engagement has enhanced dissemination of the project's accomplishments, experiences, and lessons learned.

D. Project implementation structure and partners

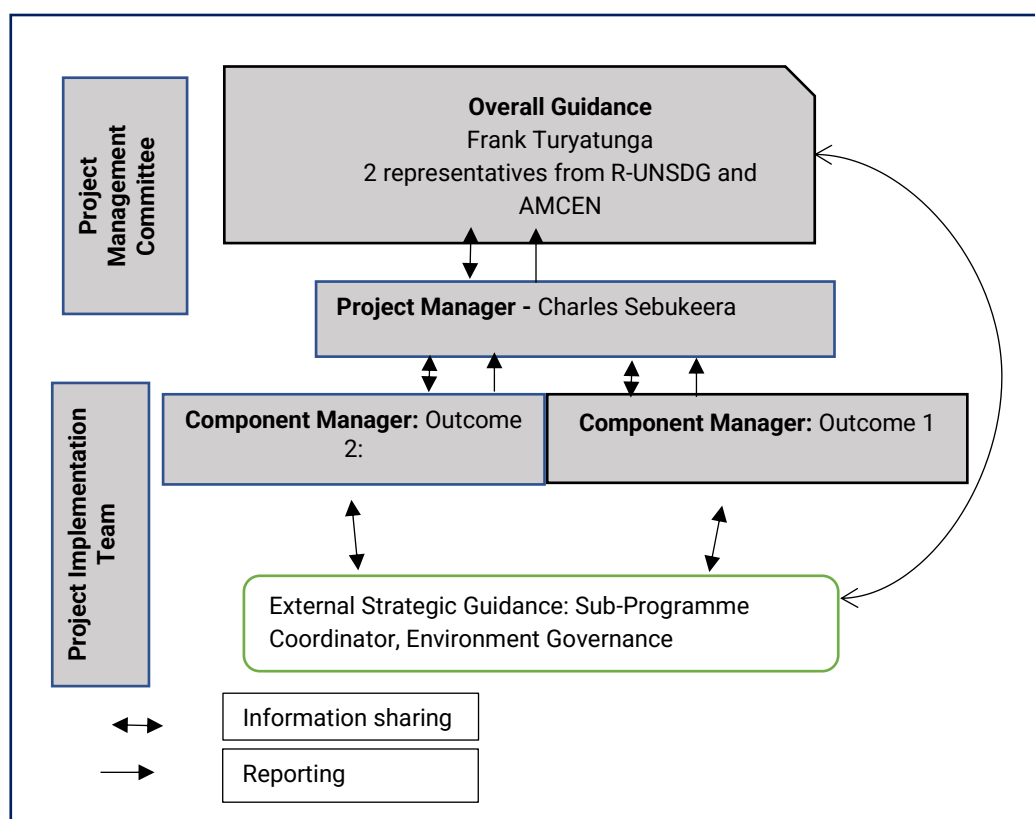
23. The overall policy and project management was provided by the UNEP Africa Office (Table 4). The project manager (PM), who was responsible for the implementation of project activities and quality assurance of the project outputs, was the Coordinator of the Science-Policy. The PM worked closely with the Regional Development Coordination Officer and other Regional Sub-Programme Coordinators, to ensure coherent and responsive delivery of the project outputs. They also worked in close collaboration with the UNEP's Global sub-programme Coordinator for Science-Policy Sub-programme as well as the UNEP's Policy and Programme Division. The PM's first reporting officer based at UNEP Africa Office provided overall guidance to the project, via the PM.
24. Overall policy guidance was provided by a Project Management Committee (PMC), consisting of the PM and her/his supervisor (as the chair), and the global coordinator environmental under review sub-programme, who will also represent the Policy and Programme Division. The PMC's role was to contribute to any review that may be needed in project workplans on a yearly basis and provide guidance to ensure timely delivery of the project outputs. The PMC used the external strategic guidance of the global Sub-Programme Coordinator, environment under review. Although the PMC

was meant to meet at least twice a year, minutes of such meetings have not been availed to the review.

25. An aspect of the project implementation structure worth mentioning here is its link to the strengthening the capacity of the UN Resident Coordinator System in responding to requests by UNCTs, particularly on integrating environmental considerations in the CCA. The project, therefore, build on the 'National Focal Point' model being used by UNEP in the Africa region to meet the surging needs of UNCT requests, ensuring the UN reform process and UN Resident coordinator system are at its core. It's management structure complemented UNEP's capacities as a non-resident UN entity, incorporating aspects of capacity building for UNEP managers to deliver coherent Integration of the Environmental Dimension of the SDGs in Africa's regional and national policy frameworks.

Table 4: Stakeholders and their roles and responsibilities

Entity	Key Roles/Responsibilities	Key Collaborators
Project Management Structure		
UNEP Africa Office	Oversees project management	-
Project Manager (Environment Under Review Regional Sub-Programme Coordinator)	Implementation & quality assurance of outputs	Regional Development Coordination Officer, Global Sub-Programme Coordinator, UNEP's Policy and Programme Division
Management Team	Provides guidance & support to the Project Manager	First Reporting Officer, Regional Development Coordinator, Finance Management Officer, Sub-Programme Coordinators, Country Focal Points
Steering Committee (Project Management Committee)		
Chair	Project Manager's Supervisor	Leads committee meetings, provides strategic direction
Members	Project Manager, Global Coordinator (Science-Policy Sub-Programme)	Guides implementation, reviews project work plans annually.
External Strategic Guidance	Global Sub-Programme Coordinator (Science -Policy)	Offers strategic input for project alignment.
Management Team Structure		
Team Leader	Project Manager	
First Reporting Officer	Provides overall guidance	
Regional Development Coordinator	Contributes to project delivery	
Finance Management Officer	Financial oversight	
Sub-Programme Coordinators	Support implementation	
Country Focal Points	Local contributions	
Response to the UN Resident Coordinator System		
Integration Aspect	Details	
UN Reform & UNSDCF Process	Direct contributions to CCAs, built on 'National Focal Point' model; Enhances UNEP's role as a non-resident UN entity; and supports Internal Capacity Development towards SDG integration in Africa's policy frameworks.	



E. Changes in design during implementation

F. Project financing

Outputs	Amount -US\$
Output 1.1	279,500.00
Output 1.2	35,000.00
Output 1.3	40,000.00
Output 1.4	60,000.00
Output 2.1	180,000.00
Output 2.2	45,000.00
Output 3.1	30,000.00
Output 3.2	57,793.00
Total Project Cost	759,813.00
Programme support costs for DESA/UN Central Account (3% of the Total Project cost above)	22,794.39
TOTAL Project BUDGET	812,999.91

*****There was no additional funding (financial or in-kind) leveraged to further the***

IV. THEORY OF CHANGE AT REVIEW

28. A theory of change (TOC) was not presented at project design. In order to construct a TOC for the TR, an in-depth analysis of the whole project document was made seeking to establish the following issues that form the basis of a good TOC.
- Are the causal pathways from project outputs (availability of goods and services to intended beneficiaries) through outcomes (changes in stakeholder behaviour) towards impacts (long lasting, collective change of state) were clearly and convincingly described in either the logframe or the TOC;
 - Were results statements at output and outcome levels are 'SMART' (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound), appropriate and reflect the project's scope of work and ambitions, thus are they realistic with respect to the timeframe and scale of the intervention;
 - Did the logical framework capture the key elements of the TOC/ intervention logic for the project;
 - Were impact drivers and assumptions clearly described for each key causal pathway?
 - Were the roles of key actors and stakeholders, including gendered/minority groups, clearly described for each key causal pathway?
29. The TR finds that the project design was based on a thorough analysis of the challenges and opportunities for increasing the use of current and high-quality information in the planning and monitoring of the integration of environmental issues into the SDG and Agenda 2063 programmes, as described at length in the Sections on problem analysis and proposed responses of the project document. However, the TOC underlying the logic of the project was not described in the text or diagram. Furthermore, the description of the causal pathways from project outputs (availability of goods and services to intended beneficiaries) through outcomes (changes in stakeholder behaviour) towards impacts (long lasting, collective change of state) was hampered by inadequate compliance with the 'SMART' rule on identification of appropriate outputs, outcomes statements and indicators. This resulted in some activities and outputs being presented as outputs and outcomes, respectively, making it difficult to identify clear and distinct indicators for each outcome and output level – thus the 3 or so indicators are replicated under different results. Table 8 provides a detailed analysis of the "SMARTness" and appropriateness of outputs, outcomes and their indicators, summarized below.
30. To reconstruct a theory of change for the project, the following changes have become necessary:
31. **Goal statement:** UNEP's TOC template requires a goal statement. A goal statement has therefore been derived from the project objective and the general intention of the expected project impacts as described severally in various parts of the project document. The goal statement for the refined TOC is that "If reliable, high quality relevant environmental information (latest, accurate, gender disaggregated statistics) is availed and capacity build for its utilization in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of SDG and Agenda 2063 programs and strategies, there would be an increase in evidence-based decisions on the environment, guaranteeing significant integration of the environmental dimension of sustainable development to accelerate the attainment of shared prosperity for all within the ecological limits of the planet". The TOC statement recognizes two important intermediate states statements: (a) significant integration of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the SDGs and Agenda 2063; (b) development becomes more sustainable and resilient, with a lower carbon footprint. However, these events are long-term and would not be monitored via indicators by a 2-to-3-year project.
32. **Changes to outcome statements:** Outcomes 1 and 3 (at project design) address the same subject - capacity in NSOs, National EPAs, UNCTs and other (unidentified stakeholders/partners) for the generation and use of current and quality information in the environmental data in the integration of environmental dimensions of SDGs in their respective CCAs and UNSDCF. Combining the two outcomes into one will clarify the focus of the project and reduce duplication of the same indicator across the three outcomes. The revised outcome states: *Enhanced capacity (skills, information/data, data processing, storage and use platforms) of National Statistics Offices, National Environmental Protection Agencies, UNCTs and other relevant national stakeholders to generate, provide and use quality relevant information for the integration of environmental dimensions in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of SDG and Agenda 2063 programs and strategies (at least 19 African countries).*

33. While outcome 2 (at project design) refers to evidence-based national development and/or transformation of national frameworks and long-term development strategies – the outputs and indicators supporting the outcome refer to only two strategies – CCAs and UNSDCF. The project annual reports also report on these two strategies. This outcome has been revised to align more closely with the outputs and activities selected to deliver it as follows: *Nineteen National development strategies (CCAs, UNSDCFs, others) integrate environmental dimensions of SDGs, using the capacities and up to date relevant data/ information generated via outcome 1, lessons documented to support learning and upscaling.*

34. **Changes to output statements:** The output statements have been refined to reflect the effects of the completed activities rather than the activities, where relevant. Several activities which reflected lower-level results, such as tasks, have also been refined. Furthermore, the outputs of the original outcome 1 and 3 have been streamlined, removing some repetitions in the results chain at design. The suggested outputs are:

- Output 1.1: Skills development: NSOs, EPAs, UNCTs and other relevant national stakeholders skilled on the generation and use of updated, relevant data/information for the integration of environmental considerations in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of SDG programs and strategies.
- Output 1.2: Data platforms and repositories: Environmental data and statistics platforms and repositories to support CCA and UNSDCF processes developed.
- Output 2.1: Integration of environmental dimensions: CCAs and UNSDCFs integrate environmental dimensions of SDGs.
- Output 2.2: Experiences and lessons learned in capacity development of National Institutions documented and disseminated.

35. The changes to outcomes and outputs are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Outcomes, outputs and activities modified via TOC at Terminal Review

Outcome	Outputs	Activities
Outcome 1. Enhanced capacity (skills, information/data, data processing, storage and use platforms) of National Statistics Offices, National Environmental Protection Agencies, UNCTs and other relevant national stakeholders to provide and use quality relevant information for the integration of environmental dimensions in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of SDG programs and strategies (at least 19 African countries).	Output 1.1: Skills development: NSOs, EPAs, UNCTs and other relevant national stakeholders skilled on the generation and use of updated, relevant data/information for the integration of environmental considerations in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of SDG programs and strategies.	✓ Capacity assessment: Assess capacity needs for Africa region's environmental data and statistics (for EPAs, NSOs and UNCTs). ✓ National Teams: Develop training materials and train NSOs, EPAs and other relevant national stakeholders on environmental statistics and digital innovation (in the context of environmental sustainability, including spatial data analysis for environmental change detection) ✓ UNCTs: Develop training materials and train at least ten UNCTs on integration of environmental considerations and interlinkages in the individual result matrixes and joint programs. ✓ Project Managers: Develop training materials and train at least ten project managers (internal staff of UNEP Africa Office) on strategic support to the UNCTs.
	Output 1.2: Data platforms and repositories: Environmental data and statistics platforms and repositories to support CCA and UNSDCF processes developed	✓ Develop at least one UNEP-managed interactive regional repository and/or develop or revamp existing open data platforms to host country profiles and their respective CCA reports. ✓ Develop a comprehensive biennial strategy for NES and Sustainability Gap reports and prepare at least two NES and at least two Sustainability Gap reports based on emerging country needs and requests. ✓ Hold at least two stakeholder engagements and validate findings on the NES and Sustainability Gap reports, based on emerging country needs and requests.

Outcome	Outputs	Activities
Outcome 2: Nineteen National development strategies (CCAs, UNSDCF, others) integrate environmental dimensions of SDGs, using the capacities and up to date relevant data/ information generated via outcome 1, lessons documented to support learning and upscaling	Output 2.1: Integration of environmental dimensions: CCAs and UNSDCF integrate environmental dimensions of SDGs in 19 countries	✓ Facilitate 19 countries to map their national priority indicators as articulated in the National Development Plans against the environment related SDGs. ✓ Produce at least 10 CCA reports and develop a similar number of UNSDCF with full integration of the environmental dimensions of SDGs, based on UNCT requests
	Output 2.2: Experiences and lessons learned in capacity development of National Institutions documented and disseminated	✓ Prepare one survey report on the impact of the support given to NSOs and EPAs by end of the second year of the project. ✓ Develop at least one policy paper with clear documentation of best practices, lessons learned, and guidelines on the preparation and implementation of the support availed to the NSOs and EPAs during the second half of the project's third year. ✓ Hold at least two exchange visits to facilitate peer learning by the third quarter of the last year of the project.

36. Changes to the indicators: All the 3 outcomes at project design share one indicator, albeit stated slightly differently under each outcome. Indeed, indicators 1.1, 2.1 and 3.1 all refer to number of national policy frameworks, papers, strategies, legislations, etc. that integrate environmental dimensions. Noting that:

- Taking into account the findings of the project-supported National Environment Summaries (NES) and sustainability Gap reports (indicator 2.1) – is the same as integrating environmental dimensions.
- CCAs and UNSDCF are part of the national policy frameworks (indicator 3.1)
- Indicators 1.2 2.2 and 3.2 (at project design) are considered valid. An additional indicator could have been added at project design to capture the effects of the outcome on capacity enhancement, thus: Percentage of the NSOs, EPAs, UNCCTs and relevant UNEP Managers trained to generate, provide and use quality relevant information for the integration of environmental dimensions in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of SDG programs and strategies. The suggested indicators to be used by the terminal review per outcome are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Indicators to be used by the terminal review

Outcome	Indicators
Outcome 1: Enhanced capacity (skills, information/data, data processing, storage and use platforms) of National Statistics Offices, National Environmental Protection Agencies, relevant UNEP Managers, UNCCTs	1.1: Percentage of the NSOs, EPAs, relevant UNEP managers and UNCCTs trained to generate, provide and use quality relevant information for the integration of environmental dimensions in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of SDG programs and strategies.
	1.2: Number of countries with established open data platforms and other integrated systems that feature national environmental data and statistics, as a result of enhanced capacities of National Statistics Offices and National Environmental Protection Agencies.
Outcome 2: 19 National development strategies, CCAs, UNSDCF, others integrate environmental dimensions of SDGs, using the capacities and up to date relevant data/ information generated via	2.1: Number of national policy frameworks, papers, strategies, legislations, CCAs, UNSDCF etc. that integrate environmental dimensions through the leadership of the supported National Statistics Offices, National Environmental Protection Agencies, relevant UNEP Managers and UNCCTs.
	2.2: Public awareness platforms, events and media engagements that cite the findings of the project's resultant National Environment Summaries (NES) and sustainability Gap reports.

Outcome	Indicators
outcome 1, lessons documented to support learning and upscaling)	2.3: Amount of financial and other resources mobilized by country partners and stakeholders that include governmental authorities and UNCTs, to support the continuity of interventions on coherent integration of environmental data and statistics at the national level.

37. The TOC has been reconstructed (Fig. 2) using UNEP's TOC template, which incorporates a goal statement, barriers and risks. The information on the goal, barriers and key assumptions has been derived from the problem analysis chapter of the Prodoc while some additional risks have been formulated based on experience with similar projects. The refined TOC recognizes three key drivers to the achievement of the project objectives and delivery of results: (a) recognition of UNEP as the custodian of the environmental dimension of the SDGs; (b) the 7 sub-programs of UNEP and special initiatives in Africa; (c) the successful implementation of the UNEP Project - Coherent Integration of the Environmental Dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals in Regional and National Policy Frameworks in Africa 2020-2023 (PIMS ID Number – 02086), to which the project under review was part. This is in addition to already stated. Furthermore, the refined TOC identified three interrelated barriers described in the context analysis of the Prodoc:

- Regional, sub-regional and national policy frameworks that discourage coherent integration of environment into SDGs.
- National governments, Regional and National agents of development have inadequate technical capacities, hence ineffectively integrate environment into SDGs.
- Inadequate resources for implementation of SDGs and Agenda 2063 Programs.

38. The refined TOC also expands on the risks to project implementation and achievement of results and impacts identified during project design by adding two relevant risks. The risks are:

- Governments focus on purely quick fix economic recovery solutions post COVID, leading to de-prioritization of the environmental considerations and the weakening of environmental safeguards;
- Decreased priority of and funding for the implementation of SDGs environmental dimension at all levels of governments
- The slow pace of policy reforms and policy uptake once they are enacted at national levels may reduce the effectiveness and sustainability of results.
- Climate change may accelerate beyond the projections of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, increasing impacts of climate hazards, rendering project results ineffective.

39. Finally, the refined TOC expands on the assumptions identified in the project document, as below.

- Governments take action in implementing the environmental commitments of SDGs
- Current political willingness in institutions for coherent delivery of SDGs remains constant
- Political willingness and capacities present for collaboration among many organisations and agencies remain constant
- Current political willingness in institutions for coherent delivery of SDGs and Agenda 2063 remains constant

40. These proposed changes in the TOC at TE will enhance the effectiveness of the TE to capture and report the project achievements, with enhanced clarity.

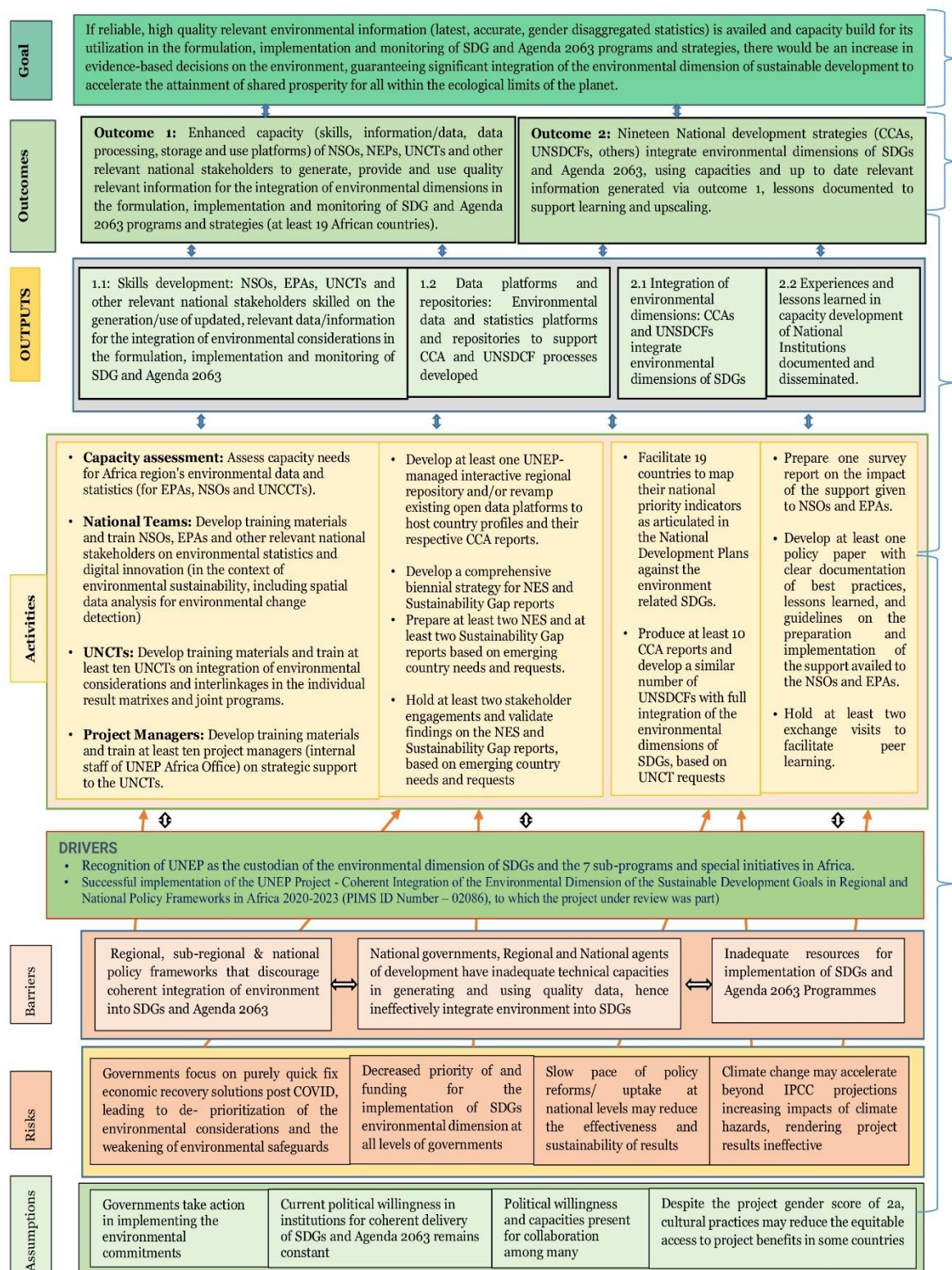


Figure 3: Reconstructed Theory of Change at TR

Table 8: Analysis of results at design to inform the reconstructed TOC

Result statement	Comment	Suggested modification for TOC at TR
Outcome 1: Enhanced capacity in NSOs and National EPAs of at least 19 African countries on environmental statistics	Outcomes 1 and 3 address the same subject - capacity in NSOs, National EPAs and UNCT and other (unidentified stakeholders/partners) for the generation and use of current and quality information in the environmental data in the integration of environmental dimensions of SDGs in their respective CCAs and UNSDCF.	Enhanced capacity (skills, information/data, data processing, storage and use platforms) of National Statistics Offices, National Environmental Protection Agencies, UNCTs and other relevant national stakeholders to provide and use quality relevant information for the integration of environmental dimensions in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of SDG programs and strategies (at least 19 African countries).
EO3: Enhanced capacity of UNCTs and other country-level and regional environmental stakeholders in at least 19 African countries through the integration of environmental dimensions of SDGs in their respective CCAs and UNSDCF.		
EA2: Evidence-based national development and/or transformation of national frameworks and long-term development strategies in at least 19 African countries -based on scientific analysis of the environmental integrity and dynamics in each country	While outcome 2 refers to Evidence-based national development and/or transformation of national frameworks and long-term development strategies – the outputs and indicators supporting the outcome refer to only two strategies – CCAs and UNSDCF. The project annual reports also report on these two strategies.	Nineteen National development strategies (CCAs, UNSDCF, others) integrate environmental dimensions of SDGs, using the capacities and up to date relevant data/ information generated via outcome 1, lessons documented to support learning and upscaling
Outputs/Activities	Comment	
Output 1.1: Country capacity needs for Africa region's environmental data and statistics assessed by UNEP	Capacity assessment is an activity that should contribute to an output on capacity enhancement, with a specific aspect of capacity identified such as skills, data platforms, etc. A 'SMART' output reflects the effects of the completed activity, not the activity itself.	Outputs 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 have been combined into an output on skills development, output 1.1 of the updated results chain at TE - Output 1.1: Skills development: NSOs, EPAs, UNCTs and other relevant national stakeholders skilled on the generation and use of updated, relevant data/information for the integration of environmental considerations in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of SDG programs and strategies
Output 1.2: Capacity development training provided to NSOs, EPAs, and other national stakeholders on environmental statistics and digital innovation	Providing training and technical backstopping are activities. A SMART output reflects the effects of the completed activity, not the activity itself.	
Output 1.3: Adequate technical backstopping on environmental dimensions of SDGs provided to countries and partners by UNEP staff		
Output 1.4: Experiences and lessons learned in capacity development of National Institutions documented and disseminated		This output has been moved to the new Output 2.1: Integration of environmental dimensions: CCAs and UNSDCF integrate environmental dimensions of SDGs in 19 countries
Output 2.1: Provide support to countries and stakeholders on environmental data and statistics through the NES and Sustainability Gap reports	Providing support on various subjects is an activity. A SMART output reflects the effects of the completed activity, not the activity itself.	Outputs 2.1 and 2.2 have been merged into the new output 1.2 of the TOC at TR - Output 1.2: Data platforms and repositories: Environmental data and statistics platforms and repositories to
Output 2.2: Provide support for the use of digital innovations and		

Result statement	Comment	Suggested modification for TOC at TR
platforms in the provisioning of wider access and dissemination of NES and Sustainability Gap reports		support CCA and UNSDCF processes developed
Output 3.1: Support provided to the UNCTs and country partners on the integration of environmental dimensions of SDGs		This output has been merged into the new
Output 3.2: Environmental data and statistics platforms and repositories to support CCA and UNSDCF processes developed		This output has been merged into the new output 1.2

Table 9: Assessment of indicators at project design as the basis of suggesting new ones at TR

Result	Indicators	Comment
Outcome 1: Enhanced capacity in National Statistics Offices (NSOs) and National Environmental Protection Agencies (EPAs) of at least 19 African countries on environmental statistics and digital innovation.	1.1: Number of national policy frameworks, papers, strategies, legislations, etc. that integrate environmental dimensions through the leadership of the supported National Statistics Offices, National Environmental Protection Agencies, and Africa's Regional Economic Communities (RECs). Baseline: 5 (June 2021) Targets: +15 (September-December 2024)	All the 3 outcomes at project design share 1 indicator, albeit stated slightly differently under each outcome. Indeed, indicators 1.1, 2.1 and 3.1 all refer to of national policy frameworks, papers, strategies, legislations, etc. that integrate environmental dimensions.
	1.2: Number of countries with established open data platforms and other integrated systems that feature national environmental data and statistics, as a result of enhanced capacities of National Statistics Offices and National Environmental Protection Agencies, relevant UNEP Managers and UNCCTs.	Noting that: Taking into account the findings of the project-supported National Environment Summaries (NES) and sustainability Gap reports (indicator 2.1) – is the same as integrating environmental dimensions. CCAs and UNSDCF are part of the national policy frameworks (indicator 3.1)
Outcome 2: Evidence-based national development and/or transformation of national frameworks and long-term development strategies in at least 19 African countries - based on scientific analysis of the environmental integrity and dynamics in each country.	2.1: National policies and institutional frameworks that take into account the findings of the project-supported National Environment Summaries (NES) and sustainability Gap reports.	Indicators 1.2 2.2 and 3.2 are considered valid.
	2.2: Public awareness platforms, events and media engagements that cite the findings of the project's resultant National Environment Summaries (NES) and sustainability Gap reports.	Additional indicators could have been added to capture the effects of the outcome on capacity enhancement. Simply stated it would read;
Outcome 3: Enhanced capacity of UNCTs and other country-level and regional environmental stakeholders in at least 19 African countries through the integration of environmental dimensions of SDGs in their respective CCAs and UNSDCF.	3.1: Number of CCAs and UNSDCF supported to integrate environmental sustainability and climate resilience.	Percentage of the NSOs, EPAs and UNCCTs trained to generate, provide and use quality relevant information for the integration of environmental dimensions in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of SDG programs and strategies.
	3.2: Amount of financial and other resources mobilized by country partners and stakeholders that include governmental authorities and UNCT, to support the continuity of interventions on coherent integration of environmental data and statistics at the national level.	

V. REVIEW FINDINGS

A. Strategic Relevance

A1. Alignment to UNEP's UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities

41. The project is highly relevant to UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2022-2025. It directly contributes to the programme of work 2022- 2024 (extended to 2025 due to COVID) through sub-programme 7 - Science-Policy, which seeks to ensure governments and other stakeholders are empowered with quality assessments and open access to data and information to deliver the environmental dimension of sustainable development. The project provided targeted capacity development to the NSOs and EPAs to generate and use environmental statistics and data on national development planning and prioritization – and to eventually integrate environmental issues into the SDG programmes. Furthermore, the MTS 2022-2025 calls for increased attention to science and environmental statistics to expand public knowledge and identify data gaps for integrated policy solutions, coupled with interagency support on environmental dimensions of sustainable development.
42. In addition, the project is relevant to all SDG targets that have indicators related to the environmental dimension, particularly the 25 SDG indicators that UNEP is mandated to track those of SDGs Goal 6, 8, 12, 14, 15 and 17. It contributed to monitoring, using scientific information, SDG targets that have indicators related to the environmental dimension, particularly the 25 SDG indicators that UNEP is mandated to track those of SDGs Goal 6, 8, 12, 14, 15 and 17.

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

A2. Alignment to United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) Strategic Priorities

43. Although the project document did not provide a section aligning its objectives with the strategic objectives of the donor, its strategy was in line with the objectives of the UNDESA, particularly regarding fostering collaboration, capacity development on environment protection and statistics. The objective of the UNDESA is to fund capacity development projects in the priority areas that benefit developing countries and countries with economies in transition¹². The UNDESA encourages close collaboration of entities of the UN Secretariat on innovative, cross-sectoral regional or interregional projects which draw mainly on the technical, human and other resources available in beneficiary countries. The projects focus on capacity building in the areas of environment protection, trade facilitation, clean energy, development of interregional transport linkages, and statistics.

Rating for Alignment to UNDESA: Satisfactory

A3. Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Priorities

44. The project objective was in line with the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), which sets the environmental agenda in Africa, and plays a strong advocacy role on environmental sustainability and matters related to environmental management and protection. The project objectives were also in line with the strategic objective of all regional economic communities, whose major priority is to provide platforms for regional approaches for policy harmonization. Moreover, the proposed project is aligned with the strategic national development priorities in each of the respective countries.

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

A4. Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence

45. Although the project document does not explain the linkages and/or complementarity between the project and any other projects of either UNDESA or UNEP, it does explain that the project would be

managed by UNEP Africa Office, with the Environment under Review Regional Sub- Programme Coordinator as the Project Manager. The Project would work closely with the Regional Development Coordination Officer and other Regional Sub-Programme Coordinators to ensure coherent and responsive delivery of the project outputs, in addition to close collaboration with the UNEP's Global sub-programme Coordinator for Environment Under Review Sub-programme as well as the UNEP's Policy and Programme Division. The project was an example of the South-South Cooperation where countries and regional bodies were supported to systematically exchange expertise, experiences, best practices and knowledge regarding mainstreaming the environmental considerations into SDG and Agenda 2063 related programmes.

Rating for Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence: Moderately Satisfactory

Rating for Strategic Relevance: Highly Satisfactory

B. Quality of Project Design

46. A detailed analysis of the quality of project design is provided in annex 5.10 of the Inception Report and summarised below.
47. **Operating Context:** The project document identified one of three unusually challenging operational factors likely to negatively affect project performance. It recognized the risk likelihood of persistence of COVID-19 pandemic and attendant health care guidelines preventing resumption of normal movements. It did not consider the likelihood of natural disasters, nor ongoing or high likelihood of change in national governments.
48. **Project Preparation:** The situation analysis of the Prodoc presented a coherent, gender responsive analysis of the critical role of Africa's natural resources in the livelihoods and economic development for the majority of the continent's populations, including the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It also included an in-depth analysis of the CCAs and UNSDCF processes in each of the nineteen countries. However, except stating that NSOs and EPAs generally have weak capacities for the generation and use of quality information for integrating environmental considerations in the planning and implementation of SDGs, there was no specific analysis of each country's strengths and weaknesses. This gives the reader the impression that the project focuses on building the capacity of the UN country teams, which is not the reality.
49. **Strategic Relevance:** the project design was informed by a solid stakeholder analysis and its objectives and outcomes were highly relevant to strategic objectives of UNEP, UNDESA, UNCTs, governments sustainable development agenda and objectives of regional bodies (explained in detail in the Section above).
50. **Intended Results and Causality, Logical Framework and Monitoring:** Although the project design was based on a thorough analysis of the challenges and opportunities for increasing the use of current and high-quality information in the planning and monitoring of the integration of environmental issues into the SDG and Agenda 2063 programmes, the analysis focused heavily on UNCTs and their CCA and UNSDCF processes, without a complimentary analysis of the state of capacities in the NSOs and EPAs. Furthermore, the theory of change was not presented, either in text or diagram. The description of the causal pathways from project outputs (availability of goods and services to intended beneficiaries) through outcomes (changes in stakeholder behaviour) towards impacts (long lasting, collective change of state) was hampered by inadequate compliance with the 'SMART' rule on identification of appropriate outputs, outcomes statements and indicators. This resulted in some activities and outputs being presented as outputs and outcomes, respectively, making it difficult to identify clear and distinct indicators for each outcome and output level – thus the 3 or so indicators are replicated under different results. Although baseline and target information are provided for each indicator, the mix-up (and repetition) of indicators across various outputs and outcomes introduces some confusion. The project manager was identified as the one bearing the responsibility for M&E, although the M&E section of the Prodoc only describes evaluation (silent on monitoring) and no extra budget was allocated to monitoring. Moreover, the risks, assumptions and drivers underlying translation of results along the results-chain (input to

output to outcomes and impacts) were not identified¹³. Further details are found in the Theory of Change Section.

51. **Governance and Supervision Arrangements:** The project governance and supervision model was comprehensive. The roles and responsibilities of all partners, including the project steering committee (PSC) were clearly spelt out. However, the PSC was made up of only UNEP and staff members involved in project implementation, and there seems to be a confusion between Project Management Committee (PMC) and PSC. Minutes of a project steering committee meeting were not made available to the reviewer, perhaps because none were held.
52. **Capacity of Partnerships:** The project was fully managed by the UNEP Africa Office; hence capacity assessment was not required.
53. **Learning, Communication and Outreach:** The project used UNEP knowledge management (KM) systems. The objective of the KM was to disseminate the key message on the importance of an integrated approach for the achievement of the SDGs, in particular the environmental dimension, and the need to engage all relevant stakeholders in planning and implementation processes. Key results accomplished through the involvement with UNCTs and Resident Coordinators in the context of CCAs, UNSDCF and Socio-Economic Analyses would be disseminated in consultation with UN Communications Groups at regional and country level. The key lessons drawn from the project activities would be documented and shared at relevant forums and applicable online platforms (outcome 2). Furthermore, internally within UNEP, project results and case studies will be developed and made available on an online portal, in addition to being disseminated through UNEP's Programme Performance Reports for its Member States, Regional UNEP website, social networks and communication materials as appropriate.
54. **Financial Planning / Budgeting:** The project was fully implemented within budget and deadlines
55. **Efficiency:** The project design embedded efficiency by integrating its implementation into existing programmes of UNEP Africa Office (and utilizing existing staff members) and into the UNCTs at country level. Implementation, therefore, was to rely heavily on the technical input of the staff members involved, and on the work of the national Resident Representation system. This strategy promoted strong ownership by the partners and member states beneficiaries.
56. **Risk identification and Social Safeguards:** As indicated previously, the project identified project management risks but did not identify outcome and output level risks in the logical framework; hence it had no safeguards and risk management plans. These risks were added during the reconstruction of the ToC at TR, as explained in the ToC section
57. **Sustainability / Replication and Catalytic Effects:** sustainability, replication and catalytic effects were embedded in the project design, which integrated implementation into existing programmes of UNEP Africa Office (and utilizing existing staff members) and into the UNCTs at country level. Providing quality information via the national environment summaries provides a clear path to sustainability. This is because the NES informs the UN country common assessment, which, in turn, informs the UN sustainable development country framework (UNSDCF) (see explanation on the sections on effectiveness (achievement of outcomes and availability of outputs).
58. **Identified Project Design Weaknesses/Gaps:** The comments of the project review committee (PRC) of UNEP were not made available to the reviewer. It is likely that the PRC could have suggested the inclusion of a ToC, improved logical framework and consequently a stronger M&E plan.
59. **Gender Marker Score:** The project design did not include a gender marker.

Rating for Project Design:	Moderately Satisfactory
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¹³ Noting that the risks to project implementation were identified, but not those likely to affect the transition along the results-chain.

Table 10: Overall quality of project design score

	SECTION	RATING (1-6) ¹⁴	WEIGHTING	TOTAL (Rating x Weighting)
A	Operating Context	4	0.4	1.6
B	Project Preparation	4.5	1.2	5.4
C	Strategic Relevance	6	0.8	4.8
D	Intended Results and Causality	4	1.6	6.4
E	Logical Framework and Monitoring	4	0.8	3.2
F	Governance and Supervision Arrangements	4	0.4	1.6
G	Partnerships	5	0.8	4
H	Learning, Communication and Outreach	5	0.4	2
I	Financial Planning / Budgeting	5	0.4	2
J	Efficiency	6	0.8	4
K	Risk identification and Social Safeguards	3	0.8	2.4
L	Sustainability / Replication and Catalytic Effects	6	1.2	6
M	Identified Project Design Weaknesses/Gaps	4	0.4	1.6
			Total score	3.6 ¹⁵

C. Nature of the External Context

60. The external context in the nineteen countries targeted by the project varies widely, in line with the levels of development, which also varies widely. Furthermore, the nature of context is, by default, challenging for a project aiming at building capacities of NSOs and EPAs to provide and use quality relevant information for the integration of environmental dimensions in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of SDG programs and strategies. Project design identified the probability of Governments focusing on purely quick fix economic recovery solutions in their response to COVID-19, leading to de-prioritization of the environmental considerations and the weakening of environmental safeguards. However, the evaluator finds that the project implementation and delivery was not affected by any of the expected or unpredictable challenges.

Rating for Nature of the external context:	Favourable
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D. Effectiveness

D1. Availability of Outputs

61. All the activities were concluded and all but one of the programme outputs were delivered within time and budgets. Indeed, it exceeded targets on all the three targets of output 2.1. The two toolkits for online dissemination via MATATU platform are yet to be finalized and uploaded. These materials will provide online training on the new platform, accessible to all the countries and regional groups willing to use them.

¹⁴ On a scale of 1-6 where: 1 is Highly Unsatisfactory; 2 is Unsatisfactory; 3 is Moderately Unsatisfactory; 4 is Moderately Satisfactory; 5 is Satisfactory; and 6 is Highly Satisfactory

¹⁵ Where < 1.83 is Highly, Unsatisfactory >= 1.83 < 2.66 is Unsatisfactory, >=2.66 <3.5 is Moderately Unsatisfactory, >=3.5 <=4.33 is Moderately Satisfactory, >4.33 <= 5.16 is Satisfactory, and, > 5.16 is Highly Satisfactory

Table 11: Availability of Outputs

Outputs	Targets	Comment
Output 1.1: Skills development: NSOs, EPAs, UNCTs and other relevant national stakeholders skilled on the generation and use of updated, relevant data/information for the integration of environmental considerations in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of SDG programs and strategies.	1. Capacity needs for Africa region's environmental data and statistics (for EPAs, NSOs and UNCCTs) documented	Capacity assessment report done.
	2. Training materials available for NSOs, EPAs, UNCTs and selected and relevant UNEP managers - on environmental statistics and digital innovation (in the context of environmental sustainability, including spatial data analysis for environmental change detection)	All training materials for in-person training have been produced. Two protocols for on-line training to be hosted on the MATATU platform are in draft form.
	3. Trained teams (NSOs, EPAs, UNCT, UNEP selected relevant managers)	- Staff members of NSOs and EPAs from 19 countries targeted by the project received training on environmental data and indicators development, integrated environmental assessment for decision support, environmental statistics and digital innovation (in the context of environmental sustainability, including spatial data analysis for environmental change detection) and resource mobilization for environmental assessments and policy transformation 10 staff members of UNCTs received training on integration of environmental considerations and interlinkages in the individual result matrixes and joint programs. 10 UNEP project managers from UNEP Africa Office received training on strategic support to the UNCTs
Output 1.2: Data platforms and repositories: Environmental data and statistics platforms and repositories to support CCA and UNSDCF processes developed	4. At least one UNEP-managed interactive regional repository and/or one existing open data platform revamped to host country profiles and their respective CCA reports.	- MATATU Platform https://matatueis.net/ was created and operationalized, available for use by all 54 African countries and other interested parties. - The Common Country Analysis and National Environmental Summaries Interactive Portal was revitalized. - Africa page on World Environment Situation Room was created (WESR - https://wesr.unep.org/)
	5. A comprehensive biennial strategy for NES and SDG Gap reports produced	Guidelines For the Preparation of National Environment Summaries (NES) 2023 was produced.

Outputs	Targets	Comment
	6. At least two SDG Gap ¹⁶ reports produced.	The project contributed an author and a reviewer to Chapter two of the Measuring Progress: Water-related ecosystems and the SDGs, specifically on the section on regional progress on the environmental dimension and state of the environment indicators of the SDGs for Sub-Saharan Africa. Produced by UNEP, the Measuring SDG Progress reports are huge global reports beyond the scope of the SDG project.
Output 2.1: Integration of environmental dimensions: CCAs and UNSDCF's integrate environmental dimensions of SDGs in 19 countries	7. 19 countries to map their national priority indicators as articulated in the National Development Plans against the environment related SDGs	All 54 countries were facilitated to map priority indicators in the process of updating and/or writing NES summaries as reported below.
	8. At least two NES reports delivered, based on emerging country needs and requests.	54 countries updated and/or produced NES summaries with the support of the project
	9. At least 10 CCAs and UNSDCF's produced with full integration of the environmental dimensions of SDGs	19 countries have produced CCAs with the support of the project - Botswana, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia. Only one country (Rwanda) produced a UNSDCF – due to programming cycles. However, the rest of UNSDCF's will integrate environmental dimensions of SDGs since CCAs inform them.
Output 2.2: Experiences and lessons learned in capacity development of National Institutions documented and disseminated	10. Lessons generated and shared on the impact of the support given to NSOs and EPAs on integration of environmental dimensions of SDGs.	The lessons were generated in conjunction with target 1 during the capacity assessment. These lessons were captured in the capacity assessment report and summarised in the policy brief (target 11).
	11. One policy brief ¹⁷ with clear documentation of best practices, lessons learned, and guidelines on the preparation and implementation of the support availed to the NSOs and EPAs	
	12. Two exchange visits facilitate peer learning	One exchange visit was made to George Mason University (USA), visiting scientists training on spatial data analysis and visualization (how many people)?

Rating for Availability of Outputs: Highly Satisfactory

D2. Achievement of Project Outcomes

62. The project surpassed targets for 4 of its 5 achievement indicators 1 (detailed below). It reported zero achievement on its 5th indicator (amount of financial and other resources mobilized by country partners and stakeholders that include governmental authorities and UNCTs, to support the continuity of interventions on coherent integration of environmental data and statistics at the

¹⁶ The project document used the term “sustainability gaps” which has been confirmed to refer to Measuring SDG Progress and Identifying gaps.

¹⁷ The prodod used the policy paper but the output availed to the reviewer is more of a policy brief (summary for policy makers).

national level). The reviewer's view is that the real challenge is the difficulty of monitoring the indicator and not that partners did not make financial contributions (detailed below).

Outcome 1. Enhanced capacity (skills, information/data, data processing, storage and use platforms) of National Statistics Offices, National Environmental Protection Agencies, UNCTs and other relevant national stakeholders to provide and use quality relevant information for the integration of environmental dimensions in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of SDG programs and strategies (at least 19 African countries).

Achievement Indicator – IA1: Number of countries with established open data platforms and other integrated systems that feature national environmental data and statistics, as a result of enhanced capacities of National Statistics Offices and National Environmental Protection Agencies. Target 19; delivered 54

63. The project has significantly enhanced accessibility of critical environmental statistics for evidence-based decision-making and integrating environmental priorities into development planning frameworks. This was achieved by developing the following national and regional open data platforms that enhance transparency, enabling real-time environmental monitoring and reporting.

64. MATATU Platform created and operationalized (<https://matatueis.net/>):

An open data platform Monitoring Africa's Targets through Technical Capacity Upscaling (MATATU) platform also known as Africa EIS Portal, was developed jointly with the Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE). The project

The development of the MATATU platform provides a centralized system to enhance management, access, and exchange of environmental information and knowledge. The integration of AI functionalities within the platform to support policy development and decision-making is a forward-thinking approach - CEDARE.

substituted individual country platforms with this regional platform, which will serve all African countries and regional initiatives willing to use it. The primary objectives of the platform are to: (i) monitor environmental conditions throughout Africa, collect, analyse, identify data gaps, verify data, and report environmental data; (ii) support decision-making on environmental policies; (iii) increase public access and data sharing of environmental information. It provides a methodical approach for Africa to access national and regional datasets. This is achieved through the following:

- Centralized Data Access: The EIS Portal serves as a central repository for various environmental datasets, both at the national and regional level. This centralized system allows for quick and easy access to collected data, eliminating the need to navigate multiple, disparate data sources. This data is uploaded and verified by national institutions.
- Structured Data Presentation: Datasets in the EIS Portal are structured in a user-friendly manner, making it easier for users to navigate and understand the data. This structured approach can greatly aid in the interpretation and utilization of the data.
- Search and Filter Features: The portal includes a search module that allows users to find specific datasets based on certain criteria. Additionally, filter features can help users narrow down the data to what is most relevant to their needs.
- Data Management Modules: The portal includes data management modules such as the ASDIS (Africa Sustainable Development Information System) and ASDGS (Africa Sustainable Development Goals System) that allow for efficient handling, organization, and updating of data. These modules ensure that the data available is always up-to-date and accurate.
- Training Modules: The portal provides training resources to help users understand how to effectively access and utilize the data. This serves as a guide for users, ensuring they can make the most of the available datasets.

65. **Africa page on World Environment Situation Room** (WESR - <https://wesr.unep.org/>) was embedded into UNEP's World Environment Situation Room (WESR). The **WESR** is a federated data system hosting the best openly accessible environmental data, information, and knowledge. The

platform has adequate analytical capacity to support decision making, policy setting, and action at the global, regional, national, and local levels in support of sustainable development¹⁸.

66. Seventeen countries have provided data on the page (Botswana, Egypt, Gambia, Guinea, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Somalia, Uganda, Cote d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa).

67. **Common Country Analysis and National Environmental Summaries**

Interactive Portal: The National Environmental Summaries portal is meant to ensure consistency and focus for the different national teams preparing their countries' respective environmental summaries as inputs into the Common Country Assessment process. The portal provides an on-line tool for those engaged in the national environmental situation analysis that leads to the production of NES. They include sector focal points collecting information, the data working group compiling the data/indicator matrix, and the designers and publishers of the finished product¹⁹. The portal will thus streamline the presentation of data gathered, analyzed, and interpreted at the sectoral level, and its integration at the national level. The portal has been developed to harmonize writing styles, provide guidance on the drafting process, illustrations and visualization, and references, and to streamline the reviewing process.

IA2: Percentage of the NSOs, EPAs, relevant UNEP managers and UNCTs trained and provided with technical capacity to generate, provide and use quality relevant information for the integration of environmental dimensions in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of SDG programs and strategies. Target was to train teams from 19 countries targeted by the project; training materials have been made available on MATATU platform that can be reached by all 54 countries.

68. The project enhanced the skills for generating, providing and using quality relevant information for the integration of environmental dimensions in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of SDG programs and strategies for 19 target countries and provided on-line training materials that can be made accessible to all African countries and regional groups. This was delivered via the following:

1. **Staff trained:** Heads of Environment Protection Agencies from 19 country teams (21, 6 females, 15 male) improved their skills on:
 - Standardization of National Environment Summaries and indicators to integrate environmental dimensions in their CCAs;
 - **MATATU:** The country teams were trained on the use of the MATATU EIS Platform. In addition, the MATATU platform hosts a training module to help users understand how to effectively access and utilize the data. Available to all users of the platform, the training resources serve as a guide for users, ensuring they can make the most of the available datasets.
 - **Digital innovation in the context of environmental sustainability** – the NSOs and EPAs team was trained on artificial intelligence, digital innovation options for enhancing shared environmental data and information at national levels, as well as at regional and cross-border levels, including opportunities for leveraging UNEP-developed data portals.
 - **Resource mobilization for environmental assessments and policy transformation.** Training was further enhanced via peer learning on an exchange visit to George Mason University (USA), visiting scientists training on spatial data analysis and visualization.

69. **Guidelines for the UNCT** to conduct data-informed National Environment Summaries were updated, disseminated and used to train UNCT teams in 19 countries. Potentially available to 54 countries, the guidelines ensure consistency and focus for different national teams

preparing the national environmental summaries that feed into Common Country Analysis (CCA). They focus on, and are meant to streamline the presentation of data gathered, analysed and interpreted at the sector level and integrated at the national level. They also harmonize writing styles and provide guidance on data collection and analysis - including satellite imagery, thus avoiding likely inconsistencies with

The greatest impact of this project is that it built capacity in the compilation of environmental, social and economic indicators for assessing SDGs - Ghana

¹⁸ UNEP, 2022: <https://www.unep.org/events/unep-event/launch-un-world-environment-situation-room-unep50>

¹⁹ <https://cedarekmp.net/cca/web2/>

illustrations and visualization, while also aiding streamlined reviewing process. UNEP's UNCTs Focal Points (10 female, 8 male) were also trained on UNINFO and on the integration of environmental considerations and interlinkages in the individual result matrixes and joint programmes. Training led to additional lessons on key areas of intervention that will continually be used to offer technical backstopping of UNEP's UNCT country focal points.

70. **Lessons generated on the capacity building process for National Statistics Office and Environment Protection Agencies.** The project assessed the impact and lessons emerging from the processes of strengthening environmental data and statistics and its use in evident-based decision-making by NSOs and EPAs. The assessment made the following important findings:

- Significant strides have been made in building the capacity of NSOs and EPAs to improve environmental data and statistics for informed decision-making. Key achievements reported include the successful integration of environmental data into policy frameworks, fostering cross-sectoral collaboration, and strengthening monitoring efforts. These successes have directly contributed to more robust environmental sustainability planning and decision-making processes, as validated by participants' overwhelmingly positive feedback.
- Enhanced environmental information systems have a transformative potential in managing, harmonizing, and utilizing environmental data effectively, hence targeted capacity development is important and has dividends on the uptake of science-informed informed decision-making. By leveraging partnerships, fostering citizen participation, and incorporating innovative technologies, stakeholders can build on these gains to drive effective environmental governance and long-term sustainability. Continued focus on addressing identified challenges and scaling successful initiatives will be key to achieving broader and coherent environmental and developmental objectives.
- The alignment of national indicators with global frameworks like the UNSDCF demonstrates the institution's commitment to sustainable development goals. Strengthening contributions to these frameworks through active participation, regular data updates, and robust internal communication will further enhance national and global sustainability efforts.

71. The assessment cautioned that further investments are required for (inter alia) advanced data analysis, technology utilization, and stakeholder engagement, which are crucial for comprehensive and actionable environmental insights. Despite notable progress, challenges such as inadequate funding and limited technical capacity persist, posing barriers to achieving full potential. Addressing these gaps will require concerted efforts, including enhanced capacity building and resource mobilization, to ensure data reliability and expand geographic and thematic coverage.

72. The TR confirms that collectively, the achievements skills development and establishment of the open data platforms has directly contributed to tackling the pervasive issues of inconsistencies, gaps, and quality problems in environmental information in Africa, which is a fundamental bottleneck for effective environmental management. The development of the MATATU platform provides a centralized system to enhance management, access, and exchange of environmental information and knowledge. The integration of AI functionalities within the platform to support policy development and decision-making is a forward-thinking approach.

Outcome 2: 19 National development strategies, CCAs, UNSDCFs, others integrate environmental dimensions of SDGs, using the capacities and up to date relevant data/ information generated via outcome 1, lessons documented to support learning and upscaling)

IA 3: Number of NESs, CCAs, UNSDCFs etc. that integrate environmental dimensions through the leadership of the supported National Statistics Offices, National Environmental Protection Agencies, relevant UNEP Managers and UNCCTs

73. The project substantially enhanced mainstreaming of environmental sustainability into NESs, CCAs and UNSDCFs, thereby embedding sustainability and resilience into these important SDG tools. This was achieved via the following:

74. **National Environment Summaries (NES) integrate environmental dimensions:** 54 countries have updated and/or prepared NES, with the technical support of the project. NES is a comprehensive report that analyzes a country's environmental issues, policies, and legislation, highlighting gaps

and their impact on poverty reduction and human well-being. It serves as a tool for decision-making, guiding policy development and resource allocation for environmental management and sustainable development. NES development involves collecting data from various sources, including government agencies, research institutions, and experts, and may include consultations with key stakeholders. A NES typically includes:

- Analysis of environmental conditions, the effectiveness of existing policies, regulations and institutional arrangement for environmental management, and the linkages between environmental issues and socio-economic development.
 - An evaluation of the country's SDG progress in the international development context, and its interaction with the national strategic vision and the environment. This includes analysis of the completeness of the government reports on progress, highlighting the targets that lack data, exploring why data is lacking, sectoral budget allocations and how these impacts the achievement of the SDG targets.
 - Environment and Climate Risk Analysis, using the UN SDG-based risk framework to undertake a multi-dimensional analysis of environment and climate risks and the socioeconomic activities that drive these risks as well as alternatives that can lower risks. This analysis informs a systems approach to climate resilience building and risk reduction.
 - Analysis of a country's financial landscape, using the UNDPs Development Finance Assessment tool and UNCTADs Investment Promotion and Facilitation Diagnostic tools to map and analyse the different volumes, mixes, lengths, and sequencing of the different sources of financing flows to implement the SDGs – including from formal & informal sources, - against the SDG framework and flows across the areas of humanitarian, development, and peace.
 - Analysis of underlying causes influencing country status, including investigation of political economy, social exclusion, environment and, governance and institutions, focusing on the roots causes of the challenges and opportunities in a) attaining the SDGs; b) leaving no one behind; c) integrating the environment dimension into solutions to implement different SDGs and, d) reducing and preventing risk.
 - **Identification of potential partnerships to implement commitments**, drawing on all the analyses above, undertaken via a SWOT analysis. This identifies the multi stakeholder platforms for meaningful engagement and development of partnerships to support a country to achieve the 2030 SDG agenda leveraging environment action as a source of solutions.
75. The findings of an NES inform the development of national environmental policies, strategies, and action plans and UNCT CCAs, guiding investments and interventions to address environmental challenges.
76. **Nineteen CCAs have integrated environmental sustainability and climate resilience** informed by NES (Botswana, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia). Developed through a collaborative process involving the UNCT and national stakeholders, the CCA is an analytical document that identifies key development challenges, opportunities, and national priorities, forming the basis for developing the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF). The UNSDCF determines and reflects the UN development system's contributions in the country and shapes the configuration of UN assets required inside and outside the country; consequently, the nineteen UNSDCFs are better placed to accelerate achievement of various SDGs.
77. The science-policy components of the Strategic Framework (2024-2026) between the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and UNEP was adopted: UNEP and SADC signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in March 2021. The purpose of the MoU was to provide a framework of cooperation and understanding, and to facilitate collaboration between the Parties to further their shared goals and objectives within their respective mandates. The MoU identified the following areas of common concern: air quality, waste and pollution, chemicals management, biodiversity and natural heritage (including Green Economy), cultural heritage, sustainable land management, marine and inland water resources (Blue Economy), climate change, environmental governance, capacity building, technology transfer and other sustainable development aspects or processes. A joint workplan (Strategic Framework (2024-2026)) was developed and adopted at a

tripartite workshop (UNEP-SADC Secretariat -Member States including eSwatini, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Madagascar, and Zimbabwe) November 2023. The aim of the strategic plan is to strengthen the operationalization of UNEP-SADC Secretariat MoU. Although the MoU and the strategic framework are legally non-binding, they provide a detailed action plan for collaboration, to be financed by each entity, and provided that monitoring of the implementation rests with the Head of the Southern Africa Sub-Regional Office and the Director of the Directorate of Food, Agriculture, and Natural Resources at the SADC Secretariat.

78. **Contribution made to the global report on “Measuring Progress: Water-related ecosystems and the SDGs”.** The project contributed an author and a reviewer to Chapter two of the report (The State of the Environment) specifically on the section on regional progress on the environmental dimension and state of the environment indicators of the SDGs for Sub-Saharan Africa²⁰. Produced by UNEP, the Measuring Progress series of reports provides an overview of the progress made in data availability for the 92 environment-related SDG indicators, coupled with improvement or degradation in the trend of each indicator. It also explores the potential and limitations of using statistical analysis to demonstrate interlinkages between indicator pairs to better inform policymakers of the synergies and trade-offs between SDGs. The indicators are divided into four categories: (i) state of the environment, (ii) drivers of change, (iii) state of human well-being and (iv) socioeconomic and environmental factors. This report explores the use of multivariate statistical analysis using water related ecosystems (freshwater and marine) as an example of the utility of this approach to explore how ecosystems are impacted by drivers, pressures and actions at multiple scalesn (ibid)²¹.
79. **A draft policy brief on best practices and lessons learnt was produced**, summarizing the findings of the capacity development assessment study. The policy brief identified three best practices: (i) Capacity-building programs enhanced technical expertise in data analysis, GIS, and AI, enabling actionable solutions for sustainable development; (ii) standardized data collection and open platforms improved consistency, transparency, and collaboration; (iii) Cross-sectoral forums aligned environmental indicators with SDGs through strengthened partnerships.
80. It also identified 4 lessons: (i) Sustained funding is vital for overcoming inadequate financial resources, enabling long-term capacity-building and robust environmental governance; (ii) Consistent training participation is essential to retain institutional knowledge and ensure progress; (iii) Broader stakeholder engagement, including civil society and private sectors, is critical for inclusive adoption of tools and practices; (iv) Addressing persistent data quality challenges requires enhanced validation protocols and advanced tools to improve accuracy and reliability.
81. It offered two recommendations: (i) In the preparation phase, stakeholder mapping and baseline assessments ensure tailored interventions. During implementation, continuous capacity building, resource allocation, and AI tool expansion enhance efficiency. Monitoring and evaluation focus on performance metrics, periodic reviews, and knowledge sharing to track progress and foster collaboration; (ii) Secure sustainable funding, expand training on emerging technologies, engage civil society and the private sector, and foster regional collaboration to share best practices and enhance data management

Lessons we learned by implementing the project:

1. Stakeholder engagement is crucial.
2. Capacity building is necessary.
3. Coordination can be challenging.
4. Data-driven decision-making is valuable - Ghana

IA 4: Public awareness platforms, events and media engagements that cite the findings of the project's resultant National Environment Summaries (NES) and SDG Gap reports

82. The target for this indicator was set at 3 events, without specifying which of the aspects of the compound indicator would qualify as an achievement (public awareness platforms, events or media engagements). The project report focused on public platforms, reporting that eight countries that updated the environment information system (EIS) either as individual countries system or on the MATATU platform. In addition, seventeen countries have provided data on the WESR page

²⁰ United Nations Environment Programme (2023). Measuring Progress: Water-related ecosystems and the SDGs. Nairobi, Kenya.

²¹ ibid.

(Botswana, Egypt, Gambia, Guinea, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Somalia, Uganda, Cote d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa).

IA 5: Amount of financial and other resources mobilized by country partners and stakeholders that include governmental authorities and UNCTs, to support the continuity of interventions on coherent integration of environmental data and statistics at the national level

83. As explained above, the view point of the reviewer is that this indicator was not monitored. The target had been set as nineteen – the number of countries targeted by the project (which was not appropriate indicator for resources mobilized). Furthermore, apart from training heads of NSOs and EPAs on financial mobilization, there was no intervention planned to support mobilization of additional resources or monitoring progress towards mobilization of such resources. It is possible that many partners mobilized co-finances. Furthermore, CEDARE indicated that it had raised approximately \$50,000 in kind contribution as staff time allocated for upgrading, training and technical back stopping of the MATATU facility, post SDG project. Moreover, as described in the section on Availability of Outputs, all 54 African countries updated and/or developed new NES, which will eventually inform the CCAs and consequently the UNSDFs. Furthermore, 19 countries²² produced CCAs during the project timeline with one (Rwanda) finalizing its UNSDCF.
84. The CCA is a crucial tool for ensuring that the UN's development assistance is targeted, effective, and aligned with national needs and priorities. The UNSDCF is the most important instrument for planning and implementation of the UN development activities at country level in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Thus, the NES embeds coherent integration of environmental data and statistics in the UN support on SDGs, as well as governments' investments in SDG programmes. This approach embeds both efficiency and sustainability into the project design. Furthermore, Ghana reported that the SDG project has benefited from co-finance from the Ghana component of the World Bank project on Harmonizing and Improving Statistics in West Africa. The project supported the compilation natural capital accounts, eco system accounts, environmental goods and services accounts, energy accounts and green GDP accounts.

Rating for Achievement of Project Outcomes: Satisfactory

D3. Likelihood of Impact

85. The reconstructed theory of change states that: if reliable, high quality relevant environmental information (latest, accurate, gender disaggregated statistics) is availed and capacity build for its utilization in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of SDG and Agenda 2063 programs and strategies, there would be an increase in evidence-based decisions on the environment, guaranteeing significant integration of the environmental dimension of sustainable development to accelerate the attainment of shared prosperity for all within the ecological limits of the planet. This recognizes four levels of impacts: (a) increased availability of relevant environmental information; (b) increase in evidence-based decisions on the environment; (c) significant integration of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the SDGs and Agenda 2063; (d) development becomes more sustainable and resilient, with a lower carbon footprint. However, these events are long-term and would not be monitored via indicators by a 2-to-3-year project.
86. The TR finds that project impacts are likely to be achieved in the long-term. This decision is based on the facts that the project exceeded targets for the 3 most critical indicators of achievement. The drivers to support transition from outputs to project outcomes, outcomes to intermediate states and intermediate states to impacts are in place, the assumptions for the change process from outputs to project outcomes, outcomes to intermediate states and intermediate states to impacts have held and are likely to continue holding. Indeed, there is already evidence that the quality of data and its use in monitoring SDG progress have improved in Sub-Sahara Africa and at the global level. Furthermore, the project exceeded targets for the two most critical indicators of achievement.

²² Botswana, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia.

87. **Increased availability of relevant environmental information:** the project contributed significantly to tackling the barriers to the integration of quality data and AI in monitoring progress on SDGs, through the open data platforms (MATATU Platform <https://matatueis.net/>), Common Country Analysis and National Environmental Summaries Interactive Portal and the WESR. This was complimented with the skills, including updated guidelines for the UNCT to conduct data-informed NES, training on relevant topics and best practices. The TE finds that the capacity-building programs enhanced technical expertise in data analysis, GIS, and AI, enabling actionable solutions for sustainable development. Standardized data collection and open platforms improved consistency, transparency, and collaboration. Furthermore, the policy brief based on the impact assessment provided best practices, lessons learned and a framework for improving environmental data management and decision-making to ensure sustainable impact for NSOs and EPAs²³. Cross-sectoral forums aligned environmental indicators with SDGs through strengthened partnerships.
88. **Impacts are already demonstrated:** The TE finds that there is evidence that quality of data and its use in monitoring SDG progress have, indeed, improved in Sub-Sahara Africa. The 2023 “Measuring Progress: Water-related ecosystems and the SDGs” report found that data availability concerning the 92 environment-related SDG indicators in the sub-Saharan Africa region has improved, where no data or insufficient data to analyse decreased from 65 per cent in 2020 to 51 per cent in 2022²⁴. Furthermore, the same report found that data availability at the global level had improved too, attributing this improvement to additional data being reported by countries. The indicators with no data or insufficient data to analyse decreased from 58 to 41 per cent between 2018 and 2023 reports.
89. The report found that the most significant improvements in data availability are related to the environment: those for SDG 6 on water, SDG 12 on sustainable consumption and production, SDG 14 on oceans and SDG 15 on land and biodiversity. In 2022: (i) only 1 out of 11 indicators of SDG 6 (water) had no data; (ii) four out of 14 indicators of SDG 12 (sustainable consumption and production) had no data; (iii) only two out of nine indicators of SDG 14 (oceans) had no data; and only three out of 14 indicators for SDG 15 (land and biodiversity) had no data. has three indicators with no data out of 14. While these changes result from many national, regional and global initiatives, the project has a clear path of contributing to these impacts
90. **Increase in evidence-based decisions on the environment:** The 54 NES reports already provide the first step on the evidence-based decisions process on the environment and SDGs. As explained previously, the NES informs the formulation of two important UN country development frameworks; the CCAs and the UNSDCF. The MATATU information system enhances the science-policy interface in the countries that use it. By bridging the gap between scientific research, data interpretation, and policy formulation, the portal promotes evidence-based decision-making. Policymakers can access comprehensive and accurate environmental assessments through the portal, enabling them to make informed decisions on environmental regulations and strategies. Furthermore, the TE finds evidence that assumptions will hold to enable the project results to continue the support towards this intermediate impact. The refined TOC recognized three key drivers to the achievement of the project objectives and delivery of results: (a) recognition of UNEP as the custodian of the environmental dimension of the SDGs; (b) the 7 sub-programs of UNEP and special initiatives in Africa; (c) the successful implementation of the UNEP Project - Coherent Integration of the Environmental Dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals in Regional and National Policy Frameworks in Africa 2020-2023 (PIMS ID Number – 02086), to which the project under review was part.
91. The TR finds that UNEP is the custodian of the environment related SDG indicators as demonstrated by the “Measuring Progress on SDGs” series of reports, which provide an overview of the progress made in data availability for the 92 environment-related SDG indicators, coupled with improvement or degradation in the trend of each indicator. This project was part of the 7 sub-programs of UNEP and special initiatives in Africa, under which the baseline project with a similar title was concluded in 2023, scoring “Satisfactory” in its terminal review. Although not explicitly

²³ Based on the assessment of the Impact of capacity development of National Statistics Office and Environment Protection Agencies in strengthening environmental data and statistics for better decision making.

²⁴ Ref the report

mentioned in the design of the project under review, it is likely that the baseline values to the indicators were realized through the former concluded project.

92. **Development becomes more sustainable and resilient, with a lower carbon footprint:** the TE finds evidence that assumptions will hold to enable the project results to eventually contribute significantly to the realization of this long-term impact. The refined TOC identified the following assumptions underlying the transition from outputs to outcomes to intermediate effects and eventual impacts: (a) Governments take action in implementing the environmental commitments of SDGs; (b) Current political willingness in institutions for coherent delivery of SDGs remains constant; (c) Political willingness and capacities present for collaboration among many organisations and agencies remain constant; (d) Current political willingness in institutions for coherent delivery of SDGs and Agenda 2063 remains constant.
93. The TE finds that all these assumptions hold and are likely to continue holding as demonstrated by the active participation of NSOs and EPAs in the nineteen countries supported to integrate data and AI into monitoring of environmental related SDG indicators. All 54 African countries updated and/or produced national environmental summaries between 2021 and 2024, demonstrating capacity and willingness to use improved quality data in monitoring SDG progress. The outcomes of this project contribute directly to the achievement of several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Strengthening national capacities for sharing up-to-date environmental information for decision support (SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals), it promotes partnership, cooperation, and capacity-building on a global level. Moreover, by focusing on environmental networking and reporting, it supports efforts to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts (SDG 13: Climate Action), protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems (SDG 15: Life on Land), and conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources (SDG 14: Life Below Water). The principle of “Leave no one Behind” aligns with SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities. The project also indirectly supports all SDGs by enabling better decision-making based on accurate and timely environmental information.
94. Moreover, the NES inform the UN CCA and the subsequent UNSDCF, which guide SDG implementation and monitoring frameworks. Indeed, African countries continue to participate in the production of the UNEP Progress Report on SDG series as well as the Africa Sustainable Development Report²⁵. Both these reports continue to emphasize the importance of quality data in measuring progress on SDGs.

Achievement of Likelihood of Impact: Likely

Overall Rating for Effectiveness: Highly Satisfactory

E. Financial Management

Criteria	Rating
Adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures	S
Completeness of Financial Information	S
Communication between Finance and Project Management Staff	S
Overall	S

95. The overall rating on financial management is “Satisfactory” for the reasons explained in the sections below – primarily that UNEP undertook project financial management, it allocated a Funds Management Officer to the project, who was incorporated into the PMT. Consequently, evidence shows that financial management was done in

compliance with all UNEP regulations and there was excellent working relations between the Funds Management Officer and the rest of the project team. Details below.

E1. Adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures

96. Since the project was implemented by UNEP ROA, all financial management was handled by a UNEP Funds Management Officer who was incorporated into the PMT, in conjunction with the project manager. Although the project did not have an in-house project to tag the project on, no cases of financial improprieties have been reported. Furthermore, responses from project partners indicated

²⁵ Example - https://www.google.com/search?q=africa+sustainable+development+report+2024&sca_esv

that there had been timely approval and disbursement of cash advances to partners; the PMC undertook regular analysis of actual expenditure against budget and workplans.

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

E2. Completeness of Financial Information

97. The Project Funds Management Officer provided all the relevant and complete financial information to the TR.

Table 12: Budget by Outputs

Outputs	Amount -US\$
Output 1.1	279,500.00
Output 1.2	35,000.00
Output 1.3	40,000.00
Output 1.4	60,000.00
Output 2.1	180,000.00
Output 2.2	45,000.00
Output 3.1	30,000.00
Output 3.2	57,793.00
Total Project Cost (Requested from PDF) -A	759,813.00
Programme support costs for non-DESA IP (4% of the total project cost above - B	30,392.52
Programme support costs for DESA/UN Central Account (3% of the Total Project cost above) - B1	22,794.39
TOTAL Project BUDGET - requested from PDF 2030 Agenda (total programme costs A + Programme Support Cost B)	812,999.91

E3. Communication between Finance and Project Management Staff

98. The TR finds no evidence of challenges in communication between finance and project management staff. Indeed, responses from the Finance Office (FMO) and Project Management staff revealed that the project manager had strong awareness of the financial status of project throughout the implementation period, the FMO had strong

awareness of overall project progress when making financial disbursements. Furthermore, being implemented by UNEP, there was regular contact between PM and FMO. The good communication between financial and project staff members contributed to the project being completed within programmed timeline and budget.

Rating for Communication Between Finance and Project Management Staff: Satisfactory

Overall Rating for Financial Management: Satisfactory

F. Efficiency

99. The project design embedded efficiency through integrating environmental sustainability and resilience into national SDG planning, implementation and monitoring vehicles, using existing structures. The project has significantly enhanced accessibility of critical environmental statistics for evidence-based decision-making and integrating environmental priorities into development planning frameworks, through the open data platforms. In particular, the MATATU platform bridges the gap between scientific research, data interpretation, and policy formulation, thereby promoting evidence-based decision-making. Policymakers who access the comprehensive and accurate environmental assessments through the portal, have the tools to make science-informed decisions on environmental regulations and strategies, thereby integrating environment into all the development and SDG investments they support.

100. The project built the capacity of the national institutions responsible for statistics and environmental information – the NSOs and EPAS. It built the capacities of UNCTs and relevant project managers at UNEP Office for Africa to increase effectiveness of their support to the country teams and stakeholders to integrate environmental indicators and data into the National Environment Summaries, which informs the CCAs and the UNSDCF. The UNCTs work directly with multiple ministries responsible for diverse SDGs, with the latest science and data from UNEP actions on nature, climate, and pollution/waste to inform implementation pathways towards the SDGs. As argued in the section on Delivery of Outcomes, the UNSDCF determine and reflect the

UN development system's contributions in any country and shapes the configuration of UN assets required for sustainable development. Mainstreaming science-based decision-making in the UNSDCF improves the integration of environment and resilience into the investments dedicated to development in the country, increasing the efficiency of the small funding for this project significantly.

Rating for Efficiency: Satisfactory

G. Monitoring and Reporting

G1. Monitoring Design and Budgeting

101. As argued in the Theory of Change Section, the results chain (outputs, outcomes, impacts) and their indicators were weak. Many activities and outputs had been presented as outputs and outcomes, respectively, making it difficult to identify clear and distinct indicators for each outcome and output levels. The projects 3 key indicators were replicated under different results. Although baseline and target information are provided for each indicator, the mix-up (and repetition) of indicators across various outputs and outcomes introduced some confusion. Although the project manager was responsible for M&E, there seems to have been no budget allocated specifically to monitoring. However, monitoring of indicators was straight forward (largely counting events and documents).

Rating for Monitoring of Project Implementation: Moderately Unsatisfactory

G2. Monitoring of Project Implementation

102. The TR finds that the monitoring system was operational and facilitated the timely tracking of results and progress towards projects objectives throughout the project implementation period, except the indicator on financial resources generated by the partners for further SDG support. The annual project reports provided updates on the milestones and progress towards indicators. However, as described in the project reporting section below, monitoring reports are not comprehensive, indicating the numbers of outputs delivered with no explanation of the context. This made obtaining information for this review challenging.

Rating for Monitoring of Project Implementation: Moderately Unsatisfactory

G3. Project Reporting

103. Due to its nature, this project produced several outputs in form of reports, guidelines and strategies, which are all uploaded to the UNEP PIMS (Project Information Management System). However, the annual project reports are very sketchy, largely filled into the targets' column of the LFA, rarely accompanied by informative narratives that give detailed accounts of project implementation and achievements. The Final Project Report was not availed to the review and project closure reports are sketchy and do not capture the projects achievements adequately. This challenge is compounded by the fact that all the documents, reports and guidelines produced do not make any reference to the project or to UNEP, making it difficult to separate the outputs of this project from those of the regular work of UNEP and its partners.

Rating for Monitoring and Reporting: Moderately Unsatisfactory

H. Sustainability

Criteria	Rating
Socio-political sustainability	likely
Financial sustainability	Likely
Sustainability of the Institutional Framework	Likely
Overall rating	Likely

H1. Socio-political Sustainability

It is highly likely that the results delivered by the project will be sustained due to the fact that the project build on existing programs of relevant partners, it targeted policies and existing policy frameworks, working through the institutions with recognized mandate for policy and development; and, it delivered structures, guidelines and curriculums for continued use by those mandated to support implementation of SDGs and Agenda 2063.

As explained previously, policies are the effective drivers of lasting change. Once environmental

sustainability and resilience are anchored in the UN and Country Development Frameworks, they will continue to influence the most prioritized policy instruments in national economies, increasing the coherence of the implementation of SDGs and Agenda 2063. UN Development Cooperation Frameworks will continue to mainstream environment and climate actions under the leadership of the UNCTs, using up to date environmental data from the empowered national governments institutions, supported by the UNCT Focal Point system, the open data platforms on environmental data and statistics and drawing further support from the forum for interactions among the heads of Environment Protection Agencies and Directors of Environment across the Africa region operationalized by the project.

Rating for Socio-political Sustainability - Likely

H2. Financial Sustainability

104. The ultimate goal of the SDGs project was to improve policy coherence across environmental, social and economic sectors, which is critical for preventing, halting and reversing environmental degradation in order to foster resilient carbon neutral development, especially through the coherent implementation of SDGs and Agenda 2063. While it has increased the coherence and created pro-SDGS policy pathways, the ultimate impact is dependent, to some extent, on individual countries' actual implementation and enforcement of these pro-SDGS pathways. Mainstreaming the use of scientific information thorough the UNSDCF will ensure that all the UN and national budgets for the SDG programmes will sustain the science-policy nexus. The UNCT and its country-based UN Development Assistance Framework will, however, continue to support the actual implementation, thereby making it likely that the financing will be available for long-term sustainability.

Rating for Financial Sustainability - Likely

H3. Institutional Sustainability

105. Majority of the institutions with the responsibility of sustaining the project outcomes were engaged in the project implementation and have demonstrated strong ownership and interest in the project. Project implementation was integrated into the existing programs of the implementing partners, building on the mandates and roles of each partner and their existing capacities, yet the roles and responsibilities of external partners was properly specified and appropriate to their capacities. Although sustainability of these outcomes has a moderate degree of dependency on social/political factors of each country, there is very high level of ownership, interest and commitment for the project outcomes by all the stakeholders. Furthermore, UNEP continues to provide technical support and advisory services to partner governments and UNCTs, reinforcing capacity developed during the project. In addition, UNEP has mainstreamed the use of NES, SDG Gap Reports, and open data platforms into ongoing programming and country-level engagements, ensuring their continued relevance and application in development planning. Finally, the knowledge products and digital platforms developed under the project are now integrated into UNEP's World Environment Situation Room (WESR), providing long-term access and continuity for data sharing, policy analysis, and cross-country learning.

Rating for Sustainability (Likelihood): Likely

I. Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

Criteria	Rating
Preparation and Readiness	MS
Quality of Project Management and Supervision	S
Stakeholders' Participation and Cooperation	S
Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equity	MS
Environmental and Social Safeguards	MS
Country Ownership and Driven-ness	S
Communication and Public Awareness	S
Overall	S

106. The overall rating for factors affecting performance is "Satisfactory". Factors contributing to this rating are that: the project was designed and managed by a team of senior staff of the UNEP ROA, who constituted the project management team, the project design was informed by adequate stakeholder assessment, implementation engaged a wide range of stakeholders, who have expressed strong ownership and interest by high political players in environment and development. However, while the project took care to involve both men and

women in its activities, it had no real influence over gender compliance of partner institutions

J1 Preparation and Readiness

107. This project was developed and managed by the Africa Office of UNEP. The project was not affected by the restrictions associated with COVID-19 and was completed within budget and timeline. There is, however, no evidence that the project was subjected to review by the UNEP Project Review Committee. There is also no evidence that the project design was informed by an environment and social safeguards (ESE) assessment, although it is unlikely that the assessment would have triggered any risks that would require a risk management plan. TE finds that the project outcomes and their sustainability are unlikely to be affected negatively by any ESE. This is because the main target of the project was to mainstream environmental sustainability and resilience in key development processes to improve coherence of implementation of the SDGs and Agenda 2063. It therefore had no on-the-ground community-based activities.

108. However, the project states clearly that it would support governments and the UN system to implement the “leaving no one behind principle” - which recognizes the need for protecting ecosystems and biodiversity as the “Gross Domestic Products of the poor,” as they provide the bases for livelihoods and employment for many of the poor and those left furthest behind, including vulnerable groups such as women, indigenous peoples, the physically challenged and the youth. Direct stakeholders, therefore, were primarily policy makers at regional and national levels, in governments, the UN system and regional bodies. Indirect stakeholders included civil society, academia, private sector and the general populations in the fifty-four African countries.

Rating for Preparation and Readiness: Moderately Satisfactory

J1. Quality of Project Management and Supervision

109. This project was managed by the Africa Office of UNEP. All the staff members confirmed to the TR that, in their opinions, the project was well managed. Since the project was mainstreamed into the sub-programmes of the UN Africa Office, the staff members responsible constituted the PMC. This is evidenced by the facts that the project was implemented within the programmed time and budget, scoring highly satisfactory on effectiveness, despite a weak project design.

Rating for Quality of Project Management and Supervision: Satisfactory

J2. Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation

110. The project design was informed by an in-depth stakeholder analysis that identified direct and indirect stakeholders. Direct stakeholders were primarily policy makers at national levels, in governments and the UN system. Indirect stakeholders included civil society, academia, private sector and the general populations in the fifty-four African countries.

111. Stakeholders’ identification and the importance of clear stakeholder engagement in project implementation and achievement and sustainability of project results was mainstreamed throughout the project document, in addition to the specific chapter on stakeholder analysis. The nature of the project required high levels of participation of the direct and indirect stakeholders (type A and B), as demonstrated in the outputs and outcomes such as NES and CCAs. Furthermore, the project committed to ensure that at least one strategic outcome area in the UNSDCF focuses on environmental sustainability and a foundational component of development in the targeted countries, to secure its priority and addressing of any gaps, including through the lens of the imperative of leaving no one behind. Furthermore, due to the high integration of project implementation into the partner programmes, there is high interest and ownership of the project by the direct stakeholders.

Rating for Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation: Satisfactory

J3. Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality

112. The project document did not provide a gender score and did not state that it would take a human rights approach to implementation. However, the project was designed by UNEP Africa Office, in compliance with UNEP guidelines, which integrates human rights and gender equity. The project

design recognizes that environmental degradation affects more adversely the vulnerable groups in society, including women, the youth and the physically challenged; b) Women and indigenous communities are among the clear champions advocating for more sustainable use of natural resources and the rights of the minorities within development; c) A stronger policy and institutional framework for environmental governance increases resources for the implementation of SDGs and Agenda 63 with likelihood of benefits at local level, where vulnerable groups are likely to benefit. Furthermore, the project states clearly that it would support governments and the UN system to implement the “leaving no one behind principle”.

113. The project worked through existing national teams of NSOs, EPAs and UNCTs. It had no direct influence over the gender relations and/or issues that may prevail in these institutions. This is demonstrated by the fact that gender disaggregated indicators on number of people attending meetings and training events were largely predominated by men, even though the project committed to encouraging gender equity in attending project events. It is however noted that being managed by UNEP, the project would have integrated gender during implementation especially during training, conducting gender-sensitive analysis, and mainstreaming gender considerations in policy guidance tools.

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

J4. Environmental and Social Safeguards

114. The project did not conduct environmental and social safeguards and there is no evidence provided to the reviewer that these (social safeguards) were monitored or reported on. However, it can be argued that given the nature of the project – no activities on the ground – and the fact that it was designed and managed by UNEP, it is unlikely that the ESS would have triggered any risks that would require specific management.

Rating for Environmental and Social Safeguards: Moderately Satisfactory

J5. Country Ownership and Driven-ness

115. Since the project targeted UNCTs, relevant UNEP managers and national institutions (NSOs/EPAs) of nineteen countries, the review examines “Partner Ownership and Drive-ness” (not “country ownership and drive-ness”). There is evidence that the project was integrated into the programmes of partner institutions, including UNCTs that support the African countries on the development of the UNSDCF. All stakeholders that are essential for moving from project outputs to outcomes and from outcomes to intermediate states and eventually impacts were engaged in its implementation, taking lead roles in strategic direction of project delivery, advocating for change to achieve higher level results, accepting project results. Each country receiving development cooperation assistance from the UN system participates actively in the formulation of the UNSDCF, demonstrating high levels of ownership of these processes.

Rating for Partner’s ‘Ownership and Driven-ness: Satisfactory

J6. Communication and Public Awareness

116. The TR finds evidence that the project used the UNEP communication and public awareness systems.

Rating for Communication and Public Awareness: Satisfactory

Overall Rating for Factors Affecting Performance: Satisfactory

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions

117. This project has made remarkable progress towards enhancing the capacities of national institutions to effectively manage, access, and harmonize environmental information. This highlights the critical importance of well-structured environmental information systems in enabling evidence-based decision-making, strategic planning, and compliance with both national and international reporting obligations. By proactively addressing existing gaps and building institutional strengths, the project has steadily established a robust framework that empowers institutions to generate, analyze, and disseminate high-quality environmental data, an essential step toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.
118. The project was conceived to reinforce existing environmental governance mechanisms and to embed responses to the triple planetary crisis - climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution into national and regional development processes. It also sought to leverage the UN reform process and respond to emerging needs such as COVID-19 recovery planning. Despite a very small budget (about US\$ 0.9 million) the project has built on results of previous initiatives (such as the previous SDG capacity development projects) to significantly move the needle towards mainstreaming of environmental sustainability into national policy and planning processes into SDG planning, implementation and monitoring of processes in the following ways:
119. Establishment of National and Regional Open Data Platforms (MATATU, Africa page on World Environment Situation Room, Common Country Analyses, and National Environmental Summaries Interactive Portal). These platforms enhance transparency, enable real-time environmental monitoring, and improve accessibility of critical environmental statistics for policymakers and the public alike.
120. Training and networking of NSOs and EPAs significantly enhanced institutional capacity of nineteen countries to embrace evidence-based decision making, thereby enhanced the integration of environmental considerations into the NESS.
121. Producing and/or updating NES for the 54 countries, the project strengthened evidence-based decision-making and informed the design of responsive, sustainable development strategies.
122. The production of NES-informed CCAs for 19 African countries, further entrenched the integration of environmental priorities into UNSDCF's. This promotes the alignment of country development policies and programmes with global frameworks like the SDGs, UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy, and Africa's Agenda 2063.
123. Promoting regional collaboration (via networking and joint open data platforms) strengthened inter-country collaboration and exchange of lessons, delivering on the South-South collaboration.
124. Thus, through increased data accessibility and public awareness initiatives, the project fostered transparency, stakeholder engagement, and a culture of accountability. Ultimately, it laid the foundation for long-term climate resilience and sustainable environmental governance in the region. Indeed, the project positioned CEDARE as a key facilitator for knowledge sharing and cooperation among African nations, enhanced CEDARE's networking and collaboration within the African environmental sector and strengthened CEDARE's relationship with UNEP, a crucial entity in driving environmental programs both globally and across Africa.
125. Working through the existing programmes with the mandate for the provision of data for planning (NSOs), environmental protection (EPAs), development of the UNSDCF's (UNCCT) and facilitating the networking of the EPAs and NSOs (CEDARE) embedded both efficiency and sustainability. Furthermore, since the conditions (assumptions) necessary for the transition of outputs to outcomes and onto impacts are in place, there is high likelihood of sustaining the integration of emerging technologies to advance science-policy interface and support decision-making.
126. The table below provides a summary of the ratings and finding discussed in Chapter 0. Overall, the project demonstrates a rating of **"Satisfactory"**.

UNEP Evaluation Office Validation of Performance Ratings:

The UNEP Evaluation Office formally quality assesses (see Annex XII) management led Terminal Review reports and validates the performance ratings therein by ensuring that the performance judgments made are consistent with evidence presented in the Review report and in-line with the performance standards set out for independent evaluations.

The Evaluation Office assesses a Terminal Review report in the same way as it assesses the initial draft of a Terminal Evaluation report. It applies the following assumptions in its validation process:

- That what is being assessed is the contents of the report and the extent to which it makes a consistent and justifiable case for the performance ratings it records.
- That the consultant has, within the report, presented all the evidence that was made available to them.
- That the Review has been based on a robust Theory of Change, reconstructed where necessary, which reflects UNEP's definitions at all levels of results.
- That the project team and key stakeholders have already reviewed a draft version of the report and provided substantive comments and made factual corrections to the Review Consultant, who has responded to them. The Evaluation Office assumes, therefore, that it has received the Final (revised) version of the report.

In this instance the Evaluation Office assesses the quality of the Report at the 'Satisfactory' level and validates the overall project performance rating at the '**Satisfactory**' level.

Table 13: Summary of the ratings and finding

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation	EOU Validated Rating
Strategic Relevance		HS	The rating has been corrected in accordance with the weighted rating scale, following the correction of the sub-rating for one of the sub-criteria.	S
Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and strategic priorities	The project is highly relevant to UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2018-20217 and MTS 2022-2025.	HS	The rating is validated.	HS
Alignment to Donor/Partner strategic priorities	The project was funded by a UNDA grant administered by UN DESA. The project is highly relevant to the mandate of UNDESA. UN DESA produces the backbone of data and analyses that inform the global policy decisions on economic, social, and environmental issues and provides technical assistance to developing countries, at their request, to help translate global decisions into viable national strategies and plans	HS	In the text, the rating is presented as <i>Satisfactory</i> . The rating "S" is validated.	S
Relevance to global, regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities	The project objective was in line with the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), which sets the environmental agenda in Africa, and plays a strong advocacy role on environmental sustainability and matters related to environmental management and protection.	HS	The rating is validated.	HS
Complementarity with relevant existing interventions/coherence	Although the project document does not explain the linkages and/or complementarity between the project and any other projects of either UNDESA or UNEP, it does explain that the project would collaborate with all programs and projects under the UNEP Africa Office.	MS	The rating is validated.	MS
Quality of Project Design	The TOC was poorly described, the LFA was weak, results didn't always comply with the "smartness" criteria, the indicators were repeated across outcomes, there were no output indicators and no evidence was provided to show that the project design was reviewed by the UNEP Project Review Committee, which would likely have recommended improvement of the integrity of the project document.	MS	The rating is validated.	MS
Nature of External Context	Being implemented by UNEP ROA, there were no issues affecting its planning and implementation. Implementation started immediately after the conclusion of the financing agreement and the whole project was completed within the stipulated time and budget, scoring HS on effectiveness.	F	The rating is validated.	F
Effectiveness		HS	The Evaluation Office notes that the original overall rating in the text should have been corrected in accordance with the weighted rating scale. The rating 'S' is validated.	S

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation	EOU Validated Rating
Availability of outputs	All the activities were concluded and all but one of the programme outputs were delivered within time and budgets. Indeed, it exceeded targets on all the three targets of output 2.1.	HS	Based on criterion rating descriptions matrix, the rating has been adjusted from HS to S. Regarding outputs, the analysis presented in Table 11 that not all outputs were fully delivered. For instance, the review reported that some targets such as indicators 2 and 12 were partially delivered.	S
Achievement of project outcomes	The project surpassed targets for 4 of its 5 achievement indicators. It reported zero achievement on its 5th indicator (amount of financial and other resources mobilized by country partners and stakeholders that include governmental authorities and UNCTs, to support the continuity of interventions on coherent integration of environmental data and statistics at the national level). The reviewer's view is that the real challenge is the difficulty of monitoring the indicator and not that partners did not make financial contributions.	S	The rating is validated.	S
Likelihood of impact	The project impacts are likely to be achieved in the long-term. The project exceeded targets for the 3 most critical indicators of achievement. The drivers to support transition from outputs to project outcomes, outcomes to intermediate states and intermediate states to impacts are in place, the assumptions for the change process from outputs to project outcomes, outcomes to intermediate states and intermediate states to impacts have held and are likely to continue holding. Indeed, there is already evidence that the quality of data and its use in monitoring SDG progress have improved in Sub-Sahara Africa and at the global level. Furthermore, the project exceeded targets for the two most critical indicators of achievement.	L	The rating is validated.	L
Financial Management		S	The rating is validated.	S
Adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures	Project was managed by UNEP	S	The rating is validated.	S
Completeness of project financial information	All financial information was availed to the reviewer	S	The rating is validated.	S
Communication between finance and project management staff	Evidence produced shows there was clear communication between finance and project management staff	S	The rating is validated.	S
Efficiency	The project design embedded efficiency through integrating environmental sustainability and resilience into national SDG planning, implementation and monitoring vehicles, using existing structures.	S	The rating is validated.	S
Monitoring and Reporting		MS	The overall rating has been corrected, reflecting the ratings in the text. "MU" is validated.	MU

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation	EOU Validated Rating
Monitoring design and budgeting	The M&E design was weakened by a weak LFA.	MS	In the text, the rating is presented as Moderately Unsatisfactory. The rating, "MU" is validated.	MU
Monitoring of project implementation	The TR finds that the monitoring system was operational and facilitated the timely tracking of results and progress towards projects objectives throughout the project implementation period, except the indicator on financial resources generated by the partners for further SDG support.	MS	In the text, the rating is presented as Moderately Unsatisfactory. The rating, "MU" is validated. The evaluation office notes that evidence in the text does not address whether a completed workplan and minimal amounts of baseline data exists, and the data collected is disaggregated by vulnerable/marginalized groups, including gender.	MU
Project reporting	However, the annual project reports are very sketchy, largely filled into the targets' column of the LFA, rarely accompanied by informative narratives that give detailed accounts of project implementation and achievements. A final project report was not availed to the review.	MS	In the text, the rating is presented as Moderately Unsatisfactory. The rating, "MU" is validated.	MU
Sustainability		Likely	The rating is validated.	L
Socio-political sustainability	that the project build on existing programs of relevant partners, it targeted policies and existing policy frameworks, working through the institutions with recognized mandate for policy and development; and, it delivered structures, guidelines and curriculums for continued use by those mandated to support implementation of SDGs and Agenda 2063.	Likely	The rating is validated.	L
Financial sustainability	Mainstreaming the use of scientific information thorough the UNSDCF's will ensure that all the UN and national budgets for the SDG programmes will sustain the science-policy nexus.	S	In the text, the rating is presented as 'Likely'. The rating 'L' is validated. However, the evaluation office notes that no findings and evidence on dependency on future funding, and secured future funding were addressed.	L
Institutional sustainability	Majority of the institutions with the responsibility of sustaining the project outcomes were engaged in the project implementation and have demonstrated strong ownership and interest in the project. Project implementation was integrated into the existing programs of the implementing partners, building on the mandates and roles of each partner and their existing capacities, yet the roles and responsibilities of external partners was properly specified and appropriate to their capacities.	Likely	The rating is validated.	L
Factors Affecting Performance		S	The rating is validated.	S

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation	EOU Validated Rating
Preparation and readiness	The project was developed and managed by the UNEP RAO. The project was not affected by the restrictions associated with COVID-19 and was completed within budget and timeline. However, there is no evidence that it benefitted from the UNEP PRC.	MS	The rating is validated. The evaluation office notes that the evidence in the text highlighted absence of ESE safeguards assessment, and PRC process, which may warrant a lower-level rating than MS. However, no other evidence was provided in the text regarding inception meeting, annual costed workplan, and staffing mobilization and engagement of stakeholders in a timely manner to allow for a comprehensively adjustment of the rating.	MS
Quality of project management and supervision	Provided by UNEP ROA	S	The rating is validated.	S
2.1 UNEP/Implementing Agency:		S	The rating is validated.	S
2.2 Partners/Executing Agency:	N/A	MS	The evaluation office notes that there is no analysis about this sub-section.	N/A
Stakeholders' participation and cooperation	Stakeholders' identification and the importance of clear stakeholder engagement in project implementation and achievement and sustainability of project results was mainstreamed throughout the project document, in addition to the specific chapter on stakeholder analysis.	MS	In the text, the rating is presented as 'S'.	S
Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality	The project document does not provide a gender score and does not mention specifically state that it would take a human rights approach to implementation. However, the project was designed by UNEP Africa Office, in compliance with UNEP guidelines, which integrates human rights and gender equity.	S	In the text, the rating is presented as 'MS'.	MS
Environmental and social safeguards	The project did not conduct environmental and social safeguards and these is evidence provided to the reviewer that these were monitored or reported on. However, it can be argued that given the nature of the project – no activities on the ground – and the fact that it was designed and managed by UNEP, it is unlikely that the ESS would have triggered any risks that would require specific management	S	In the text, the rating is presented as 'MS'. The rating 'MS' is validated. The Evaluation Office notes that no evidence about the exemption of ESS process, based on the nature of project is not addressed or provided. This lack of information limits the ability to adjust the rating.	MS
Country ownership and driven-ness	There is evidence that the project was integrated into the programmes of partner institutions, including UNCTs that support the African countries on the development of the UNSDCFs. This engendered high levels of ownership by project partners.	MS	In the text, the rating is presented as 'S'. The rating 'S' is validated.	S
Communication and public awareness	The TR finds evidence that the project used the UNEP communication and public awareness systems	S	The rating is validated. Evaluation office notes that the review does not explicitly provide the details of the evidence.	S
Overall Project Performance Rating		S	Satisfactory	S

B. Lessons learned

Lesson 1.	Well-positioned, modest investments can have far reaching, transformative results, when the right partnerships target strategic policy processes and empower the most relevant drivers of economic development
Context/comment:	The project's planned budget was less than one million USD, which is a minimal for a project targeting improved data management and use for decision-making on SDG management in nineteen countries. However, the project delivered considerable results and created conditions to support the translation of the results into impacts. In recognition of the fact that policies drive economic growth and development, the focus on building the capacity of the relevant development players national enabled the project to make transformative change in integrating environmental sustainability and climate resilience into development processes, increasing the effort and coherence of the implementation of SDGs and Agenda 2063, leading to more sustainable, resilient and carbon neutral development while simultaneously halting, preventing and reversing degradation of Africa's natural capital, the bedrock of economic development and livelihoods.
Lesson 2.	Targeting institutions with the mandate for project initiatives is a win-win strategy
Context/comment:	Working through the existing institutions with the mandate for the provision of data for planning (NSOs), environmental protection (EPAs), development of the UNSDCFs and facilitating the networking of the EPAs and NSOs (CEDARE) embedded both efficiency and sustainability of the project results.
Lesson 3.	Emerging technologies and AI can leap-frog availability and use of scientifically sound quality data in the planning, implementation and monitoring of SDGs in Africa
Context/comment:	To meet the urgent need for addressing data challenges and enhancing the environmental data infrastructure in African countries, there is need to identify highly transformative technologies and techniques. The project met this challenge by operationalizing the MATATU platform combined by targeted skills development for the relevant players in the SDG process (NSOs, EPAs, UNCTs). The MATATU platform provides a centralized system to enhance management, access, and exchange of environmental information and knowledge, while the integration of AI functionalities within the platform to support policy development and decision-making is a forward-thinking approach. These facilities provide user-friendly data systems for the adoption and the effectiveness of these systems, which will benefit the production of National State of Environment reports.
Lesson 4.	Flexibility in project design is essential to accommodate emerging needs and challenges, particularly with high staff turn-over in the NSOs, EPAs and UNCTs.
Context/comment:	NSOs, EPAs and UNCTs experience frequent staff turnover, which impacted capacity-building efforts related to the management of open data platforms. During scheduled training sessions, newly assigned personnel often replaced previously trained staff, resulting in significant knowledge gaps. To address this challenge, the project team adjusted its approach by developing more modular, easily replicable training materials and implementing a continuous capacity-building model. This included follow-up sessions, virtual training options, and documentation tailored for rapid onboarding of new staff. As a result, knowledge retention improved over time, and institutional capacity for managing the platforms became more resilient to staff transitions.

Lesson 5.	Early and sustained engagement with the technical and political actors ensures ownership.
Context/comment:	Stakeholders' identification and the importance of clear stakeholder engagement in project implementation and achievement and sustainability of project results was mainstreamed throughout the project design. This translated to a high level of engagement of relevant partners in the implementation of project initiatives, thereby promoting high levels of ownership of project results, increasing the probability of sustainability of project results.

Lesson 6.	Regional collaboration offers valuable peer learning opportunities and strengthens collective action on environmental sustainability
Context/comment:	By adopting a regional approach to country-specific challenges, the project provided a South-South Cooperation facility. The project positions CEDARE as a key facilitator for knowledge sharing and cooperation among African nations. Moreover, the project enhances CEDARE's networking and collaboration within the African environmental sector. The project also strengthens CEDARE's relationship with UNEP, a crucial entity in driving environmental programs both globally and across Africa. Secondly, it expands its network by facilitating collaboration with national experts and institutions from 19 pilot countries throughout the continent. Additionally, CEDARE collaborates directly with the Africa Network for Heads of Environment Protection Agencies (AFEP), establishing valuable connections with environmental policy leaders.

C. Recommendations

Recommendation #1:	All partners (governments, UNEP and other development partners) should improve internet connectivity in government (NSOs, EPAs) offices for effective use of the open data platforms.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Poor internet infrastructure in some countries may affect the ability to make full use of the open data platforms and the AI facilities that enhance the effectiveness of the data systems.
Priority Level:	High priority (important)
Type of Recommendation	All partners
Responsibility:	Governments, UNEP, development partners supporting infrastructure and SDG assistance to countries.
Proposed implementation time-frame:	On-going

Recommendation #2:	Avail resources (financial, continued skills development, networking) post project
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	To ensure the sustainability of the platforms post project, resources should be availed for continued maintenance, updating of data and skills. There is a potential challenge of raising resources in-country to continue the support of the use of the system in some countries, not because they do not value the system, but due to budgetary shortages. The NSOs, EPAs and even UNCTs experience high staff turnover, hence the necessity of continuous training and support to networking. The countries need to continuously update NES on regular basis. The use of data/information provided via the open data system and the skills developed need to be maintained.
Priority Level:	High priority (important)
Type of Recommendation	All partners
Responsibility:	Governments, UNEP, development partners supporting infrastructure and SDG assistance to countries.
Proposed implementation time-frame:	On-going

Recommendation #3:	Launch the MATATU platform at a meeting of the Africa Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN)
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	MATATU should be properly launched at an AMCEN meeting to ensure national commitments and to showcase that Africa has the capacity to develop internally a state-of-the art technology in the field of IEA and AI. Africa is pioneer in implementing a pan African system.
Priority Level:	Important
Type of Recommendation	All partners
Responsibility:	UNEP
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Within a year, at the first opportunity available

Recommendation #4:	Scale up the MATATU platform to provide more data types and AI functions
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Scaling up the MATATU platform would significantly benefit environmental management and sustainable development in Africa by widening data availability and accessibility, enhancing regional monitoring and reporting, increasing collaboration and knowledge sharing among African nations, and strengthening institutional capacity for environmental information management
Priority Level:	Important
Type of Recommendation	All partners
Responsibility:	All partners
Proposed implementation time-frame:	On-going

Recommendation #5:	Strengthen in-country resource mobilisation in all the countries to continue support (skills development, expanding and maintaining the open data platforms and its use).
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Include a stronger component on in-country resource mobilization, earlier engagement with finance ministries, greater integration with digital platforms, and an enhanced monitoring system to track progress post-implementation. Indeed, future projects should build in mechanisms for institutional continuity, scale-up pathways, and post-project follow-up support. Expanding south-south collaboration and peer-learning among countries could further accelerate uptake and innovation.
Priority Level:	Important
Type of Recommendation	All partners
Responsibility:	All partners
Proposed implementation time-frame:	On-going

SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHED ACHIEVEMENTS

127. The below summary is as per the sixth and final report submitted to UNDESA.

Table 14: Summary of accomplished achievements

INDICATOR as approved	BASELINE at the start of the project	INDICATOR OF ACHIEVEMENT at project completion
IA1.1 Number of national policy frameworks, papers, strategies, legislations, etc. that integrate environmental dimensions through the leadership of the supported National Statistics Offices, National Environmental Protection Agencies, and Africa's Regional Economic Communities (RECs)	The five (5) indicated as baseline refers to Voluntary Reviews, National Development Plans, and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks that had environmental dimensions at the onset of the project, as follows: - Eritrea's Common Country Analysis paper (2020/2021); - South Africa's UNSDCF 2020-2025; - Somalia's UNSDCF (2021-2025); - Somalia's Common Country Analysis paper (2020/2021); - Uganda's UNSDCF 2021-2025	Target: +15 Achieved: +12
IA1.2 Number of countries with established open data platforms and other integrated systems that feature national environmental data and statistics, as a result of enhanced capacities of National Statistics Offices (NSOs) and National Environmental Protection Agencies (EPAs).	Four (4) Egypt, Kenya, Madagascar, and Senegal	Target: +15 Achieved: +2
IA2.1 National policies and institutional frameworks that take into account the findings of the project-supported National Environment Summaries (NES) and sustainability Gap reports.	Five (5) air quality policies in cities of Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), Nairobi (Kenya), and Cape Town (Cape Town), as well as Uganda National Wetlands Policy; and Nigeria's Climate Change Act of November 2021	Target: +19 Achieved: 3
IA2.2 Public awareness platforms, events and media engagements that cite the findings of the project's resultant National Environment Summaries (NES) and sustainability Gap reports.	Three (3)	Target: +19 Achieved: +6
IA 3.1: Number of CCAs and UNSDCFs supported to integrate environmental sustainability and climate resilience	Ten (10) At the project's conceptualization stage, the cited baseline of ten(10) refers to CCAs and UNSDCFs for the following countries: Botswana (1st CCA -2021); Cote d'Ivoire (UNSDCF 2021-2025); Egypt (1st CCA 2020); Eritrea (UNSDCF – 2022-2026, and 1st CCA – 2020/2021); Gambia (1st CCA – 2020/2021); Nigeria (1st CCA – 2021); Somalia (UNSDCF 2021-2025, and 1st CCA -2020); South Africa (1st CCA – 2020; UNSDCF 2020-2025); Rwanda (1st CCA – 2020/2021);	Target: +19 Achieved: +8
IA 3.2: Amount of financial and other resources mobilized by country partners and stakeholders that include governmental authorities and UNCT, to support the continuity of interventions on coherent integration of environmental data and statistics at the national level.	Zero (0)	Target: +19 Achieved: 0

ANNEX I. RESPONSE TO STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

128. All editorial comments were accepted. The table below contains substantive comments and the reviewer's responses.

Comment	Response
It is not accurate to say that the project document had no section on theory of change. Please have a look at the both the project concept note and the project document.	This finding is factual. I have read the consolidated project document and there is no presentation of theory of change.
The project was funded by UNPDF, not UNDESA. Please correct this fact throughout the document.	Done
It is incorrect to state that the project did not have output indicators and that no evidence was provided to show that the project design was reviewed by the UNEP Project Review Committee	This is factual. The project logframe in the consolidated project document provided for the review has no indicators at the output level (only activities). The report of Project Review Committee was not made available with the other project background information. Findings of the review are based on evidence.
It is incorrect to state that CEDARE has set aside US\$ 50,000 of its budget as a contribution to the co-finance of this project, since it (CEDARE) was a contractor in the project. Paid by UNEP - US\$ 148.2K from the project funds.	CEDARE reported in their questionnaire that they had raised \$50,000 institutional resources (largely in co-finance) in addition to the grant the project gave them, to sustain the MATATU facility post project. This demonstrates ownership of results and probability of sustainability. So, there is no contradiction.
It is incorrect to state that the project document did not provide a gender score and did not state that it would take a human rights approach to implementation. However, the project was designed by UNEP Regional Office for Africa, in compliance with UNEP guidelines, which integrates human rights and gender equity.	This is factual – there is no gender score or statement regarding human rights approach on the Consolidated Project Document provided for this review.
Recommendation that UNEP and that governments, UNEP and other development partners should improve internet connectivity in government (NSOs, EPAs) offices for effective use of the open data platforms is mundane and should be reconsidered.	This is not mundane. Data platforms are a significant part of the project results. However, as specified in the detailed “conclusions and recommendations” section, poor internet infrastructure in some countries may affect the ability to make full use of the open data platforms and the Artificial Intelligence facilities that enhance the effectiveness of the data systems. The recommendation is directed to all partners, not just UNEP.
Provide an annex a plan/add here on when respondents to the questionnaire were engaged i.e. the timelines	Table 14

ANNEX II. REVIEW FRAMEWORK/MATRIX

Key question	Potential Indicator	Source of Verification
Criteria 1: Strategic relevance		
Was the project aligned to UNEP MTS and PoW and their strategic priorities?	Level of alignment of the project with UNEP MTS and PoW and strategic priorities	Project document, Project Reports, Official UNEP MTS and PoW
How far was the project in line with UNEP and other Donor strategic priorities?	Level of alignment of the project with UNEP and other donors' strategic priorities	Published UNEP and other donors' Strategic priorities, Prodoc and the Assessment of Quality at Design matrix
To what extent was the project relevant to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National SDGs and the role of environment in the SDG and Agenda 2063 priorities	Analysis of the Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National SDGs and the role of environment in the SDG and Agenda 2063 priorities in project document	National, Regional and Global programmes and initiatives on SDGs, Agenda 2063, Project Reports
Was complementarity with other relevant on-going and planned initiatives considered during the design, inception and/or implementation stages?	Analysis and mention of synergies in the project document and reports	Project document and project reports, discussions with executing agency staff, UNEP staff and the Project Steering/Management Committee
Criteria 2: Effectiveness		
<i>Criteria 2.1: Achievement of project outputs</i>		
To what extent has the project delivered programmed outputs and achieved milestones stated in the project document (outputs assessed for quantity, quality and timeliness)?	Number of programmed outputs produced in a timely manner within budget and judged to be of good quality by the relevant authorities (PSC, UNEP, Partners).	Publications, study reports, progress reports completed, discussions with executing agency staff
Were key stakeholders appropriately involved in producing the programmed outputs?	Stated contribution of stakeholders in achievement of outputs	Project document, project progress reports, discussions with key stakeholders including Project Steering/Management Committee, project partners and project staff
<i>Criteria 2.2: Achievement of Direct Outcomes</i>		
To what extent has the project achieved/led to the achievement of the outcomes in the reconstructed theory of change?	Number of outcomes achieved	Publications, study reports, Progress reports, discussions with project executing agency staff and project partners
To what extent has the project achieved/led to the achievement of the intermediate states outlined in the TOC at TE?	Extent of contribution attributable to project results	Project document, project progress reports, discussions with key stakeholders including Project Steering/Management Committee, project partners and project staff
To what extent have the project findings been made available to decision makers as well as the public, and relevant interest groups?	Level of dissemination of findings to decision makers as well as the public, and relevant interest groups	Dissemination materials (publications, information kits) Communication activities (press articles, TV programmes).
Is the required capacity available to achieve outputs?	Quality of reports and achievements	Publications, reports, discussions with project management team

Key question	Potential Indicator	Source of Verification
What factors contributed to achievement of outcomes (or non-achievement)?	List of factors enabling or derailing achievement of outcomes	Project reports, discussions with the project partners, beneficiaries and management
Criteria 2.3: Likelihood of Impact		
Is the level of ownership by the main national and stakeholders sufficient to allow for the project results to be sustained?	Key stakeholders participate actively in implementation and replication of project activities and results	Project document, project progress reports, discussions with key stakeholders (governments, UN and Regional bodies, UNCTs and other key stakeholder) as well as Project Steering/Management Committee, project partners and project staff
Are relevant stakeholders (governments, UN and Regional bodies, UNCTs and other key stakeholder) aware, interested and committed to the use of improved data/information to integrate environmental considerations into SDGs and Agenda 2063 programmes?	Extent of engagement of the relevant beneficiaries in the programme and the number and content of inter- institutional agreements to execute and enforce programmes, plans and project results	
Did the project conduct succession planning in the life of the project?	Succession planning reports	
What factors contributed to likelihood of impacts or the lack thereof?	List of factors enabling or derailing a positive outcome on likelihood of impacts	Project reports, discussions with the project partners, beneficiaries and management
Criteria 3: Financial Management		
How well are standards (clarity, transparency, audit etc.) of financial and operational (staff recruitment, evaluation, secondary conditions) planning, management and reporting applied, to ensure that sufficient and timely financial resources were available to the project and its partners	Quality of standards for financial and operative management	Financial and audit reports, project progress reports, discussions with the project management unit, including administrative staff.
Has co-financing materialized as planned at project approval?	Level of co-financing related to original planning	Project Reports, discussions with PSC/PMC and the UNEP Task Manager
Has there been any irregularities in procurement, use of financial resources that impacted project performance?	Number of cases of irregularities	Financial and audit reports, discussions with project staff and UNEP Financial Manager
Criteria 4: Efficiency		
Is implementation on track or are delays threatening the delivery of project outputs?	Timeliness of outputs delivered and extent to which milestones were delivered in line with the original project plan and/or approved revisions.	Publications, progress reports, discussions with Project Management Team and project partners and beneficiaries.
To what extent have other administrative processes such as recruitment of staff, procurement of goods and services (including consultants) and staff movement influenced project performance?	Number of cases where processes influenced project performance	Project document, project progress reports, discussions with key stakeholders including Project Steering/Management Committee, project partners and project staff
What is the likelihood of the project being fully implemented within the allocated budget?	Number of outputs completed and within budgetary allocations	Financial reports, discussions with project management team and project partners
Is technical and financial reporting timely and of adequate quality?	Reports completed to-date of required standard	Project Reports, financial and audit reports, technical publications.

Key question	Potential Indicator	Source of Verification
What factors contributed to the level of efficiency demonstrated by the project implementation?	List of factors enabling or derailing a positive outcome on efficiency	Project reports, discussions with the project partners, beneficiaries and management
Criteria 5: Monitoring and Reporting		
Did the monitoring system work efficiently to enable timely tracking of results and progress to meet the project objectives during the implementation period?	Success level of implementation of monitoring system	Project Reports, discussions with project management team and UNEP Task Manager
Were the monitoring results used to improve project performance and to adapt to changing needs?	Any change brought to original project document to adapt to the changing needs, justified by the results of the M&E process.	Project Reports, discussions with project management team and UNEP Task Manager
Were Project Reports, half-yearly progress & financial reports complete and accurate?	Level of completeness and accuracy of reports	Project progress and implementation reports
Criteria 6: Sustainability		
Have partner institutions benefiting from the project outputs committed financial resources to continue financing project initiatives post project?	Evidence of financial resources committed by the partners	Project Reports, discussions with project partners and project management team
Are partners using project outputs (skills, platforms) now that the project is operationally closed?	Evidence of continued use/application of project outputs	Discussion with project beneficiaries
Is the socio-political context conducive to support the continuity and further development of project outcomes	Evidence that project outcomes either do not require additional funds to continue roll out or that such funds are available where relevant.	Project Reports, Policy documents, discussions with the PSC/PMC and project partners.
How far have the project partners and beneficiaries assumed responsibility and provided adequate support and collaboration in the project execution so far?	Level of collaboration of partners	Reports on roles of partners in the outputs, discussions with the PSC/PMC and project partners.
Are financial resources sufficient to complete the project as planned?	Budget allocations	Financial reports, discussions with project management team and project partners
How robust are the institutional achievements such as governance structures and processes, policies, sub-regional agreements, legal and accountability frameworks etc. required to sustain project outcomes and benefit the environment and communities in the future?	Level of commitment, proved by formal agreements, recommendations, declarations, of key stakeholders, beneficiaries and partners in governance structures that sustain project results	Project Reports, discussions with key stakeholders including PSC/PMC and participating partner institutions.
Criteria 7: SDGs, Human Rights and Gender, Environmental and Social Safeguards, Communication and Public Awareness.		
Criteria 7.1: SDGs		
Which SDG targets and indicators did the project contribute?	List of targets and indicators	Project document and project reports, discussions with executing agency staff, UNEP staff and the Project Steering/Management Committee
Has this contribution been quantified?	Quantified contribution	
How did the project fulfil the principles of 'Leaving no one behind'?	Extent to which the project actively engaged with the principles of 'Leaving no one behind' during implementation	
Criteria 7.2: Human Rights and Gender Equality		
What actions did the project team take to ensure compliance with the principles of equality, inclusion and non-discrimination during project planning and implementation?	Specific actions targeting principles of equality, inclusion and non-discrimination	Project document and project reports, discussions with executing agency staff, UNEP staff and the Project Steering/Management Committee
Did the project engage actively during implementation with groups with specific vulnerabilities and/or disadvantaged groups		

Key question	Potential Indicator	Source of Verification
including women, youth and children and those living with disabilities?		
Criteria 7.3: Environmental and Social Safeguards:		
Did the project design identify all the relevant risks and safeguard issues?	List of risks assessed for completeness	Project document and project reports, discussions with executing agency staff, UNEP staff and the Project Steering/Management Committee
Did the project develop an Environmental and Social Safeguards management plan?	Environmental and Social Safeguards management plan	
Did the project team actively review risk ratings on a regular basis	Reports of risk ratings and relevant updates	
Did the project team actively monitor project implementation for possible safeguard issues, and respond (where relevant) to safeguard issues through risk avoidance, minimization, mitigation or offsetting and report on the implementation of safeguard management measures taken.	Reports of safeguard issues and relevant updates	
Criteria 7.4: Communication and Public Awareness		
Which communication channels and networks and feedback channels were used by the project?	List of communication channels, networks and feedback mechanisms	Project document and project reports, discussions with executing agency staff, UNEP staff and the Project Steering/Management Committee
Was communication of learning and experience sharing between project partners and interested groups effectively done?	Number of events dedicated to learning and experience sharing between project partners and interested groups View of the stakeholders on the effectiveness of these channels and networks	
What/which public awareness activities were undertaken during the implementation to influence attitudes or shape behaviour among wider communities and civil society at large.	List of public awareness activities undertaken during the implementation	
Were these public awareness activities effective in raising awareness across different stakeholder groups (including gender groups)?	View of the stakeholders on the effectiveness of these channels and networks	
Adjustments and impacts due to COVID		
What adjustments, if any, were made to the project as a direct consequence of the COVID-19	List of adjustments (if any)	Project document and project reports, discussions with executing agency staff, UNEP staff and the Project Steering/Management Committee
To what extent did the adjustments allow the project to effectively respond to the new priorities of Member States that emerged in relation to COVID-19?	View point of the project beneficiary countries on the effectiveness of the response by the project the new priorities of Member States that emerged in relation to COVID-19	
How did the adjustments affect the achievement of the project's expected results as stated in its original results framework?	Extent to which the project has delivered the planned and/or additional results related to COVID 19.	
Factors and Processes Affecting Project Performance		
What was the level of preparedness and readiness of stakeholders and partners? Were appropriate measures taken to address weaknesses in the project design, including the implementation mechanisms?	Level of success of project, number of outcomes completed on time and evidence of contribution towards impacts.	Project inception report, Technical and Financial progress reports, Number of technical reports of adequate quality
Was project management adequate, effective and efficient (skills, leadership, coordination, adaptive capacity)? Were sufficient adaptations made ensure smooth implementation?	Level of satisfaction (among partners and project staff) of project management team	Review of Project Reports, financial and audit reports, discussions with project staff stakeholders and partners

Key question	Potential Indicator	Source of Verification
Did the executing agency respond to direction and guidance provided by the UNEP Task Manager?	Number of challenges faced and overcome	Progress reports, minutes of the PSC meetings, discussions with executing organization staff and UNEP Task Manager
How successful was the project in engaging stakeholders outside the government system (i.e. private sector, NGOs, universities and research bodies, the civil society and community groups)?	Number of stakeholder groups involved in the project and their perceived level of engagement	Progress reports, output reports, discussions with the PSC, partner institutions and other project management staff
Did the project design and/or adaptive management applied during implementation to guarantee Gender Equity and Human Rights?	Level of participation of women in the project and measures taken to ensure human rights	Discussions with project management staff, publications, outputs' reports
How far have the project partners and beneficiaries (especially national governments) been involved in the execution of the project, including the safeguarding of the needs and interests of all gender and marginalized groups?	Available co-finance; endorsement of project outputs by the project partners and beneficiaries.	Project Reports, financial reports, discussions with project partners and beneficiaries and project staff, project progress reports.
Are the activities and outputs of the project made visible so that the project results, outputs and lessons are reaching the intended wide stakeholder groups and taking into consideration the needs of gender and marginalized groups?	Level of communication and awareness initiatives, workshops, media articles	Progress and project reports, awareness raising strategies, discussions with the PSC/PMC and partner institutions.
How well did the project design comply with UNEP requirements for project preparation, as outlined in the annotated project template?	Compliance with the guidelines in the annotated project template, including clear compliance with sections on stakeholders and gender, amongst many others.	Project document, PDQ analysis template (Annex D to this Inception Report), project reports
Did the project face challenges related to the political, environmental, social, institutional context at any stage of implementation? If so how did the project adapt to the changes?	Reported nature of context and adaptive management measures in response to changes in context	Project document, project progress reports, discussions with key stakeholders including Project Steering/Management Committee, project partners and project staff

ANNEX III. PEOPLE CONSULTED DURING THE REVIEW

129. Questionnaires were sent out to 30 project informants (10 female - listed in Table 14). However, only 18 (60% - 7 female) returned the questionnaire or discussed responses on phone and/or email (coloured green).

Table 15: People consulted during the Review

(Names of respondents have been excluded for confidentiality)

These personnel of UNEP and the UNDESA were consulted via briefing (electronic).

Organization	Position/ Functional Title	Role in project	When
UNEP	Programme Support Officer, Assessment Unit Africa Office	Environmental Assessment Support, Africa Office	Numerous discussions on phone and emails
UNDESA	Programme Management Expert, 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-Fund, Capacity Development Programme Management Office, Department of Economic and Social Affairs	In charge of the review on behalf of UNPDF	7 th March 2025

The questionnaires were sent out by UNEP to the project beneficiaries in the table below. Responses were received on different dates.

Organization	Position/Functional Title	Role in project	Sex
Ministere de L'environnement, du developpement durable et de la transition ecologique	Ingenieur Statisticien Economiste	Focal point and beneficiary	Male
Ministere de L'environnement, du developpement durable et de la transition ecologique	Professeur d'Université/ Conseiller Technique du Ministre, Cabinet Ministeriel	Focal point and beneficiary	Male
Ministry of Environment	Manager, Statistics and Information Department	Focal point & beneficiary	Female
Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS)	Senior Statistician, General Administration of Environmental Statistics		Female
Social and Agricultural Statistics, Central Statistical Office	Senior Statistician	Focal point & beneficiary	Male
Eswatini Environment Authority	Knowledge Management Officer	Focal point & beneficiary	Male
Ministère de l'Environnement, du Climat et du Conflit Homme-Faune	Inspecteur de l'Environnement, Direction Générale de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable/ Service Système d'Information et Cartographie	Focal point & beneficiary	Male
Ministry of Water and Forests of Gabon	Administrative Agent	Focal point & beneficiary	Female
Environmental Protection Agency	Assistant Information Technology Officer	Focal point & beneficiary	Male
Agriculture and Environment Statistics section, Economic Directorate, Ghana Statistical Service	Senior Statistician	Focal point & beneficiary	Male
National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA)	Chief Statistician, Planning and Policy Analysis Department/Planning Division	Focal point & beneficiary	Male

Organization	Position/Functional Title	Role in project	Sex
National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA)	Engineer/Asst. Chief Engineer	Focal point & beneficiary	Male
Environment Protection Agency	Principal Environment Officer (Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist), Program Development and Performance (PDP)	Focal point & beneficiary	Male
Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment	Control Environmental Officer - Environmental Indicators, State of Environment Information	Focal point & beneficiary	Male
Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment	Director, State of Environment Information	Focal point & beneficiary	Female
National Bureau of Statistics	Senior Agriculture and Environmental Statistician	Focal point & beneficiary	Female
Ministry of Environment and Forestry	Senior Inspector for publicity and documentation, Environmental Education and Information	Focal point & beneficiary	Male
Ministry of Environment	Head of National Environmental Observatory	Focal point & beneficiary	Male
Direction of Environment	Lieutenant of water and Forest/ Applications Developer	Focal point & beneficiary	Female
National Environment Management Authority	Manager Environment Information Systems, Environment Planning and Coordination	Focal point & beneficiary	Male
Environmental Pulse Institute (EPI)	Expert/Facilitator	Expert/Facilitator	Male
Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE)	Regional Programme Director, Knowledge Management Programme (KMP) / Africa Sustainability Programme (ASP)	Expert/Facilitator	Male
Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE)	Regional Programme Specialist, Knowledge Management Programme (KMP) / Africa Sustainability Programme (ASP)	Expert/Facilitator	Female
Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE)	Regional Programme Specialist, Knowledge Management Programme (KMP) / Africa Sustainability Programme (ASP)	Expert/Facilitator	Female
Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE)	Regional Programme Assistant, Knowledge Management Programme (KMP) / Africa Sustainability Programme (ASP)	Expert/Facilitator	Male
UNEP	Regional Science-Policy Coordinator (Retired), Science-Policy Unit, Africa Office	Project Management Lead	
UNEP	Regional Sub-Programme Coordinator Environment Governance, and Acting Regional Science-Policy Coordinator, Africa Office	Strategic Advisory Services	Male
UNEP	Environmental Assessments Specialist, Science-Policy Unit, Africa Office	Expert Contribution	Male
UNEP	Environmental Assessments Specialist, Science-Policy Unit, Africa Office	Expert Contribution	Female
UNEP	Finance Management Officer, Africa Office	Fund Management	Male
UNEP	Administrative Officer, Science-Policy Unit, Africa Office	Administrative and Budget Management	Female

ANNEX IV. KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

List of Documents Reviewed	
Title	Type
Consolidated Project Document	Background planning documents.
Minutes of Project Management Committees.	Project inception and management reports.
Annual project reports.	Project implementation reports.
Memorandum Of Understanding Between the United Nations Environment Programme and the Southern African Development Community Secretariat for Cooperation in the Support of Environment and Natural Resources Management	Signed in March 2021, the purpose of the MoU was to provide a framework of cooperation and understanding, and to facilitate collaboration between the Parties to further their shared goals and objectives within their respective mandates. The MoU identified the following areas of common concern to both organizations
UNEP-SADC Secretariat Joint Action Plan for 2024-2026	Report outlines the process of collaboration between the Secretariat of Southern African Development Community and the United Nations Environment Programme.
Guidelines For the Preparation of National Environment Summaries (NES) 2023	Project output, guidelines for training UNCTs
Capacity Assessment Report	Project output presenting the findings of survey conducted to assess the impact of capacity development of National Statistics Office and Environment Protection Agencies in strengthening environmental data and statistics for better decision making.
One policy brief	Project output with documentation of best practices, lessons learned, and guidelines on the preparation and implementation of the support availed to the NSOs and EPAs
Measuring Progress: Water-related ecosystems and the SDGs.	Project output - highlighting regional progress on the environmental dimension and state of the environment indicators of the SDGs for Sub-Saharan Africa.
MATATU Platform https://matatueis.net/	Project output - An open data platform Monitoring Africa's Targets through Technical Capacity Upscaling (MATATU) platform also known as Africa EIS Portal, was developed jointly with Center for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE).
World Environment Situation Room: https://wesr.unep.org/	A UNEP federated data system hosting the best openly accessible environmental data, information, and knowledge
National Environment Summaries - https://cedarekmp.net/cca/web2/	Project output: National Environment Summaries (NES) provide an overview of a country's environmental status, including its natural resources, challenges, and policy framework. Produced by the National Environment Management Authorities, NES serves as a key resource for understanding the environmental situation, identifying areas for improvement, and guiding efforts towards sustainable development. They inform the CCA and UNSDCF
Common Country Analysis (Rwanda)	Common country analysis informed by training and NES for Rwanda.
Rwanda UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Rwanda

ANNEX V. REVIEW ITINERARY

Dates	Events/Actions	Outputs
February 2025	Inception period and consultations	Inception Report
March to May 2025	Data collection and analysis	Findings of the TR (draft)
May to September 2025	Report preparation	Draft TR report
	Finalization and Submission of Report	Final TR report

ANNEX VI. PROJECT BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES

Table 16: Project Funding Sources Table

Funding source	Planned funding - US\$	% of planned funding	Secured funding - US\$	% of secured funding
All figures as USD				
Cash				
Funds from the from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-Fund of the United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund (UNPDF).	759,813	93.5%	759,813	100%
UNEP	53,187	6.5%	53,187	100%
Total	813,000	100%	813,000	100%

*Funding from a donor to a partner which is not received into UNEP accounts, but is used by a UNEP partner or collaborating centre to deliver the results in a UNEP – approved project.

Table 17: Expenditure by Outcome/Output

Outcome	Estimated cost at design – US\$	Actual Cost/ expenditure - US\$
Outcome 1	279,500.00	279,500.00
Outcome 2	414,500.00	414,500.00
Outcome 3	225,000	225,000
Total project	727,293.00	727,293.00
Project Management Cost	32,520	32,520
Program Management Cost	53,186.91	53,186.91
Grand Total	812,999.91	812,999.91

ANNEX VII. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Table 18: Financial Management Table

Financial management components:		Rating	Evidence/ Comments
1. Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures:		S	The project was executed by the Regional Office for Arica (UNEP) following UNEP's financial management guidelines. There were no reported issues with financial management.
Any evidence that indicates shortcomings in the project's adherence ²⁶ to UNEP or donor policies, procedures or rules		No	
2. Completeness of project financial information²⁷:		S	
Provision of key documents to the reviewer (based on the responses to A-H below)		S	
A.	Co-financing and Project Cost's tables at design (by budget lines)	N/A	
B.	Revisions to the budget	N/A	Detailed
C.	All relevant project legal agreements (e.g. SSFA, PCA, ICA)	N/A	
D.	Proof of fund transfers	N/A	
E.	Proof of co-financing (cash and in-kind)	N/A	
F.	A summary report on the project's expenditures during the life of the project (by budget lines, project components and/or annual level)	Yes	
G.	Copies of any completed audits and management responses (<i>where applicable</i>)	Yes	
H.	Any other financial information that was required for this project (list):	N/A	
3. Communication between finance and project management staff		S	The project was executed by the Regional Office for Arica (UNEP) following UNEP's guidelines. There were no reported issues with communication.
Project Manager and/or Task Manager's level of awareness of the project's financial status.		S	
Fund Management Officer's knowledge of project progress/status when disbursements are done.		S	
Level of addressing and resolving financial management issues among Fund Management Officer and Project Manager/Task Manager.		S	
Contact/communication between by Fund Management Officer, Project Manager/Task Manager during the preparation of financial and progress reports.		S	
Project Manager, Task Manager and Fund Management Officer responsiveness to financial requests during the review process		S	
Overall rating		S	

²⁶ If the review raises concerns over adherence with policies or standard procedures, a recommendation maybe given to cover the topic in an upcoming audit, or similar financial oversight exercise.

²⁷ See also document 'Criterion Rating Description' for reference

ANNEX VIII. COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH TOOLS

N/A

ANNEX IX: BRIEF CV OF THE REVIEWER

Name: Veronica Nyawira Muthui

Profession	International Consultation on Programme Formulation for Climate Change, Biodiversity conservation and Sustainable Land and Forest Management; Expert on Evaluations.
Nationality	Kenyan
Country experience	All Eastern and Southern Africa Countries and some West Africa countries (Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Liberia).
Education	- Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Kenya, (1997) Postgrad. Diploma in Planning and Management of Development Programs - Agricultural University of Norway, (1992) - MSc - Natural Resource Management & Sustainable Agriculture - University of Nairobi, (1987) - BSc in Range Management - Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada, (2002) - Certificate: Monitoring & Evaluation of Development Programs

Short biography

Ms Muthui is a senior development practitioner with skills and practical experience in mainstreaming climate risks into development programmes. In addition to academic qualifications, Ms Muthui has experience in technical advisory services, partnership building, stakeholder mobilization, policy analysis, strategic planning and management of development and conservation programmes, including mainstreaming resilience and environment into humanitarian programs. Since 2015, Ms Muthui has worked as senior International Consultant. From 2006 to 2014, Ms Muthui worked in various capacities at the Africa Regional Office of the Global Environmental Finance Unit, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP GEF), the unit that assists African governments to program and access resources from international funds to mainstream environmental considerations and climate risks into national development (including Global Environment Facility, Least Developed Countries' Fund for Adaptation, The Green Climate Fund).

Ms Muthui has therefore formulated and supervised the implementation of numerous projects funded by international climate and environment funds, covering Eastern and Southern Africa, many of them addressing climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, sustainable land management, biodiversity conservation and sustainable forest management. Before that she managed a consulting company that primarily developed and supervised implementation of environmental projects in Eastern and Southern Africa (2004-2006). Prior to that, she worked for the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) at regional and global levels (1997-2003). Ms Muthui worked with the University of Nairobi between 1993 and 1995, and was a member of a UNESCO Research Team in Northern Kenya between 1987 and 1992 (including two years of study for an MSc). Key specialties and capabilities cover:

Selected assignments on Evaluations since 2015 (a more complete CV is available on request)

When/who	What
03/2024-09/2024 UNEP	Lead evaluator on Terminal Review of the UNEP project titled - Coherent Integration of the Environmental Dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals in Regional and National Policy Frameworks in Africa
03/2021 to 12/2021 UNEP	International consultant on the Terminal Evaluation of project "Enabling South Africa to Prepare its Third National Communication and Second Biennial Update Report"
10/2018-11/2018 UNDP	Team Leader of the Mid-term evaluation of the "Environmental Sustainability, Climate Change and Resilience Pillar - Part of the Tanzania UNDP Country Programme – 2016 to 2021"
03/2018-05/2018 UNDP	Team Leader of the Mid-term evaluation of the project "Enhancing the Forest Nature Reserves Network for Biodiversity Conservation in Tanzania, Africa Region"
08/2018-09/2018 - UNDP	Team Leader of the Mid-term evaluation of the project "Securing watershed services through SLM in the Ruvu and Zigi catchments (Eastern Arc Region)"

12/2016 – 02/2017 UNDP	Lead consultant on the Mid-Term Evaluation of the project “Expanding Protected Area Network of Seychelles and the Outer Islands”.
05/2016 – 11/2016 UNDP	Team Leader of the Mid-term evaluation of the project “Strengthening Climate and Early Warning Systems of Uganda (UNDP-GEF)”
11/2016-01/2017 – UNDP	Team Leader of the Mid-term evaluation of the project “Strengthening Climate Information and Early Warning Systems (SCIEWS) Project - Uganda
01/2017-03/2017 – UNDP	Team Leader, Mid Term Review of the project “Expansion and Strengthening of the Protected Area Subsystem of the Outer Islands of Seychelles and its Integration into the broader land and seascape”
09/2017-12/2017 – UNDP	Team Leader, Mid Term Review of the project “Scaling up Community Resilience to Climate Variability and Climate Change in Northern Namibia with a Focus on Women and Children” (SCORE)
08/2017-11/2017 UNDP	Team Leader, Mid Term Review of the “Niger Delta Biodiversity Conservation Project”
05/2015 – 10/2015 UNDP	Team Leader, Evaluation and baseline data collection, updating Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for the Climate Information and Early Warning Systems for Zambia (CIEWS)

ANNEX X. REVIEW TORS (WITHOUT ANNEXES)

Terminal Review of the UNEP/UNDESA project

Coherent Integration of the Environmental Dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals in Regional and National Policy Frameworks in Africa

1. Project General Information

2. Context of the Review

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development plays a crucial role in advancing Africa's socio-economic progress, aligning closely with various continental initiatives led by the African Union (AU). These include Agenda 2063, the African Green Stimulus Programme, and the Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020-2030), as well as the flagship initiatives like the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the AU Development Agency – New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD). These efforts are focused on integrating inclusivity and environmental sustainability while pushing for accelerated progress. The "Decade of Action" is critical for ensuring the achievement of these goals, but a major obstacle lies in the availability of reliable, timely, and up-to-date data to track the progress across all levels, particularly concerning environmental sustainability.

External socio-economic and environmental shocks, such as extreme weather events like locust invasions and tropical cyclones, have highlighted the urgent need for proactive, Africa-specific interventions to build resilient socio-ecological systems. Reports from AUDA-NEPAD and the UNEP underscore the data deficiencies that hinder effective monitoring and policy formulation on the continent. The lack of adequate data is a key barrier preventing Africa from assessing and addressing environmental challenges, which are critical to the broader SDG agenda. This project, therefore, aims to bridge the gaps in environmental and SDG data, helping Africa develop more effective strategies for sustainable development and progress.

The project is based on one of UNEP's core mandates and comparative advantages: keeping the environment under review, with the project being set to optimally use the organization's strategic regional presence in Africa for effective delivery. Through information networking and delivering capacity support to countries, the project supports all other components on the science-policy interface such as the Africa Environment Information Network. In addition, the project is relevant to all SDG targets that have indicators related to the environmental dimension, and mostly the 25 SDG indicators – across SDG Goal 6, 8, 12, 14, 15 and 17, that UNEP is responsible for as custodian agency. It, therefore, resonates well with UNEP's strategic framework on environmental assessments and science-policy interfaces, all of which have been articulated well in both the Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2018-20217 and its incomer MTS 2022-2025.

3. Subject of the Review

The central objective of this project is to enhance the capacity of national-level actors, including UN Country Teams (UNCT), to integrate environmental considerations into country-level planning and programming, particularly within the context of achieving the SDGs. This includes strengthening regional frameworks, creating platforms for policy dialogue and science-policy interactions, and improving national-level engagement with global governance processes, such as the UNEA. The project also aims to ensure that decision-makers have the necessary information to incorporate environmental and sustainable development considerations into socio-economic responses.

The project covers 19 countries in Africa (Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia) and spans a three-year period from January 1, 2022, to December 31, 2024. With a budget of USD 813,000, including a 7% Programme Support Costs (PSC) split between UNEP (4%) and UNDESA (3%).

The project is an integral part of UNEP's broader efforts to drive policy-based interventions that accelerate progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and foster an inclusive, transparent, and equitable green recovery at the national level. The project builds on UNEP's ongoing collaborations with UN Country Teams (UNCT) through the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCF) and Common Country Analysis (CCA), aiming to strengthen national actors' capacity to integrate environmental considerations into country-level planning and programming. Through its regional presence, UNEP is well-

positioned to leverage its strategic convening power, bringing together governments and partners to ensure that environmental sustainability and climate action are central to Africa's national development strategies.

Aligned with UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2025 and the global 2030 Agenda, the project addresses Africa's triple planetary crisis—climate, nature, and pollution—while responding to the socio-economic challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. It enhances the capacity of national and regional partners to engage in key global governance processes, such as the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA), ensuring that Africa's priorities are communicated effectively on the global stage. The project facilitates the creation of platforms for policy dialogue, advocacy, and science-policy interfaces, providing actionable data and fostering interaction among stakeholders. In this way, the DA project contributes to UNEP's results framework by embedding environmental sustainability at the heart of Africa's socio-economic development, promoting stronger environmental governance and building a resilient future in Africa.

Project Results Framework

With an overall objective that seeks to strengthen science-policy nexus through the provision of environmental data, statistics and reporting capabilities for countries to foster coherent integration of environmental dimensions of Sustainable Development Goals, the following constitute detailed elements of its logic:

Logic intervention	Indicators	Means of verification
Objective: To strengthen science-policy nexus through provision of environmental data, statistics, and reporting capacity for countries to foster coherent integration of environmental dimensions of Sustainable Development Goals		
Outcome 1. Enhanced capacity in National Statistics Offices (NSOs) and National Environmental Protection Agencies (EPAs) of at least 19 African countries on environmental statistics and digital innovation.	IA 1.1: Number of national policy frameworks, papers, strategies, legislations, etc. that integrate environmental dimensions through the leadership of the supported National Statistics Offices, National Environmental Protection Agencies, and Africa's Regional Economic Communities (RECs). Baseline: 5 (June 2021) Targets: +15 (September-December 2024)	• Documentations, including regular progress reports. • Actual policy frameworks and other products that are directly attributed to the project's interventions.
	IA 1.2: Number of countries with established open data platforms and other integrated systems that feature national environmental data and statistics, as a result of enhanced capacities of National Statistics Offices and National Environmental Protection Agencies. Baseline: 4 ((June 2021) Targets: +15 (September-Dec. 2024)	• Progress review reports. • Operational and integrated environmental data platforms visible online.
Output 1.1: Country capacity needs for Africa region's environmental data and statistics assessed by UNEP		
Activities 1.1.1 – One temporary personnel hired to support capacity development of NSOs and EPAs by the first quarter of the project coming into operation. 1.1.2 - Development of at least one UNEP-managed open data platforms and revamping of the existing ones on dynamic country environment information data and profiles within the first 6 months of the project. 1.1.3 - At least one capacity assessment and one workshop report compiled within the first 6 months of the project's commencement.		
Output 1.2: Capacity development training provided to NSOs, EPAs, and other national stakeholders on environmental statistics and digital innovation		
Activities: 1.2.1- Develop at least one online and in-person training module for NSOs and EPAs in environmental data and indicators development as well as integrated environmental assessment for decision support by end of the 9th month of the project inception. 1.2.2- Conduct one workshop and prepare report on the training of the representatives of the NSOs and EPAs of 19 countries by end of the first year of the project.		

1.2.3- Conduct one online workshop for two days on capacity building of NSOs and National EPAs on digital innovation in the context of environmental sustainability, including spatial data analysis for environmental change detection, within the first 3 months of the second year of the project.		
Output 1.3: Adequate technical backstopping on environmental dimensions of SDGs provided to countries and partners by UNEP staff Activity: 1.3.1 – Support 19 countries to map their national priority indicators as articulated in the National Development Plans against the environment related SDGs within the first 6 months of the project's second year of operation. 1.3.2 – Conduct two-day's capacity development workshop for national stakeholders of 19 countries on resource mobilization for environmental assessments and policy transformation, in the first quarter of the project's second year.		
Output 1.4: Experiences and lessons learned in capacity development of National Institutions documented and disseminated. Activities 1.4.1- Prepare one survey report on the impact of the support given to NSOs and EPAs by end of the second year of the project. 1.4.2- Develop at least one policy paper with clear documentation of best practices, lessons learned, and guidelines on the preparation and implementation of the support availed to the NSOs and EPAs during the second half of the project's third year. 1.4.3 – Hold at least two exchange visits to facilitate peer learning by the third quarter of the last year of the project.		
Outcome 2: EO2.Evidence-based national development and/or transformation of national frameworks and long-term development strategies in at least 19 African countries - based on scientific analysis of the environmental integrity and dynamics in each country.	IA 2.1: National policies and institutional frameworks that take into account the findings of the project-supported National Environment Summaries (NES) and sustainability Gap reports. Baseline: 5 (June 2021) Targets: +19 (September 2024)	• Documentations including regular progress reports. • Actual policies adopted as a result of UNEP's intervention
	IA 2.2: Public awareness platforms, events and media engagements that cite the findings of the project's resultant National Environment Summaries (NES) and sustainability Gap reports. Baseline: 3 (June 2021) Targets: +19 (September 2024)	Compilation and documentations including regular progress reports, with specific web-links
Output 2.1: Provide support to countries and stakeholders on environmental data and statistics through the NES and Sustainability Gap reports. Activities 2.1.1- Develop a comprehensive biennial strategy for NES and Sustainability Gap reports by end of the project's first year. 2.1.2- Prepare at least two NES and at least two Sustainability Gap reports throughout the project's timeline based on emerging country needs and requests. 2.1.3- Hold at least two stakeholder engagements and validate findings on the NES and Sustainability Gap reports throughout the project's timeline based on emerging country needs and requests.		
Output 2.2: Provide support for the use of digital innovations and platforms in the provisioning of wider access and dissemination of NES and Sustainability Gap reports. Activities 2.2.1- Develop at least one dynamic data repository and at least one open data platform to host findings and country profiles 2.2.2- Develop at least two toolkits for online and in-person dissemination of the findings from the NES and Gap reports		
Outcome 3: Enhanced capacity of UNCTs and other country-level and regional environmental stakeholders in at least 19	IA 3.1: Number of CCAs and UNSDCF's supported to integrate environmental sustainability and climate resilience. Baseline: 10 (June 2021) Targets: +19 (September 2024)	• Documents on CCA and the UNSDCF • Annual UNCT Reports

African countries through the integration of environmental dimensions of SDGs in their respective CCAs and UNSDCF.	IA 3.2: Amount of financial and other resources mobilized by country partners and stakeholders that include governmental authorities and UNCT, to support the continuity of interventions on coherent integration of environmental data and statistics at the national level. Baseline: 0 (June 2021) Targets: +19 (September 2024)	- Annual UNCT Reports - Applicable Voluntary National Reviews by Governments
Output 3.1: Support provided to the UNCTs and country partners on the integration of environmental dimensions of SDGs Activities 3.1.1- Training of at least ten UNCTs on integration of environmental considerations and interlinkages in the individual result matrixes and joint programs by the second quarter from the project inception. 3.1.2- Develop internal staff capacity of at least ten UNCTs by the third quarter the project's first year.		
Output 3.2: Environmental data and statistics platforms and repositories to support CCA and UNSDCF processes Developed Activities 3.2.1- Develop at least one interactive regional repositories and open data platforms hosting country profiles and their respective CCA reports by the second quarter of year 1. 3.2.2 -Produce at least 10 CCA reports and develop a similar number of UNSDCF with full integration of the environmental dimensions of SDGs from each quarter beginning after the first 3 months of project commencement, based on UNCT requests.		

Executing Arrangements

Project Management Structure:

Entity	Key Roles/Responsibilities	Key Collaborators
UNEP Africa Office	Oversees project management	-
Project Manager (Environment Under Review Regional Sub-Programme Coordinator)	Implementation & quality assurance of outputs	Regional Development Coordination Officer, Global Sub-Programme Coordinator, UNEP's Policy and Programme Division
Management Team	Provides guidance & support to the Project Manager	First Reporting Officer, Regional Development Coordinator, Finance Management Officer, Sub-Programme Coordinators, Country Focal Points

Management Team Structure:

Role	Responsibilities
Team Leader	Project Manager
First Reporting Officer	Provides overall guidance
Regional Development Coordinator	Contributes to project delivery
Finance Management Officer	Financial oversight
Sub-Programme Coordinators	Support implementation
Country Focal Points	Local contributions

Steering Committee (Project Management Committee):

Role	Members	Responsibilities
Chair	Project Manager's Supervisor	Leads committee meetings, provides strategic direction
Members	Project Manager, Global Coordinator (Environment Under Review Sub-Programme)	Guides implementation, reviews project work plans annually.
External Strategic Guidance	Global Sub-Programme Coordinator (Environment Under Review)	Offers strategic input for project alignment.

Response to the UN Resident Coordinator System:

Integration Aspect	Details
UN Reform & UNSDCF Process	Direct contributions to CCAs, built on 'National Focal Point' model; Enhances UNEP's role as a non-resident UN entity; and supports Internal Capacity Development towards SDG integration in Africa's policy frameworks.

Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholders	Stake in the project and the topic that the project addresses	Level of influence over topic and project / Ways in which affected by topic and project	Expected use of the review results	Way(s) to involve this stakeholder in the review process
Policymakers in the environment, finance, and planning	They develop national policy, hold consultative meetings that affect the environment and engage in regional and global discussions.	Role in national development planning policies and priorities	Publication and dissemination of their impact in shaping the implementation of the agenda 2030 at national and regional levels	Provide expertise and support to the work of the reviewer on the impact of the project so far
Business/ private sector	Integrating environmental sustainability in their business operations	Influencing consumer preferences and behaviours	Technical advice on resource-efficient interventions with greater cost-savings to the business while benefiting the environment	Express how their engagement with the project has seen business growth from environmental degradation and climate risks
Media	Dissemination of project's achievements and impacts at the national, and regional levels.	The media influence and shape public opinion. They also put pressure on politicians, decision-makers or people in positions of power	Increased engagement to participate in UNEP's events, meetings, and training of media personnel on	To get clearer insights on how environmental reporting has enhanced dissemination of the project's accomplishments, experiences, and lessons learned
Civil Society Groups	Reviewing and dissemination of the project's accomplishments	Educating the public and holding policymakers to account	Increased engagement to participate in UNEP's events, meetings, and training of media personnel on environmental reporting	To get insights on how their engagement has enhanced dissemination of the project's accomplishments, experiences, and lessons learned.

Project Cost and Financing

The funding for this project is from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-Fund of the United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund (UNPDF).

Date of receipt	Receipt Number	Amount (US\$)
31.12.2021	2500129222	290,464.72
09.06.2023	2500148921	230,360.00
22.12.2023	2500158970	10,360.80
27.12.2023	2500159010	259,020.00
Grand Total		790,205.52

Past Reviews/Evaluations

N/A

Implementing issues and changes in design during implementation (including the rationale for any changes)

There were no issues mentioned by the Project Manager, however, there was only a request seeking permission for extension of the terminal evaluation to June 2025.

4. Review Purpose

In line with UNDESA 2030 Agenda Sub-Fund's Guidelines²⁸, the Guidance Note on Planning and Conducting Terminal Evaluations of 11th Tranche projects and the UNEP Evaluation Policy²⁹, the Terminal Review (TR) is undertaken at completion of the project to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project. The TR 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 TR will identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation.

With a view to ensuring that the TR generates evidence that is useful in determining the project's performance and in informing future programming, the TR should have a clear plan for utilization of its results. Concrete and actionable recommendations³⁰ with identified people/position-holders are critical for the TR (Table of Recommendations (Annex 4)). Clear lessons learned with a potential for replication and of wider application, describing the context from which they are derived and those contexts in which they may be useful, should also be presented in the review report³¹.

It is anticipated that the findings from this TR will be of value and interest to:

- a) those who have been involved in implementing the project [Africa Office of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)]
- b) all partners and parties who were expected to participate in, or benefit from, the work (Targeted the Environment Protection Agencies and National Statistics Offices from the 19 project countries in Africa that include Botswana, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, UNCTs]
- c) UNEP staff active in similar areas of work UNCT Focal Points and heads of out-posted offices.
- d) other countries and organisations implementing work with UNPDF funding.

²⁸ Shared by UNDESA

²⁹ UNEP Evaluation Policy: <https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/41114>

³⁰ The primary users of the DA project reviews are the implementing entities themselves, and the recommendations should be directed to the management and staff of the implementing entities.

³¹ The review results, including the lessons learned and good practices, should be widely disseminated among parties within and outside the implementing entity(ies) who may benefit from the knowledge generated (secondary users).

5. Review Scope, Objectives and Questions

All review criteria will be rated on a six-point scale. The set of review criteria are grouped in seven categories: (A) Strategic Relevance; (B) Effectiveness, which comprises assessments of the attainment of outputs, achievement of outcomes and likelihood of impact; (C) Financial Management; (D) Efficiency, including partnerships; (E) Monitoring and Reporting; (F) Sustainability. In addition, an assessment of a project's performance with regard to the following cross-cutting criteria (G) is required: the SDGs, Human Rights and Gender, Environmental and Social Safeguards and Communication and Public Awareness.

The TR will address the following review criteria, in accordance with the UNEP Norms and Standards³² (see also Ratings Table in Annex 1). These criteria are common to both UNDESA and UNEP:

Relevance: Extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country-needs, global priorities and partners' and donors' policies

Efficiency: Measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time etc) are converted to results. It is most commonly applied to the input-output link in the causal chain of an intervention. This includes an assessment of Partnerships: partnerships typically refer to joint/collaborative implementation of projects among the United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund Implementing Entities, other UN agencies as well as sub-regional, regional and global level stakeholders. Direct beneficiaries of projects are not, however, referred to as implementing partners.

Effectiveness: Extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance. Effectiveness assesses the outcome level, intended as an uptake or result of an output.

Impact³³: Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.

Sustainability: Continuation of benefits from a development intervention after major development assistance has been completed. The probability of continued long-term benefits. The resilience to risk of the net benefit flows over time.

The following criteria are required by UNEP: **financial management** and **monitoring and reporting**.

The following criteria are cross-cutting (see also UNDESA [2030 Agenda Sub-Fund's Guidelines](#) :

SDGs: This includes attention to the SDGs and related targets and indicators of those SDGs relevant to the project concerned as well as attention to the principles of 'Leaving no one behind'.

Human Rights and Gender Equality: This requires explicit attention to the principles of equality, inclusion and non-discrimination as part of the TR. It should consider the specific vulnerabilities of disadvantaged groups including women, youth and children and those living with disabilities.

Environmental and Social Safeguards: 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 TR will confirm whether UNEP requirements 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.

Communication and Public Awareness: The Review 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 Review 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.

The UNEP Evaluation Office can provide, on request, a number of tools, templates and guidance notes that support evaluative work. While these were not originally designed to operationalize UNDESA guidelines, they can

³² <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>

³³ UNEP differentiates between 'impacts' and 'effects' such that effects is the broader term referring to intended, unintended, positive and negative changes and impacts are a narrower group of intended, long-lasting changes. When impacts are defined as intended changes, it would be illogical for these to be intentionally negative.

provide Review Consultants with valuable insights and guidance. These can be requested from Janet Wildish (janet.wildish@un.org).

From 2020 UNDESA requests that two COVID-19 related questions are addressed:

What adjustments, if any, were made to the project as a direct consequence of the COVID-19 situation, and to what extent did the adjustments allow the project to effectively respond to the new priorities of Member States that emerged in relation to COVID-19?

How did the adjustments affect the achievement of the project's expected results as stated in its original results framework?

In addition to the review criteria outlined above, the TR will address the strategic questions listed below (no more than 5 questions are recommended). Strategic questions should not be redundant with the review criteria. These are questions of interest to UNEP and UNDESA and to which the project is believed to be able to make a substantive contribution:

- (a) Capacity Building and Institutional Strengthening: Has the project effectively strengthened the capacity of NSOs and EPAs in the 19 project countries, leading to measurable improvements in environmental data management and policy integration?
- (b) Policy Frameworks and Legislative Integration: To what extent have national policy frameworks, strategies, and legislation incorporated environmental considerations due to project support, and what are the tangible outcomes?
- (c) Data Platforms and Technological Infrastructure: Are the established open data platforms fully functional, actively used, and contributing to better decision-making, and what challenges remain in their sustainability?
- (d) Impact Assessment and Utilization of Reports: Have these National Environment Summaries (NES) and Sustainability Gap reports influenced national policies, planning, and public awareness, and how effectively have they been utilized?
- (e) Integration with UN Systems and Regional Cooperation: Has the project successfully integrated environmental sustainability into UNSDCF and CCAs, and has it enhanced the capacity of UNCTs and regional stakeholders to address environmental challenges?

6. Methodology of the Review

The full methodological approach to this TR, including the rationale behind the selection of countries to be visited and sampling of respondents for qualitative and quantitative data gathering, will be outlined by the Review Consultant in the Inception Report.

Review findings and judgements should be based on sound evidence and analysis, clearly documented in the review 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.

As this is a TR 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 consultant(s)' minds all through the review exercise and is supported by the use of a theory of change approach. This means that the consultant(s) need to go beyond the assessment of "what" the project performance was and make a serious effort to provide a deeper understanding of "why" the performance was as it was (i.e. what contributed to the achievement of the project's results). This should provide the basis for the lessons that can be drawn from the project.

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 reviews. Establishing the contribution made by a project in a complex change process relies heavily on prior intentionality (e.g. approved project design documentation, logical framework) and the articulation of causality (e.g. narrative and/or illustration of the Theory of Change). Robust evidence that a project was delivered as designed and that the expected causal pathways developed supports claims of contribution and this is strengthened where an alternative theory of

change can be excluded. A credible association between the implementation of a project and observed positive effects can be made where a strong causal narrative, although not explicitly articulated, can be inferred by the chronological sequence of events, active involvement of key actors and engagement in critical processes.

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

The TR will be carried out using a human-rights based and gender sensitive approach with disaggregation of data and respondents by sex, ethnicity, age, disability and other relevant vulnerability criteria. Ethical concerns and how to address these, including the fact that human rights, gender and the principle of 'leaving no one behind' as part of the TR will be guiding principles in how the TR is conducted.

7. Organisation of the Review

There are no foreseen security considerations relevant to carrying out the TR or logistical limitations as there will be no travel involved. This will be a desk review.

The TR will be an in-depth review using a participatory approach whereby key stakeholders are kept informed and consulted throughout the review process. Both quantitative and qualitative review methods will be used as appropriate to determine project achievements against the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts. It is highly recommended that the consultant maintains close communication with the project team and promotes information exchange throughout the review implementation phase in order to increase their (and other stakeholder) ownership of the review findings. Where applicable, the consultant should provide a geo-referenced map that demarcates the area covered by the project.

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

(a) **A desk review of:**

Relevant background documentation, inter alia: *The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Sustainable gaps reports, Links to the CCAs, MATATU, Reports from UNEA, UNEP Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2025 and the global community's 2030 Agenda and Africa's Agenda 2063, African Green Stimulus Programme report, and the Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020 -2030).*

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 annual progress and financial reports, progress reports from collaborating partners, meeting minutes, relevant correspondence, terminal project report and any other monitoring materials etc.;

Project outputs:

1. **Measuring Progress III: Water-related Ecosystems and the SDGs** (finalized and launched in March 2023). Available here: <https://www.unep.org/resources/report/measuring-progress-water-related-ecosystems-and-sdgs>
2. **Revitalized Open Data Platform** for common country analysis (CCA) and National Environment Summaries (NES) (at the tail-end: <https://cedarekmp.net/cca5/reporting/web/index.html> now integrated to include federated systems here: <https://matatueis.net/>
3. **National Environment Summary (NES) reports** for 16 project countries - namely: Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, Somalia, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Senegal, and Zambia. Available on: <https://unitednations.sharepoint.com/:f:/r/sites/UNEPsUNReformKnowledgeNetwork/Shared%20Documents/General/Africa?csf=1&web=1&e=z1mSSQ> and on: https://unitednations-my.sharepoint.com/:f:/g/personal/harrison_simotwo_un_org/EnMlt9uwBB5ArA5gp_Q2BIkBEFvtmt21QyU8SpdcdgqqMg?e=x0zneD

Efforts are being made to make them available in the open access environmental information sharing platform.

Important to also note is that, 24 non-project beneficiary countries were supported during the period, based on request, with no additional cost to the project, as follows:- Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eswatini, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Seychelles, South Sudan, Zimbabwe. The NES are continuing to shape the integration of environmental dimensions of the 2030 Agenda in national policy frameworks in each of the respective countries.)

4. One Online Training Material for National Environment Summaries
 5. One Guidance Material for Training of Trainers on National Environment Summaries.
 6. Eight Common Country Analysis reports - including four (4) in the period covered under the 5th reporting cycle (Sierra Leone - Dec 2023; Zimbabwe - Oct 2023; Cabo Verde -Oct 2023; Rwanda - Oct 2023 - the support spanned two reporting cycles owing to the scope of the CCA and issues to be covered under the leadership of its UN Resident Coordinator's Office. UNEP support entailed technical backstopping to bolster the integrating of environmental dimension CCAs as tools that underpin the formulation and/or ongoing implementation of UNSDCF - including in Egypt (UNSDCF 2023-2027); Kenya (UNSDCF 2022-2026); Uganda (UNSDCF 2021-2025; Ghana (UNSDCF 2023-2025); Nigeria (UNSDCF 2023-2027); Cabo Verde (UNSDCF 2023-2027); Cote d'Ivoire (2021-2025); Tanzania (UNSDCF 2022-2027) Senegal (UNSDCF (2024-2028); Togo (UNSDCF 2023-2026); Zambia (UNSDCF 2023-2027)) .
 7. An in-person training module, incorporating self-paced tools for NSOs and EPAs, has been developed, and made ready for use in a planned training event in Cairo, Egypt on 28-29 May 2024.
 8. Capacity building training was conducted for NSOs and EPAs in Cairo, Egypt on 28-29 May 2024.
 9. One policy paper with clear documentation of best practices, lessons learned, and guidelines on the preparation and implementation of the support availed to the NSOs and EPAs on access and usage of environmental data and statistics.
- Mid-Term Review or Mid-Term Evaluation of the project;
 - Reviews/Evaluations of similar projects.
- (b) **Interviews** (individual through email questions, online meetings/calls via teams, etc with project manager, project management team, Fund Management Officer, project partners, relevant resource people, etc).
 - (c) **Surveys** [These will be outlined in the Inception Report]
 - (d) **Other data collection tools** [These will be outlined in the Inception Report]

See Annex 1 of these TOR for a list of tools and guidance available, see Annex 2 for a list of review criteria and sub-categories to be assessed.

The consultant will prepare:

- **Inception Report:** (see Annex 3 of these TOR)
- **Preliminary Findings Note:** 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.
- **Draft and Final Review Report:** (see Annex 4)
- **Table of Recommendations:** (see Annex 5)

The consultant will submit a draft report to the Project Manager and revise the draft in response to their comments and suggestions. The Project Manager will then forward the revised draft report 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 Project Manager for consolidation. The Project Manager will provide all comments to the consultant for consideration in preparing the final report, along with guidance on areas of contradiction or issues requiring an institutional response.

The final version of the Review Report will be assessed for its quality by the UNEP Evaluation Office using the guidance in Annex 3 and this assessment will be annexed to the final Review report.

At the end of the review process, the Project Manager will complete the Recommendations Implementation Plan (see Annex 4) and request their line manager to provide the narrative management response. The uptake of recommendations will be monitored and reported on through the updating of the table at regular intervals.

Table 2. Tentative schedule for the Terminal Review

Milestone	Proposed dates
Draft Inception Report	07/03/2025
Final Inception Report	10/03/2025
Review Mission (where applicable)	N/A
Telephone interviews, surveys etc.	11/03/2025 – 14/03/2025
Powerpoint/presentation on preliminary findings and recommendations	17/03/2025 – 21/04/2025
Draft Review Report to Project Manager	03/04/2025
Draft Review Report shared with UNEP colleagues	08/04/2025
Draft Review Report shared with wider group of stakeholders	18/04/2025
Final Review Report	24/04/2025
Final Review Report shared with all respondents	03/05/2025

The consultant will work under the overall responsibility of the Project Manager, a.i, Mr. **Robert Wabunoha** in consultation with the Fund Management Officer, **Mr. Stephen Ndeti**, the **Administrative Officer of the Unit**, **Ms. Liana Archaia-Atanasova**, and the and the representative at **UNEP's Resource Mobilisation Unit in the Corporate Services Division**.

The consultant will liaise with the Project Manager on any procedural and methodological matters related to the TR. It is, however, the consultant's individual responsibility, in the case of travel, 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 TR as efficiently and independently as possible.

The consultant will be hired for 45 Days spread over the period 03/2025 to 05/2025 and should have: an advanced university degree in environmental sciences, international development or other relevant political or social sciences area; a minimum of 5 years of technical / evaluation experience, preferably including of using a Theory of Change approach and a broad understanding of **UNDESA/UNEP** Terminal Evaluation experience required. English and French are the working languages of the United Nations Secretariat. For this consultancy, fluency in spoken English is a requirement and proficiency in French is required/desirable, along with excellent writing skills in English. 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.

The consultant will be responsible, in close consultation with the Project Manager, for overall quality of the TR and timely delivery of its outputs, described above in Section 11 Review Deliverables, above. The consultant will ensure that all review criteria and questions are adequately covered.

8. Contractual Arrangements

Review Consultants will be selected and recruited by the Project Manager under an individual Special Service Agreement (SSA) on a "fees only" basis (see below). By signing the service contract with UN Environment/UNON, the consultant certifies 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.

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

Table 3. Schedule of Payment for the consultant:

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

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

The consultant may be provided with access to UNEP's information management system and, if such access is granted, the consultant agrees not to disclose information from that system to third parties beyond information required for, and included in, the Review report.

In case the consultant is not able to provide the deliverables in accordance with these guidelines, and in line with the expected quality standards by UNEP, payment may be withheld at the discretion of the Head of Unit/Branch until the consultant has improved the deliverables to meet UNEP's quality standards.

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

ANNEX XI. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Project Title and Reference No. N/A	Coherent Integration of the Environmental Dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals in Regional and National Policy Frameworks in Africa. (ref. # PDF-SDG-2021-06)			
Contact Person	Robert Wabunoha - Project Manager			
	PLANS			
RECOMMENDATIONS	ACCEPTED (YES/NO /PARTIALLY)	WHAT WILL BE DONE?	EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER/ UNIT/ DIVISION/ AGENCY
All partners (governments, UNEP and other development partners) should improve internet connectivity in government (NSOs, EPAs) offices for effective use of the open data platforms	Yes	This will be done through other possible related project activities when and as available	Will be ongoing	UNEP ROA
Avail resources (financial, continued skills development, networking) post project	Partially	The post project resources will be availed when and as available	As available	UNEP ROA
Launch the MATATU platform at a meeting of the Africa Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN)	Yes	This will be reviewed and decision taken by the UN personnel with the proper Delegation of Authority	By next AMCEN	UNEP ROA
Scale up the MATATU platform to provide more data types and AI functions	Yes	UNEP ROA with CEDARE's support	Ongoing	UNEP ROA/CEDARE
Strengthen in-country resource mobilisation in all the countries to continue support (skills development, expanding and maintaining the open data platforms and its use).	Yes	This will be done through other possible related project activities when and as available	Will be ongoing	UNEP ROA

ANNEX XII. QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF THE REVIEW REPORT

Review Title: Coherent Integration of the Environmental Dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals in Regional and National Policy Frameworks in Africa (ref. # PDF-SDG-2021-06)

Consultant: Nyawira Muthui

All UNEP Reviews are subject to a quality assessment by the UNEP Evaluation Office. This is an assessment of the quality of the review product (i.e. Main Review Report).

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
Report Quality Criteria		
Quality of the Executive Summary Purpose: acts as a stand alone and accurate <u>summary</u> of the main review product, especially for senior management. To include: • concise overview of the review object • clear summary of the review objectives and scope • overall review rating of the project and key features of performance (strengths and weaknesses) against exceptional criteria • reference to where the review ratings table can be found within the report • summary response to key strategic review questions • summary of the main findings of the exercise/synthesis of main conclusions • summary of lessons learned and recommendations.	Final report (coverage/omissions): The executive summary covers the most of key components. However, some elements of the review methodology and its limitations, as well as summary responses to key strategic review questions are omitted. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The section is succinctly and clearly articulated. However, the summary of the missing components would have strengthened the section.	4.5
Quality of the 'Introduction' Section Purpose: introduces/<u>situates</u> the evaluand in its institutional context, establishes its main parameters (time, value, results, geography) and the purpose of the review itself. To include: • institutional context of the project (sub-programme, Division, Branch etc) • date of PRC approval, project duration and start/end dates • number of project phases (where appropriate) • results frameworks to which it contributes (e.g. POW Direct Outcome) • coverage of the review (regions/countries where implemented) • implementing and funding partners • total secured budget • whether the project has been reviewed/evaluated in the past (e.g. mid-term, external agency etc.) • concise statement of the purpose of the review and the key intended audience for the findings.	Final report (coverage/omissions): The report includes a brief overview of the project, background to the review, and purpose of review including intended users. However, information on implementing partners, and previous reviews/evaluations are not included in the section. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The contents of the sub-section - <i>Review process</i>- might be more relevant to Section III. Review Methods. In addition, the missing components would have strengthened the section.	5

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
Quality of the 'Review Methods' Section <u>Purpose:</u> provides reader with clear and comprehensive description of review methods, demonstrates the <u>credibility</u> of the findings and performance ratings. To include: • description of review data collection methods and information sources • justification for methods used (e.g. qualitative/ quantitative; electronic/face-to-face) • number and type of respondents (see <i>table template</i>) • selection criteria used to identify respondents, case studies or sites/countries visited • strategies used to increase stakeholder engagement and consultation • methods to include the voices/experiences of different and potentially excluded groups (e.g. vulnerable, gender, marginalised etc) • details of how data were verified (e.g. triangulation, review by stakeholders etc.) • methods used to analyse data (scoring, coding, thematic analysis etc) • review limitations (e.g. low/ imbalanced response rates across different groups; gaps in documentation; language barriers etc) • ethics and human rights issues should be highlighted including: how anonymity and confidentiality were protected. Is there an ethics statement? E.g. <i>'Throughout the review process and in the compilation of the Final Review Report efforts have been made to represent the views of both mainstream and more marginalised groups. All efforts to provide respondents with anonymity have been made.'</i>	<u>Final report (coverage/omissions):</u> This section consists of two sub-sections: A. Definitions of Review Criteria and B. Limitations of the Review. Only few elements of the section such as review criteria, scale of rating are presented. The most of key elements were not described in the section, while several key elements such as the data collection methods, quality assurance are partly addressed at the limited level in another section, such as under the review process in Section I: Introduction. <u>Final report (strengths/weaknesses):</u> The section includes the strategic review questions and limitation of the review. However, the omission of the key elements of the review methodology section weakens the report. For instance, there is no explicit articulation of the methodological approach or its rationale, respondent's sample and selection criteria, data analysis methods, including gender and the human rights perspectives into the review. In addition, data collection instruments used for the review are not annexed.	3
Quality of the 'Project' Section <u>Purpose:</u> describes and <u>verifies</u> key dimensions of the evaluand relevant to assessing its performance. To include: • <i>Context:</i> overview of the main issue that the project is trying to address, its root causes and consequences on the environment and human well-being (i.e. synopsis of the problem and situational analyses) • <i>Results framework:</i> summary of the project's results hierarchy as stated in the ProDoc (or as officially revised)	<u>Final report (coverage/omissions):</u> The section covers all key elements, but certain elements only partially satisfy the full information requirement. <u>Final report (strengths/weaknesses):</u> Most of the sub-components are articulated well, such as context, project financing per output, stakeholder analysis, project implementation structure and partners, and the original results framework, including project objectives and components (outputs and outcomes). The key activities are presented in the ToC section.	5

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
• <i>Stakeholders</i>: description of groups of targeted stakeholders organised according to relevant common characteristics • <i>Project implementation structure and partners</i>: description of the implementation structure with diagram and a list of key project partners • <i>Changes in design during implementation</i>: any key events that affected the project's scope or parameters should be described in brief in chronological order • <i>Project financing</i>: completed tables of: (a) budget at design and expenditure by components (b) planned and actual sources of funding/co-financing but partially, there is no actual expenditure and sources of funding/co-financing.	However, while the structure of stakeholders and their roles were described but there is no mention about the beneficiaries/target countries in the stakeholder analysis. Lastly, the section partially presents the 'planned' project financing, with no information on the 'actual' expenditure by components or sources of funding/co-financing. This part could be strengthened by referring to relevant Annex.	
Quality of the Theory of Change <u>Purpose</u>: to set out the TOC at Review in diagrammatic and narrative forms to support consistent project performance; to articulate the causal pathways with drivers and assumptions and justify any reconstruction necessary to assess the project's performance. To include: • description of how the <i>TOC at Review</i>³⁴ was designed (who was involved etc) • confirmation/reconstruction of results in accordance with UNEP definitions • articulation of causal pathways • identification of drivers and assumptions • identification of key actors in the change process • summary of the reconstruction/results re-formulation in tabular form. <i>The two results hierarchies (original/formal revision and reconstructed) should be presented as a two-column table to show clearly that, although wording and placement may have changed, the results 'goal posts' have not been 'moved'.</i> This table may have initially been presented in the Inception Report and should appear somewhere in the Main Review report.	Final report (coverage/omissions): The section covers key elements of the section. However, some elements such as participation of the stakeholders in restructuring the ToC at review, key actors in change process are omitted. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The restructured ToC and its causal pathways—from activities and outputs to outcomes and goals—are described, including key barriers, risks, drivers, and assumptions. One assumption relates to equitable access to project benefits in some countries is identified. The section also addresses challenges encountered in restructuring the ToC due to weaknesses in the results chain. However, the ToC diagram does not include intermediate states, and the goal statement incorporates assumptions or pre-requisites within it. Although two intermediate states are described in paragraph 31, they are later identified as 'impacts' in paragraph 85. Clear causal pathways aligned with UNEP's glossary of result changes would have strengthened the restructured ToC. Furthermore, the section does not indicate whether stakeholders participated in the restructuring process or whether the revised ToC was endorsed or agreed upon by the project team or stakeholders. Including key	4

³⁴ During the Inception Phase of the review process a *TOC at Review Inception* is created based on the information contained in the approved project documents (these may include either logical framework or a TOC or narrative descriptions), formal revisions and annual reports etc. During the review process this TOC is revised based on changes made during project intervention and becomes the *TOC at Review*.

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
	change actors would have further strengthened the revised ToC. The standard table could have shown the clear changes and justifications compared to the original ones.	
Quality of Key Findings within the Report <u>Presentation of evidence:</u> nature of evidence should be clear (interview, document, survey, observation, online resources etc) and evidence should be explicitly triangulated unless noted as having a single source. <u>Consistency within the report:</u> all parts of the report should form consistent support for findings and performance ratings, which should be in line with UNEP's Criteria Ratings Matrix. <u>Findings Statements (where applicable):</u> The frame of reference for a finding should be an individual review criterion or a strategic question from the TOR. A finding should go beyond description and uses analysis to provide insights that aid learning specific to the evaluand. In some cases a findings statement may articulate a key element that has determined the performance rating of a criterion. Findings will frequently provide insight into 'how' and/or 'why' questions.	Final report (coverage/omissions): The findings section covers all key criteria. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The findings are articulated based on evidence. integrated responses to strategic and review questions throughout the section. Also, the analysed data that presented gender-disaggregated information enhance the section. However, more concrete evidence would have supported ratings in line with UNEP's Criteria Ratings Matrix. A more evidence-based analysis with systematic triangulation of different sources would have strengthened the Finding section, as triangulation is only applied occasionally in some parts.	4.5
Quality of 'Strategic Relevance' Section <u>Purpose:</u> to present evidence and analysis of project strategic relevance with respect to UNEP, partner and geographic policies and strategies at the time of project approval. To include: Assessment of the evaluand's relevance vis-à-vis: • Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities • Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partners Strategic Priorities • Relevance to Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities • Complementarity with Existing Interventions: complementarity of the project at design (or during inception/mobilisation³⁵), with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups.	Final report (coverage/omissions): The section presents findings for the key criteria, with evidence-based analysis provided under each sub-criterion. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The ratings in the text and the summary table should be consistent, and the overall rating for the section should be determined in accordance with the weighted rating scale.	5
Quality of the 'Quality of Project Design' Section <u>Purpose:</u> to present a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the project design, on the basis that the detailed assessment was presented in the Inception Report.	Final report (coverage/omissions): The section covers all sub-sections including rating table. Final report (strengths/weaknesses):	6

³⁵ 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.

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
	The section is well articulated with details for each element, demonstrating the quality of project design based on evidence.	
Quality of the 'Nature of the External Context' Section <u>Purpose:</u> to describe and recognise, when appropriate, key <u>external</u> features of the project's implementing context that limited the project's performance (e.g. conflict, natural disaster, political upheaval³⁶), and how they affected performance. While additional details of the implementing context may be informative, this section should clearly record whether or not a major and unexpected disrupting event took place during the project's life in the implementing sites.	Final report (coverage/omissions): The section presents the nature of the external context. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The section is succinctly articulated, and identifies some external context such as COVID-19 and its affect. However, the section could have been strengthened by providing more information across the 19 countries.	5
Quality of 'Effectiveness' Section (i) Availability of Outputs: <u>Purpose:</u> to present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the outputs made available to the intended beneficiaries. To include: • a convincing, evidence-supported and clear presentation of the outputs made available by the project compared to its approved plans and budget • assessment of the nature and scale of outputs versus the project indicators and targets • assessment of the timeliness, quality and utility of outputs to intended beneficiaries • identification of positive or negative effects of the project on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).	Final report (coverage/omissions): The section covers all output of the project. However, finding on positive or negative effects of the project on disadvantaged groups are not addressed in the section. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): Table 11 succinctly presents the availability of outputs including assessment of the timeliness, quality, and utility. In addition, the results are mostly demonstrated, compared to the project targets. However, some findings are not supported by evidence. For instance, while the review states that "all but one of the programme outputs were delivered within time and budget," this claim is not substantiated—indicators 2 and 12 in the table were not fully delivered. Including gender-disaggregated data, where applicable, would have added value. Also, identification of positive or negative effects of the project on disadvantaged groups would have been beneficial. Furthermore, stronger use of evidence, more robust information sources, and systematic triangulation could have further enhanced this section. In addition, greater clarity regarding target countries (19 implementing countries versus all 54 countries) would	4.5

³⁶ Note that 'political upheaval' does not include regular national election cycles, but unanticipated unrest or prolonged disruption. The potential delays or changes in political support that are often associated with the regular national election cycle should be part of the project's design and addressed through adaptive management of the project team.

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
	have improved understanding, as both targets are mentioned in the results even though the project was implemented in only 19 countries.	
ii) Achievement of Project Outcomes: <u>Purpose:</u> to present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the uptake, adoption and/or implementation of outputs by the intended beneficiaries. This may include behaviour changes at an individual or collective level. To include: - a convincing and evidence-supported analysis of the uptake of outputs by intended beneficiaries - assessment of the nature, depth and scale of outcomes versus the project indicators and targets - discussion of the contribution, credible association and/or attribution of outcome level changes to the work of the project itself - any constraints to attributing effects to the projects' work - identification of positive or negative effects of the project on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).	Final report (coverage/omissions): This section demonstrates the achieved outcomes compared to the targets. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The detailed explanations in the section are based on evidence, drawing the relevant lessons learned and recommendations. However, the reporting on overachievement of targets appears inconsistent. While the narrative explains overachievements (4 out of 5 indicators in Para 62 or 3 out of 5 indicators in Para 86), Table 13 shows 4 out of 6 outcome indicators are achieved. Furthermore, this section would have been strengthened by providing more analysis on incorporating assumptions and drivers that support progress and the transition from outputs to outcomes, including discussion of the contribution or attribution of outcome level changes to the work of the project.	4.5
(iii) Likelihood of Impact: <u>Purpose:</u> to present an integrated analysis, guided by the causal pathways represented by the TOC, of all evidence relating to likelihood of impact, including an assessment of the extent to which drivers and assumptions necessary for change to happen, were seen to be holding. To include: - an explanation of how causal pathways emerged and change processes can be shown - an explanation of the roles played by key actors and change agents - explicit discussion of how drivers and assumptions played out - identification of any unintended negative effects of the project, especially on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).	Final report (coverage/omissions): The section presents the analysis of the likelihood of impact in line with the ToC pathways. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The section assesses the likelihood of impact based on the four levels of impact identified in the goal statement. The findings on the likelihood of these impacts are supported by various pieces of evidence, demonstrating whether assumptions hold and drivers are in place. However, two of the four impacts identified in the goal statement (Para 92) are the same as the intermediate states mentioned earlier (Para 31). This overlap between different levels of results weakens the logical hierarchy of the ToC and analysis in the section. Clear differentiation between intermediate states and impacts would have demonstrated more coherent causal pathways and improved the overall analysis of likelihood of impact. Finally, the report does not address any unintended negative effects.	4.5

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
Quality of 'Financial Management' Section <u>Purpose:</u> to present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under financial management and include a completed 'financial management' table (may be annexed). Consider how well the report addresses the following: • <i>adherence</i> to UNEP's financial policies and procedures • <i>completeness</i> of financial information, including the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used • <i>communication</i> between financial and project management staff	Final report (coverage/omissions): The section covers all three sub-sections. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The section is concise and well-narrated, covering all sub-criteria. The section includes the budget by outputs. However, cross-referencing relevant annexes and providing a more extensive analysis of the completeness of financial information could have strengthened the section, particularly under the sub-criterion related to financial information completeness.	5
Quality of 'Efficiency' Section <u>Purpose:</u> to present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under efficiency (i.e. the primary categories of cost-effectiveness and timeliness). To include: • time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe • discussion of making use, during project implementation, of/building on pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. • implications of any delays and no cost extensions • the extent to which the management of the project minimised UNEP's environmental footprint.	Final report (coverage/omissions): The section covers efficiency of the project including cost-effectiveness. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The section provides an evidence-based assessment of efficiency with small funding, particularly in discussing the use of and reliance on existing structures and partnerships. However, the assessment of timeliness, implications of any delays and no-cost extensions, and operational efficiency measures such as time-saving actions—both of which are not demonstrated in the section—could have strengthened the analysis. In addition, UNEP's environmental footprint is not addressed in this section.	4
Quality of 'Monitoring and Reporting' Section <u>Purpose:</u> to present well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the evaluand's monitoring and reporting. Consider how well the report addresses the following: • quality of the monitoring design and budgeting (<i>including SMART results with measurable indicators, resources for MTE/R etc.</i>) • quality of monitoring of project implementation (<i>including use of monitoring data for adaptive management</i>) • quality of project reporting (<i>e.g. PIMS and donor reports</i>)	Final report (coverage/omissions): The report covers all areas of quality of monitoring and reporting section. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The review provides evidence-based findings and analysis on monitoring design, absence of monitoring budget, implementation, and reporting quality. The section on monitoring design and budgeting highlights weaknesses in the results chain and relevant challenges identified during the review. It also notes the limited detail on progress in the annual reports and project closure reports and the poor quality of reporting. However, the section could have been strengthened by including more detailed information on monitoring design, such as data collection frequency, data collection methods, disaggregation of results, and budgeting for the mid-term	5

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
	review (MTR) or terminal review (TR). In addition, the ratings presented in the narrative and those in the summary table are inconsistent.	
Quality of 'Sustainability' Section <u>Purpose:</u> to present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under sustainability (i.e. the endurance of benefits achieved at outcome level). Consider how well the report addresses the following: • socio-political sustainability • financial sustainability • institutional sustainability	Final report (coverage/omissions): The report presents analysis of all three main subsections. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): Overall, the section outlines key conditions and factors likely to contribute to the persistence of achieved outcomes, based on evidence. However, none of the exit strategies for the three sub-criteria are explicitly mentioned. Furthermore, the evidence-based analysis of financial sustainability could have been strengthened by clearly assessing the dependency on future funding, the level of secured funding for the future.	4.5
Quality of Factors Affecting Performance Section <u>Purpose:</u> These factors are not always discussed in stand-alone sections and may be integrated in the other performance criteria as appropriate. However, if not addressed substantively in this section, a cross reference must be given to where the topic is addressed and that entry must be sufficient to justify the performance rating for these factors. Consider how well the review report, either in this section or in cross-referenced sections, covers the following cross-cutting themes: • preparation and readiness • quality of project management and supervision³⁷ • stakeholder participation and co-operation • responsiveness to human rights and gender equality • environmental and social safeguards • country ownership and driven-ness • communication and public awareness	Final report (coverage/omissions): The section addresses most of the key sub-criteria, including the summary table. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The section addresses most of the key sub-criteria. The section is succinctly articulated with smooth flow. Overall, the section could have been strengthened by presenting more evidence on essential elements, as outlined in UNEP's criterion rating descriptions. For instance: – Preparation and readiness: Additional findings on inception meeting, annual, costed workplan, staffing mobilization and engagement of stakeholders in a timely manner would have strengthen the section. – Environmental and social safeguards: Clear evidence or justification that the project's exemption with ESS (if any)-	4

³⁷ In some cases 'project management and supervision' will refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments while in others, specifically for GEF funded projects, it will refer to the project management performance of the executing agency and the technical backstopping provided by UNEP. This includes providing the answers to the questions on Core Indicator Targets, stakeholder engagement, gender responsiveness, safeguards and knowledge management, required for the GEF portal.

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
	based on its nature - would have supported this sub-section, as no evidence on ESS was shared with the reviewer. – Communication and public awareness: no evidence is presented or referenced in this section. In addition, cross-referencing relevant sections or annexes that cover these sub-sections would also have further improved the section.	
Quality of the Conclusions Section (i) Conclusions Narrative: <u>Purpose:</u> to present summative statements reflecting on prominent aspects of the <u>performance of the evaluand as a whole</u>, they should be derived from the synthesized analysis of evidence gathered during the review process. To include: • compelling narrative providing an integrated summary of the strengths and weakness in overall performance (achievements and limitations) of the project • clear and succinct response to the key strategic questions • human rights and gender dimensions of the intervention should be discussed explicitly (e.g. how these dimensions were considered, addressed or impacted on)	Final report (coverage/omissions): The conclusion includes the summative statements based on the findings and analysis. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The review conclusion provides a summary of key findings and achievements, including a summary table of project findings and ratings. However, the summary rating table should have been consistent with the ratings presented in the narrative. Additionally, although the responses to the key strategic questions are integrated in the narrative, clear summary on platform usage, sustainable challenges, and COVID-19-related project adjusts would further strengthen the section. Also, explicitly addressing challenges and limitations would have been beneficial to strengthened this section.	4.5
ii) Utility of the Lessons: <u>Purpose:</u> to present both positive and negative lessons that have potential for wider application and use (replication and generalization) Consider how well the lessons achieve the following: • are rooted in real project experiences (i.e. derived from explicit review findings or from problems encountered and mistakes made that should be avoided in the future) • briefly describe the context from which they are derived and those contexts in which they may be useful • do not duplicate recommendations	Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The section presents six lessons learned, most of which are derived from the review findings and analysis. However, cross-references to relevant paragraphs are not included. In addition, while some good practices are embedded within the context or comments of the lessons learned, a clearer and more structured presentation would have strengthened the section.	5
(iii) Utility and Actionability of the Recommendations: <u>Purpose:</u> to present proposals for specific action to be taken by identified people/position-holders to resolve concrete	Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The section provides five recommendations derived from	4

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
problems affecting the project or the sustainability of its results. Consider how well the lessons achieve the following: - are feasible to implement within the timeframe and resources available (including local capacities) and specific in terms of who would do what and when - include at least one recommendation relating to strengthening the human rights and gender dimensions of UNEP interventions - represent a measurable performance target in order that the UNEP Unit/Branch can monitor and assess compliance with the recommendations. NOTES: (i) In cases where the recommendation is addressed to a third party, compliance can only be monitored and assessed where a contractual/legal agreement remains in place. Without such an agreement, the recommendation should be formulated to say that UNEP project staff should pass on the recommendation to the relevant third party in an effective or substantive manner. The effective transmission by UNEP of the recommendation will then be monitored for compliance. (ii) Where a new project phase is already under discussion or in preparation with the same third party, a recommendation can be made to address the issue in the next phase.	identified challenges, problems, and potential benefits. Overall, several components of the recommendation table—such as the challenge or problem addressed by each recommendation, priority level, type of recommendation, and implementation timeframe—could have been clarified, aligning with the UNEP’s guidance. For instance, some recommendations indicate combined priority levels, for instance, “high priority (important)”. Furthermore, certain recommendations, such as R1, should have considered feasibility, and clarification on the level of scale-up for R4 would have been beneficial. In addition, some recommendations, such as R2 and R5, could have been grouped and merged into a single recommendation.	
Quality of Report Structure and Presentation (i) Structure and completeness of the report: To what extent does the report follow the UNEP Evaluation Office structure and formatting guidelines? Are all requested Annexes included and complete?	Final report (coverage/omissions): The report covers all standard sections and Annexes. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): Overall, the report covers most of the key sections of the review. However, it does not fully comply with UNEP guidelines regarding report structure. For instance, sub-sections and key elements of the sections are scattered across the different sections (e.g. Review Methods). Adopting the standard section structure, and tables would have ensured better flow. Regarding the annexes, data collection instruments and tools are missing from the report. Furthermore, the UNEP’s weighted rating and scale should have been properly applied for determining the overall ratings of criteria(e.g., strategic relevance, financial sustainability, and effectiveness).	4.5

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
	Last but not least, inconsistencies were found between the ratings in the main text and those in the summary rating tables (e.g., strategic relevance, nature of external context, monitoring and reporting, factors affecting performance).	
(ii) Writing and formatting: Consider whether the report is well written (clear English language and grammar) with language that is adequate in quality and tone for an official document? Do visual aids, such as maps and graphs convey key information?	Final report (strengths/weaknesses): Overall, the report is written in adequate language and tone. Most of sections were succinctly articulated. However, incorporating more visual aids could have strengthened its presentation. In addition, further editing and formatting would help improve the overall quality of the report.	5
OVERALL REPORT QUALITY RATING	Satisfactory	4.6

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

Rating the Report Quality Criteria

Rating (1–6)	Description
6	Provides all content with high quality.
5	Provides all content with minor weaknesses.
4	Provides most content with minor weaknesses.
3	Provides most content with significant weaknesses.
2	Omits substantive content with significant weaknesses.
1	Omits almost all content with major weaknesses.