Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP Project

"Consolidating, Running and Implementing a World Water Quality Alliance" (2020-2024)

operationalized through the project "Assessing key environmental issues and providing focused outlooks to strengthen science-based policy and decision making"
PIMS 2041 (Jan 2020 - Dec 2023)

and the

Project Preparation Proposal phase of "Global Environmental Monitoring Systems for Early Warning for the Environment (GEMS4EWE)"

SMA ID: 177344 (Jan 2024 – Oct 2024)

Evaluation Office of the United Nations Environment Programme

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During the evaluation, I, José Antonio CABO BUJAN, informed UNEP of the use of Artificial Intelligence tools OpenAI GPT-5 and Google Gemini in line with the UNEG Ethical Principles for Harnessing AI in United Nations Evaluations, especially in interview transcription, literature reviews and synthesis of reports/report. After using this tool/service, the evaluator/evaluation team reviewed and verified the content as needed and take(s) full responsibility for the content of the report.

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Consolidating, Running and Implementing a World Water Quality Alliance

Project number: PIMS 2041 and SMA 177344

Date 01/26

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

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Brief consultant biography

José Antonio Cabo is an international consultant with more than two decades of experience supporting climate change, biodiversity, energy, and governance initiatives in over 30 countries. He began his career in field-based technical roles in the Philippines and Guatemala, later specialising in independent evaluations for UN agencies, multilateral facilities, and development partners. Since 2012, he has completed over 30 evaluations, applying theory-based, mixed-methods approaches to assess performance, strategic alignment, and sustainability. His work has informed programmes on climate-resilient landscapes in Mozambique, electric mobility in Cabo Verde, industrial energy efficiency in Brazil, marine protected areas in the Philippines, wetlands conservation in El Salvador, and water–energy integration in Latin America, among others. Trained in environmental economics and marine science, he combines technical depth with practical experience, helping to connect evidence, policy, and stakeholder engagement to strengthen climate, biodiversity, and sustainable development outcomes.

About the Evaluation

Joint Evaluation: No

Report Language(s): English.

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ABSTRACT: This report is a Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP project: Consolidating, Running and Implementing a World Water Quality Alliance" (2020-2024), implemented between 2020 and 2024.The project's overall objective was to consolidate and implement the World Water Quality Alliance (WWQA) as a global, overarching platform to assess water quality and its impacts on human and ecosystem health, and to promote science- and evidence-based services and solutions for water quality improvement, in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The evaluation sought to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency) and determine the sustainability of its results. The evaluation has two primary purposes: accountability and learning. Data collection methods included: in-depth key informant interviews, and document reviews. Data analysis was based on applying triangulated data to assess performance against a reconstructed Theory of Change and its causal pathways. With an overall performance rating of Moderately Unsatisfactory, the main findings include: i) strong technical performance and effective delivery of knowledge products through Small-scale Funding Agreements, ii)significant weaknesses in institutional anchoring, governance activation, cross-workstream integration, and monitoring for learning, iii)the non-completion of the planned flagship World Water Quality Assessment and limited evidence of update or policy influence at outcome level. The main recommendations to UNEP are: strengthening governance, coordination, and learning mechanisms for multi-divisional and alliance based initiatives. Implementing parties are advised to place greater emphasis on early agreement on governance, decision-making arrangement, embed monitoring and learning mechanisms from the outset.

Source(s) of Funding by Country: Swiss, Norway

Source(s) of Funding by Institution Type:

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

Key words *(max five words)***:** World Water Quality Alliance (WWQA), Water quality monitoring, Environmental assessment, Multi-stakeholder partnerships, Science-policy interface

Primary data collection period: May-July 2025

Field mission dates: No field mission

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of acronyms and abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full Name
AMCOW	African Ministers' Council on Water
BfG	Federal Institute of Hydrology (Germany)
EWAD	Early Warning and Assessment Division (UNEP)
FOEN	Swiss Federal Office for the Environment
GEMS/Water	Global Environment Monitoring System for Water
GEMS4EWE	Global Environmental Monitoring Systems for Early Warning for the Environment
GEMStat	Global Environment Monitoring System Water Quality Database
GQI	Groundwater Quality Index
GWQA	Global Water Quality Assessment
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IDWG	Inter-Divisional Working Group
IGRAC	International Groundwater Resources Assessment Centre
IMI	Integrated Monitoring Initiative
IO	International Organization
IHE Delft	IHE Delft Institute for Water Education
JRC	Joint Research Centre (European Commission)
MTR	Mid-Term Review
PPP	Project Preparation Proposal
SAC	Strategic Advisory Committee
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SSFA	Small-Scale Funding Agreement
STI	Science, Technology, and Innovation
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
TAFIRI	Tanzania Fisheries Research Institute
TUF	The Umvoto Foundation
ToC	Theory of Changes
UFZ	Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research
UNEA	United Nations Environment Assembly
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USTIR	University of Stirling
WESR	World Environment Situation Room
WfWP	Women for Water Partnership
WHO	World Health Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization

WRUA	Water Resource Users Association
WUR	Wageningen University & Research
WWQA	World Water Quality Alliance

Project identification table

Table 1 Project Identification Table

UNEP SMA[1] ID:	PIMS 2041 (January 2019 – 31 Dec 2023) SMA 177344/PPP (1 January – 31 October 2024)	Grant ID[2] (if applicable):	Abbreviated to **WWQA**
UNEP Management (Division/Branch/Unit):	Early Warning and Assessment Division (EWAD)		
Implementing Partners:	Deltares, Earthwatch, IGRAC, IHE-Delft, TUF, UFZ, USTIR, WUR, WfWP		
Sources of Funding:	*Country[3]:* Switzerland	*Institution[4] Name/Type:* Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)	
Relevant SDG(s):	SDG 6 Clean Water and Sanitation - Indicator 6.3.2 Proportion of bodies of water with good ambient water quality		
MTS (all that apply):	2018-21; 2022-25	UNEP approval date:	Not applicable as this is a grant under a PRC-approved project
POW Output(s) number/reference[5] *(applicable for projects approved pre-2022):*	POW Output: 1.1 Policymaking and decision-making for climate action are informed by the latest science-based analysis and data generation. 1.2 Integration of the Early Warning platform into the wider overarching platform of the One UN Geospatial Situation Room, coordinating action on geospatial across 40 UN entities 2.7 Natural assets are valued, monitored and sustainably managed. 2.9 Institutional capacity to adopt and act on national and international commitments is enhanced and accountability frameworks are strengthened. 2.14 Fair and equitable access and benefit-sharing frameworks are advanced.	POW Expected Accomplishment(s) number/reference[5] *(applicable for projects approved pre-2022):*	*POW Expected Accomplishment:* *SP7-EA (a):* Governments and other stakeholders use quality open environmental data, analyses and participatory processes that strengthen the science-policy interface to generate evidence-based environmental assessments, identify emerging issues and foster policy action
Sub-programme:	Science Policy	Programme Coordination Project (if relevant):	Science for Policy and Action Programme PCP

[1] SMA refers to the ID provided by the Integrated Planning, Management and Reporting Solution (IPMR) system, which was introduced by UNEP in July 2023. Previously, it was referred to as a PIMS ID number.
[2] For example, ID references from EC, IKI, UNDA, Adaptation Fund, GCF.
[3] Where applicable, list countries who have provided project funds and/or co-finance.
[4] Indicate where funding institutions are any/all of the following: Foundation/NGO; Private Sector; UN Body; Multilateral Fund; Environment Fund; Other.

UNEP SMA[1] ID:	PIMS 2041 (January 2019 – 31 Dec 2023) SMA 177344/PPP (1 January – 31 October 2024)	Grant ID[2] (if applicable):	Abbreviated to **WWQA**
Expected start date:	Nov 2019 (WWQA)	Actual start date:	28 Jan 2020
Planned completion date:	Oct 2023 (WWQA)	Actual operational completion date:	October 2024
Planned *project budget at approval:*	Planned Core Funding (SDC): $1,818,000 (SDC)[5]		
	Planned Extra-budgetary Funds: Cash: $ 35,000 (Norway), $401,208 (FOEN), $ 50,000 (China) In-kind: $4,884,154		
	Total Planned Budget: $7,188,948.00		
Secured project budget [6]	Secured Core Funding (SDC): $1,818,000		
	Secured Extra-budgetary Funds: Cash: $15,000 (EF), $ 145,000 (Norway), $401,208 (FOEN) In-kind: $ 449,794		
	Total Secured Budget: $2,829,002 (Total secured cash: $ 2,379,208)		
Actual expenditures reported:	Actual Core Funding expenditures reported as of *03 June 2025*: $ 1,793,538 (SDC)		
	Actual Extra-budgetary Funds expenditures reported as of *03 June 2025* *Cash:* $14,998 (EF), *$144,658 (Norway),* $383,823 (Swiss FOEN for Africa)		
	Total actual expenditures reported as of *03 June 2025*: $2,319,016		
First disbursement:	$ 505,000 (WWQA)	*Planned* date of financial closure:	*Estimated 1 year after operational completion.*
No. of formal project revisions:	1 – no cost extension of 1 year	Date of last approved project revision:	30.10.23
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	NA – no steering committee (WWQA has an Advisory and Technical Committee)	Date of Last Steering Committee meeting:	
Mid-term Review/ Evaluation[7] *(required or not required):*	UNEP requirement: No Donor requirement: No	Mid-term Review/ Evaluation actual date:	February 2024 *(MTR of PIMS 02041 project, not WWQA specific MTR)*
Terminal Evaluation *(planned date):*	post-October 2024	Terminal Evaluation actual date:	Mar – Dec 2025
Coverage - Country(ies):	Global	Coverage - Region(s):	Global
Dates of previous project phases:	NA	Status of future project phases:	This work was incorporated, from

[5] 13% of this project was planned and used for PSC.
[6] The secured extra-budgetary funds for both cash and in-kind for the WWQA in the table refers to Annual report 2021. In addition to the SDC fund that is an evaluand, the additional funds from Norway funds 2019, 2020, and 2021, and environment funds were secured.
[7] UNEP projects of four or more years duration require an MTR unless there is an exceptional circumstance. See the *Evaluation in the Project Cycle* section in the Evaluation Office's operational manual. Donor requirements may vary and should be considered in conjunction with UNEP's requirements.

UNEP SMA[1] ID:	PIMS 2041 (January 2019 – 31 Dec 2023) SMA 177344/PPP (1 January – 31 October 2024)	Grant ID[2] (if applicable):	Abbreviated to **WWQA**
			Jan 2025, in the project: *Early Warning Global Environmental Monitoring Services*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project background

1. The project "Consolidating, Running and Implementing a World Water Quality Alliance (WWQA)" aimed to operationalize United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) Resolution 3/10 by **establishing the World Water Quality Alliance (WWQA) as a global multi-stakeholder global platform dedicated to improving the generation, integration, and use of water quality data and knowledge**. Conceived as a long-term mechanism for collective scientific assessment, in the manner of science-policy interfaces such as the IPCC or IPBES, the Alliance sought to deliver a **world water-quality assessment** through a data-fusion approach, link water-quality hotspots to solution pathways, and pilot in-country "use cases" that demonstrate practical applications.

2. The project was implemented by UNEP's Early Warning and Assessment Division (EWAD) between 2020 and 2024 [8] with USD 1,818,000[9] in funding from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), and at least USD 500,000 in terms of in-kind contributions from alliance members[10]. While the WWQA project operationalized an UNEP-SDC agreement, within UNEP, the SDC-funded grant was financially managed[11] through two project review committee (PRC) project documents and preparation proposal (PPP): first under project document PIMS 2041[12] and later under the PPP 177344[13].

This evaluation

3. The evaluation examined the project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. Its objectives are both to ensure accountability to UNEP and the donor and to generate lessons for future multi-stakeholder environmental initiatives. Evidence was drawn from document review, interviews with 42 project team and partner organization members, and analysis of outputs, with findings validated through triangulation against a refined Theory of Change.

Key findings and performance ratings

4. **The project has demonstrated strong performance in convening a multi-stakeholder platform and in producing technically sound knowledge products through small scale funding agreements (SSFAs)** [14]. These products included guidelines, white papers, methodologies, capacity-development materials, and peer-reviewed publications that

[8] The SDC–UNEP agreement was originally due to end in December 2023, but it was granted a no-cost extension through December 2024 to allow full utilization of the funds

[9] 18,000 of the SDC grant was set apart as a coordination levy. According to the 2020 SDC-UNEP agreement: Pursuant to paragraph 10(a) of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 72/279 of 31 May 2018, the SDC agrees that an amount corresponding to 1% of the Contribution to UNEP shall be paid to finance the United Nations Resident Coordination System. This amount, hereinafter referred to as the "Coordination Levy" will be held in trust by UNEP until transfer to the United Nations Secretariat for deposit into the United Nations Special Purpose Trust Fund for the reinvigorated Resident Coordinator system, which has been established to fund the United Nations Resident Coordinator System and is managed by the United Nations Secretariat.

[10] Table 4 of the report lists in-kind contributions at USD 449,794, against original estimates of USD 4,877,740. In-kind contributions were not officially estimated, and impressions from project partners (alliance members) collected during the evaluation varied from between 1:1 to 4:1 in-kind contribution regarding the SDC grant. However, none of these figures could be verified and table 4 only considers in-kind estimates of 2021 by partners that confirmed in-kind support exclusive for the alliance

[11] Both PIMS 2041 and PPP 177344 functioned only as internal mechanisms to host and disburse funds

[12] Project document PIMS 2041 -"Assessing key environmental issues and providing focused outlooks to strengthen science-based policy and decision making", which had been approved in January 2019 and was also managed by the same division

[13] Global Environmental Monitoring Systems for Early Warning for the Environment (GEMS4EWE). The project preparation proposal purpose was to design the project document for future activities of UNEP's Global Environment Monitoring System (GEMS)

[14] Ranging from USD 18,200 to 217,425

were scientifically credible, and responsive to emerging water quality themes (ANNEX IVB. KEY PUBLICATIONS). Financial management was sound, with the SDC grant fully executed within budget, and SSFA deliverables were completed as planned.

5. However, **important systemic weaknesses undermined the coherence and impact of these achievements.** The flagship **World Water Quality Assessment** was completed only in a limited form, as a baseline report to UNEA in 2021, and a collection of materials packaged as "pathways" to an assessment at the web sites (https://wwqa.info, and https://www.unep.org/interactives/wwqa/), which, according to the evaluation interviews, did not meet stakeholder expectations for a comprehensive and influential global product. Moreover, Integration among the alliance's workstreams[15] remained weak, and they operated mostly in isolation. Despite efforts by the coordination team, the alliance's governance structures: the Strategic and Technical Advisory Committees (SAC/TAC), were not effectively activated to provide oversight or strategic guidance and were marked by limited of participation of many originally envisioned members, while monitoring and reporting remained compliance-driven rather than focused on learning and linked to the agreement's original theory of change. Gender, human rights, and safeguards were not systematically integrated.
6. Most stakeholders identify **leadership changes and limited institutional support within UNEP as having weakened coordination and weak dissemination and use of WWQA products, with no documented evidence of systematic uptake or policy influence at the level intended in the outcome level**: Governments and other actors start basing their water quality decisions, policies, plans, and investments, on reliable scientific assessments, forward-looking scenarios, practical solutions, and expert analysis produced by the WWQA.
7. Prospects for sustainability are weak: although some workstreams secured follow-on funding, **no resources were mobilized as of November 2025 for Alliance-wide coordination, governance, or cross-stream integration**. The subsequent integration of elements under GEMS4EWE did not include earmarked support for the WWQA coordination team, leaving core functions unfunded. As a result, **without urgent intervention, the Alliance's technical contributions risk remaining isolated outputs rather than a sustained global mechanism for advancing water-quality action**.

Table 2 Summary of project ratings

Criterion	Rating
Strategic Relevance	**Moderately satisfactory**
Quality of Project Design	**Satisfactory**
Nature of External Context	**Moderately unfavourable**
Effectiveness	**Moderately unsatisfactory**
Financial Management	**Satisfactory**
Efficiency	**Moderately satisfactory**
Monitoring and Reporting	**Moderately unsatisfactory**
Sustainability	**Unlikely**
Factors Affecting Performance	**Moderately Satisfactory**
Overall Project Performance Rating	**Moderately Unsatisfactory**

[15] Thematic groups, of which the number varied during the over four years implementation period

Conclusions summary

8. Overall, the project performed at the **Moderately Unsatisfactory** level.
9. Despite this rating, the project showed that a relatively small, well-targeted investment can convene a broad and technically capable partner network and deliver credible thematic outputs within a short implementation period. The use of Small-Scale Funding Agreements (SSFAs) proved effective in mobilising specialised expertise, and the project demonstrated that a multi-workstream approach to global environmental assessment is feasible in practice.
10. At the same time, the WWQA model did not fully realise its potential to function as a sustained convening mechanism for diverse actors in the water quality field. While the project laid the foundations for such a role, these were not sufficiently consolidated during the implementation period.
11. The **strongest performing aspects included maintaining delivery momentum across workstreams through partner commitment despite UNEP's leadership limitations and coordination changes**, and the production of outputs that consistently met technical quality standards. SSFAs remained a particularly effective tool for engaging specialized partners, and leveraging co-funding and in-kind contributions, demonstrating the efficiency of this delivery modality even under resource and staffing constraints.
12. Comparative weaknesses were apparent in the **weak institutional anchoring of the Alliance within UNEP**, **linkages to UNEA and other UN entities and structures**, and the related **inability to mobilize new donor resources** after SDC funding ended. These factors **prevented the completion of the planned World Water Quality Assessment and limited the policy influence originally envisaged in the SDC–UNEP agreement**.
13. The Terms of Reference included five strategic questions regarding alignment, implementation, relevance, positioning, and complementarity of the WWQA within UNEP and the donor-funded water quality landscape. The answers are summarised below:
    a. **To which extent did the A3/713.2/2041 project and the GEMS4EWE PPP operationalize the SDC–UNEP donor agreement?** The evaluation finds that operationalization occurred almost exclusively through the WWQA project funded by the Swiss grant. Integration of the agreement within PIMS 2041 and later the GEMS4EWE PPP was an administrative device rather than a meaningful programmatic integration, with no shared planning, joint delivery structures, or coherent monitoring and reporting mechanisms
    b. **What is the connection, from a results perspective, between the WWQA and the PIMS 2041 project and the GEMS4EWE PPP?** No collaboration occurred within PIMS 2041, but some cooperation with GEMS through the workstreams citizen science and earth observation (contributions to SDG indicator 6.3.2) but not linked to the GEMS4EWE PPP but rather to the participation of GEMS partners in WWQA SSFAs. The integration of WWQA into GEMS4EWE was merely administrative and did not represent strategic continuity.
    c. **What contribution, from a results perspective, did the WWQA make to UNEP's Programme of Work and implementation of relevant UNEA resolutions such as UNEA 3/10?** The WWQA generated knowledge products and methodological work aligned with UNEA 3/10 and UNEP's Environment under Review subprogramme. However, the expected flagship global assessment was not completed, limiting the anticipated answer to resolution 3/10 and the consequent policy influence and institutional uptake
    d. **To what extent was UNEP positioned to convene a global thematic alliance composed of diverse stakeholders working on water quality?** The evaluation concludes that UNEP demonstrated strong convening potential—mobilizing more

than 40 credible partners and leveraging significant in-kind contributions. However, the absence of institutional anchoring, sustained financing, and a consistent engagement strategy has so far prevented the WWQA from maturing into a consolidated and sustainable global platform.

e. **Did the WWQA complement, create synergies, and avoid duplication with other UNEP freshwater initiatives (e.g., GEMS/Water, UN-Water IMI, Healthy and Productive Freshwater Ecosystems)?** Synergies emerged mainly at the workstream level rather than through formal strategic coordination. Collaboration with GEMS/Water and the Wastewater unit through the citizen science, and earth observation workstreams was noted, and the wastewater surveillance workstream later catalysed the Global Wastewater Initiative. However, no evidence suggests systematic coordination, institutionalized complementarity, or a strategic role for the WWQA in guiding or connecting UNEP freshwater initiatives

Lessons Learned

14. **Building and sustaining multi-stakeholder alliances** requires early agreement on governance structures, roles, and decision-making processes to ensure consistent engagement and accountability over time.
15. **Embedding monitoring and learning mechanisms from the outset** strengthens strategic oversight, supports adaptive management, and enhances the uptake of outputs.
16. **Securing institutional anchoring within the host organisation** and diversifying the funding base are critical to sustaining platform functions beyond the initial donor funding cycle.

Recommendations

17. **Recommendation 1: Establish structured cross-component learning and performance review mechanisms** for this (and other) umbrella projects, particularly where multiple assessments or initiatives are implemented under a shared project ID or outcome framework.
18. **Recommendation 2: Assess options for sustaining selected WWQA functions or outputs beyond the current funding period**, by identifying critical tools, platforms, or coordination services that could be maintained through minimal bridging support or integration into ongoing UNEP programmes.
19. **Recommendation 3: Establish clear, formal cooperation pathways between internal units working on water quality**, including routine joint planning across divisions, mapped mandates, and focal point responsibilities to avoid fragmentation and clarify UNEP's thematic leadership.
20. **Recommendation 4: Host an internal, UNEP, discussion to consider streamlining the management of project funding across units and funding sources**, by introducing shared budget frameworks or co-financing alignment mechanisms for multi-divisional initiatives such as global alliances and thematic platforms.
21. **Recommendation 5: Strengthen the integration of human rights and gender equality in follow up work** (i.e. the project *Early Warning Global Environmental Monitoring Services*), by incorporating gender analysis and rights-based approaches in project design, delivery, and monitoring, and ensuring that these are applied consistently across workstreams.

1 THE PROJECT

1.1 Context

1.1.1 Intervention context

22. The **World Water Quality Alliance (WWQA)** was established in response to mounting global concerns about the degradation of water quality and its far-reaching consequences for human health, ecosystems, and sustainable development. The initiative is grounded in the recognition that pollution from agriculture, industry, domestic wastewater, and land use change is a major contributor to declining water quality, exacerbating water scarcity, ecosystem loss, and public health. These impacts are particularly acute in low- and middle-income countries where monitoring capacities are limited, and data availability is uneven or fragmented.

23. The WWQA was initially positioned as a global coordination mechanism, with the long-term ambition of becoming an authoritative science-policy platform akin to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)[16] for water quality. It aimed to support countries in achieving SDG Target 6.3 and to strengthen the science-policy interface. While globally relevant in design, implementation under the SDC–UNEP agreement focused primarily on Sub-Saharan Africa, where pilot activities and technical collaborations were concentrated.

24. The initiative responded to UNEA Resolution 3/10 (2017), which requested UNEP to develop a **world water quality assessment**[17]. It was convened by UNEP's Global Environmental Monitoring Systems (GEMS)[18] unit within the Early Warning and Assessment Division (EWAD) to mobilize over 50 partners from across UN agencies, governments, academia, and civil society. Within GEMS, coordination of the WWQA was linked to GEMS/Water, the freshwater-quality component of GEMS, which played a central role in launching the Alliance in 2018 and hosting its initial coordination functions.

25. The WWQA was formally launched following its inception workshop in 2018. Initial pilot activities, including the Africa Use Cases[19], were supported through a grant from the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN). A larger multi-year contribution agreement between the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and UNEP was signed in January 2020, originally covering the period 2019–2023 and subsequently extended to October 2024 via a no-cost amendment. Following the full disbursement of SDC funds, implementation has continued based on voluntary in-kind contributions from UNEP and participating Alliance members.

1.1.2 Institutional context

26. The WWQA was administratively hosted within the "Assessing key environmental issues and providing focused outlooks to strengthen science-based policy and decision making" project (known as A, 3 or PIMS 2041), also under EWAD, from its inception through 2023. While there was no formal Project Review Committee (PRC) approval of

[16] The SDC–UNEP donor agreement and the 2018 WWQA Inception Workshop framed the Alliance as a long-term, science–policy mechanism designed to deliver recurring global water quality assessments "in an IPCC-like manner" (UNEP–SDC Agreement, 2020; WWQA Inception Workshop Report, Geneva 2018). The 2020 WWQA Declaration reaffirmed this intent, describing a data-fusion and innovation platform for continued global assessment and regular updates.

[17] Across project documents, two titles are used interchangeably for the assessment: Global Water Quality Assessment and World Water Quality Assessment. For the purpose of this evaluation, the term World Water Quality Assessment is used to refer to the project's flagship assessment.

[18] The Global Environment Monitoring System (GEMS) was established by UNEP in 1974, following the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm). Its objective was to develop a coordinated global system for monitoring key environmental parameters—air, water, soil, and biota—to provide scientifically sound data for policy and environmental management. Since 2023 the unit is called Global Environmental Monitoring Systems and Early Warning for the Environment (GEMS4EWE)

[19] Discussion of water quality issues centred in the Volta Basin, Lake Victoria, and Cape Town

the WWQA as a standalone project, the SDC–UNEP agreement was treated administratively as a donor contribution to PIMS 2041. Although the PIMS 2041 reporting and budget eventually reflected the SDC-funded WWQA initiative, the project document was never formally revised to integrate it. The original document listed a World Water Quality Assessment among its planned outputs—alongside the World Oceans Assessment, the Belt and Road Environmental Outlook, and the African Atlas series—but it did not reference or embed the Alliance established with SDC support. Thus, this arrangement provided administrative cover and financial tracking, but without formal integration into PIMS 2041's Theory of Change or UNEP's Programme of Work.

27. In 2024, the agreement's financial administration was shifted to the Project Preparation Proposal (PPP) of the new Global Environmental Monitoring System for Environmental Early Warning (GEMS4EWE/PPP) initiative, with WWQA activities, staff, and coordination administratively embedded under its preparatory budget and oversight. After the end of the PPP in December 2024, the WWQA is, according to project reports, included, administratively, under the GEMS4EWE project document.
28. The WWQA was primarily financed through a USD 1.8 million grant from the SDC under a contribution agreement signed in January 2020. An earlier related contribution of USD 401,208 was provided by the FOEN to support Africa-based pilot activities. While the WWQA was not governed by a standalone UNEP project document, its funds were tracked and reported under the PIMS 2041 project framework.
29. The WWQA itself has not been subject to a dedicated mid-term or independent external evaluation prior to this terminal review. However, its administrative host project, PIMS 2041, underwent a formal mid-term review in 2023–2024. That review addressed overall project performance but did not include a dedicated assessment of the WWQA component.
30. In addition to donor cash contributions, **the WWQA was expected to mobilize substantial co-funding and in-kind support from partners, the agreement citing commitments of up to USD 4.9 million (**Table 4**)**.

1.2 Results Framework

31. In the SDC-UNEP agreement, the WWQA project was designed around one overarching outcome and four primary outputs. The terminal evaluation proposed minor refinements in its inception report to more clearly distinguish between outputs (products and services under direct project control) and outcomes (the intended uses or applications of these outputs). These refinements bring the framework into closer conformity with UNEP's 2023 Glossary of Results Definitions and Evaluation Policy (Table 3 for a summary of results and Table 6 for the modifications).
32. The project outcome aims to strengthen global water quality governance by establishing a multi-stakeholder Alliance capable of delivering credible, science-based assessments, solutions, and policy advice.
33. The logframe treats the WWQA platform as both an enabler and a result: its operationalisation under **Output 1** supports knowledge co-production and coordination across expert groups, advisory committees, and thematic workstreams. This component serves a core management function, underpinning the coherence and delivery of the remaining outputs.
34. **Output 2** focuses on the development of **the World Water Quality Assessment**. This flagship deliverable integrates data fusion, modelling, and scenario-building to produce a global water quality baseline and forward-looking insights.

35. **Output 3** complements output 2 by generating targeted communication and knowledge products addressing persistent and emerging water quality issues, thereby supporting outreach and science-policy engagement.
36. **Output 4**, although funded separately (FOEN grant), is meant to demonstrate the application of WWQA tools and approaches in real-world use cases (Africa Use Cases in the Volta basin, Lake Victoria and the Cape Town aquifer).

Table 3 Summary of project's latest approved results framework (source: UNEP-SDC agreement)

	Results Statement
Project objective	To consolidate and implement the World Water Quality Alliance (WWQA) as a global, overarching platform to assess water quality and its impacts on human and ecosystem health, and to promote science- and evidence-based services and solutions for water quality improvement, in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
Impact	Freshwater bodies are protected and restored through the implementation of smart policies, business models, and operational policy advisory services, fostering integrated water quality and resource management from global to local scales, and contributing to the achievement of SDGs and other internationally agreed goals
Intermediate state	Government, private and civil society support policy action and prioritize investment based on assessment results and other knowledge products
Project outcome	In their strategies, policies, and investments related to water quality management, governments and stakeholders begin to use evidence-based assessments, scenarios, solutions and services, and analyses and advice on persistent and emerging water quality issues of socio-environmental concern, as provided by a global Alliance of experts, public, private, and civil society partners.
Outputs	**Output 1:** The World Water Quality Alliance is operational, with Expert Groups, Advisory Bodies (TAC/SAC), Thematic Working Groups, and a Science, Technology, and Innovation(STI) and Agenda-Setting Platform established and available to support stakeholders. **Output 2:** A Global Water Quality Assessment, including a global baseline, innovative data fusion and modelling products, scenarios, causal chain illustrations, and solution pathways, is produced and made available to stakeholders, with a draft presented by UNEA-5 and the full assessment, including causal chain cases, completed by UNEA-6 **Output 3:** An operational Agenda-Setting Platform produces and disseminates analysis, synthesis, and products on persistent and emerging water quality issues, and makes these outputs accessible to national, regional, and global science-policy processes **Output 4:** Demonstration case studies documenting the in-country application of WWQA products and services, developed with support from complementary UNEP-implemented funding sources, are produced and disseminated to inform stakeholders and future scaling efforts

1.3 Project Implementation Structure and Partners

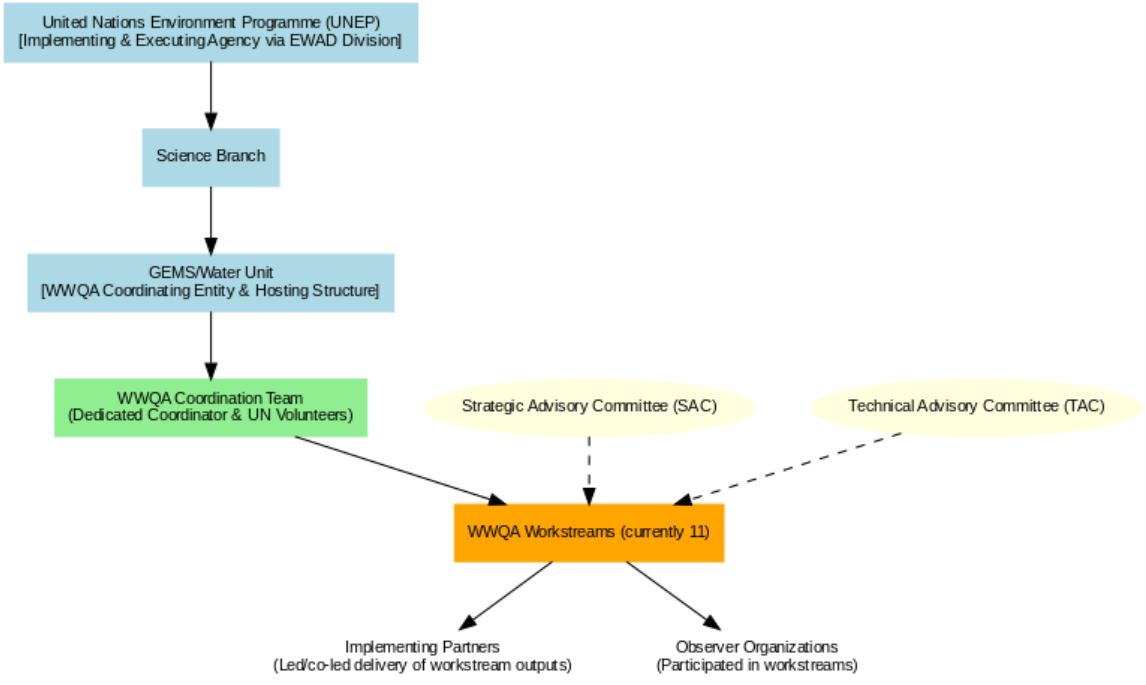
37. The WWQA project had a dedicated coordination team led by a coordinator and at least one assistant/ co-coordinator, though the incumbent changed over time: following a one-year recruitment delay after the project's start in January 2020, a P-4 fixed-term staff member was appointed; in July 2022, the post-holder went on parental leave and was replaced by an acting coordinator (individual contract) until late 2022; The P-4 staff resumed duties until leaving in December 2024, after which the Alliance's work was coordinated by a national UN Volunteer (UNV) who had been part of the team since 2022.
38. Project governance involved two advisory bodies: the Strategic Advisory Committee, envisioned to be composed of high-level institutional partners providing strategic direction, and the Technical Advisory Committee, to be composed of scientific and technical experts representing themselves or alliance members and contributing to methodological and thematic coherence. The TAC was also responsible for selecting SSFA seed-funded projects; however, this role appears to have been exercised jointly

with the SAC, as decision-making took place in combined meetings. Both committees were merged into one Advisory Committee (AC), with new members elected in November 2024.

39. Thematic delivery was organized through a variable number of workstreams, which are now eleven according to the https://wwqa.info website: Earth Observation, Citizen Science, Ecosystems, Waster Surveillance, Friends of Groundwater, Plastics, Biodiversity and Biomonitoring and Assessment, In-situ Water Quality, Modelling, Social Engagement, and Science-Policy Interface for Water.

40. Sixteen SSFAs were the project's principal delivery mechanism and provided catalytic or "seed" funding to selected institutions to lead or co-lead workstream activities. These agreements supported the development of core WWQA products, including pilot assessments, scenario modelling, citizen science protocols, capacity-building modules, and knowledge platforms. While individually modest in scale, the SSFAs were intended to foster collaboration, generate visibility, and stimulate further uptake or replication by participating institutions and partners.

Figure 1 Organigram of the project with key project stakeholders



1.4 Stakeholders

41. The WWQA engaged a wide and diverse set of stakeholders, structured around their formal role in project delivery, level of influence, and expected contributions. These can be grouped into four main categories:

    - Implementing Partners: Organizations that received SSFAs to deliver workstream outputs. These actors—typically research institutions, NGOs, and expert networks[20]—were the project's key change agents. They led or co-led activities

[20] SSFA implementing partners were: **Deltares**, an independent research institute for applied research in the field of water, **Earthwatch Europe**, a UK-based environmental charity, the International Groundwater Resources Assessment Centre **IGRAC**, an UNESCO-affiliated research centre that provides groundwater data and information, **IHE Delft**, an UNESCO-affiliated Netherlands-based international postgraduate education and research institute, The **Umvoto Foundation**, a registered non-profit based in South Africa focusing on building community capacity toward maintaining clean and healthy ecosystems, particularly in relation to water resources, The Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research **UFZ**, a German research institute that conducts interdisciplinary environmental science on ecosystems, water, chemicals, and sustainability, the **University of Stirling**, a UK public university with strong teaching and research in areas such as environmental sciences, Wageningen

such as the global water quality assessment, use cases, citizen science initiatives, and capacity development components.

- Workstream Contributing Partners: A broader group of Alliance members involved in co-producing outputs or sharing data, tools, or expertise. While not funded, these partners played a significant role in thematic development, technical peer review, and advocacy. Workstream contributors included all implementing partners, as well as UN organizations, such as the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), and the European Commission Joint Research Centre (JRC)[21].
- Observers [22] : Entities participating in workstreams without leadership or implementation responsibilities. They included government agencies, civil society, and academic institutions interested in WWQA's mandate but without formal roles in project delivery.
- National Stakeholders and End Users: Institutions in countries engaged through use cases, and other on the ground implementation (notably in Africa), including water ministries or authorities, and environmental agencies. Their primary benefit lay in access to assessment tools, modelling methods, and policy dialogue platforms. However, their participation in the project and the WWQA was mostly indirect and mediated by the SSFA implementing partners. The only national organizations involved in the implementation of project activities were linked to citizen science workstream: the National Water Resources Management Agency of Sierra Leone (NWMRA), the Kenya National Association of Water Resources Users Association (KeNAWRUA) and the Kenya Water Resources Authority (WRA).

42. While a youth and gender-focused workstream was constituted, stakeholder engagement on gender and inclusion was uneven. The project did not systematically address the needs of under-represented or marginalised groups, including persons with disabilities.

1.5 Changes in Design during Implementation

43. Initially conceived in 2018 as a support platform for the UNEA-mandated global water quality assessment, the project was reframed during early consultations into a broader multistakeholder platform, yet still with focused, at least in the project agreement and in advisory committee meetings, confirmed by several key stakeholders, on producing the UNEA-mandated Water Quality Assessment. The SDC agreement explicitly positioned this assessment as a core deliverable and described the funding as catalytic, intended to leverage in-kind and additional financial contributions and to help generate political traction for follow-up to UNEA Resolution 3/10.

44. From 2022 onward, project implementation encountered challenges related to UNEP's internal transitions, institutional alignment, and what many stakeholders described as the WWQA losing focus on the original main output (water quality assessment) and

University, a Dutch public research university specialising in life sciences, agriculture, food, and environmental sustainability, and Women for Water Partnership WfWP, a global network of women's organisations that advocates for and strengthens the role of women in water management, sanitation, and sustainable development.

21 Workstream contributors also included: the Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology (EAWAG), Estonian University of Life Sciences (EULS), the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), the German Museum für Naturkunde (MfN), the Nanjing University of Information Science and Technology (NUIST), and the Wetskills Foundation. Based on project reports and evaluation interviews, the most active workstream contributors were the SSFA implementing partners together with the WMO and JRC.

22 Observers included NGOs such as Human Rights 2 Water, a Geneva-based non-profit organisation that promotes the human rights to safe water and sanitation, The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), an autonomous international organisation under the UN system that promotes the safe, secure, and peaceful use of nuclear science and technology, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development OECD and the World Bank. The distinction between workstream contributor and observer is blurry as it is based on the intensity of the collaboration, which varied significantly during the implementation of the SDC-UNEP agreement.

outcome (national governments begin to use evidence-based assessments, scenarios, solutions and services, and analyses and advice on persistent and emerging water quality issues). Periods of reduced staffing and changes in leadership led to a slowdown in coordination and contributed to delays in planned activities. These circumstances coincided with increasing complexity across workstreams and a gradual shift in emphasis from assessment products to broader alliance-building and technical support functions. There is, however, no documentation indicating that the agreement's outcomes or objectives were ever formally revised or communicated and escalated to the donor or UNEP senior management. As reflected in evaluation interview feedback, expectations around delivering the assessment persisted and differed among different partners throughout implementation, and the evolution of priorities appears to have occurred informally rather than through a transparent and systematic adjustment of scope or governance.

45. In October 2023, UNEP and the SDC signed an amendment to grant a one-year no-cost extension for the WWQA project, extending its operational period from 31 October 2023 to 31 October 2024. The extension aimed to offset initial start-up delays, including those linked to the Covid-19 pandemic. Project-funded activities under the SDC-UNEP agreement concluded on 31 October 2024.

46. By October 2024, as the extended funding period ended and no new core funding had been secured, workstream contributors questioned their capability in continuing providing in-kind resources, primarily through their own time and expertise. Moreover, the absence of a perspective of completing the global water quality assessment led to reduced engagement in many workstreams. Participation remained active only in those workstreams that had independently obtained supplementary funding, while overall Alliance activity and scope began to contract. No new SSFAs were issued, and overall workstream delivery was markedly reduced.

1.6 Project Financing

47. The total UNEP-managed budget for the WWQA project amounted to USD 2,534,208, of which USD 1,818,000 (less the 1 percent coordination fee of USD 18,000) constituted the core contribution from the (SDC. Additional secured cash contributions included USD 401,208 from the FOEN, USD 145,000 from Norway, and an UNEP Environment Fund allocation of USD 15,000 (see Table 4). No cash was received from the China Trust Fund or other potential sources listed in the financial summary (Table 4).

48. The agreement and the 2021 Annual Progress Report shared with SDC included an initial estimate of about USD 4.9 million, summarizing partner inputs such as staff time, technical expertise, data platforms, and logistical support from UNEP, GlobeWQ[23], JRC, Deltares, and other Alliance members. Later internal financial documentation covering 2021–2023 revised the cumulative estimate to approximately USD 5.1 million. These figures were compiled by the project coordination team, since UNEP's financial systems do not capture in-kind or third-party co-financing outside formal project agreements. While one project stakeholder and the project team inform about reporting on in-kind contributions, likely in 2024, the no annual report after 2021, including the 2024 annual report, contains such information.

49. While no further official reports exist on those in-kind contributions, project implementing partners and workstream contributors confirmed during interviews that their in-kind contributions substantially exceeded initial expectations, yet no confirmation or approximate estimation could be obtained or provided by the partners.

[23] Water Quality Assessment project funded by the government of Germany

The values reported in Table 4 should be considered therefore lower range broad approximations rather than audited figures. Several in-kind contributions out of the agreement and 2021 report are not included in the estimation. For instance, contributions from entities such as the GEMS/ Water Capacity Development Centre (government of Ireland in Table 4) and the GEMS/Water Data Centre (Germany) were expended under the UNEP Project 716.1 "Capacity Building for National and Regional Environmental Information and Knowledge Management"—and are not included here to avoid double counting.

50. Among the externally reported co-funding figures, Globe WQ (Table 11) appears prominently with an internal estimate of USD 2.68 million, and the JRC with approximately USD 0.7 million linked to its role as Regional Hub for GEMS/Water (Mediterranean, Central Asia and Africa). While the WWQA design acknowledged their relevance for modelling and data integration, interview and reporting evidence indicate that coordination with these initiatives remained limited, despites some synergies with Globe WQ. Each project pursued related objectives, particularly in modelling and assessment of water quality, but operated virtually independently. The amounts listed in the planned funding column of table 4 correspond to the total envelope of those two activities. Considering that they were independently funded and implemented activities and that the cost of possible synergies with the WWQA were not quantified, they do not figure on the secured funding column of Table 4.
51. In addition to the project-funded UNV and one Professional (P-4) post, limited staff time from UNEP's regular personnel supported WWQA activities—estimated at roughly **25–30 percent of one senior professional position over the period January 2020 to November 2022**, equivalent to an in-kind value of approximately **USD 130 000 – 150 000**. These inputs are included in the "Environment Fund staff-post costs" line of Table 4 but were not separately costed or reported in the UNEP financial system Umoja.
52. Despite the 2024 inclusion of the WWQA in the terms of reference of the Expert Group Water Quality and Wastewater of UN-Water, interviews and reports provide no evidence for the planned IMI in-kind contribution reported in the 2021 annual report.

Table 4 Project funding sources

Funding source *All figures as USD*	**Planned funding**	**% of planned funding**	**Secured funding[24]**	**% of secured funding**
Cash				
Funds from the Environment Fund	0	*0.0%*	15,000	*0.5%*
Funds from the Regular Budget	0	*0.0%*	0	*0.0%*
SDC	**1,818,000**	*28.4%*	**1,818,000**	*64.3%*
FOEN	401,208	*6.3%*	401,208	*14.2%*
Norway Funds	35,000	*0.5%*	145,000	*5.1%*
China Trust Fund	50,000	*0.8%*	0	*0.0%*
Sub-total: Cash contributions	**2,304,208**	***36.0%***	**2,379,208**	***84.1%***
In-kind				
Environment Fund staff-post costs	565,000	*7.9%*	140,000	4.9%
Government of Germany (Globe WQ)	2,679,946	*37.3%*	0	0.0%
Government of Germany GEMS/Water Data Centre	160,000	*2.2%*	0	0.0%

[24] The values for secured in-kind contributions were extracted from the 2021 Annual Report. A draft 2024 progress report does not include the financial information

Funding source *All figures as USD*	**Planned funding**	**% of planned funding**	**Secured funding[24]**	**% of secured funding**
Ireland Capacity Development	150000	*2.1%*	0	0.0%
IMI for SDG 6 contribution	190,000	*2.6%*	0	0.0%
Deltares modelling and emission scenarios for the World Water Quality Assessment	150,000	*2.1%*	0	0.0%
JRC and WMO — hosting meetings and conferences 2018-2019	30,000	*0.4%*	30,000	1.1%
JRC continued support to the Alliance and as Regional Hub for GEMS/Water	695,000	*9.5%*	0	0.0%
Alliance members Co-funding	279,794	*3.9%*	279,794	9.9%
Sub-total: In-kind contributions	***4,877,740***	***67.9%***	***449,794***	***15.9%***
Co-financing				
Co-financing cash contribution	0	*0.0%*	0	*0.0%*
Co-financing in-kind contribution	0	*0.0%*	0	*0.0%*
Sub-total: Co-financing contributions	*0*	*0.0%*	*0*	*0.0%*
Total	**7,188,848**		***2,829,000***	
Source: developed based on 2021 report, the financial reports (last 2023), Umoja screenshots and information from the FMO				

2 EVALUATION METHODS

2.1 UNEP's Evaluation Approach

53. In line with UNEP Evaluation Policy and the UNEP Programme and Project Management Manual, the evaluation was undertaken at operational completion of the project to assess performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency) and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned.

54. The main target audiences for the evaluation findings are

- UNEP, and specifically, the Early Warning and Assessment Division (project managing division), the Ecosystems Division (host of the Freshwater Ecosystems Unit), and the Chemicals and Health Branch (host of the Wastewater and Sanitation Unit and the Global Wastewater Initiative)
- Project partners, especially workstream contributors and SSFA implementors such as Deltares, Earthwatch, the International Groundwater Resources Assessment Centre (IGRAC), IHE Delft Institute for Water Education (IHE-Delft), The Umvoto Foundation (TUF), Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research (UFZ), The University of Stirling (USTIR), Wageningen University & Research (WUR), and Women for Water Partnership (WfWP).
- The SDC, and the FOEN, as donors
- Members of the World Water Quality Alliance including its past and present Advisory Committees
- The wider community working on global water quality monitoring and assessment.

55. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy and the UNEP Programme Manual, the evaluation has been carried out using a set of 9 commonly applied evaluation criteria which include: (1) Strategic Relevance , (2) Quality of Project Design, (3) Nature of External Context, (4) Effectiveness (incl. availability of outputs; achievement of outcomes and likelihood of impact), (5) Financial Management, (6) Efficiency, (7) Monitoring and Reporting, (8) Sustainability and (9) Factors Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues (see Annex II: Evaluation Framework for more details on each evaluation criterion).

56. Most evaluation criteria are rated on a six-point scale as follows: Highly Satisfactory (HS); Satisfactory (S); Moderately Satisfactory (MS); Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU); Unsatisfactory (U); Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). Sustainability and Likelihood of Impact are rated from Highly Likely (HL) down to Highly Unlikely (HU) and Nature of External Context is rated from Highly Favourable (HF) to Highly Unfavourable (HU). The ratings against each criterion are 'weighted' to derive the Overall Project Performance Rating. The greatest weight is placed on the achievement of outcomes, followed by dimensions of sustainability.

57. The UNEP Evaluation Office has developed detailed descriptions of the main elements required to be demonstrated at each level (i.e. Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory) for each evaluation criterion. The evaluator has considered all the evidence gathered during the evaluation in relation to this matrix to generate evaluation criteria performance ratings.

58. In addition to the 9 evaluation criteria outlined above, the evaluation addresses several strategic questions that were formulated in the Terms of Reference. These questions were posed by the UNEP Evaluation Office in conjunction with members of the Project

Team. The answer to the ToR strategic questions can be found in section **Strategic Relevance.**

59. This evaluation adopted a participatory approach, consulting with project team members, partners and beneficiaries at several stages throughout the process. Central to the evaluation was the analysis (and reconstruction) of the project's Theory of Change. Consultations were held during the evaluation inception phase to arrive at a nuanced understanding of how the project intended to drive change and what contributing conditions ('assumptions' and 'drivers') would need to be in place to support such change. The (reconstructed) Theory of Change, supported by a graphic representation and narrative discussion of the causal pathways, was discussed further with respondents during the data collection phase, and refined as appropriate. The final iteration of the Theory of Change is presented in this final evaluation report and has been used throughout the evaluation process.

2.2 Data Collection

2.2.1 Primary data sources

60. Primary data for the Terminal Evaluation were collected through semi-structured interviews with a total of 42 stakeholders (17 or 40% women) who participated in project implementation or were directly engaged through WWQA workstreams (See Annex III). Interviews were conducted remotely, through virtual meetings using the online communication platforms Google Meet, Zoom and Microsoft Teams. Respondents included representatives of the project team, implementing partners, and collaborating institutions, as well as select observers and external experts prominently referenced in project documentation.

61. Several workstreams — including citizen science, modelling, social engagement, and plastics — undertook field activities, with the workstream citizen science taking a lead role alongside Sierra Leone's National Water Resources Management Agency and Kenya's Water Resources Authority. Social engagement also collaborated with the Kenya National Association of Water Resources Users Association, while the Africa case studies workstream, mainly funded through a FOEN grant on the African Great Lakes, involved Ugandan, Malawian, and Tanzanian authorities indirectly. However, as the project's design centred on delivering an actionable global water quality assessment without a field component, no field missions or travel were undertaken for the evaluation.

62. Stakeholders were selected based on predefined criteria including confirmed involvement in WWQA implementation; inclusion in key governance or workstream roles; nomination by the project team; prominence in project records; and efforts to prioritize non-European perspectives and women respondents. Interview tools followed a consistent protocol tailored by respondent type, enabling structured yet open-ended responses across evaluation criteria.

63. The evaluation sampling frame contained 98 contacts across 54 organisations, with six people participating in the alliance in a personal capacity and not as representatives of their organisations. Given that the evaluation sample was deemed representative, comprising 51 individuals (42 of whom completed an interview), and accounting for 65% of the organizations and 51% of the individuals from the sampling frame, the evaluation did not survey as suggested in the inception report. Of the 54 organizations in the sampling frame, 10 were implementing partners (receiving project funds), one (UNEP) was the implementing entity, and one (SDC) was the funding agency, and the rest (42) were observers, workstream contributors, and national entities having not received any project funds.

Table 5 Evaluation respondents and field visits

Stakeholders - Individuals			A. Total number involved (M/F)	B. Number contacted (M/F)	Sample size (% B/A)[25]	C. Total number responded Total (M/F)	Response rate (% C/B)[26]
Project Team	**Project Team** (with management responsibilities e.g. Project Management Unit)	Implementing agency	9 (5/4)	9 (5/4)	100%	8 (4/4)	88%
		Executing agency	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Beneficiaries	**Direct Beneficiaries:** (e.g. duty bearers, gatekeepers, training participants, etc.) **Indirect Beneficiaries:** (e.g. household members, civil society representatives, group members, etc.)		NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Others	**Project contributors (observers, donors, etc.)**		89 (51/38)	42 (26/16)	47%	33 (21/12)	79%
Stakeholders - Entities			**A. Total number involved**	**B. Number contacted**	**Sample size (% B/A)[27]**	**C. Total number responded**	**Response rate (% C/B)[28]**
Partners	**Project implementing/ executing partners** (receiving project funds)		10	10	100%	9	90%
	Project collaborating/ contributing partners[29] (not receiving project fund)		42	22	52%	15	68%

2.2.2 Strategies for inclusivity

64. Of the 98 contacts, 42 (42%) were women. Although the evaluation prioritised interviewing women, only 20 of the 51 individuals invited (39%) were women. This was because the main priority groups — SSFA implementing partners, the most active key informants pre-selected by the project team, and additional stakeholders identified during interviews — were predominantly male.

65. To maximize response rates and ensure inclusive representation, the evaluator applied a structured outreach strategy guided by predefined selection criteria that prioritized geographic and gender diversity, institutional relevance, and involvement in WWQA implementation. Effort was made to engage non-European stakeholders and women, including through targeted follow-ups and flexible scheduling. Respondents were identified through project records, SSFA documents, and project team suggestions. To capture national-level beneficiary perspectives, the evaluator sought personal referrals from implementing partners, as no centralized directory of national stakeholders existed.

[25] Percentage of people involved in the project who were contacted.
[26] Percentage of people contacted who responded.
[27] Percentage of entities involved in the project who were contacted.
[28] Percentage of entities contacted who responded.
[29] Contributing partners may be providing resources as either cash or in-kind inputs (e.g. staff time, office space etc.).

Three relevant national stakeholders were identified, of which representatives of two government organizations were interviewed.

2.2.3 Secondary data sources

66. The evaluation drew on 240 secondary sources (ANNEX IV), including project documents provided by UNEP, materials obtained directly from implementing partners, and relevant publicly available outputs. These included the original project proposal, results framework, budgets and revisions, and formal agreements such as SSFAs. Key reporting sources included annual donor reports, PIMS reports, expenditure reports, SSFA narrative and financial reports, and various internal and external communications. Scientific and technical products generated under the WWQA umbrella, such as peer-reviewed articles, white papers, and workshop deliverables, were also reviewed. Several documents were obtained directly from partners or through follow-up during interviews to ensure comprehensive coverage of project activities and outputs across all major workstreams. Major papers and publications identified by the stakeholders are listed in **ANNEX IVB**. Key Publications. The impact of those key publications was researched through Google Scholar searches to gauge their citation count, or citation in policy documents. Stakeholders were also asked about how they believed their outputs would be or are being utilized in the sense of the UNEP-SDC agreement's outcome.

2.3 Data Analysis

67. The evaluation applied a mixed-methods approach guided by the project's Theory of Change (ToC) and UNEP's evaluation standards. Contribution analysis was used as the primary interpretive framework to explore how project activities plausibly contributed to observed or reported results. The evaluator mapped reported outputs and outcomes against the ToC pathways and assessed whether the required assumptions and enabling conditions held—paying special attention to where causal links broke down or diverged from expectations.

68. Qualitative data from interviews were compiled and structured using a tabular framework, with responses coded according to evaluation criteria (e.g., relevance, effectiveness, sustainability) and triangulated across respondent groups. This allowed for the identification of common themes, outlier views, and gaps in perception between stakeholder types (e.g., project team, implementing partners, observers). Document sources were also tabulated, categorized by type (e.g., SSFA reports, financial reports, technical outputs, donor reports), and coded against the evaluation matrix. These were cross-referenced with interview findings to verify consistency or identify discrepancies.

69. Artificial intelligence tools were used to enhance data processing efficiency while maintaining ethical standards and confidentiality. Google Gemini was employed for transcription and summarisation of interview notes taken during direct (non-recorded) interviews, and ChatGPT (GPT-4o) was used to assist in the systematic coding and summarisation of documents in alignment with the evaluation matrix. In two cases, interview notes were taken entirely by hand, and in one case this was specifically because the respondent declined the use of AI-assisted processing. All interviews were conducted with informed consent, and strict measures were applied to ensure confidentiality and respondent anonymity. AI tools were used solely to support transcription, coding, and summarisation; they did not replace the evaluator's professional judgement, analysis, or responsibility for the findings. All AI-assisted outputs were reviewed, validated, and refined by the evaluator to ensure accuracy, consistency, and adherence to evaluation standards.

70. Stakeholders expressed varied opinions and perceptions of the project and its results, but these differences were not linked to gender, occupation, stakeholder type, or age.

Although technical and academic respondents tended to approach issues differently from those engaged in grassroots and social engagement initiatives, this divergence in perspective did not translate into differing overall views of the project's implementation or outcomes.

71. Where available, quantitative data—such as financial records, number of participating organizations, and geographical distribution of SSFAs—were used to substantiate qualitative patterns. Ratings were derived through a synthesis of coded evidence across these sources and calibrated according to UNEP's standard performance criteria. The approach ensured traceability from raw evidence to evaluative judgment and supported a balanced representation of views.

2.4 Limitations and Mitigation Strategies

72. The evaluation faced some initial challenges in establishing comprehensive outreach due to the absence of a centralized or up-to-date membership roster for the WWQA. As the available listings were incomplete, additional time was required to identify and validate contact details. A total of 51 individuals were invited to participate in interviews; approximately 10% declined (25% women), another 10% did not respond (20% women), and two confirmed participants did not attend their scheduled interviews. To ensure sufficient coverage, the evaluator extended the data collection period beyond the original timeline: interviews were conducted between 16 May and 9 July 2025, although the evaluation mission was initially expected to conclude in June. Considerable effort was made to engage a broad and diverse set of stakeholders across workstreams and partner institutions. Several members of the relevant UNEP unit participated in interviews; however, at the managerial level, only a former head of the unit was available for consultation, while another invited to participate declined.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

73. Throughout this evaluation process and in the preparation of the Final Evaluation Report, every effort has been made to represent a diversity of perspectives, including both central actors and more marginal voices. As the project did not involve direct engagement with local communities or beneficiaries, no field visits were planned or undertaken. All interviews were conducted remotely, and data collection adhered to UN ethical standards, including respect for confidentiality, privacy, and informed consent. While several respondents spoke candidly about their experiences, all transcripts, notes, and records were rigorously anonymized. No personally identifiable information has been disclosed in this report, and all contributions have been treated with the highest level of confidentiality.

3 THEORY OF CHANGE AT EVALUATION

3.1 WWQA Theory of Change

74. The WWQA design (UNEP-SDC agreement) is grounded in findings from several key assessments and reports, most notably UNEP's (2016) "A Snapshot of the World's Water Quality" and UNEA Resolution 3/10, which addresses water pollution to protect and restore water-related ecosystems. The snapshot report emphasized the urgent need to translate water quality information into policy action and investment to address the underlying causes of degradation. UNEA 3/10 called on UNEP, in cooperation with relevant partners, to undertake a World Water Quality Assessment, strengthen water quality monitoring and data sharing, and enhance capacity-building to support evidence-based decision-making for the protection and restoration of water resources.

75. The project design specifically sought to address barriers to data sharing, coordination, and policy action. It builds on UNEP's long-standing commitment to data-driven policymaking through initiatives such as the Global Environmental Monitoring System for Water (GEMS/Water) and collaborates with a broad array of non-governmental, academic, and regional actors, as well as global frameworks like, explicitly in the UNEP-SDC agreement, UN-Water and its Integrated Monitoring Initiative (IMI) supporting SDG 6. Hence, the project explicit three core objectives:

    - Maintain, coordinate, and strengthen the **World Water Quality Alliance** (WWQA), including the establishment and functioning of its Strategic and Technical Advisory Committees (SAC and TAC).
    - Support the production of a World **Water Quality Assessment** that informs and communicates situational analyses, including through demonstration case studies in low-income countries.
    - **Communicate and promote the results** among national, regional, and global actors.

76. The SDC-UNEP document included a fully articulated Theory of Change (Figure 3). However, during the inception phase of this evaluation, a refined Theory of Change was developed to better align with UNEP's updated evaluation standards (Glossary of Results Definitions, 2023; Evaluation Policy and Programme Manual, 2021–2025). This refinement made more explicit the differentiation among outputs, outcomes, intermediate states, and impacts (see Table 6 and Table 7), and clarified the causal pathways, assumptions, drivers, and barriers underpinning the project logic. It also incorporated standard UNEP evaluation considerations regarding cross-cutting issues such as human rights, gender equality, and inclusion.

Table 6 Justification for reformulation of results statements

Formulation in original project document(s)	Formulation for Reconstructed ToC at Evaluation (RTOC)	Justification for Reformulation
(LONG LASTING) IMPACT		
Smart policies and business models, and operational policy are implemented, and policy advisory services are operational, to foster integrated water quality and resource management from global to local scales, to protect and restore freshwater bodies, and to achieve SDGs and other agreed goals.	Freshwater bodies are protected and restored through the implementation of smart policies, business models, and operational policy advisory services, fostering integrated water quality and resource management from global to local scales, and contributing to the achievement of SDGs and other internationally agreed goals	The strengthened formulation better reflects UNEP's core mission to "promote the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development" by ensuring that environmental improvements (e.g., restored freshwater bodies) contribute directly to global sustainable development goals, rather than resulting from them. (UNEP Medium-Term Strategy 2022–2025)
INTERMEDIATE STATES		
Governments, private sector, and civil society draw on WWQA assessment results, scenarios, and water quality solution pathways proposed, as well as knowledge products for operational services provided by the alliance to support policy action and prioritize investment.	NA	NA
PROJECT OUTCOMES		
A global Alliance of experts, public, private, and civil society partners provide governments and stakeholders with: i) globally, regionally, and locally relevant evidence-based assessments, scenarios, solutions and services on water quality issues; and ii) analyses and advice on persistent and emerging water quality issues of socio-environmental concern to foster policy action.	In their strategies, policies, and investments related to water quality management, governments and stakeholders begin to use evidence-based assessments, scenarios, solutions and services, and analyses and advice on persistent and emerging water quality issues of socio-environmental concern, as provided by a global Alliance of experts, public, private, and civil society partners.	The rephrasing maintains the structure but ensures that the Outcome reflects initial use or uptake of outputs by governments and stakeholders, consistent with UNEP's results definition of an Outcome as the adoption or application of outputs, leading toward broader systemic changes at the Intermediate State level. (UNEP Glossary of Results Definitions, April 2021.)
OUTCOME INDICATORS [*comment if relevant*]		
Number of active members and partners in the Alliance sharing expertise and contributing to products of the Alliance	*In addition:* Number of governments, institutions, or private sector stakeholders that have begun or intend to use WWQA assessments, scenarios, or advice to inform strategies,	Original indicator measures participation/input to the Alliance, i.e., strengthening of outputs (knowledge production capacity), not use or behavioural change by governments, businesses, or civil society (outcomes).

Formulation in original project document(s)	Formulation for Reconstructed ToC at Evaluation (RTOC)	Justification for Reformulation
Baseline June 2019: 0 Target by June 2023: 40	policies, regulatory frameworks, or investment decisions.	
Number of products aiming to foster policy action developed through the Alliance Baseline June 2019: 0 Target by June 2023: 10	*In addition:* Percentage of surveyed stakeholders reporting application of WWQA knowledge products (assessments, scenarios, advice) to inform water quality management practices or investments.	Original indicator measures products produced (outputs), not whether governments or stakeholders use them to inform decisions, policies, or investments (outcomes).
OUTPUTS		
World water quality alliance operational and managed, including expert group on water quality/wastewater; advisory bodies (TAC/SAC), Thematic Working Groups, Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) and agenda setting platform	The World Water Quality Alliance is operational, with Expert Groups, Advisory Bodies (TAC/SAC), Thematic Working Groups, and an STI and Agenda-Setting Platform established and available to support stakeholders	The reformulation improves the clarity of the intended availability of structures and platforms to stakeholders, but the original wording was already aligned with UNEP Glossary of Results Definitions (2021)
Global Water Quality Assessment[30]: global water quality baseline is provided; reflecting data fusion/modelling innovation and providing scenarios, causal chain illustrations and solution pathways in cases for upscaling; (we expect a global draft for demonstration by UNEA 5 but the full assessment incl. causal chain cases by UNEA 6 in 2023).	A Global Water Quality Assessment (GWQA), including a global baseline, innovative data fusion and modelling products, scenarios, causal chain illustrations, and solution pathways, is produced and made available to stakeholders, with a draft presented by UNEA-5 and the full assessment, including causal chain cases, completed by UNEA-6	Reformulation clarifies that all outputs are produced and made available + preserve the critical UNEA-5/UNEA-6 milestones.
Globally recognized Agenda Setting Platform - Analysis, synthesis and products on persistent and emerging water quality issues of socio-environmental concern developed and communicated into national, regional and global science-policy processes	An operational Agenda-Setting Platform produces and disseminates analysis, synthesis, and products on persistent and emerging water quality issues, and makes these outputs accessible to national, regional, and global science-policy processes	Reformulation of Output 3 clarifies that the Agenda-Setting Platform produces and disseminates analysis and synthesis products and retains the coordination with the Norway-funded freshwater microplastics or other initiatives (SSFAs funded from different sources) that occurred during implementation, conforming to the UNEP Glossary of Results Definitions (2021) and the Evaluation Policy and Programme Manual (2021–2025), which require Outputs to focus on the availability of products and services but permits mention of adaptive coordination.

[30] In the original result framework of UNEP-SDC agreement, the project use two terminologies for one assessment: Global Water Quality Assessment, and World Water Quality Assessment.

Formulation in original project document(s)	Formulation for Reconstructed ToC at Evaluation (RTOC)	Justification for Reformulation
(from separate funding 2019/2020): Demonstration Use Cases of in-country application of Alliance products and services - Case studies, such as Alliance Africa Use Cases	Demonstration case studies documenting the in-country application of WWQA products and services, developed with support from complementary UNEP-implemented funding sources, are produced and disseminated to inform stakeholders and future scaling efforts	The reformulation of Output 4 clarifies that the demonstration case studies are produced and disseminated as knowledge products supported by complementary UNEP-implemented funding sources, and avoids implying that countries have already adopted or applied WWQA services, thereby conforming to the UNEP Glossary of Results Definitions (2021) and the Evaluation Policy and Programme Manual (2021–2025), which require Outputs to focus on availability of products and services, not behavioural change.
OUTPUT INDICATORS [*comment if relevant*]		
Number of Alliance and Committee Meetings (virtual or face-to-face) Baseline (June 2019): 1 Target (December 2023): 9	NA	
Number of World Water Quality Assessments produced Baseline (June 2019): 0 Target (December 2023): 2	NA	
Number of targeted communication and outreach products developed, including traditional, innovative, and interactive products Baseline (June 2019): 0 Target (December 2023): 6–8	NA	
NA	Pilot Africa Use Cases finalized, and documentation disseminated. (Baseline June 2019: 0; Target December 2020: Pilot case documentation finalized and disseminated.)	No numeric target in the core budget; activities described development of case studies demonstrating in-country application of WWQA services implemented through parallel contributions (e.g. Swiss FOEN, GlobeWQ/Germany)

Table 7Justification for reformulation / expansion of drivers and assumptions

Formulation in original project document(s)	Formulation for Reconstructed ToC at Evaluation (RTOC)	Justification for Reformulation
DRIVERS		
1. Human rights and gender equality[31] (Not in the original ToC)	1. Gender-responsive design of citizen engagement activities	Citizen science and primary research entail the only evaluation-identified social risk of the WWQA
2. The key relevance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development lies on national and system scale - the water quality challenge is central and requires a consortium approach; Engagement in the alliance is considered mutually beneficial	2. SDG framework, particularly SDG 6, UN-Water partnership, and IMI initiative, United Nations Environmental Assembly and UNEP Global Environmental Monitoring System, especially GEMS/ Water program	More specific drivers formulated based on the causal pathway narrative contained in the UNEP-SDC agreement
3. Streng buy-in, outreach, institutional, country and stakeholder engagement in the Alliance and its principles, to be inclusive, interdisciplinary, interactive and an interoperable neutral knowledge broker	3. Engagement of regional or global agencies EU JRC, WMO and water initiatives by private and academic institutions 4. Development of new data sources, including citizen science and Earth observation.	More specific drivers related to engagement formulated based on the causal pathway narrative contained in the UNEP-SDC agreement. Role of national governments included in assumptions (duplicated in drivers and assumptions in the original ToC)
ASSUMPTIONS		
1. Human rights and gender equality[32]	1. Broader human rights, equality, and inclusion principles are respected and promoted in project activities	Assumption in accordance with UN principles on human rights and gender equality'
2. Willingness on the part of governments and stakeholders to share data increasing the evidence base and advocate their translation into policy and planning	2. Governments commit to improve ambient water quality (activity to output)	More specific assumptions related to national and regional involvement and commitment formulated based on the causal pathway narrative contained in the UNEP-SDC agreement.
3. Governments and institutions commit to improve integrated water quality, resource and ecosystem management with a landscape and nexus focus	3. Diverse government and private actors, including civil society willing to cooperate and share data and advocate data use for policy formulation and action (activity to output)	
	4. Broader human rights, equality, and inclusion principles are respected and promoted in adoption of WWQA solutions (outcome to intermediate state) 5. Governments and other stakeholders aware of and with capacity to use WWQA results, which must be perceived as relevant to national priorities (outcome to intermediate state)	These specific assumptions were formulated by the terminal evaluation based on the causal pathway narrative contained in the UNEP-SDC agreement.

[31] If the project design document contains commitments on human rights and gender equality that are not reflected in the results framework, the commitment must appear as Driver.
[32] If the project design document and the framework are silent on human rights and gender equality, the following assumption must be included in the TOC: 'The project works toward the UN principles on human rights and gender equality'.

Formulation in original project document(s)	Formulation for Reconstructed ToC at Evaluation (RTOC)	Justification for Reformulation
	6. Timing must align with policy cycles, and WWQA outputs need advocates or champions in-country (outcome to intermediate state)	
	7. Stakeholder must see tangible benefits from water quality improvements (improved health, reduced water management costs, economic opportunities, such as tourism, green industry, etc.) [intermediate state to impact] 8. Stakeholders must develop mechanisms to sustainable generate data and integrate data into policy making, implementation and evaluation [intermediate state to impact]	These specific assumptions were formulated by the terminal evaluation based on the causal pathway narrative contained in the UNEP-SDC agreement

77. According to the UNEP–SDC agreement, the primary channel for formal knowledge delivery was to be the UNEA. The agreement explicitly references UNEA Resolution 3/10, which mandated UNEP to produce a Water Quality Assessment. It specified that the WWQA would deliver a draft assessment for UNEA-5 (2021) and a complete version by UNEA-6 (2023), including solution pathways and governance analyses. UNEA was not only framed as the political mandate but also as the intended amplifier of results, ensuring global legitimacy, visibility, and uptake by Member States.

78. The **causal pathway**, as refined during the evaluation inception phase, consists of four coordinated streams of action:
(i) establishing and coordinating the WWQA governance structures and platform;
(ii) producing and disseminating the World Water Quality Assessment using Earth observation, data fusion, and modelling;
(iii) identifying and synthesizing emerging water quality issues through an operational agenda-setting platform; and
(iv) demonstrating local relevance and use through in-country Use Cases and stakeholder co-design.

79. These streams of action were designed to deliver the project's four outputs (see Table 6). Establishing and coordinating the WWQA governance structures and platform was intended to lead to the operationalization of the Alliance through Expert Groups, Advisory Bodies (TAC/SAC), Thematic Working Groups, and the STI and Agenda-Setting Platform. Producing and disseminating the Water Quality Assessment was expected to generate a global baseline, data fusion and modelling products, scenarios, and causal chain illustrations to inform solution pathways. Identifying and synthesizing emerging water quality issues through the agenda-setting platform intended to ensure that analysis and communication reached national, regional, and global science–policy processes. Finally, demonstrating local relevance and use through in-country Use Cases and stakeholder co-design was intended to provide concrete examples of application and lessons for scaling.

80. Together, these outputs were intended to deliver the project outcome as formulated in the logframe: that governments and stakeholders use WWQA-generated assessments, scenarios, solutions, and policy advice in their strategies, decisions, and investments related to water quality. This intended outcome was expected to lead to the intermediate outcome (explicit in the UNEP-SDC agreement) that government, private sector, and civil society actors support policy action and prioritize investment based on the assessment

results and other knowledge products, ultimately contributing to the long-term impact of protecting and restoring freshwater bodies through integrated water quality and resource management, in support of the SDGs. This change process remains conditioned by assumptions (e.g., willingness to share and apply data, alignment with policy cycles, institutional openness) and driven by enabling factors such as the global SDG mandate, technical innovation, and multi-stakeholder engagement platforms.

81. As mentioned above, the transformation of the outputs into water quality action was to be led by a World Water Quality Assessment to be delivered to UNEA and hence to national governments, supported by a digital strategy centred on the **World Environment Situation Room (WESR)** to host and visualize assessment findings through dynamic dashboards and Story Maps, allowing countries to explore trends, identify hotspots, and access scenario-based guidance tailored to their policy needs. As described in Output 2 of the agreement, **WESR would allow principal investigators to update content, supporting an evolving narrative of water quality linked to the SDGs.**
82. In practice, the project's traction mechanism has shifted. The word water quality assessment was not delivered as a consolidated product and presented for Member State consideration at UNEA-5 or UNEA-6. Similarly, the **WESR-based dissemination platform** was not operationalized; assessment components remained distributed across WWQA workstreams, with no central data interface or visualization dashboard.
83. Instead, the **WWQA website** (https://wwqa.info) and a compilation at UNEP's web site (https://www.unep.org/interactives/wwqa/) has emerged as the de facto repository and outreach interface for alliance products. While both hosts selected reports, workstream descriptions, and engagement materials, they lack the interactivity, dynamic data integration, and institutional visibility foreseen in the original strategy. Those elements are rather contained in the independently funded and developed SG Water Quality Hub of UNEP (https://www.sdg632hub.org), and GEMS stat (https://gemstat.org/data-gemstat/data-portal/), both developed by GEMS/ Water with other funding, and the Globe WQ platform (https://www.globewq.info).
84. At the country level, the UNEP-SDC agreement assumed that the UNEP Regional Offices—and to some extent GEMS/Water—would serve as conduits for engagement with governments and national actors. However, this interface has remained weak. Instead, as shown in the findings section of the evaluation report, the traction of knowledge now depends largely on relationships between individual WWQA partners and national stakeholders.

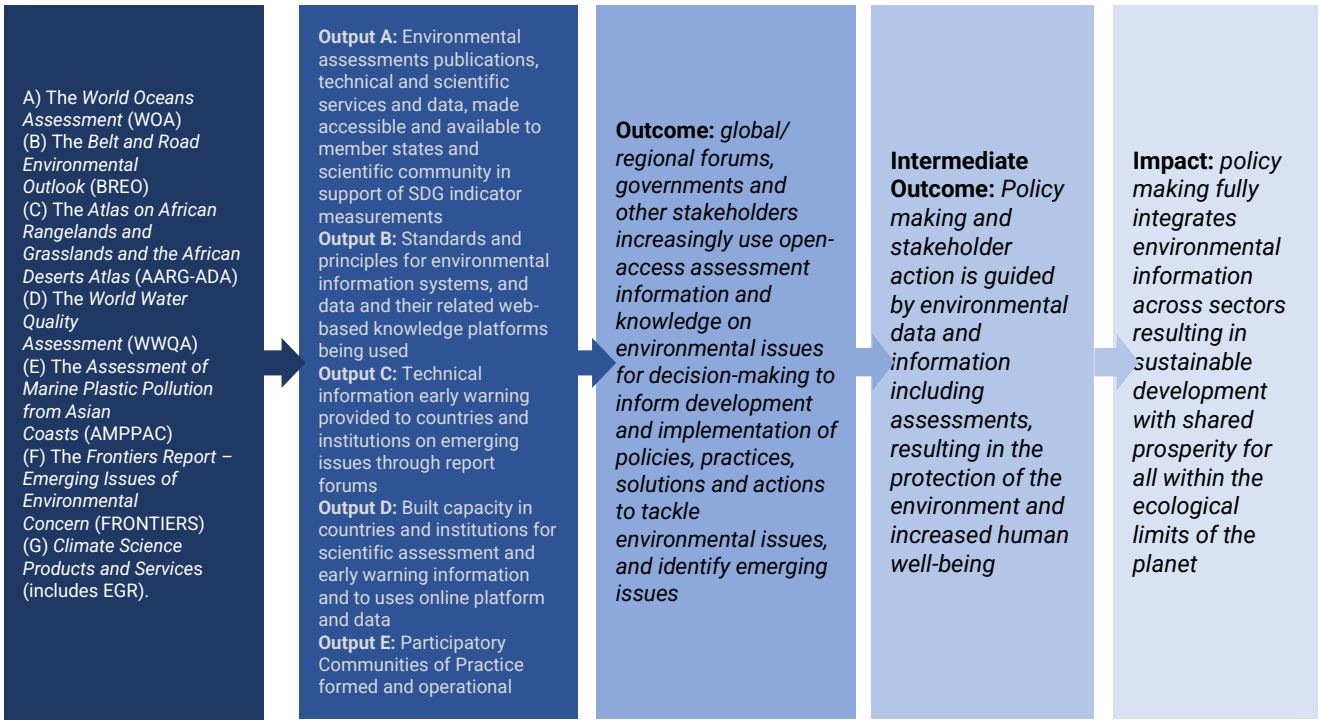
3.2 PIMS 2041 Theory of Change

85. The UNEA 3/10-mandated World Water Quality Assessment was integrated into an umbrella project as one of the project components in the PIMS 2041 or 'A3' project document. Approved in January 2019, the project document included several other flagship assessments: The World Oceans Assessment (WOA), The Belt and Road Environmental Outlook (BREO), The Atlas on African Rangelands and Grasslands and the African Deserts Atlas (AARG-ADA), the Assessment of Marine Plastic Pollution from Asian coasts (AMPPAC), The Frontiers Report – Emerging Issues of Environmental Concern (FRONTIERS), and to the Climate Science Products and Services (CLIMASCI), contributing to the Emissions Report Gap, and the Climate Science Frontiers Report 2020.
86. Together with the publication of the assessments (output A), use of data and information (output B), dissemination (output C), capacity building programmes (output D), and the establishment of communities of practice (output E), the PIMS 01979/ PIMS 2041/ 713.2/ A3 project intends to lead to the outcome that "global/regional forums,

governments and other stakeholders increasingly use open-access assessment information and knowledge on environmental issues for decision-making to inform development and implementation of policies, practices, solutions and actions to tackle environmental issues, and identify emerging issues". One of the assessments delivered under output A is the World Water Quality Assessment, implemented through the WWQA project, which thereby contributes to the PIMS 2041 intended impact that "policy making fully integrates environmental information across sectors resulting in sustainable development with shared prosperity for all within the ecological limits of the planet", through the intermediate state of "Policy making and stakeholder action is guided by environmental data and information including assessments, resulting in the protection of the environment and increased human well-being" (figure 2).

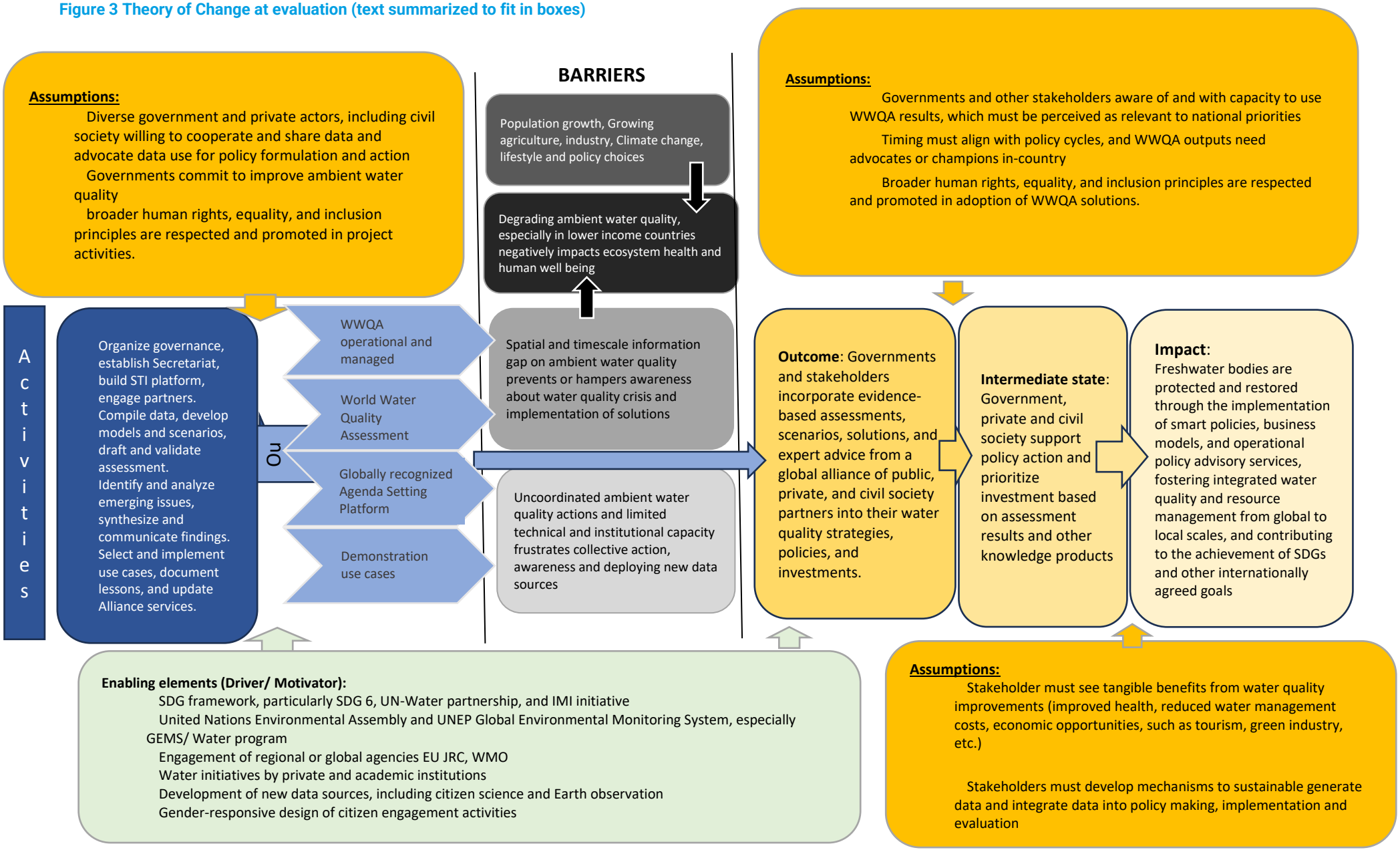
87. The second World Ocean Assessment (WOA II), published between 2021 and 2022, was a collective effort involving more than 300 experts from a pool of over 780 global specialists. It was compiled by the Group of Experts of the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects, under the coordination of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea. The Rangeland Atlas, published in 2022, was the result of collaboration between several UN agencies, including UNEP, and international non-governmental organisations and charities. The Emissions Gap Report (EGR), produced annually by UNEP, is widely cited and reported, with an influence comparable to that of the Global Environment Outlook (GEO) or IPCC reports, **an influence that was originally and explicitly envisaged for the World Water Quality Assessment**. Both the WOA and the EGR are extensively referenced in grey literature, project documents, and the general press. By contrast, while the Frontiers reports have been regularly published as part of a UNEP institutional series, there is limited evidence of their influence on the World Water Quality Assessment. The Belt and Road Environmental Outlook did not result in a formally published assessment. More importantly, this evaluation cannot determine the extent to which the A3/PIMS 2041 project contributed to these assessments, as this falls

Figure 2 A3 summarized theory of change (Source: A3 ProDoc)



88. As UNEP initiated contacts for the World Water Quality Assessment in 2018–2020, the idea of creating an international alliance to support this endeavour emerged from the initial meetings. This process culminated in the SDC–UNEP agreement to establish and operate the WWQA in support of developing the world water quality assessment. Administratively, the SDC–UNEP Theory of Change became integrated into the broader A3/PIMS 2041 project. Consequently, the WWQA coordination team contributed to the biannual and annual PIMS reports for the A3/PIMS 2041 project and participated in its Mid-Term Review (MTR).
89. However, as detailed in the Evaluation Findings section of this report, this inclusion did not result in any synergies or cross-learning, and the WWQA coordination unit did not receive any feedback based on its contribution reports. Moreover, the UNEP–SDC agreement did not explicitly reference the PIMS 2041 project or define operational linkages.
90. While the project does not include an explicit results statement or dedicated output addressing human rights, gender equality, or inclusion of marginalized or vulnerable groups, these dimensions are incorporated into the restructured Theory of Change at Evaluation in line with UNEP evaluation policy. The UNEP–SDC agreement does not commit to specific gender- or rights-based actions; therefore, the project's contribution to equality is treated as a cross-cutting assumption—that is, the realization of inclusive participation and equitable benefit-sharing is understood as a necessary condition for the credibility and legitimacy of WWQA knowledge products, even if not directly planned for or monitored.

Figure 3 Theory of Change at evaluation (text summarized to fit in boxes)



4 EVALUATION FINDINGS[33]

4.1 Strategic Relevance

4.1.1 Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities

Table 8 Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW), and Strategic Priorities

UNEP strategic document	Alignment with UNEP's mandate and thematic priorities	Level of alignment *full, partial, or not at all*
MTS (2022–2025)[34]	• Subprogramme 2: Nature Action – through the freshwater ecosystem framing. • Subprogramme 3: Pollution Action – core to the water quality and SDG 6.3 mandate. • Subprogramme 4: Environmental Governance – via stakeholder platforms and open data.	Full
POW (2022–2023)[35]	• Environmental Governance: Output 1, stakeholders access and use open environmental data, including citizen science.	Full
Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building[36]	• Data sharing and assessment tools • Capacity development	Full
South-South Cooperation[29]	Not relevant	

4.1.2 Alignment to Donor Strategic Priorities

Table 9 Alignment to Donor Strategic Priorities

Donor or partner strategic document	Alignment with donor or partner strategic priorities	Level of alignment *full, partial, or not at all*
SDC	The WWQA project was aligned in intent and design with the strategic priorities of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) under its Global Programme Water (GPW)	Full

[33] Refer to the TOR for descriptions of the nature and scope of each criterion.

[34] Refer to the MTS under which the project was approved.

[35] Refer to the POW under which the project was approved.

[36] If applicable.

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

Table 10 Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities

Strategic document or agreement	**Alignment with global, regional, sub-regional, national environmental priorities**	**Level of Alignment** *Full, partial, or not at all*
UNEA Resolution 3/10	The WWQA directly responds to UNEA Resolution 3/10, which calls for enhanced action on water pollution and mandated UNEP to deliver a World Water Quality Assessment	Full
SDG target 6.3	It contributes to SDG 6, specifically Target 6.3 ("improve water quality by reducing pollution"), as well as the integrated monitoring framework of UN-Water's IMI–SDG6, to which UNEP is a contributor.	Full

4.1.4 Complementarity with Existing Interventions/ Coherence

Table 11 Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence

Other initiatives by UNEP or other organisations	**Complementarity** *(including collaboration, coordination and overlap or duplication)*	**Level of Alignment** *Full, partial, or not at all*
GEMS/Water	WWQA was conceptually positioned as a complementary mechanism to GEMS/Water, drawing on its monitoring legacy to inform assessment and scenario-building, though it was not formally designated as a GEMS/Water delivery mechanism.	Partial
UNEP's PIMS 2041 (PIMS 2041):	WWQA was included within the suite of global assessments under PIMS 2041, in theory reinforcing its role in supporting science-based policy through UNEP's Early Warning and Assessment mandate. Although the assessment was aligned with the PIMS 2041, this umbrella initiative did not contribute to the WWQA or the world water quality assessment and serve merely as an administrative vehicle for the SDC and other funds	Partial
UN-Water / IMI–SDG6	WWQA was explicitly intended to align with and support the Integrated Monitoring Initiative by contributing water quality evidence relevant to SDG 6.3.; However, and despite the inclusion of the WWQA in the terms of Reference of UN-Water's expert group on water quality and wastewater, project reports and stakeholder interview confirm that no formal coordination frameworks, shared workplans, or joint outputs were established, and that the contribution was indirect through partners such as GEMS/ Water	Partial
UNESCO WWDR	While not explicitly referenced in the project design, WWQA's global assessment focus was conceptually aligned with the broader knowledge ecosystem that includes the WWDR.	Partial
WMO State of Global Water Resources:	Although not referenced in project documentation, WMO's global hydrological assessments address water availability, which in principle complements WWQA's water	Partial

Other initiatives by UNEP or other organisations	**Complementarity** *(including collaboration, coordination and overlap or duplication)*	**Level of Alignment** *Full, partial, or not at all*
	quality focus—but no planned or stated synergy between the two initiatives is documented.	
UNEP's HPFWE (Healthy and Productive Freshwater Ecosystems)	While both projects focus on aspects of freshwater sustainability, no formal or intended complementarity was defined between WWQA and HPFWE in their design or delivery.	Partial
JRC, IWMI, GWP, IWA:	These partners were listed or involved in WWQA thematic working groups or use case activities and were expected to contribute technical expertise (e.g. JRC on EO/modelling; IWMI on water quality in agriculture), as well as act as amplifiers of WWQA knowledge through their own professional and regional networks.	Partial
GlobeWQ (funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, BMBF, Germany)	GlobeWQ operated as an independently funded initiative with aligned objectives, and several deliverables—including global modelling outputs—contributed directly to WWQA workstreams and the draft assessment. While collaboration was constructive in places, formal integration mechanisms and a clear division of labour were not established, and the absence of an operational dissemination pathway (e.g., WESR) limited the extent to which synergies could be fully realised. Globe WQ published its report in 2023 and has a dedicated website that includes documents, data and dashboards at https://www.globewq.info	Partial

91. **Finding 1: Alignment with UNEP and Donor mandates, but partial fulfilment of strategic expectations.** The WWQA project was well aligned with UNEP's mandate and strategic frameworks, including the 2022–2025 Medium-Term Strategy and UNEA Resolution 3/10, as well as with the donor's priorities for water quality data, global assessment platforms, and science-policy integration. Foundational documentation—most notably the signed SDC agreement responding to UNEA/3/10—explicitly framed the initiative as an IPCC-like mechanism, stating that it "shall be designed to continue, technically, in an IPCC-like manner with regular updates," a framing echoed in early governance materials and inception documents. Across all annual reporting cycles (2019–2024), no formal communication indicated a revision of this expectation or an escalation of any change in scope to the donor or UNEP senior management. While the project delivered technically sound outputs, such as modelling approaches, methodologies, and stakeholder capacity development materials, it did not achieve the level of institutionalisation, mandate or resourcing required to meet this ambition. The resulting gap is therefore assessed as a design–feasibility disconnect rather than an implementation shortfall, and this finding is consistently supported across project reports and stakeholder perspectives.
92. **Finding 2: Lack of sustained political anchoring through UNEP structures.** WWQA originated as UNEP's formal response to UNEA Resolution 3/10, which mandated the organization, and GEMS specifically, to undertake a World Water Quality Assessment and strengthen monitoring and data sharing on water-related ecosystems. UNEP reported preliminary progress to UNEA-4 (2019), noting a draft workplan, expressions of interest from over fifty organizations, and the Geneva launch meeting (November 2018) hosted by WMO with support from Switzerland and German partners

(the World Water Quality **Alliance** inception). Yet, beyond this early stage, UNEP did not pursue sustained intergovernmental engagement or political follow-up through UNEA or its subsidiary bodies. The only formal update was the UNEP/EA.5/INF/7 (2021) "Progress in the Implementation of UNEA Resolution 3/10" information document, presented to UNEA-5, which described the establishment and activities of the World Water Quality Alliance but was not subject to negotiation or decision. Subsequent sessions—UNEA-6 (2024) and UNEA-7 (2025) reiterated the importance of data, monitoring, and dissemination, explicitly through GEMS/Water and the (yet to be operational) World Environment Situation Room (WESR) but made no direct reference to the World Water Quality Assessment or its outcomes and did not establish any follow-up mechanism to Resolution 3/10.

93. According to multiple interviewees and project documentation, UNEP itself deprioritized the WWQA internally—particularly following staff turnover and the departure of the original champion, reflecting how governance and institutional arrangements functioned in practice. Without internal advocacy or a clear procedural roadmap for submitting assessment products to UNEA, WWQA lost traction within the UNEA's normative framework. As a result, the WWQA lacked the institutional visibility and procedural standing necessary to influence intergovernmental deliberations—unlike other recurring UNEP assessments with formal mandates (e.g., GEO, IPCC-contributing reports).

94. **Finding 3: Weak anchoring in national and regional policy frameworks. While** the WWQA Theory of Change envisioned uptake of its products by national governments and regional actors, the project lacked strong institutional pathways to translate evidence into policy action. Outside a handful of African Use Cases, and the citizen science workstream the initiative did not formally engage with national planning or water governance processes. Regional UNEP offices and Resident Coordinators played little to no role in contextualizing the project or brokering national uptake. Although partners were expected to act as intermediaries, interview data suggest that these linkages were informal, variable in strength, and rarely extended beyond technical collaboration into policy design. In the absence of dedicated country strategies, government co-financing, or engagement through SDG focal point systems, such as the ones dealt with by GEMS/Water and the Freshwater Ecosystem unit, WWQA's relevance to national policy contexts remained limited. This finding is supported by project reports, progress reviews, and consistent statements across stakeholder groups with insight into regional engagement and national impact.

95. **Finding 4: Conceptual complementarity but limited operational integration with related initiatives.** The WWQA was designed to complement and build upon existing initiatives such as UNESCO's World Water Development Report, UN-Water's Integrated Monitoring Initiative (IMI), and the WMO's State of Global Water Resources. It also anticipated collaboration with technical actors like JRC, IWMI, GWP, and IWA through thematic working groups and data sharing. However, while the WWQA is mentioned in the 2024 Terms of Reference of UN-Water's expert group on water quality and wastewater, project reports and stakeholder interview confirm that no formal coordination frameworks, shared workplans, or joint outputs were established. Some cooperation did occur at workstream level — for example, with GlobeWQ, which, although operating as an independently funded research project with its own objectives and deliverables, aligned its modelling activities with the WWQA and provided outputs that were used in the draft WWQA assessment. However, broader operational integration across related initiatives remained limited: WWQA contributions to UN-Water and IMI remained indirect, for instance through WWQA's workstreams on earth observation, citizen science and biomonitoring. As a result, although the WWQA was conceptually well positioned in the global water-quality architecture, the absence of formalised mechanisms for coordination and dissemination meant that the WWQA operated largely in parallel to

existing initiatives, limiting the realisation of wider synergies and its contribution to a more unified global water-quality system.

96. **Finding 5. Fragmented internal landscape and lack of strategic anchoring weakened WWQA's position within UNEP.** Although WWQA was conceptually aligned with UNEP's strategic focus on water quality and ecosystem health, it lacked clear institutional anchoring within UNEP's programmatic architecture. Water-related mandates and technical capacities are distributed across divisions—including the Early Warning and Assessment Division (EWAD), the Ecosystems Division, and the Chemicals and Health Branch—each managing related initiatives such as GEMS/Water, freshwater ecosystems, and wastewater. Some respondents noted that collaboration relating to WWQA occasionally took place through broader UNEP coordination mechanisms, such as the Inter-Divisional Working Group (IDWG). However, this engagement was neither widely visible nor consistently experienced across units. Despite a IDWG 2022 publication that mentions WWQA as a mechanism for delivering the Freshwater Strategic Priorities 2022–2025 to implement UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy, no demonstrable steps or actions have been taken towards that end.

97. For most stakeholders, interaction with WWQA remained informal and dependent on individual initiative rather than being anchored in regularised internal coordination practices. Thus, despite thematic overlap the Alliance was not positioned as a key implementation vehicle or knowledge hub within UNEP's own strategies. Interviews confirmed that WWQA was perceived by many as a side initiative rather than a core programmatic function. Respondents noted the absence of clear internal governance, structured integration, or long-term vision for how the Alliance fit within UNEP's broader mandate.

Rating for Strategic Relevance: Moderately satisfactory. Despite strong alignment in concept and design, the project did not deliver against key strategic expectations, notably the formal presentation of the assessment to UNEA, sustained intergovernmental engagement, or integration into UNEP's normative work.

Rating for Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities: Moderately satisfactory. *While the project clearly aligned with UNEP's stated strategic priorities (MTS 2022–2025 and Resolution 3/10), this alignment did not translate into institutional commitment, programmatic integration, or visibility within UNEP's own delivery mechanisms. The alignment remained largely theoretical.*

Rating for Alignment to Donor Strategic Priorities: Moderately satisfactory. *The project spoke to the donor's interest in global platforms and science-policy engagement, but did not fully meet expectations for visibility, traction, or formal impact. The donor's own internal reflections flagged the gap between platform building and policy influence.*

Rating for Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Priorities: Moderately satisfactory*. WWQA's thematic focus was globally relevant, but concrete uptake by countries or sub-regional institutions was limited. The absence of tailored national engagement strategies, institutional entry points, or UNEP regional facilitation reduced practical relevance.*

Rating for Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence: Moderately unsatisfactory. *Although WWQA was designed to complement several ongoing initiatives, actual integration, coordination, or joint programming was minimal. Mutual awareness existed, but operational synergies were not realized.*

4.2 Quality of Project Design

Table 12 Summary of quality of project design assessment ratings

	SECTION	**RATING** (1-6)	**Summary Assessment**
A	Project Preparation	5	The project document includes a strong situational analysis and a clear stakeholder map. However, it lacked a gender or human rights analysis and did not include a detailed procurement plan. Still, the preparatory work was solid overall.
B	Risk identification and Safeguards	4	Risks were clearly described, and mitigation measures were proposed, but UNEP safeguard policies were not applied and there were no footprint-reduction strategies
C	Governance and Supervision Arrangements	5	The project used an innovative platform governance model, with SAC/TAC oversight and clearly assigned UNEP roles, including the EWAD division as lead.
D	Partnerships	4	Roles of key international partners (UFZ, BfG, Wageningen) were well defined, but no evidence exists that national or regional actors were consulted at the design stage.
E	Strategic Relevance	5	The project was strongly aligned with UNEP MTS, PoW, and donor priorities, and complementary to ongoing initiatives such as GEMS/Water and GlobeWQ.
F	Logical Framework and Causality	4	The ToC and logframe articulated causal pathways well. However, outcome indicators needed later reformulation to focus on change, not outputs.
G	Financial Planning	5	The donor agreement included a sound overall budget and disaggregated co-financing but lacked an activity-based breakdown and did not link inputs directly to outputs.
H	Efficiency	4	The design capitalized on existing partnerships and data platforms but lacked any value-for-money analysis and relied on later workarounds for continuity.
I	Monitoring	2	Monitoring responsibilities were nominally assigned, but no monitoring plan, indicators, budget lines, or disaggregation strategies were defined in the original documentation.
J	Sustainability / Replication and Catalytic Effects	4	Institutional sustainability was considered, and catalytic intentions were clear. Still, no exit strategy or structured replication plan was included.
K	Learning, Communication and Outreach	5	The project had strong outreach intentions, with planned public-facing products and communication embedded in platform design. Audience segmentation could have been clearer.
	Total (Weighted) Score:	*4.27*	*(Full analysis in the Inception Report, available from the Evaluation Office.)*

98. **Finding 6: Robust but incomplete project design.** The WWQA project was grounded in a strong strategic and institutional design, aligned with UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy and donor priorities. Governance arrangements (SAC/TAC and thematic workstreams), a comprehensive Theory of Change, and communication strategies were clearly articulated and provided a sound conceptual foundation. However, critical gaps undermined evaluability and operational coherence: there was no dedicated monitoring framework or budget, indicators were largely output-focused and not disaggregated by gender or vulnerability, and safeguards and human rights were only partially addressed. Institutional sustainability and catalytic potential were acknowledged but no exit or replication strategy was planned. Although later strategies (e.g., WWQA Vision and Strategy 2030; Resource Mobilization Strategy) attempted to fill some gaps, they came too late and with limited UNEP support. Stakeholders expressed concern that these issues should have been secured much earlier and viewed their absence as the responsibility of UNEP and the coordination team.

Rating for Project Design: Satisfactory

4.3 Nature of the External Context

99. **Finding 7: External context posed limited constraints. The WWQA project operated during a period marked by the COVID-19 pandemic.** While the pandemic disrupted planned in-person engagements and delayed some workshops and consultations, these did not amount to serious impediments. The project adapted through remote collaboration and workstream-level adjustments, and continuity was maintained throughout. Respondents consistently emphasized that COVID-19 played only a minor role in shaping performance compared to internal coordination and institutional anchoring challenges.

100. **Finding 8: UNEP's institutional weaknesses limited the project's strategic positioning.** While the WWQA was conceived as a UNEP-hosted global platform expected to benefit from UNEP's institutional visibility, access to funding pathways, and convening authority, these anticipated advantages did not materialize during implementation. Following the departure of key champions and the failure to establish formal follow-up under UNEA-5, no high-level political or strategic anchoring remained. Several sources emphasized that UNEP did not exercise leadership, did not coordinate across divisions, and failed to support the Alliance's evolution or secure long-term positioning. Respondents also highlighted rigid administrative barriers and fragmented internal dynamics, particularly a sense that UNEP units were protective of their own domains, obstructing collaboration rather than enabling it.

101. The Evaluation Office notes that this is an unusual interpretation of an external factor but its inclusion here is in recognition of frequent respondent references to UNEP's institutional weaknesses as a hindering factor, external to the project's scope of work.

Rating for Nature of the External Context: Moderately Unfavourable

4.4 Effectiveness

4.4.1 Availability of Outputs

Table 13 Availability of outputs

Outputs	**Narrative Assessment** *Discuss the nature and scale of outputs delivered, as well timeliness, quality, and utility to intended beneficiaries*	**Sources of Information/Evidence** *List specific sources of information for each output and its indicator/s and mention triangulation efforts*
Output 1: The World Water Quality Alliance is operational, with Expert Groups, Advisory Bodies (TAC/SAC), Thematic Working Groups, and an STI and Agenda-Setting Platform established and available to support stakeholders. <u>Indicator:</u> Number of Alliance and Committee Meetings (virtual or face-to-face) Baseline (June 2019): 1 Target (December 2023): 9 Achieved (June 2025): 7 steering committee meetings and 60–70 structured meetings	The WWQA Alliance structures were delivered. A coordination platform was launched, governing bodies (SAC and TAC) were established, and over a dozen thematic workstreams became operational. These structures remained active beyond the project's initial phase, with an Advisory Committee (AC) structure continuing through 2024–2025. Workstreams maintained regular activity and output delivery until early 2025 (last workstream publication in April 2025). However, leadership and coordination capacity were weakened by staffing and especially leadership challenges. Changes at the head of unit level caused a leadership gap at the GEMS unit. While workstreams functioned independently, many respondents expressed frustration with the lack of oversight and integration. The STI and agenda-setting function was not institutionalized. The Alliance itself was never formalized. Although an Alliance Declaration was signed by UNEP" s Executive Director in 2020, the other organizations listed in that document never formalized such membership through a legal signature, reportedly due to legal and procedural constraints within UNEP. **Delivered**	Main source: SAT/TAC meeting materials (Annex IV: 232-240) Project Reports (2020–2024) Evaluation interview: 70% (29 out of 42) of respondents across stakeholder groups agreed that the meetings were structured.

Outputs	Narrative Assessment *Discuss the nature and scale of outputs delivered, as well timeliness, quality, and utility to intended beneficiaries*	Sources of Information/Evidence *List specific sources of information for each output and its indicator/s and mention triangulation efforts*
Output 3: An operational Agenda-Setting Platform produces and disseminates analysis, synthesis, and products on persistent and emerging water quality issues, and makes these outputs accessible to national, regional, and global science-policy processes <u>Indicator:</u> Number of targeted communication and outreach products developed, including traditional, innovative, and interactive products Baseline (June 2019): 0 Target (December 2023): 6–8 Achieved (June 2025): at least 113 products, including partial assessments, white papers, peer reviewed papers and other knowledge products	A preliminary version of the world water quality assessment was developed with contributions from several partners and featured content aligned with this output's description. This version was shared with UNEP Executive Director and summarized in a report for UNEA-5. However, the full Global Assessment envisioned at design — with integrated baseline, global scenarios, and formal presentation to UNEA-6 — was never finalized or adopted. Although the draft SDC_UNEP progress report _FY2024 reported that the assessment can be accessed at: https://www.unep.org/interactives/wwqa/, there is no final report published. Most stakeholders cited a lack of strategic anchoring and internal fragmentation within UNEP as major factors in the incomplete delivery of this output. Nevertheless, some important technical contributions (e.g., EO-based monitoring products, guidelines and methodological guides, applied citizen science systems, partial water quality assessments, peer-reviewed papers) were produced and disseminated through the WWQA and partners sites. **Partially delivered**	Main source: Project Reports (2020–2024) WWQA Newsletter (2023-25) Draft WWQA Assessment report https://wwqa.info Evaluation interview: 52% (22 out of 42) of respondents across stakeholder groups agreed completely with the narrative of the assessment Others: Annex IV (7-115) WWQA workstream technical outputs, policy briefs, guidelines, assessments etc.
Output 4: Demonstration case studies documenting the in-country application of WWQA products and services,	A wide range of relevant communication and policy-oriented products were developed and disseminated under WWQA, mostly through the WWQA small scale funding agreements implemented by WWQA partners. These include materials and application of citizen science, Earth observation, guidelines on plastic pollution,	Main source: Project Reports (2020–2024) WWQA Newsletter (2023-25)

Outputs	Narrative Assessment *Discuss the nature and scale of outputs delivered, as well timeliness, quality, and utility to intended beneficiaries*	Sources of Information/Evidence *List specific sources of information for each output and its indicator/s and mention triangulation efforts*
developed with support from complementary UNEP-implemented funding sources, are produced and disseminated to inform stakeholders and future scaling efforts Indicator: Pilot Africa Use Cases finalized, and documentation disseminated. Baseline June 2019: 0 Target (December 2020): Pilot case documentation finalized and disseminated. Achieved (June 2025): Pilot case documentation finalized and disseminated.	monitoring, the role of bioassessment, and scenario modelling for nutrient pollution. Several were peer-reviewed or produced in collaboration with academic partners. However, these products were delivered through decentralized channels and were not consolidated into a formal, institutionalized Agenda-Setting Platform. While the WWQA site: https://wwqa.info and WWQA partner's sites enabled some degree of diffusion, there was no central coordination for targeted policy engagement, stakeholder segmentation, or feedback loops. Thus, while the volume and thematic richness of outputs was high, the platform did not function as originally envisioned in design. **Partially delivered**	https://wwqa.info https://www.unep.org/interactives/wwqa/ Evaluation interview: 74% (31 out of 42) of respondents across stakeholder groups agreed with assessment Others: Annex IV (7-115) WWQA workstream technical outputs, policy briefs, guidelines, assessments etc.
	The Africa Use Cases—focused on Lake Victoria, the Volta Basin, and the Cape Town aquifer—were fully implemented and documented as originally envisioned. The case studies are not really published independently, but included and mentioned in other papers and summaries, particularly in a 2022 "baseline report". These cases successfully applied the WWQA's "data-to-action" triangle approach using Earth observation, modelling, and in situ data. A range of outputs was produced, including technical reports, peer-reviewed articles, and synthesis materials, many of which are catalogued under the project's official outputs. Beyond the original use cases, additional demonstration activities were carried out by selected workstreams. Notably, the Citizen Science workstream contributed to	Main source: Project Reports (2020–2024) Pilot case documents and materials Evaluation interview: 64% (27 out of 42) of respondents across stakeholder groups agreed assessment

Outputs	Narrative Assessment *Discuss the nature and scale of outputs delivered, as well timeliness, quality, and utility to intended beneficiaries*	Sources of Information/Evidence *List specific sources of information for each output and its indicator/s and mention triangulation efforts*
	the integration of citizen-generated data into Sierra Leone's ambient water quality assessment, which reportedly raised awareness and informed national action. Some workstreams also succeeded in attracting further funding or follow-up interventions based on early WWQA-supported activities. However, the overall demonstration effect of these initiatives fell short of the original ambition. The Africa Use Cases, while technically delivered, led to limited and uneven policy uptake. Structured follow-up and scaling mechanisms were generally lacking, and the transition from assessment to policy action was not systematically achieved. **Delivered**	Others: Annex IV (54-51) WWQA workstream technical outputs, policy briefs, guidelines, assessments etc.

102. **Finding 9: Outputs Were Broadly Delivered with Strong Technical Quality but Uneven Operationalization, Communication, and Policy Uptake.** The WWQA substantially delivered its planned outputs, including Alliance structures, draft versions of the World Water Quality Assessment, and a wide range of case studies, guidelines, methodological protocols, and scientific publications. Technical quality was consistently strong, particularly in modelling, citizen science, and pilot-focused workstreams, and some outputs gained visibility in academic literature. However, delivery was uneven: flagship elements such as the global assessment and the agenda-setting platform lacked finalization or operational clarity, limiting their utility to intended beneficiaries. Communication and integration of outputs were also weak; a formal communication strategy was only introduced in late 2022, but it could not correct visibility gaps or to ensure coherent presentation of results across stakeholders. Consequently, while outputs contributed to scientific advances and capacity development, their policy reach remained situational—stronger where linked to ongoing dialogues, programmes or processes sustained by the implementing partners, and weaker where stand-alone products lacked follow-through into governance processes.

4.4.2 Achievement of Project Outcomes

Table 14 Achievement of project outcomes

Outcome:	**In their strategies, policies, and investments related to water quality management, governments and stakeholders begin to use evidence-based assessments, scenarios, solutions and services, and analyses and advice on persistent and emerging water quality issues of socio-environmental concern, as provided by a global Alliance of experts, public, private, and civil society partners**
Performance against Indicator(s) and Target(s):	1. Number of active members and partners in the Alliance sharing expertise and contributing to products of the Alliance ● Baseline June 2019: 0 ● Target by June 2023: 40 2. Number of governments, institutions, or private sector stakeholders that have begun or intend to use WWQA assessments, scenarios, or advice to inform strategies, policies, regulatory frameworks, or investment decisions. ● Baseline June 2019: not available ● Target by June 2023: not available 3. Number of products aiming to foster policy action developed through the Alliance ● Baseline June 2019: 0 ● Target by June 2023: 10 4. Percentage of interviewed stakeholders reporting application of WWQA knowledge products (assessments, scenarios, advice) to inform water quality management practices or investments. ● Baseline June 2019: not available ● Target by June 2023: not available
Sources of Information /Evidence: *List specific source/s of information that demonstrate the uptake of outputs by intended beneficiaries*	Project Reports (2020–2024) WWQA Newsletter (2023-25) WWQA workstream technical outputs, policy briefs, guidelines, assessments and knowledge and awareness products (including videos). Interviews with 42 respondents across stakeholder groups
Narrative Assessment:	The Theory of Change envisioned a pathway in which the WWQA's outputs, an operational Secretariat, a credible World Water Quality Assessment process, a globally recognized platform, and demonstration use cases, would generate institutional uptake,

Discuss the nature, depth, and scale of Outcome. Discuss the contribution, credible association, or attribution of the Outcome level change to the project.	drive policy prioritization, and ultimately contribute to improved freshwater management and environmental outcomes. These outputs were expected to close information gaps, strengthen coordination across public, private, and civil society actors, and provide actionable evidence to guide decision-making and investments in ambient water-quality improvement. The ToC assumed that several external drivers would support this transition, including the momentum of SDG 6, the UN-Water partnership, the GEMS/Water programme, engagement of technical agencies such as the EU JRC and WMO, and growing interest in earth observation and citizen-science data sources. In principle, these drivers were intended to create an enabling ecosystem for evidence uptake by aligning WWQA outputs with emerging global data-innovation trends, and legitimacy from UN system processes. In practice, the project partially realized the early steps of this pathway. The Alliance succeeded in convening stakeholders and met its membership target, with at least 42 organizations confirmed as contributing partners. Technical products—white papers, methodologies, modelling work, basin diagnostics, and demonstration activities—were developed with the intent to support evidence-based decision-making. White papers prepared with the explicit objective of influencing policy were produced, but there is no evidence of them having any policy effect or influence. While some drivers, particularly SDG 6 alignment and interest in citizen-science and EO data, were present, they were insufficient on their own to translate technical outputs into policy traction. Other expected motivators—such as formal UN-Water anchoring, and consistent involvement of other partner agencies, were present only intermittently and did not function as sustained system-level levers. At the outcome level—where governments and institutions were expected to incorporate WWQA evidence into strategies, policies, and investments—progress remained limited. The only verified example of meaningful use was in Sierra Leone, where WWQA-supported approaches contributed to strengthening national monitoring. Interview data suggested a broader pattern of use, with 74% of respondents reporting some form of application; however, these uses were typically academic, informal, small-scale, or pilot-level activities rather than sustained institutional adoption. Without policy champions, alignment with country decision cycles, or mechanisms for institutional embedding, most outputs remained technically strong but operationally underutilized. The drivers identified in the ToC did not translate into meaningful pull-factors for governments and remained largely passive rather than catalytic. Consequently, the next causal step—the intermediate state, where governments, the private sector, and civil society actively support policy implementation and prioritize investment based on assessment findings—did not materialize at scale. While some individual actors reported increased awareness and improved technical understanding, there was no evidence of coordinated action, prioritized investments, or systemic change attributable to the WWQA. The key drivers present were not leveraged systematically enough to counteract barriers such as limited national capacity, weak institutional incentives, or competing policy priorities. The absence of formal anchoring through UNEA or UN-Water processes further reduced the Alliance's visibility and policy leverage. Moreover, the lack of a clear membership structure constrained cohesion and undermined the credibility of claims

	about WWQA's reach. Consequently, the uptake of WWQA evidence by governments and stakeholders was insufficient to trigger the outcome-level changes envisioned in the Theory of Change.
Level of Achievement:	**Not achieved**

4.4.3 Likelihood of Impact

Table 15 Likelihood of Impact

Factors influencing likelihood of impact	Assessment	Justification
Drivers to support transition from Outputs to the Project Outcomes	Partially in place	Alignment with SDG 6 and development of citizen science and EO data sources were strong. EU JRC and WMO engaged intermittently. WWQA is mentioned in the 2024 UN-Water's Expert Group on Water Quality and Wastewater, but this has yet to lead to dissemination of results and sustained policy Influence. The GEMS unit provided administrative continuity but limited strategic support. Gender was integrated into citizen-science activities.
Assumptions for the change process from Outputs to Project Outcomes	Partially held	Some data sharing and cooperation occurred, but government uptake was weak and dependent on individual champions. Human rights and inclusion principles were inconsistently applied. WWQA outputs were often seen as useful but not aligned with national priorities or policy cycles.
Proportion of **Project Outcomes** fully or partially achieved	None	The project's intended outcome, that governments and stakeholders begin to use WWQA assessments, scenarios, and advice in their strategies, policies, or investments, was not achieved at a scale consistent with its global ambition. Evidence of adoption was found only in Sierra Leone, where citizen science approaches were integrated into national monitoring procedures, used for SDG 6.3.2 reporting, and informed a draft basin management plan. Elsewhere, use of WWQA products was limited to pilot activities, and workstream-level technical outputs, without evidence of institutional uptake. Global policy anchoring through UNEA and UN-Water also did not materialize.
Drivers to support transition from Project Outcomes to Intermediate States		Not identified in ToC.
Assumptions for the change process from the Project Outcomes to Intermediate States	Partially held	Awareness and capacity were limited beyond direct contributors, and relevance to national priorities was uneven. WWQA outputs were not aligned with national, regional, or global policy cycles, and had weak global visibility. In-country advocacy was sporadic. Rights and inclusion principles were acknowledged but inconsistently applied.
Factors influencing likelihood of impact	**Assessment**	**Justification**

Proportion of **Intermediate States** achieved	None	Only a limited portion of the intermediate state has been achieved. While some government and civil society actors applied WWQA knowledge products (e.g. Sierra Leone's use of citizen science data), these examples remained isolated and largely pilot-scale. There is no consistent evidence that WWQA products led to sustained policy action or investment prioritization at national or multi-actor levels. None of the use cases evolved into nationally funded strategies or investment plans, and most workstreams did not generate follow-up mechanisms. Interviews confirmed a lack of structured policy alignment, institutional uptake, or cross-sectoral embedding of WWQA tools. Although technical contributions were acknowledged, the systemic use of WWQA outputs as a basis for decision-making across government, private sector, and civil society actors remains minimal. The absence of policy cycle alignment and in-country champions further constrained progress. Despite early signals of relevance, these remain insufficient to count as an emerging intermediate state.
Drivers to support transition from Intermediate States to Impact		Not identified in ToC
Assumptions for the change process from Intermediate States to Impact	Did not hold	Stakeholders did not consistently perceive tangible benefits from WWQA-informed actions. Only isolated cases showed movement toward sustainable data generation, and integration of WWQA data into policy systems did not occur. The assumptions needed to trigger real-world freshwater restoration or protection were largely unmet.

103. Finding **10. Conditions for long-term impact were not in place.** The project did not create the enabling environment necessary to progress from supportive stakeholder engagement to measurable improvements in freshwater quality. Key assumptions for impact — such as stakeholder recognition of tangible benefits, the institutionalization of data systems, and integration into planning and regulatory frameworks — did not hold. Data continued to be generated through short-term or fragmented initiatives, and there was little evidence of WWQA products being used to inform operational policies or investment priorities. As a result, while WWQA laid an important technical foundation, it did not trigger the structural changes needed to achieve its intended long-term impact.

104. **Finding 11. Lack of systematic consideration of disadvantaged groups and absence of safeguards.** While some workstreams, particularly citizen science, and social engagement, provided early opportunities for underrepresented voices to contribute, WWQA did not embed formal roles for such actors or institutionalise their participation. No environmental or social safeguards, risk identification processes, or targeted strategies for disadvantaged groups (including those affected by gender, vulnerability, or disability) were planned or implemented.

Findings Statements on Effectiveness:

105. **Finding 12. WWQA did not catalyse emergent policy or institutional shifts.** There is no evidence that the WWQA catalysed self-sustaining momentum beyond its immediate activities or partners. While some workstreams secured follow-up opportunities or external collaboration, the project remained largely confined to its founding partners, planned outputs, and limited set of use cases. It did not trigger broader institutional reforms, policy shifts, or investment changes that could signal catalytic effectiveness. Interviews and reports suggested that the potential for emergence existed but was constrained by the project's internal focus and lack of external positioning. Moreover, fragmentation across workstreams limited collective effectiveness. Several WWQA workstreams delivered technically sound methodologies and outputs — including in citizen science, biological monitoring, plastics, and modelling (**ANNEX IVB. Key Publications**). However, their collective effectiveness was undermined by weak operational coordination and limited cross-stream collaboration. Most interviews reflected low mutual awareness across workstreams and limited opportunities to consolidate learning or build on one another's efforts. As a result, even strong technical outputs remained siloed and failed to scale beyond their immediate contexts.

106. **Finding 13. Strategic influence was weakened by lack of policy anchoring.** While WWQA generated a diverse set of technical and communication products (**ANNEX IVB. Key Publications**), its effectiveness in influencing policy and investment was constrained by limited engagement with global coordination mechanisms, such as UN-Water and its SDG 6 monitoring initiatives. Follow-up through UNEA processes also did not occur. Combined with a lack of in-country or regional advocacy strategies, these gaps significantly reduced the Alliance's visibility and uptake among policymakers. Interviews with implementing partners and workstream contributors consistently described WWQA as technically rich but strategically disconnected from decision-making fora.

Rating for Effectiveness: Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU). While the project delivered several technically solid outputs and enabled limited downstream use, overall effectiveness was constrained by fragmented workstream coordination, lack of strategic anchoring in policy platforms, and absence of systemic uptake. There was no significant emergence of policy, institutional, or investment change.

Rating for Availability of Outputs: Moderately Satisfactory*. The WWQA produced a broad range of outputs across its planned areas: assessments, methodological tools, workstream products, and communication materials, but, crucially, not the intended world water quality assessment. While not all were well-disseminated or integrated, most planned outputs were delivered and are accessible, although the deliverable: a world water quality assessment was only partially delivered and not prominently displayed in any platform, including wwqa.info. .*

Rating for Achievement of Project Outcomes: Moderately Unsatisfactory. *Although some stakeholders engaged with WWQA knowledge products for awareness or technical purposes, and isolated policy influence occurred (e.g. Sierra Leone), these instances remained limited and did not amount to partial achievement of the intended outcome. There was virtually no policy uptake, no institutional anchoring, and no structured follow-up mechanisms to translate outputs into systemic use. The project outcome, which had a global scope, was therefore not achieved.*

Rating for Achievement of Likelihood of Impact: Unlikely. *The assumptions required for intermediate states to translate into impact — such as recognition of tangible benefits, data institutionalization, and policy integration — did not hold. The project laid a technical foundation but lacked the structural changes needed to improve or restore freshwater quality at scale.*

4.5 Financial Management

4.5.1 Adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures

107. The project consistently adhered to UNEP's financial management policies and procedures. Certified expenditures of the SDC contribution were aligned with approved budgets and presented using standard UNEP formats, including activity-based costing and procurement categories. Financial documentation shows that the SSFA mechanism was applied in line with UNEP rules to transfer funds to implementing partners. Annual progress reports (2021–2023) and the draft 2024 report[37] confirm that expenditures were regularly tracked against approved workplans and budget lines. Once an SSFA was approved by the TOC, partners executed activities and reported expenditures accordingly, with no financial management issues raised during implementation.

108. The project made appropriate use of UNEP's SSFA modality to engage research institutions, NGOs, and other partners across its workstreams. Financial documentation confirms that SSFAs included clearly defined deliverables and budgets aligned to UNEP's rules. However, interviews revealed that the administrative demands of SSFA implementation were considered high, especially for the smallest grants. Respondents described the process as time-consuming, with rigid reporting formats and delays in fund disbursement affecting implementation (see Table 16 for SSFA amounts).

Table 16 SSFA

#	Implementing partner	Workstream	Amount ($)
1	Deltares	Ecosystems	40,000
2	Earthwatch	Citizen Science	18,200
3	Earthwatch	Citizen Science	49,350
4	Earthwatch	Citizen Science	217,425
5	Earthwatch	Citizen Science	36,771
6	IGRAC	Data and Information Services	65,000
7	IGRAC	Data and Information Services	22,000
8	IHE Delft	Ecosystems	40,491
9	IHE Delft	Ecosystems	61,250
10	IHE Delft	Ecosystems	19,800
11	TUF (Umvoto Foundation)	Africa Use Cases	80,000
12	UFZ (Helmholtz Centre)	Plastics	47,500
13	University of Stirling	(not specified)	40,000
14	Wageningen University	Plastics	64,650
15	Wageningen University	Scenario Analysis	48,014
16	Wageningen University	Scenario Analysis	39,964
17	Women for Water Partnership (WfWP)	Social Engagement Platform & Youth Workstream	95,463
Total (17 SSFAs)			985,878
Average			57,993
Minimum			18,200
Maximum			217,425
Range			199,225

[37] A final report was not yet available by December 2025

4.5.2 Completeness of Financial Information

109. Finding **14. Core financial data were complete and aligned with UNEP requirements, but in-kind contributions and cross-donor visibility remained opaque.** The financial records for the WWQA project were complete in terms of certified expenditures by budget category and implementing modality. Documents confirm that all required financial reports were produced, consistent with UNEP formats, and showed full budget consumption of the cash contributions from the Government of Switzerland (FOEN and SDC) and Norway (Table 18, expenditure). No significant gaps were identified in activity-based costing or donor accountability.

110. In-kind contributions were estimated in 2021 (Table 4) but not validated. UNEP confirms that it has no mechanism to formally certify or account for these in-kind amounts. In addition, non-Swiss cash contributions (e.g. from Norway or China) were not integrated into a unified financial report. These limitations reduce the completeness of financial data from an evaluability standpoint, even if UNEP's internal and donor reporting requirements were met.

Table 17 Financial management

Financial management components:		**Rating**	**Evidence/ Comments**
1. Adherence to UNEP's/Donor's policies and procedures:		**HS**	
Any evidence that indicates shortcomings in the project's adherence[38] to UNEP or donor policies, procedures or rules		No	Financial reports
Was first disbursement carried out within 9 months of UNEP's project approval date.		Yes	Financial reports
Were the procurement policies of UNEP and the donor(s) followed? *(where applicable)*		Yes	Financial reports and interviews
2. Completeness of project financial information[39]:			
Provision of key documents to the evaluator (based on the responses to A-H below)		**MS**	
A.	Co-financing and Project Cost's tables at design (by budget lines)	Yes	Included in the updated 2021 budget under the section "Global project budget with financing key". Shows cost breakdowns by budget line and source (cash/in-kind).
B.	Revisions to the budget	Yes	WWQA project underwent multiple documented budget revisions
C.	All relevant project legal agreements (e.g. SSFA, PCA, ICA)	Yes	SSFA agreements
D.	Proof of fund transfers	Yes	Umoja screenshot and interviews

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

[39] See also document 'Criterion Rating Description' for reference.

Financial management components:		Rating	Evidence/ Comments
E.	Proof of co-financing (cash and in-kind)	Yes	Project estimation with partner input
F.	A summary report on the project's expenditures during the life of the project (by budget lines, project components and/or annual level)	Yes	Financial reports
G.	Copies of any completed audits and management responses *(where applicable)*	No	No MTR management response or audit report. SSFAs were below USD 200,000 and exempt from audit under UNEP rules, and no consolidated audit was conducted for the overall USD 1.8 million project.
H.	Procure documents[40], including the approved requisition document and Source Selection Plan *(where applicable)*	N/A	
I.	Any other financial information that was required for this project (list):	N/A	
Overall rating		**S**	

Rating for Financial Management: Satisfactory. The project adhered to UNEP procedures, executed its full budget, documented co-financing, and provided near-complete financial reporting.

Rating for Adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures: Highly satisfactory*. All UNEP and donor financial rules were followed, including SSFA use, budget coding, and disbursement processes.*

Rating for Completeness of Financial Information: Moderately satisfactory*. Certified expenditure data were complete, but in-kind and non-Swiss contributions were estimated, and some donor funding was not consolidated into unified reporting.*

4.6 Efficiency

111. As of 3 June 2025, the WWQA had absorbed over 95% of secured funds from its four main funding sources — SDC, Environmental Fund, Norway, and FOEN — with the SDC core contribution (USD 1,775,538.35 of USD 1,818,000) representing a 97.67% expenditure rate. The Environmental Fund and Norway contributions were almost fully expended, while FOEN funds reached 95.68% utilisation.

[40] Relevant for procurement action over USD 10,000 in value.

Table 18 Expenditure

Funding Source	Secured Funding (USD)	Expenditure (USD)	Expenditure Rate (%)
SDC	1,818,000.00	1,775,538.35	*98%*
Environmental Fund	15,000.00	14,997.87	*100%*
Norway	145,00.00	144,657.76	*100%*
FOEN (combined)	401,208.00	383,822.60	*96%*
TOTAL	**2,379,208.00**	**2,319,016.58**	***97%***

112. Within the SDC-funded budget, approximately 54% (USD 985,878) was channelled through SSFAs to support pilot initiatives and thematic workstream activities, with the remainder (approx. 832,000) covering UNEP staff costs, consultancy services, travel, communication, and operational expenses, as known from the latest budget available (2022).

113. The evaluation did not receive documentation or financial data on other grants or initiatives implemented under the 713.2/PIMS 2041/A3 umbrella project, nor on the proportion of total A3 resources represented by the SDC–UNEP donor agreement. Similarly, no evidence was provided on whether the umbrella project document promoted synergies or cost-effectiveness through shared resources, procedures, or practices. These aspects could not be assessed within the scope of this evaluation.

114. Finding 15. SSFAs were a cost-efficient mechanism for generating knowledge and piloting future-oriented approaches. The SSFAs (seed funding) under WWQA proved to be a cost-efficient and productive modality for delivering technical outputs. SSFAs accounted for approximately half of the total project budget and enabled UNEP to engage specialized institutions to develop knowledge products, pilot tools, and synthesize methodologies across a wide range of thematic areas.

115. SSFA reports reviewed showed evidence of substantive in-kind contributions from implementing partners, including staff time, institutional facilities, data, networks, and co-funding. Many products were delivered under tight budgets and timeframes but nonetheless offered potential for scaling, future integration, or alignment with follow-on funding opportunities. Interviewees consistently noted that the SSFAs contributed meaningful technical value, helped systematize knowledge, and in some cases laid the groundwork for further proposals or partnerships.

Rating for Efficiency: Moderately satisfactory. The project-maintained budget discipline, and SSFAs were highly cost-effective, generating useful outputs with limited funding and strong in-kind support. However, efficiency was constrained by coordination gaps, delivery delays, and overreliance on informal arrangements.

4.7 Monitoring and Reporting

4.7.1 Monitoring of Project Implementation

116. Finding **16. A formal M&E framework was established at design but neither operationalised nor embedded in implementation.** The SDC–UNEP donor agreement

included a Theory of Change, logical framework, baseline indicators, and targets, establishing a formal monitoring and evaluation framework for the WWQA. This framework was intended to guide implementation, track outputs and outcomes, and inform strategic direction. However, the annual progress reports (2021–2024) did not report against these indicators, instead presenting activities and outputs narratively without reference to baselines, targets, or systematic measurement. Across nearly all interview groups, respondents reported no awareness of a Theory of Change or indicators, and monitoring was perceived as limited to informal updates rather than systematic results tracking. Interviewees frequently stated that there were "no indicators" or "nothing to measure against," and described the WWQA as functioning "more as a community than a project." Monitoring was perceived as limited to informal workstream updates and coordination calls, rather than systematic results tracking.

117. In practice, monitoring was fragmented and led at the workstream level, with no central dashboard, shared calendar, or consolidated mechanism across the Alliance. Reporting was conducted mainly to meet donor requirements and was predominantly descriptive. Multiple respondents confirmed that progress was "reported upward when asked" or "recorded for donor purposes, not management." Evidence from interviews and project documentation further shows that monitoring data were not used for adaptive management. The absence of tracked outcomes and targets meant there were few data points to guide course corrections, and stakeholders frequently described the project as "drifting" or "reacting to opportunities" rather than being steered by evidence.

118. Finding 17. Gender-specific monitoring was absent, despite limited efforts to engage women in selected activities. The SDC–UNEP agreement and project documentation contain no gender-specific indicators, and annual reports (2021–2024) contain no gender-disaggregated data or reporting on gender-related outcomes. As a result, systematic monitoring of gender dimensions was not possible. Nevertheless, some workstreams — particularly citizen science — made efforts to encourage women's participation, for example by aiming for balanced representation among volunteers and promoting training opportunities. These efforts were not captured in formal reporting and did not translate into project-wide monitoring of gender outcomes.

119. Finding 18. SAC and TAC did not fulfil their intended review role, operating instead as irregular and informal forums. Annex 6 of the SDC–UNEP agreement established the SAC and TAC as core governance bodies for the WWQA, with functions including providing strategic and technical guidance, advising on priorities, and reviewing progress. The SAC was intended to support coordination between partners and alignment with global agendas, while the TAC was to offer expert input on methodologies and thematic focus. Both were in place by 2022, with constitution and membership described in annual progress reports. However, across the 2022–2024 reporting period there is no evidence of either committee systematically reviewing progress against indicators, validating outputs, or using monitoring results to inform decision-making.

120. Interviewees consistently described SAC/TAC meetings as "occasional and informal," often lacking detailed minutes, follow-up actions, or structured agendas tied to monitoring data. Reports confirm that meetings were primarily used for updates, networking, and information exchange rather than structured oversight. Feedback loops between reporting, review, and adjustment were weak or absent, and there was limited clarity among members on how decisions were made. As a result, monitoring and performance review remained concentrated within the coordination team, with governance bodies playing no central role in steering workstreams or ensuring accountability.

4.7.2 Project Reporting

121. Finding 19. Reporting practices were fragmented across donor, PIMS, and SSFA channels, limiting their contribution to strategic oversight, shared learning, and adaptive management. While SSFA reports were often detailed, they were not synthesised at the project level, leaving valuable lessons siloed.

122. Project reporting under the WWQA followed three distinct channels: donor reporting to SDC, UNEP internal reporting through PIMS (under the PIMS 2041 project), and individual SSFA reports submitted by implementing partners. While all three streams were delivered as required, they were largely treated as standalone exercises, limiting their contribution to strategic oversight, shared learning or adaptive management.

123. Donor reports were generally timely (no evidence of missed donor cycles) and well-structured, with clear narrative and some reflection on achievements. However, they did not evolve into a systematic performance-monitoring system across years. Reports did not assess progress towards the outcome or report against indicators, making it difficult to determine how WWQA activities contributed to the changes expected in the ToC. While internal formatting and structure were consistent from year to year, the depth and focus of analysis varied, and there was no standardised performance data set or indicator tracking to allow direct comparison across reporting periods.

124. PIMS reports, submitted biannually to UNEP as part of the larger PIMS 2041 project, were also delivered on schedule. The WWQA sections of these reports met the required format but their quality was mixed: several indicator fields were left blank or reported as zero even where qualitative achievements could have been noted, and narrative sections summarised activities without analysing their contribution to higher-level outcomes. These observations apply only to the WWQA contribution, not to other components under A3. Across reporting periods, the WWQA sections showed some inconsistencies in how activities and achievements were described, with occasional duplication or omission of earlier content. The WWQA coordination team never received documented feedback from the PIMS 2041 coordination team, making PIMS reporting a one-directional compliance activity with no clear role in coordinating with other PIMS 2041 components or guiding internal WWQA decisions.

125. Several workstreams received small-scale financial support (informally referred to in annual reports and stakeholder interviews as “seed funding”) and produced outputs such as policy briefs, methodological pilots, datasets, and capacity-building activities. These products were referenced descriptively in annual reporting; however, neither annual reporting nor project management systems analysed their contribution, dissemination pathways, or intended use. In particular, there was no evidence that workstream-level outputs were assessed or positioned in relation to the development of the World Water Quality Assessment, reporting pathways to UNEA, policy processes, or the outputs and outcomes specified under the SDC–UNEP agreement. SSFA reports submitted by implementing institutions were often detailed and deliverable-focused, but no mechanism existed to synthesise findings across workstreams or to integrate lessons learned, stakeholder feedback, or technical outputs into project-level reporting or decision-making. As a result, workstream activities remained largely standalone efforts rather than coordinated components contributing to the project’s theory of change or mandated purpose.

126. Finding 20. The Mid-Term Review provided limited insight into WWQA implementation and did not result in documented follow-up action. The 2024 MTR of the PIMS 2041 project briefly referenced WWQA as one of several contributing initiatives but did not assess its performance in depth. While the MTR described overall project challenges in strategic coherence and coordination among workstreams, it did not provide a dedicated analysis of WWQA’s Theory of Change, monitoring systems, or reporting frameworks. No

findings were offered on WWQA's results structure or progress tracking mechanisms. As of mid-2024, there is no documented management response to the MTR addressing WWQA-specific issues, nor are there records of revised workplans, follow-up coordination meetings, or other formal actions taken in response to the MTR. Interviews conducted during the Terminal Evaluation confirmed that several WWQA stakeholders were unaware of the MTR findings or their implications for the Alliance.

Rating for Monitoring and Reporting: Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU). Foundational elements were present (ToC, indicators) and reporting was completed, but monitoring remained inconsistent with the ToC, coordination was fragmented, feedback loops were weak.

Rating for Monitoring of Project Implementation: Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU). The project held meetings and generated narrative reports, but lacked systematic, indicator-based monitoring aligned with the ToC.

Rating for Project Reporting: Moderately Satisfactory (MS). Donor, PIMS, and SSFA reports were submitted on time and documented activities accurately. However, they were not used for learning or coordination and did not receive feedback. Reports insights were not synthesized or shared across the project.

4.8 Sustainability

4.8.1 Socio-political Sustainability

127. Finding 21. Socio-political commitment was uneven and dependent on individual champions rather than institutional anchoring. The WWQA was designed to function as a multi-stakeholder alliance, bringing together scientific experts, policy institutions, and civil society to jointly address global water quality challenges. This intention is clearly outlined in the project's Vision and Strategy 2030, which emphasizes creating an inclusive, co-owned platform for collaborative decision-making and knowledge exchange.

128. However, in practice, Interviewees frequently described how the project's engagement and momentum often depended on the personal commitment of a few individuals—whether within UNEP or workstreams—rather than on formal mandates or sustained institutional engagement. As a result, ownership of the project's goals and outputs was not deeply rooted in partner organizations or political structures, making it difficult to sustain momentum or ensure follow-up once external support declined. Socio-political continuity was most evident at the workstream level, particularly where long-standing partnerships or pre-existing institutional mandates existed. Yet lack of clear demand from political stakeholders or formal buy-in from UN system entities limited the project's ability to translate its science-policy vision into politically grounded sustainability.

4.8.2 Financial Sustainability

129. Finding 22. Some workstream activities and partners secured funding, but WWQA did not mobilize resources for the continuity of the Alliance. A small number of workstreams obtained follow-on funding from external sources, allowing specific technical strands to continue independently. The Ecosystems Workstream, focused on lake restoration, continues through the GEF International Waters project Phosphorus Management in Lakes and Reservoirs through the Global Framework for Action, launched in January 2023 and involving former WWQA partners such as UKCEH, Wageningen University, IHE Delft and national institutions in Chile and East Africa. The Plastics Workstream received GIZ and BMUV funding for a regional initiative on plastic pollution in the Nile Basin, including

a pilot in Kisumu, Kenya, with participation from WWQA-affiliated experts and citizen science partners. These examples demonstrate the technical relevance and uptake of WWQA methodologies but do not sustain cross-workstream integration or core Alliance functions. Although the GEF project document refers to collaboration with the WWQA, partner interviews and progress reports confirm that such coordination has not occurred. Likewise, the BMUV-funded Support to Transboundary Water Cooperation in the Nile Basin, which includes activities derived from the WWQA Plastics Workstream, neither references the Alliance nor indicates any intent to coordinate with or contribute back to its workstreams.

130. In contrast, no new donor commitment was secured to replace the Swiss contribution that ended in 2024, and central coordination functions remain unfunded. The 2024 Resource Mobilisation Strategy did not lead to new commitments, and integration under UNEP's GEMS4EWE preparatory phase brought no earmarked support for the Secretariat or convening role. Interviews confirmed that the GEMS4EWE ProDoc contains no budget for WWQA, and there is no indication of future UNEP or external donor financing for the platform.

4.8.3 Institutional Sustainability

131. Finding 23. **WWQA Lacked Operational Institutional Anchoring Within UNEP, Limiting Its Long-Term Viability.** Throughout its implementation, the WWQA was hosted within UNEP's GEMS/Water programme, a technical initiative situated in the Early Warning and Assessment Division (EWAD, formerly the Science Division/DEWA). The WWQA Vision and Strategy 2030 positioned the Coordination Team within this unit and outlined governance bodies—the SAC and TAC—to connect the Alliance with UNEP's thematic work. This administrative placement ensured proximity to global monitoring systems, particularly for SDG indicator 6.3.2, but structurally distanced the Alliance from related thematic programmes in the Ecosystems Division, including the Freshwater Ecosystems Unit and Wastewater Unit.

132. While the governance and integration arrangements were clearly articulated in strategy documents, no operational mechanisms were established to bridge this organizational divide in practice. GEMS/Water contributed to, and benefited from technical workstreams, but WWQA's coordination function, governance model, and platform identity were not embedded within UNEP's broader programmatic structures. For example, the Global Wastewater Initiative, despite its conceptual parallels with WWQA in fostering multi-stakeholder engagement, continued under separate coordination and funding. While collaboration emerged through the wastewater surveillance workstream and helped catalyse subsequent wastewater surveillance activities, this linkage was not widely recognised across stakeholders and was not formalised or maintained as an institutional integration mechanism. A few respondents referenced broader UNEP coordination platforms, such as the Inter-Divisional Working Group, but these were neither systematically associated with WWQA nor reflected in project documentation or interview testimony.

133. Despite the transition of GEMS/Water into GEMS4EWE and the launch of the SDG 6.3.2 Water Quality Data Hub (sdg632hub.org) in 2023, no transition plan was developed to institutionalize the WWQA Secretariat or sustain its alliance platform. While the 2024 PIMS 2041 Mid-Term Review attributes the SDG Water Quality Hub to the WWQA, project reports and interviews conducted for this evaluation confirm that the platform is technically and institutionally distinct. The WWQA Secretariat was not formally embedded within the new GEMS4EWE structure, and no provisions were made to ensure continuity of its coordination function or multi-stakeholder engagement platform. The Alliance is

not referenced in UNEP's public-facing communications related to GEMS4EWE or environmental early warning services.

134. Multiple interviewees described the Alliance as "orphaned" or "floating" within UNEP, especially after the end of donor funding from SDC. Although UNEP is undergoing internal reform, with expected shifts in divisional mandates and thematic clusters, no evidence suggests that WWQA will be institutionalized as part of this realignment. The Vision and Strategy 2030 itself underscored the urgent need for sustained funding to maintain the Coordination Team, yet no core UNEP budgetary provision was made. With no division—whether in the Science or Ecosystems stream—assuming long-term responsibility, the platform remained dependent on external funding that was not renewed. Without operational anchoring, its achievements risk fragmentation and disconnection from UNEP's core freshwater and wastewater programming.

Rating for Likelihood of Sustainability: Unlikely. The Alliance lacks formal institutional anchoring within UNEP and has no ongoing funding or coordination mechanism post-SDC

Rating for Socio-political Sustainability: Moderately unlikely*. While water quality remains a politically relevant issue and the platform attracted diverse stakeholders, UNEP did not mobilize champions or political support to sustain the Alliance beyond the project period.*

Rating for Financial Sustainability: Unlikely*. No internal budget line exists to support WWQA, donor funding has ceased, and despite expressed interest in private and foundation funding, no viable financial pathway has materialized.*

Rating for Institutional Sustainability: Unlikely. *WWQA was not integrated into UNEP's programmatic architecture (Science or Ecosystems Divisions), and no transition into GEMS4EWE or other UNEP initiatives has occurred.*

4.9 Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

4.9.1 Quality of project management and supervision

4.9.1.2 UNEP/Implementing Agency:

135. UNEP ensured financial compliance and delivery of contracted activities, but its supervisory role was weakened by coordination gaps, limited strategic oversight, and unclear lines of accountability, constraining the project's effectiveness and long-term influence. As discussed under Complementarity with Existing Interventions/ Coherence, UNEP's supervisory role was challenged by limited integration with the larger A3 umbrella project and the absence of feedback loops from PIMS reporting, which reduced opportunities for shared learning or coordination with other components. Under Quality of Project Design, the evaluation notes gaps in strategic framing, including ambitious objectives without clear pathways for global policy anchoring. In terms of Nature of the External Context, frequent staff turnover and reliance on voluntary contributions compounded coordination challenges. Under Efficiency, weaknesses were observed in decision-making structures and escalation mechanisms, which contributed to delays and fragmented implementation. In Monitoring and Reporting, UNEP oversight did not ensure consistent use of the results framework or systematic performance tracking. Finally, under Sustainability, the evaluation highlights that the absence of institutional anchoring within UNEP reduced the prospects for maintaining WWQA functions beyond the SDC funding cycle.

4.9.1.2 Partners/Executing Agency:

136. The WWQA engaged a range of partner institutions as executing agencies through SSFAs and workstream leadership roles, including Deltares, Earthwatch, IGRAC, IHE Delft, the

Umvoto Foundation, UFZ, the University of Stirling, Wageningen University, and the Women for Water Partnership. Their performance and contributions are assessed in detail under other evaluation criteria and sections of this report. Overall, the SSFAs enabled these partners to deliver a diverse set of technical outputs, pilot methodologies, and support knowledge exchange across workstreams. As discussed under Effectiveness, these contributions were technically robust but remained fragmented and did not consolidate into systemic influence. Under Efficiency, the SSFA modality is noted as cost-effective for generating outputs, though administratively burdensome for some smaller partners, and with limited synthesis of reporting at project level. Finally, under Sustainability, the evaluation highlights the challenge of maintaining partner collaboration and outputs beyond the SDC funding period, given the reliance on voluntary or co-financed inputs.

4.9.2 Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation

137. Stakeholder engagement was a defining feature of the WWQA project, with active participation from a broad spectrum of actors including research organizations, UN agencies, civil society networks, and scientific institutions. Evidence of this is integrated throughout the report, particularly in:

- Section Effectiveness, which document high levels of participation in workstreams and SSFA-funded pilot initiatives. Contributions ranged from scientific research and data integration to capacity-building and advocacy, reflecting the Alliance's inclusive and multi-actor approach.
- Section Sustainability, where interviewees emphasized the lack of follow-up mechanisms to sustain stakeholder collaboration once project funding ended. Several respondents described the Alliance as "floating" without an institutional home or governance mechanism post-SDC support.

4.9.3 Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality

138. Finding **24. The WWQA project reflected commitments to gender equality in select workstreams but lacked a systematic human rights or gender approach.** While the WWQA project promoted inclusive participation and made efforts to elevate diverse stakeholder voices, it did not systematically integrate human rights-based or gender-responsive approaches into its design, implementation, or monitoring. **Project documentation, including SSFA reports and internal planning materials, contains no evidence of gender analysis, gender-disaggregated indicators, or safeguards frameworks. Similarly, no Theory of Change pathways or assumptions explicitly referenced gender equality or rights-based outcomes.**

139. Interview sources noted that some SSFA-funded initiatives and workstreams involved women-focused organizations and highlighted social dimensions of water quality, but these were driven by individual partners rather than guided by UNEP through project-level strategies or criteria. There was no evidence of screening for gender or rights considerations during partner selection or activity design, nor of staff training or safeguards tools being deployed.

140. The **WWQA project demonstrated relatively strong female participation in governance structures, but this was not the result of a deliberate gender strategy and occurred within an otherwise narrow institutional and geographical profile.** Out of 32 identified members of the Strategic Advisory Committee (SAC) and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)[41], 14 were women (approximately **44**%). Interviews and project records indicate that this

[41] SAC and TAC members based on list provided by the WWQA in March-May 2025. An additional no date list facilitated on December 12, 2025, but assumed to be from 2020 based on the file creation date includes additional members from the same and additional organizations. No information was provided regarding if those members ever became active in the committees.

level of representation stemmed from the underlying composition of contributing organisations—many of which were established research institutions with a strong presence of qualified women—rather than from project-level commitments, screening criteria, or gender-responsive measures. No targeted actions were deemed necessary in this context to promote women's participation or leadership, and several women naturally assumed leading roles, including as workstream coordinators and senior scientific contributors. However, representation was otherwise concentrated in Western institutions, predominantly from Western Europe, with limited participation from other regions. The 2024 advisory committee election reflected a more intentional effort to improve both gender balance and geographical diversity: of the 12 newly elected members, seven were women and only four were affiliated with Western Europe or North America, signalling a shift toward more inclusive representation, albeit late in the project cycle.

4.9.4 Environmental and Social Safeguards

141. Finding **25. UNEP did not apply or document safeguards procedures, even for low-risk activities.** While the WWQA project was likely low-risk in terms of environmental and social impacts—focusing primarily on coordination, assessments, and technical collaboration—it did not undergo a formal safeguards screening, and no evidence exists of its risk category being determined under UNEP's Environmental, Social and Economic Sustainability (ESES) Framework. Project documents, SSFA agreements, and progress reports contain no reference to safeguards procedures. Interviewees confirmed that no training, screening, or reporting requirements related to safeguards were communicated by UNEP during implementation. This omission persisted even in cases where field-based research, citizen science, or community-level engagement occurred under SSFA-funded pilots. Although no negative impacts were reported and the project's overall risk profile appears low, UNEP did not meet its own procedural standards to confirm that safeguards were not required.

4.9.5 Country Ownership and Driven-ness

142. This criterion is largely not applicable to the WWQA project. The WWQA was conceptualized and implemented as a global platform coordinated by UNEP and focused on scientific collaboration, data sharing, and multistakeholder engagement around water quality. Its core activities—such as global assessments, modelling, technical workstreams, and SSFA-funded pilots—were not aligned to or embedded in country-owned implementation frameworks, nor did they require government co-financing or policy uptake at national level. Although some SSFAs included pilot activities or assessments at basin or regional levels, these were initiated and led by international or academic partners, not national governments. Interviews did not report direct involvement from country governments in decision-making or platform governance. No national focal points or ownership mechanisms were established under the project.

4.9.6 Communication and Public Awareness

143. Finding **26. WWQA generated a robust portfolio of communication products, but its visibility remained limited by institutional disconnection and absence from major policy arenas.** The WWQA project produced a wide range of communication outputs, including technical reports, videos, digital visuals, newsletters, and presentations (ANNEX IVB. Key Publications). Interviewees acknowledged the volume and quality of these materials. However, public and policy visibility remained limited. The project's primary online presence was through wwqa.info—a non-UNEP website not linked from UNEP's thematic portals or institutional communications. This detachment reduced the discoverability and perceived legitimacy of WWQA outputs, especially among audiences not already affiliated with the Alliance.

144. Participation in international events was inconsistent and often low-profile. Although WWQA-related content and members were present at Stockholm World Water Week and the UN Water Conference, the Alliance was not consistently recognized or branded as such; visibility was instead carried through UNEP units (e.g., GWWI, GPNM, GEMS/Water) and member institutions (IHE-Delft, UKCEH, Wageningen). Respondents noted the lack of booth presence, hosted sessions, or formal speaking roles identifying WWQA as an entity.

145. Communications were frequently described as inward-facing and ad hoc—shared mainly among existing participants rather than designed to reach broader audiences or policy influencers. Engagements that did occur outside the Alliance primarily connected with research and scientific organizations, including bodies such as ILEC, SER, SIL, and ACARE, reinforcing links with the academic and technical community rather than advancing uptake among policy or investment decision-makers.

146. Importantly, despite originating from UNEA Resolution 3/10, the WWQA Director's Report presented at UNEA-5 received no formal reaction from Member States or UNEP Governing Bodies. There was no follow-up resolution, decision, or mechanism established to recognize or act on the WWQA's work, and no visibility of the Alliance in official UNEA records or media.

147. Several interviewees identified the absence of dedicated communication staff, institutional endorsement, and a coordinated outreach strategy as key limitations. Without a central mechanism to promote its outputs across UNEP divisions or intergovernmental processes, WWQA's substantial communications effort remained fragmented—technically strong but strategically marginal.

148. A communication plan was prepared, but it lacked the resourcing, institutional backing, and monitoring systems required for effective implementation. Activities under the plan were carried out unevenly, with strong emphasis on producing outputs but little evidence of targeting priority audiences, tailoring messages, or adapting based on feedback. There was no dedicated mechanism to track dissemination or measure reach, meaning that WWQA could not assess whether its communications were influencing debates, shaping decisions, or expanding its visibility beyond the existing network. Resources for communication were spread thinly across workstreams, often delivered in-kind, and there was no earmarked budget line to support a professionalised outreach function. As a result, while communication products were numerous and of good technical quality, they did not translate into strategic influence, broad visibility, or systematic learning.

Rating for Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues: Moderately satisfactory. Key weaknesses in safeguards, communication, and strategic supervision offset otherwise strong stakeholder engagement.

Rating for Quality of Project Management and Supervision: Moderately Unsatisfactory. *coordination was delivered, but UNEP oversight lacked structure and institutional support.*

Rating for Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation: Satisfactory*. Broad and active engagement across workstreams and SSFAs.*

Rating for Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality: Moderately Unsatisfactory. *No systematic gender or rights integration in design or implementation.*

Rating for Environmental and Social Safeguards: Moderately Unsatisfactory*. No safeguards screening or documentation applied but offset by project low risk.*

Rating for Country Ownership and Driven-ness: *Not Applicable (N/A)*

Rating for Communication and Public Awareness: Moderately Satisfactory. *Good content production but limited external visibility and institutional promotion.*

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

149. Overall, the WWQA project performed at a moderately unsatisfactory level. It initiated a multi-stakeholder platform on water quality, coordinated selected thematic workstreams, and delivered a variety of technical outputs. Its most successful results were achieved through SSFAs, which, despite modest funding—many under USD 40,000—enabled expert institutions to produce credible knowledge products and pilot methodologies.

150. The project was launched with high aspirations: to serve as the backbone of a UNEP-led global water quality platform—at times described as an "IPCC for water quality." This ambition was grounded in UNEA Resolution 3/10, which had called for strengthened monitoring and assessment of freshwater quality worldwide. In practice, however, the WWQA evolved into a loosely coordinated network. The expected World Water Quality Assessment was never completed. Instead, thematic outputs were disseminated via the WWQA website (https://wwqa.info), while other key water quality datasets remain hosted on distinct and unlinked platforms, such as GEMS/Water's SDG 6.3.2 Water Quality Hub and the UNEP's Freshwater Ecosystem SDG661.app or UNEP's Global Wastewater Initiative[42], each focused on other monitoring targets. The presence of additional initiatives like GlobeWQ (https://globewq.info) while conceptually complementary—highlights the fragmented architecture of global water quality knowledge production and dissemination.

151. By contrast, UNEP's flagship environmental assessments—such as GEO, the Emissions Gap Report, and the Adaptation Gap Report—are consolidated, policy-facing, and embedded in regular institutional cycles. The WWQA lacked similar visibility, structure, or integration. It produced technically credible outputs, but not a cohesive or politically recognised assessment.

152. The WWQA's institutional setup did not keep pace with its conceptual ambition. Although a Theory of Change was included in the original funding agreement, it was not widely known or applied. No shared workplan or results tracking system was introduced. The Alliance operated without a formal membership mechanism, and its Strategic and Technical Advisory Committees lacked Terms of Reference and clear roles. Thematic workstreams proceeded independently, with limited cross-learning or strategic consolidation. Coordination was largely informal and interpersonal.

153. The sustainability of the WWQA platform is rated as moderately unlikely. After the end of Swiss funding, WWQA coordination was placed under the administrative umbrella of UNEP's GEMS4EWE preparatory phase. This ensured only minimal continuity of selected activities, as the coordination team — comprising one P-4 and one UNV — was not renewed or replaced. No unit within UNEP assumed formal responsibility for the Alliance, and UNEA was not re-engaged to provide political or institutional backing. While a few former workstreams continue under separate externally funded projects, these operate independently and no longer contribute to a cohesive Alliance framework. In the absence of coordination capacity, leadership, or strategic direction, the Alliance risks becoming inactive and ceasing to function as an organized UNEP-supported platform.

154. No environmental or social risks were reported. However, the project did not apply UNEP safeguards or undertake formal risk screening. This limited its ability to identify exclusion risks or address potential imbalances in participation or representation. Gender and social inclusion were not part of the project design and received only marginal attention during implementation. Some workstreams integrated gender perspectives in

[42] https://www.unep.org/topics/ocean-seas-and-coasts/ecosystem-degradation-pollution/wastewater/global-wastewater

stakeholder engagement or communication, but no common framework or monitoring was applied, and equity considerations remained peripheral.

155. In theory, the WWQA aligned with UNEP's comparative advantages—global convening capacity, normative authority, and technical credibility. In practice, these strengths were not fully realized. The Alliance demonstrated the feasibility of multi-actor collaboration on water quality, but without political renewal, institutional integration, or sustained leadership, it fell short of becoming a UNEP flagship. Its outputs remain technically valuable, but its long-term contribution to policy, systems change, or UNEP programme architecture is limited.

156. The Terms of Reference identified **five overarching strategic evaluation questions**:

    a. *To which extent did the A3/713.2/2041 project and the GEMS4EWE PPP operationalize the SDC-UNEP donor agreement (Consolidating, Running and Implementing a World Water Quality Alliance (WWQA))?*

    The SDC donor agreement was operationalized almost entirely through the WWQA project. The Swiss grant represented the entirety of tracked financial resources for the WWQA, with no additional donor contributions recorded. The WWQA grant maintained its own budget line, theory of change, and results framework within PIMS 2041. Links to A3/713.2/2041 and later GEMS4EWE remained administrative rather than substantive, without shared planning, monitoring or delivery systems. The later assignment of coordination functions to GEMS4EWE did not imply continuity in the Alliance's strategic direction or deliverables.

    b. *What is the connection, from a results perspective, between the WWQA and the A3/713.2/2041 project and the Global Environmental Monitoring Systems for Early Warning for the Environment (GEMS4EWE) PPP?*
    Connections to A3/713.2/2041 and GEMS4EWE were administrative rather than programmatic, with no integration of planning, shared monitoring arrangements, or joint reporting. Although the WWQA was technically located under UNEP's broader PIMS 2041 project, it operated with minimal coordination with other subcomponents and retained a standalone implementation logic. No joint workplans or institutionalized coordination mechanisms appear in reporting or interviews.

    c. *What contribution, from a results perspective, did the WWQA make to UNEP's Programme of Work and implementation of relevant UNEA Resolutions such as UNEA3/10?*
    The WWQA contributed to UNEP's Programme of Work under Environment under Review and responded to UNEA Resolution 3/10 by developing methods and knowledge products related to freshwater quality monitoring. However, the flagship global assessment was not completed, limiting the initiative's expected policy role. The project did not re-engage with UNEA processes beyond the initial resolution, and there is no evidence of institutional uptake or integration into UNEP's broader policy or programme structures.

    d. *To what extent has UNEP been positioned to convene a global thematic alliance composed of diverse stakeholders working on water quality?*
    The WWQA demonstrated UNEP's convening potential, reflected in engagement of more than 40 credible partners and in-kind contributions through SSFA arrangements. However, participation was uneven, important stakeholders—particularly from the Global South—were underrepresented, and the Alliance lacked formal membership structure, governance body, shared workplan, engagement strategy or common framework for results. These gaps limited the sustainability and strategic coherence of the convening function.

e. *Did the WWQA complement, create synergies, and avoid duplication with other UNEP freshwater initiatives, such as GEMS/Water (Project Document 716.2), the UN-Water Integrated Monitoring Initiative (IMI), and Healthy and Productive Freshwater Ecosystems (Project Document 316.2)?* Synergies occurred mainly at the technical level and through individual workstreams rather than through institutionalized coordination or joint programming. Evidence of collaboration includes exchanges with GEMS/Water through biomonitoring, citizen science and Earth Observation workstreams, and later catalytic contributions from the wastewater surveillance workstream to the Global Wastewater Initiative. However, subsequent documentation does not present these as continuation of WWQA activities nor reference the Alliance. Interaction with freshwater ecosystem and SDG monitoring teams (6.5.1 and 6.6.1) appeared informal and inconsistently documented, with some stakeholders mentioning linkages through broader internal mechanisms such as the IDWG. Available evidence indicates that subsequent programme design—including new GEMS/Water project documentation—did not position the WWQA as a strategic coordination mechanism.

157. The table below provides a summary of the ratings and finding discussed in Chapter 4. Overall, the project demonstrates a rating of **'Moderately Unsatisfactory'**.

Table 19 Summary of project findings and ratings

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
Strategic Relevance		**MS**
1. Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities	While the project clearly aligned with UNEP's stated strategic priorities (MTS 2022–2025 and Resolution 3/10), this alignment did not translate into institutional commitment, programmatic integration, or visibility within UNEP's own delivery mechanisms. The alignment remained largely theoretical.	**MS**
2. Alignment to UNEP Donor/Partner strategic priorities	The project spoke to the donor's interest in global platforms and science-policy engagement, but did not fully meet expectations for visibility, traction, or formal impact. The donor's own internal reflections flagged the gap between platform building and policy influence.	**MS**
3. Relevance to global, regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities	WWQA's thematic focus was globally relevant, but concrete uptake by countries or sub-regional institutions was limited. The absence of tailored national engagement strategies, institutional entry points, or UNEP regional facilitation reduced practical relevance.	**MS**
4. Complementarity with existing interventions/ Coherence	Although WWQA was designed to complement several ongoing initiatives, actual integration, coordination, or joint programming was minimal. Mutual awareness existed, but operational synergies were not realized.	**MU**
Quality of Project Design	The project featured a clear Theory of Change, aligned with UNEP and donor priorities, and included structured governance via SAC/TAC and workstreams. It embedded communication and multi-stakeholder engagement.	**S**
Nature of External Context	The project was affected by COVID-19 disruptions and, more critically, by weak institutional support from UNEP. The lack of high-level anchoring, cross-divisional coordination, and internal leadership constrained the Alliance's development. These structural barriers justify a Moderately Unfavourable rating.	**MU**

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
Effectiveness	While the project delivered several technically solid outputs and enabled limited downstream use, overall effectiveness was constrained by fragmented workstream coordination, lack of strategic anchoring in policy platforms, and absence of systemic uptake. There was no significant emergence of policy, institutional, or investment change.	**MU**
1. Availability of outputs	Rating for Availability of Outputs: Moderately Satisfactory. The WWQA produced a broad range of outputs across its planned areas: assessments, methodological tools, workstream products, and communication materials. While not all were well-disseminated or integrated, most planned outputs were delivered and are accessible, although the deliverable: a world water quality assessment was only partially delivered.	**MS**
2. Achievement of project outcomes	Some stakeholders used WWQA knowledge products for awareness or technical purposes, and isolated policy influence occurred (e.g. Sierra Leone). However, the outcome was only partially achieved, with limited policy uptake, and no structured follow-up mechanisms to translate outputs into systemic use.	**MU**
3. Likelihood of impact (use 'likely' scale)	The assumptions required for intermediate states to translate into impact — such as recognition of tangible benefits, data institutionalization, and policy integration — did not hold. The project laid a technical foundation but lacked the structural changes needed to improve or restore freshwater quality at scale.	**U**
Financial Management	The project adhered to UNEP procedures, executed its full budget, documented co-financing, and provided near-complete financial reporting	**S**
1. Adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures	All UNEP and donor financial rules were followed, including SSFA use, budget coding, and disbursement processes	**HS**
2. Completeness of project financial information	Certified expenditure data were complete, but in-kind and non-Swiss contributions were estimated, and some donor funding was not consolidated into unified reporting	**MS**
Efficiency	While the project maintained budget discipline, it faced coordination gaps and delivery delays. However, SSFAs were highly cost-effective, generating useful outputs with limited funding and strong in-kind support.	**MS**
Monitoring and Reporting	Foundational elements were present (ToC, indicators) and reporting was completed, but monitoring remained inconsistent with the ToC, coordination was fragmented, feedback loops were weak.	**MU**
1. Monitoring of project implementation	The project held meetings and generated narrative reports, but lacked systematic, indicator-based monitoring aligned with the ToC.	**MU**
2. Project reporting	Donor, PIMS, and SSFA reports were submitted on time and documented activities accurately. However, they were not used for learning or coordination and did not receive feedback. Reports insights were not synthesized or shared across the project.	**MS**
Sustainability (use 'likely' scale)	The Alliance lacks formal institutional anchoring within UNEP and has no ongoing funding or coordination mechanism post-SDC	**U**

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
1. Socio-political sustainability	Rating for Socio-political Sustainability: Moderately unlikely. While water quality remains a politically relevant issue and the platform attracted diverse stakeholders, UNEP did not mobilize champions or political support to sustain the Alliance beyond the project period.	**MU**
2. Financial sustainability	No internal budget line exists to support WWQA, donor funding has ceased, and despite expressed interest in private and foundation funding, no viable financial pathway has materialized.	**U**
3. Institutional sustainability	WWQA was not integrated into UNEP's programmatic architecture (Science or Ecosystems Divisions), and no transition into GEMS4EWE or other UNEP initiatives has occurred	**U**
Factors Affecting Performance	Key weaknesses in safeguards, communication, and strategic supervision offset otherwise strong stakeholder engagement.	**MS**
1. Quality of project management and supervision	Coordination was delivered, but UNEP oversight lacked structure and institutional support.	**MU**
1.1 UNEP/Implementing Agency:	UNEP ensured financial compliance and output delivery, but supervision was weakened by oversight gaps, staff turnover, and limited institutional anchoring, constraining effectiveness and influence.	**MU**
1.2 Partners/Executing Agency:	Partners delivered technical outputs and knowledge products through SSFAs, but contributions remained fragmented and difficult to sustain beyond project funding.	**MS**
2. Stakeholders' participation and cooperation	Broad and active engagement across workstreams and SSFAs.	**S**
3. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality	No systematic gender or rights integration in design or implementation.	**MU**
4. Environmental and social safeguards	No safeguards screening or documentation applied but offset by project low risk.	**MU**
5. Country ownership and driven-ness	NA	
6. Communication and public awareness	Good content production but limited external visibility and institutional promotion	**MS**
Overall Project Performance Rating	**The project delivered a broad set of technically solid outputs and effectively engaged specialized partners through cost-efficient SSFAs. However, limitations in leadership and coordination, limited policy uptake, lack of strategic anchoring, and weak sustainability across institutional, financial, and impact dimensions constrained its overall effectiveness and transformative potential**	**MU**

5.2 Lessons Learned

Lesson Learned #1:	**A strong Theory of Change introduced early and socialized across partners can improve coordination and outcome orientation**
Context/comment:	Although the WWQA project included a comprehensive ToC in its design, it was not actively used during implementation. Many workstream leads and partners were unaware of its content or relevance, leading to fragmented delivery and outputs that lacked cumulative value. In global partnerships with decentralized implementation, an early and well-communicated ToC is critical to align

	expectations, guide contributions, and support outcome-focused monitoring.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	104, 116,126,126,152

Lesson Learned #2:	**Small-Scale Funding Agreements can be highly effective for delivering technical outputs when supported by thematic guidance and streamlined administration.**
Context/comment:	The project's SSFAs enabled specialized partners to generate some of the most credible and forward-looking outputs, often under modest budgets. Their contributions added substantial value to workstreams such as citizen science, Earth observation, and modelling. However, the administrative burden of SSFA procedures—especially for smaller or less-resourced institutions—was seen as a constraint. Ensuring thematic clarity, timely disbursement, and simplified reporting requirements can enhance the cost-effectiveness and inclusivity of this modality.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	108,114, 136, 149

Lesson Learned #3:	**UNEP's convening role in global alliances requires visible, sustained institutional leadership and political anchoring to maintain credibility and influence.**
Context/comment:	The WWQA was initially backed by UNEA Resolution 3/10 and presented as a UNEP-hosted global initiative. However, after the departure of key champions and the project coordinator, no successor was appointed, and no UNEA follow-up was pursued. This contributed to a gradual loss of momentum, visibility, and strategic relevance. Global partnerships hosted by UNEP must be continuously supported through clear leadership structures, cross-division coordination, and formal links to intergovernmental processes to remain effective and legitimate.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	96,97,127

5.3 Recommendations

Recommendation #1:	**UNEP could consider establishing structured cross-component learning and performance review mechanisms for umbrella projects, particularly where multiple assessments or initiatives are implemented under a shared project ID or outcome framework**.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The WWQA was implemented under the broader PIMS 2041 project umbrella but operated in isolation from its sibling components. No shared monitoring or learning structures were established to assess contributions toward common outcomes, and WWQA implementers did not receive feedback or strategic input from the PIMS 2041 coordination process. This limited the opportunity to generate synergies or identify systemic inefficiencies across UNEP's assessment portfolio.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	121,122,135
Priority Level:	High

Type of Recommendation	Project: Strategic oversight and learning systems
Responsibility:	UNEP Early Warning and Assessment Division
Proposed implementation time-frame:	12 months - For future multi-component or multi-platform initiatives beginning 2026 onward

Recommendation #2:	**UNEP could assess options for sustaining selected WWQA functions or outputs beyond the current funding period, by identifying critical tools, platforms, or coordination services that could be maintained through minimal bridging support or integration into ongoing UNEP programmes.**
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	As WWQA nears closure, no formal transition or legacy strategy has been articulated. While partners are likely to continue using and building on the technical materials produced, many interviewees expressed concern that UNEP's leadership, convening role, and visibility in water quality may be lost. This represents a missed opportunity, particularly given UNEP's mandate as custodian of SDG 6.3 and its comparative advantage in global environmental monitoring. Time is critical, as coordination capacity is expected to drop further by Q3 2025.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	49, 51, 65, 83,143
Priority Level:	High (time-sensitive)
Type of Recommendation	Project: Strategic
Responsibility:	UNEP Early Warning and Assessment Division, in consultation with relevant technical divisions and WWQA partners
Proposed implementation time-frame:	3 months- Immediately (Q3 2025)

Recommendation #3:	**UNEP could establish clear, formal cooperation pathways between internal units working on water quality, including routine joint planning across divisions, mapped mandates, and focal point responsibilities to avoid fragmentation and clarify UNEP's thematic leadership**
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	During WWQA implementation, coordination between the Alliance and UNEP's broader freshwater-related initiatives and teams was generally perceived by stakeholders as fragmented and dependent on individual initiative rather than supported by systematic internal mechanisms. UNEP had established structures such as IDWG and internal freshwater priorities, but interview and documentation evidence indicate that these platforms did not translate into consistent operational collaboration, shared planning, or unified messaging related to WWQA. As a result, internal alignment remained uneven, and opportunities for synergy across freshwater portfolios were not fully realised. Notably, UNEA-6 Resolution 4, adopted on 1 March 2024—four years after the WWQA agreement commenced—explicitly calls for strengthened internal coordination across UNEP's water-related work, underscoring that improved coherence and collaboration remain necessary despite existing structures.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	96, 131,132,133, 134
Priority Level:	High
Type of Recommendation	UNEP-Wide: Institutional/Organizational

Responsibility:	UNEP Divisional Directors (Ecosystems, EWAD, Chemicals and Health), supported by the Programme Coordination Office
Proposed implementation time-frame:	12 months - During the next Medium-Term Strategy planning cycle (2026–2029)

Recommendation #4:	**UNEP could consider streamlining the management of project funding across internal units and funding sources, by introducing shared budget frameworks or co-financing alignment mechanisms for multi-divisional initiatives such as global alliances and thematic platforms.**
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Stakeholders reported that the WWQA operated within UNEP as a multi-thematic initiative engaging several divisions, yet its financial structure remained fragmented. The project was funded exclusively by the Swiss Government, while related initiatives (e.g. GlobeWQ, GEMS/Water) operated under separate financing and reporting arrangements. Although some outputs and activities were aligned, stakeholders perceived the absence of coordinated resource planning, shared budget visibility, or joint financing pathways as a missed opportunity for coherence, efficiency, and collective mobilisation. SSFA partners and internal stakeholders alike cited the lack of transparency or coordination across budget lines as a constraint on delivery and internal collaboration, and in some cases felt it contributed to a sense of competition for visibility and positioning.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	96,100
Priority Level:	Medium
Type of Recommendation	UNEP-Wide: Institutional/Organizational
Responsibility:	UNEP Programme Coordination Office, in collaboration with Division Finance Managers
Proposed implementation time-frame:	12 months - Within the next UNEP biennium planning cycle (2026–2027)

Recommendation #5:	**UNEP could strengthen the integration of human rights and gender equality considerations in the design and implementation of environmental assessment initiatives, ensuring these are embedded from the outset through mandatory screening, dedicated action plans, and regular monitoring against clear indicators.**
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The WWQA did not apply a formal human rights–based approach or systematic gender integration during its design phase. Gender considerations became more visible only in selected workstreams during implementation, and there was no overarching gender action plan, safeguards screening, or monitoring framework. Vulnerable groups, including marginalised communities, were not consistently targeted or involved in project activities, limiting the inclusivity and equity impact of the Alliance. Embedding these dimensions from the outset—supported by measurable targets and accountability mechanisms—would help UNEP align with its UN-SWAP commitments and strengthen the social relevance and sustainability of future initiatives.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	98,138,139,140,141
Priority Level:	High

Type of Recommendation	Project: Policy and Programme Design
Responsibility:	UNEP Programme Coordination Office, in coordination with divisions
Proposed implementation time-frame:	12 months - For all new project designs and revisions from 2026 onward

ANNEX I. RESPONSE TO STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

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

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator(s) Response	UNEP Evaluation Office Response
Overarching	The WWQA Working Groups were supported by wide-reaching institutional in-kind resourcing and their contribution through membership represents a valuable resource to be further developed. Even though the report concluded that the scale of this resource leveraged was not fully recorded or reported, it would be fitting to include a clear statement of recognition to the many institutions who have worked together to support the delivery and development of the WWQA and in turn the funding body and the Resolution. The capacity of the network established is world leading in this respect and should be acknowledged as such.	The evaluation already recognises that the WWQA convened a wide network and that delivery relied heavily on institutional in-kind contributions and partner commitment. This is reflected in findings noting strong technical products and effective engagement through SSFAs. However, the intended result of the SDC–UNEP agreement — policy influence and institutional uptake — was largely not achieved. The evaluation documents no systematic policy use, with only one verified example at national level (Sierra Leone), and no evidence of broader institutional embedding or use of the flagship outputs. The Alliance also did not secure continuity: donor funding ended, no further financing was mobilised, and no anchoring within UNEP or intergovernmental processes occurred.	The evaluator has responded to the comment.
Overarching	It is apparent that the materials considered as evidence of delivery against objectives do not represent an exhaustive list of deliverables and outcomes associated with various Work Streams. This indicates an issue with the auditing/reporting process and should be acknowledged as a limitation of the report.	The evidence base already includes all documentation formally submitted to UNEP, all SSFA deliverables, all products referenced in annual and progress reports, as well as additional outputs identified independently during the evaluation. Annex IV contains over 200 catalogued items spanning technical reports, policy briefs, workstream outputs, peer-reviewed papers, presentations, and communication products. No additional documents were withheld or identified as missing during the evaluation. Where products were referenced but not submitted or publicly available, this has been flagged as a reporting and documentation gap, not an evaluation omission.	The evaluator has responded to the comment.

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator(s) Response	UNEP Evaluation Office Response
Executive Summary *Para 1, (page 10)*	While in quotes, and an early aspiration the statement "…the Alliance sought to deliver a global water-quality assessment" did not materialise into the actual inputs of the Working Groups. It was realised very early on that this ambition was not attainable, hence the evolution of the Alliance pt a more diffuse grouping of supporting members and formal support of a number of institutions. The original intention can be considered as a "mission impossible" given the structure of the Alliance and resources available	Thank you for the clarification. While perspectives on feasibility may have shifted during implementation, the signed agreement with SDC was explicit in positioning the World Water Quality Assessment as a core deliverable, and this expectation remained throughout the project period. The proposal described the funding as catalytic, with the intention that it would leverage further in-kind, which it did, and financial contributions, which it did not, from Alliance members to complete the assessment and generate sufficient political traction for follow-up to UNEA Resolution 3/10. This aligns with statements in the agreement emphasising the role of the funding in enabling a scalable assessment process and leveraging partner contributions rather than replacing them. Notably, there is no documentation indicating that this objective was formally revised or communicated and escalated to the donor and UNEP senior management. This unresolved shift is reflected in evaluation feedback: many respondents expressed that the expectation of producing the assessment remained, and several reported frustrations with the perceived lack of strategic direction rather than a shared recognition that the ambition was unachievable. As such, the evolution of priorities may have occurred informally rather than through a transparent adjustment of scope, expectations and governance.	The evaluator has responded to the comment.
Executive Summary (pages 10-12)	Add quantified uptake evidence for outputs (e.g., citations, downloads from Annex IVB) and explicit links to ToR strategic questions, which are summarized but lack paragraph-specific cross-references. Include donor-specific lessons from SDC feedback in Annex I.	The citation power of the products was gauged through the interviews with the authors and through scholar Google searches. Both methods, however, did not yield consistent quantifiable results and the academic impact of the WWQA technical products is so far modest. No policy impact, other than the mentioned Sierra Leone case could be identified. SDC specific lessons are included.	The evaluator has responded to the comment.
Executive Summary, Para5 (page 10)	The phrase "did not meet stakeholder expectations for a comprehensive global product" can be better understood given Comment 3 above. A misalignment of expectations arose early on.	The signed donor agreement positions the World Water Quality Assessment as a core product, including delivery of a global baseline and subsequent scenario and solutions components, with an initial draft expected for UNEA-5 (not completely delivered according to many respondents) and full assessment by UNEA 6 (not delivered). This framing set clear expectations among donors and many stakeholders. While some project actors report that a full global assessment was recognised early as unrealistic, this shift was not documented, endorsed at senior level, or communicated to the donor. As reflected in the evaluation, the absence of a shared theory of change and strategic steer resulted in fragmented delivery and partners holding different assumptions on scope and intended outputs. Therefore, the phrase "did not meet stakeholder expectations for a comprehensive global product" reflects not only differing assumptions, but also the gap between the formally agreed objective and the eventual trajectory of implementation.	The evaluator has responded to the comment.

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator(s) Response	UNEP Evaluation Office Response
Executive Summary Para5 (page 10)	The key phrase in "the Strategic and Technical Advisory Committees (SAC/TAC) were not effectively activated to provide oversight or strategic guidance" is *not effectively activated*. My recollection is the SAC and TAC provided guidance within the remit they understood they were operating under. Translating that to higher level operational and governance levels was a challenge. At the same time finding 18, page 57 is also reasonable.	Finding 18 reflects the divergence in perspective noted: while the committees existed and contributed, they did not fulfil the governance and oversight functions originally envisaged in the project agreement, nor did they operate as a mechanism for formally adjusting scope or expectations. The lack of clarity on mandate, authority and expected outputs contributed to differing interpretations of what "activation" meant in practice.	The evaluator has responded to the comment.
Executive Summary Para 5, 6, 7 (page 10)	The phrase "although some workstreams secured follow-on funding" does not provide sufficient recognition of the large in-kind contributions of partner organisations, and co-opted members to the workstreams-at least for *Ecosystems*. See first overarching comment, and as a consequence summary point 8 that "a relatively small, well-targeted investment can convene a broad, technically capable partner network and generate credible thematic products within a short implementation period" and summary point 9.	Thank you for the clarification. The report recognises that partner organisations contributed substantial in-kind resources to the workstreams, and in some cases interview respondents estimated these contributions at two to four times the value of the project's cash envelope. This aligns with the SDC agreement's co-financing model, which anticipated that the core funding would operate as catalytic support and leverage significant in-kind participation. At the same time, stakeholder interviews also noted that these in-kind contributions were not unconditional. They were linked to the expected delivery of the project's original purpose — particularly progress toward the World Water Quality Assessment and related outputs — as well as the continued availability of seed funding. As reflected in the findings (e.g., project financing section), when core funding ended and there was no clear pathway toward completing the assessment, participation and in-kind support diminished in several workstreams, remaining active primarily where additional external financing had been secured.	The evaluator has responded to the comment.
Executive Summary Para 12, (page 11) .	Re "These factors prevented the completion of the planned Global Water Quality Assessment" see Comment 3 above.	The signed agreement with SDC was explicit in positioning the World Water Quality Assessment as a core deliverable, and this expectation remained throughout the project period, and was never officially reformed, modified or escalated with donor or UNEP higher management. Moreover, a significant number of interviews reflect frustration about the lost opportunity represented by not accomplishing the World Water Quality Assessment	The evaluator has responded to the comment.

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator(s) Response	UNEP Evaluation Office Response
Section 1.1, Para 23 (Page 13)	Re "The WWQA was initially positioned as a global coordination mechanism, with the long-term ambition of becoming an authoritative science-policy platform akin to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)" the resources and coordinated strong partnership was not in place for this from the beginning. It was and should still be an important ambition with intergovernmental support and allocation of resources and professional secretariat.	The evaluation agrees that the long-term ambition of positioning the WWQA as an authoritative, IPCC-like science-policy mechanism would have required sustained resourcing, intergovernmental support, and a professional secretariat which were not secured during implementation. However, this ambition was not informal or retrospective: it was explicitly articulated in foundational documentation, including the signed donor agreement in response to UNEA resolution EA/3/Res.10, which states that the Alliance "*shall be designed to continue, technically, in an IPCC-like manner with regular updates*." This framing was also reflected in early governance materials, the draft declaration, and inception documentation. Across all annual reporting cycles reviewed (2019–2024), no formal communication was made to donors or within UNEP indicating a revision of this intent, nor was a change in strategic direction, scope, or expected trajectory escalated for approval. Reporting continued to reference progress toward the original mandate, and no request was submitted to adjust expectations or modify the intended operating model. The evaluation therefore maintains that the IPCC analogy forms part of the documented original design and intention of the initiative. The gap between that design ambition and the level of institutionalisation, mandate, and resources achieved is appropriately treated as a design–feasibility disconnect rather than an implementation gap or unrealised informal aspiration.	The evaluator has responded to the comment.
Para 48 (Page 18)	"…the estimates reflected in Table 4 originate from workstream contributors themselves and reported in the project 2021 annual report" Comment: The numbers for GlobeWQ comprise the entire project budget including funding amount and in-kind contribution of GlobeWQ partners and were provided in an early phase of the WWQA. Extrapolating the early estimates in the final evaluation report is critical. Numbers may potentially be revised according to true contributions to WWQA deliverables	The evaluation reviewed Table 4 and confirms that the initial estimated in-kind contribution from GlobeWQ—reported during the early phase of the WWQA—has not been included in the final appraisal of in-kind contributions. As noted, the figures initially shared corresponded to the full GlobeWQ project budget and partner contributions, rather than a quantified estimate of the portion attributable specifically to WWQA activities. Because no validated attribution estimate was available and stakeholders confirmed that the total value could not be extrapolated to represent WWQA-related inputs, this value was excluded from the final consolidated totals.	The evaluator has responded to the comment.

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator(s) Response	UNEP Evaluation Office Response
Para 96 (Page 40)	There was substantive integration between GWWI and WWQA through the Wastewater Surveillance stream and on regular coordination meetings, including under UNEP IDWG.	Thank you for the comment. This is the first reference to IDWG encountered during the evaluation. No mention of IDWG or other UNEP internal coordination mechanisms appears in any WWQA project reports (2019–2024), interviews, or other documentation. The evaluation therefore maintains that internal coordination was not experienced or documented as a structured mechanism. However, the existence of IDWG has now been acknowledged in the text in Finding 5 (Para 96), Finding 23 (para 131) and the Recommendation 3 challenge statement.	The text has been revised slightly throughout the report to acknowledge the existence of IDWG based on the assertion from the stakeholder.
Para 94(Page 40)	I would disagree that the WWQA operated largely in parallel to these initiatives. We made a lot of effort to be included and e.g. the SDG 6.3.2 consultant was involved in a number of workstreams which are feeding into the SDG 6.3.2 data drive. We liaised with WMO to see how WWQA and the data / tools workstreams were generating could contribute to its annual state of the water resources report, and also with UNESCO colleagues through structures such as the advisory committees.	After reviewing the updated 2023–2024 UN-Water EG ToR, which explicitly provides for the Expert Group to be serviced by WWQA and GWWI under tripartite co-coordination (UNEP/FAO/WHO). This ToR, downloaded from the UN-WATER portal, confirms a formal engagement pathway for WWQA within UN-Water. The evaluation was not made aware of this at any point during the interviews. At the same time, interview evidence and delivery records indicate this engagement did not translate during the project into systematic integration within IMI coordination mechanisms or policy follow-up through UNEA, consistent with our original finding on limited institutional uptake. Notably, most stakeholders interviewed reported that an UN-Water mechanism linked to WWQA was not in effect during the main implementation period; the EG's revitalization and servicing language were agreed in 2023–2024. We have therefore revised Table 15 and paragraphs 52, 75 and 95 to (i) acknowledge the formal UN-Water engagement channel and cooperation with GEMS/Water (custodian for SDG 6.3.2), and (ii) retain the evaluation judgment that practical integration and policy leverage remained limited.	The evaluator has responded to the comment, and Table 15 and the Para 52,75,95 have been revised.
Para95-96 (Page 40)	The wastewater surveillance was established under the WWQA, so I see a coordination framework in place.	Thank you for the comment. The evaluation acknowledges that wastewater surveillance discussions took place within the WWQA wastewater workstream, and paragraph 96, 132, and 155 now reflects that these exchanges may have contributed conceptually to later activities. However, across project documentation, annual reporting, stakeholder evidence, and UNEP's own wastewater surveillance materials, the initiative is not framed as having been established under WWQA nor recognised as a formal WWQA output. It evolved into a separate UNEP initiative with its own partners, funding, governance, and identity.	The evaluator has responded to the comment and text has been slightly revised.

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator(s) Response	UNEP Evaluation Office Response
Section 4.7.2. Para 125, (Page 57)	That "These reports were not analysed or integrated at the project level, and their findings were not fed into global WWQA reporting" limits the comprehensiveness of the outputs presented in Annex IV of outputs.	The evaluation does not question the existence or completeness of workstream deliverables, nor the accuracy of their listing in Annex IV. The point being made relates specifically to the project-level use of these outputs. While several workstreams produced substantive deliverables under small-scale financial support arrangements (as reflected in Annex IV), the evidence indicates that these products were referenced descriptively in annual reporting but were not analysed, synthesised, or integrated into global WWQA reporting, nor linked to project-level decision-making, dissemination pathways, or the expected contribution to mandated outputs. The revised text (now reflected in the merged paragraph replacing former paragraphs 128–129) clarifies this by distinguishing between the production of outputs and their strategic use within the project's results framework and reporting architecture.	The evaluator has responded to the comment and the text in Para 120 has been revised.
Cross-Cutting Issues (4.9) (Page 61-62)	*Detail gender/HR metrics (e.g., % women in SSFAs, stakeholder Table 5) and safeguards follow-up from Annex VI*	SSFA reports and contracts, nor interview with SSFA leads yielded any information pertaining % women in SSFA.	The evaluator has responded to the comment and Para 140 has been added.
Section, 4.8.3. Para 134 (Page 59)	Re "No evidence suggests that WWQA will be institutionalized as part of this realignment", note that there are active processes to realign the WWQA into a more coordinated entity that has followed the recent re-organisation within UNEP. This can enable a re-evaluation, maintenance and better interaction across current workstreams. Several workstreams have committed to continuation, irrespective of funding-but noting Comment 3 above. See also Recommendation #2, page 70	At the time of the evaluation, the WWQA coordination function had concluded, and no further external funding had been secured to continue the platform. Several stakeholders indicated uncertainty about the future of the Alliance, and some perceived it as inactive following the end of the SDC-supported phase. While a small number of interviewees expressed hope that the recent restructuring within UNEP could create future opportunities for alignment, no formal plans, governance arrangements, or resource commitments had been established.	The evaluator has responded to the comment.

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator(s) Response	UNEP Evaluation Office Response
Section 4.9.6 , Para145, (Page 63)	Re “Communications were frequently described as inward facing and ad hoc—shared mainly among existing participants rather than designed to reach broader audiences or policy influencers”. For the Ecosystems workstream there was specific focus on “outward” communications including two SWWW events, webinars, and on-line and face-to face presentations at other international conferences and seminars under the banner and auspices of WWQA. This has also led to newly initiated or stronger links with several international entities including International Lake Environmental Committee (ILEC), Society of Ecological Restoration (SER), Society of International Limnology (SIL), Africa Centre for Aquatic Research and Education (ACARE) and several associated government agencies.	The evaluation acknowledges that the ecosystems workstream participated in a number of outward-facing activities, including sessions at Stockholm World Water Week, webinars, and presentations in scientific and technical fora. Interviews and project reporting confirm that these engagements helped disseminate themes linked to lake restoration, ecosystem health, and limnology, and that they facilitated exchanges with international research bodies such as ILEC, SER, SIL, and ACARE. These activities contributed to strengthening scientific networks and advancing shared technical understanding within the freshwater ecosystem research community. However, the evidence does not demonstrate that these outreach efforts led to measurable influence on public-sector decision-making consistent with the project’s intended outcome. While WWQA-related content was presented in policy-adjacent environments — including Stockholm World Water Week and the UN Water Conference — participation occurred primarily through individual member institutions and UNEP units rather than as a coordinated WWQA policy engagement effort. The evaluation did not identify documented cases where WWQA guidance, white papers, or analytical outputs were referenced in national strategies, planning frameworks, regulatory processes, or investment decisions. No interviewee reported direct use of WWQA products by government stakeholders to inform policy development or budgetary choices. Therefore, while the comment correctly notes targeted outreach and emerging research linkages, available evidence indicates that these activities did not translate into the type of systematic uptake or use of WWQA analyses, scenarios, or advisory products envisioned in the project outcome statement. The paragraph retains its core finding, now clarified to distinguish between meaningful scientific engagement and the absence of demonstrable policy or investment influence. The referred paragraph has been altered to include more detail on the WWQA interactions.	The text in Para 145 has been slightly revised. The evaluator has responded to the comment.

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator(s) Response	UNEP Evaluation Office Response
Paragraph 150. (Page 65)	There was substantive integration between GWWI and WWQA through the Wastewater Surveillance stream and on regular coordination meetings, including under UNEP IDWG.	The evaluation acknowledges the reference to the IDWG as an internal coordination mechanism; however, available evidence continues to show that such coordination was not systematically documented or reflected as a formal mechanism within WWQA reporting. While interviews confirm that exchanges occurred—including in relation to the wastewater surveillance workstream—these linkages did not translate into an institutionalised role for WWQA within UNEP freshwater architecture. The paragraph therefore retains its current formulation, while noting in the narrative that coordination through the IDWG was referenced by some stakeholders, though not broadly recognised or evidenced across documentation.	The evaluator has responded to the comment.
Para 91 & 132, Recommandation 3,	There was substantive integration between GWWI and WWQA through the Wastewater Surveillance stream and on regular coordination meetings, including under UNEP IDWG.	Based on this comment, the report now acknowledges that some collaboration occurred through the Inter-Divisional Working Group (IDWG). This has been reflected in Finding 5 (Para 96), Finding 23 (para 132), and the challenge statement under Recommendation 3.	The text has been revised slightly throughout the report to acknowledge the existence of IDWG based on the assertion from the stakeholder.
Annex III, page 97	The positions of several individuals effectively identify them.	While the individuals could be identified as interviewees based on their roles, no statements are attributable to them. All interviews were anonymized and thematically coded, ensuring that no comments can be traced back to a specific person.	The evaluator has responded to the comment.

ANNEX II. EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

EVALUATION QUESTIONS	METHODS	SOURCES OF INFORMATION
Strategic Questions		
See in bold under corresponding criteria		
Strategic relevance		
To which extent did the A3/713.2/2041 project and the GEMS4EWE PPP operationalize the SDC-UNEP donor agreement (Consolidating, Running and Implementing a World Water Quality Alliance (WWQA))? **What is the connection, from a results perspective, WWQA and the A3/713.2/2041 project and the Global Environmental Monitoring Systems for Early Warning for the Environment (GEMS4EWE) PPP?** What contribution, from a results perspective, did WWQA make to UNEP's Programme of Work and implementation of relevant UNEA Resolutions such as UNEA 3/10? **To what extent has UNEP been positioned to convene such a global thematic Alliance composed of diverse stakeholders working on water quality?** Did the WWQA complement, create synergies and avoid duplications with other UNEP freshwater initiatives, such as GEMS/ Water (Project document 716.2), the UN-Water Integrated Monitoring Initiative (IMI) and the Healthy and Productive Freshwater Ecosystems (Project document 316.2) (Ecosystems Division)?	Semi-structured interviews Online Survey Document analysis	**Project documents:** SDC–UNEP Donor Agreement and amendment A3 Project document GEMS4EWE/PPP document UNEP MTS 2018–21 and 2022–25 UNEP PoW UNEA Resolutions SDG targets and indicators Progress Reports (including PIMS reports and GEMS4EWE/PPP progress reports) Risk and safeguards logs SSFA reports WWQA assessment, papers, use cases **Semi-structured interviews with project team**, SAC/TAC members, Implementing partners, and donor **Online survey:** WWQA network members

EVALUATION QUESTIONS	METHODS	SOURCES OF INFORMATION
Quality of Project Design		
Was the WWQA project preparation compliant with UNEP standards, including stakeholder consultation, risk identification and safeguards? Did the WWQA project establish the necessary partnerships to set up relevant and effective management arrangements? To what extent was the WWQA project's ToC and logical framework based on stakeholder consultation and solid and established research? Was the WWQA project cost-effectiveness considered at design? To what extent did the WWQA project design include an exit strategy and an upscale vision? To what extent did the WWQA project design include stakeholder engagement through communication and outreach?	Semi-structured interviews Document analysis	**Project documents:** SDC–UNEP Donor Agreement and amendment A3 Project document GEMS4EWE/PPP document UNEP MTS 2018–21 and 2022–25 UNEP PoW UNEA Resolutions Progress Reports (including PIMS reports and GEMS4EWE/PPP progress reports) Risk and safeguards logs SSFA reports **Semi-structured interviews** with project team
Nature of External Context		
To what extent did the external context (COVID-19, macroeconomic, political changes) support or hamper the WWQA project implementation, and how proactively did the project team react to changes in the external context?	Semi-structured interviews Online Survey Document analysis	**Project documents:** Progress Reports (Evidence of delays, and adaptive measures) SSFA Progress Reports: **Semi-structured interviews:** with project team, implementing partners and TBD third parties such as representatives from national water authorities **Online survey:** WWQA network members

EVALUATION QUESTIONS	METHODS	SOURCES OF INFORMATION
Effectiveness		
Availability of Outputs		
Did the WWQA successfully produce the expected outputs and make them available to the intended beneficiaries? Additionally, was it able to achieve the milestones outlined in the SDC-UNEP donor agreement?	Same as impact	Same as impact
Achievement of Project Outcomes		
What evidence supports the achievement of WWQA ToC intended outcomes and the attribution narrative between outputs and outcomes?	Same as impact	Same as impact
Likelihood of impact		
How likely is the WWQA's intended impact to become a reality? Can an attribution narrative be constructed linking the intervention to the intended effects (causal pathway from activities to outputs to outcomes, and intermediate states)? Could the intervention lead or contribute to unintended adverse effects?	Semi-structured interviews Online Survey Document analysis	**Documents:** SDC–UNEP Donor Agreement and amendment A3 Project document GEMS4EWE/PPP document GEMS4EWE project document Progress Reports (including PIMS reports and GEMS4EWE/PPP progress reports) SSFAs – Progress Reports and Final Outputs WWQA Platform / Website and Platform usage metrics (downloads, visits, citations) World Water Quality Assessment Other WWQA communication products UNEA Resolutions referencing WWQA or related products References in external platforms: e.g., SDG 6.3.2 reporting systems **Semi-structured interviews:** with project team, donor, implementing partners and TBD third parties such as representatives from national water authorities **Online survey:** WWQA network members and TBD third parties such as representatives from national water authorities

EVALUATION QUESTIONS	METHODS	SOURCES OF INFORMATION
Financial Management		
Did the WWQA project design and implementation adhere to UNEP's financial policies and procedures? Did the WWQA project provide complete financial information to relevant partners and the evaluation, including co-financing, interactions, and synergies with other funded initiatives such as other UNEP freshwater initiatives, such as GEMS/ Water (Project document 716.2), the UN-Water Integrated Monitoring Initiative (IMI) and the Healthy and Productive Freshwater Ecosystems (Project document 316.2) (Ecosystems Division)?? Were the reporting lines and procedures clear, cost-effective, and timely?	Semi-structured interviews Document analysis	**Documents:** Budget and financial information (lines, activities, schedule) of SDC-UNEP donor agreement, A3 Project Document and GEMS4EWE/PPP document Expenditure reports SSFA expenditure reports **Semi-structured interviews:** with project team, implementing partners
Efficiency		
To what extent were the outputs achieved cost-effectively and timely? What other grants or initiatives were part of the 713.2/PIMS 2041/A3 umbrella project, and what percentage of its funds did the SDC-UNEP donor agreement represent? To what extent did the project document for the 713.2/PIMS 2041/A3 umbrella project promote synergies and cost-effectiveness through the sharing of resources, procedures, or practices? How has the WWQA utilized partners' in-kind resources to support the implementation of UNEP's mandate?	Semi-structured interviews Document analysis	**Documents:** Budget and financial information (lines, activities, schedule) of SDC-UNEP donor agreement, A3 Project Document and GEMS4EWE/PPP document Expenditure reports SSFA expenditure reports UMOJA expenditure reports **Semi-structured interviews:** with project team, donor and implementing partners
Monitoring and Reporting		
Monitoring of project implementation		
Did the project design include relevant and appropriate indicators and methods to track progress against them as part of conscious results-based management? Did the project budget include sufficient resources for adequate monitoring and evaluation activities, including the Mid-Term and Terminal Evaluation/Review? he project gather relevant and good quality baseline data that is accurately and appropriately documented, including monitoring the representation and participation of desegregated groups, such as gendered, marginalized or vulnerable groups?	Semi-structured interviews Online Survey Document analysis	**Documents:** SDC–UNEP Donor Agreement and amendment A3 Project document GEMS4EWE/PPP document GEMS4EWE project document Progress Reports (including PIMS reports and

EVALUATION QUESTIONS	METHODS	SOURCES OF INFORMATION
Was the information generated by the monitoring system during project implementation used to adapt and improve project execution?		GEMS4EWE/PPP progress reports) SSFAs – Progress Reports and Final Outputs **Semi-structured interviews:** with project team, donor and implementing partners **Online survey:** WWQA network members
Project reporting		
To what extent did the project meet UNEP and donor reporting commitments, including the reporting requirements and schedule, as well as the quality and timeliness of the reports?	Semi-structured interviews Document analysis	**Documents:** SDC–UNEP Donor Agreement and amendment A3 Project document GEMS4EWE/PPP document GEMS4EWE project document Progress Reports (including PIMS reports and GEMS4EWE/PPP progress reports) SSFAs – Progress Reports and Final Outputs **Semi-structured interviews:** with project team, donor and implementing partners
Sustainability		
Socio-political sustainability		
To what extent do social or political factors support the continuation and further development of the benefits derived from project outcomes?	Semi-structured interviews Online Survey Document analysis	**Documents:** SDC–UNEP Donor Agreement and amendment A3 Project document GEMS4EWE/PPP document GEMS4EWE project document Progress Reports (including PIMS reports and GEMS4EWE/PPP progress reports)

EVALUATION QUESTIONS	METHODS	SOURCES OF INFORMATION
		SSFAs – Progress Reports and Final Outputs WWQA Platform / Website and Platform usage metrics (downloads, visits, citations) World Water Quality Assessment Other WWQA communication products UNEA Resolutions referencing WWQA or related products References in external platforms: e.g., SDG 6.3.2 reporting systems Relevant national and regional policy and strategy documents (Any document that sets national or regional water quality, monitoring, IWRM, environmental reporting, or SDG implementation priorities) **Semi-structured interviews:** with project team, donor, implementing partners and TBD third parties such as representatives from national water authorities **Online survey:** WWQA network members and TBD third parties such as representatives from national water authorities
Financial sustainability		
To what extent are the project outcomes dependent on future funding for the benefits they bring to be sustained? What is likelihood of securing these funding sources?'	Same as socio-political sustainability	Same as socio-political sustainability
Institutional Sustainability		
Are project-linked institutional capacity development efforts likely to be sustained?	Same as socio-political sustainability	Same as socio-political sustainability

EVALUATION QUESTIONS	METHODS	SOURCES OF INFORMATION
Factors affecting project performance and cross cutting issues		
Quality of project management and supervision		
Did the WWQA team demonstrate effective leadership in achieving their planned outcomes? Were they successful in managing team structures, maintaining productive relationships with partners, and staying relevant amidst changing external and strategic contexts? Additionally, did they communicate and collaborate with UNEP colleagues while effectively performing risk management and adaptive management tasks? Did the project count with sufficient initial staffing and financing arrangements?	Semi-structured interviews Document analysis	**Documents:** SDC–UNEP Donor Agreement and amendment A3 Project document GEMS4EWE/PPP document GEMS4EWE project document Progress Reports (including PIMS reports and GEMS4EWE/PPP progress reports) SSFAs – Progress Reports and Final Outputs **Semi-structured interviews:** with project team, donor and implementing partners
Stakeholder participation and cooperation		
To what extent did the project team engage with stakeholder groups and foster partner capacity, development, and partnership agreements? To what extent were effective partnership arrangements established? Did the project effectively communicate with stakeholders throughout the project life?	Semi-structured interviews Online Survey Document analysis	**Documents:** SDC–UNEP Donor Agreement and amendment A3 Project document GEMS4EWE/PPP document GEMS4EWE project document Progress Reports (including PIMS reports and GEMS4EWE/PPP progress reports) SSFAs – Progress Reports and Final Outputs WWQA Platform / Website and Platform usage metrics (downloads, visits, citations) World Water Quality Assessment Other WWQA communication products UNEA Resolutions referencing WWQA or related products Communication products featuring engaged partners

EVALUATION QUESTIONS	METHODS	SOURCES OF INFORMATION
		(policy briefs, videos) References in external platforms: e.g., SDG 6.3.2 reporting systems Relevant national and regional policy and strategy documents (Any document that sets national or regional water quality, monitoring, IWRM, environmental reporting, or SDG implementation priorities) **Semi-structured interviews:** with project team, donor, implementing partners and TBD third parties such as representatives from national water authorities **Online survey:** WWQA network members and TBD third parties such as representatives from national water authorities
Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity		

EVALUATION QUESTIONS	METHODS	SOURCES OF INFORMATION
Did the project consider (i) possible inequalities (especially those related to gender) in access to, and control over, natural resources; (ii) specific vulnerabilities of disadvantaged groups (especially women, youth and children and those living with disabilities) to environmental degradation or disasters; and (iii) the role of disadvantaged groups (especially women, youth and children and those living with disabilities)?	Semi-structured interviews Online Survey Document analysis	**Project documents:** SDC–UNEP Donor Agreement and amendment A3 Project document GEMS4EWE/PPP document UNEP MTS 2018–21 and 2022–25 UNEP PoW UNEA Resolutions Progress Reports (including PIMS reports and GEMS4EWE/PPP progress reports) Risk and safeguards logs SSFA reports **Semi-structured interviews:** with project team, donor, implementing partners and TBD third parties such as representatives from national water authorities **Online survey:** WWQA network members and TBD third parties such as representatives from national water authorities
Environmental and social safeguards		
Did the project meet UNEP requirements to review risk ratings regularly; monitor project implementation for possible safeguard issues; respond (where relevant) to safeguard the problems through risk avoidance, minimization, mitigation or offsetting and report on the implementation of safeguard management measures?	Same as Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity	Same as Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity
Country ownership and driven-ness		
	Semi-structured interviews Online Survey	SDC–UNEP Donor Agreement and amendment A3 Project document GEMS4EWE/PPP document GEMS4EWE project document

EVALUATION QUESTIONS	METHODS	SOURCES OF INFORMATION
	Document analysis	Progress Reports (including PIMS reports and GEMS4EWE/PPP progress reports) SSFAs – Progress Reports and Final Outputs WWQA Platform / Website and Platform usage metrics (downloads, visits, citations) World Water Quality Assessment Other WWQA communication products UNEA Resolutions referencing WWQA or related products Communication products featuring engaged partners (policy briefs, videos) References in external platforms: e.g., SDG 6.3.2 reporting systems Relevant national and regional policy and strategy documents (Any document that sets national or regional water quality, monitoring, IWRM, environmental reporting, or SDG implementation priorities) **Semi-structured interviews:** with project team, donor, implementing partners and TBD third parties such as representatives from national water authorities **Online survey:** WWQA network members and TBD third parties such as representatives from national water authorities
Communication and public awareness		
Did the project effectively use existing communication channels and networks, including meeting the differentiated needs of gendered or marginalized groups, and whether any feedback channels were established?	Same as Country ownership and driven-ness	Same as Country ownership and driven-ness

ANNEX III. STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED DURING THE EVALUATION

Stakeholders consulted during the evaluation *[No names should be included]*

#	Organization	Position	Stakeholder type
1	SDC	Senior Programme Manager, SDC Section Wate	Funding agency
2	DELTARES	Senior Specialist or Advisor	Implementing partner
3	Earthwatch		Implementing partner
4	Earthwatch		Implementing partner
5	IGRAC		Implementing partner
6	IHE Delft	Professor of Aquatic Ecosystems	Implementing partner
7	TUF		Implementing partner
8	TUF		Implementing partner
9	TUF		Implementing partner
10	UFZ		Implementing partner
11	UFZ		Implementing partner
12	UFZ		Implementing partner
13	USTIR		Implementing partner
14	USTIR		Implementing partner
15	Wageningen University	Professor	Implementing partner
16	Wageningen University	Assistant Professor or Postdoctoral Researcher	Implementing partner
17	WfWP	Co-Founder and Treasurer	Implementing partner
18	KeNAWRUA	Chief Executive Officer	National and local beneficiaries
19	NWMRA	Director	National and local beneficiaries
20	NWMRA	Water Resources and GIS analyst	National and local beneficiaries
21	NWMRA	Asst. Director, Hydrological Services	National and local beneficiaries
22	HR2W	Chief Executive Officer	Observer
23	IWRA		Observer
24	OECD	Policy Analyst, Water Team	Observer
25	RCEES	Associate Professor	Observer
26	UNEP	Project team	
27	UNEP	WWQA coordinator	Project team
28	UNEP	Head of the Global Environment Monitoring Unit	Project team
29	UNEP	Associate Programme Management Officer	Project team
30	UNEP	WWQA coordinator	Project team
31	UNEP		Project team
32	UNEP		Project team
33	UNEP	WWQA consultant	Project team
34	BfG		Workstream contributor
35	EAWAG		Workstream contributor
36	EURECAT	Head of Politics; Acting Coordinator, WWQA (until April 2023)	Workstream contributor

#	Organization	Position	Stakeholder type
37	EYPW		Workstream contributor
38	JRC	Portfolio Leader, Water Quality	Workstream contributor
39	NUIST		Workstream contributor
40	UKCEH		Workstream contributor
41	UNESCO	Programme Specialist	Workstream contributor
42	WMO	Head	Workstream contributor

ANNEX IV. KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
1	Final Report of the XVII World Water Congress 29/11 – 3/12 2021 BY THE INTERNATIONAL WATER RESOURCES ASSOCIATION (IWRA)	World Water Congress	Conference proceedings	11	2021	WWQA participates in World Water Congress	Link
2	Mid-Term Review of the UNEP Project Assessing key environmental issues and providing focused outlooks to strengthen science-based policy and decision-making	External evaluator	Evaluation	2	2024	Evaluation of project 2041, which included, as an administrative vehicle, the Swiss Cooperation Agreement and the WWQA activities	UNEP
3	Summary of Findings and Recommendations of the Mid-Term Review of UNEP Project 02041: Assessing key environmental issues and providing focused outlooks to strengthen science-based policy and decision-making	External evaluator	Evaluation	2	2024	Evaluation of project 2041, which included, as an administrative vehicle, the Swiss Cooperation Agreement and the WWQA activities	UNEP
4	Terminal Review of the Healthy and Productive Freshwater Ecosystem Project" (Project Document 316.2 / PIMS ID 02052) UNEP Ecosystem Division	External evaluator	Evaluation	5	2024	Terminal Review of the Healthy and Productive Freshwater Ecosystems project assessing its global contributions to freshwater SDG indicators.	UNEP (not published yet)
5	Terminal Review of the Project "Support to the implementation of the global monitoring of SDG 6 on water and sanitation (GEMS/Water)"	UNEP	Evaluation	1	2023	Evaluation of the GEMS/Water project's contribution to SDG 6.3.2 monitoring and capacity building	Link
6	Terms of Reference of the Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP project "Consolidating, Running and Implementing a World Water Quality Alliance" (operationalised under "Assessing key environmental issues and providing focused outlooks to strengthen science-based policy and decision making" PIMS 2041)	UNEP	Evaluation	1	2025	Final evaluation ToR	UNEP
7	Future projections of river nutrient export to the global coastal ocean show persisting nitrogen and phosphorus distortion	Deltares	Output	11	2022	This peer-reviewed article by Beusen and Bouwman (2022) provides scientific validation of the IMAGE-GNM modelling framework used in the Global Scenarios for Nutrient Pollution and Toxic Stress report delivered under SSFA/2021/4535. While the article does not mention the WWQA directly,	Link

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
						it supports the scientific soundness of the scenario methods applied for the World Water Quality Assessment.	
8	Global Scenarios for Ecosystem Health. Nutrient pollution and toxic stress	Deltares	Output	8	2022	The Global Scenarios for Nutrient Pollution and Toxic Stress report, developed under SSFA/2021/4535, was explicitly intended to support the World Water Quality Assessment coordinated by the WWQA. The SSFA mandated Deltares to deliver scenarios as a central contribution to this assessment, and the report itself confirms its role in providing scenario analysis for the world water quality assessment process.	Link
9	Rokel River Basin Citizen Science for SDG 6.3.2 Report	Earthwatch	Output	11	2022	Final report documenting implementation of citizen science water quality monitoring in the Rokel River Basin, Sierra Leone, under SSFA/2021/4358. Describes site selection, training, field data collection using FreshWater Watch kits, stakeholder engagement, and lessons learned for integrating citizen data into SDG 6.3.2 reporting. Contributes to WWQA Output 4 as a national demonstration case.	Link
10	Empowering citizen scientists to improve water quality: from monitoring to action	Earthwatch	Output	10	2023	Published in 2024 and linked to SSFA/2023/6177, this peer-reviewed journal article presents the transboundary citizen science initiative in the Mara River Basin (Kenya–Tanzania). It discusses the potential of citizen-generated water quality data to support SDG 6.3.2 reporting and cross-border water governance. Contributes to WWQA Output 4 by documenting scientific evidence from a WWQA-supported use case.	Link
11	Sierra Leone – SDG–FWW Partnership Agreement 2024	Earthwatch	Output		2024	This 2024 partnership agreement between Earthwatch and NWRMA formalizes continued collaboration on citizen science monitoring using the FreshWater Watch platform in Sierra Leone. While not a deliverable under SSFA/2021/4358, it directly builds on that project's outcomes in the Rokel River Basin and reflects national	Link

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
						ownership and scaling of WWQA Output 4 activities.	
12	Citizen science monitoring in Sierra Leone National Water Resources Management Agency	Earthwatch	Output	9	2024	Presentation delivered by NWRMA in September 2024 summarizing citizen science monitoring achievements in the Rokel River Basin. It highlights outcomes of SSFA/2021/4358, including site expansion, cost-effectiveness, SDG 6.3.2 reporting, and integration into national planning. Serves as stakeholder validation and evidence of WWQA Output 4 visibility and institutional uptake in Sierra Leone.	Not published, shared by NWRMA
13	Citizen Science Data Integration: Summary report on process and lessons learnt	Earthwatch	Output		2024	Produced under SSFA/2022/5149 (Amendment 4), this cross-cutting summary synthesizes lessons from Kenya, South Africa, and Sierra Leone on the use of citizen science for SDG 6.3.2 reporting. It compares approaches, identifies enabling conditions, and offers recommendations for institutional uptake. Supports WWQA Output 4 by consolidating results from multiple country demonstrations.	Link
14	KeNAWRUA Report	Earthwatch	Output	9	2024	Developed under SSFA/2022/5149, this case study (dated September 2024) documents the integration of citizen science data into SDG 6.3.2 reporting in Kenya through collaboration with KeNAWRUA. It outlines site selection, training, monitoring methods, and engagement with local communities and authorities. Contributes to WWQA Output 4 by demonstrating a national application of citizen data for freshwater quality monitoring.	Link
15	World Water Quality Alliance (WWQA) citizen science data integration for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6.3.2: Lessons learned from a South African perspective	Earthwatch	Output		2024	Produced under SSFA/2022/5149, this September 2024 case study summarizes citizen science contributions to SDG 6.3.2 reporting in South Africa, in partnership with GroundTruth. It details sampling protocols, data flows, institutional engagement, and policy relevance. Supports WWQA Output 4 by illustrating how locally generated water	Link

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
						quality data can inform official monitoring processes.	
16	Policy brief: The role of citizen science in improving ambient water quality Sustainable Development Goal Target 6.3	Earthwatch	Output	7	2024	Produced under SSFA/2022/5149 (Amendment 4), this 2024 policy brief outlines how citizen science contributes to SDG 6.3.2 monitoring and policy processes. It synthesizes lessons from Kenya, South Africa, and Sierra Leone, and provides recommendations for scaling citizen-generated data within national reporting systems. Supports WWQA Output 4 by translating field-level results into actionable policy guidance.	Link
17	Technical brief: The role of citizen science in improving ambient water quality Sustainable Development Goal Target 6.3	Earthwatch	Output	7	2024	Produced under SSFA/2022/5149 (Amendment 4), this July 2024 technical brief by Earthwatch Europe complements the policy brief by detailing the methods, data flows, and institutional processes used in citizen science water quality monitoring across Kenya, South Africa, and Sierra Leone. Supports WWQA Output 4 by providing practical guidance for integrating citizen-generated data into SDG 6.3.2 reporting systems.	Link
18	Opportunities and challenges of integrating citizen science generated data on water quality for monitoring and achieving Sustainable Development Goal 6.3.2	Earthwatch	Output	9	2024	Produced under SSFA/2022/5149 (Amendment 4), this 2024 report by Earthwatch Europe analyses the opportunities and challenges of integrating citizen science-generated data into SDG 6.3.2 monitoring. It synthesizes findings from pilot experiences in Sierra Leone, Kenya, and South Africa, highlighting technical, institutional, and policy barriers and enablers. Contributes to WWQA Output 4 by informing future scaling and institutional uptake.	Link
19	SDG–FWW Letter of Agreement 2025	Earthwatch	Output	3	2025	Signed in March 2025, this Letter of Agreement between Earthwatch and NWRMA confirms ongoing commitment to citizen science-based water quality monitoring in Sierra Leone. Though outside the formal scope of SSFA/2021/4358, it is a direct	Not published, shared by NWRMA

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
						continuation of that work and evidence institutionalization of WWQA Output 4 results through national partnerships.	
20	Nairobi River Monitoring Programme	Earthwatch	Output		2025	Developed under SSFA/2022/5149 (Amendment 4), this infographic visualizes citizen science water quality data collected along the Nairobi River. It presents key findings on pollution sources, phosphate and nitrate levels, and ecological status across 17 monitoring sites. Supports WWQA Output 4 by communicating results from a national demonstration of SDG 6.3.2 citizen monitoring.	Link
21	Assessing Groundwater Quality: A Global Perspective — Importance, methods and potential data sources	IGRAC	Output	10	2021	Perspective paper produced under SSFA 4750 by the WWQA Friends of Groundwater, summarizing priority issues, methods, and data sources for groundwater quality monitoring, with the explicit aim of informing and contributing to the World Water Quality Assessment.	Link
22	A global perspective on assessing groundwater quality	IGRAC	Output	9	2022	Peer-reviewed publication by Misstear et al., describing methods, challenges, and data needs for a global groundwater quality assessment. It explicitly references the World Water Quality Alliance (WWQA) and its assessment objectives, providing a scientific basis for WWQA's groundwater quality pillar.	Link
23	Guidelines for Groundwater Quality Assessment under the World Water Quality Alliance	IGRAC	Output	4	2024	Technical guidelines developed under SSFA 4750 and updated under SSFA 6186 by the WWQA Friends of Groundwater to harmonize methods for groundwater quality assessment, with the stated aim of supporting the World Water Quality Assessment.	Link
24	Introduction to the groundwater quality guidelines	IGRAC	Output	5	2024	Video produced under SSFA 6186 summarizing one of the four national case studies (Uganda, Chile, Sweden, or South Korea) carried out under the WWQA Friends of Groundwater to test the GWQ guidelines	Link

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
						methodology in support of the World Water Quality Assessment.	
25	Importance of knowing your groundwater quality	IGRAC	Output	5	2024	The video stresses the importance of groundwater quality, which is often overlooked despite being our primary freshwater source. It highlights the lack of global monitoring data and the complexity of assessment. To address this, the Groundwater Quality Index (GQI) and new guidelines have been developed to simplify quality information for better decision-making	Link
26	Embedding lakes into the global sustainability agenda. Protecting and restoring ecosystems to deliver global scale socio-economic benefits	IHE Delft	Output	3	2022	Embedding Lakes into the Global Sustainability Agenda: Protecting and Restoring Ecosystems to Deliver Global-Scale Socio-Economic Benefits (2023) is a White Paper produced under SSFA/2021/4759 with IHE Delft. It synthesizes evidence on ecosystem restoration benefits, highlights case studies of large-scale freshwater restoration, and provides recommendations for embedding lakes and freshwater ecosystems within global sustainability frameworks, supporting the WWQA Ecosystems Workstream. The document does not explicitly mention the World Water Quality Assessment.	Link
27	A global assessment of lake restoration in practice: New insights and future perspectives	IHE Delft	Output	12	2023	Peer-reviewed scientific article published in Science of the Total Environment assessing global lake restoration practices through a structured survey of practitioners. The paper identifies key pressures, restoration objectives, and effective measures, emphasizing nutrient reduction and stakeholder participation as central to success. It highlights shortcomings in monitoring, policy frameworks, governance, and integration with climate adaptation, and calls for improved guidance and global coordination. The article explicitly acknowledges the World Water Quality	Link

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
						Alliance (WWQA) and states it was prepared under SSFA/2021/4759 with IHE Delft.	
28	Towards harmonized standards for freshwater biodiversity monitoring and biological assessment using benthic macroinvertebrates	IHE Delft	Output	2	2024	Peer-reviewed scientific article published in Science of the Total Environment reviewing the status, gaps, and challenges of freshwater biodiversity monitoring using benthic macroinvertebrates. The paper identifies 20 major gaps grouped into five categories and calls for globally harmonized standards. Although the lead author (Simaika) is part of the WWQA BBMA workstream and IHE Delft, there is no explicit mention of any SSFA funding (such as SSFA/2024/7831) supporting this publication, and the article does not name any SSFA number. Therefore it cannot be explicitly linked as a result of an SSFA	Link
29	Integrating Bioassessment in the Global Sustainability Agenda	IHE Delft	Output	9	2024	White Paper produced under SSFA/2024/7831 between UNEP and IHE Delft, developed through the WWQA Biodiversity and Biological Monitoring and Assessment (BBMA) Workstream. It provides global recommendations for integrating bioassessment into national and international water quality and ecosystem policy frameworks, drawing on survey data from nearly 100 countries, and directly supports the WWQA's contribution to UNEA Resolution 3/10.	Link
30	Water quality cooperation for building peace from source-to-sea — Session summary and outcomes	IHE Delft	Output	8	2024	Summary report of the World Water Week session "Water Quality Cooperation for Building Peace from Source-to-Sea," co-convened by IHE Delft, UNEP, and WWQA partners on 25 August 2024. The report details keynotes, panel discussions, and conclusions on transboundary water quality cooperation and peacebuilding benefits. While coordinated by the WWQA and partners, there is no explicit mention of any SSFA number (for example SSFA/2024/7831) funding this report, so it	Link

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
						cannot be formally linked as a direct SSFA deliverable.	
31	Policy Brief: Bridging the global data gap by integrating biomonitoring in water quality monitoring	IHE Delft	Output	12	2024	Communication product developed under SSFA 7831 with IHE Delft and the WWQA Biodiversity and Biological Monitoring and Assessment workstream, summarizing key policy messages for decision-makers on biomonitoring.	Link
32	White paper on the role of bioassessment in policy delivery	IHE Delft	Output	9	2024	Technical white paper developed under SSFA 7831 with IHE Delft, providing recommendations to integrate bioassessment into the 2030 Agenda and SDG policy frameworks. This is the principal "white paper" deliverable under SSFA 7831.	Link
33	Water Pollution by Plastics and Microplastics: A Review of Technical Solutions from Source to Sea	IWMI	Output		2020	This UNEP publication, produced by the Economy Division's Life Cycle Initiative, addresses the growing challenge of plastic and microplastic pollution in freshwater and marine environments. It explores sources, impacts, and policy responses, emphasizing life cycle approaches and systemic solutions. While not a product of the WWQA, the report is thematically aligned with the Alliance's plastics workstream and offers complementary insights into freshwater plastic pollution and circular economy pathways. It serves as a relevant background resource for WWQA activities but is not linked to specific WWQA outputs or SSFAs.	Link
34	Toward Developing an African Water Quality Program (AWaQ)	IWMI	Output	10	2022	Concept paper outlining the rationale, objectives, and proposed components of AWaQ. Serves as early strategic communication product. Reflects WWQA principles and links to Citizen Science and Capacity workstreams.	Link
35	Assessment of Capacity for Monitoring Ambient Water Quality in Africa	IWMI	Output	8	2023	Baseline assessment of water quality monitoring capacity across African countries, commissioned with support from WWQA. Informs AWaQ design. Linked to	Link

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
						WWQA Capacity Development and Citizen Science workstreams.	
36	A Framework for an African Water Quality Program (AWaQ)	IWMI	Output	1	2024	Framework document for AWaQ, co-funded by WWQA and authored with Citizen Science workstream expert Stuart Warner. Proposes governance, monitoring, and innovation components including citizen science.	Link
37	SARS-CoV-2 Surveillance employing Sewage: Towards a Sentinel System – Feasibility assessment of an EU approach	JRC	Output	9	2021	WWQA-affiliated initiative on wastewater-based epidemiology for SARS-CoV-2. Page 42 confirms collaboration with UNEP and the WWQA to ensure synergy with the international community. Thematically linked to the WWQA Wastewater Surveillance workstream, promoting the health–environment nexus through sewage monitoring.	Link
38	The Gems of Water: How to Become a Gem of Water?	JRC	Output	11	2023	WWQA Social Engagement Platform output engaging citizens and local Science Embassies in participatory water quality monitoring. Promotes the use of innovative sampling (e.g. stir bar sorptive extraction), with results linked to SDG 6.3.2 and integrated in platforms like GEMStat and IPCHEM. Developed under UNEA 3/10 mandates and GEMS/Water leadership.	Link
39	Earth Observation Workstream (YouTube video)	Stirling University	Output	12	2023	Simple explanation of earth observation for assessing ambient water quality	Link
40	A Roadmap for Copernicus Water Services – Water-ForCE 2024	Stirling University	Output	4	2024	Strategic roadmap developed under Water-ForCE and WWQA guidance, outlining Copernicus service contributions to SDG 6.3.2 through EO data. Supports long-term operationalization planning under SSFA/2024/7519.	Link
41	Participatory Process for the EO-Based SDG Co-Design Involving Local Stakeholders (v2.0)	Stirling University	Output	9	2024	Report describing the co-design process for EO-based SDG monitoring, including workshop outputs, survey results, and stakeholder needs. Matches Deliverable 1.3 of SSFA/2024/7519.	Link

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
42	Deliverable 2.3 v2.0 – Waterbody-Level Classification Using the EO-Based Indicator for the Pilot Study	Stirling University	Output	9	2024	Technical deliverable presenting the composite EO indicator for Lake Tanganyika, with classification thresholds, indicator interpretation, and geospatial outputs. Matches Deliverable 2.3 of SSFA/2024/7519.	Link
43	Unlocking the Global Benefits of Earth Observation to Address the SDG 6 In Situ Water Quality Monitoring Gap	Stirling University	Output	5	2024	Peer-reviewed article authored by Stirling researchers, aligned with the objectives of SSFA/2024/7519. Demonstrates EO methodologies to support global SDG 6.3.2 reporting, with Lake Tanganyika as a use case. UNEP support not explicitly acknowledged.	Link
44	Desk Study, Inception Stakeholder Workshops, and Baseline Report for Lake Victoria and Volta Basins	TUF	Output	7	2021	World Water Quality Alliance, Africa Use Cases: Background WWQA report published in July 2021 summarizing early engagement and situation analysis for the Africa use cases (Volta Basin, Lake Victoria, and Cape Town). Not a deliverable under SSFA/2023/6015 but provided foundational context for subsequent stakeholder engagement and co-design activities funded through the SSFA.	Link
45	WWQA Africa Use Cases Desk Study, Inception Stakeholder Workshops, and Baseline Report for Lake Victoria and Volta Basins July 2021 (Africa Use Cases_Volta_Victoria_Cape Town_Final Report.pdf)	TUF	Output	7	2021	WWQA (FOEN) output	Link
46	Need for harmonized long-term multi-lake monitoring of African Great Lakes	TUF	Output	6	2022	Peer-reviewed article published in Ambio (2022) presenting a scientific agenda for coordinated long-term monitoring of African Great Lakes. Andrew Gemmell contributed to the section on data management (page 15), drawing from WWQA experience in the Lake Victoria Basin. Not an SSFA/2023/6015 deliverable but relevant to WWQA Output 4 as scientific underpinning for regional collaboration and stakeholder engagement.	Link
47	WWQA Africa Use Cases: Lake Victoria	TUF	Output	9	2023	Presentation delivered by Andrew Gemmell at the 2023 WWQA Nairobi Conference,	UNEP

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
						summarizing the status and outcomes of stakeholder engagement in the Lake Victoria Basin. Highlights progress since the original mapping, local institutional collaboration, challenges in data integration, and proposed next steps.	
48	WWQA Africa Use Case Lake Victoria Stakeholder Engagement Expansion	TUF	Output	10	2023	Final outcomes report produced under SSFA/2023/6015 summarizing stakeholder engagement activities in the Lake Victoria Basin. Captures workshop findings, stakeholder priorities, barriers to data sharing, and recommendations for institutional integration. Represents a core narrative deliverable of WWQA Output 4 and directly fulfils multiple components of the SSFA's Lake Victoria engagement track.	Link
49	Lake Victoria Stakeholder Engagement –Progress, outcomes and way forward for Africa	TUF	Output		2023	Public-facing brochure produced by Umvoto Foundation under SSFA/2023/6015 to highlight stakeholder engagement outcomes in the Lake Victoria Basin. Summarizes objectives, key actors, engagement strategy, and follow-up actions. Supports WWQA Output 4 by enhancing the visibility and accessibility of project results for broader institutional and public audiences.	Link
50	Lake Victoria portal on GlobeWQ	TUF	Output		2023	Developed in 2023 in response to stakeholder needs expressed during the WWQA Africa Use Case engagement, this dedicated Lake Victoria portal on the GlobeWQ platform allows users to visualize water quality data and indicators	Link
51	WWQA Lake Victoria Use Case (video)	TUF	Output		2023	Draft script for a WWQA promotional video on the Lake Victoria Use Case, developed under SSFA/2023/6015. Outlines the story arc, narration, and visuals to highlight the use of the triangle integration approach, stakeholder engagement, and the GlobeWQ portal.	UNEP
52	Geoethical issues around water security for the City of Cape Town	TUF	Output	3	2023	Scientific article discussing ethical approaches to groundwater resilience in	Link

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
						Cape Town. Aligns with SSFA/2023/6015 Cape Town focus but does not explicitly acknowledge SSFA or WWQA support.	
53	TT 902 – Development of aquifer resilience metrics	TUF	Output	6	2023	Report presents methodology for assessing aquifer resilience, with direct relevance to Cape Town aquifers. Strong thematic link to SSFA/2023/6015 but lacks direct reference to SSFA or WWQA.	Link
54	TT 905 – Climate change, groundwater and agriculture	TUF	Output	9	2023	Discusses climate risk and groundwater governance in Southern Africa. Authored by SSFA participants, thematically relevant to the Cape Town component of SSFA/2023/6015 but no attribution to UNEP or WWQA.	Link
55	TT 906 – Groundwater sustainability for the Cape Flats Aquifer	TUF	Output	12	2023	Covers governance, sustainability, and resilience of Cape Town's aquifers. Matches SSFA/2023/6015 objectives but no mention of WWQA or UNEP funding.	Link
56	Lotus-Limits Artistic Brie	TUF	Output	8	2023	Concept note for artistic engagement in Lotus Canal restoration. Aligns with SSFA deliverable on rehabilitation strategy but lacks direct attribution to SSFA/2023/6015 or UNEP support.	Link
57	Monitoring Plastics in Rivers and Lakes: Guidelines for the Harmonization of Methodologies	UFZ	Output		2020	The MPRL 2020 report presents a standardized protocol for monitoring plastics in rivers and lakes, developed by UFZ with funding from NORAD. Though published prior to the 2021–2022 SSFA, it served as a foundational input to the WWQA plastics workstream. The methodology outlined in the report guided the SSFA-funded pilot activities in Ghana, Vietnam, and Europe. Within WWQA, the MPRL protocol supports Output 4 by enabling country-level demonstration of harmonized monitoring approaches for freshwater plastic pollution.	Link
58	Project factsheet: GlobeWQ – Pilot Project to create a 'Global Water Quality Analysis and Service Platform'	UFZ	Output	7	2020	Project factsheet describing the GlobeWQ initiative, led by UFZ with UNEP and WWQA, intending to deliver a near real-time, global-scale water quality analysis platform. Project	Link

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
						factsheet presenting GlobeWQ as a pilot initiative under BMBF's GRoW program, co-developed with UNEP and WWQA partners. Designed to support the WWQA WorldWater Quality Assessment using integrated modelling, in-situ, and EO data. Closely linked to the WWQA Modelling and Earth Observation workstreams	
59	GlobeWQ Quality Known report	UFZ	Output	4	2023	It says it supports the World Water Quality Alliance (WWQA) and UNEP by delivering actionable insights to strengthen water quality governance and SDG 6.3.2 implementation but i**s mentioned only in passing in FY2023 project report. Comprehensive final report of the GlobeWQ project. Summarizes modelling results, case studies (e.g., Lake Victoria, Lake Sevan), data triangulation methods, and the technical implementation of the GlobeWQ platform. Developed in close cooperation with WWQA, contributing to the WWQA global assessment mandate and aligned with the Earth Observation and Modelling workstreams.**	Link
60	Sustainable Implementation of Citizen-Based Plastic Monitoring of Fresh Waters in Western Africa	UFZ	Output	9	2024	Peer-reviewed article co-authored by UFZ and Wageningen University, produced under SSFA/2021/4486 and SSFA/2023/6315. Presents WWQA-supported citizen science results from freshwater plastic monitoring in Ghana, applying the MPRL protocol and reflecting on institutional partnerships, training, field data, and long-term sustainability. Offers a scalable model for West Africa.	Link
61	UNEP GEMS/Water: A Snapshot of the World's Water Quality: Towards a Global Assessment	UNEP	Output	ND	2016	First technical product of the WWQA initiative; developed by UNEP with contributions from GEMS/Water (hosted by UBA, Germany), UFZ, JRC, EOMAP, UNESCO, and UN-Water—most of whom became WWQA members; the report anchors the vision for a periodic global assessment	Link

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
						linked to SDG 6.3.2 and outlines a multidisciplinary, partner-based approach.	
62	UN-Water: Towards a Worldwide Assessment of Freshwater Quality A UN-Water Analytical Brief	UNEP	Output	ND	2016	Prepared under the UN-Water umbrella and led by UNEP, the 2016 Analytical Brief on Water Quality outlines global water quality challenges and lays out a conceptual framework for a future global assessment. It recommends coordinated monitoring, scenario modelling, and data harmonization — themes later echoed in the development of the WWQA.	Link
63	WWQA Inception Workshop – Final Draft	UNEP	Output	11	2018	Summary report of the Geneva inception workshop co-hosted by UNEP and WMO. Outlines rationale, structure, and next steps for the WWQA. Includes proposed goals, principles, and organizational arrangements, laying groundwork for the WWQA and later declaration. Contains draft concept notes and stakeholder feedback.	UNEP
64	Draft Declaration – World Water Quality Alliance	UNEP	Output	12	2019	Output of FOEN contribution (started 2018) for the WWQ Assessment. Foundational declaration for the WWQA, signed by UNEP and listing over 100 partners. Outlines shared principles and commitments for global water quality action under UNEA 3/10. Although widely consulted and disseminated, it was never formally signed, due to capacity limitations and the legal complexities of establishing an inter-organizational agreement. Serves as a guiding statement during WWQA's establishment phase.	UNEP
65	World Water Quality – Where We Stand and Where We Need to Go	UNEP	Output	12	2021	Presentation by UNEP/WWQA to SDC and FOEN on WWQA progress, use cases (Volta, Victoria, Cape Town), workstreams, partnerships, and funding needs. Explicitly confirms WWQA coordination by UNEP and Swiss support. Includes GlobeWQ and capacity development initiatives, as well as contributions to SDG 6.3.2. Likely delivered	UNEP

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
						during a dedicated funder meeting, not a general WWQA assembly.	
66	World Water Quality Assessment: First Global Display of a Water Quality Baseline. A consortium effort by the World Water Quality Alliance – towards a full global assessment. Information Document Annex for display at the 5th Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, Nairobi 2021	UNEP	Output	ND	2021	Assessment product of a networking activity mirroring the competences, expertise and action focus as well as resources of the contributing WWQA working groups and principle investigators in consultation with UNEP	Link
67	World Water Quality Alliance (2021). Assessing Groundwater Quality: A Global Perspective: Importance, Methods and Potential Data Sources. A report by the Friends of Groundwater in the World Water Quality Alliance. Information Document Annex for display at the 5th Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, Nairobi 2021	UNEP	Output	ND	2021	The report refers to its origin in the World Water Quality Alliance (WWQA) and the Friends of Groundwater (FoG) working group	Link
68	Multimodel and Multiconstituent Scenario Construction for Future Water Quality	Wageningen University	Output	2	19	Peer-reviewed baseline study underpinning WWQA scenario modelling; foundational to SSFA 4643 and WWQA Assessment framework.	Link
69	Editorial overview: Water quality: A new challenge for global scale model development and application	Wageningen University	Output	2	19	Scientific editorial introducing global modelling priorities and scenario needs foundational to WWQA. Predates the Alliance and does not mention it but authored by key WWQA partners and reflects the conceptual groundwork for the World Water Quality Assessment.	Link
70	Model inter-comparison design for large-scale water quality models	Wageningen University	Output	11	24	Peer-reviewed output of WWQA scenario analysis under SSFA 4643; develops stakeholder-informed protocol for future water quality projections.	Link
71	The ISIMIP/Proclias water quality workshop (13-14 June) in Wageningen (hybrid)	Wageningen University	Output	6	2024	Report of ISIMIP/Proclias water quality indicators workshop held under SSFA 7523. Presents paper outlines, modelling insights, and coordination efforts for global water quality model intercomparison.	Link
72	Deliverable 2 WWQA 09-19-2024	Wageningen University	Output	9	2024	Visual summary of proposed common indicators for global water quality models, developed under SSFA 7523 with stakeholder consultation.	UNEP

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
73	Deliverable -- Brief report of SWOT analysis for indicators	Wageningen University	Output	9	2024	Evaluative report of global water quality indicators based on usage, limitations, and potential. Replaces SWOT with four-criteria analysis. Produced under SSFA 7523.	UNEP
74	Universal water quality indicators.	Wageningen University	Output	9	2024	Lay-accessible article explaining the evolution, function, and significance of global water quality indicators. Final communication output of SSFA 7523.	UNEP
75	Guidebook for training Local Water Forums – Module 1: Engagement	WfWP	Output	10	2023	Provides guidance to Local Water Forums (LWFs) on stakeholder engagement planning, including vision development, stakeholder mapping, outreach, budgeting, metrics, and independent monitoring.	Link
76	Guidebook for training Local Water Forums – Module 2: Stakeholder Mapping	WfWP	Output	10	2023	Offers a structured method for LWFs to identify and prioritize duty bearers and rights holders in water quality governance, using situational analysis and mapping tools.	Link
77	Guidebook for training Local Water Forums – Module 3: Monitoring and Data Collection	WfWP	Output	10	2023	Introduces citizen science principles and water quality monitoring tools like miniSASS and CrowdWater, aiming to build community-based monitoring capacity.	Link
78	Guidebook for training Local Water Forums – Module 4: Funding Strategy	WfWP	Output	10	2023	Equips LWFs with strategies for designing local funding plans, reviewing stakeholder engagement to align with funding goals, and exploring diverse financing mechanisms including crowdfunding.	Link
79	WWQA Training Workshop – Module 1 Slide Deck	WfWP	Output	10	2023	Accompanies Module 1 guidebook, presenting key elements of stakeholder engagement planning and practices to support trainers and facilitators during LWF workshops.	Link
80	WWQA Training Workshop – Module 2 Slide Deck	WfWP	Output	10	2023	Supports Module 2 by guiding workshop participants through stakeholder analysis, prioritization criteria, and implications for water quality governance	Link
81	WWQA Training Workshop – Module 3 Slide Deck	WfWP	Output	10	2023	Complements Module 3 guidebook by introducing tools and techniques for citizen-	Link

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
						based water quality monitoring and data collection.	
82	Summary Report: Workshop 1 – Scenarios for the World Water Quality Assessment	WWQA	Output	6	2021	Summary of the first in a series of scenario development workshops held under the WWQA Modelling Workstream. The workshop convened 44 global experts to design 'light' water quality scenarios for the 2022 World Water Quality Assessment. It included breakout group activities to quantify missing scenario input variables based on SSP/RCP storylines and aimed to prepare for model simulations and the development of a joint community paper.	UNEP
83	First triangulation experiences for the World Water Quality Assessment – final report of the World Water Quality Assessment Use Cases project	WWQA	Output		2021	Final report documenting the 2021 WWQA Demonstration Use Cases coordinated by UNEP and UFZ, focusing on the Volta Basin, Lake Victoria, and Cape Town. These pilots tested the applicability of WWQA tools—including Earth Observation, in-situ data, and stakeholder consultations—to assess water quality challenges and inform decision-making. The report outlines methodologies, results, and lessons learned for integrating scientific evidence into local and regional water quality management aligned with SDG 6.3.	UNEP
84	Summary report Workshop 2: Scenarios for the World Water Quality Assessment	WWQA	Output	2	2022	Summary of the second WWQA Scenario Workshop held in February 2022 to develop 'light' global water quality scenarios for the forthcoming World Water Quality Assessment. Convened by UFZ, WUR, and Prospex with UNEP support, the workshop brought together 44 participants to refine storylines, compare model outcomes, conduct SDG 6.1.1 and 6.3.2 backcasting exercises, and propose future actions. Outputs informed both scientific publications and the development of WWQA's global assessment and modelling work.	Link

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
85	YEMAYA – The World Water Quality Alliance Newsletter (January 2023)	WWQA	Output	1	2023	Highlights the 2022 WWQA Conference in Konstanz, featuring local water forums, youth leadership, and the role of citizen science. Includes an interview with Noémie Plumier.	Link
86	YEMAYA – The World Water Quality Alliance Newsletter (February 2023)	WWQA	Output	2	2023	Highlights ongoing activities of WWQA workstreams, early warning services, partner collaboration, and citizen science outreach. Includes updates on Africa Use Cases, modelling, and governance reforms.	Link
87	YEMAYA – The World Water Quality Alliance Newsletter (March 2023)	WWQA	Output	3	2023	The March 2023 issue of YEMAYA, the World Water Quality Alliance newsletter, introduces its new format and calls for global submissions on water quality. It highlights a feature on Costa Rica, where banana monocultures negatively affect ecosystems, livelihoods, and water quality, and describes a youth-led monitoring initiative supported by WWQA and GEMS/Water. Another article covers Sierra Leone's first national water quality assessment, supported by UNEP and GEMS/Water capacity-building efforts. The issue also includes an interview with GEMS/Water Coordinator Kilian Christ, updates on WWQA participation in the UN 2023 Water Conference, training opportunities, and innovation challenges.	Link
88	YEMAYA – The World Water Quality Alliance Newsletter (April 2023)	WWQA	Output	4	2023	Lacks full front-page structure, but appears to be a newsletter page or extract, likely from April 2023. Refers to events linked to WWQA governance and LWFs	Link
89	YEMAYA – The World Water Quality Alliance Newsletter (May 2023)	WWQA	Output	5	2023	Covers plastics monitoring, UDYAMA's community water work in India, and the digital transformation of the water sector. Interview with Almotaz Abadi (UfM).	Link
90	YEMAYA – The World Water Quality Alliance Newsletter (June 2023)	WWQA	Output	6	2023	Features citizen science, GlobeWQ, and the Great Torrington Water Forum. Also includes an interview with Nynke Hofstra and details on the Nairobi 2023 WWQA Conference.	Link

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
91	YEMAYA – The World Water Quality Alliance Newsletter (July 2023)	WWQA	Output	7	2023	Discusses water quality in informal settlements (Korogocho and La Pincoya), environmental challenges in Uganda, and efforts in Bangladesh.	Link
92	YEMAYA – The World Water Quality Alliance Newsletter (August 2023)	WWQA	Output	8	2023	Features SAC and TAC elections, Local Water Forum activities, youth engagement, and upcoming UNEA-6 roadmap. Includes visuals and partner highlights.	Link
93	YEMAYA – The World Water Quality Alliance Newsletter (September 2023)	WWQA	Output	9	2023	Highlights GlobeWQ's water quality predictions, a case from the Philippines (Taguig River), and includes a message from MOPGA fellow Alamin Yusuph.	Link
94	YEMAYA – The World Water Quality Alliance Newsletter (October 2023)	WWQA	Output	10	2023	Features the WWQA 2023 Conference in Nairobi, analysis of water quality monitoring in West Africa, and interviews with youth and Local Water Forum members.	Link
95	YEMAYA – The World Water Quality Alliance Newsletter (November 2023)	WWQA	Output	11	2023	Updates on global water quality modelling, social engagement platform, UNEP partnerships, and assessment tools. Strong coverage of stakeholder outreach and digital product development.	Link
96	YEMAYA – The World Water Quality Alliance Newsletter (December 2023)	WWQA	Output	12	2023	Concludes the 2023 year with recaps of SSFA contributions, regional dialogues, platform beta releases, and alignment with UNEA-6 and GEMS4EWE.	Link
97	YEMAYA – The World Water Quality Alliance Newsletter (January 2024)	WWQA	Output	1	2024	This WWQA newsletter focuses on SDG 6.3.2 monitoring in East Africa, knowledge products, and youth and citizen science engagement. Highlights include a webinar on ambient water quality, youth inputs to the A3 workstream, and an invitation to contribute to WWQA tools. Affirms ongoing WWQA convening role and link with UNEP.	Link
98	YEMAYA – The World Water Quality Alliance Newsletter (February 2024)	WWQA	Output	2	2024	Features stakeholder engagement updates, a spotlight on West Africa (Nigeria, Senegal), and contributions from workstreams including modelling and early warning. Highlights links to the citizen science platform and upcoming events. Content	Link

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
						supports WWQA knowledge-sharing and outreach objectives.	
99	YEMAYA – The World Water Quality Alliance Newsletter (March 2024)	WWQA	Output	3	2024	This issue features contributions from Tanzania, Cameroon, and South Africa, with a focus on water quality innovation and local monitoring initiatives. It also includes a spotlight on partnerships and a Bulletin Board section announcing WWQA events and job opportunities. The WWQA coordination team leads editorial content and dissemination.	Link
100	YEMAYA – The World Water Quality Alliance Newsletter (April 2024)	WWQA	Output	4	2024	The April issue highlights World Water Day outcomes, gender and water quality, and success stories from youth-led initiatives. Includes updates on WWQA capacity development and calls for contributions. Edited and published by WWQA Coordination under UNEP.	Link
101	YEMAYA – The World Water Quality Alliance Newsletter (May 2024)	WWQA	Output	5	2024	Features insights into the World Water Quality Assessment process, citizen science in the Nile Basin, and stakeholder reflections. Also includes announcements about WWQA-related training and global events. Maintains editorial continuity with prior issues.	Link
102	YEMAYA – The World Water Quality Alliance Newsletter (June 2024)	WWQA	Output	6	2024	Emphasizes Indigenous Peoples' contributions to water quality monitoring, links with GEO AquaWatch, and provides updates on workstreams. Promotes inclusive monitoring and encourages community submissions to WWQA tools. Published by WWQA Coordination and aligned with UNEP outreach	Link
103	YEMAYA – The World Water Quality Alliance Newsletter (July 2024)	WWQA	Output	7	2024	This issue commemorates World Youth Skills Day and includes stories on youth-led water monitoring, including the "Voluntarios por el Agua" initiative in Chile. It also presents an interview with Dr. Camila Bañales and a range of WWQA community engagement activities. Contains Bulletin Board entries linked to WWQA events, job	Link

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
						openings, and calls for citizen science contributions. Strong alignment with the Citizen Science and Youth workstreams.	
104	YEMAYA – The World Water Quality Alliance Newsletter (August 2024)	WWQA	Output	8	2024	Highlights a new WWQA publication on the African Water Quality Index and citizen science in Ghana and Uganda. Features interviews with Maria Carmen Llasat (UNESCO Chair on Gender and Water), and includes policy updates, calls for submissions, and WWQA workstream outputs. Also covers climate risks in highland water systems and WWQA's involvement in science-policy dialogues	Link
105	YEMAYA – The World Water Quality Alliance Newsletter (September 2024)	WWQA	Output	9	2024	Features coverage on wetlands and mangroves as nature-based water quality solutions. Spotlights WWQA Youth activities and introduces a special advisory group on gender. Contains updates on modelling workstream outputs and the UNEP plastic pollution toolkit.	Link
106	YEMAYA – The World Water Quality Alliance Newsletter (October 2024)	WWQA	Output	10	2024	Discusses WWQA's involvement in mountain ecosystems and links to SDG 6. Presents the new WWQA factsheets on basin monitoring. Features stories from the Andes and Balkans and showcases WWQA citizen science efforts in water governance	Link
107	YEMAYA – The World Water Quality Alliance Newsletter (November 2024)	WWQA	Output	11	2024	Focuses on Indigenous knowledge and community-led monitoring. Introduces collaborative WWQA tools in the Global South, including digital water observatories and training materials. Reports on UNECE and UNEP engagements and WWQA's support to the African Water Facility	Link
108	YEMAYA – The World Water Quality Alliance Newsletter (December 2024)	WWQA	Output	12	2024	Marks 2 years of YEMAYA. Introduces the new WWQA Advisory Committee. Bulletin board includes release of a WWQA Policy Brief on biomonitoring, publication on citizen-based plastic monitoring in West Africa, and a Global Perspective Paper on scenario construction for future water quality. Also	Link

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
						notes WWQA contributions to UNECE's Mara Basin case, and announces "World Lake Day" via UN GA Resolution A/79/L.39	
109	YEMAYA – The World Water Quality Alliance Newsletter (January 2025)	WWQA	Output	1	2025	Opens the year with a recap of 2024 activities and strategic WWQA directions for 2025. Topics include outreach and partnerships, SDG linkages, a spotlight on the Philippines and Senegal, and young professionals contributing to workstreams. Also features new communication materials and announcements.	Link
110	YEMAYA – The World Water Quality Alliance Newsletter (February 2025)	WWQA	Output	2	2025	Announces a new phase for WWQA, outlines key goals for 2025 (e.g., SDG 6.3.2 alignment, improved inclusivity via the Quintuple Helix model, funding strategies, and community engagement). Features articles on lake restoration in India, macroplastics monitoring in the Nile Basin (in partnership with NBI and GIZ), and empowering African women in freshwater science through the AWIS program.	Link
111	YEMAYA – The World Water Quality Alliance Newsletter (March 2025)	WWQA	Output	3	2025	Focuses on the digital transformation of WWQA, including launch of the beta version of the WWQA Knowledge Platform. Features articles on Earth Observation contributions from the Philippines, the Mekong youth initiative, and WWQA presence at UNEA-6. Also includes governance updates and participation highlights from citizen science partners.	Link
112	YEMAYA – The World Water Quality Alliance Newsletter (April 2025)	WWQA	Output	4	2025	Highlights the Interworkstream Coordination Meeting outcomes, WWQA Phase 1 Terminal Evaluation update, and growing collaboration across workstreams. Features citizen science in Kenya, African youth engagement, Earth Observation for SDG 6.3.2, and plastic pollution in the Nile. Also contains announcements (job openings, website updates, WWQA YouTube channel, and publications).	Link

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
113	YEMAYA – The World Water Quality Alliance Newsletter (May 2025)	WWQA	Output	5	2025	Emphasizes cross-sector water quality efforts. Highlights WWQA and UNEP at the World Water Forum in Bali, engagement with GEMS/Water and citizen science, and the introduction of a WWQA university course. Spotlights include Latin America youth work, a gender lens on citizen engagement, and reflections from SAC/TAC	Link
114	PIMS Report December 2020 (GEMS/Water, incl. WWQA)	UNEP	PIMS report	12	2020	GEMS/Water PIMS performance report for Output A6. Includes contributions from WWQA to data analysis and ecosystem assessment frameworks. GEMS reporting structured around A–E outputs. No stand-alone WWQA results section but early collaboration is evident.	UNEP
115	PIMS Report January–June 2021 – Responsibilities for WWQA	UNEP	PIMS report	6	2021	Covers WWQA reporting under multiple outputs (A, B, C, D, E). Describes workstream activities, outputs, coordination with partners, and early steps in global assessment. Highlights institutional coordination and reporting to UNEP systems.	UNEP
116	PIMS Report July–December 2021 (WWQA)	UNEP	PIMS report	12	2021	Semi-annual WWQA progress under Output A3. Focuses on co-design of the global assessment, SAC and TAC functions, and early implementation of citizen science and regional workstreams. Aligns activities with UNEA 3/10.	UNEP
117	PIMS Report July–December 2022 (WWQA)	UNEP	PIMS report	12	2022	Describes FY2022 results for WWQA components including global assessment preparation, workstream coordination, platform development, and stakeholder engagement. Linked to UNEP Subprogramme 7 and tracks results under A3 indicators.	UNEP
118	RE A3 project document renewal (email)	UNEP	PIMS report	11	2022	Email correspondence confirming UNEP's intention to formally renew the A3 project document to accommodate continued WWQA activities. Discusses timeline adjustments, use of residual funding, and expected alignment with UNEA-6 milestones.	UNEP

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
						Reinforces the narrative provided in the extension document.	
121	Biannual Progress report 713.2: Assessing key Environmental issues and providing focused outlooks to strengthen science-based policy and decision making (January-June 2023) (A3 ProDoc IPM Reporting-Jan - June 2023)	UNEP	PIMS report	7	2023	Highlights WWQA engagement in global forums, social engagement through LWFs, SAC/TAC meetings, and progress on the Pathway to WWQA digital tool.	UNEP
122	WWQA – A3 Project Document: Survey of Components / Extension Requirement	UNEP	PIMS report	8	2023	Formal internal request to extend WWQA activities under A3 without additional funding through October 2024. Provides updated timeline for assessment outputs, gender marker clarification, and capacity-development milestones. Includes 2023–2024 deliverable planning.	UNEP
123	Biannual Progress report 713.2: Assessing key Environmental issues and providing focused outlooks to strengthen science-based policy and decision making (July-December 2023) (A3 ProDoc IPM Reporting-July - Dec 2023)	UNEP	PIMS report	12	2023	Covers WWQA participation in major events (e.g. Stockholm, UNECE, IWRA), conference outcomes, citizen science promotion, and roadmap to WWQA assessment.	UNEP
124	Project Progress report PIMS 2041 July 2023	UNEP	PIMS report	8	2023	July 2023 A3 project monthly report, with indications for WWQA and GEMS/ Water transition. Very hard to interpret, as it is a rough draft. It seems that: "GEMS Unit project development needs to be developed as A3 extension will not include WWQA past 31.12.2023. This will mean a GEMS-specific prodoc needs to be approved by PRC and in place by this date, otherwise the project will need to be temporarily housed within another project document that has been approved/extended" has been superseded by WWQA amendment and PPP Memo	UNEP
125	Project Progress Report 177344 PPP Global Environment Monitoring Systems for Early Warning for the Environment (Global Environment Monitoring Systems for Early Warning for the Environment_22Nov) clean	UNEP	PPP report	11	2023	First annual report on implementation of the GEMS4EWE PPP	UNEP
126	Project Progress Report 177344 PPP Global Environment Monitoring Systems for Early Warning for	UNEP	PPP report	5	2024	First semester report on implementation of the GEMS4EWE PPP	UNEP

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
	the Environment (IPMR - WWQA - Jan - June 2024 clean 280524)						
127	GEMS Unit Indicators (Copy of GEMS Unit Indicators at activity level - WWQA_AS Sept2024)	UNEP	PPP report	9	2024	(Seemingly) Progress report based on activity or output indicators	UNEP
128	Project document: Assessing key environmental issues and providing focused outlooks to strengthen science-based policy and decision making.	UNEP	Project document	1	2019	Project document (PIMS 01979, Project document 713.2, formerly known as A3) grouping several intended assessments, including the World Water Quality Assessment	UNEP
129	Signed budget of PIMS 01979, Project document 713.2, formerly known as A3	UNEP	Project document	1	2019	Budget of Project document (PIMS 01979, Project document 713.2, formerly known as A3)	UNEP
130	SDC UNEP Donor Agreement WWQA signed by both parties	UNEP	Project document	1	2020	Donor agreement	UNEP
131	Amendment 1 WWQA contract 81062813 - PDF signed by SDC and UNEP	UNEP	Project document	10	2023	Amendment to donor agreement	UNEP
132	Memorandum recommending the approval of project preparation proposal (PPP) for Global Environmental Monitoring Systems for Early Warning for the Environment (GEMS4EWE) project	UNEP	Project document	12	2023	Memo for the approval of the PPP of the GEMS4EWE project and implementation vehicle for the SDC no-cost extension	
133	Project preparation proposal (PPP) for Global Environmental Monitoring Systems for Early Warning for the Environment (GEMS4EWE) project	UNEP	Project document	12	2023	Implementation vehicle for the SDC no-cost extension (Amendment 1 WWQA contract 81062813 - PDF signed by SDC and UNEP) Document #3	UNEP
134	WWQA – A3 Project Document: Survey of Components / Extension Requirement	UNEP	Project document	8	2023	This official extension request confirms that WWQA is a distinct project component within the A3 ProDoc ("Assessing key environmental issues…"). It outlines WWQA's contribution to Output A3 (environmental assessments), cites expected milestones (baseline, scenario analyses, global assessment delivery), and proposes a no-cost extension through October 2024. Funding is SDC-provided, already committed. The document also confirms alignment with Indicator 2 of the A3 results framework.	UNEP
135	A3 ProDoc Revision Budget V2 – NR WWQA	UNEP	Project document	2	2023	This spreadsheet provides a revised A3 budget reflecting WWQA cost allocations for	UNEP

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
						2023. Cannot confirm inclusion of WWQA lines without file parsing but likely complements the extension request and ProDoc renewal. Should be treated as supporting evidence for WWQA's A3 integration.	
136	Email from Andreas S 310321_2020-21 WWQA SDC Budget Approval. Subject: RE: Annual Progress and Financial Reports WWQA 2019-2020 SDC and FOEN combined	SDC	SDC financial report	3	2021	SDC reaction to 2020 report (document #9)	UNEP
137	SDC finance communication to UNEP/ WWQA and response from UNEP	SDC	SDC financial report	5	2022	Criticism of SDC Budget Project Contribution ($) - Revised 02-2022	UNEP
138	Certified Interim Financial Statement WWQA Inception FOEN 31.12.2019	UNEP	SDC financial report	1	2020	Interim Certified Financial Statement for the period ended 31st December 2019 (FOEN: S1-32WPL-00002 Development of a World Water Quality Assessment thro GEMS/ Water)	UNEP
139	Certified Interim Financial Statement WWQA Africa Pilots FOEN 31.12.2019	UNEP	SDC financial report	1	2020	Interim Certified Financial Statement for the period ended 31st December 2019 (FOEN: M1-32WPL-00007 Africa Pilots)	UNEP
140	Yearly Financial Report_SDC_WWQA_S1-32CPL-000405	UNEP	SDC financial report	12	2020	Interim Certified Financial Statement for the period ended 31st October 2020 (SDC grant: S1-32CPL-000405 Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation WWQA)	UNEP
141	SDC FOEN Progress Report_FY 2020_final_31012021	UNEP	SDC financial report	2	2021	WWQA **Combined Annual Progress Report** October 2019 – October 2020 (SDC) / December 2020 (FOEN)	UNEP
142	WWQA SDC_Updated Budget 2021	UNEP	SDC financial report	1	2021	SDC Budget Project Contribution ($) - Revised 01-2021	UNEP
143	Interim Report S1-32WPL-000002	UNEP	SDC financial report	2	2021	Interim Certified Financial Statement for the period ended 31st December 2020 (FOEN: S1-32WPL-00002 Development of a World Water Quality Assessment thro GEMS/ Water)	UNEP

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
144	Interim Report M1-32WPL-000007	UNEP	SDC financial report	2	2021	Interim Certified Financial Statement for the period ended 31st December 2020 (FOEN: M1-32WPL-00007 Africa Pilots)	UNEP
145	WWQA Swiss FOEN Annexes (Excel Table)	UNEP	SDC financial report	2	2021	Detailed Financial Breakdown for the Period Ended 31 December 2020 by budget line for FOEN: M1-32WPL-00007 Africa Pilots and FOEN: S1-32WPL-00002 Development of a World Water Quality Assessment thro GEMS/ Water	UNEP
146	Indicative Financial Breakdown for the Period Ended 31 December 2021 (WWQA Swiss FOEN Annexes_2021)	UNEP	SDC financial report	2	2022	Annexes to WWQA Combined Annual Draft Report October 2020 – October 2021 (SDC) / December 2021 (FOEN)	UNEP
147	WWQA CO-FUNDING AND IN-KIND SUPPORT	UNEP	SDC financial report	2	2022	Supports the WWQA Combined Annual Draft Report October 2020 – October 2021	UNEP
148	Attachment 1_SDC 2021-22 PROPOSED BUDGET. BUDGET Project Contribution ($) - Revised 02-202	UNEP	SDC financial report	2	2022	SDC Budget Project Contribution ($) - Revised 02-2022	UNEP
149	S1-32CPL-000405 Interim Financial Report to Donor as at 31.10.21	UNEP	SDC financial report	2	2022	Interim Certified Financial Statement for the period ended 31st October 2021 (SDC grant: S1-32CPL-000405 Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation WWQA)	UNEP
150	Interim Report S1-32WPL-000002 (S1-32WPL-000002 R164-0449.pdf)	UNEP	SDC financial report	10	2022	Interim Certified Financial Statement for the period ended 09 July 2022 (FOEN: S1-32WPL-00002 Development of a World Water Quality Assessment thro GEMS/ Water)	UNEP
151	Interim Report M1-32WPL-000007 (M1-32WPL-000007 R503-1352.pdf)	UNEP	SDC financial report	10	2022	Interim Certified Financial Statement for the period ended 21 June 2022 (FOEN: M1-32WPL-00007 Africa Pilots)	UNEP
152	Final Report M1-32CPL-000155b signed	UNEP	SDC financial report	1	2023	Interim Certified Financial Statement for the period ended 31st October 2022 (SDC grant: S1-32CPL-000405 Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation WWQA)	UNEP
153	WWQA SDC Financial Annex_2022_final (Excel Table)	UNEP	SDC financial report	1	2023	Annex to WWQA Annual Draft Report November 2021 – December 2022 (SDC) with budget and expenses	UNEP

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
154	S1-32CPL-000405 Interim Donor Report as at 31.10.2023_RFS-1-11450697706	UNEP	SDC financial report	1	2024	Interim Certified Financial Statement for the period ended 31st October 2023 (SDC grant: S1-32CPL-000405 Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation WWQA)	UNEP
155	Progress Report June 2018 – December 2019	UNEP	SDC progress report	1	2020	Summarizes FOEN-funded inception of WWQA and Africa Use Cases; formal WWQA launch at Ispra; detailed implementation report on 2018–2019 activities under UNEP Subprogramme 7, Project 713.2. Includes progress on pilot assessments (Volta, Victoria, Cape Town), co-design efforts, and partner engagement	UNEP
156	World Water Quality Alliance Progress Report FY2021	UNEP	SDC progress report	2	2022	Covers FY2021 activities across workstreams, including Africa Use Cases, citizen science, and modelling. Details progress on advisory structures, outputs (platforms, pilots), and science-policy interface. Supported by Swiss SDC.	UNEP
157	World Water Quality Alliance Progress Report FY2022	UNEP	SDC progress report	1	2023	FY2022 report with workstream summaries, partnership engagements, governance updates, and regional/national collaborations. Notable activities include expansion of Local Water Forums and digital platforms.	UNEP
158	Final Consultant Report – Recommendations for WWQA and GEMS Unit	UNEP	SDC progress report	3	2023	Contains strategic and operational recommendations for WWQA and GEMS, including the WEFE+H Nexus, stakeholder engagement (Quintuple Helix), citizen science, and sustainability pathways. Proposes enhancements for workstream coherence, digital transformation, and socio-political positioning. Summarizes achievements between September 2022–March 2023, including SAC/TAC elections, assessment coordination, social engagement platform relaunch, development of communications tools, workstream revitalization, and donor outreach. Notes remaining capacity and strategic gaps.	

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
159	World Water Quality Alliance Progress Report FY2023	UNEP	SDC progress report	12	2023	FY2023 report details outputs and coordination across 16 workstreams. Emphasis on Africa Use Cases, early warning, water quality platforms, science-policy linkages, and youth/social engagement.	UNEP
160	Interim Progress Report: January – June 2024	UNEP	SDC progress report	6	2024	Interim summary of 1H 2024 activities. Includes early progress on GlobeWQ, citizen science updates, youth engagement, coordination of advisory bodies, and interim status of SSFA implementation.	UNEP
161	World Water Quality Alliance Progress Report FY2024 (Draft)	UNEP	SDC progress report	7	2024	Draft version of FY2024 report. Likely finalization pending inputs or editing. Continues tracking of ongoing workstreams, partner engagements, and dissemination efforts. Should be replaced with final version once available.	UNEP
162	WWQA Acting Coordinator – Overall Work Programme (September 2022 – March 2023)	UNEP	SDC progress report	9	2022	Describes the Acting Coordinator's role in overseeing the finalization of the World Water Quality Assessment and revitalizing WWQA governance and workstreams. Outlines specific actions for workstream coordination, SAC/TAC restructuring, seed funding, external outreach, and positioning WWQA within UN-Water. Includes calendar for proposal calls and plans for the Konstanz 2022 conference.	UNEP
163	WWQA Communications Strategy (October 2022 – October 2023)	UNEP	SDC progress report	10	2022	Defines WWQA's internal and external communication objectives, including branding, outreach to UNEP-accredited entities, social media strategy, KPIs, and plans for a new website and newsletter. Frames communications as central to science diplomacy, community engagement, and WWQA visibility in the run-up to the Assessment and global events.	UNEP
164	Resource Mobilization Strategy for the World Water Quality Alliance	UNEP	SDC progress report	3	2024	Proposes a multi-pronged fundraising strategy aligned with WWQA Vision and Strategy 2030. Identifies funding needs (e.g., for core coordination, monitoring, LWFs), key	UNEP

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
						partner types (donors, NGOs, UN agencies, tech companies), and coordination with UNEP's own donor strategies. Cites UNEA Resolutions 3/10 and 6/16 as justification for expanding financial support.	
165	SSFA 4535 between UNEP and DELTARES: The World Water Quality Alliance, Global Scenarios Health	Deltares	SSFA	12	2021	SSFA The World Water Quality Alliance, Global Scenarios Health central contribution to the World Water Quality Assessment to be completed by November 2022. It assesses water quality impacts on ecosystem health through an assessment of future changes in water quality, by establishing global scenarios of water quality, considering multiple drivers of change, their pressures and impacts in a nexus context, with a focus on ecosystems based on historical and current global situations.	UNEP
166	SSFA 4358 between UNEP and Earthwatch: The World Water Quality Alliance, Citizen Data for SDG 6.3.2. in Africa	Earthwatch	SSFA	9	2021	The project showed the clear benefit of engaging communities (24) along the Rokel River to improve information on water quality. This information is proving to be important in ongoing management of river water quality in Sierra Leone, in the Rokel in particular and nationally in general	UNEP
167	SSFA 5149 between UNEP and Earthwatch: GEMS/ Water and SDG indicator 6.3.2 in Africa	Earthwatch	SSFA	5	2022	Supports integration of citizen science data into SDG 6.3.2 monitoring in Kenya and South Africa. Focuses on piloting data flows, institutional engagement, and preparation of two national case study reports. Contributes to WWQA Output 4 by applying citizen-generated data to national reporting and decision-making.	UNEP
168	SSFA 6177 between UNEP and Earthwatch: The World Water Quality Alliance, Mara Transnational Citizen Science Monitoring for SDGs	Earthwatch	SSFA	5	2023	SSFA with Earthwatch to Increase knowledge on 1) how to connect data to create impacts e.g., through Local Water Forums, WWQA workstreams and local partnerships., 2) uptake of technical and scientific findings to inform local action to global pressures, and 3) benefits of citizen science to aid in indicator 6.3.2 AND to increase data availability toward SDG 6.3.2 and knowledge	UNEP

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
						of opportunities and challenges for trans-river citizen science monitoring for SDG 6.3.2.	
169	Amendment 4 of SSFA 5149 between UNEP and Earthwatch: GEMS/ Water and SDG indicator 6.3.2 in Africa	Earthwatch	SSFA	4	2024	Expands SSFA/5149 to include synthesis of lessons learned and targeted communications. Deliverables include a policy brief, technical brief, Nairobi River infographic, and the CSFOR61 cross-cutting summary report. Reinforces WWQA Output 4 by documenting outcomes and scaling potential of citizen science for water quality monitoring.	UNEP
170	SSFA 4750 between UNEP and IGRAC: Groundwater Quality for the World Water Quality Assessment	IGRAC	SSFA	12	2021	Contract under the World Water Quality Alliance (WWQA) to develop global groundwater quality assessment guidelines (GQI), collect and process data for a Global Groundwater Quality (GGWQ) portal, and coordinate with WWQA partners to feed into the World Water Quality Assessment. The expected products included: (1) a harmonized GQI methodology, (2) recommendations for integrating groundwater in the global assessment, and (3) initial data inputs for the GGWQ portal. Subsequent narrative reports and guidelines (2024) confirm these products were delivered and further refined under follow-up SSFA 6186	UNEP
171	SSFA 6186 between UNEP and IGRAC: Communicating Groundwater Quality for the World Water Quality Assessment	IGRAC	SSFA	4	2023	SSFA with IGRAC to Increase knowledge on groundwater quality at a national, regional and global scale. Outputs: 1. Three case studies on GQI assessments, and Updated guidelines on a regional groundwater quality assessment Result 2. Key findings and guidance to assist regional groundwater quality assessment in practice and promote the existence of guidelines and their practical use Output 2:Videos to showcase key findings and to a wide audience	UNEP

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
172	SSFA 4759 between UNEP and IHE Delft: Large Scale Restoration Initiatives to Prevent, Halt and Redress Degradation of Freshwater Ecosystems	IHE Delft	SSFA	10	2021	Large Scale Restoration Initiatives to Prevent, Halt and Redress Degradation of Freshwater Ecosystems 1. Ecosystem membership convened as a platform for increased knowledge on improving water quality of lakes from data, information and experiences collected on restoration of lakes. ToR for Ecosystem membership and reports summarizing key stakeholder inputs with view on global lake restoration 2. Enhanced coordination of action in the area of lake restoration and mobilization of policymakers. White paper on the enabling environment for successful lake restoration	UNEP
173	SSFA 6256 between UNEP and IHE Delft: WWQA Ecosystems Workstream White Paper communication: from concepts to impact	IHE Delft	SSFA	5	2023	SSFA with IHE Delft to communicate and expand the impact of the Ecosystems Workstream work (white paper) in the sphere of lake protection and restoration. It will do so by targeted advocacy with relevant stakeholders, creating effective communication support, and enhanced awareness.	UNEP
174	SSFA 7831 between UNEP and IHE Delft). White paper on the role of bioassessment in policy delivery	IHE Delft	SSFA	5	2024	White paper on the role of bioassessment in policy delivery 1. White paper on the role of bioassessment in policy delivery 2. Communication product on the importance of bioassessment in transboundary monitoring	UNEP
175	SSFA/2024/7519 – UNEP and University of Stirling: Defining the pathway to SDG-ready Earth Observation (EO) data for SDG indicator 6.3.2 reporting through a transboundary pilot	Stirling University	SSFA	6	2024	Agreement between UNEP and the University of Stirling to pilot Earth Observation-based SDG 6.3.2 monitoring in the Lake Tanganyika basin. Outlines deliverables including participatory workshops, EO indicator development, metadata reporting, and dashboard prototyping.	UNEP
176	SSFA 6015 between UNEP and The Umvoto Foundation (TUF): World Water Quality Alliance, Africa Use Cases	TUF	SSFA	2	2023	World Water Quality Alliance, Africa Use Cases: 1. Lake Victoria Stakeholder Engagement: Expand the stakeholder network to co-design	UNEP

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
						additional products and services. 2. Volta Basin Stakeholder Engagement: Modify engagement methodology to broaden the network and integrate various sectors and government levels. 3. Cape Town Aquifer Engagement: Enhance engagement across sectors to support urban water resource management, with a summary report for all areas. 4. Lotus Canal Rehabilitation Plan: Create a rehabilitation plan for the Lotus Canal in Cape Town. 5. Data Sharing and Management: Improve trust in data sharing platforms like GEMStat and GlobeWQ. 6. Stakeholder Engagement Evaluation: Compare engagement processes in the three areas and recommend approaches based on their contexts.	
177	SSFA 4486 between UNEP and UFZ: Piloting freshwater plastics monitoring guidelines for the World Water Quality Assessment in Europe, Africa and Asia	UFZ	SSFA	10	2021	UNEP partnered with UFZ to pilot the application of freshwater plastics monitoring guidelines in three geographically and politically diverse river basins: the Rhine in Europe, the Odaw in Ghana, and the Saigon in Vietnam. The initiative aimed to translate UNEP's global guidelines into context-specific strategies, combining technical monitoring with stakeholder engagement. Activities included developing localized long-term monitoring approaches, mapping plastic flows to validate methodologies, and convening participatory processes to support implementation and lesson sharing. The project contributed to the WWQA plastics workstream by testing field-level application of the guidelines and generating insights to inform future training and scaling.	UNEP
178	SSFA 4643 between UNEP and Wageningen University: The Scenario Analysis for World Water Quality Assessment	Wageningen University	SSFA	1	2022	The Scenario Analysis for World Water Quality Assessment 1. Convened group of experts from around the world has enhanced knowledge on how to perform scenario analysis using water	UNEP

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
						quality models and scenario data. Summary report from workshop 1 2. Convened group of experts from around the world assessed the available modelled future water quality and determined analysis and assessment methods for further analysis towards the light scenario analysis part of the World Water Quality Assessment Report due in November 2022. Potential to use this work to develop other additional products such as a scientific community paper on translation of scenarios. Summary report from workshop 2	
179	SSFA 6315 between UNEP and Wageningen University: Community Driven Freshwater Plastic Monitoring in Western Africa	Wageningen University	SSFA	7	2023	Community Driven Freshwater Plastic Monitoring in Western Africa. To develop a regional blueprint for long-term river plastic monitoring based on community engagement and citizen science A1: Capacity building workshop on community engagement and citizen science, and plastic monitoring. A2: Citizen science monitoring of the Odaw basin, including micro- and macroplastic sampling in rivers, on riverbanks and on land. A3: Development of regional blueprint for plastics monitoring	UNEP
180	SSFA 7523 between UNEP and Wageningen University: Developing a common set of indicators for large-scale water quality models	Wageningen University	SSFA	6	2024	Developing a common set of indicators for large-scale water quality models. To develop (integrated) indicators and thresholds for the evaluation of water quality and to evaluate the historical and future model results against these indicators, through a workshop, literature review and expert opinion.	UNEP
181	SSFA 6028 between UNEP and WfWP: Bridging the gap between data, engagement and impact for the World Water Quality Assessment	WfWP	SSFA	1	2023	Bridging the Gap for the World Water Quality Assessment 1. Organize workshops with WWQ-Assessment experts, SEP, and Youth representatives to address local actions and global pressures. 2. Gather insights from global experts and LWF representatives in a workshop to create	UNEP

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
						ongoing dialogue that aligns technical and scientific efforts of the WWQA. 3. Develop a training course for LWF and community water initiatives on local fundraising, including funding opportunities, partnerships, and proposal writing. 4. Evaluate outcomes and publish a report and future concept.	
182	SSFA 4535 between UNEP and DELTARES: The World Water Quality Alliance, Global Scenarios Health, Final Expenditure Report	Deltares	SSFA expenditure report	8	2022	SSFA The World Water Quality Alliance, Global Scenarios Health central contribution to the World Water Quality Assessment to be completed by November 2022. It assesses water quality impacts on ecosystem health through an assessment of future changes in water quality, by establishing global scenarios of water quality, considering multiple drivers of change, their pressures and impacts in a nexus context, with a focus on ecosystems based on historical and current global situations.	UNEP
183	SSFA 4358 between UNEP and Earthwatch: The World Water Quality Alliance, Citizen Data for SDG 6.3.2. in Africa. **Final Financial Report**	Earthwatch	SSFA expenditure report	11	2022	The project showed the clear benefit of engaging communities (24) along the Rokel River to improve information on water quality. This information is proving to be important in ongoing management of river water quality in Sierra Leone, in the Rokel in particular and nationally in general	UNEP
184	SSFA 6177 between UNEP and Earthwatch: The World Water Quality Alliance, Mara Transnational Citizen Science Monitoring for SDGs: Final expenditure report	Earthwatch	SSFA expenditure report	10	2023	Details actual costs incurred under SSFA/2023/6177, matching activities and deliverables outlined in the agreement. Confirms expenditures related to monitoring design, citizen science training, water quality analysis, feedback sessions, and the draft policy brief on transboundary citizen science. Supports accountability for WWQA Output 4 implementation in the Mara River Basin.	UNEP
185	SSFA 5149 between UNEP and Earthwatch. GEMS/ Water and SDG indicator 6.3.2 in Africa: Final Financial Report.	Earthwatch	SSFA expenditure report	9	2024	The project (SSFA) aims to scale up citizen science by working with the Water Resources Management Agency in Zambia, the Ministry of Water Tanzania and Tanzania Fisheries Research Institute, Lilongwe Water Board	UNEP

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
						and Ministry of Irrigation and Water Development (Malawi) to evaluate key components of a citizen-scientist regulatory water quality design process targeted at SDG indicator 6.3.2 reporting	
186	SSFA 4750 between UNEP and IGRAC: Groundwater Quality for the World Water Quality Assessment Expenditure Report	IGRAC	SSFA expenditure report	12	2022	Provides financial details on SSFA/2021/4750 budget execution, documenting costs allocated to the development and launch of the Global Groundwater Quality Portal and preparation of regional groundwater quality assessment guidelines under the WWQA framework.	UNEP
187	SSFA 6186 between UNEP and IGRAC: Communicating Groundwater Quality for the World Water Quality Assessment Expenditure report	IGRAC	SSFA expenditure report	10	2023	The final expenditure report under SSFA/2023/6186 accounts for $ 22,000 used to develop four case studies, update the GQI guidelines, and produce two videos as described in the report, though only one video is currently present on the WWQA.info page. These expenditures align with the SSFA objectives supporting the WWQA's planned World Water Quality Assessment.	UNEP
188	SSFA 4759 between UNEP and IHE Delft: Large Scale Restoration Initiatives to Prevent, Halt and Redress Degradation of Freshwater Ecosystems Final expenditure report	IHE Delft	SSFA expenditure report	12	2022	The final expenditure report under SSFA/2021/4759 documents the use of $ 40,491 by IHE Delft to deliver activities supporting large-scale restoration initiatives for freshwater ecosystems. Reported expenditures covered organizing virtual workshops, coordinating Ecosystems membership and terms of reference, developing and finalizing a white paper with case studies, and disseminating it to WWQA partners. Spending aligns with the SSFA's scope of contributing to the WWQA's work on ecosystem restoration.	UNEP
189	SSFA 6256 between UNEP and IHE Delft: WWQA Ecosystems Workstream White Paper communication: from concepts to impact Expenditure Report	IHE Delft	SSFA expenditure report	1	2024	The final expenditure report under SSFA/2023/6256 details a total of $ 61,250 spent on communication and advocacy activities promoting the WWQA Ecosystems Workstream White Paper. Reported costs covered stakeholder engagement, webinars, targeted policy outreach, event participation,	UNEP

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
						and production of a communication video hosted on WWQA channels, consistent with the SSFA objectives to advance freshwater ecosystem restoration messaging within the WWQA framework.	
190	SSFA 7831 between UNEP and IHE Delft). White paper on the role of bioassessment in policy delivery Interim final financial report	IHE Delft	SSFA expenditure report	9	2024	Final expenditure report detailing SSFA 7831 budget execution ($ 19,800) for the white paper and policy brief on bioassessment, confirming full use of funds to support WWQA objectives under UNEA Resolution 3/10.	UNEP
191	SSFA 6015 between UNEP and The Umvoto Foundation (TUF): World Water Quality Alliance, Africa Use Cases. Final financial report	TUF	SSFA expenditure report	10	2023	Final financial report for SSFA/2023/6015 covering costs associated with workshops, coordination, and reporting in the Lake Victoria, Volta Basin, and Cape Town Aquifer use cases. Confirms delivery of stakeholder engagement and Lotus Canal rehabilitation outputs	UNEP
192	SSFA 4486 between UNEP and UFZ: Piloting freshwater plastics monitoring guidelines for the World Water Quality Assessment in Europe, Africa and Asia. Final Expenditure report	UFZ	SSFA expenditure report	12	2022	The financial report confirms full budget utilization and identifies personnel, contracts, and travel as key spending areas. However, it does not substitute for the narrative report, which would be required to assess deliverable completion, methodology application, or regional outcomes.	UNEP
193	SSFA 4643 between UNEP and Wageningen University: The Scenario Analysis for World Water Quality Assessment Final Expenditure Report	Wageningen University	SSFA expenditure report	7	22	Final financial report for SSFA 4643 with Wageningen University. Covers expenditures for data development, online workshops, travel, and coordination. Total actual expenditures were $ 41,062, slightly below the $ 48,014 grant, mainly due to savings on student assistant time and workshop refreshments (held online).	UNEP
194	SSFA 6315 between UNEP and Wageningen University: Community Driven Freshwater Plastic Monitoring in Western Africa Final expenditure report	Wageningen University	SSFA expenditure report	10	2023	Final financial report for SSFA 6315. Documents $ 53,118 in expenditures across three workstreams: workshop delivery, citizen science-based plastic monitoring, and blueprint development. Largest costs were for field implementation and expert	UNEP

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
						interviews. Report certified by Wageningen University's project lead.	
195	SSFA 7523 between UNEP and Wageningen University: Developing a common set of indicators for large-scale water quality models Final financial report	Wageningen University	SSFA expenditure report	9	2024	Financial report for SSFA 7523. Confirms full use of the $ 39,964 grant across all four planned activities (workshop, literature review, indicator evaluation, communication product). The budget was distributed primarily across staff/personnel ($ 8,240), contractual services ($ 16,480), travel ($ 13,596), and operating costs ($ 1,648). Report certified by Wageningen University's project controller.	UNEP
196	SSFA 6028 between UNEP and WfWP: Bridging the gap between data, engagement and impact for the World Water Quality Assessment. Final financial report	WfWP	SSFA expenditure report	10	2023	Final expenditure report confirms full delivery within the US$95,463 budget, with largest costs in training delivery, travel, and personnel; minor reallocations noted but all activities completed as planned	UNEP
197	SSFA 4358 between UNEP and Earthwatch: The World Water Quality Alliance, Citizen Data for SDG 6.3.2. in Africa. **Final Progress Report**	Earthwatch	SSFA narrative report	11	2022	The project showed the clear benefit of engaging communities (24) along the Rokel River to improve information on water quality. This information is proving to be important in ongoing management of river water quality in Sierra Leone, in the Rokel in particular and nationally in general	UNEP
198	SSFA 6177 between UNEP and Earthwatch: The World Water Quality Alliance, Mara Transnational Citizen Science Monitoring for SDGs. Final Progress Report	Earthwatch	SSFA narrative report	10	2023	Documents the implementation of transboundary citizen science monitoring in the Mara River Basin (Kenya and Tanzania) under SSFA/2023/6177. Includes design and site selection with national ministries and WRUAs/WUAs, training and equipping of 42 citizen scientists, data collection and quality control, and monthly feedback mechanisms. Contributes to WWQA Output 4 by demonstrating the feasibility and challenges of integrating citizen-generated water quality data into SDG 6.3.2 reporting at a transnational scale.	UNEP
199	SSFA 4750 between UNEP and IGRAC: Groundwater Quality for the World Water Quality Assessment Final Progress Report	IGRAC	SSFA narrative report	12	2022	Describes completion of the Global Groundwater Quality Portal (developed, launched, and populated, though currently	UNEP

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
						not functional as of 2025) and delivery of guidelines for regional groundwater quality assessment proposing a GQI method under SSFA/2021/4750. Notes that testing the guidelines with country data was postponed to follow-on activities. Prepared within the WWQA Friends of Groundwater to support the World Water Quality Assessment.	
200	SSFA 6186 between UNEP and IGRAC: Communicating Groundwater Quality for the World Water Quality Assessment Final Narrative report	IGRAC	SSFA narrative report	10	2023	The final narrative report under SSFA/2023/6186 confirms delivery of four national-scale case studies testing the Groundwater Quality Index (GQI) guidelines, as well as updated guidelines incorporating lessons learned. While the report mentions two videos were produced (one on guidelines and one on case studies), only one video is currently available on the WWQA.info page, covering both an introduction to the guidelines and highlights from the Chile case study. The report also notes challenges in data harmonization and stakeholder coordination.	UNEP
201	SSFA 6256 between UNEP and IHE Delft: WWQA Ecosystems Workstream White Paper communication: from concepts to impact Final Progress Report	IHE Delft	SSFA narrative report	1	2024	The final progress report under SSFA/2023/6256 documents implementation of communication and advocacy activities to promote the Ecosystems Workstream White Paper developed under SSFA/2021/4759. It confirms delivery of targeted advocacy strategies, stakeholder meetings, webinars, and presentations at events such as Stockholm Water Week and the ILEC World Lakes Conference. It also notes the production of communication outputs, including a video summarizing the White Paper, published on WWQA's website and YouTube, to raise awareness of ecosystem restoration benefits within global policy frameworks.	UNEP

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
202	SSFA 7831 between UNEP and IHE Delft). White paper on the role of bioassessment in policy delivery Interim final progress report	IHE Delft	SSFA narrative report	9	2024	Final narrative report confirming completion of SSFA 7831 activities, including the white paper and policy brief on bioassessment for policy delivery and transboundary water monitoring, supporting WWQA's implementation of UNEA Resolution 3/10.	UNEP
203	SSFA 6015 between UNEP and The Umvoto Foundation (TUF): World Water Quality Alliance, Africa Use Cases. Final Progress report	TUF	SSFA narrative report	10	2023	Final progress report under SSFA/2023/6015 detailing stakeholder engagement outcomes in the Lake Victoria, Volta Basin, and Cape Town Aquifer. Includes deliverables on stakeholder mapping, workshop implementation, data sharing, and a draft rehabilitation strategy for the Lotus Canal.6. Stakeholder Engagement Evaluation: Compare engagement processes in the three areas and recommend approaches based on their contexts.	UNEP
204	SSFA 4643 between UNEP and Wageningen University: The Scenario Analysis for World Water Quality Assessment Final Progress Report	Wageningen University	SSFA narrative report	7	22	Final narrative report for SSFA 4643 with Wageningen University. Describes implementation of two online workshops to develop "light" water quality scenarios for the World Water Quality Assessment. Documents expert engagement, process design, database development, and first scenario results. Reports two peer-reviewed publications as follow-up outputs.	UNEP
205	SSFA 6315 between UNEP and Wageningen University. (SSFA 6315): Community Driven Freshwater Plastic Monitoring in Western Africa Final narrative report	Wageningen University	SSFA narrative report	10	2023	Final narrative report for SSFA 6315. Describes successful delivery of capacity-building workshops, field training, and blueprint development for citizen science-based plastic monitoring in the Odaw River Basin, Ghana. Despite logistical delays and challenges with local partners, the project met all its objectives and generated key outputs including a blueprint report, monitoring protocol, and peer-reviewed publication.	60UNEP
206	SSFA 7523 between UNEP and Wageningen University: Developing a common set of indicators for large-scale water quality models Final progress report	Wageningen University	SSFA narrative report	9	2024	Narrative report for SSFA 7523. Confirms delivery of all four outputs (workshop report, indicator summary, analysis, lay article). Highlights the role of the WWQA in	UNEP

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
						mobilizing the modelling community and contributing to ongoing journal special issues and intercomparison protocols.	
207	SSFA 6028 between UNEP and WfWP: Bridging the gap between data, engagement and impact for the World Water Quality Assessment. Final progress report	WfWP	SSFA narrative report	10	2023	Final report summarizes completed delivery of 3 workshops and a training course for Local Water Forums, development of tools and slides, and pilot launch of a Community of Practice in Kibera to support local uptake of WWQA findings.	UNEP
208	Resolutions and Decisions Adopted by the UNEP Governing Council at its 27th Session	UNEA	UNEA	2	2013	Resolution VI requests new host for GEMS/Water and encourages broader data participation. Directly relevant as GEMS/Water is a foundational contributor to the WWQA, predating its creation. Strong background link.	Link
209	Resolutions and Decisions adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly at its First Session	UNEA	UNEA	6	2014	Resolutions include calls for integrated water resources management and support to GEMS/Water (Res. 1/8), laying early groundwork for future global water quality monitoring efforts.	Link
210	GEMS/Water Programme report to the Second Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly	UNEA	UNEA	5	2016	Official report of the GEMS/Water programme to UNEA-2. Summarizes status of global water quality monitoring and presents GEMS/Water strategy to strengthen data, country capacity, and global indicators.	Link
211	Resolutions and Decisions adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly at its Second Session	UNEA	UNEA	5	2016	Contains no mention of WWQA or world l water quality assessment. Some indirect relevance through Res. 2/10 (Sustainable Development) and Res. 2/13 (Marine plastic litter and microplastics	Link
212	Resolution UNEA-3/10: Addressing water pollution to protect and restore water-related ecosystems	UNEA	UNEA	12	2017	Formal resolution requesting UNEP to undertake a global assessment of water quality and to strengthen global partnerships. This resolution is seen by WWQA stakeholders as the origin point of WWQA. It explicitly mandates the assessment that led to WWQA's formation.	Link
213	Resolutions and Decisions adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly at its Third Session	UNEA	UNEA	12	2017	Full set of UNEA-3 adopted texts, including Res. 3/10. Confirms adoption of water	Link

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
						quality mandate, placing UNEP in charge of assessment and partnership coordination. Serves as legal source for WWQA's creation.	
214	Proceedings of the United Nations Environment Assembly at its fourth session	UNEA	UNEA	3	2019	Proceedings of UNEA-4 (2019). No explicit mention of WWQA or water quality. Indirect relevance through general environmental governance, institutional context, and SDG 6	Link
215	Report of the online session of the fifth United Nations Environment Assembly	UNEA	UNEA	2	2021	Proceedings of UNEA-5. No mention of WWQA, water quality, or resolution 3/10	Link
216	Resolution adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly on 2 March 2022 5/2. Sustainable nitrogen management	UNEA	UNEA	3	2022	Targets nutrient pollution, including nitrogen's impact on water quality. Supports Global Partnership on Nutrient Management and related UNEP initiatives. While relevant to water quality, WWQA is not mentioned. No clear evidence of coordination.	Link
217	Resolution adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly on 2 March 2022 5/4. Sustainable lake management	UNEA	UNEA	3	2022	Strong thematic relevance to WWQA workstreams (e.g. Lakes Naivasha, Tana) and directly cites resolution 3/10. However, WWQA is not explicitly referenced. Suggestive of aligned goals (SDG 6.6, ecosystem monitoring), but no proven coordination. Thematic overlap; no explicit WWQA affiliation.	Link
218	Resolution adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly on 2 March 2022 Nature-based solutions for supporting sustainable development	UNEA	UNEA	3	2022	A broad resolution on Nature-based Solutions (NbS), with indirect links to freshwater ecosystems, pollution, and SDGs. Mentions water availability, but no mention of WWQA or resolution 3/10. No direct WWQA linkage	Link
219	Proceedings of the United Nations Environment Assembly at its Sixth Session	UNEA	UNEA	3	2024	No specific mention of WWQA. Relevant as contextual backdrop for resolution UNEP/EA.6/Res.13 on water	Link
220	Resolution 6/13 – Effective and inclusive solutions for strengthening water policies to achieve sustainable development in the context of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution	UNEA	UNEA	3	2024	No explicit reference to WWQA, but closely aligned with WWQA goals, especially regarding integrated water management, pollution, and climate change.	Link

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
221	Report of the Executive Director – Part 1: Priorities for Advancing Sustainable Solutions (UNEA-7)	UNEA	UNEA	5	2025	No direct WWQA mention. However, contains substantial thematic overlap, especially in "Hydrological Cycle" and "Nutrient Pollution" sections. Invites UNEP to support enhanced monitoring and community-based solutions.	Link
222	Progress made pursuant to GC decision 27/3 on International Water Quality Guidelines for Ecosystems	UNEP	UNEA	10	2017	Executive Director report responding to GC 27/3. Presents conceptual framework for International Water Quality Guidelines for Ecosystems (IWQGES). Describes UNEP's role in water quality governance and outlines need for world water quality assessment.	Link
223	Progress in the implementation of resolution 3/10 on addressing water pollution to protect and restore water-related ecosystems	UNEP	UNEA	2	2021	This report directly follows up on UNEA-3/Res.10 and provides the clearest institutional linkage to WWQA. It outlines UNEP's steps to establish the World Water Quality Assessment, which became the core deliverable leading to WWQA's creation. It details actions by UNEP's Freshwater Ecosystems Unit and GEMS/Water and references the November 2018 Geneva meeting that effectively launched the WWQA	Link
224	Note by the Executive Director: Information on implementation of resolution 3/10 on addressing water pollution to protect and restore water-related ecosystems (UNEA 5 Information Document)	UNEP	UNEA	2	2021	Official WWQA information document prepared for UNEA-5. Provides a summary of WWQA progress and structure, funding, partner engagement, and the state of the World Water Quality Assessment. Confirms alignment with UNEA-3/10 mandate	Link
225	Impact Report 2025	SIWI	World Water Week		2025	Impact report highlighting participation trends, engagement patterns, and learning outcomes at World Water Week 2025. It presents strong global reach, high reported knowledge gains, and increased confidence and willingness to act among participants, with emphasis on inclusion, youth engagement, and capacity development. The report reflects high networking value and alignment with global water and climate agendas but does not document policy uptake or implementation outcomes. No mention of the WWQA was identified.	Link

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
226	Impact Report 2024	SIWI	World Water Week		2024	Short conference impact report summarizing audience reach, engagement patterns, and learning outcomes from World Water Week 2024. It highlights broad geographic participation, strong satisfaction with content, and high reported intention to apply knowledge, with emphasis on youth inclusion and Indigenous perspectives. The document focuses on awareness-raising and capacity development rather than policy influence or implementation evidence. No mention of the WWQA was identified.	Link
227	Impact Report 2023	SIWI	World Water Week		2023	Short conference impact report summarizing audience reach, engagement patterns, and learning outcomes from World Water Week 2024. It highlights broad geographic participation, strong satisfaction with content, and high reported intention to apply knowledge, with emphasis on youth inclusion and Indigenous perspectives. The document focuses on awareness-raising and capacity development rather than policy influence or implementation evidence. No mention of the WWQA was identified.	Link
228	Impact Report 2022	SIWI	World Water Week		2022	Impact report summarising participation, engagement trends, and learning effects from World Water Week 2022. It highlights strong global reach, hybrid expansion, youth and gender representation, and increased knowledge, motivation, and willingness to act among participants. The focus is on awareness-raising, inclusion, and capacity-building outcomes rather than policy implementation or measurable follow-up actions. No mention of the WWQA was identified.	Link

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
229	Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 6 September 2024 — United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018–2028	UN General Assembly	General Assembly Resolution	9	2024	UN General Assembly resolution establishing arrangements for the 2026 UN Water Conference. It defines the scope, objectives, preparatory process, thematic focus, stakeholder engagement rules, and reporting expectations. The resolution emphasizes accelerating SDG 6 implementation, strengthening multi-stakeholder participation, improving monitoring and data systems, and advancing water-related climate resilience, financing, governance, and transboundary cooperation. It mandates UN-Water and Member States to coordinate inputs, mobilize scientific and policy communities, and support inclusive global participation.	Link
230	Inputs to the Interactive Dialogues Themes – 2026 UN Water Conference Global Online Stakeholder Consultation Summary Report (May 2025)	UN DESA	UN Report	5	2025	Stakeholder consultation summary report informing the thematic structure of the 2026 UN Water Conference. It reflects inputs from hundreds of organisations, highlighting priorities such as governance, data systems, water quality, climate resilience, financing, and rights-based approaches. The focus is on shaping dialogue themes rather than documenting implementation or policy outcomes. No mention of the WWQA was identified, though several proposed themes overlap with WWQA areas such as water quality, monitoring, and science-policy integration.	Link
231	Report of the United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development" 2018–2028	UN Water Conference	UN Report	3	2023	The 2023 UN Water Conference marked a major global turning point, calling for urgent transformational action rather than incremental progress. Participants emphasized water as a global common good, essential for human rights, health, climate resilience, and sustainable development. Over 700 voluntary commitments and significant financial pledges were made. The Conference highlighted the need for inclusive cooperation, improved financing, innovative	Link

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
						local solutions, better data, and new governance and partnership models to achieve a water-secure future.	
232	WWQA SAC and TAC Members List	WWQA	WWQA internal communication	8	2020	List of TAC and SAC members as of 2020	UNEP
233	SAC and TAC Participation Analysis	WWQA	WWQA internal communication	4	2021	Analysis of participation and absences from different WWQA meetings	UNEP
234	Presentation for SAC and TAC_Meeting	WWQA	WWQA internal communication	6	2021	This presentation was prepared for a joint SAC–TAC chairs meeting. It provides updates on the WWQA workstream funding process, highlights delays caused by low reviewer engagement, and proposes options to improve future proposal review workflows. It also outlines plans for a standalone WWQA website to strengthen visibility and partner recognition, discusses possible meeting frequency and formats, and suggests ways to re-engage inactive members.	UNEP
235	SAC and TAC Meeting Agenda	WWQA	WWQA internal communication	9	2022	This agenda outlines the structure of an upcoming joint SAC–TAC meeting. Key topics include updates on 2021 activities, funding and implementation progress for workstreams, and the TAC role in reviewing technical deliverables. The meeting also aims to address membership renewal, engagement of inactive members, communications platforms, and the next round of seed funding. Additional points include the WWQA assessment timeline, follow-up from the 3rd Annual General Meeting, and agreement on meeting frequency for 2022	UNEP
236	TAC meeting minutes	WWQA	WWQA internal communication	3	2023	These minutes from a TAC meeting document discussion on the review procedure for the World Water Quality Assessment and how to structure its	UNEP

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
						implementation in the short, medium, and long term. Members clarified the scope of review (peer-reviewed and grey literature), provided feedback on the workflow, and raised issues such as reviewer capacity, conflict of interest, and differing levels of review depending on the type of submission. Next steps include testing the proposed process, mapping TAC expertise, improving guidance, and preparing a longer-term review framework ahead of the next meeting.	
237	Presentation for WWQA Annual Conference	WWQA	WWQA internal communication	9	2023	Presentation prepared for the WWQA Annual Conference and summarizes key feedback points for discussion. It highlights perceived gaps, including governance and implementation, solution-oriented approaches, integration of diverse and Indigenous knowledge systems, consideration of drivers, legal frameworks, and emerging contaminants. It also notes the need for assessments across all spatial scales and transitions toward discussion of WWQA workstreams.	UNEP
238	Agenda SAC Meeting	WWQA	WWQA internal communication	11	2023	This presentation slide was prepared for the WWQA Annual Conference and summarizes key feedback points for discussion. It highlights perceived gaps, including governance and implementation, solution-oriented approaches, integration of diverse and Indigenous knowledge systems, consideration of drivers, legal frameworks, and emerging contaminants. It also notes the need for assessments across all spatial scales and transitions toward discussion of WWQA workstreams.	UNEP
239	Presentation for WWQA TAC meeting 20 March 2024	WWQA	WWQA internal communication	3	2024	This presentation for a TAC meeting proposes improvements to the seed-funding review process, including clearer evaluation criteria, a panel-based review model, and limiting applications to approved workstreams. It also recommends updating the proposal template to require a Theory of	UNEP

	Title	Lead organization	Type	Month	Year	Link to project	Source
						Change, word limits, clearer budget justification, and alignment with policy context.	
240	Speaking Points for Interim Coordinator at SAC and TAC meeting	WWQA	WWQA internal communication	4	2024	This document provides speaking points for the interim coordinator to guide the upcoming SAC–TAC meeting. It focuses on the WWQA funding situation and fundraising strategy, updates following UNEA6, and next steps for operational alignment with the new resolution. It also outlines points for discussing membership renewal and diversification, the format and timing of the 2024 annual conference, and expected support from SAC and TAC to identify potential donors. The tone is forward-looking and intended for delivery during the meeting.	UNEP

ANNEX IVB. KEY PUBLICATIONS

	Workstream	Workstream Lead	Title	Year	Relevance and Influence
1	Not applicable	Not applicable	*World Water Quality Assessment: First Global Display of a Water Quality Baseline*	2021	Presented at UNEA-5 as an information document annex. Introduced a modelled global baseline drawing on PBL's IMAGE-GNM nutrient model and other datasets, coordinated under the WWQA Baseline Assessment workstream. Added limited new information compared to the 2016 UN-Water Analytical Brief and 2016 UNEP Snapshot Assessment. No verified evidence of policy uptake; perceived by some stakeholders as offering limited added value over earlier assessments.
2	Friends of Groundwater	IGRAC (International Groundwater Resources Assessment Centre)	*Groundwater Quality Guidelines – Groundwater Quality Index (GQI)*	2024	High technical relevance for harmonised assessment; adoption potential within monitoring programmes; **no verified policy uptake to date**.
3	Friends of Groundwater	IGRAC	*Groundwater Quality: A Perspective from Friends of Groundwater*	2021	Moderate academic uptake across water quality and governance-related research; mainly cited in technical literature; **no evidence of policy uptake**; absent from UNEP main repository but accessible via UNEP community site and IGRAC.
4	Friends of Groundwater	IGRAC	*Assessing Groundwater Quality: A Global Perspective — Importance, Methods and Potential Data Sources*	2023	Strongest academic reach of the three; published in *Hydrogeology Journal* (IF ~3.0, Q1); diverse international citations; **no evidence of policy uptake**.
5	Ecosystems	Deltares	*Global Nutrient Pollution and Toxic Stress: Scientific Findings and Policy Implications*	2022	High technical and synthesis value; integrates global modelling results for nutrients and toxic stress; accessible in UNEP's repository; **no evidence of policy uptake**; potential as reference in future global water quality assessments.
6	Ecosystems	Deltares	*Global modelling of surface water quality: scientific advances and policy relevance* (*Frontiers in Water*)	2022	Strong academic reach; peer-reviewed open-access in *Frontiers in Water* (IF ~3.6, Q1 in Water Science & Technology); cited in modelling and water quality research; **no evidence of policy uptake**.
7	Ecosystems	IHE-Delft	*Embedding Lakes in the Global Sustainability Agenda: A White Paper*	2024	High conceptual value for integrating lakes into sustainability frameworks; aligns with SDGs and biodiversity targets; **no evidence of policy uptake**; academic relevance in limnology and sustainability science.
8	Ecosystems	IHE Delft	*A global assessment of lake restoration in practice: New insights and future perspectives*	2023	High applied value for informing lake restoration practice; aligns with SDGs and global freshwater restoration agendas; clear relevance for ecosystem management communities; no evidence of direct policy use or uptake; contribution remains primarily academic and technical within limnology and restoration science.

	Workstream	Workstream Lead	Title	Year	Relevance and Influence
9	Citizen Science	Earthwatch Europe	*Citizen Science Plastic Pollution Monitoring in West Africa*	2024	Technical case study on citizen-based monitoring of plastic pollution; high potential for replication; **no evidence of policy uptake**; relevant for SDG 14 and SDG 6 discussions.
10	Citizen Science	Earthwatch Europe	*Case Study: KeNAWRUA, Kenya*	2024	Documents local water resource associations' role in data collection; **academic and local-level relevance**; **no policy uptake evidence**.
11	Citizen Science	Earthwatch Europe	*Case Study: GroundTruth, South Africa*	2024	Focus on community monitoring and engagement; **locally significant**; **no evidence of policy uptake** beyond project context.
12	Citizen Science	Earthwatch Europe	*Opportunities and Challenges for Citizen Science in Water Quality Monitoring*	2024	Broad thematic synthesis; potential reference for practitioners; limited academic citations so far; **no policy uptake evidence**.
13	Citizen Science	Earthwatch Europe	*Citizen Science Policy Brief*	2024	Advocacy-oriented; intended for policy audiences; **no traceable uptake in UNEP or national policy**.
14	Citizen Science	Earthwatch Europe	*Citizen Science Technical Brief*	2024	Technical guidance for implementation; practical utility for practitioners; **no academic or policy uptake evidence**.
15	Citizen Science	Earthwatch Europe	*Citizen Science Lessons Learnt (CSFOR61)*	2024	Captures integration experiences from Kenya and South Africa; practical learning resource; **no verified academic or policy uptake**.
16	Citizen Science	Earthwatch Europe	*Mara River Citizen Science Journal Article*	2024	Peer-reviewed output; academic relevance in freshwater monitoring; early citation stage; **no policy uptake evidence**.
17	Citizen Science	Earthwatch Europe	*Nairobi River Infographic*	2025	Public outreach product; supports local awareness; **no academic or policy uptake evidence**.
18	Citizen Science	Earthwatch Europe	*Rokel River Citizen Science for SDG 6.3.2 Report*	2022	Field-based case study in Sierra Leone; **high operational and policy influence** — data integrated into the Rokel River Basin Management Plan, used for national SDG 6.3.2 reporting, expanded monitoring coverage, and reduced costs for the National Water Resources Management Agency.
19	Africa Use Cases	The Umvoto Foundation	*Lake Victoria Stakeholder Engagement – Progress, Outcomes and Way Forward* (Brochure, Final Outcomes Report, Presentation)	2023	High operational and regional influence — directly informed the Lake Victoria GlobeWQ model and case study outputs, ensuring stakeholder-prioritised data and modelling needs were integrated. Built lasting networks via AGL-ACARE Advisory Groups, identified priority eutrophication tool needs, and shaped a multi-stakeholder roadmap for African Great Lakes water quality data sharing. **No evidence of formal policy adoption**, but strong uptake in institutional collaboration and monitoring practice.
20	Africa Use Cases	The Umvoto Foundation	*Volta Basin Use Case Summary Report*	2023	Technical synthesis of data and modelling approaches for the Volta Basin; reinforced partnerships with basin authorities; provided inputs to GlobeWQ case study development. **No evidence of policy uptake** but strengthened cross-border collaboration and data exchange.
21	Africa Use Cases	The Umvoto Foundation	*Cape Town Aquifer Use Case* (Background & Final Reports)	2021	Applied hydrogeological assessment and stakeholder engagement to urban aquifer management; **locally operational influence** in Cape Town planning discussions; **no evidence of formal policy uptake** beyond project activities.

	Workstream	Workstream Lead	Title	Year	Relevance and Influence
22	Africa Use Cases	The Umvoto Foundation	*Multi-Lake Monitoring in the African Great Lakes Region* (peer-reviewed article)	2022	Peer-reviewed academic output with strong disciplinary relevance in limnology and environmental monitoring; provides methodological framework for multi-lake assessments; **no evidence of policy uptake**.
23	Africa Use Cases	The Umvoto Foundation	*Africa Use Cases Background Report – Lake Victoria, Volta Basin, Cape Town*	2021	Baseline synthesis that framed the three Africa Use Cases; **internal strategic value** for aligning workstreams; **no evidence of policy uptake**.
24	BBMA	IHE Delft	*Bioassessment: Building a Global Agenda for the Next Decade – White Paper*	2024	High conceptual value for harmonising bioassessment globally; relevant to SDG 6.3.2 monitoring; **no evidence of policy uptake**; academic relevance in aquatic ecology and monitoring science.
25	BBMA	IHE Delft	*Harmonized Biodiversity Standards for Water Quality Monitoring* (*Science of the Total Environment*)	2024	Strong academic reach; peer-reviewed in *Science of the Total Environment* (IF ~9.8, Q1 in Environmental Science); cited in biodiversity monitoring literature; **no policy uptake evidence**.
26	BBMA	IHE Delft	*Bridging the Global Data Gap by Integrating Biomonitoring in Water Quality Monitoring – Policy Brief*	2024	Policy-oriented advocacy tool urging integration of biomonitoring into national frameworks; **no verified uptake yet**, but potential influence if referenced in national SDG 6.3.2 reporting.
27	BBMA	IHE Delft	*White Paper on Bioassessment* (Sept 2024)	2024	Foundational synthesis for global bioassessment guidance; strengthens technical and scientific basis for BBMA work; **no evidence of policy uptake**.
28	Earth Observation	University of Stirling	*Global Modelling of SDG 6.3.2 Indicator – Lake Tanganyika Pilot (Frontiers in Water article)*	2024	Strong academic relevance; peer-reviewed open-access in *Frontiers in Water* (IF ~3.6, Q1 in Water Science & Technology); informs EO-based SDG 6.3.2 monitoring; **no evidence of policy uptake**.
29	Earth Observation	University of Stirling	*Waterbody-level Classification Using EO-based Indicator for Lake Tanganyika Pilot (Deliverable 2.3)*	2024	Technical report defining EO-based classification methodology for SDG 6.3.2; uptake potential within EO modelling community; **no policy uptake evidence**.
30	Earth Observation	University of Stirling	*Participatory Process for EO-based SDG 6.3.2 Co-Design Involving Local Stakeholders (Deliverable 1.3)*	2024	Demonstrates high stakeholder willingness (86–93%) to use EO in SDG 6.3.2 reporting; identifies key capacity gaps; **early-stage operational influence** in Lake Tanganyika countries, but **no formal policy adoption yet**.
31	Earth Observation	University of Stirling	*Roadmap for Copernicus Water Services – Water-ForCE*	2024	Strategic roadmap for integrating EO water quality services into Copernicus; potential to shape future EU-funded EO service design; **no evidence of direct policy uptake** within UNEP or UN-Water processes.
32	Plastics	UFZ	*Sustainable Implementation of Citizen-Based Plastic Monitoring of Fresh Waters in Western Africa*	2024	Peer-reviewed article (*Sustainability*); strong **academic and practitioner** relevance—frames 30 barriers and 21 solutions for long-term programmes in West Africa; **no verified policy uptake to date**.
33	Capacity Development	IWMI (with AMCOW)	*African Water Quality Programme (AWaQ) – Concept Brief*	2022	Outlines vision, objectives, and partnership structure for AWaQ; foundational document for AMCOW–WWQA collaboration; **shaped subsequent AWaQ design and funding discussions**.
34	Capacity Development	IWMI (with AMCOW)	*Africa Water Quality Monitoring Capacity: Status and Needs Assessment* (IWMI Working Paper 208)	2023	Situation analysis for African water quality monitoring; directly informed AWaQ framework; supports WWQA's Africa focus and global SDG 6.3.2 reporting inputs.

	Workstream	Workstream Lead	Title	Year	Relevance and Influence
35	Capacity Development	IWMI (with AMCOW)	*A Framework for an African Water Quality Programme (AWaQ)* (IWMI Working Paper 209)	2024	Comprehensive operational framework for AWaQ; influential in shaping AMCOW's continental programme and WWQA's integration with African water quality governance.
36	Modelling	WUR	*Summary report Workshop 2: Scenarios for the World Water Quality Assessment*	2022	Academic – Contributed to scenario development for the WWQA; informed draft high-impact paper, but no evidence of direct policy uptake yet
37	Social Engagement	WfWP	WWQA Local Water Forums Training Modules 1–4	2023	Potential influence at the local/community level through training LWF leaders on engagement, stakeholder mapping, citizen science methods, and funding strategies. No evidence of academic or high-level policy uptake

ANNEX V. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS ASSESSMENT

ESS PLANNING AT PROJECT DESIGN	
List any ESS issues identified at project design (e.g. SS 1.7, SS 2.3, etc.)[43]	None
For any ESS issues identified at project design, were mitigation strategies developed (Y/N)? (If yes, briefly describe)	No
Were any gaps in ESS issues identified at the evaluation inception phase (Y/N)? (If yes, briefly describe)	Not applicable

ESS MONITORING AT PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	
Is there evidence that the potential emergence of ESS issues was actively monitored during project implementation (Y/N)? [44] (If yes, briefly describe)	**No**
Is there a justification for the absence of ESS monitoring (Y/N)? (If yes, briefly describe[45])	**Partially, as project intended to support world water quality assessment, without any direct field or institutional output or outcome**

MANAGEMENT RESPONSIVENESS DURING PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	
Identify the ESS issues/events triggered [46] **by the project.**[47]	**Not applicable**
Describe consequences of ESS issues/events during project implementation.	Not applicable
Describe the management response and identify supporting documentation. [48, 49]	Not applicable
Were negative ESS effects offset by management response (Y/N)? (If yes, briefly describe)	Not applicable

[43] Select from the list of Environmental and Social Safeguards Risks in Table 1 of the template (tool 14, Safeguards Assessment Template).

[44] **Low risk:** Negative impacts minimal or negligible: no further study or impact management required.
Moderate risk: Potential negative impacts, but limited in scale, not unprecedented or irreversible and generally limited to programme/project area; impacts amenable to management using standard mitigation measures; limited environmental or social analysis may be required to develop an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP). Straightforward application of good practice may be sufficient without additional study.
High risk: Potential for significant negative impacts (e.g. irreversible, unprecedented, cumulative, significant stakeholder concerns); Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) (or Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA)) including a full impact assessment may be required, followed by an effective comprehensive safeguard management plan.

[45] For instance, during COVID, access to the field may have been restricted

[46] 'Triggered' refers to environmental or social issues/events that are caused or exacerbated—directly or indirectly—as a result of the project's activities, interventions, or presence.

[47] Select from the list of Environmental and Social Safeguards Risks in Table 1 of the template (tool 14, Safeguards Assessment Template).

[48] For most low-moderate risk projects, good practice approach may be sufficient. Project should demonstrate safeguard management approach in the project activities, budget, risks management, stakeholder engagement or/and monitoring segments of the project document to avoid or minimize the identified potential risks without preparing a separate safeguard management plan.

[49] E.g., GEF Project Implementation Report (PIR), Progress Report, Minutes, etc.

ANNEX VI. COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH TOOLS

Besides publications cited on annex iv, other materials, such as YouTube videos can be found on:

https://wwqa.info/workstreams/

(site still under development)

ANNEX VII. BRIEF CV OF THE EVALUATOR

Name	José Antonio Cabo
Profession	Senior Evaluator (Environment & Sustainable Development)
Nationality	Spanish
Country experience	• **Europe:** Spain, Germany • **Africa:** Cabo Verde, Mozambique, Tanzania, Seychelles, Mauritius, Ghana, Uganda, Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea, Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone • **Americas:** Guatemala, El Salvador, Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, Guyana, Haiti • **Asia:** Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam, India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Lao PDR, Cambodia, Timor-Leste • **Oceania:** Solomon Islands, Fiji, Vanuatu
Education	• **Certificate** – Sustainable Finance: ESG and the Future of Finance, University of Oxford, UK (2025) • **MSc –** Environmental Economics, SOAS, University of London, UK (2019) • **Certificate –** Environmental Management in Enterprises, UNED, Spain (2001) • **Licenciatura** en Ciencias del Mar (equivalent MSc – Marine Science), University of Vigo, Spain (1999) • **Erasmus** academic exchange in Marine Biology, University of Rostock, Germany (1997–1998)

Short biography

José Antonio Cabo is an international consultant with over 20 years of experience in climate change, biodiversity, energy, and governance. He began his career in field roles in the Philippines and Guatemala and has since led more than 30 independent evaluations for UN agencies, multilateral facilities, and development partners. His work has supported initiatives such as climate-resilient landscapes in Mozambique, electric mobility in Cabo Verde, energy efficiency in Brazil, marine protected areas in the Philippines, wetlands conservation in El Salvador, and water–energy integration in Latin America. He holds degrees in environmental economics and marine science.

Key specialties and capabilities cover:

- Independent evaluation of UN projects and programmes using mixed-methods, theory-based approaches (30+ since 2012)
- Climate change adaptation and mitigation
- Biodiversity and ecosystem management (marine, coastal, terrestrial, freshwater)
- Renewable energy, energy efficiency, and electric mobility
- Governance and institutional strengthening
- Stakeholder engagement and participatory methods (interviews, FGDs, community appraisal)
- Clear synthesis and communication of evaluation evidence to policy audiences

Selected assignments and experiences

- **Independent evaluations for UN agencies and multilateral facilities** – More than 30 evaluations since 2012 covering climate change, biodiversity, energy, and governance across Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America, and global programmes.

- **Climate and energy transition projects** – Assessments of adaptation and mitigation initiatives including clean cooking in Guatemala, electric mobility in Cabo Verde, solar PV in The Gambia, and industrial energy efficiency in Brazil.
- **Biodiversity and ecosystems management** – Evaluations of marine protected areas in the Philippines, wetlands conservation in El Salvador, mangrove and terrestrial biodiversity projects in Brazil and Mozambique, and freshwater systems at global level.
- **Programme and policy influence** – Contributions to country programme evaluations, regional initiatives, and global alliances, informing UNDP's strategic planning in Cabo Verde, regional water–energy integration in Latin America, and UNEP's global water quality agenda.

ANNEX IX. QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF THE EVALUATION REPORT

All UNEP evaluations are subject to a quality assessment by the Evaluation Office. This is an assessment of the quality of the evaluation product (i.e. evaluation report) and is dependent on more than just the consultant's efforts and skills.

Report Quality Criteria	**UNEP Evaluation Office Comments**	**Final Report Rating**
Section A: Executive Summary	Assessment	
1. Does the ***Executive Summary*** act as a concise, accurate standalone section, especially to inform decision-making? Consider how clearly and concisely the report presents: • a clear summary of the evaluation object • evaluation objectives, scope and methodology • the overall project evaluation rating • a summary of main evaluation findings, including key features of performance (strengths and weaknesses) • summary responses to key strategic evaluation questions • summary of main conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations	Coverage/omissions: *The executive summary addresses all key elements.* Strengths/weaknesses: *The section is succinctly and clearly articulated based on the findings. A summary of main findings is presented, including strengths and weaknesses.*	6
Section B: The Project	Assessment	
2. Does the report clearly describe the ***key parameters, scale and complexity of the evaluand***? Consider how well the report presents: • an overview of the main issue that the project is trying to address • timeline, including dates of project approval, duration and number of phases (where appropriate) • geographic coverage (regions/countries) • total secured budget and project financing, including a table with funding sources • implementing and funding partners • institutional context (i.e. UNEP sub-programme, Division, Branch etc.) • implementation structure with diagram • UNEP results frameworks to which it contributes (e.g. PoW Direct Outcome) • summary of results framework as stated in the ProDoc (or as officially revised) • stakeholder groups organised according to relevant common characteristics • whether the project has been evaluated in the past (e.g. mid-term, by an external agency, etc.) • substantive or significant changes in design during implementation	Coverage/omissions: *The section covers all key components for the project section, except for UNEP results framework.* Strengths/weaknesses: *The report clearly describes the project including overview of the project, its context, implementation structure with diagram, result frameworks. In particular, the section provides the comprehensive findings on changes in design during the implementation, as well as associated challenges and gaps. Although the WWQA does not explicitly address the UNEP results framework (e.g., PoW) due to the nature of the umbrella project, including relevant information in this section would be beneficial.*	5.5

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
Section C: Evaluation Methods and Theory of Change	Assessment	
3. Does the report present a clear, comprehensive and adequate description of the ***evaluation methodology***? Consider how well it presents the following elements, and their adequacy based on the scope of the evaluation: • statement of the purpose of the evaluation and the key intended audience for the evaluation findings • data collection methods and information sources • justification for methods used (e.g. electronic/face-to-face interviews, qualitative/quantitative analysis) • criteria and sampling strategies used to select stakeholders for consultations, and for sites/countries visited • number and types of respondents *(including in a table broken down by gender)* • strategies used to increase stakeholder engagement and response rate • methods used to include the voices/experiences of different and potentially excluded groups (e.g. women, marginalised) • data verification methods (e.g. triangulation) • data analysis methods (e.g. scoring, thematic analysis) • evaluation limitations and mitigation measures (e.g. how these were addressed by the evaluator) • consideration for ethics and human rights issues, including how anonymity and confidentiality were protected	Coverage/omissions: *The section includes all key components to describe evaluation methodology.* Strengths/weaknesses: *The section clearly describes the methods, criteria and sampling strategies of sample selections, as well as associated limitations and mitigation measures. The report also explains how the evaluation ensured the inclusivity. Furthermore, detailed information about the data collection and analysis is clearly and succinctly presented including identified limitations.*	6
4. Does the report describe an assessment and reformulation of the ***Theory of Change***, and present an adequate articulation of the TOC causal pathways that were used to assess project performance (*narratively and diagrammatically)?* Consider how well the report presents: • whether the project design included a TOC • how the *TOC at Evaluation*[50] was designed (e.g. who was involved, etc) • confirmation/reconstruction of results in accordance with UNEP definitions (*including reformulation table, which may have initially been presented in the Inception Report and should appear in the Main Evaluation report.)* • articulation of causal pathways • identification of drivers and assumptions • identification of key actors in the change process	Coverage/omissions: *The ToC section addresses most of key elements except for the information on how the TOC at evaluation was designed (e.g. who was involved, etc).* Strengths/weaknesses: *The report provides a refined ToC that is better aligned with UNEP's glossary of result definitions. The refined ToC articulates the drivers and assumptions along each pathway where applicable and identifies key actors in the change process.* *However, the inclusion of the missing component would have further strengthened the section. In addition, a more explicit analysis on the casual pathways of WWQA and Umbrella project, as well as their interlinkage would have been beneficial.*	5

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

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
Section D: Evidence and Analysis	Assessment	
5. Is the report based on ***sufficient and adequate data*** and ***clear and credible evidence***? Consider how well the report presents: • sufficient evidence that is consistent throughout the report • evidence that is supported by data sources (e.g. quotes, reports, etc) • evidence that is explicitly triangulated, unless noted as having a single source • gaps in data are explained and justified • data sources that are reliable, adequate, sufficient for the scope of the evaluation	Coverage/omissions: *This section presents findings of all criteria by using various sources.* Strengths/weaknesses: *The evidence from different sources – project related documents, products, materials, and key informant interviews is explicitly triangulated, and the report clearly explains existing data gaps.* *Although most key data sources sufficiently support the evidence, more sources listed in the Annex IVB could have been more explicitly referenced in the main findings, where applicable.*	5
6. Does the report include ***rigorous analysis*** and ***logical findings***? Consider the extent to which the findings are: • supported by clear analysis that is consistent with the evidence presented • logical, clear and coherent • aligned with UNEP's Criteria Ratings Matrix • aligned with the evaluation framework • more than descriptions and provide insights into 'how' and/or 'why' the project performed a certain way • balanced, presenting both successes and weaknesses	Coverage/omissions: *The finding section presents all criteria based on UNEP's guidance.* Strengths/weaknesses: *The analysis and findings are consistent with UNEP's criteria ratings matrix, and the overall evaluation framework.* *However, some repetition is observed across the different criteria. While the report seeks to present a balanced analysis by highlighting both successes and weaknesses, clearly articulated central arguments would have strengthened the findings and analysis.*	5
Section E: Evaluation Findings	Assessment	
7. Does the report present evidence and analysis of project ***Strategic Relevance*** with respect to UNEP, partner and geographic policies and strategies at the time of project approval? Consider how well the report addresses: • Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities • Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partners Strategic Priorities • Relevance to Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities • Complementarity with Existing Interventions: complementarity of the project at design (or during inception/mobilisation[51]), with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups.	Coverage/omissions: *All required components are addressed in the section.* Strengths/weaknesses: *The findings are supported by the evidence presented. The evaluation demonstrates that, although the key elements are relevant, there are limitations that hinder the realization of strategies and priorities during the based on the evidence.*	5.5

[51] A project's inception or mobilization period is understood as the time between project approval and first disbursement. Complementarity during project implementation is considered under Efficiency, see below.

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
Does the report present a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the ***Quality of Project Design***, based on the detailed assessment presented in the Inception Report?	Coverage/omissions: *The section covers all sub-criteria including the summary table.* Strengths/weaknesses: *The report presents the summary table and the narrative based on the detailed assessment provided in the Inception report and the analysis is supported by the evidence.*	***NOT RATED**
Does the report recognise and describe, when appropriate, key features of the ***Nature of the External Context*** under which the project was implemented that limited the project's performance (e.g. conflict, natural disaster, political upheaval[52]), and how they affected performance?	Coverage/omissions: *The section addresses UNEP's standard external context, including an additional project specific context.* Strengths/weaknesses: *The report presents external factors that affected the project implementation.* *Evaluation office notes that, although the institutional weakness is not typical interpretation of external context within UNEP evaluation, it was included, in recognition of the frequent respondent references to UNEP's institutional weakness as a factor external to the project's scope of work.*	***NOT RATED**
8. Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the ***Availability of Outputs*** to the intended beneficiaries? Consider how well the report presents: • a convincing, evidence-supported and clear presentation of the outputs made available by the project compared to its approved plans and budget • assessment of the nature and scale of outputs versus the project indicators and targets • assessment of the timeliness, quality and utility of outputs to intended beneficiaries • identification of positive or negative effects of the project on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).	Coverage/omissions: *The section presents all output results using the standard table format and includes the finding narrative, but it does not address the identification of positive or negative effects on disadvantaged groups.* Strengths/weaknesses: *The report clearly articulates the analysis drawn from triangulated evidence. The findings outline the nature and scale of outputs versus the project indicators and targets, and they include an assessment of the quality and utility of outputs to intended beneficiaries.* *However, the missing element would have further strengthened the section.*	5

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

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
9. Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the ***Achievement of Outcomes***, as a result of the uptake, adoption and/or implementation of outputs by the intended beneficiaries? This may include behaviour changes at an individual or collective level. Consider how well the report presents: • a convincing and evidence-supported analysis of the uptake of outputs by intended beneficiaries • assessment of the nature, depth and scale of outcomes versus the project indicators and targets • discussion of the contribution, credible association and/or attribution of outcome level changes to the work of the project itself • any constraints to attributing effects to the projects' work • identification of positive or negative effects of the project on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).	Coverage/omissions: *The section presents all outcome results using the standard table format. of findings, but it does not address the identification of positive or negative effects on disadvantaged groups.* Strengths/weaknesses: *The section presents the outcome achievements based on indicators and TOC pathways, supported by the evidence. Although not all the outcomes could be explicitly compared against targets due to the limited baselines and targets, the analysis offers robust findings by triangulating the multiple sources. The section also presents the constraints affecting the project's ability to achieve is intended contribution effects.* *The inclusion of the missing element would have been further beneficial.*	5
10. Does the report present an integrated analysis, guided by the causal pathways represented by the TOC, of all evidence relating to ***Likelihood of Impact***? Consider how well the report presents: • an explanation of how causal pathways emerged and the resulting change processes • an explicit discussion of how drivers and assumptions played out • an explanation of roles played by key actors and change agents • identification of any unintended negative effects of the project, especially on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).	Coverage/omissions: *The section addresses causal pathways based on the ToC.* Strengths/weaknesses: *The report presents analysis of the causal pathways including assumptions and drivers. In addition to summary of proportion of outcomes and intermediate states achieved, assumptions at each results of pathways are discussed based on the evidence.* *However, the section would have been beneficial with identification and analysis of any unintended negative effects. Also, an explicit and further discussion on some drivers at outcomes to intermediate states, and intermediate states to impact would have strengthened the section.*	4.5
11. Does the report present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under ***Financial Management*** and include a completed 'financial management' table? Consider how well the report addresses the following: • *adherence* to UNEP's financial policies and procedures • *completeness* of financial information, including the actual project costs and actual co-financing used and explanation of any variances between planned and actual expenditures	Coverage/omissions: *The section covers all key components including a rating table in the report.* Strengths/weaknesses: *The section presents an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated including standard financial management table and SSFA table. While updated actual co-financing (in-kind)figures could not be provided*	6

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
	due to the lack of validated information, the report clearly identifies and explains this gap.	
12. Does the report present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under ***Efficiency***? Consider how well the report presents: • cost-effective or time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe • implications of any delays and no cost extensions • discussion of making use, during project implementation, of/building on pre-existing institutions, partnerships and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. • the extent to which the management of the project minimised UNEP's environmental footprint.	Coverage/omissions: *The section partially covers key elements required for the analysis of efficiency. For instance, it does not address time-saving measures, UNEP's environment footprint, or implications of any delays or no-cost extensions are not addressed.* Strengths/weaknesses: *The report demonstrates the efficiency through the example of SSFAs, supported by triangulated evidence. The report also clearly acknowledges the limited analysis related to the umbrella A3 project, which is due to insufficient detailed data and information within the scope of this evaluation.* *However, the inclusion of missing components would have further strengthened this section.*	4
13. Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the project's ***Monitoring and Reporting***? Consider how well the report addresses the following: • the quality of *monitoring of project implementation* (including use of monitoring data for adaptive management) • the quality of *project reporting* (e.g. PIMS and donor reports)	Coverage/omissions: *This section covers key required components in the report.* Strengths/weaknesses: *The report presents a robust analysis on the quality of monitoring of the project implementation and project reporting, with triangulated data that supports the findings. The section clearly addresses limitations and weaknesses of monitoring of project implementation and reporting.* *However, a deeper analysis of underlying 'why' and 'how' would have further strengthened section by providing more insights.*	5
14. Does the report present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under ***Sustainability*** (i.e. the endurance of benefits achieved at outcome level)? Consider how well the report addresses the following: • socio-political sustainability • financial sustainability • institutional sustainability	Coverage/omissions: *The report addresses all three dimensions for the sustainability.* Strengths/weaknesses: *The evaluation assesses sustainability by identifying strengths but predominantly gaps, supported by triangulated evidence from multiple sources.* *Nonetheless, the section would have been more robust with a deeper examination of exit strategies related*	5

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
	to financial and institutional sustainability.	
15. Does the report present a well-evidence analysis of the ***Factors Affecting Performance***, either in this section or in cross-referenced sections? *These factors are not always discussed in stand-alone sections and may be integrated in the other performance criteria as appropriate. However, if not addressed substantively in this section, a cross reference must be given to where the topic is addressed, and that entry must be sufficient to justify the performance rating for these factors.* Consider how well the report addresses the following cross-cutting issues: • quality of project management and supervision[53] • stakeholder participation and co-operation • responsiveness to human rights and gender equality • environmental and social safeguards • country ownership and driven-ness • communication and public awareness	Coverage/omissions: *The section covers all required cross-cutting issues in the section.* Strengths/weaknesses: *The evaluation identifies factors affecting performance by referencing to some key relevant sections and summarizing the findings, with analysis is supported by the evidence. In addition, the report explains why country ownership and driven-ness are not applicable for rating.* *However, the section would have been further strengthened by addressing the linkages to poverty alleviation or impacts on economic livelihoods for the criteria of stakeholders' participation and cooperation, as well as by addressing gender scores in the assessment of responsiveness to human rights and gender equity.*	5.5
Section F: Conclusions, Lessons Learned and Recommendations	Assessment	
16. Do the ***Conclusions*** present a summative assessment of the evaluand as a whole, reflecting on prominent aspects of the project's performance? Consider how well the conclusions: • provide a compelling narrative and integrated assessment of project project's performance (i.e. achievements and limitations) • add deeper insights and analysis beyond the findings under each individual criterion • are derived from the synthesized analysis of evidence gathered during the evaluation process • provide clear and succinct response to the key strategic questions • address the human rights and gender dimensions of the intervention explicitly (e.g. how these dimensions were considered, addressed or impacted on) • provide lessons that are rooted in real project experiences, describe the context from which they are derived, and do not duplicate recommendations	Coverage/omissions: *The section includes the summary of conclusions, lessons learned, and recommendations as well as a table of summary of project findings and ratings.* Strengths/weaknesses: *The section is clearly and succinctly articulated, providing an integrated assessment of the project's achievements and limitations. It also clearly presents succinct responses to the key strategic questions. The conclusion would have been further strengthened by incorporating the human rights and gender dimensions of the intervention and by offering deeper insights beyond the findings related under key criteria.*	5
17. Does the report present ***Recommendations*** for specific action to be taken by identified people/position-holders to	Coverage/omissions:	4.5

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

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
resolve concrete problems affecting the project or the sustainability of its results? Consider how well the recommendations: • are clearly formulated and logically derived from the findings and/or conclusions • are feasible to implement within the timeframe and resources available (including local capacities) and specific in terms of who would do what and when • include at least one recommendation relating to strengthening the human rights and gender dimensions of UNEP interventions • represent a measurable performance target in order that the Evaluation Office can monitor and assess compliance with the recommendations. NOTES: **(i)** In cases where the recommendation is addressed to a third party, compliance can only be monitored and assessed where a contractual/legal agreement remains in place. Without such an agreement, the recommendation should be formulated to say that UNEP project staff should pass on the recommendation to the relevant third party in an effective or substantive manner. The effective transmission by UNEP of the recommendation will then be monitored for compliance. **(ii)** Where a new project phase is already under discussion or in preparation with the same third party, a recommendation can be made to address the issue in the next phase.	*The section presents proposed recommendations, including all information in the standard table.* Strengths/weaknesses: *The recommendations are clearly formulated and logically derived from the findings. Also, a recommendation relating to the human rights and gender equality is included.* *Although the recommendations are feasible to implement within the timeframe, they could have been developed in a more measurable manner.*	
Section G: Report Structure and Presentation	Assessment	
18. Is the report ***well-structured and complete***? Does it: • follow the Evaluation Office structure and formatting guidelines • include all required sections and annexes, as applicable • not exceed 50 pages in length from the Executive Summary to the end of the Conclusion Does the report ***present*** information clearly and appropriately? Is it written: • in clear and accessible language • largely free from grammar, spelling and punctuation errors • in an adequate and professional tone • with the use of visual aids, such as maps, graphs tables and photos	Coverage/omissions: *The evaluation report adheres to the structure and formatting guidelines and includes all required sections and annexes.* Strengths/weaknesses: *The report is written in clear and accessible language and maintains a professional tone throughout the report. In addition, feedback from stakeholders and project teams is transparently communicated and addressed where necessary.* *However, the report is overly lengthy, and reducing repetitions would have made it more succinct and clearer. In addition, the use of visual aids would have strengthened the report.*	5
OVERALL REPORT QUALITY RATING		Satisfactory (5.1)

A number rating 1-6 is used for each criterion, with half-point increments allowed (e.g., 3.5 or 4.5). Highly Satisfactory = 6, Satisfactory = 5, Moderately Satisfactory = 4, Moderately Unsatisfactory = 3, Unsatisfactory = 2, Highly Unsatisfactory = 1. The overall rating is based on a simple average of the ratings for each criterion.

* This criterion was not rated to avoid giving it disproportionate weight in calculating the overall score, as this section is typically brief. The remaining criteria are comprehensive and substantial enough to provide a balanced and meaningful overall rating for the report.

Rating the Report Quality Criteria

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

At the end of the evaluation, compliance of the evaluation process against the agreed standard procedures is assessed, based on the table below. *All questions with negative compliance must be explained further in the table below.*

Evaluation Process Quality Criteria	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Consultant's independence:		
1. Were possible conflicts of interest of proposed Evaluation Consultant(s) appraised and addressed in the final selection?	**X**	
2. Was the Evaluation Consultant given direct access to identified external stakeholders?	**X**	
3. Did the Evaluation Consultant raise any concerns about being unable to work freely and without interference or undue pressure from project staff or the Evaluation Office?		**X**
4. If Yes to Q3: Were these concerns resolved to the mutual satisfaction of both the Evaluation Consultant and the Evaluation Manager?		
Project's engagement and support:		
5. Did the project make available all required/requested documents?	**X**	
6. Did the project make all financial information (and audit reports if applicable) available in a timely manner and to an acceptable level of completeness?		**X**
7. Was adequate support provided by the project to the evaluator(s) in planning and conducting evaluation missions?	**N/A**	**N/A**
8. Were the project team, relevant UNEP senior staff, partners and interviewed stakeholders given an opportunity to provide comments on key deliverables, as appropriate (e.g. Terms of Reference, Inception Report and Draft Evaluation Report)?	**X**	
Quality assurance of key deliverables:		
9. Were the Terms of Reference peer-reviewed?	**X**	
10. Was the inception report peer-reviewed, including the Theory of Change?	**X**	
11. Were evaluation preliminary findings presented to the project team in a format allowing discussion, before drafting the report?	**X**	
12. Was the draft report peer-reviewed?	**X**	
Transparency and commenting:		
13. Was the inception report, including the (reconstructed) TOC, sent to the project team, relevant UNEP senior staff and partners, with a minimum of eight working days to comment?	**X**	
14. Was the draft evaluation report sent directly by the Evaluation Consultant to the Evaluation Office?	**X**	
15. Were all stakeholder comments to the draft evaluation report sent directly to the Evaluation Office	**X**	
16. Did the Evaluation Consultant(s) respond adequately to all factual corrections and comments?	**X**	
17. Did the Evaluation Office share substantive comments and Evaluation Consultant responses with those who commented, as appropriate?	**X**	
Financial Resources:		
18. Was the evaluation budget approved at project design available for the evaluation? If not, comment in the table below on the sufficiency of the funds made available.	**X**	
19. Were the agreed evaluation funds readily available to support the payment of the evaluation contract throughout the payment process? If not, comment in the table below.	**X**	
Timeliness:		
20. If a Terminal Evaluation: Was the evaluation initiated within six months after project operational completion and not more than three months prior? (Or, if a Mid Term	**X**	

Evaluation Process Quality Criteria	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Evaluation: Was the evaluation initiated within a six-month period prior to the project's mid-point?)		
21. Was the inception report delivered and reviewed/approved prior to commencing any travel?	**N/A**	**N/A**
22. Were all submission and commenting deadlines met as set by the Evaluation Manager and as far as unforeseen circumstances allowed? If not, comment in the table below on exceptional delays.	**X**	

Provide comments / explanations / mitigating circumstances below for any non-compliant process issues.

Evaluation Process Criterion Number	Evaluation Office Comments
7 & 21	No country mission was planned for this evaluation.