
Evaluation of the UNEP Subprogramme on Chemicals and Pollution Action 2015-2024



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This report has been prepared by:

Dr. Toolseeram Ramjeawon, Evaluation Specialist

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For further information on this report, please contact:

Cecilia Morales - Evaluation Manager

Janet Wildish – Director, Evaluation Officer

Pauline Marima - Evaluation Officer (Peer Reviewer)

Evaluation Office of UNEP

P. O. Box 30552-00100 GPO

Nairobi Kenya

Email: unep-evaluation-director@un.org

Website: <https://www.unep.org/evaluation-office>

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Brief consultant biography

Dr Toolseeram Ramjeawon holds a Diplome D'Ingenieur and a PhD in Environmental Engineering. He has more than 35 years of experience working for academic institutions, government agencies, industries and international organizations in the field of environmental engineering and sustainability. He is currently an independent Sustainability Consultant and was previously a Professor of Environmental Engineering at the University of Mauritius where he lectured on Pollution Control and Waste Treatment and Disposal. He has several research publications on pollution control and waste management. His expertise is in the areas of Cleaner Production, Waste Treatment, Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP), Life Cycle Assessment and Circular Economy. He recently developed a Roadmap and Action Plan on Circular Economy for the Republic of Mauritius and for the Republic of Seychelles. He has done evaluation for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the African Development Bank (ADB).

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

AMR	Antimicrobial Resistance
AQMx	Air Quality Management Exchange Platform
BRS	Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm conventions
BSC	Budget Steering Committee
CA	Climate Action
CCA	Common Country Analyses
CPA	Chemicals and Pollution Action
CPR	Committee of Permanent Representatives
DED	Deputy Executive Director
DRI	Directly Responsible Individual
EA	Expected Accomplishment
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
EMG	Environmental Management Group
EWAD	Early Warning and Assessment Division
GCF	Global Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GFC	Global Framework on Chemicals
GPML	Global Partnership on Plastic Pollution and Marine Litter
GSPC	Global Subprogramme Coordinator
IED	Industry and Economy Division
IETC	International Environmental Technology Centre
INC	Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee
IPMR	Integrated Planning, Management and Reporting
JWP	Joint Work Plan
LDC	Less Developed Countries
MDBs	Multilateral Development Banks
MTS	Medium Term Strategy
NA	Nature Action
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PCP	Programme Coordination Project
PIMS	Programme Information Systems
POPs	Persistent Organic Pollutants
POW	Programme of Work
PPD	Policy and Programme Division
PPR	Programme Performance Report
PRC	Project Review Committee
QCPR	Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review
RO	Regional Office
RSPC	Regional Subprogramme Coordinator
SAICM	Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management.
SCP	Sustainable Consumption and Production

SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SP	Subprogramme
SP-CPA	Subprogramme on Chemicals and Pollution Action
SP-CA	Subprogramme on Climate Action
SP-NA	Subprogramme on Nature Action
ToC	Theory of Change
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNEA	United Nations Environment Assembly
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
WHO	World Health Organization

Executive Summary

1. The evaluation of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Subprogramme on Chemicals and Pollution Action (SP-CPA) reviews UNEP work related to Chemicals and Pollution Action from 1 January 2015 up to 31 December 2024. The SP-CPA work is carried out primarily by the Industry and Economy Division (IED) and, to a lesser extent, by other Divisions (e.g., the Ecosystems Division) and in conjunction with UNEP's Regional Offices (ROs).
2. The SP-CPA is one of seven UNEP Subprogrammes, and one of three thematic Subprogrammes¹. The Terms of Reference² of the evaluation delineated four areas of focus: 1) strategic relevance of the Subprogramme, 2) Subprogramme design and structure, 3) the overall Subprogramme performance and 4) factors that affect the Subprogramme performance. Furthermore, the key strategic questions outlined in the Terms of Reference were assigned to the areas of focus to better integrate them into the analysis.
3. The evaluation followed a theory-based approach to the extent possible in which the major change pathways are mapped, assessed and tested. It considered the role of the SP-CPA in these pathways through the principles of contribution analysis and aimed to produce a plausible, evidence-based narrative to help explain how and why the changes occurred. A mixed methods approach was employed to gather and analyse data for the evaluation, including: desk- based review of UNEP strategic documents and performance reports; portfolio analysis; case-studies analysis of eleven projects; meta-analysis of the ratings of 36 previously evaluated projects during the period 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2024; trend analysis of evaluation findings and semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions held with fifty six (56) participants to analyse the performance of the Subprogramme and identify the factors affecting performance.
4. The evaluation finds that the Subprogramme is strategically vital and normatively strong, but that it suffers from technical, programmatic and geographical fragmentation; unclear accountability structures; and weak long-term impact tracking. It is well-positioned globally but must adapt structurally and operationally to become more catalytic, integrated, and visible. There are strategic choices to be made to align ambitions with funding, such as by having fewer but larger and more strategic initiatives with blended finance that complements the core resources and allows the organization to have an integrated response to the problems of Member States and therefore more impact. The next Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) presents a critical window for UNEP to align Global Environment Facility (GEF)-funded activities with its programmatic vision, invest in institutional connectors and governance mechanisms, elevate the political and economic visibility of pollution, and support green market transformation.
5. The Subprogramme demonstrated a 'Highly Satisfactory' performance in achieving its Programme of Work (POW) targets from 2014 to 2023: 73% of targets were fully achieved, 18% were partially achieved (60% or above), and 9% were not achieved. The performance improved over time, with strong performance being achieved during the last three POWs. Project-level overall performance is 'Satisfactory' on average, with the highest ratings on Strategic Relevance and Effectiveness and the lowest rating on Sustainability and Replication, where the average rating is 'Moderately Likely'.

¹ UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (2022–2025) is structured around three strategic objectives—Climate Stability, Living in Harmony with Nature, and Towards a Pollution-Free Planet. These are operationalized through three thematic subprogrammes: Climate Action, Nature Action, and Chemicals and Pollution Action. Supporting these are two foundational subprogrammes—Science-Policy and Environmental Governance—and two enabling subprogrammes—Finance and Economic Transformations, and Digital Transformations.

² <https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/48943>

Main findings from the evaluation

6. **Finding 1— Alignment with UNEP’s mandate and global, regional, and country needs:** Strong strategic alignment with UNEP’s mandate and global priorities, but weak downstream coherence at regional and country levels. The SP-CPA is strategically essential and globally relevant, forming a cornerstone of UNEP’s Pollution-Free Planet vision and its mandate to promote science-based environmental governance, policy coherence, and global collaboration. The Subprogramme capitalizes on UNEP’s strengths in policy influence, convening power, and science-policy integration (e.g., model chemicals legislation and global coordination mechanisms), positioning it as a core instrument for delivering UNEP’s pollution and chemicals agenda. However, while strategic alignment with global priorities is strong, this coherence diminishes at the regional and national levels. Implementation suffers from both portfolio and institutional fragmentation, low institutional visibility, and limited delivery capacity, constraining UNEP’s ability to translate global leadership into country-level impact. The result is a gap between global ambition and local delivery.
7. **Finding 2— Strategic relevance of portfolio and geographical scope:** The SP-CPA has remained critical and relevant to UNEP’s MTSS and POW at the strategic level, although the emphasis has evolved. The thematic evolution from 2015-2024 reflects global environmental complexity and an adaptive response to emerging crises. However, the overall strategic objectives have remained consistent and aspirational. There has been a gradual shift from a chemical-by-chemical focus to a sectoral safety/integrated approach and an increasing emphasis on circularity and life cycle management. While portfolio fragmentation is a real issue within some GEF-funded streams—where multiple small projects are tied to specific treaty obligations—the overall SP-CPA portfolio also includes larger, cross-sectoral initiatives that are integrated under UNEP’s high-impact sector approach, reflecting a shift toward fewer, more programmatic interventions beyond the GEF-financed components.
8. **Finding 3— Coherence of the SP-CPA design and structure:** The SP-CPA demonstrates conceptual alignment between its intended outcomes and UNEP’s higher-level strategic goals. However, this coherence is not well operationalized in practice. The ToC of the Sub-Programme and its project portfolio lack a robust causal logic linking activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts. Projects often contribute to strategic objectives in isolation, but the absence of harmonized indicators, fragmented portfolio structures, and limited systems for post-project impact tracking weaken the ability to demonstrate aggregated or sustained results. The current ToC provide only partial visibility on how interventions collectively drive pollution reduction, chemicals management, or circular economy transitions. Consequently, the SP-CPA’s ToC functions more as a conceptual map than as a practical results framework guiding strategic management and performance monitoring.
9. **Finding 4— Effectiveness of the Subprogramme:** The SP-CPA is an effective delivery vehicle for UNEP’s POW, especially at the level of norm-setting and broad output delivery. However, its effectiveness is undermined by fragmented implementation, limited coherence, and weak tracking of real-world outcomes. The current strategy with several small grant mechanisms does not lead to transformative change. Strengthening programmatic integration, monitoring systems, and long-term planning would significantly enhance its capacity to deliver lasting results.
10. **Finding 5— Efficiency of the Subprogramme:** While the SP-CPA is efficient in mobilizing resources and delivering individual projects, its overall delivery efficiency is hampered by institutional fragmentation, heavy administrative burden, and weak coordination systems. Improvements in governance structures, knowledge management, and internal reporting systems are essential to increase the Subprogramme’s efficiency as a delivery vehicle for UNEP’s PoW. To improve efficiency, UNEP must consolidate project pipelines, invest in

internal technical capacity, and institutionalize coordination and performance systems that reduce duplication and enable smarter use of resources. There are already a few examples of UNEP-wide projects, (e.g. One UNEP Textile Project, One UNEP Plastic Project, UNEP-wide air quality project) and global partnership initiatives (e.g. Climate Clean Air Coalition (CCAC)), in which there are synergies to improve efficiency by leveraging more partners, financial resources and buy-in among industry by integrating multi-region and multi-level efforts.

11. **Finding 6— Likelihood of Impact:** The SP-CPA has high potential for long-term environmental and policy impact due to its strategic positioning, normative influence, and global partnerships. However, the likelihood of actual, measurable impact is limited by weak project sustainability, fragmented delivery, lack of impact metrics, and insufficient post-project tracking. Without systemic improvements, there is a risk that outputs do not translate into durable outcomes. To increase the likelihood of impact, UNEP should strengthen outcome and impact-level indicators, institutionalize post-project impact assessment mechanisms, consolidate the portfolio into more coherent, high-impact programs and enhance cross-Division coordination and knowledge sharing. It is also important to highlight that UNEP's normative work does not produce direct, immediate measurable emissions reductions, and that longer timeframes are needed to see results. Without clear communication, UNEP risks being seen as “not delivering” when in fact it is shaping the enabling conditions that make delivery possible.
12. **Finding 7— Achievement of catalytic Effects, replication, and scaling:** The SP-CPA has achieved some notable catalytic effects, particularly through large normative or GEF-supported initiatives. However, the replication and upscaling of project-level results remain underdeveloped, largely due to portfolio and institutional fragmentation, lack of coordination, and absence of internal strategies to institutionalize success. To enhance this dimension, UNEP should establish a replication and upscaling framework tied to impact tracking, invest in a central knowledge-sharing system and build funding and governance models that incentivize programmatic scaling over isolated pilots. Real scale in CPA will come from positioning UNEP as the normative, scientific and convening anchor within multi-partner global programmes.
13. **Finding 8— Subprogramme management and supervision:** Strong technical leadership and alignment with UNEP's strategic frameworks support SP-CPA performance. However, limited operational authority, weak cross-divisional coordination, and the absence of formal governance structures constrain effectiveness. The integration of the Global Subprogramme Coordinator (GSPC) into one Division improved alignment but reduced collaboration across Divisions. There are no systems to institutionalize GSPC coordination, track synergies, or fund cross-pillar delivery. Addressing these systemic gaps—by empowering GSPCs, enhancing accountability, and establishing coordination mechanisms—is essential to shift from procedural delivery to transformational impact.
14. **Finding 9— Human and financial resources' administration and efficiency:** The allocation of funds in UNEP follows a multi-layered process that blends strategic guidance, project-level needs, donor priorities, and internal governance mechanisms. Funding structures (e.g., Planetary Funds) lack internal transparency. Funding decisions are often siloed by Division, weakening cross-sectoral collaboration and integrated delivery. There is heavy reliance on GEF funding while other sources (philanthropy, private sector) remain underutilized. The mandate of the SP-CPA is strongly influenced by GEF funding and as such is not necessarily responding to the normative work that UNEP has the mandate to do. While there is increasing alignment at a strategic level between IED and GEF, IED needs more alignment within its own internal structure and with other Divisions. There is persistent fragmentation between GEF-funded work and UNEP's core programmatic priorities. There is scope for better integration of the work of the GEF unit with the broader Division to pool resources,

consolidate expertise and create more programmatic interventions while respecting the GEF-UNEP “firewall”. While the commitment and competence of UNEP staff are high, systemic inefficiencies—such as overstretching, lack of support, weak coordination, and fragmented roles—significantly constrain delivery, especially at the regional and national levels. The constant concern about securing new funding and the reliance on projects with two to five years implementation time creates a disruptive environment and can lead to higher staff turnover.

15. **Finding 10— Monitoring and reporting:** The SP-CPA performs well on compliance and basic reporting, but its monitoring systems fall short in measuring real-world impact, driving learning, or informing strategic decisions. Indicators are rather broad and do not incentivize ambition in the projects, making accountability difficult. The lack of outcome-oriented indicators, post-project impact tracking, and integrated feedback systems hinders the Subprogramme’s ability to demonstrate real impact, adapt based on evidence, and scale successful interventions. Many projects remain enabling in nature, making tangible impacts difficult to measure within short time frames. There is a misalignment between planning horizons and environmental change cycles. Four-years MTS cycles are too short to observe impacts and there must be continuity of outcome indicators across the MTS cycles. While there are indicators for the contribution of the enabling and foundational Subprogrammes to the three strategic objectives, there are no indicators that measure the interlinkages between the three strategic objectives. Upgrading monitoring and reporting from an administrative function to a strategic enabler will be essential for demonstrating transformational change and improving accountability.
16. **Finding 11— Knowledge Management and communication:** While the SP-CPA produces valuable knowledge products and has global credibility, its weak knowledge management and underutilized communication capacity hinder its performance. Without systems to capture learning, communicate strategically, and inform programming, the Subprogramme misses opportunities for scaling, influence, and transformational impact. A “pollution gap report” could significantly increase the visibility of the Subprogramme, but UNEP should carefully design it to avoid duplication, resource strain, or methodological pitfalls.
17. **Finding 12— Effectiveness of cooperation with Regional Offices:** The underutilization of Regional Offices (ROs) is a major constraint on SP-CPA performance. The effectiveness of cooperation with the ROs has a direct and significant impact on the performance of the SP-CPA. There is a need for a proper functional analysis of ROs and assessment of their capacities. Strengthening cooperation would significantly improve the Subprogramme’s country-level relevance, policy influence, and long-term sustainability. To realize this potential, UNEP must establish structured, accountable partnerships with its ROs, including shared planning, joint implementation, and delegated authority. There is a need for an established accountability framework for Divisions to treat country requests through ROs. The ROs need more technical backing from Divisions to mainstream CPA in Country Common Analyses (CCAs).
18. **Finding 13— Effectiveness of external partnerships and cooperation:** Many partnerships have been successful because of clear mandates and shared goals, multi-stakeholder engagement (policy, science, private sector, civil society), strong technical foundations and political buy-in, alignment with **Global Frameworks** (e.g., Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Global Framework on Chemicals (GFC) and practical tools and capacity-building for countries. Overall, external partnerships significantly enhance the Subprogramme’s performance, particularly in normative influence, technical delivery, and access to funding. However, limitations in strategic coordination, partner diversity, and national-level alignment reduce their transformative potential. Partnerships are one of UNEP’s most powerful delivery mechanisms, but their impact is only as strong as the strategic coordination that brings

them together. Strengthening strategic coordination — through GSPCs, Programme Coordination Projects (PCPs), joint governance structures, and shared results frameworks — is essential to unlocking the transformative potential of partnerships in SP-CPA and across UNEP.

19. **Finding 14— Meta-analysis of project-level performance:** The SP-CPA shows strong performance in achieving results under the PoW, particularly in strategic relevance, effectiveness and output delivery. Overall project level performance is Satisfactory on the average. Project evaluations have identified weaknesses in sustainability, long-term impact tracking, and post-project learning.

Responses to the key strategic questions (see details in section 3.1.2)

20. **Q1: To what extent were the recommendations from the 2010-2014 Chemicals and Waste Subprogramme evaluation implemented?** Several recommendations from the 2010–2014 Chemicals and Waste Subprogramme evaluation were implemented, including better cooperation with MEAs, stronger donor engagement, and improved outreach such as the "Beat Pollution" campaign. Partnerships boosted normative influence, technical delivery, and funding access, though strategic coordination and national alignment remain weak. Regional Offices' roles were clarified in UNEP's 2022 Delivery Model Policy but are still underutilized. Resource allocation challenges continue to limit full implementation of earlier recommendations.
21. **Q2: To what extent have collaborations and partnerships with MEAs been productive in implementing the PoW and achieving SP-CPA objectives?** Collaborations with MEAs have been highly productive, especially in aligning norms, convening stakeholders, and delivering treaty obligations through GEF-funded initiatives. Early project review by the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions Secretariat improved coherence and MEA relevance, enhancing project quality. UNEP played central roles in initiatives like the Global Framework on Chemicals (GFC), and the ongoing Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) process to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, aligning with MEA evolution. However, non-GEF projects are less systematically linked to MEAs, reducing unified strategic impact.
22. **Q3: To what extent do partnerships with the GEF influence UNEP's strategy, Subprogramme, and delivery effectiveness in addressing chemicals and pollution?** GEF partnerships have been essential for large-scale delivery, MEA alignment, and promoting sectoral and life-cycle approaches. However, reliance on GEF risks over-dependence and strategic drift, with portfolio composition heavily shaped by GEF priorities. While GEF projects like PlanetGOLD and hazardous chemical phase-outs are impactful, UNEP's internal structures lag behind GEF's sectoral ambitions. Siloed housing of GEF projects limits integration with broader thematic teams.
23. **Q4: How effectively were United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) resolutions on chemicals, waste, and pollution – reflecting Member States' priorities- embedded by the SP-CPA, and what were the primary challenges?** UNEA resolutions are embedded strategically in SP-CPA, especially where these are aligned with GEF priorities and UNEP strengths. They have informed major initiatives like the GFC, the ongoing INC process to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, and Science-Policy Panel. Operational integration is inconsistent due to fragmented portfolios, weak field presence, and underrepresentation of some topics. Funding gaps and lack of measurable PoW indicators further limit systematic implementation.
24. **Q5: To what extent have the UNEP-wide projects impacted Subprogramme performance, global presence, and operational delivery?** UNEP-wide projects have boosted SP-CPA's

performance, visibility, and credibility, demonstrating capacity for high-impact delivery. Initiatives like PlanetGOLD and the Air Quality programme provided measurable outputs and strong alignment with PoW targets. They model cross-sectoral, integrated delivery and strengthen global leadership in key areas. However, benefits like institutional learning and portfolio integration are underutilized without deliberate follow-up mechanisms.

25. **Q6: How are ownership arrangements and synergies between the SP-CPA and other thematic, foundational, and enabling UNEP Subprogrammes made tangible and effective to deliver interconnected and mutually beneficial results?** Synergies between SP-CPA and other UNEP Subprogrammes are limited, inconsistent, and largely dependent on personal networks rather than institutional frameworks. Division-driven ownership and lack of joint governance hinder systemic results. Weak coordination mechanisms and siloed budgeting discourage collaboration. Existing tools like PCPs have drifted from strategic coordination to fragmented project lists.
26. **Q7: What is the relationship between the three Programme Coordination Projects (PCP)s: (i) Circularity in Sectors, (ii) Pollution and Health, and (iii) Towards Zero Waste and the SP-CPA from a results-oriented perspective?** Thematic alignment exists between PCPs and SP-CPA, but operational links are weak. PCPs lack shared outcomes, indicators, and governance structures, functioning instead as loose collections of projects. This dilutes thematic coherence and obscures their collective contribution to PoW outcomes. Without programme-level reporting, their added value beyond individual projects is unclear.
27. **Q8: How has the SP-CPA contributed to the influence of the UN Development System (UNDS) and its programming processes?** Specifically, how can it inform and influence 1) UN Common Country Analysis (CCA), 2) UN Sustainable Development Country Frameworks (UNSDCF), and 3) support the advancement of the SDGs related to the SP-CPA? How can its role be improved in the future to assist UNEP's environmental policy leadership role in the UN system at the global, regional, and country levels? SP-CPA's influence on UNDS processes is limited, with pollution issues underrepresented in CCAs and UNSDCFs. Contributions depend on individual initiative, lacking an institutional approach or mandate. Weak in-country presence and technical language barriers hinder mainstreaming into national frameworks. Greater institutional engagement, clearer messaging, and regional empowerment are needed to increase influence.
28. **Q9: To what extent has the Subprogramme involved the Regional Offices in its strategy, including the selection of geographic coverage? Has it ensured that they are meaningfully engaged in the SP-CPA design and implementation?** RO's involvement in SP-CPA strategy and implementation is inconsistent and often reactive. While ROs support project delivery and engagement in CCAs/UNSDCFs, and are engaged early in the project cycle, they lack a formal role in strategic planning or geographic prioritization. Their potential is constrained by unclear mandates, limited technical capacity, and insufficient authority. Regional perspectives are not systematically integrated into decision-making.
29. **Q10: To what extent did the staff of UNEP shift their culture towards the vision and delivery of the MTS 2025 outcome and 2030 goal during the implementation of SP-CPA?** Cultural shift toward MTS 2025 and 2030 goals has begun, with growing awareness and examples of systems-oriented programming. Cross-agency collaborations and sectoral transformation work are emerging, but silos, unclear incentives, and skill gaps persist. Internal competition and project-bound metrics hinder collaboration. Broader transformation requires training, unified outcomes, and aligned performance incentives.
30. **Q11: Considering the evaluation will also be forward-looking to inform the implementation of the current and new MTS, to what extent have the changes in the design of the SP-CPA under the 2022-2025 MTS and the 2022-2023 PoW (extended to 2025) compared to the**

design under the MTS and PoW during the 2015-2021 period brought more coherence and effectiveness in the implementation, monitoring and reporting of the Subprogramme? The 2022–2025 MTS and PoW improved SP-CPA’s strategic framing and thematic coherence, moving toward sectoral and life-cycle approaches. However, operational reforms, governance, and monitoring systems lag behind design improvements. PCPs, introduced during the 2022-2023 PoW, remain loosely connected projects rather than integrated delivery mechanisms. Indicators are still process-heavy and lack outcome focus, limiting long-term effectiveness tracking.

Conclusions (See details in section 3.1)

31. The evaluation finds that the SP-CPA is central to UNEP’s mandate and vital to addressing the pollution dimension of the triple planetary crises. It confirms UNEP’s strong global leadership in policy guidance, standard-setting, and treaty support, but also notes that impact at the country level remains limited due to fragmented delivery, modest regional presence, and donor-driven project design. The Subprogramme has evolved toward a more systemic, sectoral approach, improving coherence and alignment with UNEP’s strategic vision, though implementation has been uneven. Projects perform well individually, yet long-term outcome measurement and aggregation remain weak, making it difficult to demonstrate system-level change. Efficiency is constrained by multiple small, siloed projects and limited integration between GEF and non-GEF funding streams. Regional Offices are under-empowered to shape portfolios and respond to country needs. At the same time, partnerships such as CCAC, GEF and MEAs amplify UNEP’s influence, while collaboration with industry, civil society, and other UN agencies remains underdeveloped. Knowledge management and visibility need strengthening. Overall, UNEP should consolidate resources into fewer, larger, and more integrated initiatives, empower regional delivery, and link its work more clearly to UNEA resolutions and national implementation, ensuring greater coherence, catalytic impact, and measurable transformation.
32. The evaluation notes that UNEP management had already identified many of the challenges highlighted in this assessment and had begun implementing corrective measures during the latter part of the evaluation period. These reforms reflect a deliberate shift toward stronger technical capacity, greater programmatic integration, and enhanced institutional coherence.

Lessons Learned (see details in section 3.2)

- i. **Lesson 1:** Strategic evolution in the SP-CPA improved thematic relevance but made long-term coherence and impact tracking more challenging.
- ii. **Lesson 2:** Balancing UNEP’s strong normative role with its limited operational reach is essential for SP-CPA to drive transformative change.
- iii. **Lesson 3:** Fragmentation of the SP-CPA portfolio limited systemic results, underlining the need for more integrated programming.
- iv. **Lesson 4:** Weak knowledge management and communications constrained learning, visibility, and influence across the SP-CPA.
- v. **Lesson 5:** Governance gaps and unclear accountability weakened cross-divisional coordination and reduced programmatic coherence.
- vi. **Lesson 6:** A focus on output-level monitoring limited the SP-CPA’s ability to measure behavioural and environmental outcomes.
- vii. **Lesson 7:** Underutilization of regional capacities restricted the SP-CPA’s ability to engage strategically at the country level.

- viii. **Lesson 8:** Limited integration of pollution priorities into UN country programming reduced SP-CPA's influence and visibility within the UN system.
- ix. **Lesson 9:** Emerging green and circular sectors offer strategic leverage points that remain underutilized by the SP-CPA.
- x. **Lesson 10:** Institutional placement of SP coordinators affects both strategic coherence and implementation alignment.

Recommendations (see details in section 3.3)

33. Based on the findings and lessons learned, the main recommendations given below focus on enhancing strategic coherence, institutional effectiveness, and delivery impact. The overarching recommendation is for UNEP to transition the SP-CPA from a collection of projects to a strategically governed, results-driven programme. This shift should enable the delivery of systemic environmental and development outcomes through stronger internal coordination, regional engagement, and sectoral integration. Some recommendations will require UNEP-wide action, not just changes at the SP-CPA level.
 - i. **Recommendation 1:** *Strengthen Strategic Planning and Continuity Across MTS Cycles.* Ensure that future iterations of the SP-CPA maintain strategic continuity across MTS cycles to support long-term coherence, learning, and impact assessment.
 - ii. **Recommendation 2:** *Strengthen SP-CPA Governance and Strategic Coherence.* Improve internal governance, coordination mechanisms, and accountability to enhance SP-CPA's ability to deliver coherently across Divisions and Regional Offices.
 - iii. **Recommendation 3:** *Improve Delivery Through Focused Portfolios, Knowledge Systems, and Sustainable Resourcing.* Strengthen the operational delivery of SP-CPA by streamlining its portfolio, investing in institutional learning, and addressing resourcing gaps.
 - iv. **Recommendation 4:** *Catalyse Green and Circular Markets as a Strategic Delivery Mechanism.* Position SP-CPA as a driver of market transformation and innovation through targeted engagement in priority sectors.
 - v. **Recommendation 5:** *Elevate the Visibility and Political Salience of the Pollution Agenda.* Enhance the visibility, influence, and strategic positioning of SP-CPA by framing pollution as a public health and development issue and integrating it more deeply into UN and national platforms.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background of the Subprogramme on Chemicals and Pollution Action (SP-CPA)

34. UNEP's vision and direction for all activities over a period of four years are articulated in a Medium-Term Strategy (MTS). Subprogrammes (SPs) function as the operational pillars of UNEP, each focusing on a distinct area including one on chemicals and pollution. UNEP use these Subprogrammes as a planning and reporting structure that coordinates work across UNEP's primary thematic areas undertaken by Divisions and Regional Offices. The MTS is implemented through biennial Programmes of Work (PoW), which includes the results framework in terms of a set of integrated interventions over a two-year period.
35. UNEP has identified the triple planetary crisis as its main call to action in the MTS 2022-2025. This triple crisis arises from the confluence of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, and it is the basis for the MTS, which is structured around three thematic Subprogrammes. The Subprogramme on Chemicals and Pollution Action (SP-CPA) is one of them. Climate Action (SP-CA) and Nature Action (SP-NA) are the other two. These thematic Subprogrammes align with UNEP's pivot toward new strategic objectives of climate stability, living in harmony with nature, and towards a pollution-free planet. Ultimately, the Subprogrammes, including the SP-CPA, are designed to implement UNEP's vision for planetary sustainability and human health and well-being (UNEP, 2021)³. In addition to these three thematic Subprogrammes, there are foundational (Science-policy, Environmental Governance) and enabling Subprogrammes (Finance and Economic Transformations, Digital Transformations).
36. Over the past decade, the SP-CPA has evolved through three successive MTS⁴: It was called "Chemicals and Waste" under MTS 2014–2017, "Chemicals, Waste and Water Quality" under MTS 2018–2021, and has been known as "Chemicals and Pollution Action" since the start of the 2022–2025 MTS. Each iteration reflects shifting global priorities and policy developments in pollution and waste management.
37. The SP-CPA work is carried out primarily by the Industry and Economy Division (IED), and, to a lesser extent, by other Divisions (e.g., Ecosystems Division) and in conjunction with UNEP's Regional Offices for the delivery of the PoW outputs. **Annex I** and Figure 21 and Figure 22 summarizes the organizational structure of UNEP with respect to the Subprogramme. The Directly Responsible Individual (DRI) for the SP-CPA is the Director of the IED. The DRI is "responsible for providing the Deputy Executive Director (DED) with accurate information and recommendations (...) to ensure programmatic coordination and results-based management across the Subprogrammes."⁵
38. The Subprogramme is coordinated by a Global Subprogramme Coordinator (GSPC) reporting to the IED Director and works closely with a team of Regional Subprogramme Coordinators (RSPCs) based in UNEP's Regional Offices. The GSPC (and team) reports on the achievement of the Subprogramme. Previously located one year ago within the Policy and Programme Division (PPD), it is now located in IED. The responsibility for implementing CPA activities rests with the Divisions. However, the SP-CPA coordination function has an important role to play in ensuring that work on CPA is directed toward achieving the outcomes outlined in the MTS and PoW.

³ UNEP (2021) For People and Planet. The United Nations Environment Programme strategy for tackling climate change, biodiversity and nature loss, and pollution and waste from 2022–2025. Nairobi.

⁴ UNEP Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2014–2017, 2018–2021, and 2022–2025

⁵ UNEP (2022) UNEP Delivery Model - Policy for One UNEP Delivery

39. In 2023, UNEP created Programme Coordination Projects (PCPs) under all UNEP's Subprogrammes and clustered projects around a core theme. The PCPs have a coordinating project manager who is the Direct Responsible Individual (DRI) and manages work within the PCP. The manager is a senior staff member from the substantive Division in which the work primarily takes place. These PCPs are managed by the Divisions. Three PCPs were established under the SP-CPA: (i) Circularity in Sectors, (ii) Towards Zero Waste; and (iii) Pollution and Health. The GSPC has oversight across all three PCPs. An overview of the SP-CPA, its strategic evolution, and the portfolio is given in [Annex I](#).

1.2 Objectives and scope of the evaluation

40. This evaluation, conducted by the UNEP Evaluation Office between Oct 2024 and Oct 2025, has three main objectives:
 - i. to assess how well SP-CPA interventions align and cohere with UNEP's MTSs, PoWs, and CPA global frameworks;
 - ii. to evaluate the Subprogramme's effectiveness in achieving Expected Accomplishments (EAs), direct outcomes, and impacts; and
 - iii. to help UNEP improve Subprogramme design, coordination and delivery by providing information on strategic positioning, portfolio planning, management arrangements, and programme implementation.
41. The evaluation supports accountability by analysing, at a meta level, the performance of all the Subprogramme projects evaluated during the evaluation period. Secondly, it contributes to institutional learning by providing formative reflections based on further analysis of the Subprogramme's effectiveness as a coherent and coordinated unit within UNEP's results framework, and by providing lessons that are relevant to its role in the MTS 2022-2025, as well as making forward-looking recommendations.
42. The Evaluation reviewed UNEP's work related to the SP-CPA from 1 January 2015 up to 31 December 2024 against standard evaluation criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, and impact). The mandate for evaluation by the UNEP Evaluation Office covers all projects and programmes under the POW. It does not extend to the work undertaken by UNEP Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEA) Secretariats. SP-CPA work in support of MEAs, however, does fall within the evaluation scope. The Evaluation considered the extent to which, in the period under review, UNEP was able to meet its objective as stated in MTS 2014-2017: *"To promote a transition among countries to the sound management of chemicals and waste, with a view to minimizing impacts on the environment and human health."*, and in MTS 2018-2021: as *"Sound management of chemicals and waste and improved air quality enables a healthier environment and better health for all"*, as well as progress made towards the objective in the MTS 2022- 2025 *"significant progress is made towards a pollution-free planet, particularly through the delivery of the Towards A Pollution-Free Planet Implementation Plan."*
43. The scope of the Evaluation is defined by the portfolio of active projects that were classified in the Programme Information Management System (PIMS) and now migrated into the Integrated Planning, Management and Reporting (IPMR) system under the SP-CPA, which were either still on-going or were started after 1 January 2015 (see Annex I, Table 10 and Table 11. Specific focus areas include the SP-CPA contributions to UNEP's MTS for the periods 2014–2017, 2018–2021, and 2022–2025. Also, the performance of the SP-CPA work/portfolio during the PoWs 2014-2015, 2016-2017, 2018-2019, 2020-2021, 2022-2023, and 2024-2025 in the context of the key Theories of Change.

1.3 Key strategic questions

44. The evaluation Terms of Reference outlined 11 strategic questions, which are addressed in the Executive Summary above and in section 3.1.2.
 - i. To what extent were the recommendations from the 2010-2014 Chemicals and Waste Subprogramme evaluation implemented?
 - ii. To what extent have collaborations and partnerships with MEAs been productive in implementing the PoW and achieving SP-CPA objectives?
 - iii. To what extent do partnerships with the GEF and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) influence UNEP's strategy, Subprogramme, and delivery effectiveness in addressing chemicals and pollution?
 - iv. How effectively were United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) resolutions on chemicals, waste, and pollution – reflecting Member States' priorities- embedded by the SP-CPA, and what were the primary challenges?
 - v. To what extent have the UNEP-wide projects impacted Subprogramme performance, global presence, and operational delivery?
 - vi. How are ownership arrangements and synergies between the SP-CPA and other thematic, foundational, and enabling UNEP Subprogrammes made tangible and effective to deliver interconnected and mutually beneficial results?
 - vii. What is the relationship between the three PCPs: (i) Circularity in Sectors, (ii) Pollution and Health, and (iii) Towards Zero Waste and the SP-CPA from a results-oriented perspective?
 - viii. How has the SP-CPA contributed to the influence of the UN Development System and its programming processes? Specifically, how can it inform and influence 1) UN Common Country Analysis, 2) UN Sustainable Development Country Frameworks, and 3) support the advancement of Sustainable Development Goals related to the SP-CPA? How can its role be improved in the future to assist UNEP's environmental policy leadership role in the UN system at the global, regional, and country levels?
 - ix. To what extent has the Subprogramme involved the Regional Offices in its strategy, including selection of geographic coverage? Has it ensured that they are meaningfully engaged in SP-CPA design and implementation?
 - x. To what extent did the staff of UNEP shift their culture towards the vision and delivery of the MTS 2025 outcome and 2030 goal during the implementation of SP-CPA?
 - xi. Considering the evaluation will also be forward-looking to inform the implementation of the current MTS and new MTS, to what extent the changes in the design of the SP-CPA under the 2022-2025 MTS and the 2022-2023 PoW (extended to 2025) compared to the design under the MTS and PoW during the 2015-2021 period brought more coherence and effectiveness in the implementation, monitoring and reporting of the Subprogramme?

1.4 Evaluation approach and methods

45. The evaluation was conducted under the overall responsibility of the UNEP Evaluation Office as an independent exercise. The Evaluation Team, composed initially of two independent

consultants from October 2024 to May 2025 for the inception and data collection phase and then by one of the consultants for the reporting phase from May to October 2025, was supported by Evaluation Office staff, who contributed on logistical and/or methodological assistance to help ensure that the assessment was carried out as independently as possible, given the circumstances and resources provided. In addition, the Evaluation Team was supported by an Evaluation Reference Group (ERG, see membership in [Annex X](#)), which provided technical advice based on its members' expertise and diverse experience in the chemicals and pollution field. Evaluation findings and judgments are based on sound evidence and analysis, clearly documented in the evaluation report. Information is triangulated (i.e., verified from different sources) to the greatest extent possible. Analyses leading to evaluative judgments are clearly spelled out.

46. The Terms of Reference⁶ of the evaluation delineated four areas of focus for the Subprogramme: 1) strategic relevance, 2) design and structure, 3) overall performance and 4) factors affecting performance. Furthermore, the key strategic questions (see section [3.1.2](#)) were assigned to the areas of focus to better integrate them into the analysis.
47. The evaluation followed a theory-based approach to the extent possible in which the major change pathways are mapped, assessed and tested. It considered the role of the SP-CPA in these pathways through the principles of contribution analysis and aimed to produce a plausible, evidence-based narrative to help explain how and why the changes occurred. Given that it was not feasible to reconstruct the three separate Theories of Change (ToCs) across the three evolving MTS cycles from 2015–2024, the Evaluation Team instead mapped out the strategic evolution and thematic shifts of the SP-CPA, illustrating its progression over the past decade through a **Strategic Evolution Map** (Figure 2)
48. A mixed methods approach was employed to gather and analyse data for the evaluation, including: desk-based review of UNEP strategic documents and performance reports; portfolio analysis; case-studies analysis of eleven projects; meta-analysis of the ratings of 36 previously evaluated projects during the period 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2024; trend analysis of evaluation findings and semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions held with fifty six (56) participants to analyse the performance of the Subprogramme and identify the factors affecting performance. A complete list of people interviewed is found in [Annex V](#).
49. The evaluation questions, derived from the areas of focus, were operationalized in an Integrated Evaluation Framework presented in [Annex IX](#) which addresses strategic and project-level questions while aligning findings with UNEP's overarching objectives. The top-down framework evaluates the SP-CPA's strategic alignment, coherence, and effectiveness at the Subprogramme level. The bottom-up framework synthesizes findings from project-level evaluations to inform strategic insights.
50. The systematic review of the previous evaluations of projects related to SP-CPA drew on the evaluation ratings scoring and analysis contained within existing project evaluation reports; meta-analysis of the ratings of previously evaluated projects, pulling out patterns and trends in operational performance and trend analysis of evaluation findings against UNEP's standard evaluation criteria. The analysis also provided a synthesis of the recommendations and lessons learned from the evaluations as well as highlighted projects with good practices.
51. A Portfolio Review was undertaken to analyse how the changing collection of projects that has comprised the SP-CPA has contributed to the achievement of the aims and higher-level results of the SP-CPA and how the portfolio has evolved over time. Eleven projects were

⁶ <https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/48943>

recognized as key drivers to the causal pathways and were used to provide case studies of the strength of the ToC and on the effectiveness of the SP-CPA (see [Annex III](#)).

52. The data collected from the interviews, in the form of text, were analysed via qualitative content analysis through which the Evaluation Team identified information and patterns significant for the evaluation. Process analysis supported the identification of positive and negative elements in programme processes and helped to identify needed improvements. An analysis of the 'contribution' made by the Subprogramme to high-level sectoral or global change (using the Strategic Evolution Map and the other evaluation methods described) was also conducted.

1.5 Limitations to the evaluation

53. Key constraints to the evaluation include variability in documentation quality and non-availability of some key stakeholders during the interview exercise. Limited availability of private sector and government stakeholders during the interview exercise may also have limited the depth of the analysis. Incomplete outcome-level data gave unclear evidence of results achieved beyond outputs. There was limited post-project monitoring data with uncertain long-term continuation of results or institutional capacity. The information available on the projects, current as well as closed, was fragmented and hindered a fully systematic analysis. Financial reporting of UNEP is also often not available at the level necessary for in-depth analysis. Steps taken to mitigate these limitations included triangulation of data sources, using contribution analysis and the Strategic Evolution Map to infer pathways and gaps.

1.6 Ethical considerations

54. Ethical considerations ensured that this evaluation was conducted responsibly and with respect for all individuals involved. Key ethical principles included informed consent before any recording of interviews, voluntary participation and maintaining confidentiality and anonymity. All data were securely stored and shared only within the Evaluation Team and the UNEP Evaluation Office, in line with United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) ethical guidelines. AI tools were used solely to support transcription and summarisation; they did not replace the Evaluator's professional judgement, analysis, or responsibility for the findings.

1.7 Evaluation audience

55. The immediate and priority users of the Evaluation are UNEP senior management (including Division and Regional Directors), Subprogramme Coordinators, and all UNEP units and staff involved in the SP-CPA, the UNEP Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR), and the UNEA. Interest in the Evaluation is likely to be shown by other stakeholders and partners, including the UN Secretariat, UN or other international bodies working in the area of chemicals and pollution, commissions, committees, donors, NGOs, and civil society groups, research centres and academia, etc.

2 Evaluation Findings

2.1 Assessment of subprogramme performance

2.1.1 Subprogramme's strategic relevance

56. This section discusses the evaluation findings related to the strategic relevance of the SP-CPA, including its alignment with the global challenges posed by chemicals and pollution and with UNEP's mandate as per UNEA and General Assembly resolutions. It assesses its relevance to global, regional, and national environmental priorities, and its complementarity with existing relevant interventions. It also examines how well the Subprogramme contributed to UNEP's overall strategic priorities and goals, such as those outlined in its MTS.

Finding 1: Strong strategic alignment with UNEP's mandate and global priorities, but weak downstream coherence at regional and country levels. The SP-CPA is strategically essential and globally relevant, forming a cornerstone of UNEP's Pollution-Free Planet vision and its mandate to promote science-based environmental governance, policy coherence, and global collaboration. The Subprogramme capitalizes on UNEP's strengths in policy influence, convening power, and science-policy integration (e.g., model chemicals legislation and global coordination mechanisms), positioning it as a core instrument for delivering UNEP's pollution and chemicals agenda. However, while strategic alignment with global priorities is strong, this coherence diminishes at regional and national levels. Implementation suffers from both portfolio and institutional fragmentation, low institutional visibility, and limited delivery capacity, constraining UNEP's ability to translate global leadership into country-level impact. The result is a gap between global ambition and local delivery.

2.1.1.1 Alignment with UNEP's mandate and global environmental priorities

57. UNEP has clear mandates to (i) support UNEA, (ii) be custodian or co-custodian for 26 SDG indicators relevant to the environment, (iii) provide science-policy interfaces and consideration of the environment in many areas, and (iv) support MEAs. Furthermore, the 2017 Secretary-General's Reform Agenda required UNEP to play a key environmental role in the United Nations reform process.
58. The SP-CPA directly supports UNEP's role as the leading global environmental authority, which includes setting the global environmental agenda, promoting coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development and acting as a normative authority on issues such as chemicals, pollution, and waste. This Subprogramme embodies UNEP's Pollution-Free Planet vision, which is central to its strategic priorities and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is one of UNEP's three core pillars under the triple planetary crisis (alongside climate change and biodiversity loss). The SP-CPA operationalizes this pillar, serving as UNEP's principal vehicle to tackle pollution and toxic chemical exposure and helps deliver outcomes under Agenda 2030.
59. The SP-CPA has focused on the comparative advantage of UNEP to achieve the outcomes in the MTS. UNEP's global credibility and neutrality underpin its convening and coordination role – a key aspect of the SP-CPA's approach, exemplified by its leadership in the entry into force of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, the Science Policy Panel on Chemicals and Waste, the Global Framework on Chemicals (2023) and in the current process for an international legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution. SP-CPA projects under the evaluation period consistently reflect this normative character, contributing to global policy frameworks and standards.

60. The SP-CPA has supported **global agreements and frameworks** such as (i) global MEAs, e.g., Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm, Minamata Conventions. (ii) the Global Framework on Chemicals; UNEP Working Group on Nitrogen; the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities⁷, among others and (iii) the emergence of new mandates such as the ad hoc open-ended working group on a Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution prevention and the INC to prepare an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution (UNEP resolutions 5/8 and 5/14).
61. The SP-CPA has helped countries implement their obligations under these global frameworks by providing technical assistance, strengthening institutions and facilitating access to financing mechanisms, such as the GEF. The SP-CPA has served as an operational bridge between international legal frameworks and national-level implementation.
62. Even though the MEAs are evolving instruments, they do not cover all pollutants. The Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) has helped fill the gap with its process for identifying emerging policy issues through the International Conference on Chemicals Management, including, for example, resolutions promoting the gathering and exchange of information on emerging issues such as perfluorinated chemicals, nanotechnology, endocrine-disrupting chemicals and pharmaceuticals, some of which warrant additional scientific research to accurately assess their environmental and health impacts. In September 2023, the world agreed to the Global Framework on Chemicals (GFC), which provides a vision for a planet free of harm from chemicals and waste for a safe, healthy, and sustainable future. Governments and industry have committed to reduce chemical pollution and implement policies to promote safer alternatives. UNEP takes a leading role in supporting collaboration across sectors to develop strategies and actions to put into effect the GFC. The GFC and the new Science-Policy Panel allow UNEP to evolve the MTS and the portfolio to an approach that looks at whole supply chains and bring in science and industry to ensure sectors are safe and sustainable and this approach can connect Divisions and Subprogrammes.
63. The predominance of Satisfactory ratings on the 'Strategic Relevance' criterion of evaluated projects under the SP-CPA from 2015-2024 confirms that projects approved by the Project Review Committee (PRC) are well-aligned to UNEP's high-level results (i.e., the Expected Accomplishments/Outcomes). During the evaluation interviews, SP-CPA was perceived by both internal and external stakeholders to have a very important and highly relevant role to play in supporting its stakeholders when they are addressing chemicals and pollution issues. Through the SP-CPA, UNEP is seen as playing several important roles on chemicals and pollution: the global champion for the environment, convenor, advisor and information provider, capacity builder, and project implementer. There is general support for UNEP's "Pollution-Free Planet" vision. Internal and external interviewees emphasized UNEP's work on science-based insights, norms, and project-related work, with external stakeholders focusing on the value of the work on the MEAs and internal stakeholders more focused on the role of UNEP's normative work.
64. The SP-CPA is aligned with UNEP's core expertise in scientific and policy leadership. It draws heavily on UNEP's technical expertise in pollution science, environmental health, life cycle assessment, and policy development and leads the development of technical guidelines, toolkits, and assessments, such as the Global Chemicals Outlook and Rapid Environmental Assessments. The Subprogramme also has strong operational alignment with UNEP's role as an implementing agency of the GEF. UNEP's expertise in multi-stakeholder platforms and industry engagement (especially through IED and Ecosystems Division) is reflected in SP-

⁷ Between 2015-2019, the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities was implemented under the Nature Action SP.

CPA's sectoral focus on plastics, textiles, electronics, and sustainable mobility. Through these programmatic interventions and partnerships, The SP-CPA embodies UNEP's expertise on circularity and sustainable production.

65. The SP-CPA is tightly linked to UNEA mandates. Several UNEA resolutions on chemicals and pollution have been put forward by some developed countries, not necessarily to add something new to the work, but in keeping pollution visible and high on the political agenda. However, while many of these resolutions are reaffirming what UNEP may already be doing, it does not necessarily raise the level of ambition or attract more funding or trigger large-scale shifts. Future resolutions must drive implementation forward and not just maintain visibility.

2.1.1.2 Alignment with global, regional, and country needs in sound chemicals management and pollution control

66. A healthy environment, healthy people and healthy economies are the foundation for achieving the SDGs. Chemicals and pollution pose significant risks to human health and the environment and result in substantial costs to national economies.
67. The SP-CPA has supported global agreements and frameworks as described under section 2.1.1.1. It directly supports implementation of MEAs and the GFC which prioritizes sectoral safety, just transitions, and green chemistry. It delivers on key SDGs and UNEA resolutions. UNEP, through this Subprogramme, leads global policy and science platforms, such as the development of global standards and toolkits or the establishment of the Science-Policy Panel for chemicals, waste, and pollution (air and water). It is playing a critical role in supporting technical aspects on the topic in parallel with the intergovernmental negotiation process on plastic pollution as well as integrating pollution and health in global platforms (e.g., air quality and antimicrobial resistance).
68. The new UNEP Delivery Model (2022) emphasizes regional coordination to tailor interventions to specific environmental and institutional realities. The Regional Offices are expected to guide project targeting based on local pollution risks, government readiness, and private-sector engagement opportunities. UNEP has supported region-specific platforms and works with regional conventions and centres, including BRS regional centres and others. Regional Subprogramme Coordinators (RSPCs) handle a broad range of themes – from chemicals to waste, air and water pollution, and plastics. Their responsibilities go beyond coordination and reporting, and they also support direct implementation, engage with intergovernmental processes, and liaise with multiple UNEP Divisions and external partners. In some cases, they support direct implementation of project components in coordination with the Divisions. However, there is no institutionalized system yet to prioritize regional/country needs or to ensure coherence across Divisions in response to regional/country requests.
69. The SP-CPA facilitates technical assistance and capacity building in many developing countries via GEF-funded enabling activities and national plans. For example, countries routinely seek UNEP's help on legislation for hazardous chemicals and waste or support on National Action Plans for implementing MEAs. Many interviewees, however, noted the absence of a clear country support strategy, a weak accountability mechanism from Divisions to address requests from countries, and fragmented field implementation. The SP-CPA has the potential to play a catalytic role, especially where its work aligns with pressing country priorities (e.g., plastic pollution, air quality). Also, UNEP tends to work with countries that have funding, which can reinforce the mismatch between donor priorities (often from the global north) and actual needs in the global south. Many stakeholders (both internal and external) have pointed out that donor-driven programming risks creating a geographic and thematic mismatch between where UNEP delivers and where needs are greatest.

70. UNEP is making use of the United Nations Development System (UNDS) reform to extend its reach as the global environmental authority to support all Member States in their pursuit of the SDGs. Working with and through its sister United Nations entities, UNEP is supporting United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs), providing environmental data and analysis so that Common Country Analyses (CCAs) have environmental science as their foundation. United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs) will then likewise include strong environmental components, providing clear guidance and pathways for the entire UNDS to support the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.
71. However, as of data collected up to December 2024, pollution is referenced in only 9% of UNSDCFs. The strategic relevance can be increased further through responding to country priorities. There are several reasons why, compared to climate and nature, pollution is still largely missing from UN country strategies. This is due to limited country presence, weaker engagement with planning/finance ministries, and the need for more technical backing from Divisions to the Regional Offices. Focal points have improved UNEP's visibility and coordination within UNCTs. However, many work only part-time and lack structured training or tools. The influence of the focal points depends heavily on the personalities involved and the clarity of the messaging. If the RSPCs and national focal points do not get heavily involved in the development of the CCA, nothing will be mentioned about waste management or about pollution, although these are important issues for many developing countries. One of the major roles of the RSPCs is to mainstream pollution in the UNSDCF, but they need technical support from Divisions when the CCA is carried out through the UNCTs.
72. Some developments within the evaluation period have started to address this issue notably through the development of the UN common approach to pollution under the UN Environment Management Group (EMG), and the establishment of the Issue Management Group on Pollution. This includes a focus on integrating pollution in the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) process of the UNDS (enhancing agency-level reporting on pollution), and on integration into CCAs/UNSDCFs, with the engagement of multiple agencies. While pollution is now mentioned at a high level in many UNSDCF as part of the triple planetary crises framing, the Joint Work Plan (JWP)⁸ offers a more effective mechanism for including concrete, measurable pollution indicators that can drive programming and accountability. This reflects a two-step process: (i) Using the UNSDCF to secure political recognition of pollution as a priority outcome. And (ii) Using the JWP to embed specific indicators and outputs, ensuring pollution is operationalized and adequately funded at country level.

2.1.1.3 Strategic relevance of portfolio and geographical scope

Finding 2: The SP-CPA has remained critical and relevant to UNEP's MTS and POW at the strategic level, although the emphasis has evolved. The thematic evolution reflects global environmental complexity and an adaptive response to emerging crises. However, the overall strategic objectives have remained consistent and aspirational. There has been a gradual shift from a chemical-by-chemical focus to a sectoral safety/integrated approach and an increasing emphasis on circularity and life cycle management. While fragmentation is a real issue within some GEF-funded streams—where multiple small projects are tied to specific treaty obligations—the overall SP-CPA portfolio also includes larger, cross-sectoral initiatives that are integrated under UNEP's high-impact sector approach, reflecting a shift toward fewer, more programmatic interventions beyond the GEF-financed components.

⁸ A Joint Work Plan (JWP) is the “working document” that turns the strategic priorities (e.g., those outlined in the UNSDCF) into actionable collaboration among agencies. It translates the high-level outcomes of the UNSDCF into specific, measurable activities, outputs, and indicators that are jointly implemented by UN agencies at the country level.

73. The strategic relevance of the SP-CPA portfolio and its geographical scope lie in how well the mix of projects, and their global distribution supports UNEP's vision of a Pollution-Free Planet, aligns with international priorities, and addresses the needs of diverse countries and regions. As per UNEP's second Global Chemicals Outlook (GCO-II) published in 2019, addressing legislation and capacity gaps in developing countries and emerging economies remain a priority. Overall progress towards achieving the sound management of chemicals and waste is insufficient and uneven across countries, regions, and actors, pointing to an urgent need to take concerted action to develop basic chemicals management systems in all countries. Developing countries and economies in transition still lack basic chemicals and waste management systems. The Global Waste Management Outlook published in 2024 showed that the largest growth in Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) generation is expected to take place in fast-growing economies, where waste generation is already outpacing the capacity to manage it. It also pointed to the urgent need for greater waste management capacity, especially in countries already struggling to collect and manage waste where high growth in MSW is projected such as in Africa and Asia.
74. The SP-CPA over the last decade has evolved through three Medium-Term Strategies (2014-2017, 2018-2021, and 2022-2025), each reflecting emerging priorities and global policy shifts in pollution and waste management:
- **MTS 2014-2017:** Focused on strengthening national capacities for sound chemicals and waste management. Key emphasis was placed on governance, regulatory frameworks, and the integration of chemicals management into national policies.
 - **MTS 2018-2021:** This period emphasized air quality and pollution control as key thematic additions, aligning interventions with global SDGs. as well as stronger integration of gender at the sub-program level.
 - **MTS 2022-2025:** This version integrates circular economic principles and life-cycle approaches to chemicals and waste management while aligning with the triple planetary crisis framework.
75. The SP-CPA has remained critical and relevant to UNEP's MTS and POW at the strategic level, although the emphasis has evolved. There has been a gradual shift from a chemical-by-chemical focus (e.g., Mercury, POPs) to a sectoral safety/integrated approach and an increasing emphasis on circularity and life cycle management. A key lesson from having implemented a chemical-by-chemical approach is that UNEP needs to complement it with a more integrated approach to chemicals management, especially by working across the life chain of key high-impact sectors, such as textiles, agriculture, electronics and extractives. There has thus been a gradual shift towards fewer/ larger projects on high-impact sectors of the economy like Plastics (e.g., reuse models, treaty support), Textiles (e.g., sustainable chemicals in production), Construction (e.g., hazardous materials phase-out), Mobility (e.g., emissions from vehicles and fuels), and Agriculture and food systems (e.g., pesticide safety). This strategic concentration enables UNEP to influence policy and market transformation and achieve economies of scale. While the strategy has evolved, many older projects still reflect outdated paradigms (e.g., narrow pollutant-specific focus), which dilutes the overall coherence of the portfolio.
76. The portfolio included 81 active projects as of end December 2024. According to project evaluations, strategic relevance is the highest-rated criterion across assessed projects, supported by strong proposal approval processes active within UNEP and its funding partners. While the breadth allows UNEP to tackle a wide range of issues, the portfolio fragmentation into many small-scale projects poses a challenge for coherence, efficiency, and measurable impact. Within the SP-CPA, a substantial share of mercury and POPs projects are financed through GEF, which serves as the financial mechanism for the Stockholm and Minamata Conventions. These projects often have relatively small individual

budgets (the average budget of the 47 POPs/Mercury projects is about US\$ 3.8 million), reflecting the GEF's model of targeted, treaty-driven interventions. However, this pattern does not represent the entire SP-CPA portfolio. A significant portion of UNEP's work on air quality, waste, circularity, and pollution-health linkages is non-GEF funded, supported instead by the Environment Fund, bilateral contributions, and partnerships such as the CCAC. Therefore, while fragmentation is a real issue within some GEF-funded streams—where multiple small projects are tied to specific treaty obligations—it does not apply uniformly across the Subprogramme. The overall SP-CPA portfolio also includes larger, cross-sectoral initiatives that are integrated under UNEP's high-impact sector approach, reflecting a shift toward fewer, more programmatic interventions beyond the GEF-financed components.

77. Figure 1 illustrates that the portfolio has an appropriate geographical scope, reflecting alignment with donor priorities (e.g., GEF, EU, bilateral donors), global south needs (e.g., phase-out of harmful pollutants, policy support), countries or regions' readiness, and regions undergoing rapid industrialization and urbanization, where pollution risks are highest. The portfolio covers a wide geographical scope, including Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and crisis-affected countries (through Rapid Environmental Assessments). There is a global reach with representation of vulnerable countries. However, despite the global spread, pollution remains underrepresented in UNSDCFs (only ~9% mention it), limiting traction at the national planning level. UNEP's relatively limited in-country presence also hampers the translation of global strategies into local impact.
78. The evidence collected by the Evaluation Team from internal and external stakeholders suggested that many of the primary factors contributing to the country selection of these for projects under the SP-CPA are outside of UNEP's direct control, being the needs and interests of countries themselves and responding to the requirements of bilateral and multilateral funding sources. For example, the GCF's policy requirement for funding LDCs and SIDS helps ensure geographic spread and a focus on countries most in need. Many GEF-funded projects prioritize countries with high pollution risk or critical chemical management needs, reflecting global equity considerations. It is to be noted that in the latest MTS the Subprogramme follows a co-creation approach to ensure that the global strategy and country needs are both considered in designing projects.

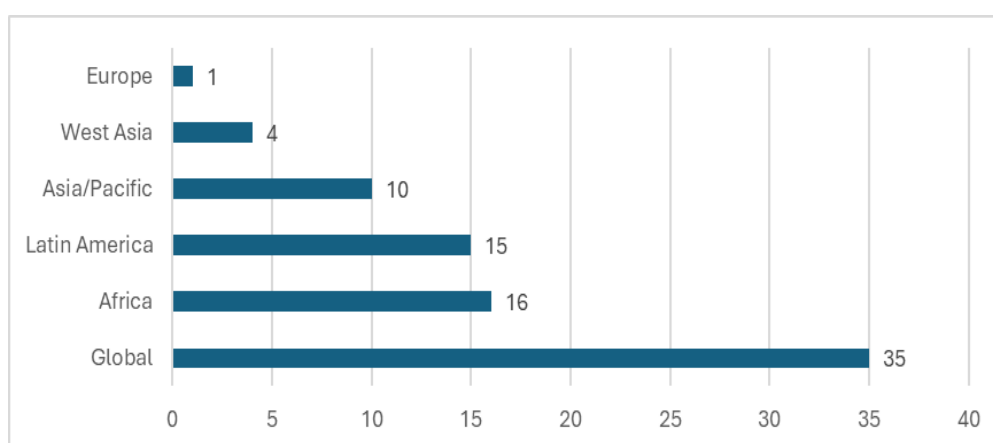


Figure 1. Geographic distribution of the active projects as of 31st December 2024

79. There is a mix of normative and operational work in the portfolio, which combines norm-setting (e.g., indicators, policy toolkits, MEA alignment), UNEP-wide projects (e.g., PlanetGOLD, One UNEP Plastics) and pilot and demonstration activities to test and scale innovation. This mix strengthens UNEP's role as a thought leader and convenor as well as a project implementer. In the last MTS some UNEP-wide projects, such as the UNEP Plastics

Initiative, have been designed to deliver projects at global, regional, and national levels across high-impact sectors and value chains. This approach ensures that efforts are tailored to specific contexts while contributing to the overall goal of reducing plastic pollution.

2.1.2 Coherence of the SP-CPA design and structure

The evaluation assessed the extent to which the overall performance of the SP-CPA has been affected (in terms of effectiveness and efficiency) by the way it has been designed, structured, and integrated with other Subprogrammes and management structures. The evaluation has considered the internal coherence and logic between MTS Expected Accomplishments/Outcomes, PoW outputs and project outcomes. Particular attention was given to how well the Subprogramme's results are formulated and logically organized, including the appropriateness of performance indicators to measure progress towards planned achievements. Concerning the Theory of Change (ToC) for the Subprogramme, the evaluation assessed through the **Strategic Evolution Map (Reviewed ToC)** (Figure 2

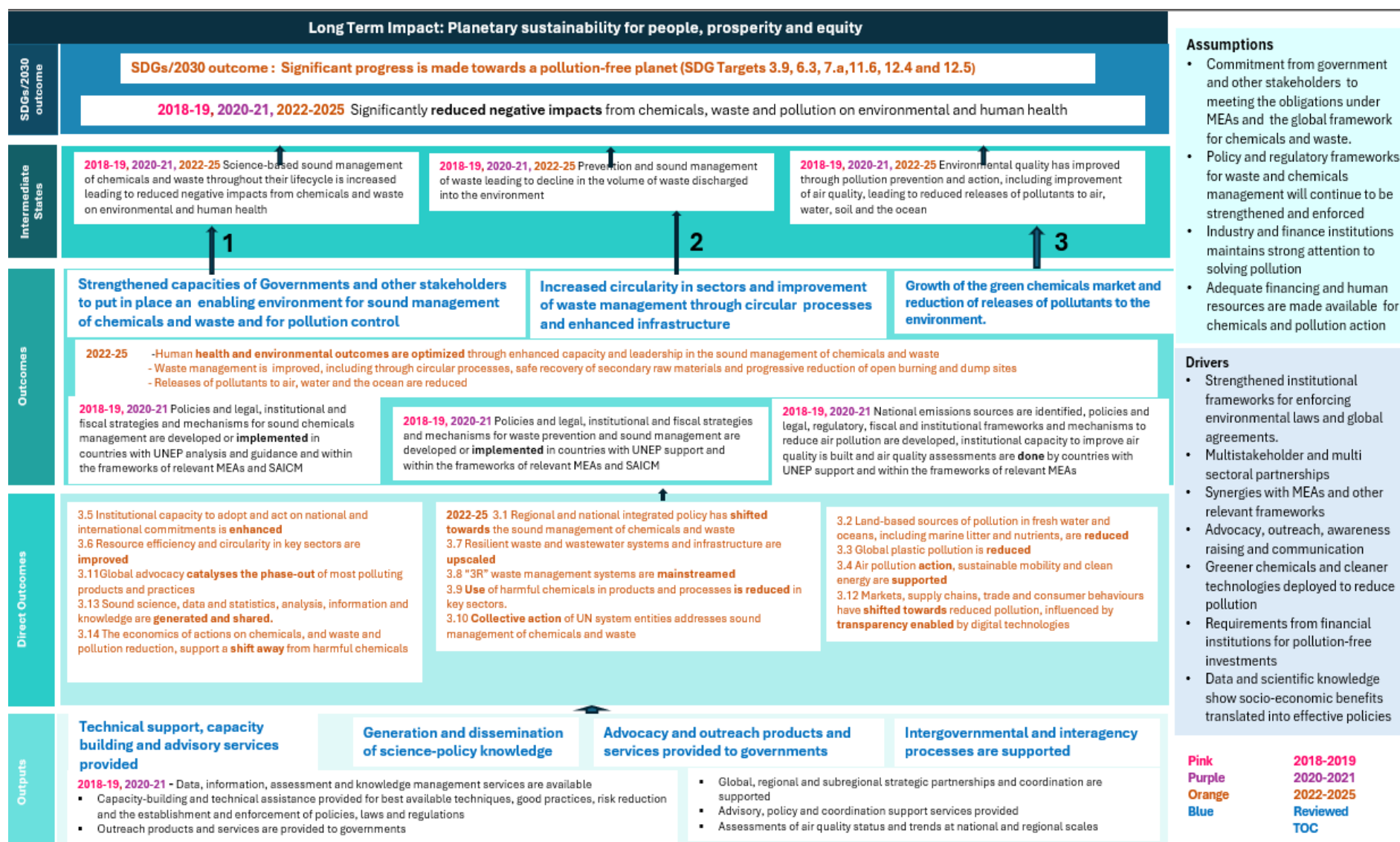


Figure 2. Strategic Evolution Map and Three Causal Pathways

80.) the extent to which the intermediate states, drivers and assumptions underlying the Subprogramme change process have been well thought through and articulated. Overall, the evaluation considered whether a dedicated Subprogramme on chemicals and pollution action has helped to better define and coordinate UNEP's activities in addressing the challenges posed by chemicals and pollution. An overview of the SP-CPA ToC over time, along with the reviewed ToC within the Subprogramme, is provided in [Annex II](#).

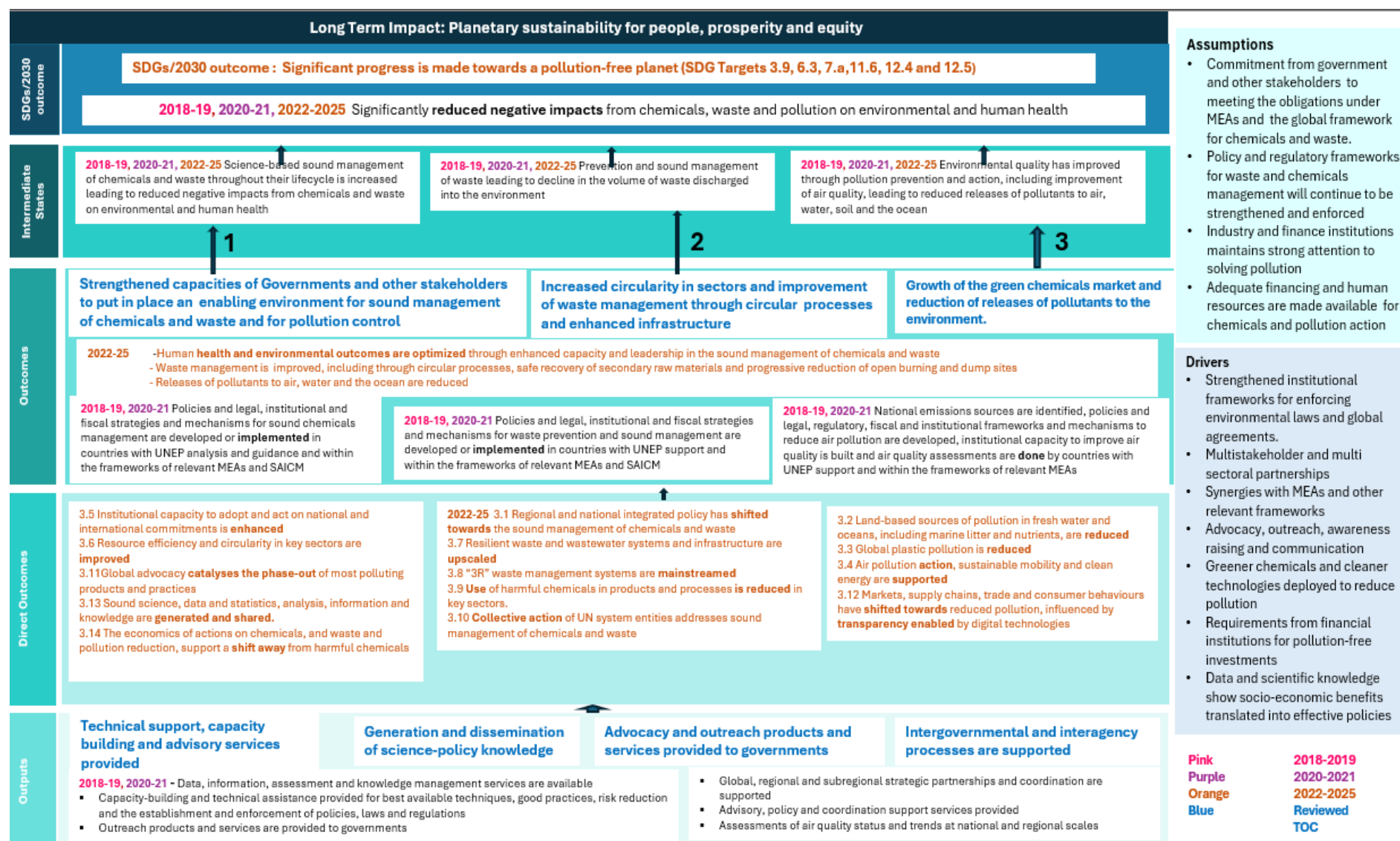


Figure 2. Strategic Evolution Map and Three Causal Pathways

Finding 3: The SP-CPA demonstrates conceptual alignment between its intended outcomes and UNEP's higher-level strategic goals. However, this coherence is not well operationalized in practice. The ToC of the Sub-Programme and its project portfolio lack a robust causal logic linking activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts. Projects often contribute to strategic objectives in isolation, but the absence of harmonized indicators, fragmented portfolio structures, and limited systems for post-project impact tracking weaken the ability to demonstrate aggregated or sustained results. The current ToC provide only partial visibility on how interventions collectively drive pollution reduction, chemicals management, or circular economy transitions. Consequently, the SP-CPA's ToC functions more as a conceptual map than as a practical results framework guiding strategic management and performance monitoring.

2.1.2.1 Coherence between project outcomes and higher-level results

81. The coherence between project outcomes and higher-level results in the SP-CPA has improved over time, especially under the 2022–2025 MTS. Conceptually, the three 2025 outcomes are found to be logically linked to the SP objective of significant progress towards a pollution-free planet. The reviewed ToC (see Figure 2) shows that all the project case studies selected are broadly aligned with SP-CPA's strategic outcomes. Initiatives like the One UNEP Plastics, PlanetGOLD, the UNEP Textile Initiative, and Air Quality have helped consolidate smaller projects into coherent packages with measurable higher-level contributions. These projects show how multiple outcomes (policy reform, industry change, behaviour shifts) can collectively contribute to long-term pollution reduction goals. Many projects explicitly support countries in meeting obligations under the MEAs and SDG targets which reinforces vertical coherence between project outcomes and global normative goals. However, a few of the fourteen direct outcomes that UNEP wants to achieve through its outputs, "direct" meaning here directly attributable to UNEP's efforts, may be difficult to ascertain. (For example, the direct Outcome 3.5: *'Institutional capacity to adopt and act on national and international commitments is enhanced'*, may stem from other interventions or factors).
82. The MTS of 2022-2025 encompasses a set of direct outcomes that illustrate how interventions across the SP-CPA and foundational and enabling Subprogrammes come together in an integrated manner. An integrated approach to implementing the Subprogrammes is central to the successful realisation of the MTS. Single indicators under the SP-CPA measure progress for multiple 2025 outcomes and direct outcomes. For example, an indicator on "Number of countries implementing integrated chemicals management policies" can simultaneously show **Direct outcome** progress (countries adopting the policy), and **2025 outcome** progress (increased national capacity and systems for pollution prevention). In contrast, the indicators for the enabling and foundational Subprogrammes primarily measure performance for the direct outcomes because their contribution to higher-level 2025 outcomes is **indirect**—the actual impact is realised through the work of the thematic or "delivery" Subprogrammes. Measuring their influence on system-level change would be methodologically difficult and risk double-counting, since those effects are already tracked under the thematic Subprogrammes⁹.
83. **Table 5** in Annex I provides a comparison of the indicators that have been included in the POWs since 2014. The indicators and targets in the 2014-2017 and 2018-2021 are broadly consistent. The 2025 outcomes utilize a new set of six common indicators (four quantitative and two qualitative) which are applied to relevant 2025 CPA outcomes. This is the first time that qualitative indicators have been included. The latter are designed to capture the

⁹ Enabling and foundational subprogrammes work through other subprogrammes, so their results are not usually stand-alone outcomes but contributions to the impacts of thematic areas. Measuring the influence of enabling and foundational subprogrammes on system-level change is methodologically difficult because their contributions are indirect, long-term, and spread across multiple thematic areas. Attempting to attribute a proportion of system change to them risks overstating UNEP's overall impact — because those changes are already being captured under thematic subprogramme results.

influence and uptake of UNEP normative and standard-setting work. They complement the quantitative indicators, which mainly capture the effect of direct intervention by UNEP, and provide a more complete picture of UNEP results for the three thematic Subprogrammes.

84. As documented before, the quantitative indicators mostly consist of indicators of institutional reach only, with insufficient outcome orientation¹⁰. Most of the indicators were related to the number of instances in which UNEP supported, for example, the *"Number of Governments that, with UNEP support, are developing or implementing policies, strategies, legislation or action plans that promote sound chemicals and waste management and/ or the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements and the existing framework on chemicals and waste"* without a qualitative minimum standard or any follow-up on whether or not these policies ever became effective. It was comparatively easy for a project to report on these indicators and comparatively easy for the Subprogramme to give an aggregated indicator measurement across all projects. The effect of the project portfolio on the global environment is not captured, and the indicators do not incentivize ambition in the projects – a weak policy counts exactly as much as a strong policy.
85. There is an absence of continuity of long-term indicators across the MTS cycles. Changing indicators with every MTS undermines UNEP's ability to measure sustained progress over time. The four-year MTS cycles are too short to capture meaningful environmental impacts and favour output tracking rather than outcome or impact measurement. Extending the strategic timeframe – such as adopting a 10-year MTS or developing an internal longer-term strategic vision for each Subprogramme (for example, a dedicated 10-year SP-CPA strategy to guide successive MTS cycles) would better reflect the realities and timescales of environmental change. This approach would enable more meaningful progress tracking, while maintaining flexibility through interim, two-year PoWs within the longer strategic framework.
86. The Programme of Work demonstrates how the UNEP Subprogrammes come together in an integrated manner to deliver interconnected and mutually beneficial results. UNEP interventions have the aim to benefit from the comparative advantage of each Subprogramme to improve cost-effectiveness and have a greater, more strategic impact. Each Subprogramme is supposed to develop a project portfolio that is synergistic with other Subprogrammes. While there are indicators for the contribution of the enabling/foundational Subprogrammes to the three thematic Subprogrammes, there are no indicators that measure the interlinkages between the three thematic Subprogrammes – for example how the SP-CPA contributes to Nature Action or Climate Action and vice versa.
87. Despite theoretical alignment, coherence is rather weak in implementation due to a fragmented project portfolio and weak linkages in programme design. For example, in the 2022–2023 PoW, the ToC lacked a clear causal narrative, making it hard to see how project-level results contribute to 2025 outcomes, with no explicit mapping of how MTS direct outcomes relate to PCPs or how they aggregate into higher-level Subprogramme or MTS goals; inadequate Indicators and a lack of post-project impact tracking further undermine coherence. There was no mechanism to capture long-term impacts or verify whether anticipated behavioural, policy, or institutional changes materialize.

2.1.2.2 Coherence between SP-CPA and the Thematic, Foundational and Enabling Subprogrammes

88. A pollution-free planet is one of UNEP's strategic objectives, and foundational Subprogrammes are expected to enable its delivery with expertise, project implementation and strategic support. In the framework established under the ToC, the responsibility for the

¹⁰ MOPAN (2021) United Nations Environment Programme. 2020 Assessment Cycle. Paris.

achievement of the direct outcomes for SP-CPA extends beyond the remit of the Subprogramme to include the foundational and enabling Subprogrammes. For example, the SP-CPA draws support from the Law Division to help countries develop chemicals-related legislation or align national policies with MEAs. Joint staff positions between IED and the Law Division have been established (e.g., a shared lawyer in the Global Framework Chemicals Secretariat) to formalize collaboration. As Annex I [Table 6](#) shows, the objectives and outcome statements have been aligned across the Subprogrammes. However, the distribution of the responsibility to these Subprogrammes for direct outcomes under the SP-CPA for achieving shared results is not clear/documented.

89. The fourteen direct outcome statements of the SP-CPA can also be found in the reporting of the foundational and enabling Subprogrammes. The four quantitative indicators of the PoW 2022-2023 have been formulated such that a clear contribution from the other Subprogrammes is necessary and can be reflected in the SP-CPA's indicators. As shown in Annex I [Table 7](#), the indicators for the enabling and foundational Subprogrammes measure performance for specific direct outcomes of the SP-CPA and enhances the coherence significantly.
90. Several factors limit effective operational coherence such as a lack of institutional mechanisms ensuring joint planning, delivery, or monitoring between SP-CPA and the other Subprogrammes. Collaboration across Subprogrammes is often informal and ad hoc, relying on personal initiative rather than systemic coordination.

2.1.2.3 Internal coherence of the Theories of Change of the Subprogramme and its portfolio

91. The internal coherence of the ToC for the SP-CPA and its portfolio have improved over successive MTS. The Strategic Evolution Map or reviewed ToC in Figure 2 identifies the following three main outcomes for the SP-CPA across the three MTS ToCs:
 - i. Strengthened capacities of Governments and other stakeholders to put in place an enabling environment for sound management of chemicals and waste and for pollution control.
 - ii. Increased circularity in sectors and improvement of waste management through circular processes and enhanced infrastructure, and
 - iii. Growth of the green chemicals market and reduction of releases of pollutants to the environment.
92. The Strategic Evolution Map shows that the ToCs have contributed to UNEP's Pollution-Free Planet vision, the GFC, SDGs and the MEAs. This makes the overall ToC normatively grounded and globally relevant.
93. The implementation of the ToC in projects and the contribution of the Subprogramme to shaping UNEP's work on CPA was investigated through a purposive sample of eleven projects considered to have key interventions. The scope of this case studies analysis is both retrospective and prospective, i.e. taking stock of past achievements while also looking into the future regarding UNEP's role in the field. The projects selected as case studies are summarized in Annex III Table 12. The following elements are discussed for each case study in the **Text boxes 1 to 11** in [Annex III](#):
 - i. Evaluation of whether the observed results align with the expected outcomes and pathways outlined in the reviewed ToC and whether the assumptions underlying the program's logic were valid. As expected, there is a wide variation in structure and detailing of the ToCs for each project, each drafted within the boundaries of its own specificity.

Comparative analysis of the levels of project activities and their outputs is not useful because of this. However, one would reasonably expect a comparison of medium/long term outcomes, intermediate states and impacts (the causal pathways shown in **Error! Reference source not found.**) to show a clear connection with the results of the overall Subprogramme's ToC.

- ii. Analysis of the 'contribution' made or potentially to be made by the Subprogramme to the outcomes and longer-term results.
 - iii. Identification of some lessons on the implementation of the SP-CPA.
94. Figure 3 shows that the design of the SP along the three main causal pathways is reflected in the design of its major projects and the observed results in the case studies align with the expected outcomes and pathways outlined in the ToC. Some of the projects are 'umbrella' projects or UNEP-wide projects which are effectively operating in a programme mode and contribute to more than one of the causal pathways. Accordingly, the evaluation found that the formulation of the SP-CPA objective, intermediate states and outcome statements was robust.
 95. The design of the SP was however lacking when it comes to the indicators as discussed above. As shown in Figure 3, all projects contribute to the causal pathway 1, reflecting the normative character of UNEP. This suggests that, at a high level, project outcomes support the Subprogramme's intended objectives, especially those linked to governance, capacity-building, and enabling environments. This normative nature of UNEP has the implication that results are less tangible or emerge over a very long period. Impact is dependent on factors such as political will and uptake by countries and other stakeholders in industry, the quality of the outputs and their practical application, and financing and human resources.
 96. The ToC is supposed to show how multiple outputs combine to achieve intermediate states and outcomes. A fragmented portfolio (many small, isolated projects with different donors, geographies, and themes) makes it hard to demonstrate a coherent pathway from project outputs to subprogramme-level change. Without consolidation, resources get spread too thin across pollutants, sectors, and regions. This dilutes catalytic potential and makes it hard for managers to use the ToC to steer investment toward the most transformational causal pathways. Also, because projects are not linked under a common programmatic logic, lessons learned are not systematically fed back into portfolio design, weakening the adaptive management function of the ToC. Indicators have changed between MTS cycles. This means progress cannot be tracked longitudinally, and the ToC cannot be tested over time. When indicators are mostly output-based, they only confirm that activities were delivered – not whether they contributed to the desired systemic change. This breaks the feedback loop that a ToC should enable ("Are we moving closer to the impact state?").

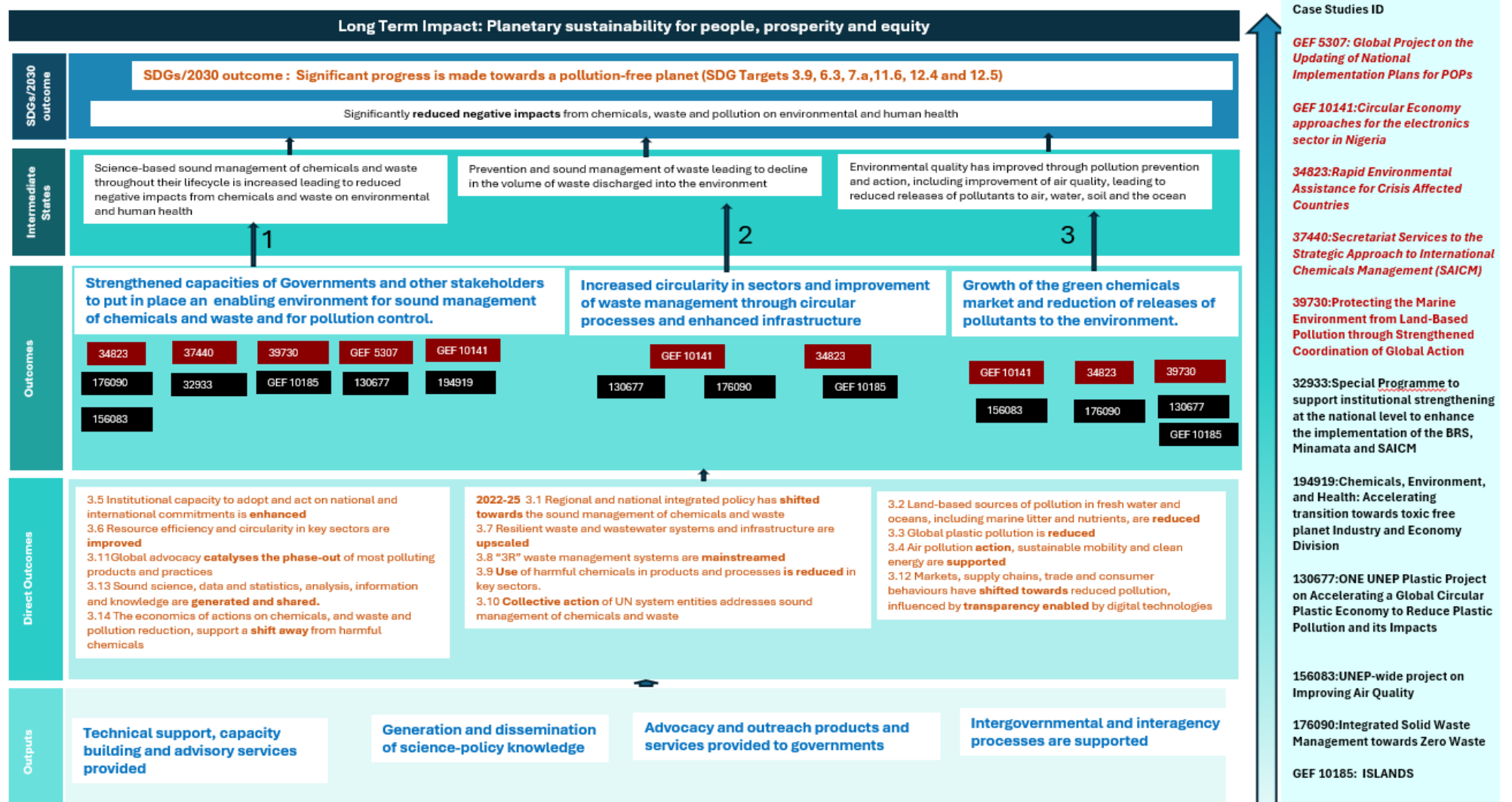


Figure 3. Strategic Evolution Map: Causal Pathways-Contributions of projects case studies to outcomes, intermediate state and impact

2.1.3 Effectiveness of the Subprogramme as a vehicle for delivering on UNEP's PoW

Finding 4: The SP-CPA is an effective delivery vehicle for UNEP's Programme of Work, especially at the level of norm-setting and broad output delivery. However, its effectiveness is undermined by fragmented implementation, limited coherence, and weak tracking of real-world outcomes. Strengthening programmatic integration, monitoring systems, and long-term planning would significantly enhance its capacity to deliver lasting results.

97. The following analysis focuses on the performance of the Subprogramme as a vehicle for the delivery of UNEP higher-level results, as expressed in the Programme Performance Reports (PPRs) and related to the PoWs and MTS. The effectiveness of the SP-CPA has been assessed using its performance reporting in attaining the expected accomplishments/2025 outcomes and the associated targeted indicators in the PPR and direct outcomes as defined in the ToC. The evaluation furthermore assessed the SP-CPA's contribution via a qualitative approach.
98. The Subprogramme demonstrated a 'Highly Satisfactory' performance in achieving its POW Direct Outcome targets from 2014 to 2023: 73% of targets were fully achieved, 18% were partially achieved (60% or above) and 9% were not achieved (See Figure 4). The performance improved over time with strong performance being achieved between 2018 and 2023.
99. The SP-CPA significantly exceeded three measured targets during the 2014-2015 biennium, partially achieving in five and not achieving in one. Though progress has been made in a variety of areas, UNEP was not able to meet its target of increasing the number of countries reporting the use of economic and market-based incentives, business policies and practices that promote the sound management of chemicals and waste. In 2016-2017, the Subprogramme achieved five of its nine targets, partially achieving in one and not achieving in three. It again did not achieve its target on increasing the number of countries reporting the use of economic and market based incentives, business policies and practices, but also did not achieve its target on increasing the number of countries reporting the use of industry reporting schemes as well as its target on increasing the number of countries addressing priority waste issues towards SAICM and their obligations under the related MEAs through the use of tools and methodologies provided by UNEP. In 2018-2019 and 2020-2021, the Subprogramme demonstrated exceptional performance in exceeding all the nine targets. In 2022-2023, the Subprogramme exceeded three of the four targets and partially achieved the remaining one.

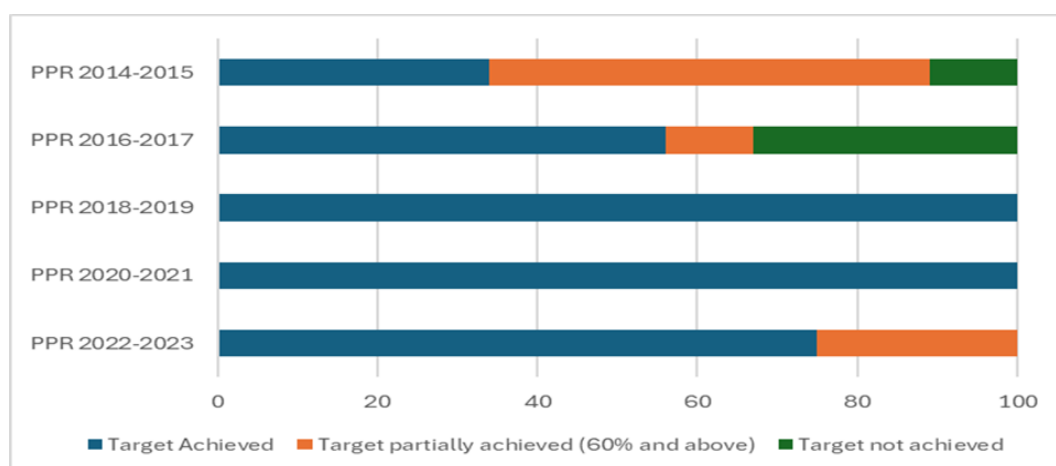


Figure 4. Indicators of achievement of the SP-CPA reported in the PPR (2014-2023)

100. The Subprogramme delivers on what is asked of it in the PoW, at least in terms of formal output-based indicators. These indicators are, however, rather broad. It was comparatively easy for a project to report on these indicators and comparatively easy for the SP-CPA to give an aggregated indicator measurement across all projects. Indicators like “number of governments supported” are too generic and repeated across outcomes, lacking clear links to implementation or measurable impact. The structure of an MTS spanning over four years favours output tracking and not of transformational outcomes. UNEP’s normative role yields long-term results, and there is a lack of mechanisms to capture post-project impacts. Despite improvements in results monitoring and an increase in evaluations since the previous SP-CPA evaluation, pinpointing UNEP’s specific impact remains difficult. In terms of results, most project evaluations only assess short-term outputs and the achievement of outcomes at the end of the project implementation period. Consequently, the assessment of impacts relied on qualitative evidence gathered through interviews and the analysis of project evaluations and related documentation.

101. The work of the SP-CPA has been most impactful in the following areas:

- **Normative leadership:** UNEP through the SP-CPA has played a pivotal role in convening diverse stakeholders on global agreements (Minamata Convention), setting global frameworks (SAICM/GFC) and leveraging impact through a large range of partnerships, including with the private sector. UNEP has demonstrated strong normative leadership - setting directions, policies, standards, frameworks - even in areas where results are not directly within its control.
- **Support to MEA implementation:** Good support has been given to countries in meeting their MEA obligations through GEF-funded projects. These range from enabling activities (e.g. National Action Plans) to larger medium- and full-sized projects. The full-sized projects, in particular, UNEP-wide initiatives such as PlanetGOLD Plus, developed by UNEP in collaboration with UNDP, UNIDO, and Conservation International have had substantial influence. PlanetGOLD is one of the strongest initiatives in terms of scale and coordination and has made a real difference in the management of mercury use in artisanal and small-scale gold mining. Under GEF-7, management of mercury received more generous funding than many other chemical areas, which helped initiatives like PlanetGOLD take off.
- **Promoting circularity and life cycle thinking:** The SP-CPA has significantly raised the visibility of life cycle thinking and circularity, helping institutionalize these perspectives and shifting the focus from end-of-pipe waste management to tackling root causes in design, production, and consumption phases.
- **Catalysing action on plastic pollution:** The marine litter/plastic pollution groundwork, which between 2014 and 2019 was under the Nature Action SP, has significantly influenced UNEA resolutions shaping the development of a legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution, including in the marine environment.
- **Linking health and environment:** UNEP’s efforts to link health and environment were highlighted in several interviews as impactful, particularly in air quality and antimicrobial resistance (AMR). The AMR initiative launched through a UN General Assembly resolution a decade ago and now supported by WHO, FAO, UNEP, and the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) stands out as a success built through shared ownership, political visibility, scientific credibility and interagency collaboration. Despite UNEP’s limited financial role, it is a good example of how to move agendas forward with alignment, storytelling, and leadership.
- **High-impact projects addressing priority pollutants:** Some projects have been particularly impactful in relation to achieving the targets such as the Special Programme, Rapid Environmental Assessments for crisis affected countries, Secretariat services to

SAICM/GFC and GEF enabling projects, to meet commitments on the relevant MEAs. These projects contribute to a pollution-free planet by focusing on pollutants that pose significant risks to the environment and health. They promote a strong science-policy interface, spearhead global action to address these issues and more broadly ensure the sound management of chemicals and waste, by convening and promoting multisectoral and multi-stakeholder action by countries, sustainable development actors, the private sector and civil society.

102. The SP-CPA plays a critical role in advancing UNEP's pollution agenda, including through its global normative work (e.g., treaties, frameworks), sectoral strategies (such as plastics, textiles, mobility), and thought leadership on circularity and life cycle management. However, institutional and delivery challenges limit its overall effectiveness. Fragmentation of projects limits coherence and leverage. There is weak coordination across Divisions and Subprogrammes and PCPs are not yet functioning as true programmatic delivery mechanisms. In addition, the lack of systematic post-project impact tracking reduces the ability to measure transformative change over time.

2.1.4 Efficiency of the Subprogramme

Finding 5: While the SP-CPA is efficient in mobilizing resources and delivering individual projects, its overall delivery efficiency is hampered by institutional fragmentation, heavy administrative burden, and weak coordination systems. Improvements in governance structures, knowledge management, and internal reporting systems are essential to increase the Subprogramme's efficiency as a delivery vehicle for UNEP's PoW. To improve efficiency, UNEP must consolidate project pipelines, invest in internal technical capacity, and institutionalize coordination and performance systems that reduce duplication and enable smarter use of resources. There are already a few examples of UNEP-wide projects (e.g., One UNEP Textile Project, One UNEP Plastic Project, UNEP-wide air quality project) and global partnership initiatives (e.g. Climate Clean Air Coalition (CCAC)), in which there are synergies to improve efficiency by leveraging more partners, financial resources and buy-in among industry by integrating multi-region and multi-level efforts.

103. Due to the lack of a comparable portfolio and quantitative benefits measurement, traditional efficiency assessments based on financial data and benchmarks were not feasible. To address this limitation, the evaluation draws primarily on qualitative findings from stakeholder interviews, alongside an analysis of the timeliness of target delivery reported in PPRs. This approach ensures a comprehensive assessment, albeit relying primarily on qualitative evidence due to the limitations of available financial data.
104. Across 36 evaluated projects, around 40% were rated Satisfactory or Highly Satisfactory for the Efficiency criterion; another 38% were rated Moderately Satisfactory. This indicates that, at the individual project level, most interventions were delivered within acceptable cost and time parameters, especially large GEF-funded initiatives with robust management frameworks. The Subprogramme itself achieved most of its targets (73 %) as reported in the PPRs, suggesting a realistic approach to planning and implementation. The SP-CPA has been very successful at mobilizing extrabudgetary resources, especially through the GEF and has built a reputation with GEF for getting things done, which reinforces donor confidence and sustained funding flows.
105. Recent UNEP-wide projects, such as the project on Improving Air Quality and the ONE UNEP Plastic Project help illustrate how integrated, cross-divisional approaches can help improve efficiency. The Air Quality project advances air quality action with more impact, visibility, and resources, by integrating UNEP's multi-region and multi-level efforts to improve air quality, by leveraging more partners, financial resources and buy-in among industry, finance and the broader UN system, and by providing a platform to mobilize efforts across the house, particularly under projects aimed at transforming key sectors such as transport, waste,

energy and other high-impact sectors so that air quality benefits can be fully harnessed. It is a concerted approach across Divisions and Regional Offices to increase the effectiveness and efficiency and help in communication and in resource mobilisation. Similarly, the One UNEP Plastic Project, which was approved in 2023, now delivers UNEP's work on plastics pollution, and by drawing expertise and implementation capacity from across the entire organization. Coordinated by IED with deliverables by other thematic Divisions, regional offices, and the Regional Seas Programme, it also amplifies the impacts by bringing in all strategic partners under a shared ambition. UNEP-wide, partnership-based initiatives like the CCAC are an example of how UNEP can deliver at scale while staying within its mandate as a convenor, knowledge broker, and agenda-setter – without overstressing its limited core resources. While UNEP-wide projects require blending multiple funding sources, this does not necessarily increase fragmentation if they are designed under a unified strategic, results, and governance framework.

106. Despite new systems and structures, institutional fragmentation persists in the organization with many interviewees attributing this to the organizational culture. Teams still operate in silos, guarding their resources, budgets, and mandates. There is a lack of a “golden thread” linking UNEP's work across sectors and an absence of a systems-level mindset when addressing integrated issues like food systems or mobility, which span chemicals, air, biodiversity, and waste. While there are efforts to reduce this fragmentation, it remains a core challenge that limits efficiency.
107. During interviews some project managers highlighted a high administrative workload, noting that some of them are often managing multiple complex projects simultaneously while spending disproportionate time on compliance and reporting tasks. Administrative processes for PCPs and project approval (e.g., through the Concept Approval Group (CAG)) are perceived by some as cumbersome and time-consuming. There is no streamlined system for aggregating or aligning indicators, adding to inefficiency in reporting and planning (e.g., IPMR does not unify PoW indicators across projects). Additionally, there may be an over-reliance on consultants for technical work instead of building UNEP's internal expertise, which reduces long-term efficiency and capacity building. Much of the technical and horizon-scanning work is outsourced to consultants, which is seen as a failure to build internal capacity and knowledge retention.
108. The growing project portfolio of the SP-CPA has presented challenges in maintaining oversight and strategic direction for its diverse projects and activities. Coordination within and across Subprogrammes often relies on personal and informal relationships between individuals rather than institutional mechanisms. While this informal approach has generally worked well, there is a clear need to better institutionalize the coordination to guarantee future efficiency. Although the PCPs were established as a means to address this issue and increase efficiency and coherence, they are not yet functioning as true programmatic tools – instead, they often operate as project compilations without shared goals, indicators, or integrated budgets.
109. The SP-CPA lacks a formalized governance or decision-making structure such as a programme board overseeing delivery across Divisions and projects. As a result, coordination across Divisions and Subprogrammes is informal and inconsistent, leading to potential duplication of efforts, delayed responses to regional or country needs and siloed implementation. Delivery suffers from fragmented systems and weak coordination structures. While monitoring and reporting tools, like IPMR and dashboards exist, there are not yet fully programmed with consistent PoW indicators. Knowledge management systems are fragmented, with no centralized platform to share learnings or track “what works.” Some experimentation with AI and dashboards is happening, but overall, digital transformation is nascent.

110. The lack of integrated systems to link financial performance to outcomes (e.g., results-based budgeting) makes it difficult to evaluate cost-effectiveness. A project may be fully financially compliant but still underperforming. No formal return-on-investment (ROI) tracking exists. Resources are spread thinly across many priorities, with little prioritization or structured ROI assessment for major funding areas like plastics, AMR, or textiles. UNEP lacks the internal mechanisms to definitively assess the efficiency of SP-CPA in terms of value for money.

2.1.5 Likelihood of impact

Finding 6: The SP-CPA has high potential for long-term environmental and policy impact due to its strategic positioning, normative influence, and global partnerships. However, the likelihood of actual, measurable impact is limited by weak project sustainability, fragmented delivery, lack of impact metrics, and insufficient post-project tracking. Without systemic improvements, there is a risk that outputs do not translate into durable outcomes. To increase the likelihood of impact, UNEP should strengthen outcome and impact-level indicators, institutionalize post-project impact assessment mechanisms, consolidate the portfolio into more coherent, high-impact programs, and enhance cross-Division coordination and knowledge sharing. It is also important to highlight that UNEP's normative work does not produce direct, immediate measurable emissions reductions, and that longer timeframes are needed to see results. Without clear communication, UNEP risks being seen as "not delivering" when in fact it is shaping the enabling conditions that make delivery possible.

111. Despite improvements in results monitoring and an increase in evaluations since the previous SP-CPA evaluation, pinpointing UNEP's specific impact remains challenging. Consequently, the assessment of impacts relied on qualitative evidence gathered through interviews and the analysis of project evaluations and related documentation. This section presents an analysis structured around the elements commonly used to assess impact likelihood: relevance, design, implementation, systemic enablers, and barriers.
112. The thematic and strategic relevance of the SP-CPA provides a strong basis for long-term impact. The SP-CPA is highly aligned with UNEP's mandate, the SDGs, and key MEAs. It's focus on circular economy, air quality, and chemicals management addresses urgent global challenges, increasing its potential to influence policy, regulation, and sectoral transformation. UNEP's role as a norm-setter and convenor gives the Subprogramme strategic influence in shaping the global pollution agenda (e.g., plastics global agreement negotiations, AMR, air quality coalitions).
113. The Strategic Evolution Map (Figure 2) shows a logical pathway from normative work to national implementation and eventual behavioural/environmental outcomes. However, the 2022–2023 PoW ToC lacks clarity in how project-level outcomes connect to higher-level goals. The links between PCPs, projects, and SP-level outcomes are weakly articulated. Although projects broadly align with impact pathways, the lack of clarity and specificity reduces confidence in sustained, measurable impact.
114. In the evaluation of the 36 SP-CPA projects, strategic relevance and output achievement were high, but the lowest-scoring criterion was "sustainability and replication". Many projects were enabling in nature (e.g., creating platforms, raising awareness), making it hard to trace direct environmental or social impacts. Post-project impact tracking mechanisms are lacking, meaning UNEP often cannot determine whether behavioural or systemic change occurred or if the gains were sustained, or scaled. In brief, evidence of short-term output delivery is strong, but long-term transformative impact remains poorly documented. UNEP's comparative advantage lies in advocacy, science, agenda-setting, and institution-building, which should be measured through enabling indicators and evaluated through contribution analysis over extended periods. Without clear communication, UNEP risks being seen as

“not delivering” when in fact it is shaping the enabling conditions that make delivery possible.

115. There are some positive enablers, such as the strong partnerships with GEF and Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC), the global frameworks and normative influence, and the strategic alignment with donor and partner priorities. But there are some constraining factors, such as fragmented projects, institutional silos, weak indicators and limited in-country presence.

2.1.6 Achievement of catalytic effects, replication and up-scaling

Finding 7: The SP-CPA has achieved some notable catalytic effects, particularly through large normative or GEF-supported initiatives. However, the replication and upscaling of project-level results remain underdeveloped, largely due to portfolio and institutional fragmentation, lack of coordination, and absence of internal strategies to institutionalize success. To enhance this dimension, UNEP should establish a replication and upscaling framework tied to impact tracking, invest in a central knowledge-sharing system and build funding and governance models that incentivize programmatic scaling over isolated pilots. Real scale in CPA will come from positioning UNEP as the normative, scientific and convening anchor within multi-partner global programmes.

116. Catalytic success is observed when UNEP’s interventions trigger broader environmental or policy change. The SP-CPA has been highly catalytic at the global and normative level, particularly through UNEP’s convening power and scientific leadership. It has made notable catalytic contributions to shaping global frameworks and policy agendas, leveraging partnerships and influencing donor and partner strategies. Examples include its key role in the development of the GFC and the ongoing INC process to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution driven by the SP-NA’s and SP-CPA’s groundwork and SAICM and convening the CCAC partnership. The SP-CPA has provided secretariat support to global processes and generated technical tools (e.g., guidance, indicators) that have informed international policymaking. Its work helps countries meet obligations under conventions like the Stockholm and Minamata Conventions, often through enabling activities that lay foundations for long-term change. It successfully catalysed initiatives through cooperation with GEF and the CCAC. For example, large GEF-funded projects, such as PlanetGOLD, have demonstrated catalytic potential by shifting national policies and practices around mercury in artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM). UNEP publications and thought leadership were cited in GEF programming strategies, influencing the design of integrated programs in sectors like textiles and electronics.
117. However, evaluations and interviews found limited evidence of structured replication of successful pilots or models. Most replication occurs opportunistically through partnerships or external demand, rather than through an internal UNEP strategy. Knowledge management systems are fragmented, and there is no central repository to share “what works.” Several impactful models (e.g., PlanetGOLD, air quality, circularity pilots) have shown replication potential, but UNEP lacks dedicated tools, staffing, or resources to systematically replicate or adapt them across regions or sectors. UNEP’s influence comes from its convening power, normative guidance, and ability to align partnership work with its Medium-Term Strategy. CCAC is an example where UNEP sets the direction through the Secretariat, shapes the strategic agenda via sector hubs, and ensures delivery supports global and national policy commitments. This approach could be replicated. UNEP’s regional networks and communities of practice are already key vehicles for dissemination and replication. Their impact can be significantly strengthened by systematically using centralized knowledge platforms or clearinghouses – such as the Air Quality Management Exchange Platform (AQMx) and the “Global Plastics Hub” – which ensure long-term access, avoid duplication, and provide a cost-effective mechanism for scaling up results globally. Real scale in CPA will not come from expanding UNEP’s internal delivery capacity, but from positioning UNEP

as the normative, scientific and convening anchor within multi-partner global programmes. GEF Impact Programmes and global partnerships such as the CCAC provide the architecture for this – allowing UNEP to set the direction, provide guidance, and monitor collective progress, while leveraging the implementation capacity of governments, other UN agencies, MDBs, NGOs and the private sector.

118. Sectoral upscaling is beginning to emerge with UNEP shifting to larger, sector-focused programs with transformational ambition (e.g., textiles, electronics, mobility). GEF-8 integrated programs support this, encouraging cross-value chain interventions. Some efforts have been upscaled by leveraging funding mechanisms. However, there are challenges in scaling field-level results. Many projects are “enabling” in nature (e.g., data platforms, awareness), which makes tangible upscaling difficult to define or measure. Also, UNEP’s limited country presence and short funding cycles further constrain its ability to scale interventions through national systems. There is no clear internal strategy for upscaling. UNEP lacks a formal mechanism or strategy to identify successful models, assess scalability, and channel resources toward upscaling. Fragmented budget lines and project silos further inhibit the aggregation and scale-up of results. In brief, some promising efforts are emerging, but systematic upscaling remains weak, often driven by donors (e.g., GEF) rather than UNEP’s internal architecture.

2.1.7 Factors affecting Subprogramme performance

119. While the SP-CPA generally reached its targets, the following sections discuss a number of factors that have been hypothesized to potentially affect Subprogramme performance.

2.1.7.1 Subprogramme management and supervision

Finding 8: Strong technical leadership and alignment with UNEP’s strategic frameworks support SP-CPA performance. However, limited operational authority, weak cross-divisional coordination, and the absence of formal governance structures constrain effectiveness. The integration of the GSPC into one Division improved alignment but reduced collaboration across Divisions. There are no systems to institutionalize GSPC coordination, track synergies, or fund cross-pillar delivery. Addressing these systemic gaps—by empowering GSPCs, enhancing accountability, and establishing coordination mechanisms—is essential to shift from procedural delivery to transformational impact.

120. The management and supervision of the SP-CPA have had a mixed impact on its overall performance. While responsibility for implementing SP-CPA activities rests with the Divisions, the coordination function has an important role to play in ensuring work aligns with the outcomes set in the MTS and PoW. The role of the GSPC for the SP-CPA (along with the six other global Subprogramme coordinators) is defined under UNEP’s Delivery Model Policy 2022: *Portfolio Coordination; Thought Leadership; Strategic Planning; Reporting and analysing results; Resource allocation and mobilization and Innovative approaches*.
121. The Evaluation Team found that the SP-CPA coordination function has generally been effective in steering the Subprogramme toward meeting the outcomes. The SP-CPA coordinating team has successfully helped align the work with UNEP’s “Pollution-Free Planet” vision, engaged with global platforms (e.g., MEAs, INC on plastics), and mobilized resources through GEF and other donors. However, while core coordination has enabled delivery and strategic alignment, systemic weaknesses in management structures, supervision mechanisms, and inter-Division collaboration have constrained the Subprogramme’s full potential. Although the Delivery Model Policy identifies the Subprogramme Lead – the IED Director – as responsible for providing the Deputy Executive Director (DED) with accurate information and recommendations to support programmatic coordination and results-based management across the Subprogramme, there is no formal

governance structure (e.g., programme board or steering committee) to oversee the Subprogramme strategically or make cross-cutting decisions.

122. As a result, supervision has often been ad hoc or overly reliant on individual leadership rather than institutionalized processes. Coordination kept the Subprogramme aligned with strategy, but weak strategic supervision has limited coherence, responsiveness, and adaptive management. Some interviewees saw room for greater synergies across the work of the Subprogramme, including better identification and communication of gaps in the work to directors and heads of units and branches, so they can address these gaps and identify new funding and partnership opportunities. The evidence collected during the evaluation indicated that the achievement of CPA outcomes is directly associated with the work of UNEP's Divisions and Regional Offices implementing projects rather than the Subprogramme itself, which is not a delivery structure.
123. The GSPC has had limited managerial influence over the activities of SP-CPA projects, even though their successes are reported against the SP-CPA results framework to UNEP's governance system, and progress of the Subprogramme is attested on the basis of their success in reaching the indicators from the PoW. The GSPC lack direct line-management authority, so they cannot formally approve staff workplans, performance appraisals, or resource allocations. Most recently, according to the annexes of the Delivery Model Policy, issued in 2022, the GSPC does not have any responsibilities in project selection, development or approval. Judging from the narrative, on the other hand, *"GSPCs and RSPCs, working through their respective Regional Directors, provide guidance to ensure that the concept aligns with thematic priorities and regional/national priorities, respectively."* In practice, GSPCs have to review and approve the strategic direction of all projects before they go to the CAG or the Project Review Committee. While the Divisions contributing to the Subprogramme hold responsibility for management decisions and actions, the GSPC lacks authority over resource allocation within the Subprogramme.
124. SP-CPA projects have been implemented across multiple Divisions, mainly by IED and Ecosystems Division. The shift of the GSPC of SP-CPA from PPD, a corporate Division to IED, a technical Division, in July 2024, while making the coordination with Project/Task Managers easier, risk further siloing and reduced cross-divisional collaboration. There are trade-offs between the potential objectivity achieved through locating the strategy function outside of the substantive Divisions and gaining insights from all global coordinators working collaboratively within Division/office with a corporate function versus the potential disadvantage of misalignment between strategy and practical implementation-based knowledge and insight. There is no central oversight body to connect the dots across Divisions or ensure a unified programmatic approach.
125. Several interviewees identified a lack of coordination between the Subprogrammes as an issue. Coordination between GPSCs is informal and voluntary and on individual initiative rather than on an institutional structure. Many interviewees highlighted the value of stronger institutional links across Subprogrammes and Divisions to promote a more systematic and consistent approach. Fragmented management leads to inefficiencies, gaps in project integration, and siloed implementation, undermining cross-sectoral and cross-thematic synergies. The shift of the GSPC into the Division has increased alignment but weakened cross-divisional integration. Although GSPCs must document cross-house consultations before submitting project proposals, in general the mechanisms for cross-divisional collaboration appear to be weakening. There is a lack of empowerment of the GSPC for delivery of the work across Units/ Branches/ Divisions. There is no institutionalization of the coordination between the GSPCs and there is no system for tracking synergies across Subprogrammes as well as funding mechanisms to promote cross-pillars delivery.

126. A few bridge-building efforts must be identified and funded that can connect the thematic Subprogrammes such as programmes around health, wastewater, plastics, mobility, circular economy. Harnessing integrated delivery mechanisms like CCAC is a powerful way to strengthen UNEP's impact. Interlinkages between Subprogrammes are not just conceptual – they are practical pathways to resource mobilization (for example through climate finance), operational efficiency, and systemic change. Institutionalizing this integration (via GSPCs, PCPs, joint indicators, and shared pipelines) can turn UNEP's "DNA" of integration into a delivery advantage.
127. UNEP's technical Divisions, notably IED, Ecosystems Division and Early Warning and Assessment Division (EWAD), have provided strong normative and scientific leadership. This has helped position UNEP as a trusted actor in global forums (e.g. UNEA, MEAs), deliver high-profile normative outputs (e.g. lead phase-out, mercury, plastic pollution), design effective, impactful GEF-funded projects like PlanetGOLD. This technical strength is a key performance enabler at the project level.
128. The PCPs within the SP-CPA were designed to enhance strategic coherence, serve as coordination mechanisms for clusters of projects under shared themes and support knowledge sharing, communication, and monitoring at a programmatic level. However, the evaluation finds that their effectiveness is limited, with structural and functional weaknesses undermining their intended purpose. PCPs are largely portfolios or administrative compilations of related projects rather than cohesive programmatic frameworks. They lack program-level indicators, joint results frameworks, or joint budgeting. In particular, the PCPs do not cut across Subprogrammes. For example, the PCP "Circularity in Sectors" was an opportunity for UNEP to develop a coherent approach on the work on circular economy across the organization but only includes a few sectors while a number of other key sectors are found in other PCPs.
129. There is little evidence of how the PCPs have contributed to improved "quality during implementation" versus just helping with "quality on entry." Roles, responsibility, monitoring and accountability remain unclear. The three PCPs also differ significantly in size and funding with the PCP "Pollution and Health" hosting most of the projects. Also, conceptually, there is an overlap between the PCP 'Circularity in Sectors' and the PCP 'Towards Zero Waste'. Many interviewees highlighted the lack of an enabling environment (resources/support staff; lack of accountability, monitoring and clear results) for the effectiveness of PCPs. Rather than simplifying coordination, some interviewees mentioned that they have increased the administrative workload for project teams without providing clear added value. Some interviewees believed the UNEP-wide projects are already programmes in themselves and that it is better to coordinate at the Subprogramme level. While the PCP concept holds promise, their design and operationalization do not support strategic coherence, programme-level learning, or resource alignment. Without substantial reform, PCPs risk being bureaucratic add-ons rather than strategic enablers.
130. RSPCs facilitate dialogue with countries on action under the Subprogramme and coordinate its coherence across their region (UNEP, 2022b). Coordination takes place via monthly team calls. They also provide advice on budget allocations and resource mobilization for UNEP projects in the regions (UNEP, 2022b). Given the broad scope of the CPA work, regional staff often rely on personal networks to secure Divisions to respond to country requests. There is a lack of clear accountability mechanisms for how Divisions provide country support. Technical backing from Divisions is needed to strengthen UNEP delivery in the regions, in coordination and guided by the ROs.

2.1.7.2 Subprogramme human and financial resources' administration and efficiency

Finding 9: The allocation of funds in UNEP follows a multi-layered process that blends strategic guidance, project-level needs, donor priorities, and internal governance mechanisms. Funding structures (e.g., Planetary Funds) lack internal transparency. Funding decisions are often siloed by Division, weakening cross-sectoral collaboration and integrated delivery. There is heavy reliance on GEF funding while other sources (philanthropy, private sector) remain underutilized. The mandate of the SP-CPA is strongly influenced by GEF funding and as such is not necessarily responding to the normative work that UNEP has the mandate to do. There is scope for better integration of the work of the GEF unit with the broader Division to pool resources, consolidate expertise and create more programmatic interventions. While the commitment and competence of UNEP staff are high, systemic inefficiencies—such as overstretching, lack of support, weak coordination, and fragmented roles—significantly constrain delivery, especially at the regional and national levels. The constant concern about securing new funding and the reliance on projects with two to five years implementation time creates a disruptive environment and can lead to higher staff turnover.

131. The SP-CPA is financed through a range of sources but relies on a combination of extrabudgetary funding and the Environment Fund for its core activities. **Error! Reference source not found.** presents an overview of the budgets forecasted for the SP-CPA during the period covered by the evaluation. This shows the core allocation from the Environment Fund and Regular Budget plus other trust funds, earmarked funds, project support funds and global funds for each biannual PoW. Over the 2015-2023 period, the Subprogramme budget for the POW increased from USD 77.3 million to 125 million. For 2022-2023, the planned Environment Fund budget was USD 24 million, slightly increased from the previous POW of USD 23.4 million, but reflecting an overall downward trend whereby UNEP received a smaller amount of Environment Fund contributions, peaking at USD 36 million received for the 2016-2017 POW. Earmarked and trust funds with global funds surpassed by far the Environment Fund shortfall, increasing from USD 43 million for the 2016-2017 POW to USD 94 million for the 2022-2023 POW. A primary issue with extra-budgetary funding for projects is the lack of predictable, long-term stability, which can impact the efficiency and effectiveness of operations. Donor decisions can be influenced by factors outside of UNEP's direct control, making it difficult to plan and implement projects consistently.

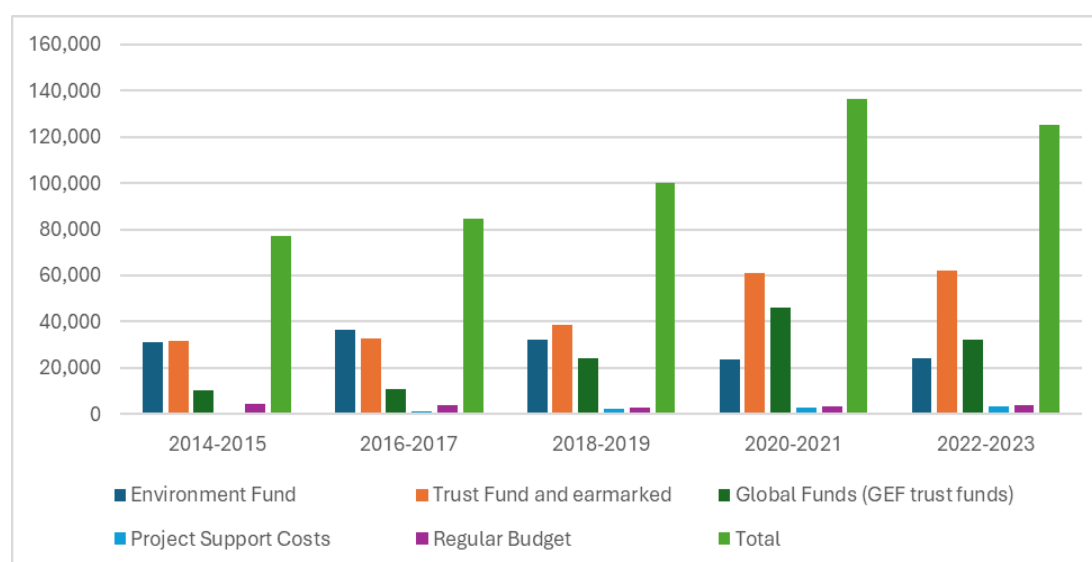


Figure 5. Budget Forecast/,000 USD

132. The Budget Steering Committee (BSC) acts as UNEP's internal mechanism for balancing limited core funds across all priorities, ensuring that SP-CPA receives resources proportionate to its strategic relevance, performance, and capacity to deliver, while

encouraging it to mobilise complementary external financing. Its function is largely strategic and balancing—it does not manage individual project budgets directly but instead ensures that Subprogramme allocations reflect UNEP’s MTS and PoW priorities, and available funding. Allocation across Subprogrammes and Divisions is bottom-up, based on proposed needs and delivery capacity. GSPCs and technical Divisions submit proposals, and these are reviewed by the BSC for balance and relevance. Staff interviews highlighted a lack of clarity on how decisions are made, especially regarding Planetary Funds. Funding decisions are often siloed by Division, weakening cross-sectoral collaboration and integrated delivery.

133. Official funding allocation documentation presents the SP-CPA as one of the largest budgetary shares among all Subprogrammes. This share has demonstrably increased over time. Specifically, the SP-CPA’s share grew from 13.7 % (POW 2014-2015) to 15.7 % (POW 2022-2023) (See Figure 6). The primary driver of this increase is the significant amount of earmarked funding directed towards the Subprogramme. Many projects and UNEP staff are therefore funded by fees and project budgets rather than the UNEP Core Budget or Environment Fund. This means that continuity is not ensured by the budget but – if at all – by a constant search for and approval of new vertical fund projects.

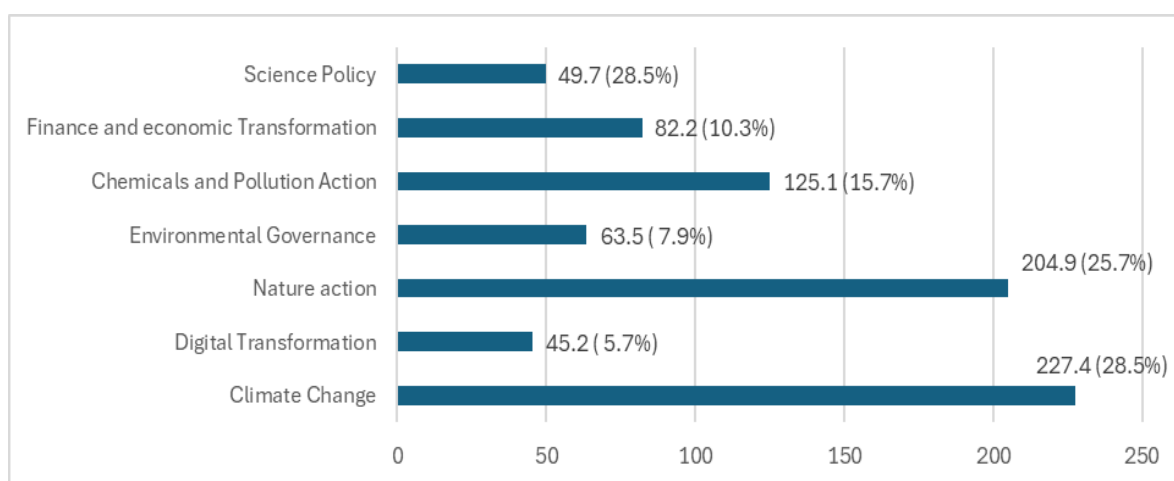


Figure 6. Budget Allocation by Subprogramme (USD million) 2022-2023

134. The SP-CPA is one of the Subprogrammes that received the highest amount of extrabudgetary funding, mainly from vertical funding partners, of all Subprogrammes during the period of evaluation, and proportionally the least amount of core budget. Echoing findings from previous evaluations (UNEP Evaluation Office, 2022), this evaluation highlights a recurring challenge: donor countries prioritizing their own agendas while lacking a comprehensive understanding of UNEP’s operational modalities. In response, UNEP has introduced thematic funds, aiming to strike a balance between donor control over resource allocation and increased predictability with some flexibility for UNEP within specific thematic areas. In 2022, aiming to enhance the flexibility of its funding model, UNEP established three novel thematic funds that directly relate to the three planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, the key tenet of UNEP’s MTS 2022-2025. These thematic funds, referred to as “Planetary Funds”, were designed to facilitate more efficient and strategic programming, enable long-term planning horizons, and ultimately influence environmental policies through targeted resource allocation for both operational and normative activities.
135. Some interviewees reported unclear rules and limited transparency on how Planetary Funds are allocated. The operations of the Thematic Funds are managed by the Fund Mobilization

and Donor Relations Unit in the Corporate Services Division (CSD)¹¹. The Directly Responsible Individual for the Thematic Funds is the CSD Chief of Partnerships and Resource Mobilization. The Unit serves all three Funds and works closely with PPD, especially on allocation, reporting and monitoring, as well as with the technical Divisions and offices responsible for the implementation of projects and activities financed by the Thematic Funds. The BSC has adopted a clear formula that the Thematic funds allocations will follow. 70% of Planetary Funds go to priority projects aligned with the three planetary crises, while 30% is retained by the Executive Director for emerging priorities. Within that 30%, 15% is ringfenced for foundational and enabling Subprogrammes provided they respond to one or more of the three planetary crises.

136. GEF-funded projects are central to the Subprogramme and heavily influence its strategic orientation and thematic priorities. GEF funding has consistently grown across successive programming cycles and there is a high donor confidence due to a track record of delivery. There is strong evidence that GEF influences UNEP's project portfolio. Projects align closely with GEF thematic strategies (e.g., mercury, POPs, circular economy). GEF's funding priorities shape UNEP's operational choices, particularly through large, programmatic interventions. There is some evidence of UNEP influencing GEF strategies. UNEP's publications and normative work (e.g., on high-impact sectors, life cycle thinking) are referenced in GEF programming strategies. UNEP helped shape the agenda on sector-wide approaches and circular economy frameworks. UNEP has been selected to lead two GEF-8 Integrated Programmes (IPs) relevant to the SP-CPA including the Circular Solutions to Plastic Pollution IP and the Elimination of Hazardous Chemicals from Supply Chains IP. These two programmes mobilize significant funding to back chemicals and pollution action, directly benefiting several Member States. UNEP is developing individual projects under the IPs, further showcasing UNEP's role in convening and driving action on global environmental priorities and reinforcing its position as a GEF agency of choice for UNEP's country partners. In conclusion, the relationship is mutually reinforcing but asymmetrical: GEF heavily steers UNEP's operational focus due to its financial weight. UNEP has limited strategic influence on GEF priorities but can shape thematic discussions through thought leadership and scientific inputs.
137. There is a decentralized fundraising model with project teams and Divisions responsible for fundraising. This leads to inconsistencies in fundraising capacity, especially for non-GEF projects. Some teams are skilled and well-connected while others struggle to raise funds, especially from non-GEF sources. Private sector and foundation fundraising is underdeveloped due to limited corporate-level support.
138. Several interviewees noted a lack of visibility and clarity on how funds are allocated across the Subprogramme. There is a fragmented financial architecture with multiple funding streams (GEF, Special Programme, GFC, Planetary Funds) which can result in duplication of efforts, overlaps in themes and regions and unclear governance of fund allocation, particularly for Planetary Funds. There is no unified funding strategy which links GEF and non-GEF streams, which hampers programmatic delivery. Increasing coherence between GEF-funded and core UNEP work, while respecting the GEF-UNEP "firewall" (which separates UNEP's role as a GEF Implementing Agency from its normative and policy-setting work), is both necessary and feasible. It requires strategic alignment without operational overlap—ensuring that GEF-funded projects contribute to UNEP's strategic objectives, without violating fiduciary or governance boundaries. The coherence between GEF and core UNEP work can be significantly improved without violating the "firewall", by focusing on shared strategic framing, harmonized outcomes, and coordinated knowledge and learning. This

¹¹ Thematic Funds Secretariat/CSD (2023). Thematic Funds for Climate Stability, Living in Harmony with Nature, and Towards a Pollution-Free Planet. OPERATIONS MANUAL

approach builds a “one UNEP” programmatic identity across funding streams, while preserving the institutional integrity of its GEF implementation role.

139. There is an increasing alignment between funding and vision. The push toward system-wide, high-impact programs (e.g., sectoral transformation) is increasingly being supported by UNEP’s funding structure and GEF programmes. While there is increasing alignment at a strategic level between IED and GEF, IED needs more alignment within its own internal structure and with other Divisions. There is persistent fragmentation between GEF-funded work and UNEP’s core programmatic priorities. There is scope for better integration of the work of the GEF unit with the broader Division to pool resources, consolidate expertise and create more programmatic interventions.
140. According to the human resources data documented in the PoWs and Quarterly Business Reports (QBR) reports over the 2015-2024 period, the posts allocated to SP-CPA increased from 81 to 140. [Table 1](#) and [Table 2](#) below present the SP-CPA staff by category and gender as of 31st December 2024, whereby there were 26 vacant posts (i.e. 16% of total posts) including 21 professional staff.

Table 1. CPA Subprogramme staff by category and gender¹²

Professional Staff			GS			Total Female	Total Male	Total No of Staff
P Male	P Female	P Total	GS Male	GS Female	GS Total			
38	49	87	16	37	53	86	54	140

Table 2. Professional staff distribution by grade at 31.12 2024¹³

	Male	Female	Total
D2	0	1	1
D1	1	4	5
P5	5	5	10
P4	9	15	24
P3	17	12	29
P2	6	12	18
Total	38	49	87

141. Human resource administration and efficiency directly influence the performance of the SP-CPA. The SP-CPA benefits from a technically competent and committed team. UNEP staff have strong partnerships with global actors (GEF, MEAs, etc.) and contribute to normative work and sectoral leadership. Some units in IED have built useful private sector engagement capacity. However, many project teams are thinly spread across a growing portfolio, lacking dedicated administrative, knowledge management, or communications support. Staff face a high workload related to compliance, reporting (IPMR, PPRs), and procedural bottlenecks, reducing time for strategic or technical work. Regional Offices suffer from inconsistent technical expertise, unclear mandates for country support and no comprehensive functional analysis to optimize their role under the new delivery model. While the commitment and competence of UNEP staff are high, systemic inefficiencies—such as overstretching, lack of support structures, weak coordination, and fragmented roles—significantly constrain delivery, especially at the regional and national levels.

¹² UNEP QBR, Programme Delivery Report, Dec 2024

¹³ UNEP QBR, Programme Delivery Report, Dec 2024

142. Most of the staff were funded through extrabudgetary resources. This high dependency on extrabudgetary funds can be a source of concern in that it does not allow SP-CPA staff to focus on strategic questions and long-term planning but keeps them busy with project work. The constant concern about securing new funding and the reliance on projects with two to five years implementation time creates a disruptive environment and can lead to higher staff turnover. With a focus on securing funding for the next initiative, the organization may struggle to capture and share knowledge gained from previous projects.

2.1.7.3 Subprogramme monitoring and reporting

Finding 10: The SP-CPA performs well on compliance and basic reporting, but its monitoring systems fall short in measuring real-world impact, driving learning, or informing strategic decisions. Indicators are rather broad and do not incentivize ambition in the projects, making accountability difficult. The lack of outcome-oriented indicators, post-project impact tracking, and integrated feedback systems hinders the Subprogramme's ability to demonstrate real impact, adapt based on evidence, and scale successful interventions. Many projects remain enabling in nature, making tangible impacts difficult to measure within short time frames. There is a misalignment between planning horizons and environmental change cycles. Four-years MTS cycles are too short to observe impacts and there must be continuity of outcome indicators across the MTS cycles. While there are indicators for the contribution of the enabling and foundational Subprogrammes to the three strategic objectives, there are no indicators that measure the interlinkages between the three strategic objectives. Upgrading monitoring and reporting from an administrative function to a strategic enabler will be essential for demonstrating transformational change and improving accountability.

143. Two of the primary coordination functions performed by the Subprogramme are strategy development and reporting. Reporting platforms are functional and evolving. The SP-CPA reports on progress in a number of reports, including the Quarterly Report of the Executive Director to the CPR with a focus on the activity level, as well as the annual PPR that focuses on the progress on indicators. The SP-CPA meets donor and UNEP reporting obligations through the IPMR system, PPRs and QBR. IPMR dashboards and early experimentation with AI-based analytics are helping to improve reporting access and efficiency. Due to the high share of GEF-funded projects, the project evaluation rate is comparatively high. Evaluation quality is overseen by the UNEP Evaluation Office.
144. A recurrent critique of UNEP's reporting practices centers on their perceived inadequacy in capturing the impact of its activities. Reporting is limited to reach indicators with little qualitative and impact-related content. Indicators are broad and output-oriented, focusing on activities and deliverables (e.g., number of laws supported, number of partnerships), rather than outcomes or impacts (e.g., pollution reduction, behavioural change). As a result, projects may be marked as "successful" without delivering meaningful environmental transformation. It was comparatively easy for the Subprogramme to give an aggregated indicator measurement across all projects in the PPR. There is a lack of post-project impact tracking. No mechanism exists to capture long-term results, such as whether supported policies are implemented and enforced or whether behaviour or institutional systems changed. This severely limits the ability to measure sustainability and systemic impact. For donor nations, a lack of specificity in reporting impedes their ability to effectively report successes within their own governance structures, potentially diminishing UNEP's visibility. SP-CPA does have outcome-level results and indicators, but they are currently too process-focused, lack continuity and quantitative targets, and do not systematically measure environmental or health impact.
145. Tying project design documents (ProDocs) to four-year MTS cycles creates operational friction that reduces efficiency, fragments delivery, and interrupts the measurement of long-term outcomes. To support system-level change, UNEP needs programming and results

frameworks that allow for continuity across multiple MTS cycles, with light-touch alignment processes rather than wholesale re-design. While there are indicators for the contribution of the enabling and foundational Subprogrammes to the three strategic objectives, there are no indicators that measure the interlinkages between the three strategic objectives. Besides an outward-looking MTS emphasis must also be put on internal-looking performance with process-oriented indicators such as a minimum % of projects cutting across Divisions or Sub-programmes.

146. There are challenges for reporting in IPMR system which seems functional but inefficient. Data sharing still involves manual processes. PoW indicators are not programmed into the IPMR and there is a need for streamlining for the reporting of indicators into the IPMR to reduce workload. The IPMR system is functional for compliance and basic reporting, but falls short as a strategic, learning-oriented, and impact-tracking tool.
147. The Evaluation Team also considered mechanisms for information sharing, cooperation, and/or collaboration with countries through UNEP's Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR). The evidence collected by the Evaluation Team indicated that countries, through their Permanent Representatives, were briefed on UNEA and associated events. As per interview evidence, CPR members sometimes struggle to get clear, transparent data on budget allocations, results and programme priorities within the Subprogramme. There is a suggestion for better internal coordination and training of staff on how to present and report to the diplomatic audience.
148. A few interviewees noted a gap between what is reported and what is happening in the field indicating that Project/Task Managers are often not adequately consulted before PPRs are finalized, weakening data accuracy and context.
149. Some external partners mentioned the blurred institutional ownership between UNEP and the CCAC for air quality initiatives. This comes from the fact that CCAC is both hosted by UNEP and acts as a platform for many air quality and short-lived climate pollutant initiatives. Many CCAC projects on air quality use UNEP's implementation capacity, so that stakeholders often see them as "UNEP projects," even when funding and political ownership lie with CCAC. CCAC initiatives like methane reduction programs are technically hosted under CCAC but often executed by UNEP teams. In brief CCAC governs the political and partnership dimensions while UNEP ensures technical rigor, fiduciary oversight, and compliance with UN norms. UNEP is delivering against the UNEA resolutions through partnership via the CCAC. Ways to clarify institutional roles include separate reporting lines where CCAC outputs should be clearly attributed in UNEP reports as "CCAC-supported" to distinguish them from UNEP core programme outputs. UNEP's governing bodies (UNEA, CPR) can also receive updates on CCAC work separately from UNEP's programme performance reporting while the MTS could frame CCAC as a partner platform rather than an internal Subprogramme, clarifying institutional boundaries while preserving synergies.

2.1.7.4 Subprogramme Knowledge Management and communication

Finding 11: While the SP-CPA produces valuable knowledge products and has global credibility, its weak knowledge management and underutilized communication capacity hinder its performance.

Without systems to capture learning, communicate strategically, and inform programming, the Subprogramme misses opportunities for scaling, influence, and transformational impact. A "Pollution Gap Report" could significantly increase the visibility of the Subprogramme, but UNEP should carefully design it to avoid duplication, resource strain, or methodological pitfalls.

150. The evaluation considered the effectiveness of this communication across four areas – within IED, with the technical units responsible for the implementation of the Subprogramme

in other Divisions, with senior management, and with relevant external partners and stakeholders. Interview evidence indicated good communication between the SP-CPA and UNEP's senior management. Communication within UNEP, within the Subprogramme and with external stakeholders regarding activities and projects was reported as effective, transparent, and constructive. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities facilitated external stakeholders' ability to identify appropriate SP-CPA contacts for addressing specific issues. These robust communication practices appear to be a fundamental factor in the positive working relationships between UNEP and its implementing and funding partners—relationships that have yielded new projects and the identification of synergies. Some stakeholders recommended that UNEP improves its strategic communication by communicating the MTS goals and planning processes more proactively with key external partners (e.g., Conventions Secretariats).

151. The role of the GSPC includes overseeing the Subprogramme knowledge management (KM), communication, and outreach. However, these activities are being carried out mostly by technical experts in the Divisions and in the PCPs, and which the evaluation consider appropriate. The GSPC participates in senior management meetings of the substantive Divisions working on CPA and is in regular communication with the Divisions and Regional Offices. During the interviews some senior managers indicated that more engagement with management was required while technical staff indicated that they needed to be more engaged in the planning work under the SP-CPA.
152. Many staff during the interviews indicated a desire to avail of a clear, unified narrative that describes UNEP's work on CPA and its role for the global community comprehensively, with a historic and forward-looking eye. Evidence collected from interviews also indicated that the role of the GSPC is not sufficiently focused on the coordination of this clear, unified narrative that joins UNEP's work on CPA despite this being perceived as a key function of that role.
153. In terms of communication, there has been improvement in the PPRs from fragmented messaging to more coherence through the three planetary crises and more strategic storytelling. The Subprogramme has contributed to high-profile campaigns like Beat Pollution and Clean Seas. Communication efforts have helped raise awareness of issues like plastics, air quality, marine pollution, and antimicrobial resistance. However, there is no institutional mechanism to track behaviour change, policy uptake, or audience engagement resulting from communication efforts.
154. While there have been improvements over the MTS in external storytelling, there are internal communication gaps. As per interviews of some senior managers there are still some staff who are not fully aware of the overarching narrative of the three planetary crisis and how their work fit into that narrative. Orientation of new Project/Task Managers was irregular and often lacks guidance on communications roles or messages. There is no formal mechanism for aligning communication across projects, Divisions, or Subprogrammes. This internal fragmentation reduces the effectiveness and coherence of external communication efforts.
155. Knowledge generation is strong through technical reports, assessments and guidance materials produced regularly. KM efforts are however fragmented with several online platforms. Websites are used as being the primary tool for managing knowledge with a lot of project deliverables uploaded. However, there is a weak active knowledge management on "what works" and a lack of a centralized knowledge-sharing platform facilitating access to useful knowledge around key topics. AI tools can strengthen such a platform. UNEP also need to invest to understand the demand for knowledge from different stakeholders.

156. Chemicals and pollution remain less visible than climate and biodiversity in UNEP's external messaging. No flagship publication or branded product regularly anchors SP-CPA's public presence. The relative low visibility of the SP-CPA compared to climate and nature makes it harder for countries – especially developing countries – to justify political support, push for funding, or engage constructively. The absence of a flagship publication (e.g., a "Pollution Gap Report") hinders visibility and political traction for pollution issues. Addressing these gaps is key to improving performance, visibility, and value for money. UNEP has produced regular global publications (associated with UNEA mandates) that could potentially fit under such flagship publication format: UNEP Global Chemicals Outlooks I (published in 2013) and II (published in 2019), UNEP Global Waste Management Outlooks (in 2015 and in 2024), UNEP Actions on Air Quality reports (in 2021 and 2024). The most strategic option may be a hybrid model: Produce a biennial Pollution and Health Gap Outlook (short, sharp, 40–50 pages) using SDG and MEA data and time its release before UNEA or major health/environment events to maximize visibility. UNEP can host a digital dashboard for continuous updates, with GEO serving as the deep dive reference every few years. Keeping pollution under review will also likely be a function of the ISP-CWP (Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution, established in June 2025 following a UNEP supported process pursuant to UNEA Resolution 5/8).

2.1.7.5 Effectiveness of cooperation with Regional Offices

Finding 12: The underutilization of Regional Offices (RO)s is a major constraint on SP-CPA performance. The effectiveness of cooperation with the ROs has a direct and significant impact on the performance of the Subprogramme. There is a need for a proper functional analysis of ROs and assessment of their capacities. Strengthening cooperation would significantly improve the Subprogramme's country-level relevance, policy influence, and long-term sustainability. To realize this potential, UNEP must establish structured, accountable partnerships with its ROs, including shared planning, joint implementation, and delegated authority. There is a need for an established accountability framework for Divisions to treat country requests through ROs. The ROs need more technical backing from Divisions to mainstream CPA in Country Common Analyses (CCAs).

157. ROs are crucial interfaces for country engagement and are meant to act as the bridge between global strategies and country-level realities. They are ideally positioned to understand and respond to regional and national priorities, engage with UNCTs, influence UNSDCFs and support coordination across stakeholders at the regional level. RSPCs are central to the delivery, visibility, and effectiveness of the SP-CPA work on the ground. UNEP focal points for UNCTs, which include the RSPCs, ensure that UNEP's environmental mandate is visible, integrated, and influential within UN planning, programming, and delivery at the country level especially through the CCA and the UNSDCF. They bridge UNEP's thematic expertise with national development agendas shaped through the UN system, especially in countries where UNEP lacks a country office.
158. While UNEP's New Delivery Model offers a more strategic and country-focused approach, it presents significant operational and institutional challenges for regional staff—particularly in terms of resources, coordination, capacity, and strategic influence. Some of the key challenges faced by the regional staff in the new Delivery Model, as mentioned in the interviews and focus groups discussion with regional staff implementing the SP-CPA, are as follows:
- i. **Lack of a functional review:** The measure that ROs cannot implement projects and that staff had to shift from technical roles to strategic intelligence brokers was probably too extreme. Many regional staff have technical expertise and UNEP, as a small organization, needs to tap on this expertise. There is a need for a capacity assessment of the ROs and elaboration of standard operating procedures to optimize the new delivery model.

- ii. **Increased responsibilities without commensurate resources:** Regional teams are expected to take on greater programmatic and coordination responsibilities (e.g., engaging in UNCTs, supporting UNSDCF, project development). However, staffing, funding, and technical backstopping are often insufficient, leading to work overload and strategic trade-offs. More technical backing is needed from Divisions to support Regional Offices and countries.
 - iii. **Fragmented and siloed communication with Divisions:** CPA work is a very wide area. Regional staff rely on personal networks to get Divisions to respond to country requests. There is no systematic feedback mechanism or structured way to ensure regional inputs are addressed. There is a lack of accountability mechanisms for country support from Divisions.
 - iv. **Limited flexibility in resource allocation:** Regional Offices are often dependent on project-based or earmarked funding, with limited core budget or predictable resources to support strategic engagement or respond to emerging issues. This limits agility and undermines strategic coherence in delivering UNEP's regional contributions.
 - v. **Capacity gaps and uneven skills:** Regional staff often lack specialized skills needed to fully engage in country-level policy processes, environmental diplomacy, or integrated programming (e.g., SDG financing, systems thinking).
159. Within the “planet” pillar of the UNSDCF, climate change and biodiversity tend to dominate the environmental narrative. Pollution is referenced in only 9% of UNSDCF for a number of reasons. There is a dominance of immediate socioeconomic priorities such as poverty reduction, education, health, gender equality, and economic growth which are typically prioritized by governments and UNCTs. Pollution is often seen as a longer-term or secondary issue, unless it is directly linked to a crisis or a highly visible public health emergency. Addressing pollution often requires challenging powerful economic interests (e.g., in chemicals, plastics, mining, or fossil fuels), making it politically sensitive. Issues like air or water pollution are sometimes perceived as local or municipal, not national development concerns. Pollution is not a single SDG but is spread across multiple goals and targets (e.g., SDG 3.9 on health impacts, SDG 6 on water, SDG 11.6 on air quality, SDG 12.4 on chemicals). This fragmentation makes it harder to advocate for pollution as a coherent, cross-cutting priority in strategic frameworks. Countries also often lack reliable data on pollution levels, sources, and impacts, making it difficult to frame the issue in evidence-based terms.
160. UNCTs may also lack access to environmental expertise, particularly in chemicals and waste, unless UNEP or another agency provides targeted support. Pollution is frequently viewed as a technical or sectoral issue, not as a systemic risk to sustainable development, despite UNEA and WHO highlighting it as a top threat. UNEP does not have a systematic structure of country offices, and its representation in UNCTs is often indirect or limited. Where UNEP is not actively engaged, pollution may not be effectively mainstreamed into CCA/UNSDCF processes. Finally, there is a lack of integrated narrative or entry points. Pollution is often not framed in ways that resonate with development planners (e.g., its links to human health, inequality, productivity, or SDG financing). Without strong narratives or integrated solutions, it is difficult to position pollution as a transformative priority within the UNSDCFs. To raise pollution's profile in UNSDCFs, the RSPCs, with the support of the GSPC and Divisions, must act as strategic connectors, technical advocates, and narrative shapers—linking pollution to health, equity, and development. There also must be timely inputs into the UN planning cycles. Country Focal Points should be incentivised to make sure that Pollution is also reflected at Outcome level of UNSDCFs. While the RSPCs may be asked by the CFPs for support to make this happen, the CPFs should also be held accountable for the mainstreaming of all 3 pillars (including CPA) at Outcome level in the UNSDCF processes they are able to influence

161. While the network of UNCT Focal Points is a key asset for UNEP's engagement at country level, there are limitations in UNEP's participation in the UNCTs since it is mostly remote and part-time. Many of the Focal Points participate in the work of UNCTs remotely and most of them have other primary roles for which they are responsible. Despite UNEP's efforts, governments might not be accessing as much support from UNEP as they would like to receive. There is also the lack of any budget to travel to the country, at least once a year for the UNCT retreat. To address this and help equip the UNCT Focal Points, significant efforts must be made to facilitate information and experience exchange among them through a minimum budget for travel, webinars and access to knowledge and research products, templates and other resources.
162. There is a need for a proper functional analysis of ROs and assessment of their capacities. As per one interviewee "Regional Offices can play a key role in ensuring the Subprogramme is responsive to country needs—but this role is not fully realized." UNEP is a small organization and has to take advantage of the expertise available in ROs while ensuring that implementation by ROs is fully aligned with the strategy and narrative. There is a need for an established accountability framework for Divisions to treat country requests through ROs. The GSPC can be the official entry point for handling countries/regional requests and for mobilizing the technical expertise in the Divisions. Also, there is a growing operational role which need strategic clarity. The recent move of the GSPCs to the Divisions provides an opportunity to anchor and operationalize the establishment of an accountability framework for Divisions to treat country requests received by ROs from UNRCs or government agencies. The ROs need more technical backing from Divisions to mainstream CPA in CCAs. UNEP must decide on whether it will remain a global normative agency or evolve into a hybrid organization with a stronger national delivery role as this decision affects staffing, budgeting and the overall strategy.

2.1.7.6 Effectiveness of external partnerships and cooperation

Finding 13: Many partnerships have been successful because of clear mandates and shared goals, multi-stakeholder engagement (policy, science, private sector, civil society), strong technical foundations and political buy-in, alignment with global frameworks (e.g., MEAs, SDGs, SAICM), and practical tools and capacity-building for countries. Overall, external partnerships significantly enhance the Subprogramme's performance, particularly in normative influence, technical delivery, and access to funding. However, limitations in strategic coordination, partner diversity, and national-level alignment reduce their transformative potential. Partnerships are one of UNEP's most powerful delivery mechanisms, but their impact is only as strong as the strategic coordination that brings them together. Strengthening strategic coordination — through GSPCs, PCPs, joint governance structures, and shared results frameworks — is essential to unlocking the transformative potential of partnerships in SP-CPA and across UNEP.

163. The effectiveness of external partnerships and cooperation is a critical success factor for the SP-CPA. The Subprogramme relies on a wide network of strategic partnerships which span MEAs, UN agencies, financial mechanisms, regional bodies, scientific networks, private sector platforms, and civil society organizations. These partnerships allow UNEP to mainstream CPA across sectors, expand its reach, and help countries implement solutions aligned with the SDGs and multilateral agreements. The role of the GSPC with respect to partnerships, as defined under the Delivery Model Policy 2022 is limited to advising, informing and communicating on strategic partnership. The role of implementing and managing partnerships falls to UNEP's Divisions and Regional Offices. This is expressed by the fact that partnerships are an important component of the Subprogramme's ToCs. Relevant intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder partnerships have been established at regional and sub-regional level, including thematically (e.g. air quality regional networks, in LAC or Asia-Pacific), and with regional and sub-regional integration organizations.

164. Examples of strong and impactful partnerships that have advanced the goals of the SP-CPA, showcasing how collaboration delivers results in policy, innovation, and implementation include:
- i. *Partnership with Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions (BRS) Secretariats.* (Partners: BRS Secretariats, Parties). The partnership was effective because these are legally binding frameworks for waste, hazardous chemicals, and POPs, and technical assistance, compliance mechanisms, and global monitoring are provided. The SP-CPA also supports policy coherence and national legislation reform. The Subprogramme drives legally anchored pollution prevention measures worldwide.
 - ii. *The Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint* (Partners: UNEP, WHO, governments, industry, NGOs). The purpose was to support countries in banning lead in paint by developing legislation and raising awareness. As of 2024, over 100 countries have adopted legally binding controls on lead-based paint. Technical guidance and model laws have been developed with WHO and industry inputs. This partnership was effective because of the strong science-policy link, voluntary but action-oriented, inclusive of private sector and regulators.
 - iii. *Global Mercury Partnership* (Partners: UNEP, governments, NGOs, industry, academia). Ratification and early implementation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury is facilitated by this partnership. Technical guidance and best practices on mercury in ASGM, coal combustion, and products have been produced, as well as support to National Action Plans (NAPs) for Minamata implementation. The partnership drives cooperation in data sharing and technology exchange. The partnership was effective through its multi-stakeholder engagement, its alignment with MEA implementation and regional cooperation mechanisms.
 - iv. *Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)* (Partners: UNEP, Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC), countries, NGOs, private sector). The purpose was to serve as a platform for collaborative global action on emerging chemical issues. Advanced actions were taken on issues like endocrine-disrupting chemicals, pharmaceuticals in the environment, and e-waste. It laid the foundation for the new Global Framework on Chemicals (GFC), adopted in 2023, and strengthened cross-sectoral collaboration and innovation. It was effective as it was flexible, issue-based, and enabling for developing countries. UNEP's role in the GFC exemplifies its strength in norm-setting and consensus-building, largely made possible through strategic partnerships.
 - v. *Partnership with the GEF* (Partners: GEF, UNEP, countries, implementing agencies). The purpose was to support countries in meeting global chemical and waste obligations. GEF has funded over 150 projects on POPs, mercury, lead, e-waste, and chemicals in products. It has supported national inventories, policy reforms, and pilot technology deployments and enabled large-scale implementation of the Stockholm and Minamata Conventions. The partnership has been effective through a clear alignment with global conventions, large funding pool, and an implementation track record.
 - vi. *UNEP-WHO Collaboration on Air Pollution and Health* (Partners: UNEP, WHO, national governments). The purpose is to address the health impacts of air pollution through joint research, advocacy, and policy support. The partnership has co-developed air quality guidelines, country profiles, and capacity-building tools and influenced national clean air policies (e.g. India, Kenya, Mongolia). It drives pollution into public health policy. The partnership was effective through its interdisciplinary framing, using health as an entry point and policy leverage.

- vii. *Partnership with Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC)*. UNEP plays a central role, both as a founding partner, convenor and host of its Secretariat and Trust Fund. Key areas of collaboration include scientific assessments, global policy forums, capacity building and regional integration platforms. Via the CCAC, UNEP delivers on the nexus between climate and clean air through partnership. UNEP is also a partner in the CCAC, and through engagement in sector Hubs, Clean Air Flagship etc., contributing to steering its strategy, operations, and global partnerships to tackle air pollution and climate change simultaneously.
 - viii. *The Global Partnership on Plastic Pollution and Marine Litter (GPML)* was launched during the Rio+20 Summit (June 2012) and operates as a multi-stakeholder platform that brings together civil society, the private sector, regional bodies, and others to address marine litter and plastic pollution. UNEP provides secretariat services for GPML, making it a direct conduit for the SP-CPA's work in this area. The partnership enables knowledge sharing, coordination of action, identification of gaps and emerging issues, and the pooling of resources and expertise to tackle marine litter from both land- and sea-based sources.
165. Strong global and normative partnerships drive strategic relevance. The SP-CPA benefits from deep, long-standing partnerships with the MEAs such as the Stockholm Convention (POPs) and the Minamata Convention (Mercury). These partnerships align UNEP with globally endorsed mandates, enhance UNEP's credibility and authority as a normative actor and help guide countries toward compliance with global environmental standards. UNEP's role in the GFC exemplifies its strength in norm-setting and consensus-building, largely made possible through strategic partnerships. Over 80% of the SP-CPA portfolio is funded by the GEF, which acts as a key partner and financial mechanism for MEAs. This cooperation enables large-scale projects (e.g. PlanetGOLD), supports longer-term programming and provides catalytic funding for policy reform and institutional strengthening.
 166. Various interviewees to the evaluation have reported that there is close cooperation with other UN organizations to achieve joint targets. WHO co-leads the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint with UNEP. It also collaborated on health evidence for the Global Chemicals Outlook and supported countries on pollution-health linkages. UNDP, in collaboration with UNEP, mainstreamed sound chemicals management into national development strategies and have joint delivery of GEF-funded projects on chemicals and waste. UNEP and UNDP collaborate in the SAICM framework and GEF-funded initiatives to develop national chemicals profiles and institutional reform. UNIDO and UNEP have joint projects under the Stockholm and Minamata Conventions, especially in industrial waste management, mercury in ASGM, and POPs elimination. UNEP co-leads the IOMC with 8 other agencies (WHO, ILO, FAO, UNDP, UNIDO, UNITAR, OECD, World Bank) to coordinate chemicals-related work, support SAICM, and develop shared guidance and indicators.
 167. Cooperations with other UN organizations are highly relevant for UNEP, because the organization does not have a strong regional and country presence compared to other UN organizations, for example UNDP and FAO. These two organizations, specifically, are also much larger regarding their staff size and institutional history and structure. Therefore, the organizations are able to complement each other with UNEP concentrating on the science and acting as the organization bringing others together and the other UN organizations working on the implementation on the ground of projects. UNDP and UNEP acknowledge each other's comparative advantages and often leverage it in joint efforts, e.g., through GEF Global Programmes. However, there is also competition between these two UN agencies for projects which can lead to inefficiencies.
 168. Partnerships with civil society organizations (CSOs) and the private sector are a significant enabler for the SP-CPA, because much of the pollution and chemicals agenda involves behaviour change, technology adoption, and policy implementation beyond government

control. There are examples of collaboration with NGOs to phase out lead in paint in the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint, engagement with IPEN (International Pollutants Elimination Network) for grassroots monitoring of POPs and mercury and working with community-based waste pickers' associations on safe e-waste dismantling practices. There are examples of engagement with paint manufacturers to eliminate lead additives through UNEP-led multi-stakeholder platforms, partnerships with electronics companies for sustainable e-waste management in line with Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and joint work with shipping and oil & gas companies to reduce marine pollution under initiatives like the Global Partnership on Marine Litter.

169. The Clean Air Fund is a global philanthropic organization with a mission to accelerate air pollution solutions by supporting governments, communities, businesses, and advocates across the world, and has collaborated with UNEP on technical efforts—for example, their joint needs assessment on air quality management guidance. The World Resources Institute (WRI) is mostly funded by philanthropies and bilateral donors. In 2018, UNEP and WRI joined forces with several partners—including the World Economic Forum and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation—to launch the Platform for Accelerating the Circular Economy (PACE). PACE serves as a global public-private platform striving to scale up circular economy practices. WRI has joined CCAC (hosted by UNEP) and has co-hosted key Clean Air Day events. Partnership comes through strategic engagement, e.g. WRI is a member of the CCAC Clean Air Flagship Task Team but is also involved in project implementation. Some industry associations are part of CCAC, e.g. International Solid Waste Association (ISWA) under the CCAC sector Hub 'Waste'.
170. The SP-CPA is increasingly organized around thematic issues — such as air quality, plastics, or chemicals and waste. Communities organized by specific issues allow UNEP to align partners, scientific expertise, and funding mechanisms to drive targeted impact. Stakeholders — NGOs, private sector actors, academia, and local communities — often want to engage on specific topics rather than through a broad, unfocused platform. This creates a sense of ownership and encourages co-creation of solutions tailored to the issue. For example, the CCAC successfully mobilizes partners around Short-Lived Climate Pollutants (SLCP) reduction and clean air, showing how thematic alliances can yield measurable policy and technology impacts. Similarly, the Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML) is an effective platform for plastics and marine pollution with strong science-policy-practice links. Issue-based communities (e.g., plastics, clean air, toxic chemicals) could significantly enhance stakeholder engagement, ownership, and delivery of UNEP's mandate.
171. Despite the strengths, the evaluation identifies some challenges. Multiple actors (including UNEP) are active in similar thematic spaces (e.g., plastics, circular economy, e-waste), but coordination is not always structured or efficient. There is no formal mechanism to avoid duplication or align overlapping mandates, especially between UNEP and UNIDO (chemicals and circular economy); UNEP and WHO (health-environment linkages). Strategic coordination seems more ad hoc partnerships rather than based on shared strategies or joint workplans. Most collaborations are at the project level, rather than long-term institutional partnerships with shared results frameworks. The Subprogramme is also less effective in cultivating country-level partnerships with Ministries of Finance, Industry, or Planning. As per one interviewee, "UNEP tends to work with Ministries of Environment, but many pollution-related decisions lie elsewhere." This weakens national ownership, policy uptake, and mainstreaming of pollution into development planning.

2.2 Meta-analysis of project-level performance

Finding 14: The SP-CPA shows strong performance in achieving results under the PoW, particularly in strategic relevance, effectiveness, and output delivery. Overall project level performance is Satisfactory on the average. Project evaluations have identified weaknesses in sustainability, long-term impact tracking, and post-project learning.

172. The analysis of the project-level performance consisted of two main elements:

- i. Aggregated analysis of evaluation ratings across 36 SP-CPA project evaluations. As part of this analysis trends in the project evaluation findings have been analyzed against the standard evaluation criteria used by the Evaluation Office: Strategic relevance; Achievement of Outputs; Effectiveness; Sustainability and Replication; Efficiency; Factors affecting performance; and Monitoring and Evaluation.
- ii. A synthesis of evaluation recommendations findings for a) the evaluation criteria and b) key cross-cutting issues (Project Designs; Gender Equality; Financial Management; Monitoring and Evaluation; and Replication, Scaling-up, Catalytic Effects). These cross-cutting themes were selected because these are important for successful project planning and delivery.

173. The following abbreviations are used throughout this section:

Terms	Abbreviations
Highly Satisfactory/Highly Likely	HS/HL
Satisfactory/ Likely	S/L
Moderately Satisfactory/Moderately Likely	MS/ML
Moderately Unsatisfactory/Moderately Unlikely	MU
Unsatisfactory/ Unlikely	U
Highly Unsatisfactory/Highly Unlikely	HU

2.2.1 Overview of project-level evaluations

174. Over the period 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2024, thirty-five (35) CPA projects have had their performance assessed through a terminal evaluation and one (1) CPA project through a mid-term evaluation. The list of the 36 evaluations is presented in [Annex VII](#). Figure 7 shows the project distribution as per their starting period. On average the projects were extended by 32 months. 15 projects had durations of more than 5 years.

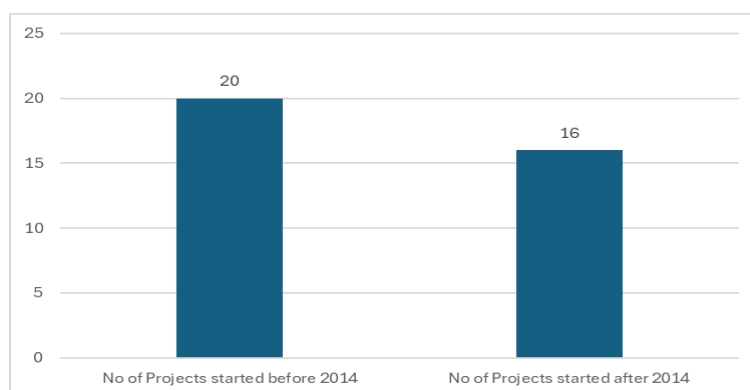


Figure 7. Distribution of the Evaluated Projects as per their starting period

175. The majority (72%) of the projects evaluated were funded by \GEF, while 28 % were funded by non-GEF funding partners, including the European Commission and several Governments from developed countries (Figure 8)

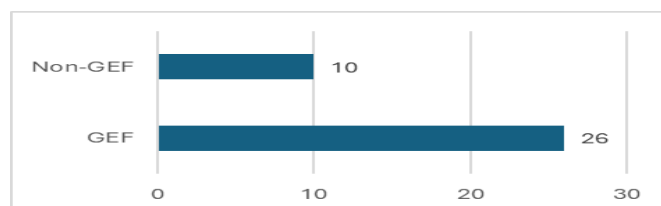


Figure 8. Distribution of evaluated projects between funding partners

176. As Figure 9 illustrates, the evaluated projects demonstrate both a global focus (50%, a total of 18 projects) as well as a geographical focus on developing countries, with Africa receiving the largest share (28 %, a total of 10 Projects), followed by Latin America and the Caribbean (8%, a total of 3 Projects), West Asia (8%, a total of 3 Projects) and Asia and the Pacific (6%, a total of 2 Projects). This geographic pattern is reflected in the projects financed by GEF, which mainly finance projects in Africa and global projects.

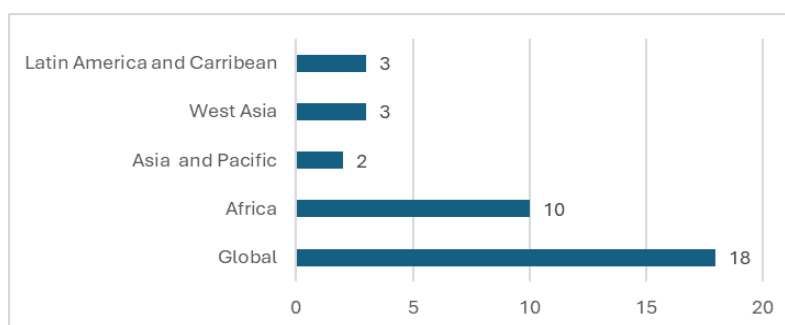


Figure 9. Distribution of evaluated projects by region

177. Of the 36 projects evaluated, 46 % focused on POPs (a total of 17 projects), 19% on Mercury (a total of 7 projects), 5% on Lead/Cadmium (a total of 2 projects), 8% on support to MEAs (a total of 3 projects), 8% on Waste (a total of 3 projects), 11% on Nutrients/Marine Litter (a total of 4 projects) and 3 % on Chemicals (1 project).(Figure 10)

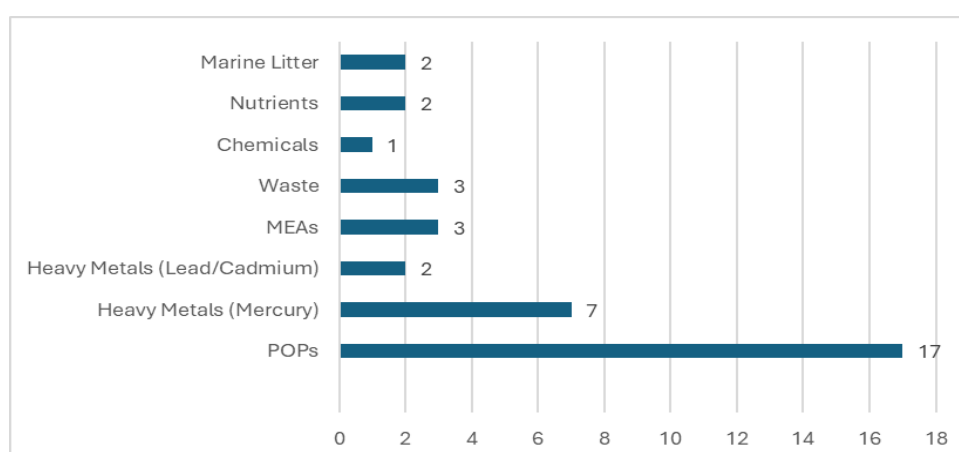


Figure 10. Distribution of evaluated projects by theme

178. UNEP acted as both the Implementation Agency and Executing agency¹⁴ for 21 projects (58%) and only as the Implementation Agency for 15 projects (42%). 89% of the projects evaluated were managed by the Industry and Economy Division while 11% were managed by the Ecosystems Division. 33 projects (92%) focused only on the Subprogramme: Harmful substances and hazardous waste (Chemicals and Waste) while only 3 projects (8%) covered two or more Subprogrammes. (Figure 11)

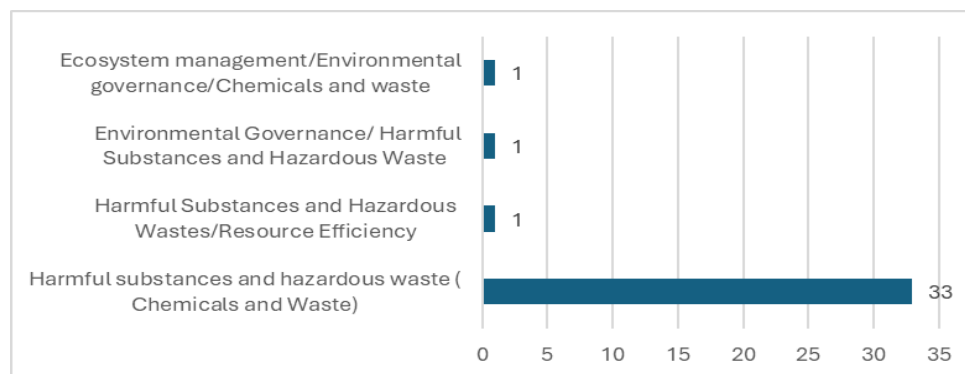


Figure 11. Distribution of evaluated projects by Subprogrammes

179. The 36 evaluated projects, with regard to funding sources, managing Divisions, topic focus areas and geographical focus, can stand as an appropriate representation of the full list of projects in the programme.

2.2.2 Aggregation and analysis of overall evaluation ratings

180. The Evaluation Office applies a six-point rating scale ranging from Highly Unsatisfactory (HU) through to Highly Satisfactory (HS) on each evaluation criterion and for the Overall Project Rating. The benchmark for successful project performances is either Satisfactory or Highly Satisfactory (S-HS). Out of the 36 evaluated projects, there were 35 with ratings and for one project, due to the limited information available from the project archives and from stakeholders, ratings are not given. For one project, as it was largely implemented and managed as two distinct initiatives, ratings are given for each initiative. Finally, while there are 3 projects related to waste, they were recognised by the project team to be closely interlinked and only one overall rating was given for the 3 projects. Overall, the meta-analysis therefore concerns 34 sets of ratings.
181. An overview of project performance ratings of the evaluated projects is presented in Figure 12. 47% of the evaluated projects have an overall project rating of S-HS with 38% of the projects rated S and 9% HS. 50% of the projects have an MS rating. The average overall project rating of the projects is 4.5. As Figure 13 shows, isolating more recent projects (i.e. distinguishing between those projects that started during the MTS 2014-2017 compared to the ones which started during the MTS 2010-2013) raises the average from 4.2 to 4.7, just below the Satisfactory point, suggesting improvements over time.
182. The highest performing criteria are Strategic Relevance (97% S-HS); Achievement of Outputs (57% S-HS); Effectiveness (53% S-HS); and Factors Affecting Performance (62% S-HS).

¹⁴ UNEP acting as both the Implementing Agency (IA) and the Executing Agency (EA) is considered an exceptional arrangement, not the norm. Under the GEF and similar financing mechanisms, UNEP usually serves as the Implementing Agency: responsible for project oversight, ensuring compliance with policies, and liaising with the funding body. Execution is normally delegated to an external Executing Agency — such as a government ministry, UN specialized agency, NGO, research institute, or private sector partner — to avoid conflicts of interest and maintain a degree of separation.

183. Mixed performances are indicated under Efficiency (22% MU-U); Monitoring and Reporting (22% MU-U).

184. The lowest performing criterion is Sustainability and Replication (34% MU-U).

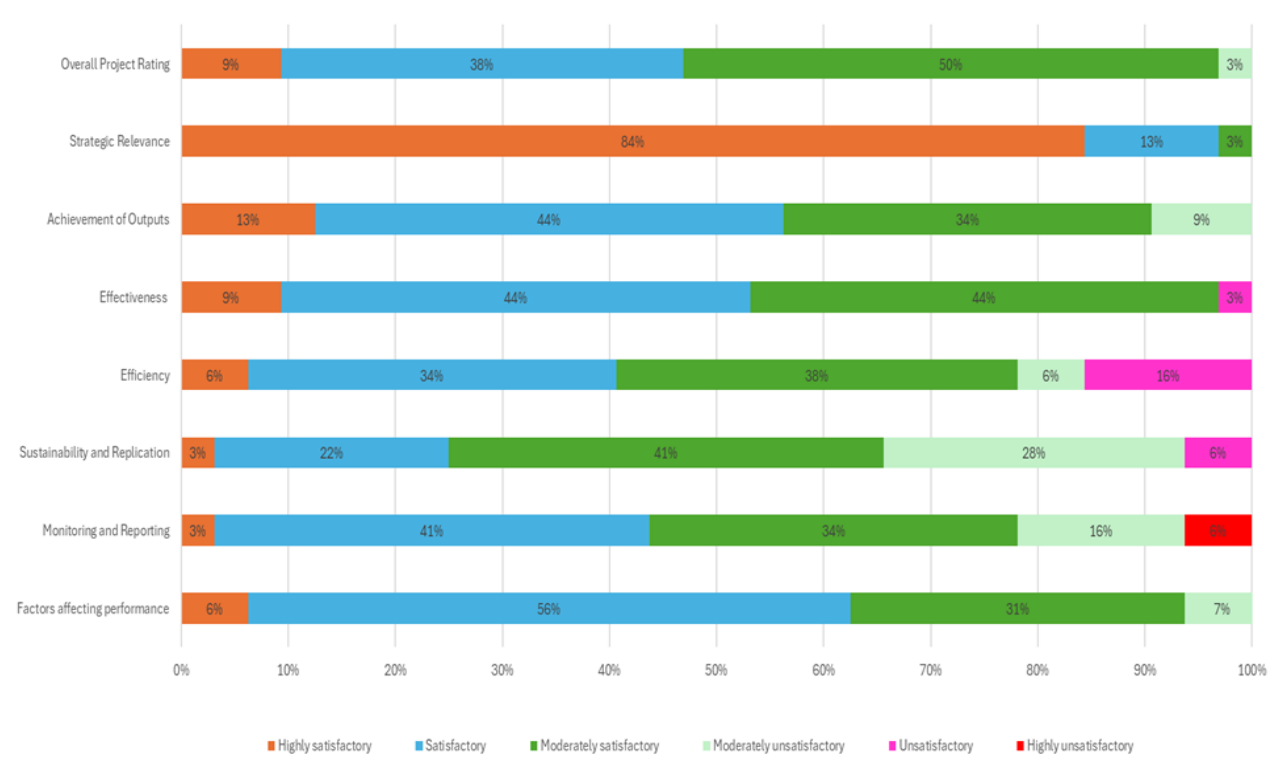


Figure 12. Overview of Project Performance by evaluation criteria



Figure 13. Comparison of Overall Project Ratings of Evaluated Projects

185. Illustrated another way, Figure 14 shows the average rating by evaluation criterion and the range. For example, 'Strategic Relevance' shows both a high average and a narrow range suggesting consistency across projects. 'Sustainability and Replication', 'Efficiency' and "Monitoring and Reporting" all show an average at the MS level, but the widest range suggesting high variability across projects.

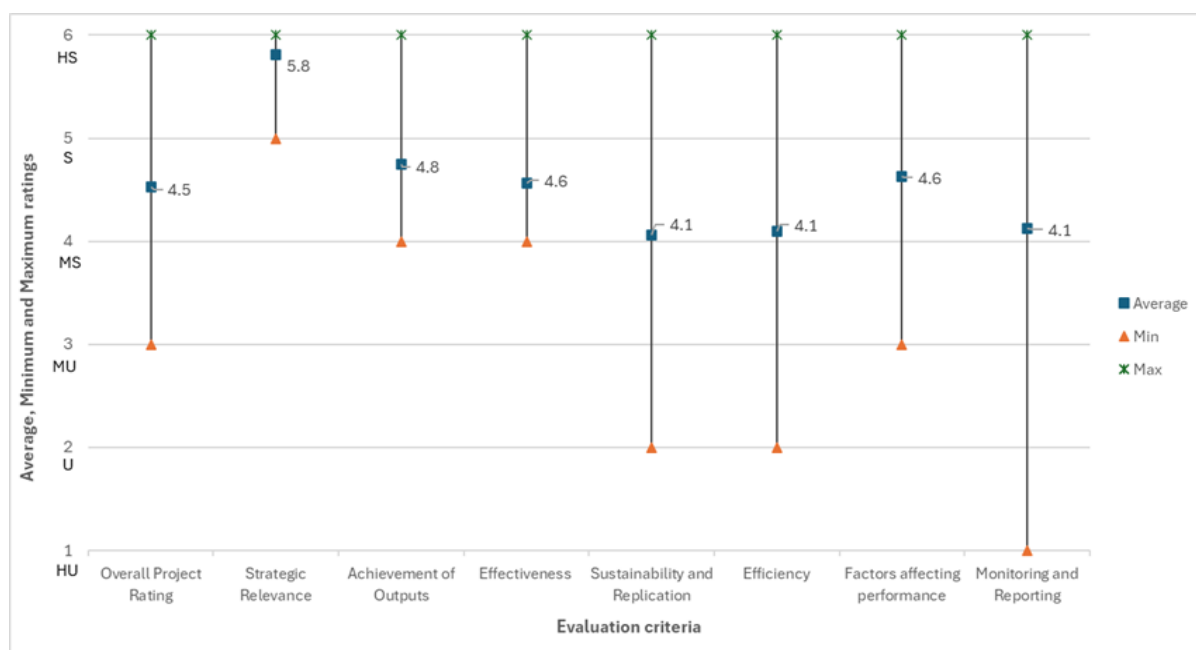


Figure 14. Average and range of performance ratings by evaluation criteria

186. A summary of key findings for each criterion is provided in the next sections.

2.2.3 Strategic relevance

187. 97% of the projects were rated S-HS on Strategic Relevance, which confirms that projects approved by the PRC for this Subprogramme are well-aligned to UNEP's high-level results (i.e. the Expected Accomplishments/Direct Outcomes).

2.2.4 Effectiveness

188. Project evaluations indicate 53 % S-HS ratings for Effectiveness, while 44% were MS. Only 3.0% received ratings of MU-S. Over the period considered by the evaluation, there seems to be a slight trend for higher effectiveness across the evaluated project portfolio (See Figure 15).

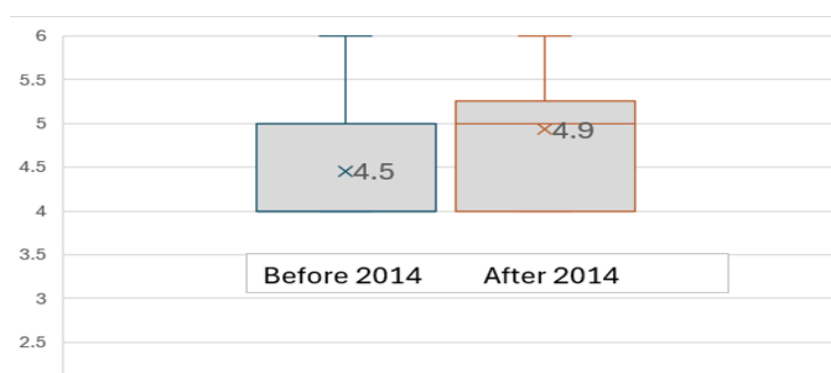


Figure 15. Comparison of Effectiveness ratings of evaluated projects which started before and after 2014

189. UNEP evaluations hold projects to account for the achievement of Outcomes and assesses whether there is evidence that the contributing conditions for achieving longer term impact have been initiated. Three criteria (Availability of Outputs, Achievement of Outcomes and

Likelihood of Impact) are combined to make the Effectiveness criterion. Based on this synthesised analysis, Figure 16 shows that projects are less effective in achieving substantive changes (results) with the S-HS rating dropping from 56% (Output level) to 40% (Likelihood of Impact).

190. Analysis of project-level initiatives revealed that intensive engagement with local stakeholders significantly increased the likelihood of impact. This finding underscores the critical role of close collaboration with local stakeholders in interventions. Projects that were assessed as having a HL chance of having an impact demonstrated increased awareness and improved systemic capacities to address challenges effectively.

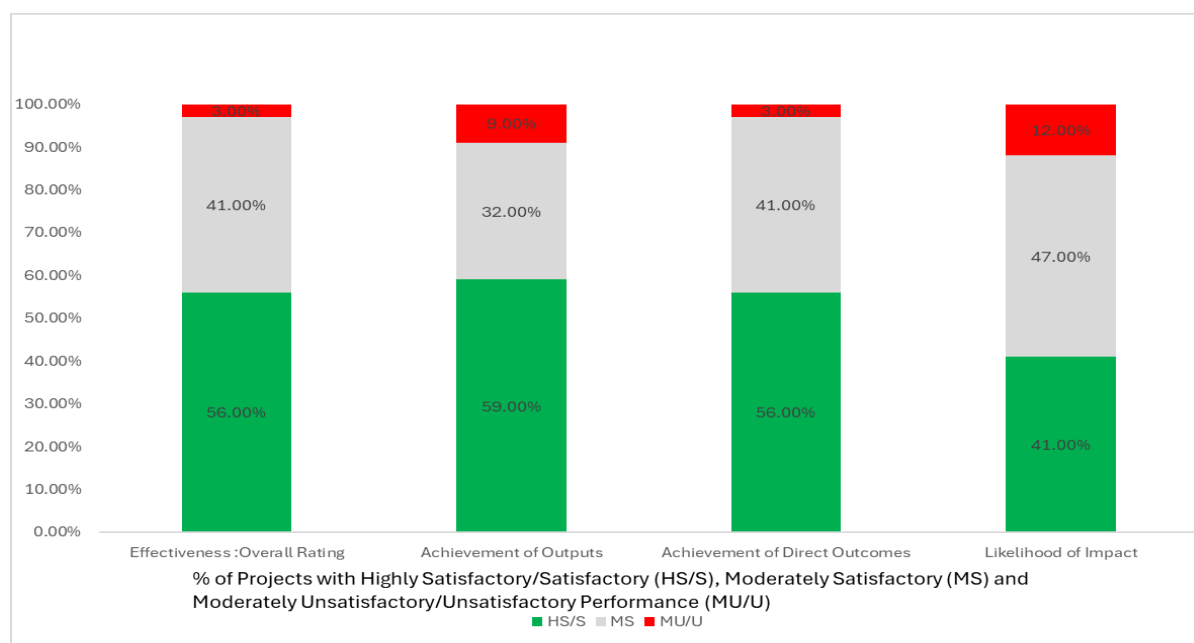


Figure 16. Analysis of Project Performance on Overall Effectiveness, Availability of Outputs, Achievement of Outcomes and Likelihood of Impact.

2.2.5 Sustainability of results

191. The evaluated projects show that, overall, the sustainability of results was ML, with an overall rating of 4.1. Only one project achieved HL rating for sustainability of results. 34% of the projects received U or HU ratings for the sustainability of results, primarily due to poor performance in achieving financial and institutional sustainability. There is a relatively a large proportion of L-HL ratings for Socio-Political Sustainability (53%) compared to Institutional Framework Sustainability (41% L-HL ratings) and Financial Sustainability (22% L-HL ratings) (See Figure 17).

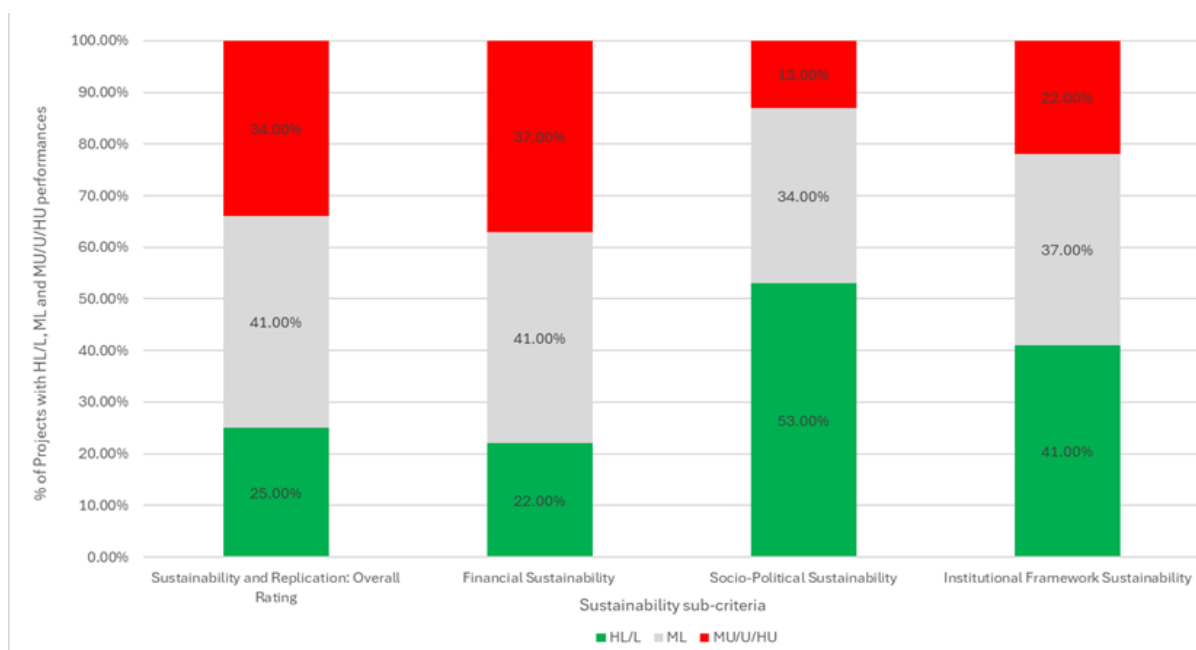


Figure 17. Analysis of Project performances on Sustainability sub-criteria

2.2.6 Efficiency

192. The efficiency of projects evaluated resulted in an overall MS rating. Only 40% of the evaluated projects were rated as S-HS, while 38% were rated as MS, 6% were rated as MU and 16% were rated as U. Over the time period considered by the evaluation, there is a trend for higher efficiency across the evaluated project portfolio with a high proportion attaining Satisfactory ratings for projects initiated during the MTS 2014-2017 (see Figure 18).

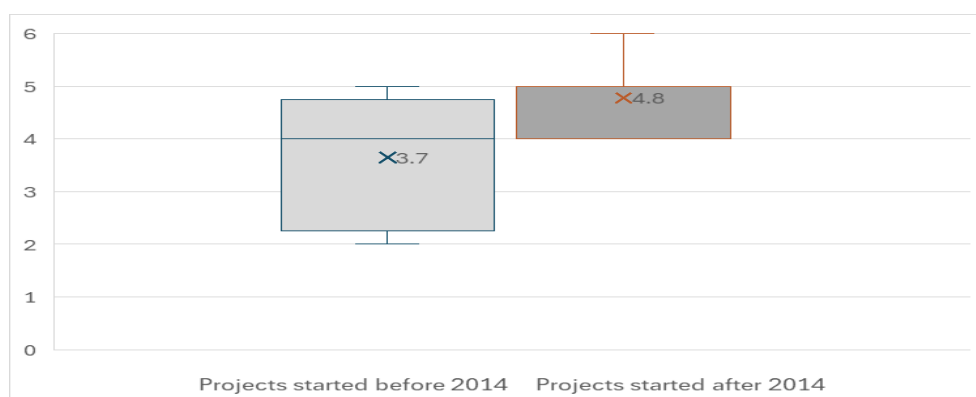


Figure 18. Comparison of Efficiency ratings of evaluated projects

193. A cross-comparison of the evaluations of projects with Unsatisfactory ratings reveals that delays and complications primarily arose due to the organization of the project implementation by the organizations involved, e.g., the communication between them was assessed as insufficient. For example, regarding time efficiency, the majority of projects ran significantly longer than the planned duration. On average, only about 25% of the evaluated projects were completed within the planned period. On average the projects were delayed by 32 months. Global projects, especially, were most often not completed within their planned implementation period. 3 projects were completed more than 6 years after the planned duration. Neglecting these 3 projects, the average delay was about 23 months.

194. The evaluations suffer from a lack of information on expenditure in relation to the delivery of outputs, which makes efficiency a weak area of assessment. Evaluation Consultants also vary in the way they assess this criterion. New guidelines were developed by the Evaluation office during 2017 to promote consistency.

2.2.7 Monitoring and reporting

195. The proportion of projects with S-HS performance for Monitoring and Evaluation is only 44 % overall (Figure 19). All Monitoring and Evaluation sub-criteria have a large proportion of performances in the Unsatisfactory range (MU-U-HU). An over-reliance on the reporting under the Project Information Management System and the IPMR to serve as a basis for 'monitoring' seems one of the reasons for low performance ratings for Monitoring and Evaluation.

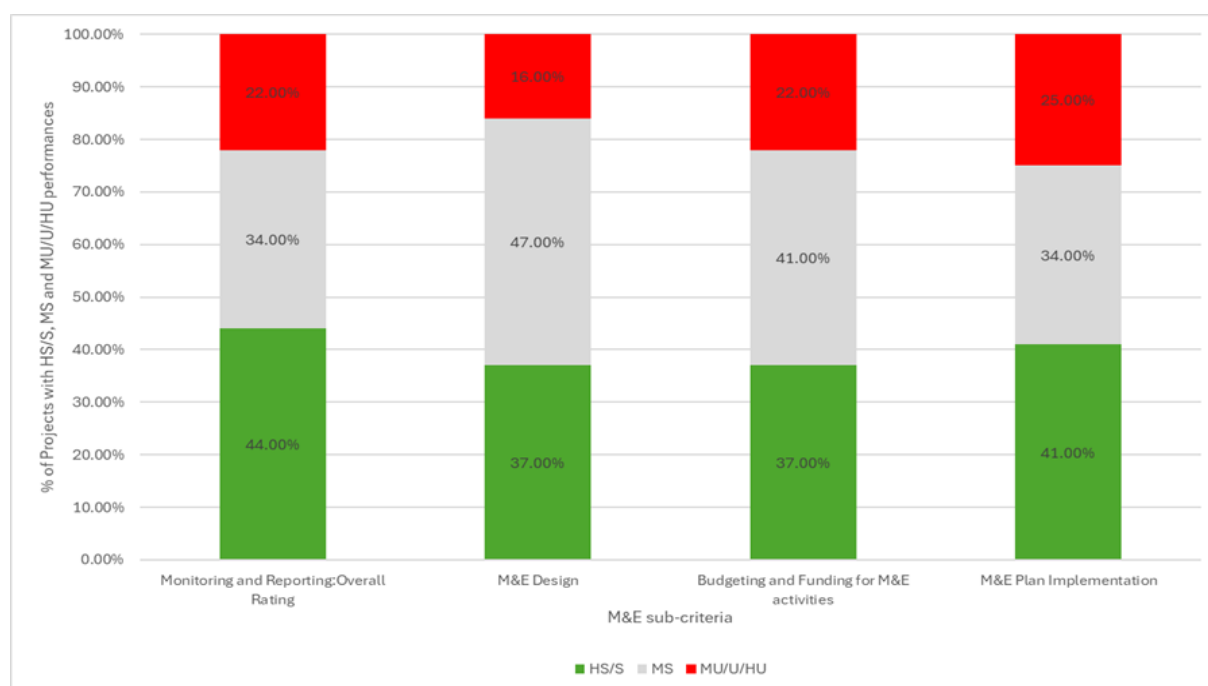


Figure 19. Analysis of Project Performances on Monitoring and Evaluation sub-criteria

2.2.8 Factors affecting performance

196. Project evaluations also rate a number of factors that typically affect performance, for example, financial management, stakeholder participation, and country ownership. 94% of the evaluated projects had ratings in the Satisfactory range (MS-S-HS). In all of the sub-criteria 50% or more of the evaluated projects scored S-HS (see Figure 20).

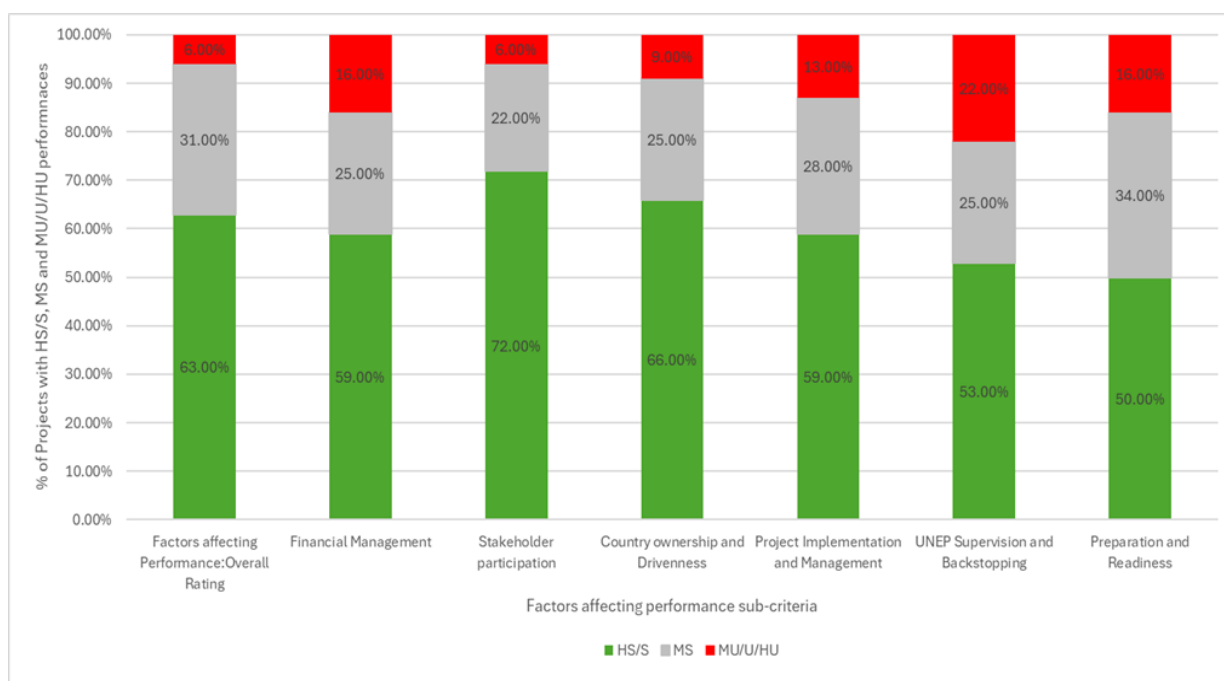


Figure 20. Analysis of Project Performances on Factors affecting Performance

197. 72 % of evaluated projects achieved S-HS on Stakeholders' Participation and Public Awareness, reflective of UNEP's focus on stakeholder engagement and partnership. Only 50% of evaluated projects scored S-HS on Preparation and Readiness which refers to the time taken to move from an approved document to an operational funded initiative. The score is affected by the time it takes to recruit staff and sign legal agreements. (Figure 20)

2.2.9 Synthesis of project-level evaluation recommendations

198. After analysing all evaluation recommendations and lessons learned outlined in the 36 evaluation reports conducted under the SP-CPA from 2015 to 2024, the key underpinning issues are summarized in Table 3. These key issues are those which are based on common recommendations appearing in two or more different projects.

199. Together, these findings point to clear opportunities for improvement that can strengthen future project design and delivery. These include:

- i. designing more integrated and coherent projects that connect meaningfully at sector and system levels.
- ii. developing stronger, more realistic sustainability strategies that secure results beyond project closure.
- iii. investing in robust monitoring and reporting systems that enable adaptive management and learning.
- iv. streamlining processes to minimize costly delays.
- v. embedding gender equality and the needs of vulnerable groups more systematically.
- vi. engaging regional and local stakeholders more deeply to build ownership and relevance.
- vii. capturing and sharing lessons and good practices more effectively; and
- viii. enhancing governance and coordination mechanisms.

200. Each recommendation aims to build on these opportunities to improve the Subprogramme's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and catalytic impact. Collectively, they offer practical pathways to make the SP-CPA more coherent, resilient, and fit for the ambitions of UNEP's broader Pollution-Free Planet vision.

Table 3. Synthesis of evaluation recommendations findings for the evaluation criteria

Criterion	Recommendations
Strategic Relevance	- National interventions, under a regional overarching umbrella, should always strive to closely match the individual client countries priorities, and most importantly, needs. - UNEP needs to develop a clear strategy for the management of heavy metals in general.
Quality of Project Design	- UNEP Regional Offices and Regional Centres should be involved in the design and implementation of all the activities with a regional scope. - Project design should include the risk of human capacity and support at the Executing Agency. - UNEP and GEF should reinforce the importance of good quality project design that is realistic, streamlined, and flexible, with a robust theory of change analysis and clarity about the ultimate project goal(s) with adequate time and budget allocation from the start.
Effectiveness	- Considering the competitive advantages of UNEP and the work being developed by the UNEP's Chemicals and Waste Branch it should focus its future work on policy development and guidance at global (through pre-existing networks) and regional level (through regional centres and Regional Offices) rather than country interventions (where UNEP does not have representation). - When model laws are developed, UNEP should ensure that appropriate and country sensitive legal frameworks and systems are covered. - Consider a Theory of Change approach to the assessment of effectiveness in the implementation of Conventions. - Based on a theory of change approach, review the Convention and Secretariat work processes to identify further entry points and means to reinforce implementation of the UNEP policies on human rights and gender equality. - Establish national level steering committees to support the cross-sectoral cooperation. - Provide financial assistance to countries, which already benefited from the Special Programme Trust Fund, but which need further financial assistance for consolidation of country project results - UNEP / International Environmental Technology Centre (IETC) should consider working on a global level to homogenize the definitions of wastes, and support countries, via projects, in the collection of relevant waste data and set-up of waste databases.
Sustainability and Replication	- Consider strengthened efforts for national-level engagement as a way of committing governments to allocate national resources rather than wait for donor funding since it would seem as if the projects were being imposed from outside. - Institutional memory through good practices in knowledge management is key to sustainability. - Strong actions in support of establishing and/or strengthening implementation capacities at the national level should be included in future projects. - For sustainability of project results and impact, it is recommended that the national authorities of the participating countries put in place the appropriate mechanism and systems to enforce legislation. - To ensure sustainability of interventions, UNEP should strongly urge Governments to continue to support the work of Steering Committees by ensuring these are mainstreamed into the permanent coordinating structures. - Develop an exit strategy to make expectations clear to all stakeholders and clarify responsibilities, and ownership for after the projects ends (including discussing and clarifying future funding possibilities).

Efficiency	▪ UNEP should carefully assess the benefits of regional interventions and consider whether theoretical benefits (cost effectiveness, ease of GEF approval and implementation, timeliness) outweigh the risks (complexities and inherent delays, dilution, etc.). ▪ When possible, co-financing (cash and/or in-kind) should be mobilized concurrently to project revisions/extensions to support project continuity and avoid delays.
Monitoring and Evaluation	▪ In future follow-up projects a clear distinction should be made between monitoring for adaptive project management and monitoring for reporting purposes and resources allocated to both to enable adequate data collection and reporting in the Project Information Management system (IPMR). ▪ Monitor progress at both output and results (outcome) level in countries implementing the Special Programme funded projects. ▪ Include the assessment of a sample of completed Special Programme funded projects (e.g. projects having similar themes) in the terms of reference of the terminal evaluation of the Special Programme. ▪ UNEP should ensure that due process is followed in documenting, reporting on and approving major changes and revisions to projects. If these programmatic revisions have financial implications, programmatic and financial modifications should be developed side by side, in accordance with the Programme Manual of UNEP.
Factors affecting performance	▪ Continue to strengthen government ownership and engagement with policymakers. Consider greater delegation for participation in policy and technical events amongst Partnership Steering Committee members or other designated representatives with relevant technical knowhow. ▪ To make the project results and the positive experiences gained from its implementation available, the project management needs to ensure that results are communicated to all stakeholders, decision makers, the scientific community and the broader public. ▪ Key stakeholders should be appropriately involved since the conceptualization of the project. ▪ Awareness raising activities should be an integral part of a chemical management project. ▪ When results of projects are planned to be reflected within national strategies, make sure these strategies make clear reference to the project and are made available to the Executing Agency and Implementing Agency. ▪ To ensure that human rights and gender equality dimensions are considered during project implementation, it is recommended that these dimensions are included not only in the project design, but also in all work planning and that appropriate indicators are developed in the project results framework to track their implementation.

2.2.10 Examples of good practices at project level in cross-cutting themes

201. A full set of project good practice examples is provided in **Annex IV** to this report. It provides a summary of selected examples that illustrate how individual projects under the SP-CPA have demonstrated good practices in important cross-cutting areas such as project design, gender equality, financial management, monitoring and evaluation, and replication or catalytic effects. These examples show how well-designed projects can strengthen governance, enhance stakeholder engagement, integrate gender and human rights considerations, ensure sound financial oversight, and catalyse broader policy and system-level impacts. They also highlight practical lessons on what works in diverse contexts and thematic areas. The Annex presents the complete information on each project, including its context, specific strengths, and the lessons that can inform future design and implementation of similar initiatives.

3 Conclusions, Lessons Learned and Recommendations

3.1 Conclusions

3.1.1 Main Conclusions

202. Based on the main findings of the evaluation of the SP-CPA summarized in the Executive Summary, the main conclusions are as follows:

- i. **The SP-CPA is strategically essential and globally relevant.** It is core to UNEP's mandate and central to its Pollution-Free Planet vision.
- ii. **UNEP shows strong normative leadership** in policy guidance, standards setting, global convening, and treaty support. However, its influence at the national level remains limited due to fragmented delivery structures, lack of sustained country presence and underuse of regional staff in strategic roles.
- iii. **The Subprogramme has evolved from a fragmented, chemical-by-chemical model to a systems-level, sectoral approach.** This transition increases strategic coherence, cross-sectoral integration, and relevance to country needs-but not all projects or teams have adapted at the same pace. The GFC and the Science-Policy Panel allows UNEP to further evolve the MTS and the portfolio.
- iv. **Project-level effectiveness is strong, but outcome-level impact remains under-measured.** The evaluations show that the SP-CPA has achieved solid output-level results, with 73% of targets met and project-level performance rated largely "Satisfactory" particularly in strategic relevance and effectiveness. However, its delivery on long-term outcomes, such as environmental impact, behavioural change, and systemic transformation, has been constrained by portfolio fragmentation, weak long-term impact tracking, unclear governance, reliance on donor-driven priorities, and low integration into national UN frameworks.
- v. **The Subprogramme's efficiency is constrained by both portfolio and institutional fragmentation.** While teams deliver effectively within their mandates, fragmented budget control and siloed project structures (GEF and non-GEF) undermine strategic agility and cost-effectiveness. The fragmentation into many small-scale projects poses a challenge for coherence, efficiency, and measurable impact. PCPs were intended to foster integration but often serve as loose project bundles with no shared results framework.
- vi. **Regional delivery and engagement remain underutilized.** Regional Offices contribute to implementation but are insufficiently empowered to shape the portfolio. Regions lack formal decision-making power, flexible resources, and integration into project design cycles. This limits UNEP's ability to translate UNEA mandates into country action, mainstream pollution into UN planning, and build sustained political momentum in regions. Regions have almost no formal power to prioritize funding towards regional or national pollution priorities. There are also staffing gaps. Many regions have only one part-time RSPC covering the entire chemicals/pollution agenda (waste, air quality, plastics, chemicals, circularity). This makes it difficult to service multiple countries and engage deeply with regional political platforms.
- vii. **Partnerships are strong with MEAs secretariats, GEF, and through CCAC, reinforcing UNEP's technical and normative leadership.** UNEP Finance Initiative and CCAC are

examples of how partnerships amplify UNEP's visibility, policy influence, catalytic impact, and delivery reach. They showcase UNEP's ability to set global norms, mobilize action from powerful sectors (finance, energy, health), and scale interventions by working through partners – all while staying focused on UNEP's core mandate as the global environmental authority. However, partnerships with the private sector, civil society and other UN agencies are not yet systematic or scalable, reducing broader catalytic potential.

- viii. **Knowledge management, communication and visibility are insufficient.** There is a lack of a systematized “what works” knowledge base and of a flagship publication to raise visibility and political traction for pollution.
 - ix. **There is a mismatch between rising mandates and limited resources.** While the Subprogramme is well-positioned globally, it must adapt structurally and operationally to become more catalytic, integrated, and visible. There are strategic choices to be made to align ambitions with funding, such as consolidating efforts into fewer, larger and more strategic initiatives with blended finance that complements the core resources and allow UNEP to have an integrated response to the problems of Member States and therefore more impact. There is scope for better integration of the work of the GEF Chemicals and Waste Unit with the broader IED to pool resources, consolidate expertise and create more programmatic interventions.
 - x. **Reforms have begun but are not yet delivering full results.** The new delivery model, the Planetary Funds and the MTS reform conversations all point toward a system that is evolving but not yet optimized.
203. The evaluation notes that UNEP management had already identified many of the challenges highlighted in this assessment and had begun implementing corrective measures during the latter part of the evaluation period. These reforms reflect a deliberate shift toward stronger technical capacity, greater programmatic integration, and enhanced institutional coherence. Environment Fund resources are being strategically realigned to strengthen technical expertise in areas such as green chemistry, pollution and health economics, and circular market development. The portfolio is becoming more integrated across high-impact sectors, with GEF task managers embedded in sectoral teams to improve coherence between normative and operational work. Performance measurement has also been revised, with new indicators tracking progress on chemicals and circularity within key sectors rather than aggregate outputs. Institutional collaboration has been enhanced through embedded staff in the Law and Communications Divisions, while a Cost of Inaction study is underway to raise the political salience of pollution. UNEP has also broadened industry engagement across plastics, mining, mobility, and electronics. These initiatives, though recent, demonstrate a clear direction of travel that aligns with the evaluation's recommendations and signals reform toward more catalytic, sector-integrated delivery.

3.1.2 Responses to the key strategic questions

204. **Strategic Question 1: To what extent were the recommendations from the 2010-2014 Chemicals and Waste Subprogramme evaluation implemented?** The evaluation of the Chemicals and Waste Subprogramme in 2015 recommended that: (i) the linkages between the Subprogramme and the chemicals conventions anchored within UNEP be given greater prominence; (ii) more investment be made in outreach and communication; (iii) partnerships be enhanced; (iv) Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)'s mainstreaming work be upscaled; (v) the role of the Regional Offices be further strengthened; and (vi) a coherent resource mobilization strategy be developed. The evaluation found that several recommendations from the 2010–2014 Chemicals and Waste Subprogramme evaluation were implemented, though not all comprehensively. There has

been improved cooperation with the relevant MEAs which helped foster better integration between normative and implementation workstreams. IED has a significant presence in Geneva and Paris, enabling stronger engagement with European donor countries and Convention Secretariats. There has been increased communication & outreach—for example, UNEP developed and launched a new "Beat Pollution" communication campaign to raise awareness. External partnerships have significantly enhanced the Subprogramme's performance, particularly in normative influence, technical delivery, and access to funding. However, limitations in strategic coordination, partner diversity, and national-level alignment reduce their transformative potential. The role of ROs has been more clearly defined in UNEP's new Delivery Model (2022). They can play a key role in ensuring the Subprogramme is responsive to country needs—but this role is not fully realized. While progress was made, resource allocation remains a major challenge, with some recommendations still lacking financial support.

205. **Strategic Question 2: To what extent have collaborations and partnerships with MEAs been productive in implementing the PoW and achieving SP-CPA objectives?** Collaborations and partnerships with MEAs have been highly productive in normative alignment, global convening, and delivery of treaty obligations through GEF-funded initiatives. UNEP has implemented a range of GEF-supported projects tied directly to MEA obligations (e.g., phase-outs of POPs, mercury reduction). There is early engagement and review mechanisms whereby the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions now reviews UNEP project proposals early in the planning process, improving coherence and ensuring MEA relevance. This cooperation has increased project quality and compliance with MEA criteria, particularly for GEF-funded work. Through these partnerships, UNEP has played a central role in major global initiatives, such as the GFC and the ongoing INC process to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, aligning UNEP's normative leadership with MEA evolution. However, while many GEF-funded projects are well aligned with MEAs, projects funded through other, non-GEF, sources are less systematically linked, reducing the potential for unified strategic impact across the portfolio.
206. UNEP provides the science, policy analysis, and convening that lead to treaties (upstream role), while MEAs focus on implementation and compliance (downstream role). Strategic coordination can bridge the two ends of this continuum. Many country requests to ROs come from obligations or gaps under MEAs (e.g., waste management plans, POPs inventories, mercury phase-outs). Closer alignment allows UNEP to respond more directly to these requests through programming support, rather than inventing parallel frameworks.
207. **Strategic Question 3: To what extent do partnerships with the GEF influence UNEP's strategy, Subprogramme, and delivery effectiveness in addressing chemicals and pollution?** Partnership with the GEF has been crucial for enabling large-scale delivery, strengthening MEA alignment, and driving UNEP's shift toward sectoral and life-cycle approaches. However, it has also strongly influenced UNEP's agenda, introducing risks of over-dependence, strategic drift, and siloed implementation. UNEP's work on the GFC, plastic pollution, and circular economy sectors reflects GEF priorities as much as UNEP's internal strategic direction. This partnership also aligns UNEP more closely with MEA implementation (e.g., Minamata and Stockholm Conventions), reinforcing the strategic relevance of SP-CPA globally. Project selection and portfolio composition are heavily influenced by GEF strategies and focal area windows, as UNEP must conform to GEF guidelines to access funds. The result is a strategically steered but donor-shaped portfolio, which can sometimes prioritize available funding opportunities over internal programmatic coherence. GEF funding has enabled UNEP to deliver large, visible, and impactful projects (e.g. PlanetGOLD, hazardous chemical phase-outs), significantly contributing to SP-CPA PoW targets. However, UNEP's internal structure sometimes lags behind GEF's sectoral ambitions. For instance, GEF projects are housed in a specific unit, creating silos and reducing integration with broader sector teams (e.g., textiles, construction).

208. **Strategic question 4: How effectively were United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) resolutions on chemicals, waste, and pollution – reflecting Member States' priorities-embedded by the SP-CPA, and what were the primary challenges?** UNEA resolutions have been strategically embedded at a high level in the SP-CPA, especially where they align with GEF priorities and UNEP's normative strengths. However, their operational integration is uneven, hampered by a fragmented portfolio, insufficient field presence, weak monitoring systems, and limited visibility at the national level.
209. There is a strong strategic alignment as the SP-CPA reflects Member States' priorities as expressed through UNEA resolutions, particularly those related to chemical safety (e.g., Minamata Convention, SAICM), plastic pollution (e.g., INC for an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution process), wastewater and nutrients pollution, air quality, circular economy, and antimicrobial resistance (AMR). UNEA mandates directly informed the development of projects and initiatives such as the GFC, the Science-Policy Panel and the ongoing INC process mentioned above. UNEP used its norm-setting authority and convening power to respond to UNEA resolutions by launching or scaling up relevant global partnerships, platforms, and science-policy processes. The Subprogramme has also supported Member States through GEF-funded enabling activities that align with resolution themes (e.g., national implementation plans, policy guidance, capacity building).
210. However, while individual projects often align with UNEA resolutions, lack of portfolio coherence means that the full range of UNEA-mandated topics is not addressed in a coordinated or programmatic way. Some resolutions (e.g., water pollution, Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP)) are underrepresented due to weak integration across subprogrammes or siloed thematic work. UNEA priorities are not consistently reflected in UNSDCF or national development plans while UNEA resolutions are not systematically translated into measurable PoW indicators. Some resolutions are mandated without corresponding funding, making implementation dependent on opportunistic donor alignment (mainly GEF).
211. UNEA has progressively elevated pollution to the level of a planetary crisis, passing resolutions on marine litter and microplastics, chemicals in products, nutrient management, single-use plastics, AMR, and air quality, etc. These resolutions have expanded UNEP's mandate, requiring the SP-CPA to cover a wide array of themes – often without proportional increases in funding or staff capacity. As a result, UNEP must respond to many emerging issues in parallel, which stretches the portfolio and increases fragmentation. UNEP often designs new projects or initiatives in response to specific UNEA resolutions, sometimes in a donor-driven way. This leads to many small, stand-alone projects rather than a coherent programme clustered around a few causal pathways. Regional Offices lack the staff and budget to mainstream UNEA resolutions into UNSDCFs or national policies at scale. This means some resolutions (e.g., air quality, nutrient management) receive much less traction in countries than plastics or mercury, where strong partnerships and donor interest exist. Some topics championed by UNEA (e.g., wastewater) remain under-represented in the portfolio because they lack dedicated funding windows. UNEA resolutions are often politically negotiated and aspirational, calling for “strengthened action” or “enhanced cooperation” without specifying measurable outcomes. Because resolutions do not define quantitative targets, the PoW indicators remain process-oriented (e.g., “number of countries supported”) rather than outcome-oriented (e.g., “% reduction in mercury emissions”).
212. During the interviews some Member States recommended that UNEP should more clearly show how proposed actions under the next MTS directly support implementation of existing UNEA resolutions (especially in the chemicals and pollution area), rather than introducing new or overly ambitious agendas. For example, platforms such as the CCAC – which directly delivers UNEA Resolutions 3/8 and 6/10 through initiatives like the Clean Air Flagship, AQMx, and the Africa Clean Air Programme – illustrate how UNEP can use partnership-based

delivery networks to coordinate global responses, attribute funding, and show measurable progress on UNEA commitments.

213. **Strategic question 5: To what extent have the UNEP-wide projects impacted subprogramme performance, global presence, and operational delivery?** UNEP-wide projects have significantly enhanced the performance, visibility, and credibility of the SP-CPA, demonstrating the Subprogramme's capacity for high-impact, strategic delivery. However, without a deliberate approach to portfolio integration, institutional learning, and narrative amplification, the broader system benefits of these projects are underutilized. UNEP-wide projects like PlanetGOLD, the Global Programme on Mercury and the Air Quality umbrella programmes have delivered clear, measurable outputs aligned with PoW targets. For example, the PlanetGOLD contributed to mercury reduction in artisanal gold mining and policy reform in several countries while the One UNEP Plastic initiative and the Air Quality programme consolidated fragmented efforts into a coherent framework that improved communication, resource mobilization, and policy advocacy.
214. These initiatives serve as templates for integrated, cross-sectoral, and multi-partner delivery that the wider SP-CPA portfolio can emulate. They often have stronger monitoring frameworks, clearer theories of change, and more deliberate linkages to UNEA resolutions. UNEP-wide projects have thus amplified UNEP's visibility and credibility on the global stage, positioning it as a normative leader on issues like plastic pollution, mercury, and air quality. UNEP's role in the and the ongoing INC process to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, and the adoption of the GFC is directly tied to these UNEP-wide efforts. UNEP-wide projects often featured sectoral focus, life-cycle approaches, and value chain transformation, offering operational models that align with the evolving direction of UNEP's MTS and programmatic approach.
215. **Strategic question 6: How are ownership arrangements and synergies between the SP-CPA and other thematic, foundational, and enabling UNEP subprogrammes made tangible and effective to deliver interconnected and mutually beneficial results?** While there are examples of collaboration between the SP-CPA and other UNEP Subprogrammes, these synergies are not institutionalized, are inadequately tracked and inconsistently realized. Ownership remains Division-driven and project-bound, rather than being anchored in a unified programmatic governance structure. This limits UNEP's ability to consistently deliver interconnected, systems-based results across pollution, nature, and climate. Despite UNEP's ambition to "deliver as one," the "golden thread" linking chemicals and pollution to other planetary crises is often lost in implementation. The mechanisms for synergies between the thematic subprogrammes are weak, and there is no evidence of stronger mechanisms having been introduced yet. No formal governance or joint programming frameworks exist above the subprogramme level to coordinate planning, budgeting, or implementation across Subprogrammes.
216. PCPs, originally designed to support this function, have become fragmented project compilations rather than strategic coordination platforms. Coordination often depends on personal relationships and not on an institutional mandate. Budget lines are managed within Divisions, creating incentives to protect turf rather than collaborate. The IPMR reporting system does not reflect programmatic structure, so joint delivery is rarely tracked or rewarded. Indicators and logframes are often unique to each project, making it hard to show additive or complementary outcomes across Subprogrammes. UNEP needs to create integrative frameworks ensuring that when targeting major issues (e.g., plastic pollution), all related thematic perspectives (climate, energy, chemicals) are involved. The CCAC is one of UNEP's strongest demonstrations of an integrated approach that bridges climate, clean air, and health. If UNEP wants to institutionalize such "bridging" strength, it needs a structural set-up that goes beyond ad hoc collaboration and makes cross-subprogramme integration the default, not the exception.

217. **Strategic question 7: What is the relationship between the three Programme Coordination Projects (PCP)s: (i) Circularity in Sectors, (ii) Pollution and Health, and (iii) Towards Zero Waste and the SP-CPA from a results-oriented perspective?** The relationship between the three PCPs and the SP-CPA is thematically aligned but operationally weak. While they conceptually support the Subprogramme's strategic ambitions, they do not currently function as results-driven programmes. Each PCP maps conceptually onto key SP-CPA result areas. For example, "Circularity in Sectors" maps onto life cycle management, sustainable value chains, and green markets; "Pollution and Health" maps onto the chemicals-health nexus and the cross-cutting work on AMR and air quality; while "Towards Zero Waste" maps onto urban pollution and waste governance. Despite their conceptual alignment, the PCPs have not yet matured into fully functional programmatic structures capable of delivering cohesive results. There is a lack of results frameworks given that the PCPs do not have their own outcome-level indicators or results chains. As such, it is unclear how their activities contribute collectively to the PoW outcomes.
218. Each PCP comprises a mosaic of legacy and new projects, often with differing scopes, durations, and funders. This inhibits strategic consolidation, dilutes thematic coherence, and makes it difficult to aggregate results meaningfully. Without a shared set of performance metrics, value addition beyond individual projects is not demonstrable. The lack of programme-level reporting from PCPs into the IPMR further obscures this relationship. To make the PCPs effective instruments for programmatic delivery, UNEP would need to define shared outcomes and indicators for each PCP, link PCP results directly to SP-CPA outputs and impacts, establish governance, staffing, and accountability mechanisms and systematically track contributions across the project portfolio.
219. **Strategic question 8: How has the SP-CPA contributed to the influence of the UN Development System (UNDS) and its programming processes? Specifically, how can it inform and influence 1) UN Common Country Analysis (CCA), 2) UN Sustainable Development Country Frameworks (UNSDCF), and 3) support the advancement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to the SP-CPA?** How can its role be improved in the future to assist UNEP's environmental policy leadership role in the UN system at the global, regional, and country levels? The SP-CPA has made valuable normative contributions, but its influence on UNDS programming processes remains modest and uneven. Pollution and chemicals issues are seldom reflected in CCAs, which tend to focus on social, economic, and peace-related priorities. UNEP focal points have begun to insert CPA-related content into CCAs, especially where strong country demand exists (e.g., air quality, waste). However, this contribution is dependent on individual initiative and not a system-wide approach or institutional mandate.
220. As of data collected up to December 2024, pollution is referenced in only ~9% of UNSDCFs, showing a clear underrepresentation of SP-CPA themes at the heart of UN country programming. This is due to limited UNEP presence in-country, lack of structured engagement with Resident Coordinators and a technical language that does not resonate with ministries of planning or finance. There is no flagship policy product or synthesized guidance (e.g., "Pollution Gap Report") which can shape CCA/UNSDCF content from an environmental policy lens. To maximize its relevance and impact, UNEP must institutionalize country-level engagement, translate pollution into development outcomes, and scale its voice within the UN system through stronger messaging, tools, partnerships, and visibility.
221. At the regional level, UNEP needs to empower Regional Offices to convene regular regional dialogues on pollution-related SDGs, influence Regional Forums on Sustainable Development (RFSDs) and integrate SP-CPA content into interagency regional collaborative platforms. At the global level, UNEP needs to institutionalize joint programming with other agencies (e.g., WHO, UNIDO, UNDP) to integrate pollution in One Health, Circular Economy, and green recovery agendas. Some developments within the evaluation period have started

to address this issue, including a heightened programmatic effort through RSPCs, and increased level of integration in UNSDCF and the development of the UN common approach to pollution under the EMG, through the establishment of the Issue Management Group on Pollution. This includes a focus on integrating pollution in the QCPR process of the UNDS (to increase the level of reporting by its agencies on pollution), and on integration into CCAs/UNSDCFs, with the engagement of multiple agencies.

222. **Strategic question 9: To what extent has the Subprogramme involved the Regional Offices (ROs) in its strategy, including selection of geographic coverage?** Has it ensured that they are meaningfully engaged in the SP-CPA design and implementation? The evaluation reveals that the SP-CPA has involved ROs to a limited and inconsistent extent in its strategic planning, geographic prioritization, and implementation. While some efforts have been made to engage the regions, their role remains underleveraged and often reactive rather than structurally embedded.
223. The way UNEP develops and co-creates projects under SP-CPA has evolved significantly over the last decade moving from largely donor-driven and Divisions-designed projects to more participatory, co-created approaches. Projects have been developed through co-creation in the current MTS and there is an institutional mechanism for ROs to confirm this before projects are approved by CAG and PRC ROs have supported the implementation of GEF-funded projects, especially in enabling activities (e.g. national action plans, awareness campaigns). In some cases, RSPCs have contributed to technical reviews, partner consultations, and UNCT engagement. The recent rollout of UNEP focal points within UN country teams has increased the visibility of UNEP's pollution-related work and created channels for engagement in CCA and UNSDCF processes. Some regional staff have strong informal relationships with national governments, which helps advocate for SP-CPA themes. However, the ROs have a limited role in strategy and geographic prioritization. Thematic workstreams are largely driven by Divisions or GEF project pipelines and not by regional demand signals or context analysis. RSPCs often operate with unclear mandates, limited technical support, and insufficient authority.
224. Regional Offices do support geographic coverage indirectly, but they do not have a formal, institutionalized role in selecting where SP-CPA invests. Most geographic focus is still shaped by donor earmarks and Division-driven pipelines rather than a systematic, RO-led prioritization process. Their involvement is often supportive and facilitative, rather than strategic and programmatic. Unlocking their potential would make UNEP's work more demand-driven, politically relevant, and impactful, especially in translating UNEA resolutions and global commitments into country-level action. Strengthening ROs' role – by requiring early endorsement, embedding them in pipeline planning, and resourcing them for country dialogues – would make SP-CPA more demand-driven, regionally balanced, and strategically targeted. Many RSPCs are expected to cover multiple roles (e.g., programme delivery, donor engagement, country liaison), often without being based in the target countries, reducing their effectiveness. There is no formal process to ensure that regional input is reflected in SP-CPA planning, project design, or monitoring. Regional perspectives on political dynamics, country readiness, or implementation feasibility are not consistently integrated into the Division's decision-making.
225. **Strategic question 10: To what extent did the staff of UNEP shift their culture towards the vision and delivery of the MTS 2025 outcome and 2030 goal during the implementation of SP-CPA?** The cultural shift among UNEP staff toward the MTS 2025 outcome and 2030 vision has started but remains incomplete. While there is growing strategic awareness and emerging examples of systems-oriented programming, deep institutional change is constrained by silos, unclear incentives, skill gaps, and weak internal integration mechanisms. The alignment around the three planetary crises—climate change, nature loss, and pollution—has provided a clearer strategic focus, with many staff recognizing its

- importance for UNEP's identity and direction. Staff have begun using new delivery instruments like PCPs and the new project concept review mechanisms. Teams are engaging more in co-creation of project ideas across the Divisions and regional staff—an intended shift of the new Delivery Model. There is growing evidence of cross-agency collaboration (e.g., WHO, UNIDO, UNDP), particularly on issues like air pollution, AMR, and chemicals in supply chains. Some teams are moving toward upstream, sectoral transformation work, which reflects a shift from reactive to systemic programming.
226. However, there are cultural and operational barriers to full transformation. Many UNEP staff continue to operate in siloed, project-centric mindsets, often protecting mandates and budgets. There is internal competition for funding and reporting responsibilities limits collaboration and openness. There are no clear institutional incentives or accountability mechanisms to promote cross-pillar collaboration, systems thinking, or joint delivery. Staff performance assessments and programme metrics remain largely project-bound and Division-specific. Internal communication of strategic priorities remains inconsistent, with some staff unsure how their work supports the MTS or how to articulate impact beyond outputs. There is no unifying ToC or integrated results framework that aligns all staff around shared outcomes. The cultural shift toward strategic delivery, co-creation, and impact measurement requires skill sets that staff must be trained for (e.g., political engagement, systems thinking).
227. **Strategic question 11: Considering the evaluation will also be forward-looking to inform the implementation of the current and new MTS, to what extent have the changes in the design of the SP-CPA under the 2022-2025 MTS and the 2022-2023 PoW (extended to 2025) compared to the design under the MTS and PoW during the 2015-2021 period brought more coherence and effectiveness in the implementation, monitoring and reporting of the Subprogramme?** The 2022–2025 MTS and PoW introduced clearer strategic framing, thematic focus, and a shift toward programmatic coherence, but the structural and operational underpinnings necessary to realize this vision remain underdeveloped. Improvements in design were not matched by sufficient reform in implementation practices, governance structures, or monitoring systems. The 2022–2025 MTS positioned the SP-CPA more explicitly within the “Pollution” pillar of the triple planetary crisis, clarifying its strategic relevance. The introduction of the three PCPs was a step toward thematic coherence and an attempt to streamline the sprawling portfolio. The shift from pollutant-by-pollutant to sectoral, circular economy, and life-cycle approaches (e.g. plastics, electronics, textiles) reflects a maturing understanding of how to address chemicals and pollution holistically.
228. Despite a clearer strategic narrative, the project portfolio remains fragmented, with many legacy projects that do not align with the new PCP themes. PCPs are still functioning as containers of loosely related projects rather than as integrated delivery mechanisms with shared outcomes and indicators. No robust oversight structure or a programme board were established to manage SP-CPA as a unified programme. Roles and responsibilities for strategic coordination, especially for GSPC and PCP DRIs, remain ill-defined and lack authority. Indicators remain project-specific, process-heavy, and not outcome- or impact-oriented. There is no systematic post-project impact tracking, making it difficult to assess long-term effectiveness or learning across cycles.
229. As UNEP enters the next MTS cycle, a stronger emphasis on institutionalizing integration, harmonizing indicators, and empowering strategic functions is essential. The next MTS and PoW present a critical window for UNEP to realign GEF-funded activities with its programmatic vision; invest in institutional connectors and governance mechanisms; elevate the political and economic visibility of pollution and support green market transformation.

3.2 Lessons Learned

230. **Lesson 1: Strategic evolution in the SP-CPA improved thematic relevance but made long-term coherence and impact tracking more challenging.** The SP-CPA evolved considerably over the past decade, shifting from a chemical-by-chemical focus (2014–2017), to broader themes like air quality (2018–2021), and more recently toward a systems-oriented and circular economy approach (2022–2025). This evolution reflects UNEP’s responsiveness to global complexity and the growing interlinkages between pollution, production, and consumption. However, this thematic expansion also introduced challenges in articulating a coherent long-term theory of change and in assessing cumulative impact across strategies.
231. **Lesson 2: Balancing UNEP’s strong normative role with limited operational reach is essential for SP-CPA to drive transformative change.** The SP-CPA’s normative leadership—seen in science-policy work, standard-setting, and support to MEAs and other global frameworks—is a recognized strength. However, UNEP’s catalytic presence at the country level is often not matched with operational depth or sustained follow-up. While normative influence is critical for shaping global discourse, limited implementation capacity and short project cycles reduce UNEP’s ability to translate global commitments into local transformation. The lesson is to align normative ambition with operational relevance at the national level.
232. **Lesson 3: Fragmentation of the SP-CPA portfolio limited systemic results, underlining the need for more integrated programming.** Despite the large number of projects implemented under the SP-CPA, the portfolio has remained fragmented, with limited integration across initiatives. Many projects operate in silos, lacking shared goals, indicators, or coordinated delivery strategies. This has diluted the subprogramme’s capacity to achieve systemic change. Greater programmatic integration, including the consolidation of projects around fewer, more catalytic initiatives, could improve coherence and enhance collective impact.
233. **Lesson 4: Weak knowledge management and communications constrained learning, visibility, and influence across the SP-CPA.** The SP-CPA lacks a structured approach to knowledge sharing and institutional learning. There is no centralized repository or platform to capture and disseminate insights from project implementation. In addition, communications around SP-CPA achievements have been under-resourced, limiting public visibility and strategic influence compared to other UNEP areas such as climate and biodiversity. Strengthening internal learning systems and strategic storytelling could raise the profile of pollution work and support adaptive management.
234. **Lesson 5: Governance gaps and unclear accountability weakened cross-divisional coordination and reduced programmatic coherence.** The SP-CPA lacks a formal governance structure to oversee its strategic direction and ensure alignment across Divisions and projects. While coordination mechanisms exist, they rely heavily on informal relationships or individual leadership. Key tools such as the PCPs have not functioned as effective programmatic frameworks, often serving as administrative groupings rather than integrated platforms. This institutional fragmentation has impeded synergies and weakened overall delivery. Institutionalizing governance and clearer roles would enhance coordination and strategic cohesion.
235. **Lesson 6: A focus on output-level monitoring limited the SP-CPA’s ability to measure behavioural and environmental outcomes.** Monitoring under the SP-CPA has primarily focused on outputs—such as policies adopted or tools developed—without sufficient emphasis on whether these led to behavioural or environmental change. Many indicators are not well-aligned across MTS cycles, and there is limited capacity for outcome tracking post-project. This constrains UNEP’s ability to assess the real-world impact of its pollution

work. Future monitoring efforts should focus more on outcome-level change and learning from implementation.

236. **Lesson 7: Underutilization of regional capacities restricted the SP-CPA's ability to engage strategically at the country level.** RSPCs play a key role in connecting UNEP's normative work with country needs. However, unclear mandates, lack of authority, and limited technical support from Divisions have restricted their effectiveness. The evaluation found that regional staff often rely on personal networks rather than institutional systems to engage countries or Divisions. Strengthening the strategic and operational role of RSPCs would enhance country-level relevance and responsiveness.
237. **Lesson 8: Limited integration of pollution priorities into UN country programming reduced SP-CPA's influence and visibility within the UN system.** Despite UNEP's mandate, pollution is currently referenced in only about 9% of UNSDCF's. UNEP has struggled to embed pollution priorities into broader UN planning processes. This reflects both a lack of visibility and the need for stronger regional engagement and support to UNCTs. Enhancing pollution's integration into UN frameworks would amplify its relevance in national development agendas.
238. **Lesson 9: Emerging green and circular sectors offer strategic leverage points that remain underutilized by the SP-CPA.** Initiatives focused on sectors like plastics, textiles, and electronics have demonstrated potential for transformational change. However, these efforts remain dispersed, with limited programmatic alignment or economic framing to drive policy and market shifts. A more deliberate approach to sectoral transformation—grounded in green innovation, trade, and job creation—could generate broader traction for the pollution agenda. The lesson is to invest more strategically in these sectoral entry points.
239. **Lesson 10: Institutional placement of SP coordinators affects both strategic coherence and implementation alignment.** The relocation of the GSPC for SP-CPA to a technical Division (IED) has improved coordination with project managers but may reduce neutrality and strategic oversight. This reflects a broader tension between vertical (Division-based) and horizontal (crosscutting) delivery models. Without mechanisms for dual reporting or cross-functional collaboration, UNEP risks reinforcing silos. Balancing proximity to implementation with strategic independence is key to maintaining both relevance and coherence.

3.3 Recommendations

240. Based on the findings and lessons learned, the main recommendations given below focus on enhancing strategic coherence, institutional effectiveness, and delivery impact. The overarching recommendation is for UNEP to transition the SP-CPA from a collection of projects to a strategically governed, results-driven programme. This shift should enable the delivery of systemic environmental and development outcomes through stronger internal coordination, regional engagement, and sectoral integration. Some recommendations will require UNEP-wide action, not just changes at the SP-CPA level.
241. **Recommendation 1: Strengthen Strategic Planning and Continuity Across MTS Cycles.** Ensure that future iterations of the SP-CPA maintain strategic continuity across MTS cycles to support long-term coherence, learning, and impact assessment. Suggested actions could include:
 - i. Maintain a stable overarching ToC for the SP-CPA that connects goals, pathways, and indicators across MTS cycles, even as thematic priorities evolve. Develop a concise causal narrative for the change processes in the ToC and better show the multiple benefits.

- ii. Limit major thematic or structural shifts in the SP-CPA with each new MTS, to safeguard institutional memory and support cumulative progress tracking.
 - iii. Strengthen SP-CPA monitoring and reporting systems by shifting from output-based to outcome- and impact-oriented indicators, especially those reflecting behavioural and policy changes. Establish mechanisms to capture post-project impacts.
 - iv. Retain continuity in SP-CPA outcome-level indicators across MTS cycles to enable comparative analysis and more robust long-term impact evaluation.
 - v. Allow ProDocs to span multiple MTS cycles, with a light-touch “strategic alignment” check at the start of each cycle rather than requiring a full redesign.
 - vi. Develop and institutionalize a set of common programme and project-level indicators for SP-CPA, aligned with the MTS and SDGs, and require projects to select relevant indicators at the design stage.
 - vii. Leverage IPMR to automatically aggregate results across projects, enabling real-time dashboards for management, reporting, and resource mobilization.
242. **Recommendation 2: Strengthen SP-CPA Governance and Strategic Coherence.** Improve internal governance, coordination mechanisms, and accountability to enhance SP-CPA’s ability to deliver coherently across Divisions and Regional Offices. Suggested actions could include:
- i. Establish a formal governance structure (e.g., program board or steering committee) specific to the SP-CPA to guide its strategic direction and ensure consistent alignment across Divisions.
 - ii. Clearly define the roles, mandates, and accountability of GSPC and RSPCs under the SP-CPA, ensuring that their responsibilities are matched by adequate authority and resources.
 - iii. Institutionalize a culture of collaboration across Divisions implementing pollution-related work under the SP-CPA—such as chemicals, waste, air quality, and water pollution—by moving beyond ad hoc efforts toward an institutionalized integration model. Establish a structural set-up that makes cross-subprogramme collaboration the norm rather than the exception. This should include a shared governance mechanism, a unified results framework, integrated pipeline planning, coordinated resource mobilization, and joint Science-Policy support. Together, these elements would ensure that integrated approaches to pollution are embedded systematically across UNEP’s programming under the Subprogramme.
 - iv. Conduct a comprehensive functional and capacity assessment of the ROs to enhance their role in SP-CPA delivery. Develop standard operating procedures (SOPs) that formalize country coordination and collaboration between regions and Divisions—covering areas such as joint business planning, joint implementation, and information sharing. Establish a clear accountability framework that requires Divisions to channel country-level requests through ROs, ensuring their role as a primary coordination interface is respected. GSPCs could serve as the formal entry points for channelling country and regional requests to the appropriate technical teams within the relevant Divisions while overall accountability for providing such responses should rest with the respective Division Directors. In parallel, create mechanisms for Divisions to provide technical support to ROs systematically. Greater use should also be made of the technical expertise housed within the ROs. This recommendation would support Recommendation 3 of the *Formative Evaluation of the Delivery Model and Associated Programmatic Approach*¹⁵.

¹⁵ <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/47005>

- v. Institutionalize a robust regional coordination and delivery model for the SP-CPA. Ensure that project pipelines, geographic targeting, and country-level support are systematically informed by regional priorities, embedded within UNCT processes, and co-owned by ROs. Provide SP-CPA RSPCs with catalytic budgets and dedicated technical backstopping to effectively engage with countries and deliver coordinated, demand-driven outcomes at the national level. In addition to receiving technical support from Divisions, all Country Focal Points (CFPs) should include in their Work Plans a clear objective to promote the CPA at the outcome level within the UNSDCF processes of the countries or UNCTs they support. The need for resources to support greater UNEP engagement in UNCT processes is highlighted in recommendation 5 of the *Evaluation of the UNEP Environmental Governance Subprogramme, 2014-2021*¹⁶
 - vi. Systematically align the SP-CPA with the MEAs that UNEP administers and supports, by institutionalizing joint strategic planning with MEA secretariats, empowering Regional Offices to coordinate with regional MEA centres, and strategically positioning existing programmes and platforms for future treaty implementation (e.g., on plastic pollution and the new Science-Policy Panel).
 - vii. Reassess the structure, purpose, and enabling conditions of the PCPs to ensure they serve as genuine platforms for programmatic integration, rather than administrative groupings.
243. **Recommendation 3: Improve Delivery Through Focused Portfolios, Knowledge Systems, and Sustainable Resourcing.** Strengthen the operational delivery of SP-CPA by streamlining its portfolio, investing in institutional learning, and addressing resourcing gaps. Suggested actions could include:
- i. Focus the SP-CPA portfolio on fewer, larger-scale, and more catalytic projects that are aligned with its theory of change and capable of driving transformational outcomes.
 - ii. Improve the predictability and flexibility of funding by diversifying sources and strengthening alignment between GEF-funded SP-CPA initiatives and core-funded projects—while respecting the firewall between them. Strengthen internal coordination by setting up regular coordination forums between the GEF unit and the GSPC to engage in early-stage project reviews and concept development. Embed GEF staff in high-impact sector teams.
 - iii. Increase internal transparency regarding the allocation and use of funds within the SP-CPA, including Planetary Funds and pooled resources, and apply strategic criteria (e.g., catalytic potential, cross-pillar relevance) for funding prioritization. Better coordinate the various sources of funding to avoid duplication efforts. The need for transparency and communication on the allocation of funds in UNEP has also been highlighted in recommendation 3 of the *Evaluation of the UNEP Subprogramme on Climate Action, 2014-2023*¹⁷.
 - iv. Establish a structured knowledge management system within the SP-CPA to systematically capture and share lessons, innovations, and performance data across project teams.
 - v. Provide SP-CPA RSPCs with the technical and administrative support needed to engage countries effectively and champion the subprogramme at the regional level.
 - vi. Address staffing shortfalls within the SP-CPA by securing dedicated resources for project management, compliance, and strategic communications.
 - vii. Strengthen the strategic positioning and coordination with other UN agencies (WHO, UNDP, UNIDO, FAO, etc.) to enhance coherence and leverage complementary

¹⁶ <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/41594>

¹⁷ <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/46140>

mandates on chemicals, waste, and pollution. This should build on and extend the existing EMG mechanisms, linking system-wide policy coordination to concrete joint programming and regional delivery. Regional Offices should operationalize these partnerships through joint initiatives and UNCT engagement, particularly in integrating pollution–health–climate linkages in UNSDCF.

244. **Recommendation 4: Catalyse Green and Circular Markets as a Strategic Delivery Mechanism.** Position SP-CPA as a driver of market transformation and innovation through targeted engagement in priority sectors. SP-CPA can catalyse green and circular markets by combining its normative role (science, policy, standards) with UNEP’s finance and economic expertise via the Finance and Economic Transformation subprogramme. This creates a powerful delivery mechanism: market transformation as a driver of sustained pollution reduction, closing the gap between policy ambition and real-world impact. Suggested actions could include:

- i. Leverage ongoing SP-CPA initiatives in key sectors (e.g., plastics, textiles, electronics) to showcase the economic, social, and environmental value of circular approaches and pollution reduction.
- ii. Develop a sector-wide strategy with the SP-CPA that links pollution action to green industrial development, trade competitiveness, and job creation.
- iii. Position green chemicals as a core enabler of the circular economy, health and pollution-free development and framing the green chemicals market as a competitive and innovation-driven opportunity for countries and companies to leapfrog towards sustainable industrialisation.
- iv. Use UNEP’s normative leadership to shape global discourse on green chemistry and sustainable materials, while piloting scalable market interventions that demonstrate practical viability. Consider launching or co-leading a global partnership or platform for advancing the green chemicals market.

245. **Recommendation 5: Elevate the Visibility and Political Salience of the Pollution Agenda.** Enhance the visibility, influence, and strategic positioning of SP-CPA by framing pollution as a public health and development issue and integrating it more deeply into UN and national platforms. Suggested actions could include:

- i. Reframe pollution and chemicals as issues of human health, economic resilience, and social equity—not just environmental concerns—to broaden their policy relevance. With the inputs of economists and social scientists, use cost-benefit framing, not just cost of inaction¹⁸
- ii. Develop a flagship global publication on pollution and health to inform interagency coordination, catalyse political commitment, and raise UNEP’s profile in this area. Develop and promote model legislation or policy toolkits for integrated health-pollution governance. Produce a biennial Pollution and Health Gap Outlook (short, sharp, 40–50 pages) using SDG and MEA data and time its release before UNEA or major health/environment events to maximize visibility. UNEP can host a digital dashboard for continuous updates, with GEO serving as the deep dive reference every few years.

¹⁸ For example, the Africa Integrated Assessment is a flagship example of CCAC’s modelling and science-to-action approach where it identified concrete measures with triple wins (climate, clean air, food security), secured political buy-in through the African Union, led to the creation of the Africa Clean Air Programme and is being operationalized via the Quick Start initiative in five champion countries.

- iii. Integrate communication into the full project cycle. Include communication objectives, define target audiences and allocate appropriate funding. Update the Programme and Project Management Manual and training to reflect this integrated approach.
- iv. Raise the visibility of underrepresented themes such as water and wastewater pollution within SP-CPA programming, including through closer collaboration between IED and the Ecosystems Division's Source to Sea Pollution Unit.
- v. Support Regional Offices and UNCTs with communications materials, narratives, and tools that enable stronger integration of pollution priorities into UNSDCFs. Provide more technical backing to ROs through the GSPC to mainstream CPA in UN country frameworks when doing CCAs.
- vi. With rising global instability and increasing frequency of disasters, develop a more agile and adaptive framework for enabling swift resource mobilization and decision-making on environmental assessments for crisis-affected countries.

4 Annexes

Annex I. Overview of Chemical and Pollution Action Subprogramme

1. Institutional context over time

The UNEP situational analysis indicates that the world faces three major environmental crises: climate change, biodiversity and nature loss, and pollution. To fight the pervasive impact of pollution on society, the world's ministers of environment, gathered at the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) in 2017, expressed their political commitment to working towards a pollution-free planet. Governments also adopted resolutions targeting specific aspects of pollution. An Implementation Plan¹⁹ was devised, cutting across all these resolutions, to promote accelerated action, enhance capacities to address pollution and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The UNEA has recognized it as the key vehicle for prompt implementation and has encouraged all relevant stakeholders to contribute to its effective implementation.

Table 4 gives an overview of the SP-CPA MTS and POW Objectives and Outcomes from 2014 to 2023. **Table 5** provides a comparison of the indicators that have been included in the PoWs since 2014. The indicators and targets in the 2014-2017 and 2018-2021 are broadly consistent. The 2025 outcomes utilize a new set of five common indicators (three quantitative and two qualitative) which are applied to relevant 2025 CPA outcomes. This is the first time that qualitative indicators have been included.

As **Table 6** shows, the objectives and outcome statements have been aligned across the subprogrammes. The fourteen direct outcome statements of the SP-CPA can also be found in the reporting of the foundational and enabling subprogrammes. The four quantitative indicators of PoW 2022-2023 have been formulated such that a clear contribution from the other subprogrammes is necessary and can be reflected in the SP-CPA's indicators. As shown in **Table 7**, the indicators for the enabling and foundational subprogrammes measure performance for specific direct outcomes of the SP-CPA and enhances the coherence significantly.

Programme Coordination Projects (PCPs) have been established under all of UNEP's subprogrammes in the 2022-2025 MTS to provide greater coordination and coherence across UNEP's projects and project pipeline within the subprogramme. There are three PCPs under the SP-CPA with each having the following objective:

- **Circularity in Sectors:** Adoption of circularity policies and practices is upscaled in key sectors and systems to reduce releases of pollutants to air, water, soil and the ocean while ensuring positive social and economic outcomes.
- **Towards Zero Waste:** To improve waste and wastewater management through, inter alia, minimizing material input and waste and wastewater generation, circular processes, safe recovery of secondary raw materials and progressive reduction of open burning and dump sites.
- **Pollution and Health:** To strengthen global action to prevent chemicals and pollution risks to the environment and health.

¹⁹ UNEA and UNEP (2019) Implementation Plan Towards a Pollution-Free Planet.

Table 4. From Expected Accomplishments (EA) in 2014 to Outcomes in 2025

MTS 2014-2017 POW 2014-2015 and 2016-2017 SP name: "Chemicals and Waste"	MTS 2018-2021 POW 2018-2019 and 2020-2021 SP name: "Chemicals, Waste and Air Quality"	MTS 2022-2025 POW 2022-2023 (extended to 2025) SP name: "Chemicals and Pollution Action"
Objective: to promote a transition among countries to the sound management of chemicals and waste, with a view to minimizing impacts on the environment and human health. EA1 Enabling Environment: Countries increasingly have the necessary institutional capacity and policy instruments to manage chemicals and waste soundly including the implementation of related provisions of the multilateral environmental agreements. EA2 Chemicals: Countries, including major groups and stakeholders, make increasing use of the scientific and technical knowledge and tools needed to implement sound chemicals management and the related multilateral environmental agreements. EA3 Waste: Countries, including major groups and stakeholders, make increasing use of the scientific and technical knowledge and tools needed to implement sound waste management and the related multilateral environmental agreements.	Objective: Sound management of chemicals and waste and improved air quality enable a healthier environment and better health for all. EA1: Policies and legal, institutional and fiscal strategies and mechanisms for sound chemicals management developed or implemented in countries within the frameworks of relevant MEAs and SAICM. EA2: Policies and legal, institutional and fiscal strategies and mechanisms for waste prevention and sound management developed or implemented in countries within the frameworks of relevant MEAs and SAICM. EA 3: National emissions sources identified, policies, legal, regulatory, fiscal and institutional frameworks and mechanisms for the reduction of air pollution developed, institutional capacity built for improved air quality, and air quality assessments done by countries with the support of UNEP.	The expected 2030 outcome of this UNEP subprogramme is that significant progress is made towards a pollution-free planet, particularly through the delivery of the Towards a Pollution-Free Planet Implementation Plan. Outcome 1: Human health and environmental outcomes are optimized through enhanced capacity and leadership in the sound management of chemicals and waste. Outcome 2: Waste management is improved, including through circular processes, safe recovery of secondary raw materials and progressive reduction of open burning and dump sites. Outcome 3: Releases of pollutants to air, water, soil and the ocean are reduced.

Although MEAs are autonomous entities and their activities, including projects, are not directly integrated into UNEP's PoW (that is why MEAs are excluded from the evaluation), UNEP plays a vital complementary role in supporting them. Through its PoW, UNEP provides essential technical, scientific, and policy support that facilitates the effective implementation of MEAs at the national, regional, and global levels. While not part of direct MEA operations, this supporting role contributes to broader environmental governance and capacity-building efforts aligned with MEA objectives.

The MTS 2022-25 and PoW 2022-23 brought about changes in the way that UNEP operates. A new 'Delivery Model' modified and clarified the roles and responsibilities for Divisions and Regional Offices for POW implementation. In a nutshell, Regional Offices represent UNEP in the regions and thus lead dialogue with Member States and, within UNEP, provide strategic and programmatic direction, thought leadership, technical input and coordination for UNEP's work as it relates to regional and national priorities, guiding the project design and implementation process. The Divisions provide thematic sectoral and technical depth and thematic coherence for UNEP's work and are directly accountable for project implementation, progress monitoring, and reporting.

Table 5. Comparison of PoW indicators (2014-2023)

POW 2014-2015/ 2016-2017	POW 2018-2019/2020-2021	POW 2022-2023 (Extended to 2025)
Indicators for EA 1 (i) Increase in the number of countries reporting the adoption of policies for the sound management of chemicals and waste (ii) Increase in the number of countries reporting the use of economic and market-based incentives, business policies and practices that promote the sound management of chemicals and waste (iii) Increase in the number of countries reporting the use of industry reporting schemes that promote take-up of the sound management of chemicals and waste	Indicators for EA 1 (i) Increase in the number of countries that have used UNEP analysis or guidance, and where possible are applying a multi-sectoral approach, in developing or implementing legislation, policies or action plans that promote sound chemicals management and implementation of the relevant multilateral environmental agreements and SAICM (ii) Increase in the number of private companies/industries that have developed or implemented a strategy or specific actions on sound chemicals management using UNEP analysis or guidance (iii) Increase in the number of civil society organizations that have undertaken action on improving chemicals management using UNEP analysis or guidance	Quantitative indicators for Outcomes 1,2 and 3 (i) Number of Governments that, with UNEP support, are developing or implementing policies, strategies, legislation or action plans that promote sound chemicals and waste management and/or the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements and the existing framework on chemicals and waste (ii) Number of Governments developing or implementing policies, strategies and mechanisms to prevent or reduce waste and ensure environmentally sound waste treatment or disposal, including in the context of disaster or conflict related environmental emergencies, with UNEP support (iii) Number of policies, regulatory, financial and technical measures developed with UNEP support to reduce pollution in air, water, soil and the ocean (iv) Reduction in releases of pollutants to the environment achieved with UNEP support
Indicators for EA 2 (i) Increase in the number of Governments addressing priority chemical issues, including their obligations under the chemicals MEAs, through the use of risk assessment and management tools provided by UNEP (ii) Increase in the number of businesses and industries addressing priority chemical issues through the use of risk assessment and management tools provided by UNEP (iii) Increase in the number of civil society organizations addressing priority chemical issues under the chemicals MEAs through the use of risk assessment and management tools provided by UNEP	Indicators for EA 2 (i) Increase in the number of countries that have used UNEP analysis or guidance in implementing waste prevention and sound management policies and good practices, in accordance with relevant multilateral environmental agreements, SAICM and other relevant international agreements (ii) Increase in the number of private companies/industries that have used UNEP analysis or guidance in implementing policies and good practices for waste prevention and sound waste management (iii) Increase in the number of civil society organizations that have taken action to enhance waste prevention and improve waste management using UNEP analysis or guidance	Qualitative indicators (i) Change in action by the private sector and civil society on pollution prevention and control as a result of UNEP action (ii) Progress in the chemicals and pollution-related aspects of the 2030 Agenda on which UNEP focuses its work
Indicators for EA 3 (i) Increase in the number of Governments addressing priority waste issues, including their obligations under the related MEAs, through the use of tools and methodologies provided by UNEP (ii) Increase in the number of businesses and industries addressing priority waste issues through the use of tools and methodologies provided by UNEP	Indicators for EA 3 (i) Increase in the number of countries that have developed national emission inventories and air quality assessments with publicly accessible monitoring data and information electronically available (ii) Increase in the number of countries that have adopted policies, standards, and legal, regulatory, fiscal and institutional frameworks and mechanisms for improved air quality with UNEP analysis or guidance (iii) Increase in the number of countries that have raised awareness on the importance of air quality and have made air quality monitoring data	

POW 2014-2015/ 2016-2017	POW 2018-2019/2020-2021	POW 2022-2023 (Extended to 2025)
(iii) Increase in the number of civil society organizations addressing priority waste issues under the waste-related MEAs through the use of risk assessment and management tools provided by UNEP	and other information publicly available and easily understandable with UNEP analysis or guidance	

Table 6. Objectives and Chemicals and Pollution-related statements of the enabling and foundational subprogrammes in MTS 2022-2025

Subprogramme	Objectives of the subprogramme	Chemicals and Pollution Action related
Science-policy	The science-policy Subprogramme will empower Governments and other stakeholders to make evidence-based decisions through environmental assessments , identification of emerging issues and fostering of policy action towards the achievement of the outcomes for the climate action, nature action and chemicals and pollution action subprogrammes.	- Sound science, data and statistics, analysis, information and knowledge are generated and shared. - Air pollution action, sustainable mobility and clean energy are supported. - Global plastics pollution is reduced. - Resilient waste and wastewater systems and infrastructure are upscaled. - Use of harmful chemicals in products and processes is reduced in key sectors. - Land-based sources of pollution in fresh water and oceans, including marine litter and nutrients, are reduced.
Environmental Governance	The environmental governance Subprogramme will support countries in developing and implementing the environmental rule of law and in identifying integrated legal and policy responses that promote participatory and effective environmental decision-making. UNEP will support institutional strengthening and the development and effective implementation of appropriate legal frameworks and policies.	- Collective action of United Nations system entities addresses sound management of chemicals and waste. - Regional and national integrated policy has shifted towards the sound management of chemicals and waste. - Institutional capacity to adopt and act on national and international commitments is enhanced. - Air pollution action, sustainable mobility and clean energy are supported. - Global plastics pollution is reduced.
Finance	The finance and economic transformations Subprogramme will leverage business value chains, private finance and consumer behaviours and enhance economic policies to support the achievement of climate, nature, and chemicals and pollution outcomes. UNEP will support transformed economic policies, including trade policies, to accelerate the shift to more sustainable patterns of consumption, production, investment and equity. In addition, UNEP will support principles and standards that enable private finance and business and their value chains to improve environmental sustainability. UNEP information and knowledge-sharing work will inform more sustainable consumer behaviour.	- Regional and national integrated policy has shifted towards the sound management of chemicals and waste. - Land-based sources of pollution in fresh water and oceans, including marine litter and nutrients, are reduced. - Air pollution action, sustainable mobility and clean energy are supported. - Institutional capacity to adopt and act on national and international commitments is enhanced. - "3R" waste management systems are mainstreamed. - Resource efficiency and circularity in key sectors are improved. - The economics of chemicals actions and waste and pollution reduction support have shifted away from harmful chemicals. - Global advocacy catalyses the phase-out of most polluting products and practices. - Markets, supply chains, trade and consumer behaviours have shifted towards reduced pollution, influenced by transparency enabled by digital technologies. - Global plastics pollution is reduced.
Digital Transformation	The digital transformations Subprogramme will support digital guidelines, architecture and governance, as well as enhanced digital literacy, to encourage transformative use of environmental digital public goods and accelerate progress towards environmental sustainability. UNEP will work to integrate datasets, analysis and digital public goods associated with climate, nature and pollution into an inclusive digital ecosystem for people and the planet.	- Sound science, data and statistics, analysis, reporting and knowledge are generated and shared. - Transparency in value chains is enhanced by digital technologies, influencing markets, supply chains and consumer behaviours. - Air pollution action, sustainable mobility and clean energy are supported. - Institutional capacity to adopt and act on national and international commitments is enhanced. - Regional and national integrated policy has shifted towards the sound management of chemicals and waste. - Global advocacy catalyses the phaseout of most polluting products and practices.

Table 7. Indicators measuring support from foundational and enabling subprogrammes support to deliver chemicals and pollution direct outcomes

Science-policy	Environmental governance	Finance and economic transformations	Digital transformations
1. Number of countries and national, regional and subnational authorities that, as a result of UNEP support, have strengthened capacity to develop sound environmental data, statistics, scientific assessments and early warning systems (DO 3.13) 2. Number of relevant global, regional and national forums, institutions and Governments using data, statistics, scientific assessments and early warning and foresight systems provided by UNEP for catalysing policymaking and action (DO 3.3) 3. Number of United Nations agencies and multilateral environmental agreement secretariats using data and statistics on environmental trends and assessments identified through UNEP to catalyse policy recommendations (DO 3.2, 3.4) 4. Number of United Nations country teams using data and statistics on environmental trends and assessments identified through UNEP to catalyse policy recommendations (DO 3.2, 3.13)	1. Number of countries supported by UNEP under the Montevideo Programme in developing and implementing environmental rule of law and related technical and institutional capacities to address internationally agreed environmental goals (DO 3.5) 2. Number of international legal agreements or instruments advanced or developed with UNEP support to address emerging or internationally agreed environmental goals (DO 3.4) 3. Number of plans, approaches, strategies, policies, action plans or budgeting processes of entities at the national, regional and global levels that include environmental goals as a result of UNEP support (DO 3.1, 3.3) 4. Number of entities at the national, regional or global levels that UNEP has supported in developing integrated approaches and tools for enhanced coordination, cooperation and synergies for the coherent implementation of multilateral environmental agreements (DO 3.10)	1. Number of economic, finance, industry and trade policies, practices, partnerships and initiatives put in place or implemented to enable just transitions (DO 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.8, 3.11, 3.12) 2. Number of business alliances, principles, practices, standards or frameworks established or adopted with UNEP support to enhance environmental sustainability (DO 3.2, 3.3, 3.6, 3.8, 3.11, 3.12, 3.14) 3. Number of consumer information tools and measures, educational approaches and advocacy and awareness-raising events and products that inform decision-making, choices and changes in behaviour towards enhanced environmental sustainability, developed with UNEP support (DO 3.11, 3.12)	1. Number of digital platforms deployed as a result of UNEP support for automatically monitoring global progress against climate, nature and chemicals and pollution targets to support transparency, predictive analytics and risk identification (DO 3.12) 2. Number of business alliances, partnerships and networks leveraging environmental data and digital transformation approach to incentivize environmental sustainability and a circular economy within financial markets (DO 3.4, 3.11) 3. Number of digital applications and engagement platforms created with UNEP support to support electronic governance and enhance public participation in environmental monitoring, consensus building, decision-making and digital transformation linked to climate, nature and chemicals and pollution actions, including the reduction of environmental digital technology inequalities in impact chains, consumer behaviours and policymaking (DO 3.13)

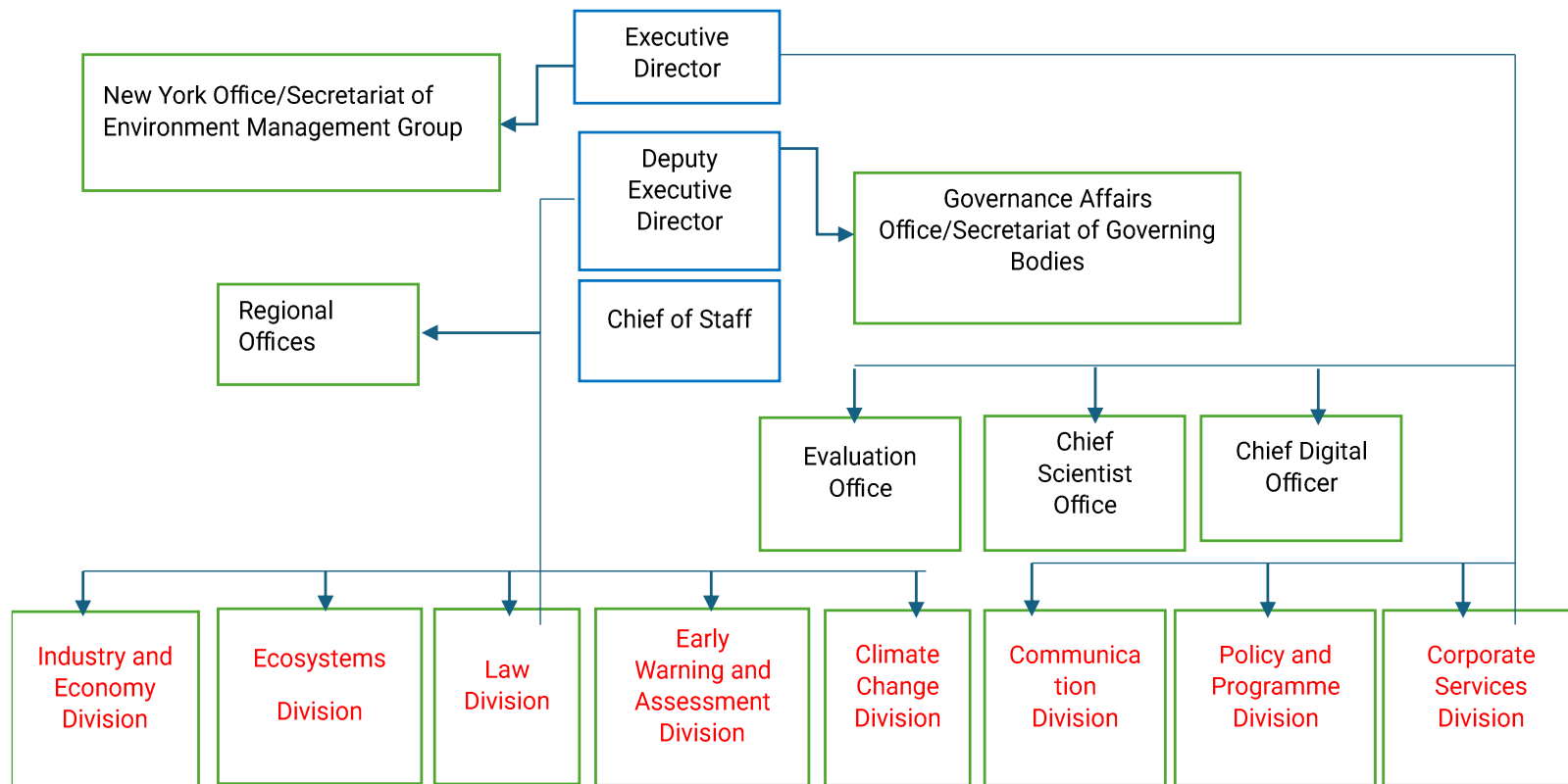


Figure 21. Organizational Structure of UNEP

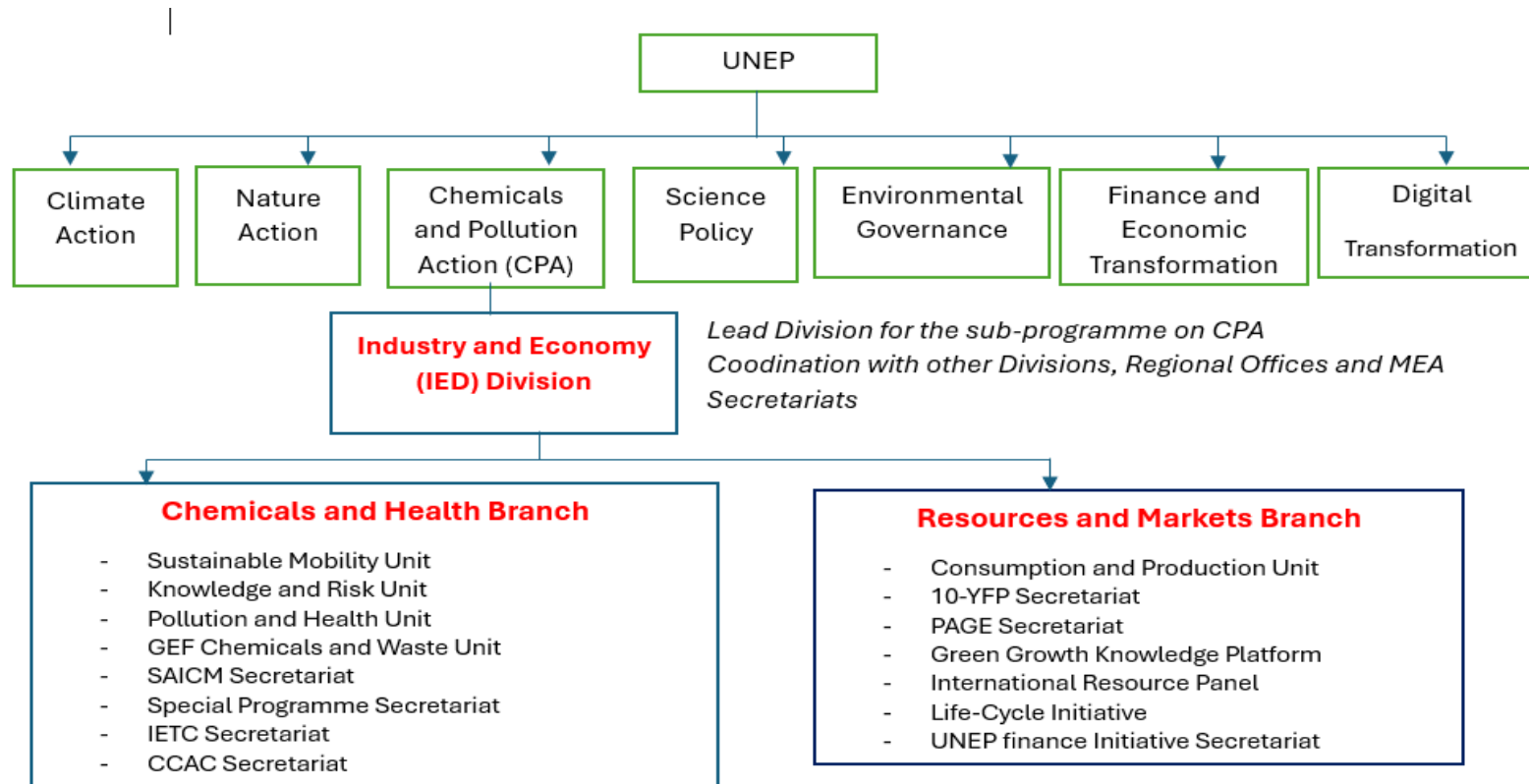


Figure 22. SP-CPA structure and function (Source: UNEP Website (adapted))

2. Project portfolio and geographic scope

The data sources for the analysis of the project portfolio provided were not always internally consistent. Sources for this assessment included the Project Information Management System (PIMS) and the Quarterly Business Review (QBR) Programme Delivery Reports. The SP-CPA is one of the largest Subprogramme both in terms of number of projects and in funding volume. There were 81 active projects as of 31st December 2024 that have been classified as belonging to the Subprogramme. An itemised list of the Subprogramme project portfolio is provided in [Annex I](#). 54 CPA projects (including 42 funded by GEF) closed during the period 2015 to 2024. [Table 8](#) summarizes the distribution of these projects as per their funding source and as per their belonging to the three PCPs.

Table 8. Active Projects as at 31.12.2024

	Non-GEF funded			GEF funded			Total		
No of Active Projects	15 (12 managed by Industry and Economy Division and 3 by Ecosystems Division)			66 (59 managed by Industry and Economy Division and 7 by Ecosystems Division)			81 (71 managed by Industry and Economy Division and 10 by Ecosystems Division)		
Active projects classified in the PCPs	Pollution and Health	Circularity in Sectors	Towards Zero Waste	Pollution and Health	Circularity in Sectors	Towards Zero Waste	Pollution and Health	Circularity in Sectors	Towards Zero Waste
	9	3	3	53	13	0	62	16	3
Budget (Million US\$)	95.1			241.5			336.6		

The following observations can be made:

- 66 projects, representing 81% of the total, were funded by GEF.
- About 72% of the funding volume for the projects came from GEF.
- 71 projects, representing 88% of the total, were managed by IED while the remaining were managed by the Ecosystems Division
- 62 projects, representing 77% of the total, belonged to the PCP "Pollution and Health".

Figure 23 illustrates that the portfolio has an appropriate geographical scope, including across Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The evidence collected by the Evaluation Team from internal and external stakeholders suggested that many of the primary factors contributing to the country selection of these for projects under the SP-CPA are outside of UNEP's direct control, being the needs and interests of countries themselves and responding to the requirements of bilateral and multilateral funding sources. For example, the GCF's policy requirement for funding LDCs and SIDS helps ensure geographic spread and a focus on countries most in need.

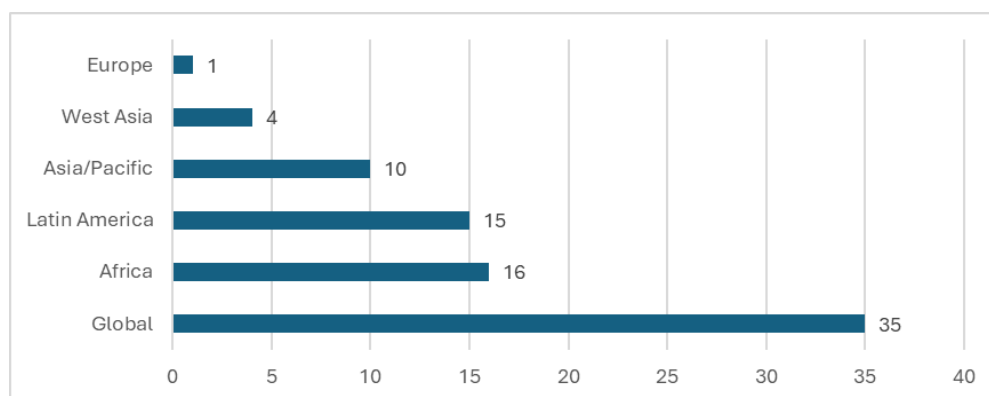


Figure 23. Geographic distribution of the active projects as of 31st December 2024

Figure 24 shows the distribution of the active projects as per the budget size. 25 projects, representing 31% of the total, had budgets below 0.5 million US\$. 47% of the projects had budgets below 1 million US\$. 10 projects, representing 12% of the total, had budgets above 10 million US\$. While the SP-CPA has a large portfolio, it mixes some big GEF and non-GEF funded programs with many small projects funded by donors. There is thus a fragmentation across many small initiatives which does not necessarily lead to optimal impact.

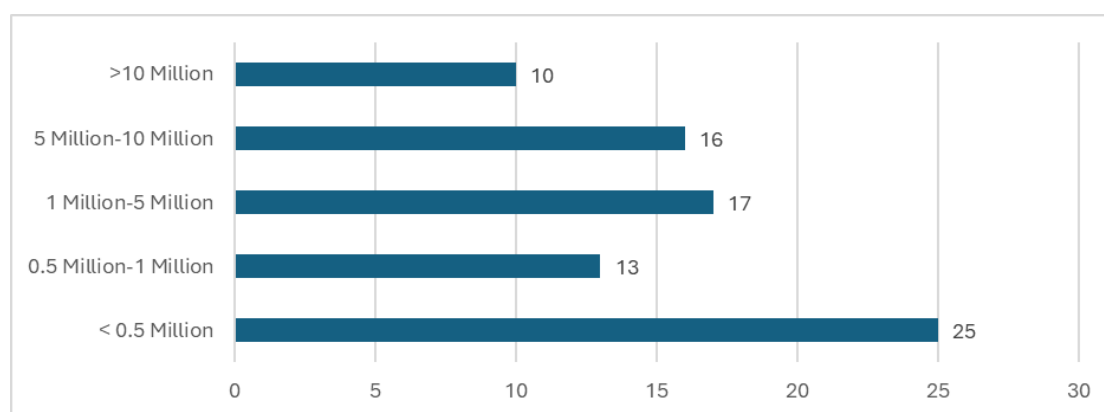


Figure 24. Active Projects distribution by budget size

Figure 25 and Figure 26 show respectively the number and budget distributions of the active projects by theme. While there is an overlapping between the themes (e.g., some of the GEF funded projects on POPs and Mercury will also be contributing to institutional strengthening or projects on circularity in sectors will also be contributing to waste management) it can be observed that there is a diverse thematic spread with again a concern over the fragmentation, which does not necessarily lead to transformative change. The profile of water pollution and air pollution, while being cornerstones for the work on pollution, is weak in the portfolio.

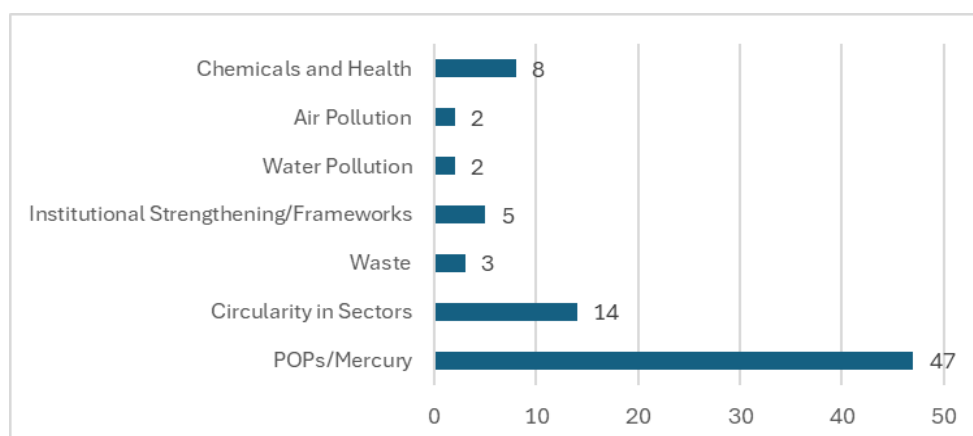


Figure 25. Number of Active Projects distribution by theme

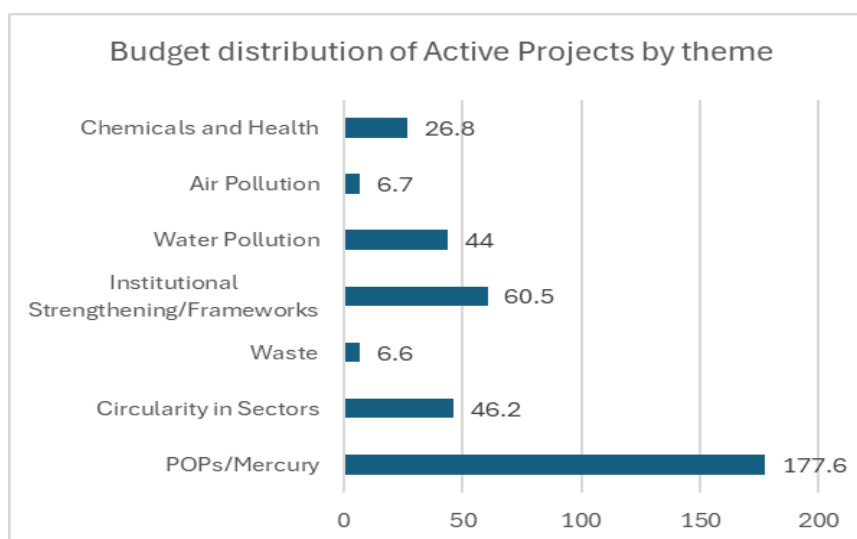


Figure 26. Budgets of Active Projects distribution by theme

Within the SP-CPA, a substantial share of mercury and POPs projects are financed through GEF, which serves as the financial mechanism for the Stockholm and Minamata Conventions. These projects often have relatively small individual budgets (the average budget of the 47 POPs/Mercury projects is about US\$ 3.8 million), reflecting the GEF's model of targeted, treaty-driven interventions.

3. Stakeholders and partners

Table 9 summarizes the roles of key stakeholders in the Subprogramme. The broad scope of the SP-CPA is reflected in the partnership arrangements. The achievement of the results set out in the PoW documents requires the involvement of UN entities, government institutions, MEA Secretariats, development organizations, civil society organizations – including expert organizations and networks, think tanks, and scientific and academic organizations. Examples of strategic coordination platforms and partnerships include: The Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint; the Clean Air Coalition to Reduce Short-lived Climate Pollutants; MEAs; SAIC; The Special Programme on Chemicals and Waste Management; The Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals; United Nations entities and other organizations, including the World Bank, the World Trade Organization and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, scientific institutions, national agencies, non-governmental organizations, foundations, and the private sector to assist Member States in implementing pollution reduction efforts.

Table 9. Key stakeholders and their role in the Subprogramme

Stakeholder	Role in the Subprogramme
UNEP Secretariat	
Division Directors/Deputy Directors from Technical and Corporate Divisions/Offices	The Subprogramme is expected to ensure the coherence of assessments conducted across all other UNEP SPs. Technical Divisions provide technical leadership and are directly accountable for the delivery of project results that fall within their Division's expertise and mandate. IED manages and coordinates the SP-CPA, developing its components within the MTS and PoW. It also devises strategic directions for the SP. IED also coordinates resource mobilization, partnership building, and monitoring and reporting. The Director of IED is the Lead Director/ DRI for the SP-CPA. The SP-CPA global Subprogramme Coordinator reports to the Director. Other Divisions, such as the Ecosystems Division, the Early Warning Division, and Communications Division also contribute to the delivery of SP-CPA. A key corporate division is the Policy and Programme Division (PPD), which is the process owner for many activities related to programmatic coordination, including strategic planning, quality assurance mechanisms, monitoring, and reporting. Another one is the Corporate Services Division, which leads and oversees all administrative and infrastructural support for the organization. It also manages UNEP's financial resources and coordinates resource mobilization from Governments, the private sector, and other partners to deliver the UNEP MTS and PoW efficiently and effectively.
Heads of Branches and Units	<i>IED Chief of Chemicals and Health Branch</i>, implements most of the SP-CPA projects. <i>IED GEF Chemicals & Waste Unit</i>, coordinates the portfolio of GEF projects in these areas. <i>IED Science Policy Panel</i>, leads, Secretariat of the ad hoc open-ended working group (OEWG) on a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution. <i>Ecosystems Division/Marine and Freshwater Branch</i>, through its Source to Sea Pollution Unit, supports UNEP's work towards a pollution-free planet by protecting freshwater, coastal, and marine ecosystems from pollution, notably from nutrients and wastewater, as well as marine litter and plastic pollution.
Global Subprogramme Coordinator	Portfolio coordination; thought leadership; strategic planning; reporting and analysing results; resource allocation and mobilization; innovative approaches; coordination of implementation and development of synergies across the SP. A key stakeholder within this group is the SP-CPA global Subprogramme Coordinator.

Stakeholder	Role in the Subprogramme
DRIs of PCPs	Monitoring of results at PCP level; coordination of implementation and development of synergies within the PCP. Key stakeholders within this group are the SP-CPA three PCP DRIs.
IED Administrative Services/ Fund Management Officers	Facilitate new resource allocation strategies. Responsible for the Divisions and SP-CPA financial management
Project Managers	Co-creating concepts for the PCPs and implementing projects within the PCPs. For example, the ONE UNEP Plastic Project on Accelerating a Global Circular Plastic Economy to Reduce Plastic Pollution and its Impacts
Regional Directors/Deputy Directors	Accountable for representing the whole of UNEP in the regions and are the principal interlocutor with regional platforms and national governments and lead all regional and country dialogue. Collectively, as part of the SMT, they play a key role in ensuring that programme implementation meets regional and country needs, guiding UNEP's interventions in their respective regions.
Regional Subprogramme Coordinators	Play a similar role at the regional level to the global SPC role (as outlined above). Gathering national and regional prioritized information at SP level; co-creating concepts for the PCPs
Other UN Stakeholders	
MEAs to which UNEP provides Secretariat.	Indirect involvement in SP design. Internationally agreed environmental goals are utilized to set the scope. Political outreach and resonate key finding and messages emanating from the programme within their constituencies. Joint outputs and thematic reviews. Seek complementarity and avoid duplication with UNEP other major environmental assessments. It can be reached directly by projects and have the potential to amplify the messaging, emphasize priorities and multiply effects
UN agencies and programmes (WHO, FAO, UNDP, etc.)	Critical role to ensure United Nations Development System (UNDS) coherence. Political outreach and resonating key finding and messages emanating from the programme within their constituencies. Jointly contribute to monitoring the SDGs. Joint outputs and thematic reviews.
External Partners	
Donors (including specific countries, the EC, and bilateral (SIDA, etc) and multilateral (the GEF, the GCF)	Critical role to ensure funding and sustainability of the SP. Contribute to expanding country capacity development work. Influence the direction and agenda of work of the SP.
Member States through the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) to UNEP	Participation in SP design through UNEP governing bodies (UNEA) and Regional Fora. Collaboration with policymakers is crucial for understanding their perspectives and ensuring that their views are considered in assessments, thereby making the findings more useful. Capacity to use project outputs. Inform knowledge gaps and research. Inform UNEP with needs for tools and methods to enable the integration of environmental, economic, and social information. Contribute to dissemination of information at the national and local levels. Share lessons learned.
External Parties	
Private sector (e.g. agriculture, mining, manufacturing, banks)	Willingness to adhere to and implement governmental policies. No involvement in SP design. Contribute with technical expertise and solutions, new data analysis methodologies and tools.
Civil Society Organizations (CSOs/NGOs, academia)	Limited power/influence in the design of the SP. Access, consult and use data, assessments). CSOs advocate for important causes, provide expertise that enriches UNEP's decisions, and channel the voices of those most likely to be affected by environmental challenges and policies. CSOs promote strong environmental governance. Share lessons learned

Table 10. List of Active CPA Non-GEF Projects as at 31.12.2024

No	PS Project ID	Project Title	Theme	PCP	Responsible Section	Expected End Date/ Start Date	Budget (US\$)	Region
1	SB-007154	Operationalization of the Special Programme to support institutional strengthening at the national level to enhance the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention on Mercury and the Strategic Approach	Institutional Strengthening	Pollution and Health	Industry and Economy Division	31/12 / 2025 30/09/ 2016	33,550,922	Global
2	SB-010239	516.1 Secretariat Services to the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)	Institutional Strengthening	Pollution and Health	Industry and Economy Division	31/12/2024 15/05/2018	17,143,819	Global
3	SB-012156	522.4 Protecting the Marine Environment from Land-Based Pollution through Strengthened Coordination of Global Action	Water Pollution	Pollution and Health	Ecosystems Division	31/03/2025 31/01/2019	39,513,441	Global
4	SB-021354	ONE UNEP Plastic Project on Accelerating a Global Circular Plastic Economy to Reduce Plastic Pollution and its Impacts	Circularity in Sectors	Circularity in Sectors	Industry and Economy Division	31/12/2027 04/05/2023	11,202,158	Global
5	SB-023204	UNEP-wide project on Improving Air Quality	Air Pollution	Pollution and Health	Industry and Economy Division	31.12.2026 01.07.2023	3,636,079	Global
6	SB-024401	ONE UNEP Textile Project: Towards a Sustainable and Circular Textile Value Chain	Circularity in Sectors	Circularity in Sectors	Industry and Economy Division	31.12.2027 19.10.2023	2,405,576	Global
7	SB-025248	Integrated Solid Waste Management towards Zero Waste	Waste	Towards Zero Waste	Industry and Economy Division	31.12.2026 01.01.2024	3,679,056	Global
8	SB-026042	Preventing and addressing the degradation of freshwater and marine ecosystems from source to sea	Water Pollution	Pollution and Health	Ecosystems Division	30/04/2028 01/05/2024	4,666,780	Global
9	194919 (SMA ID)	Chemicals, Environment, and Health: Accelerating transition towards toxic free planet	Chemicals and Health	Pollution and Health	Industry and Economy Division	31/12/2026 02/07/2024	2,218,023	Global
10	195309 (SMA ID)	New Global Framework implementation and UN common approach to pollution free including building capacities at regional and country levels	Institutional Strengthening	Pollution and Health	Industry and Economy Division	31/12/2025 01/07/2024	530,000	Global
11	198885 (SMA ID)	Global Programme for Sustainable Mobility	Air Pollution	Pollution and Health	Industry and Economy Division	30/12/2029 25/07/2024	3,255,570	Global
12	137795	Circularity in Sectors PCP	Circularity in sectors	Circularity in sectors	Industry and Economy Division	31.12.2027	514,817	Global

No	PS Project ID	Project Title	Theme	PCP	Responsible Section	Expected End Date/ Start Date	Budget (US\$)	Region
13	137838	Towards Zero Waste PCP	Waste	Towards Zero waste	Industry and Economy Division	31.12.2025	1,278,141	Global
14	146723	Pollution and Health PCP	Chemicals and Health	Pollution and Health	Industry and Economy Division	31.12.2025	2,050,699	Global
15	217457	Prevention, disposal and recovery of Conflicts, Disasters and Incidents related pollution	Waste	Towards Zero Waste	Ecosystems Division	30.10.2028	1,609,018	Global

Table 11. List of Active GEF Projects as at 31.12.2024

No	SMA ID	Title	Theme	PCP/Division	Responsible Section	Start Date	End Date	Budget (US\$)	Region
1	163623	GEF-CW.11177.Supply Chains Global, Global replication to eliminate hazardous chemicals from supply chains.	Chemicals and Health	Circularity in Sectors	IED	23.09.2024	23.03.2032	1,301,735	Global
2	204598	GEF-CW.11049.Africa Plastics FSP. Circular and POPs-free Plastics in Africa (Submitted)	Circularity in Sectors	Circularity in Sectors	IED	20.09.2024	28.02.2030	10,540,000	Regional-Africa
3	180796	GEF-CW.11048.GOLD+ Zimbabwe	Mercury	Pollution and Health	IED	01/07/2024	01/07/2029	5,000,000	Country-Africa
4	181315	GEF-CW.10837.GOLD+ Zambia	Mercury	Pollution and Health/IED	IED	09.10.2024	31.03.2030	2,703,750	Country-Africa
5	142407	GEF-CW.10606.GOLD+ Global coordination, knowledge management and outreach	Mercury	Pollution and Health	IED	08/05/2023	31/07/2029	5,690,198	Global
6	163416	GEF-CW.10903.FARM Global Coordination, Knowledge Management and Common Finance Tools	POPs	Pollution and Health	IED	29/09/2023	31/03/2029	1,502,069	Global
7	158124	GEF-CW.10902.FARM Strengthening investment for adoption of alternatives and sustainable management of agrochemicals and agriplastics in Africa and Latin America through pilots in Kenya and Uruguay	POPs	Pollution and Health/IED	IED	02/01/2024	31/01/2029	7,492,340	Regional-Africa and Latin America
8	143288	GEF-CW.10848.ISLANDS- Atlantic Regional Project	POPs/Mercury	Pollution and Health	IED	20/12/2023	31/12/2029	9,872,484	Regional-Latin America

No	SMA ID	Title	Theme	PCP/Division	Responsible Section	Start Date	End Date	Budget (US\$)	Region
9	141655	GEF-CW.10845.GOLD+ Global Opportunities for Long-term Development of ASGM in Côte d'Ivoire	Mercury	Pollution and Health	IED	01/05/2023	31/10/2029	3,877,716	Country-Africa
10	1309060	GEF-CW.10844.GOLD+ Global Opportunities for Long-term Development of ASGM in Guinea	Mercury	Pollution and Health	IED	05/07/2023	31/08/2028	5,302,000	Country-Africa
11	121814	GEF-CW.10716.Phasing out mercury measuring devices in healthcare	Mercury	Pollution and Health	IED	07/08/2023	30/03/2029	7,980,610	Global
12	119365	GEF-CW.10526.Eliminate mercury use and adequately manage mercury and mercury wastes in the chlor alkali sector in Mexico	Mercury	Pollution and Health	IED	25.07.2024	31.01.2030	12,000,000	Country-Latin America
13	122562	GEF-CW.IW.10547.LAC Reduce marine plastics and plastic pollution in Latin American and Caribbean cities through a circular economy approach	Circularity in Sectors	Circularity in Sectors	IED	18/01/2023	30/06/2027	2,000,4355	Regional-Latin America
14	189023	GEF-CW.11494.NAP South Africa National Action Plan for the Artisanal and Small-scale Gold Mining (ASGM) Sector in South Africa	Mercury	Pollution and Health	IED	06.09.2024	01.10.2026	1,000,000	Country-Africa
15	40294	GEF-CW.10086.Reducing global environmental risks through the monitoring and development of alternative livelihood for the primary mercury mining sector in Mexico	Mercury	Pollution and Health	IED	02/07/2021	30/06/2026	7,208,300	Country-Latin America
16	33851	GEF-CW.9421.Demonstration of Non-thermal Treatment of DDT Wastes in Central Asia	POPs	Pollution and Health	IED	16/09/2020	31/12/2025	6,894,329	Regional-Central Asia
17	122669	GEF-CW.10977.Review and Update of the National Implementation Plan for the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants in Ethiopia, Malawi and Zambia	POPs	Pollution and Health	IED	29/09/2022	31/07/2026	918,940	Regional-Africa
18	123416	GEF-CW.10924.Review and Update of the National Implementation Plan for the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants in Albania, Armenia and Kazakhstan	POPs	Pollution and Health	IED	21/10/2022	30/06/2026	918,900	Regional-Central Asia
19	125131	GEF-CW.10925.Review and Update of the National Implementation Plan for the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants in Algeria, Togo and Tunisia	POPs	Pollution and Health	IED	02/09/2022	31/07/2026	918,940	Regional-Africa

No	SMA ID	Title	Theme	PCP/Division	Responsible Section	Start Date	End Date	Budget (US\$)	Region
20	125263	GEF-CW.10976.Review and Update of the National Implementation Plan for the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants in Lao PDR and Maldives	POPs	Pollution and Health	IED	29/08/2022	31/07/2026	612,630	Regional-Asia Pacific
21	206902	GEF-CW.11534.Global Chemicals Monitoring Programme to support implementation of Stockholm and Minamata Conventions (GCMP)	POPs/Mercury	Pollution and Health	IED	26.09.2024	31.12.2025	800,000	Global
22	208764	GEF-CW.11561. Promoting circularity and resource efficiency in the electronic value chain in Kazakhstan	Circularity in Sectors	Circularity in Sectors	IED	29.10.2024	31.03.2026	150,000	Country-Central Asia
23	208769	GEF-CW.11562. Promoting circularity and resource efficiency in the electronics value chain across southern African countries	Circularity in Sectors	Circularity in Sectors/IED	IED			300,000	Regional-Africa
24	126975	GEF-CW.10936.Accelerate implementation of dental amalgam provisions and strengthen country capacities in the environmental sound management of associated wastes under the Minamata Convention	Mercury	Pollution and Health	IED	10/03/2023	30/11/2026	2,000,000	Regional-Africa
25	40321	GEF-CW.10266.ISLANDS Implementing Sustainable Low and Non-Chemical Development in SIDS (ISLANDS) - Knowledge Management and Coordination	POPs/Mercury	Pollution and Health	IED	30/03/2021	31/03/2026	1,742,474	Global
26	193052	GEF-CW.11585. PlanetGOLD Costa Rica	Mercury	Pollution and Health	IED	06.08.2024	31.07.2025	150,000	Country-Latin America
27	112093	GEF-CW.10119.Global best practices on emerging chemical policy issues of concern under the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) (EDCs, EPPPs, and HHPs)	Institutional Strengthening	Pollution and Health	IED	29/12/2022	31/10/2026	861,366	Global
28	123683	GEF-CW.10978.Review and Update of the National Implementation Plan for the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants for India	POPs	Pollution and Health	IED	14/12/2022	31/03/2026	980,000	Country-Asia Pacific
29	104925	GEF-CW.10810.Eliminating mercury skin lightening products	Mercury	Pollution and Health	IED	01/08/2022	30/04/2026	2,010,160	Global

No	SMA ID	Title	Theme	PCP/Division	Responsible Section	Start Date	End Date	Budget (US\$)	Region
30	33512	GEF-CW.IW. 9684.Reducing Pollution from Harmful Chemicals and Wastes in Mediterranean Hot Spots and Measuring Progress to Impacts	POPs/Mercury	Pollution and Health	IED	27/04/2020	30/09/2025	12,342,726	Regional-Europe
31	159128	GEF-CW.11170. Eliminating hazardous chemicals from supply chains - Eliminating hazardous chemicals from supply chains in Cambodia	Chemicals and Health	Pollution and Health	IED	08/09/2023	31/03/2025	149,312	Country-Asia Pacific
32	163627	GEF-CW.11176. Elimination of Hazardous chemicals from Supply Chains Integrated Programme in Trinidad and Tobago	Chemicals and Health	Pollution and Health	IED	21/12/2023	30/06/2025	100,000	Country-Latin America
33	36762	GEF-CW.NAP POT	Mercury	Pollution and Health	IED	29/03/2019	31/12/2024	817124	Global
34	108718	GEF-CW.10891.Development of Minamata Convention Initial Assessment (MIA) For the State of Qatar	Mercury	Pollution and Health	IED	24/05/2024	30/06/2026	200,000	Country-West Asia
35	162732	GEF-CW.11112.planetGOLD Paraguay	Mercury	Pollution and Health	IED	17/11/2023	31/12/2024	150,000	Country-Latin America
36	33420	GEF-CW.9697.Global Knowledge Management and Exchange of Child Project Results Through Networking and Outreach Activities for the GEF GOLD Program	Mercury	Pollution and Health/IED	IED	05/11/2018	30/09/2025	9,465,305	Global
37	165917	GEF-CW.11110.Fortifying Infrastructure for Responsible Extinguishments (FIRE).	Chemicals and Health	Pollution and Health	IED	02/02/2024	31/12/2024	300,000	Regional-Africa
38	121453	GEF-CW.10940.Development of National Action Plan for the Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan	Mercury	Pollution and Health	IED	14/11/2022	31/03/2025	490,100	Country-Asia-Pacific
39	112718	GEF-CW.10922.Development of National Action Plan for the Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining in the Islamic Republic of Cambodia	Mercury	Pollution and Health	IED	29/06/2022	31/12/2024	12,000,000	Country-Asia Pacific
40	91941	GEF-CW.10748.Assessment of existing and future emissions reduction from the coal sector toward the implementation of the Minamata and Stockholm Conventions	POPs/Mercury	Pollution and Health	IED	28/10/2021	30/06/2026	626,000	Global
41	33873	GEF-CW.9771.Global Best Practices on Emerging Chemical Policy Issues of Concern under the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)	Institutional Strengthening	Pollution and Health	IED	15/11/2018	31/12/2025	8,390,000	Global

No	SMA ID	Title	Theme	PCP/Division	Responsible Section	Start Date	End Date	Budget (US\$)	Region
42	34192	GEF-CW.9080.Integrated Health and Environment Observatories and legal and institutional strengthening for the Sound Management of chemicals in Africa (African ChemObs)	Chemicals and Health	Pollution and Health/IED	IED	01/09/2017	31/12/2025	12,278,122	Regional-Africa
43	36830	GEF-CW.MIA POT	Mercury	Pollution and Health	IED	18/02/2019	31/12/2024	344,312	Global
44	85814	GEF-CW.10811.Development of Minamata Convention Initial Assessment (MIA) for Sultanate of Oman	Mercury	Pollution and Health	IED	03/11/2021	30/03/2025	200,000	Country-West Asia
45	128701	GEF-CW.9932.Development of a Minamata Initial Assessment in the Federated States of Micronesia	Mercury	Pollution and Health	IED	14/02/2019	30/11/2024	125,000	Country-Asia Pacific
46	166489	GEF IW 11182 Plastics IP - Brazil (Innovation ecosystem for the circularity of plastics, reduction of consumption, and disposal of single-use plastic in the HORECA sector)	Circularity in Sectors	Circularity in Sectors	Ecosystems Division	15.10.2023	31.12.2024	200,000	Global
47	166692	GEF 11193 - Circular Solutions to Plastic Pollution in Nigeria	Circularity in Sectors	Circularity in Sectors	Ecosystems Division	15.10.2023	31.12.2024	150,000	Global
48	166696	GEF 11197- Circular Solutions to Plastic Pollution: Global Platform- PPG	Circularity in Sectors	Circularity in Sectors	Ecosystems Division	15.10.2023	31.12.2024	153,301	Global
49	166705	GEF 11184 - Promoting circular solutions for the food & beverage sector to tackle plastic pollution in Cambodia)	Circularity in Sectors	Circularity in Sectors	Ecosystems Division	15.10.2023	31.12.2024	100,000	Global
50	166708	GEF 11185 - Reducing Single-use Plastics on Small-island Economies (RESPONSE)	Circularity in Sectors	Circularity in Sectors	Ecosystems Division	15.10.2023	31.12.2024	200,000	Global
51	166711	GEF IW 11188- Operationalizing and implementing circular economy solutions to minimize plastic waste and reduce plastic pollution from Food & Beverage packaging.	Circularity in Sectors	Circularity in Sectors	Ecosystems Division	15.10.2023	31.12.2024	140,000	Global
52	166714	GEF IW 11191 - Circular Solutions to Plastic Pollution in Peru	Circularity in Sectors	Circularity in Sectors/ Ecosystems Division	Ecosystems Division	15.10.2023	31.12.2024	150,000	Global
53	128712	GEF 10422 Development of National Action Plan for the Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining in Mexico	Mercury	Pollution and Health	IED	31/12/2024	03/09/2020	500,000	Country-Latin America

No	SMA ID	Title	Theme	PCP/Division	Responsible Section	Start Date	End Date	Budget (US\$)	Region
54	83715	GEF 10267 Implementing Sustainable Low and Non-Chemical Development in SIDS (ISLANDS) - Pacific	POPs/ Mercury	Pollution and Health	IED	31/03/2026	12/07/2019	19,850,000	Regional-Asia-Pacific
55	83965	GEF 10279 Implementing Sustainable Low and Non-Chemical Development in SIDS (ISLANDS)- Caribbean	POPs/ Mercury	Pollution and Health	IED	31/12/2026	11/07/2019	8,000,000	Regional-Latin America
56	99200	GEF 10472 Implementing Sustainable Low and Non-Chemical Development in SIDS (ISLANDS)- Caribbean ii	POPs	Pollution and Health	IED	31/01/2027	20/02/2020	8.872.727	Regional-Latin America
57	116790	GEF 10523 Reducing uses and releases of chemicals of concern, including POPs, in the textiles sector	Chemicals and Health	Circularity in Sectors	IED	31/01/2028	30/09/2020	8,349,411	Regional-Asia
58	120872	GEF 10618 Global Opportunities for the Long-term Development of ASGM (GOLD+) in Uganda	Mercury	Pollution and Health	IED	31/12/2027	08/09/2020	5,500,000	Country-Africa
59	121498	GEF 10619 Global Opportunities for the Long-term Development of ASGM (GOLD+) in the Republic of the Congo	Mercury	Pollution and Health	IED	11/03/2022	01/11/2020	2,700,000	Country-Africa
60	128712	GEF 10422 Development of National Action Plan for the Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining in Mexico	Mercury	Pollution and Health	IED	31/12/2022	03/09/2020	500,000	Country-Latin America
61	134541	GEF 5307 Global project on the updating of National Implementation Plans for POPs	POPs	Pollution and Health	IED	30/06/2024	21/03/2014	6,423,219	Global
62	134541	GEF 5525 Global project on the updating of National Implementation Plans for POPs	POPs	Pollution and Health	IED	30/06/2024	21/03/2014	68861	Global
63	37718	GEF 9530 "Review and Update of the National Implementation Plan for the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) in Brazil	POPs	Pollution and Health	IED	30/06/2024	18/09/2015	257,909	Country-Latin America
64	34384	GEF 9734 Develop the National Implementation Plan for the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) in Bahrain	POPs	Pollution and Health	IED	31/12/2024	16/05/2017	260,000	Country-Latin America
65	35698	GEF 9634 Review and Update of the National Implementation Plan for the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) in Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)	POPs	Pollution and Health	IED	30/12/2024	16/02/2018	345,408	Country-Asia Pacific
66	128349	GEF 4903 Development of a National Implementation Plan for Namibia to Facilitate its Implementation of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)	POPs	Pollution and Health	IED	30/06/2023	31/07/2014	33,851	Country-Africa

Annex II. Theory of Change at subprogramme level

1. Analysis of the SP-CPA Theory of Change over time

UNEP utilizes a Theory of Change (ToC) approach in its planning and monitoring functions. The ToC depicts what and how UNEP plans or intends to achieve under the Subprogramme and maps out the underlying intervention logic, identifying key drivers of impact and the underlying assumptions. This evaluation has examined the cause-effect relationships between outputs delivered by the Subprogramme and expected higher-level changes (also called results chains or causal pathways).

The SP-CPA has evolved through three Medium-Term Strategies (MTS) (2014-2017, 2018-2021, and 2022-2025) reflecting emerging priorities and global policy shifts in pollution and waste management.

- a. **MTS 2014-2017:** Focused on strengthening national capacities for sound chemicals and waste management. Key emphasis was placed on governance, regulatory frameworks, and the integration of chemicals management into national policies. While the PoWs during this period did not specifically depict a ToC, causal relationships between outputs and expected accomplishments (EAs) were designed to support impact pathways.
- b. **MTS 2018-2021:** Introduced a structured ToC, explicitly linking key deliverables, expected accomplishments (EAs), intermediate states, and 2030 impacts. EAs are broadly consistent with the previous MTS except for the new emphasis on air quality and pollution control as key thematic additions as well as aligning interventions with global SDGs. The linkages between EAs and intermediate states were illustrated through directional pathways, while assumptions and drivers were integrated as external variables. Each EA has specific outputs/key deliverables associated with it, and each EA is linked to an intermediate state and a 2030 impact.
- c. **MTS 2022-2025:** The version of the ToC in the POW restructures and refines some aspects of the previous EAs (re-labelled as 2025 outcomes), integrating circular economic principles while aligning with the triple planetary crisis framework. The current MTS formulates a 2030 outcome for the SP-CPA which is “*Significant progress is made towards a pollution-free planet*” which implies for 2025 that (a) *Human health and environmental outcomes are optimized through enhanced capacity and leadership in the sound management of chemicals and waste;* (b) *Waste management is improved, including through circular processes, safe recovery of secondary raw materials and progressive reduction of open burning and dump sites and* (c) *Releases of pollutants to air, water, soil and the ocean are reduced.* This can be considered UNEP’s main pathways towards the objective of a pollution-free planet. Fourteen direct outcomes replace key deliverables, and causal pathways are less explicit. Each direct outcome is related to certain foundations and enabling Subprogrammes (a feature common across the three thematic Subprogrammes). This means the other foundational and enabling Subprogrammes may also contribute to the SP-CPA results. The 2022-2023 PoW does not specify links between the direct outcomes and the 2025 Outcomes. The direct outcomes are included in a box outlined with a dotted line. No arrows are drawn to illustrate the causal relationship between the direct and the (higher-level) 2025 outcomes, implying that the causal relationship between the activities and the 2025 outcomes might be considered as non-linear, systemic and complex. The ToC (together with the ToCs of the other subprogrammes) has a single overarching impact: *Planetary sustainability for people, prosperity and equity.*

Programme Coordination Projects (PCP) were first established in the 2022-2025 MTS. The delivery of direct outcomes in the POWs under the 2022-2025 MTS for the SP-CPA (and the other two thematic Subprogrammes) is undertaken through the PCPs. In the ToCs of the PCPs, causal linkages can be discerned between the outputs and direct outcomes and 2025 outcomes. While the 2022-2023 PoW’s implementation is based on the three PCPs, their interdependence and collective effect on SP-CPA outcomes are not explicitly articulated.

For changes to happen along the causal pathways towards outcomes and impact, a number of external conditions need to be met, and several external factors need to be present. These are considered in two groups: assumptions (external conditions over which the Subprogramme has no influence or control) and drivers (external factors that the Subprogramme can influence with specific activities or outputs). The list of assumptions and drivers in the ToCs for the different POWs are as follows:

Assumptions:

POW 2018-2019 and POW 2020-2021: *Political will at all levels; Enforcement of law and regulations; Adequate financing made available; Big momentum in the private sector.*

POW 2022-2023: *Access to private-sector and scientific data is improved in support of a pollution-free planet; Governments ensure that the private sector internalizes the full costs of pollution; All stakeholders are engaged by and committed to an ambitious and comprehensive global framework for chemicals and waste; Government willingness to follow through on global resolve and obligations under global agreements.*

Drivers:

POW 2018-2019 and POW 2020-2021: *Significant health benefits from sound chemicals/waste and air quality management; Demonstrated financial gain from sound chemicals/ waste management; Reduced social injustice from sound chemicals/waste management; Green jobs models in sound chemicals/waste management; Increased market share of green chemicals; Governments, industry and society aware of costs of inaction; Increased global interest in addressing air quality issues*

POW 2022-2023 (Extended to 2025): *Data and scientific knowledge persuasively translated into feasible policy instruments and action plans; Synergies with global and regional multilateral environmental agreements and other relevant frameworks; multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral partnerships and policy frameworks; Advocacy, outreach, awareness-raising and communication; Clean technologies and digital applications deployed to reduce waste and pollution.*

2. The Reviewed Theory of Change within the Subprogramme

Figure 2 gives a Strategic Evolution Map illustrating the progression of the SP-CPA subprogramme over the past decade. It demonstrates how the subprogramme has adapted to shifting priorities, evolving delivery models, and external drivers. Unlike a static theory of change, the map presents a dynamic view of the subprogramme's logic and outcomes across the three MTS cycles. It serves as a conceptual foundation for identifying the main causal pathways to produce the observed outcomes and to then search for evidence that will either support it or challenge it.

The map shows that, while thematic areas have evolved, the overall goals have remained consistent and aspirational. Through the SP-CPA, UNEP and its partners promote the environmentally sound management of chemicals and wastes including a shift to sustainable chemicals, improve air and water quality and promote life cycle approaches and the concept of a circular economy. The ToCs through the various POWs have similar causal pathways and show three main results areas: (i) an enabling policy environment; (ii) waste management and circularity in sectors; and (iii) improvement of environmental quality through reduction in release of pollutants.

The ToC in POW 2022-2023 overall remains valid, in particular regarding the intermediate states and the 2030 outcome. However, there are a few weaknesses as follows:

- The 2025 outcome "*Human health and environmental outcomes are optimized....*" is ambitious over the short time frame, is not specific and measurable and is more of an impact than an outcome.
- The 2025 outcome "*Waste management is improved, including through circular processes, safe recovery of secondary raw materials and progressive reduction of open burning and dump sites*" put emphasis on the downstream side of the life cycle approach.
- The important topic of shifting the demand to sustainable chemicals enabling the growth of the green chemicals market is not visible in the outcomes.

- The important topic of Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) is not visible in the results framework. It is important to integrate the issue of sustainable consumption and sustainable lifestyles alongside the circular economy narrative to reduce overconsumption.
- One important assumption to be included is that adequate financing and human resources must be made available for chemicals and pollution action.
- One important driver to be included is the requirements from financial institutions for pollution-free investments.

The reviewed ToC includes the following three main outcomes:

- a. *Strengthened capacities of Governments and other stakeholders to put in place an enabling environment for sound management of chemicals and waste and for pollution control.* There are different dimensions to achieving this outcome: increasing knowledge of the risks posed by harmful chemicals and by polluted air and water and of the cost of inaction; policy, regulatory, institutional and fiscal frameworks; integrated approach to financing the sound management of chemicals and waste (mainstreaming, industry involvement and dedicated external finance); developing and sharing scientific and technological assessments, including risk assessments, tools, methods and guidance to ensure effective implementation.
- b. *Increased circularity in sectors and improvement of waste management through circular processes and enhanced infrastructure.* The following dimensions are important to achieve this outcome: mainstreaming of the 3Rs (reduce, reuse and recycle) and circular processes across waste flows while ensuring safe secondary raw materials recovery, supporting countries and stakeholders in reducing the use of resources through the adoption of resource-efficient and circular approaches and supporting efforts to identify and close open dumpsites and upgrade infrastructure for waste management.
- c. *Growth of the green chemicals market and reduction of releases of pollutants to the environment.* The following dimensions are important to achieve this outcome: support for the shift away from the generation, production and use of harmful chemicals that pose a risk to human health and the environment and promoting green design and sustainable chemistry; influencing producer, procurement and investment decisions regarding chemicals use by fostering more informed consumer choices based on awareness of the environmental footprint of products consumed and used; supporting ongoing efforts to reduce in-country and transboundary air pollution; scaling up ongoing efforts to address land-based sources of freshwater and marine pollution, especially nutrients, chemicals and plastic and other forms of marine litter.

Direct outcomes are expected to be achieved through a diverse set of outputs. Four main types of outputs have been identified based on the typology of intervention:

- i. Technical support, capacity building, and advisory services provided
- ii. Generation and dissemination of science-policy knowledge
- iii. Advocacy and outreach products and services provided to governments
- iv. Intergovernmental and interagency processes are supported

Direct outcomes are expected to be achieved through these outputs. The fourteen direct outcomes expected from the Subprogramme in the ToC for POW 2022-2023 remain valid. As firm evidence of achievement of direct outcomes might be scarce, the effectiveness evaluation will partly rely on an assessment of the relevance, quality and timeliness of outputs delivered by the Subprogramme. The reviewed ToC also validates that the causal relationship between the activities and the 2025 outcomes might be considered as non-linear, systemic and complex, and as such no specific links are specified between the direct outcomes and the 2025 outcomes.

For changes to happen along the causal pathways towards outcomes and impact several external factors need to be present.

Key **assumptions** made by the Subprogramme are:

- Commitment from government and other stakeholders to meeting the obligations under MEAs and the global framework for chemicals and waste.
- Policy and regulatory frameworks for waste and chemicals management will continue to be strengthened and enforced
- Industry and finance institutions maintain strong attention to solving pollution
- Adequate financing and human resources are made available for chemicals and pollution action

Key **drivers** for change are:

- Strengthened institutional frameworks for enforcing environmental laws and global agreements
- Multistakeholder and multi-sectoral partnerships
- Synergies with MEAs and other relevant frameworks
- Advocacy, outreach, awareness raising, and communication
- Greener chemicals and cleaner technologies deployed to reduce pollution
- Requirements from financial institutions for pollution-free investments
- Data and scientific knowledge show socio-economic benefits translated into effective policies

3. Implementation of the Theory of Change in Projects and contribution of the Subprogramme to shaping UNEP's work on Chemicals and Pollution Action

A purposive sample of eleven projects have been identified that are considered to have key interventions in the effective implementation of the reviewed ToC of the SP-CPA. These projects were chosen for core in-depth analyses according to the following criteria:

- a. They represent a range of activities conducted under the Subprogramme, i.e., spread across the EAs/Direct outcomes.
- b. They represent the geographic scope of the SP-CPA (global, regional, country).
- c. They represent the relative importance or scale of the projects implemented under the SP-CPA budget, duration, complexity, status as a discrete or umbrella project, and criticality for the delivery of the Programme of Work.
- d. Preference has been given to projects that are currently active or had been active in the period 2018-2023 to ensure that there was still a memory of the intervention and there is ease of access to project managers.

The scope of this case studies analysis is both retrospective and prospective, i.e., taking stock of past achievements while also looking into the future regarding UNEP's role in the field. The projects selected as case studies are summarized in [Annex III](#). There are five projects which are operationally closed (with four having had a Terminal Evaluation) and six active projects.

The following elements are discussed for each case study in the text boxes below:

- i. Evaluation of whether the observed results align with the expected outcomes and pathways outlined in the reviewed ToC and whether the assumptions underlying the program's logic were valid. These projects either have ToCs within their project design documents (ProDocs) or took part in the reconstruction of a ToC during their evaluations. As expected, there is a wide variation in structure and detailing of the ToCs for each project, each drafted within the boundaries of its own specificity. Comparative analysis of the levels of project activities and their outputs is not useful because of this. However, one would reasonably expect a comparison of medium/long term outcomes, intermediate states and impacts (the causal

pathways shown in Figure 3) to show a clear connection with the results of the overall subprogramme's ToC.

- ii. Analysis of the 'contribution' made or potentially to be made by the subprogramme to the outcomes and longer-term results.
- iii. Identification of some lessons on the implementation of the SP-CPA based on the terminal evaluation (if any) and from interviews with the Project Managers.

Analysis of the 11 case studies confirms that the internal coherence of the SP-CPA Theory of Change (ToC) has improved across successive MTS cycles and is largely validated in practice. All case studies demonstrate credible contributions to at least one, and often multiple, ToC pathways:

- i. Strengthening national and institutional capacities and enabling environments (Pathway 1) remains the clearest area of alignment, with projects like the Special Programme, SAICM Secretariat, and POPs NIP updates showing how targeted capacity-building and policy support help countries operationalize MEA commitments.
- ii. Advancing circularity and improved waste management (Pathway 2) is increasingly visible in sector-focused initiatives such as the ONE UNEP Plastic Project, Electronics EPR in Nigeria, ISLANDS, and Zero Waste Solid Waste Management, which demonstrate how integrated, systems-based approaches can shift entire value chains.
- iii. Knowledge generation, stakeholder engagement, and partnerships (Pathway 3) are a consistent cross-cutting element, exemplified by the Marine Litter Partnerships, GPML Digital Platform, and the Air Quality project's collaboration with CCAC.

Overall, the projects provide practical evidence that the SP-CPA's ToC assumptions are valid when enabling factors – such as multi-stakeholder partnerships, catalytic funding, and sustained institutional capacity – are present. They also highlight recurring gaps: many projects still face challenges in tracking post-project impacts, ensuring sustainability of local results, and operationalizing behaviour change, especially where informal sectors are involved (e.g., e-waste, open dumping).

Importantly, the case studies demonstrate that UNEP's programmatic shift from fragmented, standalone projects to more integrated, multi-country and multi-sector approaches – like ISLANDS and the ONE UNEP Plastic Project – helps align project-level results more visibly with the subprogramme's long-term outcomes. Successful examples also show that leveraging UNEP's normative role, convening power, and science-policy expertise remains central to making the causal pathways credible and catalytic.

Annex III. Selected case studies from SP-CPA

Table 12. Projects selected as evaluation case studies

Project Title/ ID No	Status/ Implementation period	Region/ Country	Budget (US\$)	Subprogramme/ POW Expected Accomplishments or Outcomes	PCP	Managing Division /Branch	Project Objectives/ Overall Project rating at Evaluation (if any)
Global project on the updating of National Implementation Plans for POPs (GEF 5307)	Closed (2014-2018)	Global	\$ 7,075,534	SP: CPA EA: Countries, including major groups and stakeholders, increasingly use the scientific and technical knowledge and tools needed to implement sound chemicals management and the related multilateral environmental agreements	Pollution and Health	IED/GEF Unit	The project aimed to assist 35 countries to review and update their National Implementation Plan (NIP) to comply with reporting obligations and updating of National Implementation Plans) under the Stockholm Convention. It also aims to reduce the dependency of external expertise and resources to develop and update NIP through strengthening the political environment and technical capacities of participating countries. Overall Project Rating is Satisfactory at Terminal Evaluation
Circular Economy approaches for the electronics sector in Nigeria (GEF 10141)	Closed (2019-2023)	Country- Nigeria	\$2,000,000	SP: CPA EA: Strengthen the sound management of industrial chemicals and their waste through better control, and reduction and/or elimination 2022/2023 Outcomes: 3A, 3B and 3C	Circularity in Sectors	IED/GEF Unit	The overall project objective was to adopt a financially self-sustaining circular economy approach for electronics, through which electronics producers and waste managers recover and reintroduce usable materials into the electronics value chain and dispose of hazardous waste streams in an environmentally sound manner. It aims to address the challenges of electronic waste (e-waste) management in Nigeria, particularly focusing on establishing an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) system and promoting circular economy approaches. Overall Project Rating is Satisfactory at Terminal Evaluation
Rapid Environmental Assessment for Crisis Affected Countries (34823)	Closed (2016-2024)	All regions depending on need and request	\$4,790,480	SP: CPA EA: Emergency response and post-crisis recovery plans integrate environmental considerations to increase the sustainability of recovery	Pollution and Health	Ecosystems Division/ Disasters and Conflicts Branch	The purpose of the project was to provide rapid environmental assistance and technical capacity to disaster and conflict-affected countries, helping them respond to and recover from the harmful environmental impacts of disasters and conflicts. Over the course of the project, a total of 44 separate national level interventions were carried out, which supported 21 countries address

Project Title/ ID No	Status/ Implementation period	Region/ Country	Budget (US\$)	Subprogramme/ POW Expected Accomplishments or Outcomes	PCP	Managing Division /Branch	Project Objectives/ Overall Project rating at Evaluation (if any)
				2022/2023 Outcomes: 3A,3B,3C			the environmental fallout of disasters and conflicts.
Protecting the Marine Environment from Land-Based Pollution through Strengthened Coordination of Global Action (39730)	Closure in Progress (2019-2024)	Global	\$53,198,734	SP: CPA EA: Increase in the number of countries that have used UNEP analysis or guidance, and where possible are applying a multi-sectoral approach, in developing or implementing legislation, policies or action plans 2022/2023 Outcomes: 3A, 3C	Pollution and health	Ecosystems Division/ Marine and Freshwater Branch	Strengthen responses for land-based pollution to the marine environment and address related issues of concern identified by governments. This includes strengthening co-operation around the prevention of land-based pollution by fostering actions targeting the sources of marine litter, nutrients and wastewater pollution. Overall Project Rating is Satisfactory at Terminal Evaluation
Secretariat Services to the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) (37440)	Closed (2018-2024)	Global	\$12,483,703	SP: CPA EA: Policies, legal, institutional and fiscal strategies and mechanisms for the sound chemicals management developed or implemented in countries within the framework of relevant MEAs and SAICM. 2022/2023 Outcomes: 3A	Pollution and Health	IED-Chemicals and Health	The objective of the Secretariat is to facilitate the implementation of SAICM. Advisory, policy and coordination support services are provided by the Secretariat Overall Project Rating is Satisfactory at Terminal Evaluation
Special Programme to support institutional strengthening at the national level to enhance the implementation of the BRS, Minamata and SAICM (32933)	Active	Global	\$29,643,493	SP: CPA EA: Policies and legal, institutional and fiscal strategies and mechanisms for sound chemicals management developed or implemented in countries within the framework of relevant MEAs and the SAICM 2022/2023 Outcomes: 3A	Pollution and Health	IED/Chemicals and Health Branch	Provides support to developing countries and countries with economies in transition to enhance their sustainable institutional capacity to develop, adopt, monitor and enforce policy, legislation and regulation for effective frameworks for the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the Minamata Convention and SAICM. Independent Assessment of Closed Projects under the Special Programme have been carried out
GEF-Implementing Sustainable Low and Non-Chemical Development in	Active	Global	\$20,000,000	SP: CPA	Pollution and Health	IED/GEF unit	To prevent the build-up of materials and chemicals in the environment that contain POPs and Mercury and other harmful chemicals in SIDS,

Project Title/ ID No	Status/ Implementation period	Region/ Country	Budget (US\$)	Subprogramme/ POW Expected Accomplishments or Outcomes	PCP	Managing Division /Branch	Project Objectives/ Overall Project rating at Evaluation (if any)
SIDS (ISLANDS)- Programme (GEF 10185)				2022/2023 Outcomes: 3A,3B,3C			and to manage and dispose of existing harmful chemicals and materials in 33 SIDS.
Chemicals, Environment, and Health: Accelerating transition towards toxic free planet (194919)	Active	Global	\$15,000,000	SP: CPA 2022/2023 Outcomes: 3A,3B,3C	Pollution and Health	IED/ Chemicals and Health Branch	The Project aims to accelerate transition towards toxic free planet by minimizing the risks of hazardous chemicals and pollution on the environment and health.
UNEP's- wide project on Air Quality (156083)	Active	Global	\$15,000,000	SP: CA; CPA; EG 2022/2023 CPA Outcomes: 3B, 3C	Pollution and health	IED/ Chemicals and Health Branch	The objective of the project is to significantly decrease the health burden of air pollution resulting in avoided deaths, increased labour productivity and increased investment in air pollution reduction in high-impact sectors.
ONE UNEP Plastic Project on Accelerating a Global Circular Plastic Economy to Reduce Plastic Pollution and its Impacts (130677)	Active	Global	\$54,819,000	SP: CA; NA; CPA; Science-Policy 2022/2023 CPA Outcomes: 3A,3B,3C	Circularity in Sectors	IED/ Resources and Markets Branch	The ONE UNEP Plastic Project aims to trigger a systems change to accelerate the safe and just transition towards a circular economy of plastics thereby reducing plastic pollution.
Integrated Solid Waste Management towards Zero Waste (176090)	Active	Global	\$15,000,000	SP: CPA 2022/2023 Outcomes: 3B	Towards Zero Waste	IED/ International Environment Technology Centre	To advance integrated solid waste management practices towards a zero-waste future by mainstreaming the principles of 'Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle (3R) to enhance the safe recovery of secondary raw materials while progressively reducing open burning and dump sites.

Box IV.1: Secretariat Services to the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)

The Secretariat was established in June 2006 to facilitate the implementation of SAICM, and the achievement of the sound management of chemicals throughout their life cycle so that by the year 2020, chemicals were produced and used in ways that minimize significant adverse impacts on the environment and human health. The Secretariat played an important liaison role, mainly concentrating on convening SAICM stakeholders at all levels, promoting information exchange and supporting institutional capacity building to implement SAICM projects through the Quick Start Programme (QSP) which was a voluntary trust fund.

Since its establishment in 2006, there have been 14 application rounds. The QSP project portfolio comprised 184 approved projects with an approximate value of USD 48 million. The projects spanned over 108 different countries including 54 least developed countries and small island developing States. The overall project performance rating in the terminal evaluation was satisfactory. Based on the survey carried out during the evaluation, SAICM is highly regarded at country level as it enabled capacity building and catalysed the actual sound management of chemicals and associated wastes in many countries. It fostered collaboration among national institutions and created national awareness. Overall, the Secretariat was effective in providing support to the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM). The QSP ended its operations in December 2019. The Special Programme builds upon the lessons learned under the QSP.

The theory of change of the project supports the overall reconstructed theory of change for the SP-CPA and is primarily in line with **causal pathway 1**. For impact to be realised at the intermediate state, SAICM stakeholders would increasingly implement sound management of chemicals throughout their life cycle at all levels resulting in the impact of harmful substances and hazardous waste on the environment and human beings being minimized

On 30 September 2023, the Global Framework on Chemicals was adopted, as a successor to SAICM, and the scope of the framework covers the life cycle of chemicals, including in products and waste. A specific fund has been established to implement the framework.

Box IV.2: Global Project on the Updating of National Implementation Plans for POPs

The GEF is the financial mechanism of the Stockholm Convention and, as such, supports activities to meet its objectives. This project had the objective to assist countries to comply with Article 7 of the Stockholm Convention by updating the National Implementation Plans (NIPs) on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and to build capacity to update NIPs. The project assisted countries to identify existing gaps in POPs management in order to improve management practices in agriculture, disease vector control, industrial chemicals and other relevant areas. The project was designed to respond to concerns regarding lack of capacities to update NIPs in developing countries. The project provided technical assistance and strengthened the capacities of stakeholders in 32 countries worldwide. The overall terminal evaluation rating of the project is Satisfactory. The NIPs for POPs projects have been satisfactorily mainstreamed into the countries policy processes, and the projects are aligned with national, regional and international priorities and strongly support ownership. The project also provided countries a way forward for setting up the priorities for the future.

A comparison of the outcomes, intermediate states and impacts show a clear connection with the results of the overall Subprogramme's reconstructed ToC and is primarily in line with **causal pathway 1**. The project contributes to the intermediate state of existing gaps in POPs management are identified and actions are taken to improve POPs management practices in agriculture, disease vector control, industrial chemicals and other relevant areas. The ToC also postulates that ultimately, and in the long term, the project will have an impact whereby the risks posed by POPs on the population (especially the most vulnerable ones) will be reduced and there is an increased protection of the environment.

The GEF has funded important work on dealing with the legacy of highly hazardous chemicals such as POPs and mercury. While the focus of UNEP and GEF is now more focused into sectoral work and looking into the high-impact sectors, at the same time it is important to ensure that the conventions obligations are fulfilled.

Box IV.3: Circular Economy approaches for the electronics sector in Nigeria

GEF Medium-Sized Projects focus on a specific issue or context. Their value can be up to \$2 million. They often introduce new ideas that have the potential to be scaled up. The aim of this medium-size GEF project, implemented by UNEP and the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency of Nigeria (NESREA) as the Executing Agency, was to address the challenges of electronic waste (e-waste) management in Nigeria, particularly focusing on establishing an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) system and promoting circular economy approaches. The overall performance of the project was rated as satisfactory in the Terminal Evaluation. The project achieved significant progress in establishing a legal and institutional framework for e-waste management, particularly with the implementation of EPR legislation and the establishment of collection centers, and in significant increases (30-85%) reported by recyclers of the amount of e-waste they were able to access and responsibly recycle. However, challenges related to the informal sector's collectors lasting behaviour change, and delays in operationalizing the Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO) system, leading to non-operational collection centers at the end of the project, limited the full realization of the project's objectives. The review concluded that while the project laid a strong foundation for sustainable e-waste management, further efforts are required to ensure the long-term sustainability and scalability of the achievements.

The theory of change supports the overall reconstructed theory of change for the SP-CPA and is primarily in line with all the **three causal pathways**. The project contributes to the outcome of improved waste management through circular processes and to the intermediate state that Nigeria improves e-waste management supported by effective EPR systems, ongoing awareness campaigns, and enforced regulation, leading to reduced negative impacts. The learnings from this project helped inform the development of the PCPs and influenced the GEF 8 Funding program on the life cycle value chain of Electronics.

Box IV.4: Protecting the Marine Environment from Land-Based Pollution through Strengthened Coordination of Global Action

The objective of the project was to strengthen responses for land-based pollution to the marine environment. This includes strengthening co-operation around the prevention of land-based pollution by fostering actions targeting the sources of marine litter, nutrients and wastewater pollution. The project was implemented and managed by the Sea to Source Pollution Unit in the Ecosystems Division. The Global Partnership on Plastic Pollution and Marine Litter (GPML), Global Partnership on Nutrient Management (GPNM) and Global Wastewater Initiative (GWWI) played important roles in providing leaderships in execution of thematic components: plastic pollution and marine litter, nutrients and wastewater. Those partnerships provided forums for dialogue and exchange of information and views. They played critical roles to raise awareness of and expand the constituencies of issues concerned.

The overall project was rated as satisfactory in the terminal evaluation. It successfully raised the status of importance of three thematic issues (marine litter/plastic, nutrients and wastewater) and contributed to increasing strategic importance of marine-based pollutions in UNEP's strategy. The project has successfully provided policy and technical support to governments support such as for the development and implementation of national source inventories and national strategies/ roadmaps/plans on plastic pollution and marine litter. The development of the GPML Digital platform for plastic pollution and marine litter was a successful knowledge management tool developed by the project which can be replicated.

The theory of change supports the overall reconstructed theory of change for the SP-CPA and is primarily in line with **causal pathway 1 and causal pathway 3**. The outputs lead to the realization of the project outcomes of "source to sea" good practice, policies, legal, institutional and fiscal strategies for addressing land-based sources of marine pollution developed or implemented by government, business entities and relevant stakeholders, and to reduced influx of pollutant to coastal water.

Important lessons from this project are that it is important to include the private sector as one key actor for the theory of change for the change to happen, and that the topics related to pollution are closely interconnected. For example, water pollution/wastewater disposal is closely interconnected with the Climate Action and Nature Action subprogrammes, and it is important for UNEP to structure its work under all the three pillars.

Box IV.5: Rapid Environmental Assistance for Crisis Affected Countries

The purpose of the project was to provide rapid environmental assistance and technical capacity to disaster and conflict-affected countries, helping them respond to and recover from the harmful environmental impacts of disasters and conflicts. It operated on a demand-driven basis, essentially acting as a mechanism for the rapid provision of environmental expertise to Member States and UN partners.

The project has been instrumental in rapidly mobilizing environmental assistance for disaster- and conflict-affected countries, carrying out at least 48 interventions across 21 countries and five UNEP regions including four at the global and regional levels. It has strengthened UNEP's ability to deal with geopolitical tensions and rising global instability by enabling swift action and ensuring its continued relevance in addressing environmental priorities in politically highly sensitive situations. The project has also helped in establishing UNEP as a leading authority on conflict-related debris management, a growing challenge driven by urban conflicts and large-scale infrastructure destruction. By providing a responsive and flexible framework, the project enabled UNEP to swiftly navigate requests from countries, UN agencies, and donors, while also securing necessary funding, including contributions from humanitarian emergency funds.

The theory of change supports the overall reconstructed theory of change for the SP-CPA and is line with all the **three causal pathways**.

The project has not only delivered critical environmental assistance in crisis-affected regions but has also established a strong foundation for future efforts. With rising global instability and the increasing frequency of disasters, UNEP should develop a more agile and adaptive framework for enabling swift resource mobilization and decision-making.

Box IV.6: Chemicals, Environment, and Health: Accelerating transition towards toxic free planet Industry and Economy Division

The project advocates for and supports the phasing out and minimization of chemicals and issues of concern for the environment and health and the minimization of associated risks, in collaboration with key environment and health players. This will be achieved through a) fostering enabling conditions through policy support and partnership, b) generating, curating and maintaining information on key chemicals, and c) integrating principles of green and sustainable chemistry into high impact sectors. It is built upon the achievements of a predecessor project, and it synergizes with and complements and enhances all other UNEP interventions, particularly those financed by the GEF, by complementing their efforts in addressing chemicals and waste management challenges within high-impact sectors. The project is also guided by the global trends and processes, including chemicals identified by the Global Chemicals Outlook (GCO) II, GFC (chemicals and issues of concern), UNEA resolutions (e.g. lead, asbestos, endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs)) and MEAs (e.g. persistent organic pollutants (POPs) and mercury).

The theory of change supports the overall reconstructed theory of change for the SP-CPA and is primarily in line with **causal pathway 1**. The project outcome "Stakeholders are equipped to reduce harmful chemicals in products and processes" is to be achieved by strengthening awareness, knowledge, capacities and intersectoral collaboration on chemicals, pollution, environment, and health. Achieving this outcome will contribute to the long-term impact that 'Chemicals are used produced and managed in ways that lead to the minimisation of adverse effects on human health and the environment.'

This project supports the effective implementation of the Global Framework on Chemicals.

Box IV.7: Special Programme (SP) to support institutional strengthening at the national level to enhance the implementation of the BRS, Minamata and SAICM

The objective of the Project is to support country-driven institutional strengthening at the national level, in the context of an integrated approach to address the financing of the sound management of chemicals and wastes, taking into account the national development strategies, plans and priorities of each country, to increase sustainable public institutional capacity for the sound management of chemicals and wastes throughout their life cycle. Institutional strengthening under the Special Programme facilitates and enable the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM). The Special Programme is one of two complementary elements of dedicated external financing under an integrated approach to financing sound management of chemicals and waste, with the GEF being the other element. The SP provides funds for countries through periodic calls for applications, to focus on policy, legislation and regulation; stakeholder engagement; institutional framework; monitoring and enforcement; and mainstreaming of the sound management of chemicals and waste into national development plans, budgets, policies, legislation and implementation frameworks across all levels.

The Special Programme has successfully processed seven rounds of applications since its inception in 2015. This brings the total of 83 projects approved across seven rounds of funding (35 in Africa, 22 in Asia Pacific, 15 in Central and Eastern Europe and 11 in Latin America and the Caribbean). The Special Programme is currently funding projects from 70 countries. Two independent assessments have been carried out focusing on 22 projects and the assessments showed that overall good progress has been made. UNEA has extended the duration of the special program.

The ToC of the project supports the overall reconstructed ToC for the Subprogramme and is primarily in line with **causal pathway 1**. It is responding to the outcome of policies and legal, institutional and fiscal strategies and mechanisms for sound chemicals management developed or implemented in countries within the framework of relevant MEAs and the SAICM.

Box IV.8: UNEP-wide project on Improving Air Quality

The goal of the project is to strengthen capacities to reduce air pollution and increase the percentage of the world's population that lives in areas with cleaner air. Building on a predecessor project, this new project will advance air quality action with more impact, visibility, and resources, by integrating UNEP's multi-region and multi-level efforts to improve air quality, by leveraging more partners, financial resources and buy-in among industry, finance and the UN system, and by providing a platform to mobilize efforts across the house, particularly under projects aimed at transforming key sectors such as transport, waste, energy and other high-impact sectors so that air quality benefits can be fully harnessed.

The direct outcome of the project is that governments have measures, policies, or frameworks in place to reduce emissions of air pollutants from sources related to human activities for improved air quality and human health at national and subnational level through the support of UNEP. The project outcome is that governments have policies and measures in place to reduce emissions of air pollutants from key sources for improved air quality and health. The theory of change supports the overall reconstructed theory of change for the SP-CPA and is in line with **causal pathway 1 and causal pathway 3**.

The Climate and Climate Air Coalition (CCAC), a UNEP-convened initiative, is the leading global partnership focused on addressing the air pollution and climate challenges in an integrated manner. CCAC delivers against the objectives, but under its own ProDoc. The project builds on UNEP's and CCAC's accomplishments of the past few years. Using UNEP and CCAC's track record in harnessing political engagement, partnerships and finance will be mobilized with industry and private sector to shift investments across high impact sectors. Closer alignment and collaboration of CCAC with this project have been established as a basis for higher impact potential overall on-air quality.

Box IV.9: ONE UNEP Plastic Project on Accelerating a Global Circular Plastic Economy to Reduce Plastic Pollution and its Impacts

The ONE UNEP Plastic Project aims to trigger a systems change to accelerate the safe and just transition towards a circular economy of plastics thereby reducing plastic pollution. The project applies a programmatic approach, delivering projects at global, regional and national levels to reduce global plastic pollution through systems and circular solutions adopted by governments, businesses, financial institutions, and individuals, with a long-term vision to end plastic pollution by 2040.

The theory of change supports the overall reconstructed theory of change for the SP-CPA and is in line with all the **three causal pathways**. The project outcomes are that circularity in plastics is increased, and overall plastic pollution is reduced. Governments, businesses, financial institutions and individuals adopt systems and circular solutions to reduce plastic pollution which leads to the intermediate state of progress towards circular economy for plastics and reduced plastic pollution impacts and to reduced impacts in terms of GHG emissions; reduced leakage of plastic to environment; reduced economic and ecosystem impacts; and reduced loss of human health.

The project delivers UNEP's work on plastics pollution, and it draws expertise and executive capacity from the entire organization and is coordinated by the Industry and Economy Division, with deliverables by UNEP Divisions, the Regional Offices, and the Regional Seas. It also amplifies the impacts by bringing in all strategic partners under a shared common ambition. The strong global momentum to act decisively on plastic pollution is founded on UNEP's long-standing action on plastic pollution, from informing decision-makers and the public about plastic pollution to rallying actors across the value chain (especially the private sector) to scale up solutions. The project builds upon UNEP's key strengths as the global authority on environmental issues, including the hosting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) for an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution. It also benefits from the GEF8 Integrated Programme on Plastics.

Box IV.10: Implementing Sustainable Low and Non-Chemical Development in SIDS (ISLANDS)

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are dependent on imports for everyday items like batteries, computers, cars, and plastic-based items. Many of these products contain substances which become hazardous if not disposed of safely. The countries often lack the infrastructure to recycle or dispose of these products safely. This GEF funded programme is supporting 33 island nations in the Atlantic, Caribbean, Indian and Pacific regions to improve chemicals and waste management. ISLANDS supports implementation of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, and the Minamata Convention on mercury. Achieving the objectives under a global programme is ideal as this approach has the advantage of leveraging more resources than single countries or regions. The programme also has the potential to attract private sector investments which are more sustainable at a scale not achievable by single SIDS. As a global programme, the ISLANDS project will also promote exchange of knowledge and experience across regions which would not be possible with regional interventions. In this regard, this programmatic approach is desirable to bring much needed resources to SIDS to remove the stress on the environment caused by the unsustainable use of chemicals, materials and products. It is part of a broader set of GEF initiatives which support the development of green and blue economy approaches in SIDS. UNEP leads the programme in which IADB, FAO and UNDP are also implementing agencies.

The theory of change of the child projects supports the overall reconstructed theory of change for the SP-CPA and is in line with all the **three causal pathways**. The child projects propose suitable and appropriate options to tackle systematic challenges for SIDS to prevent the build-up of materials and chemicals in the environment that contain POPs and mercury and other harmful chemicals, and to manage and dispose of existing harmful chemicals and materials.

The transition of UNEP and GEF from standalone projects to multifocal and integrated programs has resulted in better alignment with national priorities and improved environmental outcomes. This evolution has facilitated more inclusive and informed interventions. However, persistent obstacles such as project delays, limited institutional capacity, and difficulties in achieving long-term sustainability continue to pose challenges.

Box IV.11: Integrated Solid Waste Management towards Zero Waste

The project objective is to advance integrated solid waste management practices towards a zero-waste future by mainstreaming the principles of 'Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle (3R) to enhance the safe recovery of secondary raw materials while progressively reducing open burning and dump sites. Building on UNEP's earlier effort on the development of national or city-level waste management strategies, this project focus on implementation of national and/or city waste management strategies in developing countries and countries in transition and their transition towards zero waste.

The theory of change supports the overall reconstructed theory of change for the SP-CPA and is in line with all the **three causal pathways**. Institutional capacity at national and city levels to implement integrated and circularity based solid waste management is developed. By implementing improved waste management practices, including circular processes, safe recovery of secondary raw materials, and progressive reduction of open burning and dumpsites, the project contributes directly to the reduction of pollutants released into the environment. It envisages to have two long-term impacts (i) reduced contaminants contained in wastes and wastewater enter the environment (environmental impacts) and (ii) wastes are clearly recognized as resource to be managed (development impacts).

The project is based on the two project concepts, respectively, on integrated solid waste management and reducing open dump sites and open burning. Through the Project, UNEP is taking a leadership role in promoting environmentally sound and circularity-based waste management in the international community as well as in countries in collaboration with partners and supporting organisations. The project will contribute to the implementation of the waste relevant MEAs.

Annex IV. Examples of good practices at project level in cross-cutting themes

Project examples with good practices in Project Design.

- UNEP-GEF Project : Addressing Marine Plastics – A Systemic Approach:** Project design strengths include (i) a clear and adequate problem and situation analysis; (ii) flexible and comprehensive results framework with baselines, quantitative end-of-project targets, indicators, sources of verification, and risks and assumptions; (iii) appropriate governance and supervision arrangements; (iv) engagement of key stakeholders across the entire plastic value chain; (v) capitalizing on the work of key agencies with different areas of expertise and stakeholder networks across the plastics value chain; (vi) integrating essential elements such as science, policy, stakeholder engagement, innovative solutions, and opportunities for financing, to develop guidance for the GEF.
- Operationalization of the Special Programme (SP) to support institutional strengthening at the national level to enhance the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention on Mercury and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM):** The SP was properly designed and drew lessons learnt from the GEF and the SAICM Quick Start Programme. It has a well-structured logical framework with indicators at outcome and output levels, with baseline and targets. The roles and responsibilities of the key partners have been properly described.
- Demonstration of Effectiveness of Diversified, Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Interventions and Strengthening National Capacity for Innovative Implementation of Integrated Vector Management (IVM) for Disease Prevention and Control in the WHO AFRO Region:** The project was well-designed with a clear, comprehensive framework that facilitated effective implementation. The design included robust stakeholder engagement strategies and well-defined goals that were relevant to both environmental and public health sectors. The project design was shaped through extensive stakeholder consultations, which helped ensure a strong alignment with the needs of the target groups and enhanced the complementarity with other ongoing interventions. A clear governance structure was effectively in place, guiding the project's execution and ensuring accountability at all levels. The project duration was thoughtfully considered to match the scope of activities, ensuring sufficient time for achieving expected results. Additionally, the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems were developed and implemented to provide accurate, timely data that supported effective management and adjustment of project strategies.
- Demonstrating and Scaling Up Sustainable Alternatives to DDT for the control of vector borne diseases in Southern Caucasus and Central Asia:** The project design was strong, not only because of its relevance, but also because of the clarity of the logical framework, as well as the sustainability strategy and potential catalytic effects. The project design is informed by a comprehensive stakeholder analysis outlining the stakeholder group's key strengths and respective roles in the process.
- Secretariat Support to the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Minamata Convention on Mercury:** The project document contained the country specific analysis, stakeholder analysis, linkages with the main strategic documents (donors, national, international). The Project document contained the results, assumptions and risks, logical framework (no ToC as it was not a requirement at that period). It also had a description of partners and division of responsibilities, budget and sustainability part.

Project examples with good practices in Gender Equality

- UNEP/GEF Project: Development of a Plan for Global Monitoring of Human Exposure to and Environmental Concentrations of Mercury:** Gender and human rights aspects were taken into account in the human biomonitoring component of the project and women were

represented well within the project. The Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and protocols, as well as the needed approval from the Ethics Committees, ensured that gender and human rights aspects were considered well. The project document recognized that women and children were especially susceptible to POPs, and the project, through its role in underpinning national POPs management, would contribute to improving their well-being. The document also mentioned that the project would empower women in their responsibilities within the laboratory management and would be strengthened further through training activities at international level. The project sought to empower women in their responsibilities within the laboratory management and would be strengthened further through training activities at international level.

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

Project examples with good practices in Financial Management

- **UNEP/GEF Project Demonstration of Effectiveness of Diversified, Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Interventions and Strengthening National Capacity for Innovative Implementation of Integrated Vector Management (IVM) for Disease Prevention and Control in the WHO AFRO Region:** Challenges like delays in procurement and fund disbursement were effectively addressed through continuous communication between financial and project management teams, which helped in maintaining efficient resource utilization and compliance with UNEP guidelines. Regular meetings and the use of shared management tools facilitated alignment on budgetary matters and project priorities, ensuring that financial and project management were integrated effectively throughout the project's life cycle.
- **"Global Waste Management Outlook", "Secretariat Support to the Global Partnership on Waste Management" and "Delivering Integrated Waste Solutions at the National and Local Level:** Overall, the communication between project management staff, the Financial Assistant at UNEP International Environmental Technology Centre (IETC) and Fund Management Officer was organized well. The Fund Management Officer communicated on an almost daily basis with the Financial Assistant.
- **UNEP Global Mercury Partnership and Mercury Programme:** The project prepared, in a timely manner, all necessary financial planning and reporting documents that were fully up to standards and met the quality requirements of the Executing Agency and UNEP/GEF. The financial documents were also thoroughly evaluated at the Partner Advisory Group (PAG) meetings. Moreover, a certified auditing company has duly audited all financial transactions.
- **Demonstrating and Scaling Up Sustainable Alternatives to DDT for the control of vector borne diseases in Southern Caucasus and Central Asia:** Sound financial management that was in place from the beginning of the project implementation. That ensured timely concluding the agreements, control over the money flow, expenditures and the reporting. Executing agency collected contribution and recorded in a separate excel file with references to evidence. Project's budgets were reviewed and approved by steering committee on an annual basis. Good communication was between the implementation and executing agencies, financial reports were submitted due time.

Project examples with good practices in Monitoring and Evaluation

- **UNEP/GEF Project Demonstration of Effectiveness of Diversified, Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Interventions and Strengthening National Capacity for Innovative Implementation of Integrated Vector Management (IVM) for Disease Prevention and Control in the WHO AFRO Region:** The monitoring and reporting mechanisms of the project were well-designed to ensure adherence to UNEP's reporting standards and address the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups, including those living with disabilities. The project utilized a comprehensive set of SMART indicators to track performance and outcomes effectively. Data collection was adaptive, using real-time feedback to adjust strategies and improve outcomes and incorporating sex-disaggregated data and focusing on the differentiated impacts on vulnerable populations. Regular, detailed reports were submitted by WHO and country offices in compliance with UNEP's guidelines throughout the project's lifecycle. The organizational arrangements, responsibilities and structures for monitoring and reviewing/adapting progress of project implementation were specified in the project document. The project also identified a specific budget for M&E.
- **UNEP Global Mercury Partnership and Mercury Programme** The project had a well-developed M&E plan: Detailed reports for all meetings, and for implementation of demo and pilot projects with all associated documentation have been distributed among all interested parties and uploaded on the official Project website. The budget for monitoring and evaluation was satisfactory. Project progress reporting was done on six-monthly and annual basis. The monitoring was continued throughout the project implementation and was used to optimize activities and ensure effective use of financial resources
- **Lead Paint Elimination Project in Africa:** Reporting was very satisfactory. Comprehensive half yearly progress reports as well as Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) were timely prepared and submitted. Based on these reports, it is clear that project implementation was based on the project logical framework and the SMART indicators proposed therein were used to track progress.
- **Development of a National Implementation Plan in Brazil as a first step to implement the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)** The logframe included "objectively verifiable indicators of achievements, sources and means of verification for the project outcomes and outputs, and the timeframe for monitoring activities" were specified in the projects Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. The organizational arrangements, responsibilities and structures for monitoring and reviewing/adapting progress of project implementation were specified in the project document. The project also identified a specific budget for M&E. This dedicated budget for monitoring covered monitoring activities, indicated data collection methods and frequency, and included funds for a Terminal Evaluation. A Monitoring system was put in place at the level of the Executing Agency, in line with its own standards and evidence suggests that this allowed the person responsible for monitoring progress against indicators to track results and progress toward project objectives. Monitoring of project progress is considered to have been adequate, given most indicators were at output level and easily tracked, however, monitoring of performance (in terms of achievement of the overall project objective) was unavailable, given inadequacy of indicators.

Project examples with good practices in Replication, Scaling-up, Catalytic Effects

- **Addressing Marine Plastics – A Systemic Approach:** The project has had a catalytic effect in strengthening support globally for a transition to a circular economy through the Global Plastics Commitment. According to the Ellen MacArthur Foundation website, the Global Commitment has mobilized over 1,000 organizations that are working towards the same

common vision and 2025 targets. There is direct evidence that GEF has adopted an increasing focus on addressing marine plastics, as can be seen in the GEF funding priorities for GEF 7 and GEF 8 that explicitly incorporate a circular economy approach to addressing marine plastics. For example: GEF 8: The Circular Solutions to Plastic Pollution Integrated Program tackles plastic pollution using a circular economy approach. Being among the world leaders for the transition to a circular plastics economy, there is strong institutional support by EMF and OC for building on and sustaining the project outcomes. Addressing marine plastics through a circular economy is firmly integrated in the work of these two organizations, including through their respective initiatives and well-established stakeholder networks. Each of the partner agencies has established epistemic communities and platforms through which they continue the global movement towards a circular plastics economy beyond the project's lifespan.

- ***Addressing risks posed by exposure to lead and cadmium:*** The partnership model used by the Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles (PCFV) and now by the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint (GAELP) has been a successful model to bring together stakeholders including governments, civil society and the private sector around issues of common concern. High level support at and specified commitments from participating governments at the outset have been used successfully in the PCFV and currently in the GAELP. The use of a Regulatory Toolkit developed with the aim of assisting governments to establish national laws to limit lead in paint was successfully used in implementing the PCFV and constitutes a replicable option in other similar projects.
- ***UNEP Global Mercury Partnership and Mercury Programme.*** The project played an important catalytic role in the development of a global and national policy on environmental protection, a number of regulations and procedures for environmental monitoring, risk assessment, analysis, preparation of investment studies and creation of private – public partnerships for preparation and implementation of investment projects directed to social and environmental remediation. The project has a high catalytic potential for the development of legislation concerning the mercury pollution problem. Based on the project outputs, the Governments can adopt new strategic documents and change their approaches to solving the environmental mercury problems. The catalytic role and replication of the project results was evaluated as highly satisfactory due to its very significant role in forming the legislation.
- ***Global Foundations for Reducing Nutrient Enrichment and Oxygen Depletion from Land-based Pollution in Support of Global Nutrient Cycle (GNC):*** The science-policy model applied worked at global and national level. The work under the GNC to address Lead in Batteries and Spent Products (LbSP) is integrative and transformative. It integrated natural sciences (chemistry, hydrology, coastal oceanography) and with social sciences (e.g., economics, political science) into policy. The GNC Project was successful in informing many governments to use the science-policy model and providing the foundation for policies and regulations to be put in place.
- ***Managing Harmful Substance and Hazardous Waste through the Global Programme of Action (GPA) in support of Regional Seas Agreements:*** The strategy for the project is catalytic in nature with the Partnerships intended to mobilize and facilitate the efforts of a wide cross section of stakeholders towards reduction of land-based sources of marine pollution. At the same time, the positioning of the project in the longer-term work programme of the GPA illustrates how sustained effort is required to bring about results. The project support to the Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML) has deliberately set out to create a 'snowball' effect by demonstrating a wide range of interventions that actively engage rather than simply inform a cross section of stakeholders ranging from government agencies to consumers.

- ***Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management Secretariat SAICM:*** The creation of the multi-million-dollar Special Programme is evidence of replication and up-scaling resulting from the first ten year of operation of SAICM.

Annex V. List of interviewees

Stakeholder Group	Stakeholder Sub-group	Organization	Division/Office	Branches/Unit	Name	Position	Location
UNEP Secretariat	Executive Office	UNEP	Executive Office	N/A	Elizabeth Mrema	Deputy Executive Director Chair Budget Steering Committee	Nairobi
UNEP Secretariat	Executive Office	UNEP	Executive Office	N/A	Nicholas Bertrand	Chief of Staff Budget Steering Committee member	Nairobi
UNEP Secretariat	Technical and Corporate Divisions/Offices	UNEP	Industry and Economy Division	Director's Office	Sheila Aggarwal-Khan	Director	Nairobi
UNEP Secretariat	Technical and Corporate Divisions/Offices	UNEP	Industry and Economy Division	Director's Office	Steven Stone	Deputy Director	Paris
UNEP Secretariat	Technical and Corporate Divisions/Offices	UNEP	Industry and Economy Division	Director's Office	Lolita Leal	Programme Coordination Assistant	Nairobi
UNEP Secretariat	Technical and Corporate Divisions/Offices	UNEP	Industry and Economy Division	Administrative Services	Fuaad Alkizim	Finance Management Officer	Paris
UNEP Secretariat	Technical and Corporate Divisions/Offices	UNEP	Industry and Economy Division	Administrative Services	Leena Darlington	Administrative Officer	Paris
UNEP Secretariat	PCP DRI	UNEP	Industry and Economy Division	International Environmental Technology Centre	Takehiro Nakamura	DRI of the "Towards Zero Waste" PCP under the SP-CPA Head, International Environmental Technology Centre	Nairobi
UNEP Secretariat	PCP DRI	UNEP	Industry and Economy Division	Pollution and Health Unit	Maria Cristina Zucca	Subprogramme Coordinator, Chemicals and Pollution Action DRI of the "Pollution and Health" PCP under the SP-CPA	Nairobi

Stakeholder Group	Stakeholder Sub-group	Organization	Division/ Office	Branches/Unit	Name	Position	Location
UNEP Secretariat	PCP DRI	UNEP	Industry and Economy Division	Consumption and Production Unit	Djaheezah Subratty	DRI of the "Circularity in Sectors" PCP under the SP-CPA Head, Consumption and Production Unit	Paris
UNEP Secretariat	Technical and Corporate Divisions/Offices	UNEP	Industry and Economy Division	Chemicals and Health Branch	Jacqueline Alvarez	Chief, Chemicals and Health Branch	Geneva
UNEP Secretariat	Technical and Corporate Divisions/Offices	UNEP	Industry and Economy Division	Resource and Markets Branch	Elisa Tonda	Chief of Branch, Resource and Markets Branch	Paris
UNEP Secretariat	Global Subprogramme Coordinator	UNEP	Law Division	Subprogramme Coordination	Yassin Ahmed	Global Subprogramme Coordinator, Environmental Governance	Nairobi
UNEP Secretariat	Global Subprogramme Coordinator	UNEP	Ecosystems Division	Subprogramme Coordination	Marieta Sakalian	Global Subprogramme Coordinator, Nature Action	Nairobi
UNEP Secretariat	Global Subprogramme Coordinator	UNEP	Climate Change Division	Subprogramme Coordination	Niklas Hagelberg	Global Subprogramme Coordinator, Climate Action	Nairobi
UNEP Secretariat	Global Subprogramme Coordinator	UNEP	Office of the Chief Digital Officer	Subprogramme Coordination	Magda Biesiada	Global Subprogramme Coordinator, Digital Transformation	Nairobi
UNEP Secretariat	Technical and Corporate Divisions/Offices	UNEP	Policy and Programme Division	Strategic Planning Unit	Kakuko Nagatani-Yoshida	Head, Strategic Planning Unit SP-CPA ERG member <i>(former Coordinator, Subprogramme Chemicals and Pollution Action November 2021 - October 2024)</i>	Nairobi
UNEP Secretariat	Technical and Corporate Divisions/Offices	UNEP	Policy and Programme Division	Development Coordination Unit	Cecilia Lopez y Royo	Head of Development Coordination Unit	Nairobi

Stakeholder Group	Stakeholder Sub-group	Organization	Division/ Office	Branches/Unit	Name	Position	Location
						SP-CPA ERG member	
UNEP Secretariat	Technical and Corporate Divisions/Offices	UNEP	Policy and Programme Division	Project Review and Oversight Unit Acting Deputy Director, Policy and Programme Division	Janice Sarah Golding	Head of Project Review and Oversight Unit	Nairobi
UNEP Secretariat	Technical and Corporate Divisions/Offices	UNEP	Policy and Programme Division	Performance Monitoring and Reporting Unit	Rosemary Mukasa	Head of Performance Monitoring and Reporting Unit	Nairobi
UNEP Secretariat	Technical and Corporate Divisions/Offices	UNEP	Policy and Programme Division	Gender and Safeguards Unit	Raymond Brandes	Gender Officer	Nairobi
UNEP Secretariat	Technical and Corporate Divisions/Offices	UNEP	Corporate Services Division	Public Sector Partnerships and Resource Mobilization Unit	Kati Autere	Head of Public Sector Partnerships and Resource Mobilization Unit	Nairobi
UNEP Secretariat	Technical and Corporate Divisions/Offices	UNEP	Corporate Services Division	Programme and Budget Unit	Zhendai Yang	Head, Programme and Budget Unit	Nairobi
UNEP Secretariat	Technical and Corporate Divisions/Offices	UNEP	Communications Division	Director's Office	Atif Butt	Director, Communications Division	Nairobi
UNEP Secretariat	Technical and Corporate Divisions/Offices	UNEP	Early Warning and Assessment Division	Scientific Assessment Branch	Maarten Kappelle	Chief, Scientific Assessment Branch. <i>(former Coordinator, Subprogramme Chemicals and Waste August 2014 – July 2017).</i>	Nairobi
UNEP Secretariat	Technical and Corporate Divisions/Offices	UNEP	Industry and Economy	Science Policy Panel	Tessa Goverse	Head, Science Policy Panel	Nairobi

Stakeholder Group	Stakeholder Sub-group	Organization	Division/ Office	Branches/Unit	Name	Position	Location
						<i>(former Coordinator, Subprogramme Chemicals and Waste January 2018 – May 2021)</i> SP-CPA ERG member	
UNEP Secretariat	Technical and Corporate Divisions/Offices	UNEP	Industry and Economy Division	Climate and Clean Air Coalition Secretariat	Martina Otto	Head of Secretariat, Climate and Clean Air Coalition	Paris
UNEP Secretariat	Project Managers	UNEP	Ecosystems Division	Global Programme of Action	Heidi Savelli-Soderberg	Senior Programme Management Officer	Nairobi
UNEP Secretariat	Technical and Corporate Divisions/Offices	UNEP	Early Warning and Assessment Division	SDG and Environment Statistics Unit	Dany Ghafari	O-i-C, SDG and Environment Statistics Unit	Nairobi
UNEP Secretariat	Technical and Corporate Divisions/Offices	UNEP	Early Warning and Assessment Division	SDG and Environment Statistics Unit	Ekaterina Poleshchuk	Programme Management Officer	Nairobi
UNEP Secretariat	Regional Subprogramme Coordinators	UNEP	Regional Office for Africa	N/A	Alexander Mangwiro	Regional Subprogramme Coordinator for Africa	Nairobi
UNEP Secretariat	Regional Subprogramme Coordinators	UNEP	Regional Office for Europe	N/A	Tomas Marques	Regional Subprogramme Coordinator for Europe	Geneva
UNEP Secretariat	Regional Subprogramme Coordinators	UNEP	Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean	N/A	Jordi Pon	Regional Subprogramme Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean SP-CPA ERG member	Panama City/Panama

Stakeholder Group	Stakeholder Sub-group	Organization	Division/ Office	Branches/Unit	Name	Position	Location
UNEP Secretariat	Regional Subprogramme Coordinators	UNEP	Regional Office for North America	N/A	Hilary French	Regional Subprogramme Coordinator for North America	Washington DC
UNEP Secretariat	Regional Subprogramme Coordinators	UNEP	Regional Office for West Asia	N/A	Iyngararasan Mylvakanam	Regional Subprogramme Coordinator for West Asia	Beirut
UNEP Secretariat	Regional Development Coordinators	UNEP	Regional Office for Africa	N/A	Chris Ambala	Development Coordinator	Nairobi
UNEP Secretariat	Regional Development Coordinators	UNEP	Regional Office for Europe	N/A	Mahir Aliyev	Development Coordinator	Geneva
UNEP Secretariat	Project Managers	UNEP	Industry and Economy Division	Sustainable Mobility Unit	Rob De Jong	Head, Sustainable Mobility Unit	Nairobi
UNEP Secretariat	Project Managers Project Managers	UNEP	Industry and Economy Division	Consumption and Production Unit	Feng Wang	Programme Officer, Coordinator of UNEP Plastics Initiative	Paris
UNEP Secretariat	Project Managers	UNEP	Industry and Economy Division	Pollution and Health Unit	Soraya Smaoun	Coordinator - Air Quality Pollution and Health Unit	Nairobi
UNEP Secretariat	Project Managers	UNEP	Industry and Economy Division	International Environmental Technology Centre	Shunichi Honda	Programme Officer	Osaka
UNEP Secretariat	Project Managers	UNEP	Industry and Economy Division	Knowledge and Risk Unit, Chemicals and Health Branch	Mihaela Claudia Paun	Programme Management Officer	Geneva
UNEP Secretariat	Project Managers	UNEP	Industry and Economy	Special Programme Secretariat, Chemicals and Health Branch	Katherine Theotocatos	Head, Special Programme Secretariat	Nairobi
UNEP Secretariat	Project Managers	UNEP	Industry and Economy	Global Framework on Chemicals	Kay Williams	Head, Global Framework on Chemicals	Geneva
UNEP Secretariat	Project Managers	UNEP	Ecosystems Division	Disasters and Conflicts	Hassan Partow	Programme Manager	Geneva

Stakeholder Group	Stakeholder Sub-group	Organization	Division/ Office	Branches/Unit	Name	Position	Location
				Branch, Response and Recovery Unit			
UNEP Secretariat	Project Managers	UNEP	Industry and Economy Division	GEF Chemicals & Waste Unit	Jitendra Sharma	Programme Management Officer	Geneva
UNEP Secretariat	Project Managers	UNEP	Industry and Economy Division	GEF Chemicals and Waste Unit	Eloise Touni	Programme Management Officer	Geneva
UNEP Secretariat	Project Managers	UNEP	Ecosystems Division	Marine and Freshwater Branch	Alex Pires	Programme Management Officer	Nairobi
						SP-CPA ERG member	
Other UN stakeholders	MEAs and other entities to which UNEP provides Secretariat.	Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions	N/A	N/A	Kei Ohno Woodall	Senior Programme Management Officer, Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions	Geneva
						SP-CPA ERG member	
Other UN stakeholders	MEAs and other entities to which UNEP provides Secretariat.	Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury	N/A	N/A	Eisaku Toda	Senior Programme Management Officer, Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury	Geneva
						SP-CPA ERG member	
Other UN stakeholders	MEAs and other entities to which UNEP provides Secretariat.	Plastic Pollution Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee Secretariat	N/A	N/A	Shuang Zhu	Programme Management Officer	Nairobi
						SP-CPA ERG member	
Other UN stakeholders	UN System	World Health Organization (WHO)	N/A	N/A	Heather Adair Rohani	WHO/Air Quality Unit (a.i. head)	Geneva

Stakeholder Group	Stakeholder Sub-group	Organization	Division/ Office	Branches/Unit	Name	Position	Location
Other UN stakeholders	UN System	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)	N/A	N/A	Carolin Sanz Noriega	Environmental Affairs Officer, Air Convention Secretariat	Geneva
External Partners	Member States through the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) to UNEP	Embassy of the Argentine Republic	N/A	N/A	Joaquin Salsberg	Second Secretary, Head of Multilateral Affairs and UNEP Focal Point	Nairobi
External Partners	Donors (Member States)	Swedish International Development Agency	N/A	N/A	Jorgen Eriksson	Senior Programme Manager, Department for Global Operations, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)	Sweeden
External Parties	Foundations (Philanthropic)	Clean Air Fund	N/A	N/A	Sean Maguire	Executive Director, Strategic Partnerships	United Kingdom
External Parties	Private sector	Textile Exchange	N/A	N/A	Beth Jenssen	Chief Impact Officer (CIO), Textile Exchange	United States
External Partners	Civil Society Organizations	World Resources Institute (WRI)	N/A	N/A	Beatriz Cardenas	Director, Air Quality, WRI Mexico	Mexico
External Parties	Civil Society Organizations	MoveGreen	TBC	TBC	Azhar Baisalova	Project Manager	Kyrgyz Republic

Annex VI. List of documents reviewed

1. UNEP Strategies and Programme of Work

- UNEP Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2014–2017, 2018–2021, and 2022–2025.
- UNEP Programme of Work (PoW) documents:
 - PoW 2014–2015.
 - PoW 2016–2017.
 - PoW 2018–2019.
 - PoW 2020–2021 (Proposed).
 - UNEA Approved Programme of Work 2022–2023.
- UNEP Programme Performance Reports (PPR) 2014–2023.
- UNEP Annual Reports 2014–2022.
- UNEP Quarterly Reports (142nd–162nd Meetings of the Committee of Permanent Representatives).

2. Key Frameworks and Plans

- UNEA and UNEP (2019) Implementation Plan Towards a Pollution-Free Planet.
- UNEP Programme Coordination Projects (PCPs):
 - PCP: Circularity in Sectors.
 - PCP: Pollution and Health.
 - PCP: Towards Zero Waste.
- UNEP (2023) Global Framework on Chemicals Mini Brochure.
- UNEP (2023) List of UN Environment Assembly Resolutions on Chemicals and Pollution.
- SP5 Chemicals and Waste Framework 2014–2017.
- UNEP (2017) Towards a Pollution-Free Planet: Background Report.

3. Evaluation Reports

- Evaluation Report UNEP SP-CA Final (July 2024).
- Evaluation of the UNEP Subprogramme on Climate Action, 2014–2023.
- Formative Evaluation of the UNEP Delivery Model and Associated Programmatic Approach (2024).
- UNEP (2022) Independent Evaluation of Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment (2015–2020).

4. Organizational and Management Documents

- UNEP Divisional Chart (September 2024).
- UNEP Global & Regional Subprogramme Coordinators (September 2024).
- UNEP Programme and Project Management Manual.
- UNEP (2022) Delivery Model Policy for One UNEP Delivery.
- UNEP Approved Programme Coordination Project DRIs (October 2024).
- UNEP FINAL Report V9 (October 2024): Full and Executive Summary Editions.

5. Resource Mobilization and Budget Documents

- Annexes: Budget Appropriation Model.

- C&W Resource Mobilization Strategy (2014–2017).
- Chemicals and Pollution Action Strategy (April 2022).
- Integrated Approach for Financing Chemicals and Waste.
- Outline: Subprogramme Resource Mobilization Strategy.
- SP C&W Financial and Resource Mobilization Slides.
- UNEP Funding Strategy (Final).

6. Corporate Resource Allocations and Financial Processes

- Corporate Resource Allocations by Division and Region (2017).
- Current and Proposed EF Allocation Process.
- Thematic Fund Pollution – Air Quality (2023).

7. Policy and Frameworks

- Environmental Dimensions of AMR – UNEP (June 2022).
- Partnership Policy.
- Pollution Fund Textiles Expenditure (May 2024).

8. Supporting Documents for Resource Allocation and Fundraising

- Resource Mobilization for Individual Projects (2014–2017).
- Memo – 2nd Tranche Thematic Fund Allocation (August 2023).
- Final Fundraising Strategy (Example).

9. UNEP webpages on Chemicals and Pollution

- <https://www.unep.org/topics/ocean-seas-and-coasts/ecosystem-degradation-pollution>

10. Terms of Reference for the Evaluation of the UNEP Subprogramme on Chemicals and Pollution Action 2015-2023

- <https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/48943>

Annex VII. Chemicals and Pollution Action Subprogramme-related evaluations 2015-2024

No	Year of Evaluation	Type (TE/MTE)	POW/GEF	Project Title	Actual Start- End dates
1	2016	TE	POW	Managing Harmful Substances and Hazardous Waste through the Global Programme of Action in Support of Regional Seas Agreements	23/12/2010- Sep 2014
2	2016	TE	POW	Global Mercury Partnership and Mercury Programme	24/09/2009- 31.12.2014
3	2017	TE	POW	Addressing risks posed by exposure to lead and cadmium	18/11/2010- 31.12.2015
4	2017	TE	GEF	Pilot Project on the Development of Mercury Inventory in China	01.01.2013– May 2017
5	2017	TE	GEF	Chemicals management needs and priorities: National dioxin/furan inventories and POPs global monitoring	10.03.2015-31.12.2016
6	2017	TE	POW	Support to Implementation of the Chemicals and Waste Multilateral Environmental Agreements (Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions)	22/12/2014-31.12.2016
7	2018	TE	POW	Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management Secretariat SAICM	10/11/2006-30/11/2015
8	2018	TE	GEF	Pilot project on the Development of Mercury Inventory in the Russian Federation	May 2013-June 2017
9	2018	TE	GEF	Capacity Strengthening and Technical Assistance for the Implementation of Stockholm Convention National Implementation Plans (NIPs) in African Least Developed Countries (LCDs) of the COMESA, Sub-regions	August 2011–Mid 2018
10	2018	TE	GEF	Capacity Strengthening and Technical Assistance for the Implementation of Stockholm Convention National Implementation Plans (NIPs) in African Least Developed Countries (LCDs) of the SADC Sub-regions	August 2011 – Mid 2018
11	2018	TE	GEF	Capacity Strengthening and Technical Assistance for the Implementation of Stockholm Convention National Implementation Plans (NIPs) in African Least Developed Countries (LCDs) of the ECOWAS Sub-regions	August 2011 – Mid 2018
12	2018	TE	POW	Secretariat Support to the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Minamata Convention on Mercury	August 2014 – Dec 2017
13	2018	TE	GEF	Demonstrating and Scaling Up Sustainable Alternatives to DDT for the control of vector-borne diseases in Southern Caucasus and Central Asia	Feb 2011 – June 2016
14	2018	TE	GEF	Demonstration of a Regional Approach to Environmentally Sound Management of PCB Liquid Wastes and Transformers and Capacitors Containing PCBs	Jan 2011 – Sep 2018
15	2018	TE	GEF	GEF-UNEP Project “Lead Paint Elimination Project in Africa”	Aug 2014 – June 2017
16	2018	TE	GEF	Reducing global and local environmental risks from primary mercury mining in Khaidarkan, the Kyrgyz Republic	05/05/2013 – 31.03.2018
17	2018	TE	GEF	Establishing the Tools and Methods to Include the Nine New POPs into Global Monitoring Plan	July 2011 – Dec 2017
18	2019	TE	GEF	Development of Mercury Risk Management Approaches in Latin America	09/06/2014 – 31.12.2018
19	2019	TE	GEF	Global Project on the Updating of National Implementation Plans for POPs	April 2014 – May 2016

No	Year of Evaluation	Type (TE/MTE)	POW/GEF	Project Title	Actual Start- End dates
20	2019	TE	GEF	Development of a National Implementation Plan in Brazil to implement the Stockholm Convention on POPs	Dec 2009 – May 2017
21	2019	TE	GEF	Best Practices for PCB Management in the Mining Sector of South America	01.08.2010 - May 2019
22	2019	TE	GEF	Demonstrating Cost-Effectiveness and Sustainability of Environmentally Sound and Locally Appropriate Alternatives to DDT for Malaria Vector Control in Africa	Sep 2009-June 2017
23	2020	MTE	POW	Special Programme to Support Institutional Strengthening at the National Level for Implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the Minamata Convention and the SAICM	Sep 2016 - Dec 2021.
24	2020	TE	GEF	Demonstration of Sustainable Alternatives to DDT and Strengthening of National Vector Control Capabilities in Middle East and North Africa (DDT MENA)	29/09/2009-31.12.2015
25	2020	TE	GEF	Establishment of Efficient and Effective Data Collection and Reporting Procedures for Evaluating the Continued Need of DDT for Disease Vector Control - Global	Jan 2011-Dec 2014
26	2021	TE	POW	Secretariat Support to the Global Partnership on Waste Management	15.11.2015 - 31.12.2018
27	2021	TE	POW	Global Waste Management Outlook	02.04.2015- 31.12.2018
28	2021	TE	POW	Delivering Integrated Waste Solutions at the National and Local Level	29.04.2015 – 31.03.2019
29	2021	TE	GEF	POPs Monitoring, Reporting and Information Dissemination Using Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTR I)	Jan 2009-Sep 2012
30	2021	TE	GEF	Global Project on the Implementation of Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (PRTRs) as a tool for POPs Reporting, Dissemination and Awareness Raising for Belarus, Cambodia, Ecuador, Kazakhstan, Moldova and Peru	13.05.2015 – 18.10.2020
31	2021	TE	GEF	Development of a Plan for Global Monitoring of Human Exposure to and Environmental Concentrations of Mercury	Nov 2014-Dec 2019
32	2021	TE	GEF	Pacific POPs Release Reduction Through Improved Management of Solid and Hazardous Wastes	18.06.2013 – 28.02.2020
33	2021	TE	GEF	Defining and Demonstrating Best Practices for Exchange of Information on Chemicals in Textile Products	Jan 2015- 31.05.2019
34	2023	TE	GEF	Global Foundations for Reducing Nutrient Enrichment and Oxygen Depletion from Land-based Pollution in Support of Global Nutrient Cycle	28.03.2012-30.04.2019
35	2024	TE	GEF	Demonstration of Effectiveness of Diversified, Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Interventions and Strengthening National Capacity for Innovative Implementation of Integrated Vector Management (IVM) for Disease Prevention and Control in the WHO AFRO Region	24.06.2016-31.12.2022
36	2024	TE	GEF	Addressing Marine Plastics – A Systemic Approach	Oct 2017-Dec2020

Annex VIII. UN Environment Assembly resolutions on chemicals and pollution

1. Environment Assembly resolution 1/5 – Chemicals and waste
2. Environment Assembly resolution 1/6 – Marine plastic debris and microplastics
3. Environment Assembly resolution 1/7 – Strengthening the role of the United Nations Environment Programme in promoting air quality
4. Environment Assembly resolution 2/7 – Sound management of chemicals and waste
5. Environment Assembly resolution 2/11 – Marine plastic debris and microplastics
6. Environment Assembly resolution 2/21 – Sand and dust storms
7. Environment Assembly resolution 3/2 – Pollution mitigation by mainstreaming biodiversity into key sectors
8. Environment Assembly resolution 3/4 – Environment and health
9. Environment Assembly resolution 3/6 – Managing soil pollution to achieve Sustainable Development
10. Environment Assembly resolution 3/7 – Marine litter and microplastics
11. Environment Assembly resolution 3/8 – Preventing and reducing air pollution to improve air quality globally
12. Environment Assembly resolution 3/9 – Eliminating exposure to lead paint and promoting environmentally sound management of waste lead-acid batteries
13. Environment Assembly resolution 3/10 – Addressing water pollution to protect and restore water-related ecosystems
14. Environment Assembly resolution 4/6 – Marine plastic litter and microplastics
15. Environment Assembly resolution 4/7 – Environmentally sound management of waste
16. Environment Assembly resolution 4/8 – Sound management of chemicals and waste
17. Environment Assembly resolution 4/9 – Addressing single-use plastic products pollution
18. Environment Assembly resolution 4/14 – Sustainable nitrogen management
19. Environment Assembly resolution 4/21 – Implementation plan “Towards a pollution-free planet”
20. Environment Assembly resolution 5/2 – Sustainable nitrogen management
21. Environment Assembly resolution 5/7 – Sound management of chemicals and waste
22. Environment Assembly resolution 5/8 -- Science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution

23. Environment Assembly resolution 5/14 -- End plastic pollution: towards an international legally binding instrument

Annex IX. Integrated evaluation framework

A) TOP-DOWN: Evaluation Framework for UNEP's Chemicals and Pollution Action Subprogramme

Evaluation Area	Guiding Questions	Type of evidence/Data collection methods	Means of Verification and Data Sources
Subprogramme's Strategic Relevance, Coherence and Alignment	How effectively were UNEA resolutions on chemicals, waste, and pollution embedded by the SP-CPA, and what were the primary challenges? To what extent does SP-CPA align with UNEP's strategic goals in relation to global challenges posed by chemicals, waste, and water/ocean air pollution? To what extent does the SP-CPA show full complementarity of results, avoiding duplication of effort, with other UNEP subprogrammes?	Qualitative: Review alignment in UNEP's strategic documents and reports; Utilize interviews and regional feedback to provide supplementary analysis on alignment and in coherence with current priorities. Quantitative: Score based on relevance and coherence across strategic goals; Aggregate relevance scores from project-level feedback to strengthen strategic alignment insights.	Triangulation techniques used for comparing information from different sources, such as documentation and interviews on the same subject with different stakeholders to corroborate or check the reliability of evidence. Desk review - MTS, PoW, and strategic frameworks Semi-structured interviews - Key informant interviews UNEP stakeholders - External stakeholders. Interviews with Ministries responsible for Chemicals/Pollution/Waste
Program Theory of Change (ToC) Coherence and Validity	Are the SP-CPA's ToC under the 2015-2024 MTSS structured for impact? To what extent does the MTS 2022-2025 ToC align with the three PCPs under the SP-CPA?	Qualitative: Synthesize coherence across ToCs in strategic documents; Analyze the extent to which the intermediate states, drivers and assumptions underlying the SP-CPA change process have been well thought through and articulated. Quantitative: Percentage of projects aligned to the program's ToC.	Desk review - MTS, PoW, and strategic frameworks Semi-structured interviews - Key informant interviews UNEP stakeholders External stakeholders
Effectiveness of SP-CPA MTS' Outcomes during the 2015-2024 period?	How has SP-CPA influenced UN programming processes and environmental leadership? To what extent has SP-CPA achieved expected outcomes in pollution reduction and sound management of chemicals and waste? To what extent is SP-CPA likely to achieve in the future, its intended results that contribute to the 2030 outcomes²⁰? Specifically, how can it inform and influence: UN Common Country Analysis, UN Sustainable	Qualitative: Review outcome effectiveness in strategic documents and projects. Quantitative: Aggregate outcome scores aligned with strategic goals; Supplement quantitative performance ratings with qualitative evidence from stakeholder interviews; Integrate outcome trends and project-level case studies to validate program-level effectiveness insights.	Desk review - Programme Performance Reports - Annual Reports - Quarterly Reports Semi-structured interviews - Key informant interviews UNEP stakeholders

²⁰ The MTS 2022-2025 maps out the organization's role in fulfilling the goals of the 2030 Agenda and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), as detailed in its outcome document, The Future We Want.

Evaluation Area	Guiding Questions	Type of evidence/Data collection methods	Means of Verification and Data Sources
	Development Country Frameworks, and support the advancement of Sustainable Development Goals related to the SP-CPA?		- External stakeholders. Interviews with Ministries responsible for Chemicals/Pollution/Waste
Subprogramme's Human and Financial Resources Administration and Efficiency	To what extent are synergies with other UNEP subprogramme delivering beneficial results? In what way does the funding reflect the strategic value of the SP-CPA to UNEP's mandate regarding chemicals and pollution? To what extent was the funding adequate to achieve SP-CPA expected outcomes? How have the predictability and stability of core budget allocations impacted on the quality and quantity of delivery on chemicals and pollution? How were budget allocation, especially from the Environment Fund, the Planetary (Thematic) Funds, and other non-extra-budgetary sources, decided within the SP-CPA? To what extent was the budget allocation effective? To what extent did the budget allocation decisions limit the impact of the SP-CPA?" How did UNEP conduct resource mobilization for the SP-CPA, especially beyond GEF? To what extent was the resource mobilization effective? If there is space for improvement on this topic?	Qualitative: Synthesize findings from strategic resource allocation documents. Quantitative: Aggregated cost per outcome based on strategic allocation; Use project-level data to enhance program-wide cost-effectiveness assessment, focusing on high-impact projects	Desk review - PoW and financial reports. - Organizational and Management Documents - Resource Mobilization and Budget Documents - Corporate Resource Allocations and Financial Processes Semi-structured key informant interviews - UNEP stakeholders
Sustainability of the Subprogramme and Impact	To what extent SP-CPA outcomes sustainable? Are there strong strategies for long-term sustainability?	Qualitative: Aggregate sustainability plans and stakeholder ownership; Leverage insights from projects with strong sustainability plans to inform strategic sustainability recommendations. Quantitative: Weighted score based on sustainability strategies in reports.	Desk review - MTS, PoW, and strategic frameworks Semi-structured key informant interviews - UNEP stakeholders - External stakeholders
Subprogramme Design, Structure, Organization and Management	To what extent have recent SP-CPA design changes improved coherence and effectiveness? Are Regional Offices effectively involved in SP-CPA's strategy implementation? To what extent has the staff of UNEP shifted their culture towards the vision and delivery of the SP-	Qualitative: Review organizational changes in the pre-2022 and 2022-2023 PoW; Analyze engagement records and decision-making processes. Conduct stakeholder interviews and case studies.	Desk review - MTS, PoW, and strategic frameworks - Organizational and Management Documents Semi-structured key informant interviews - UNEP stakeholders

Evaluation Area	Guiding Questions	Type of evidence/Data collection methods	Means of Verification and Data Sources
	CPA Outcomes in the MTS 2022- 2025 and the Agenda 2030 goals? Assess the extent to which the overall performance of the SP-CPA has been affected (in terms of effectiveness and efficiency) by the way it is designed, structured, and integrated with other subprogrammes and management structures. The internal coherence and logic between Expected Accomplishments Programme of Work outputs and project outcomes. How well the Subprogramme's results are formulated and logically organized, including the appropriateness of performance indicators to measure progress towards planned achievements. The extent to which the intermediate states, drivers and assumptions underlying the Subprogramme's change process have been well thought through and articulated in relation to the 2022-2023 new delivery model: Assess the extent to which the overall performance of the SP-CPA has been affected (in terms of effectiveness and efficiency) by the way it is designed, structured, and integrated with other subprogrammes and management structures. Assess the internal coherence and logic between Expected Accomplishments (Applicable for projects approved pre-2022), Programme of Work outputs and project outcomes. Assess how well the Subprogramme's results are formulated and logically organized, including the appropriateness of performance indicators to measure progress towards planned achievement. Assess the extent to which the intermediate states, drivers and assumptions underlying the Subprogramme change process have been well thought through and articulated. Aligned and in coherence with the MTS and PoW during the 2015-2024 period? Brought more effectiveness in the implementation, monitoring, and reporting of the Subprogramme?	Quantitative: Performance metrics comparing periods 2015-2021 and 2022-2023. Capacity-building program participation rates.	

Evaluation Area	Guiding Questions	Type of evidence/Data collection methods	Means of Verification and Data Sources
	To what degree is the interplay of roles between the different organizational units effective? What are the mechanisms and instruments that UNEP had to promote cross Subprogramme cooperation, collaboration, and/or joint delivery? To what extent were these mechanisms/instruments effective? How do the three PCPs contribute to SP-CPA results and outcomes? With respect to the quality of steering and implementation of SP-CPA: To what extent has subprogramme organization and management been a factor of success for UNEP's chemicals and pollution action and the achievement of the intended results? If not, what were the reasons for suboptimal functioning? To which degree does the portfolio size in relation to the human resource allocated it (e.g. can the numbers of projects under a Portfolio Manager and/or Task/Project Manager be effectively managed?		
Cooperation and Partnerships	How do GEF/GCF partnerships influence strategy and delivery effectiveness? To what extent are synergies with other UNEP subprogrammes delivering beneficial results? To what extent have collaborations and partnerships with MEAs been productive in implementing the PoW and achieving SP-CPA objectives?	Qualitative: Evaluate partnership and engagement effectiveness in strategic reports; Supplement strategic evaluation with feedback from successful project partnerships of successful partnerships Quantitative: Partnership effectiveness ratings based on collaboration outcomes.	Desk review - MTS, PoW, and strategic frameworks - Partnerships Agreements Semi-structured key informant interviews - UNEP stakeholders - External stakeholders
Human Rights, Gender, and Disability Inclusion	To what extent are cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, human rights, and inclusivity adequately integrated into program design and implementation?	Qualitative: Review program documents for inclusive indicators; Quality of the inclusive indicators on fundamental issues to effectively support mainstreaming in the design, implementation, and monitoring of projects under this SP; Highlight key practices from projects with strong inclusive measures and recommend strategies for broader application. Quantitative: Inclusivity scoring from stakeholder feedback.	Desk review - MTS, PoW, and strategic frameworks Semi-structured key informant interviews - UNEP stakeholders - External stakeholders

Evaluation Area	Guiding Questions	Type of evidence/Data collection methods	Means of Verification and Data Sources
Monitoring, Reporting and Communication	To what degree have recent SP-CPA design changes improved coherence and effectiveness? How well is the Subprogramme promoting cross-project learning? To what degree is the communication between the units responsible for the implementation of the Subprogramme and the Coordinator, senior management and relevant UNEP Divisions and departments a factor affecting the performance of the Subprogramme? To what degree is there clear communication with partners and donors? To what degree has SP-CPA communicated with external audiences as part of an outreach strategy?	Qualitative: Review of UNEP's strategic and operational reports for evidence of recommendation uptake; Assess the effectiveness of communication between the units responsible for the implementation of the Subprogramme and the coordinator, senior management and relevant UNEP Divisions and departments; The extent to which clear communication was established with partners and donors, with a view to assessing the extent to which communication has been contributing to the effective implementation of the Subprogramme, establishment of synergies, and limitation of duplication of efforts; The Evaluation will also consider SP-CPA efforts to communicate with external audiences as part of an outreach strategy to exert influence and support advocacy efforts in the relevant sectors. Quantitative: Tracking recommendation implementation rates across MTS phases.	Desk review - MTS, PoW, and strategic frameworks - PPRs, Annual and Quarterly Reports Semi-structured key informant interviews - UNEP stakeholders - External stakeholders

B) BOTTOM-UP: Evaluation Framework for UNEP's Chemicals and Pollution Action Subprogramme

Evaluation Area	Guiding Questions	Type of evidence/Data collection methods	Means of Verification and Data Sources
Strategic Relevance of Projects	What is the strategic relevance of evaluated projects for countries? Are the projects addressing local needs and aligning with regional goals? How is the alignment to the UNEP MTS, POW, and strategic priorities? What is the coherence of the foundational and enabling Subprogrammes with the SP-CPA? How has the project portfolio evolved over time? How is the alignment of the project portfolio with the three PCPs: (i) Circularity in Sectors, (ii) Pollution and Health, and (iii) Towards Zero Waste under SP-CPA?	Qualitative: Portfolio overview. Gather stakeholder insights on alignment with local priorities. Linkages with UN Development Assistance Frameworks or in UN programming; Evidence of cooperation/ networking/information sharing with regions. Quantitative: Meta-analysis of the ratings of previously evaluated projects; trend analysis of evaluation findings	Desk review - MTS, PoW, and strategic frameworks - Evaluation Reports - Programme Coordination Projects (PCPs) Semi-structured key informant interviews - UNEP stakeholders - External stakeholders. Interviews with Ministries responsible for Chemicals/Pollution/Waste
Project Theory of Change	Is there a clear Theory of Change (ToC)?	Qualitative: Assess clarity and coherence in a sample of key projects' ToC.	Desk review - MTS, PoW, and strategic frameworks

Evaluation Area	Guiding Questions	Type of evidence/Data collection methods	Means of Verification and Data Sources
	To what extent to project ToCs logically connect to SP-CPA objectives? Is there a correlation to the Subprogramme's ToC in the assessment of this criterion? To what degree project ToCs logically connect to the chemicals and pollution PCPs ToCs? Are there causal pathways from project outputs, through outcomes, towards impacts and how clearly, they are described in the log frame or the ToC. Do the projects selected as case studies align to the MTS 2022-2025 ToC?	Quantitative: Proportion of projects with a documented ToC; Trends: Identify common assumptions and drivers in ToCs across projects.	- Project Documents - Evaluation Reports Semi-structured key informant interviews - UNEP stakeholders - External stakeholders
Project Design	How satisfactory were the project designs? Were the projects' objectives and components clear, practicable and feasible within their time frame? To what extent were the main project assumptions and risks identified? Were the management arrangements and roles and responsibilities properly identified prior to project approval? Were partnership arrangements negotiated prior to project approval? To what extent did stakeholders participate in the project formulation process? Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated in the project design? To what extent the expected outcomes are realistic with respect to the timeframe, resources, and scale of the intervention?	Qualitative: Assess quality of project design in a sample of projects. Quantitative: Meta-analysis of the ratings of previously evaluated projects; trend analysis of evaluation findings	Desk review - Project Documents - Evaluation Reports Semi-structured key informant interviews - UNEP stakeholders - External stakeholders
Effectiveness	To what extent have the SP-CPA UNEP-wide projects impacted program performance, global presence, and operational delivery? To what extent is the portfolio achieving the objectives of its stated outputs and outcomes?	Qualitative: Collect case studies on pollution reduction and other outcomes. Quantitative: Meta-analysis of the ratings of previously evaluated projects; trend analysis of evaluation findings	Desk review - MTS, PoW, and strategic frameworks - Evaluation Reports - PPRs, Annual and Quarterly Reports Semi-structured key informant interviews

Evaluation Area	Guiding Questions	Type of evidence/Data collection methods	Means of Verification and Data Sources
	What impact do the projects have on pollution reduction and prevention sound management of chemicals and waste in pollution reduction?		- UNEP stakeholders. Interviews with project Managers - External stakeholders. Interviews with Ministries responsible for Chemicals/Pollution/Waste
Efficiency	Are project resources used efficiently? To what extent have the results been delivered with the least costly resources possible? Is there a strong cost-effectiveness ratio? Assess how/if timeliness influences the SP-CPA results	Qualitative: Review cost management practices in a sample of projects. Assess recurring operational challenges across projects. Quantitative: Meta-analysis of the ratings of previously evaluated projects; trend analysis of evaluation findings	Desk review - PPRs, Annual and Quarterly Reports - Evaluation Reports Semi-structured key informant interviews - UNEP stakeholders. Interviews with Project Managers - External stakeholders
Sustainability of Results and Replication	Are sustainability and exit strategies well-defined? Can project outcomes be maintained long-term?	Qualitative: Review sustainability plans and exit strategies in a sample of project examples of good practices in Replication, Scaling-up, Catalytic Effects, as noted in the evaluation reports. Identify successful projects and assess potential for replication or scaling in other regions or sectors. Quantitative: Proportion of projects with a sustainability plan; Meta-analysis of the ratings of previously evaluated projects; Trend analysis of evaluation findings; identify common factors contributing to sustainability across projects.	Desk review - MTS, PoW, and strategic frameworks - Project Documents and Budgets - Evaluation Reports Semi-structured key informant interviews - UNEP stakeholders. - Interviews with Project Managers and Project partners - External stakeholders. Interview with Country representatives. Interviews with Ministries responsible for Chemicals/Pollution/Waste
Stakeholder Engagement	Are stakeholders effectively engaged? Are partnerships supportive of project goals?	Qualitative: Evaluate stakeholder engagement and partnership quality in a sample of project Review the extent to which projects engage stakeholders early in the process Quantitative: Meta-analysis of the ratings of previously evaluated projects regarding stakeholder satisfaction,	Desk review - MTS, PoW, and strategic frameworks - Project Documents - Evaluation Reports Semi-structured key informant interviews - UNEP stakeholders. - Interviews with Project Managers - External stakeholders

Evaluation Area	Guiding Questions	Type of evidence/Data collection methods	Means of Verification and Data Sources
Country ownership and drivenness	What is the evidence that the activities of the project were country-driven?	Qualitative: Review country ownership and drivenness in a sample of projects, giving examples Quantitative: Meta-analysis of the ratings of previously evaluated projects regarding country ownership and drivenness	Desk review - MTS, PoW, and strategic frameworks - Project Documents - Evaluation Reports Semi-structured key informant interviews - UNEP stakeholders - External stakeholders. - Interviews with Ministries responsible for Chemicals/Pollution/Waste
Inclusivity and Gender Sensitivity	Does the project prioritize inclusivity and gender? Are vulnerable populations considered?	Qualitative: Review inclusive and gender aspects in project design in a sample of project examples of good practices in Gender Equality, as noted in the evaluation reports Quantitative: Meta-analysis of the ratings of previously evaluated projects in terms of inclusivity score; Patterns in inclusivity across high-impact projects.	Desk review - MTS, PoW, and strategic frameworks - Project Documents - Evaluation Reports Semi-structured key informant interviews - UNEP stakeholders. Interviews with Project Managers. - External stakeholders
Monitoring and Reporting	Are M&E practices consistent and robust? Is the project adaptable based on M&E findings? The extent to which the M&E system can effectively support adaptive management.	Qualitative: Assess adaptability in response to M&E data in a sample of projects. Examine the consistency of monitoring and reporting practices across projects; Give examples with good practices in Monitoring and Evaluation, as noted in the evaluation reports. Assessing the quality of Outcome indicators and whether they are robust enough to monitor progress on Outcome achievement under this SP; Assess the adequacy of formulated Outcome-level indicators, which can help to monitor the achievement of results in a meaningful way. Quantitative: Meta-analysis of the ratings of previously evaluated projects regarding M&E activities and adaptive	Desk review - PPR and Quarterly Reports to CPR members - Evaluation Reports - Project Documents Semi-structured key informant interviews - UNEP stakeholders. Interviews with Project Managers.

Evaluation Area	Guiding Questions	Type of evidence/Data collection methods	Means of Verification and Data Sources
		management; Adaptive practices trends across projects.	
Financial Management	Are funds managed transparently? Is there strong financial accountability?	Qualitative: Review financial transparency and accountability practices in a sample of project examples with good practices in Financial Management, as noted in the evaluation reports. Quantitative: Meta-analysis of the ratings of previously evaluated projects regarding audits and budget adherence	Desk review - PoW and financial reports. - Evaluation Reports - Project Documents Semi-structured key informant interviews - UNEP stakeholders. - Interviews with Project Managers and financial team.

Annex X. Evaluation Reference Group Members

1. Ms. Tessa Goverse, Principal Coordinator, Head of the Science-Policy Panel OEWG Secretariat (*former Coordinator, Subprogramme Chemicals and Waste January 2018 – May 2021*)
2. Ms. Kakuko Nagatani-Yoshida, Head Strategic Planning Unit, Policy and Programme Division (*former Coordinator, Subprogramme Chemicals and Pollution Action November 2021 - October 2024*)
3. Ms. Cecilia Lopez y Royo, Development Coordination Unit, Policy and Programme Division
4. Mr. Alex Pires, Programme Management Officer, Source to Sea Pollution Unit, Ecosystems Division (*former EOU consultant*)
5. Mr. Mushtaq Memon, SP-CPA Regional Coordinator, Asia and Pacific Office
6. Mr. Jordi Pon, SP-CPA Regional Coordinator, Latin America and the Caribbean Office
7. Ms. Kei Ohno Woodall, Senior Programme Management Officer, Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions
8. Mr. Eisaku Toda, Senior Programme Management Officer, Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury
9. Ms. Shuang Zhu, Programme Management Officer, Plastic Pollution Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee Secretariat