

Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF Project
“Implementation of the POPs Monitoring Plan in the Asian
Region” (GEF ID 4894)
(2015 - 2024)



Evaluation Office of the United Nations Environment Programme

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Front cover: Passive air sampling in Sinhanuk province, Preah Sihanouk, Cambodia, during the first campaign of passive air sampling monitoring in January 2018 under the UNEP/GEF project, 'Implementation of the POPs Monitoring Plan in the Asian Region'

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For further information on this report, please contact:

Evaluation Office of UNEP
P. O. Box 30552-00100 GPO
Nairobi Kenya
Email: unep-evaluation-director@un.org
Website: <https://www.unep.org/evaluation-office>

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The evaluation consultants hope 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.

Evaluation team

Bjørn Bauer – Principal Evaluator
Dunia Huarachi Jørgensen – Assistant Evaluator

Evaluation Office of UNEP

Kazuyoshi Hirohata – Evaluation Manager
Dipti Jethwa – Evaluation Programme Assistant

Brief consultant biography

Bjørn Bauer holds a Master's in Technological and Socio-Economic Planning. He has worked with all elements of the project cycle, prepared around 25 international donor-supported programs, and evaluated around 15. He has been leading the evaluation of UNEP's Sustainable Public Procurement and Ecolabelling (SPPEL) and of the EU-supported SWITCH African Green programs, and he participated in the evaluation of EU environmental support to developing countries. He has 35 years of international experience covering more than 100 countries. He is presently leading the impact assessment of the new EU Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive Impact Assessment and co-leading the IA of the new EU Circular Economy Act.

Dunia H. Jørgensen holds a background in Sustainable Design and technical design engineering. She specializes in participatory processes, which have been applied across health care and education projects, as well as in the development of tools and guidelines for policy initiatives centred on sustainable strategies and circular economy approaches. Her work spans collaborations with private enterprises, public institutions, and non-governmental organisations in Denmark, throughout Europe, Myanmar, and Bolivia. Dunia also brings experience from development projects in Myanmar and Bolivia, with a particular focus on capacity development and innovation.

Details of the experiences and qualifications of both evaluators above are listed in Annex VIII.

About the Evaluation

Joint Evaluation: No

Report Language(s): English

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ABSTRACT: This report is a Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project, “Implementation of the POPs Monitoring Plan in the Asian Region (GEF ID: 4894)”, implemented between 2015 and 2024. The project's overall goals were to strengthen the capacity for implementation of the updated Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) Global Monitoring Plan (GMP) and to create conditions for sustainable monitoring of POPs in the Asian region. 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-person interviews in Thailand, in-depth virtual interviews, a short questionnaire, 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 Satisfactory, the 4th point on a six-point scale, the main findings include: i) the project made a strategically important contribution to the evaluation of the effectiveness of the Stockholm Convention and expanding the global evidence base on POPs, ii) the project delivered all of its planned Outputs, fully or partially, with credible quality across seven countries, supported capacity development in passive and active air sampling, and ensured quality through the use of expert reference laboratories and inter-laboratory assessments, and iii) comparative weaknesses were apparent in the project's design being overly ambitious, a lack of a regional strategy to support a collaborative approach among countries to complement their monitoring efforts, prolonged project implementation with repeated no-cost extensions, and limited attention to long-term institutional, socio-political, and financial continuity.

The main recommendations to UNEP include but are not limited to: i) establish a formal and standing knowledge management and communication strategy for national GMP coordinators and experts, anchored by Regional Centres, to institutionalize peer support, technical exchange, and rapid problem-solving beyond the project's lifetime and ii) consider that the project design integrates links between POPs monitoring and policymaking at the national level to support the project's sustainability.

Source(s) of Funding by Country: Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam

Source(s) of Funding by Institution Type:

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

Key words: Chemicals and Pollution; Persistent Organic Pollutants; Human Health and Environment; Stockholm Convention; Effectiveness Evaluation

Primary data collection period: July 2025 - September 2025

Field mission dates: 07th–11th July 2025

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AAS	Active Air Sampler
BCCC-SCRC	Basel Convention Coordinating Centre Stockholm Convention Regional Centre
BCRC	Basel Convention Regional Centre
BRS	Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Convention
COP	Conference of Parties
CRI	Chulabhorn Research Institute
CSIC	Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas
CVUA	Chemisches und Veterinäruntersuchungsamt
CW	GEF Chemicals and Waste Unit
DCCE	Department of Climate Change and Environment, Thailand
DL-PCB	Dioxin like-Polychlorinated biphenyl
EA	Executing Agency
EOU	Evaluation Office of UNEP
GAPS	Global Air Passive Sampling
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GMP	Global Monitoring Plan
GOG	Global Organisation Group
GRULAC	Latin America and Caribbean States
IA	Implementing Agency
ICA	Internal Cooperation Agreement
IPMR	Integrated Planning, Management and Reporting
IVM VU	Institute for Environmental Studies, Vrije University
JESC	Japan Environmental and Sanitation Centre
LATU	Technological Laboratory of Uruguay
MTEC	The National Metal and Materials Technology Center
MTM	Man-Technology-Environment Research Centre, Örebro University
MTR	Mid Term Review
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIES	The National Institute for Environmental Studies
NIP	National Implementation Plan
PAS	Passive Air Sampler
PCA	Project Cooperation Agreement
PCD	Pollution Control Department, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Thailand
PCDD/Fs	Polychlorinated dibenzo-p-dioxins / furans
PFAS	Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PM	Project Manager
POPRC	Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee
POPs	Persistent Organic Pollutants

POPsEA	Persistent Organic Pollutants Monitoring Network in East Asia
PoW	Programme of Work
PRC	Project Review Committee
ProDoc	Project Document - reviewed by PRC
PUF	Polyurethane Foam
QA	Quality Assurance
QC	Quality Control
RC	Regional Coordinator
RECETOX	Research Center for Toxic Compounds in the Environment
RMR	Regional Monitoring Report in the Asia and the Pacific
ROG	Regional Organisation Group
SC	Steering Committee
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SSC	Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention
SSFA	Small Scale Funding Agreement
TM	Task Manager
ToC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
VEA	Vietnamese Environmental Agency
WHO	World Health Organization

Project Identification Table

Table 1: Project Identification Table

GEF Project ID/SMA ID ¹ :	GEF ID: 4894/ SMA ID: 127768		
Type of GEF Project:	Child: N	Global Coordinating Project:	N
	If yes, provide GEF Programme ² ID: N/A	Medium-Size Project or Full-Size Project:	FSP
UNEP Management (Division/Branch/Unit):	UNEP/Industry and Economy Division, Chemicals and Health Branch, GEF Chemicals and Waste Unit	Executing Agency: <i>(indicate if internally executed)</i> :	UNEP/Industry and Economy Division, Chemicals and Health Branch, Knowledge and Risk Unit (internally executed)
Sources of Funding (Co-finance):	<i>Country</i> ³ (ies): Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam.	<i>Institution</i> ⁴ Name/Type: UNEP (UN Body), Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions (IGO), World Health Organisation (WHO) (IGO), Chemisches und Veterinäruntersuchungsamt (CVUA) Freiburg (Academic Institution), National Institute for Environmental Studies (NIES) or Japan Environmental Sanitation Center (JESC) (Academic Institution), Institute for Environmental Studies, Vrije Universiteit (IVM VU) Amsterdam (Academic Institution), Man-Technology-Environment research centre (MTM) Oerebro (Academic Institution), Recetox/Stockholm Convention Regional Center, Czech Republic (Academic Institution)	
Relevant SDG(s):	SDG Goals: 3, 6, 12, 17 SDG Targets: 3.9., 6.3., 12.4., 17.6., 17.8.		
MTS (at approval):	2014 - 2017		
POW Direct Outcome(s) number/reference ⁵ <i>(applicable for projects approved from 2022)</i> :	POW Direct Outcome: N/A	MTS 2025 Outcome(s) number/reference ⁵ <i>(applicable for projects approved from 2022)</i> :	MTS 2025 Outcome: N/A
OR POW Output(s) number/reference ⁵ <i>(applicable for projects approved pre-2022)</i>	POW Output: 522		OR POW Expected Accomplishment(s) number/reference ⁵ <i>(applicable for projects approved pre-2022)</i> :
Sub-programme:	Chemicals and Pollution Action	Programme Coordination Project (if relevant):	N/A
UNEP approval date:	18 March 2015	GEF approval date:	15 December 2014

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 GEF Programme refers to 'Parent' project.

³ Where applicable, list countries that 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.

⁵ For these items do not include full text; only enter the number or reference.

GEF Project ID/SMA ID ¹ :	GEF ID: 4894/ SMA ID: 127768		
GEF Operational Programme/Cycle # (e.g. GEF-7):	GEF-5	GEF Strategic Priority (e.g. BD4):	CHEM-1
Focal Area(s):	Chemicals		
Expected start date: ⁶	18 March 2015	Actual start date: ⁷	18 March 2015
Planned completion date: ⁶	31 December 2020	Actual operational completion date:	30 June 2024
Planned project budget at approval:	GEF grant allocation: USD 3,936,000		
	Expected co-financing: USD 13,164,900		
	Cash: USD 25,000		
	In-kind: USD 13,139,900		
	Total planned budget: USD 17,100,900		
Actual expenditures reported (cash only):	GEF grant expenditures reported as of 30 June 2024: USD 3,864,866		
	Actual co-financing 30 June 2024: USD 0 (cash only)		
	Total actual expenditures reported as of 30 June 2024: USD 3,864,866		
No. of formal project revisions:	5 (no-cost extensions)	Date of last approved project revision:	31 December 2023
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	4	Date of Last Steering Committee meeting:	4 April 2023
Mid-term Review/ Evaluation ⁸ (required or not required):	UNEP requirement:	Y	Mid-term Review/ Evaluation actual date:
	GEF requirement:	N	
Terminal Evaluation (planned date):	31 December 2024	Terminal Evaluation actual date:	7 February 2025
Coverage - Country(ies):	Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam	Coverage - Region(s):	Asia
Dates of previous project phases:	Phase I (2009-12): Supporting the Implementation of the Global Monitoring Plan of POPs in West Africa (GEF ID 3674) Supporting the Implementation of the Global Monitoring Plan of POPs in Eastern and Southern African Countries (GEF ID 3673) Supporting the Implementation of the Global Monitoring Plan of POPs in Latin America and Caribbean States (GRULAC) (GEF ID 3778) Supporting the POPs Global Monitoring Plan in the Pacific Islands Region (GEF ID 3663)	Status of future project phases:	PFD approved in June 2024 Name of Future Project Phase: Global Chemicals Monitoring Pro-gramme to support implementation of Stockholm and Minamata Conventions (GCMP) (GEF ID 11534)

⁶ Expected/planned dates are listed in the Project Document (ProDoc).

⁷ Actual start date is the date of the last signature on the PCA or ICA.

⁸ 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.

Executive Summary

Project background

1. The UNEP/GEF project, “Implementation of the POPs Monitoring Plan in the Asian Region (GEF ID 4894)”, supported implementation of the Stockholm Convention’s Global Monitoring Plan (GMP2) in seven countries - Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam - by strengthening national monitoring capacity, generating comparable data in core matrices (air, water, human milk), and laying foundations for sustainable, routine reporting to Article 16. The overall objectives of the project were ‘to strengthen the capacity for implementation of the updated POPs Global Monitoring Plan (GMP) and to create the conditions for sustainable monitoring of POPs in the Asian Region’. The project was approved under GEF-5 and implemented by UNEP (Industry and Economy Division, Chemicals and Health Branch). It started on 18 March 2015, and closed operationally on 30 June 2024, following five no-cost extensions. GEF financing totalled USD 3,936,000; reported GEF disbursement at closure was USD 3,864,866. The expected co-finance at approval was USD 13,164,900 (largely in-kind), while the verified co-financing confirmed was USD 11,721,802, at the time of evaluation.

This evaluation

2. The evaluation sought to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency) and determine the sustainability of its results. It assesses performance against nine evaluation criteria⁹ and assigns a score from a six-point scale. The evaluation has two primary purposes: accountability and learning. Data collection methods included field observations, in-depth interviews, a short questionnaire, and extensive document reviews. Primary data comprised 20 online interviews plus one in-country mission to Thailand (eight in-person interviews). A beneficiary questionnaire sent to seven national coordinators returned seven responses. Data analysis was based on applying triangulated data to assess performance against a reconstructed Theory of Change and its causal pathways.

Key findings and performance ratings

3. The project made a strategically important contribution to the evaluation of the effectiveness of the Stockholm Convention and the expansion of the global evidence base on persistent organic pollutants (POPs). It partially or fully delivered all of its planned Outputs with credible quality across seven countries, supported capacity development in passive and active air sampling, and ensured quality assurance through the use of expert reference labs and inter-laboratory assessments. The project maintained stakeholder engagement throughout the COVID-19 pandemic by adopting online meetings and demonstrated efficient resource mobilization, staying within budget and attracting additional co-financing. Annual decision-making was supported by satisfactory monitoring and reporting, and there was fair representation of both female and male beneficiaries, project team members, and Steering Committee participants.
4. Areas for improvement include the project’s design being overly ambitious, involving countries with varied interests, capacities, and resources without sufficient analysis or preparation for the operating context, and with no consistent regional representation at

⁹ (1) Strategic Relevance, including Complementarity; (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.

the decision-making level. There was a lack of a regional strategy to support a collaborative approach among countries to complement their monitoring efforts, resulting in separate, independent national-level activities. Furthermore, with limited integration into national policy processes, prospects for ongoing monitoring and sustainability are low. Not all countries participated in the proposed sampling and analysis of matrices and training activities due to implementation issues, including early administrative delays, staff turnover, and cross-project dependencies. The absence of measurable indicators and explicit national conditions for GMP reporting further limited evaluability and long-term sustainability.

5. Gender considerations were integrated through balanced participation across governance and training, and by focusing on women's vulnerability via human milk sampling. Ethical procedures were applied, including informed consent, anonymization, and adherence to agreed guidelines.

Table 2: Summary of Project Ratings¹⁰

Criterion	Rating
Strategic Relevance	Highly Satisfactory (HS)
Quality of Project Design	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)
Nature of External Context	Moderately Favourable (MF)
Effectiveness	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)
Financial Management	Satisfactory (S)
Efficiency	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)
Monitoring and Reporting	Satisfactory (S)
Sustainability	Moderately Unlikely (MU)
Factors Affecting Performance	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)
Overall Project Performance Rating	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)

Conclusions Summary

6. The project's overall performance is rated as **Moderately Satisfactory**. It was strongly aligned with UNEP and GEF strategic priorities, and coherent with related interventions, but showed comparative weaknesses in efficiency and sustainability, reflected in the delayed project implementation, along with multiple no-cost extensions, and limited attention to long-term institutional, socio-political, and financial continuity.
7. Key achievements include expanding the global evidence base on POPs and addressing major data gaps in Asia. The project delivered all planned Outputs, partially or fully, across seven countries, strengthened capacity for Passive Air Sampler (PAS), Active Air Sampler (AAS), water, and human milk sampling as well as for nationally relevant matrices, and applied quality assurance through expert reference laboratories and inter-laboratory assessments. This improved the understanding of POPs trends within and across countries.
8. Sustainability is rated as Moderately Unlikely, largely due to a limited integration of monitoring outputs into policy decision-making, limiting prospects for political support,

¹⁰ The six-point scale is 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.

financing, and institutionalization. While no unintended negative effects were identified, the project's Outputs contributed to the Stockholm Convention effectiveness evaluation and GMP work, and its roadmap and country-level analyses would provide useful lessons for future GMP phases to embed sustainability more systematically.

Summary Responses to Key Strategic Questions¹¹

9. Strategic Question 1: The project adopted some lessons from the previous phase of the project (GMP1), including guidance on matrix selection and support from expert laboratories to strengthen analytical capacity. However, key GMP1 and Mid-Term Review recommendations were only partly addressed, particularly for low-capacity laboratories and targeted dissemination to institutions and NGOs. Engagement with national policy and decision-makers to secure sustained monitoring was not effectively operationalized.
10. Strategic Question 2: Knowledge sharing occurred mainly at management and expert levels, with workshops providing limited exchange among participating countries. Cross-regional learning was weak and largely limited to comparative access to data. While the four-project structure supported efficiency and standardization, it also reduced responsiveness to local realities, and overall cross-learning promotion was minimal.
11. Strategic Question 3: Linkages between monitoring data and decision-making were weak. Dissemination efforts and positive reception among the Regional Organisation Group (ROG) members were noted, but there was no clear pathway to policy uptake, and reliance on top-down mechanisms was insufficient for monitoring and use of results.
12. Strategic Question 4: Existing national monitoring mechanisms, often linked to the Persistent Organic Pollutants Monitoring Network in East Asia (POPsEA), were generally integrated into GMP activities, including through site continuity. A key limitation was the lack of direct comparability between AAS and PAS data.
13. Strategic Question 5: Project data were included in the Data Warehouse, with evidence of subsequent use in Stockholm Convention reporting, including the Third Regional Monitoring Report for Asia.
14. Strategic Question 6: Inter-lab assessments showed engagement, but there was no clear evidence of improved QA/QC or performance within the project period. Limited regular participation and the lack of lab-specific performance tracking constrained conclusions; interviews suggest sustained practice is needed for improvement.

Lessons Learned

15. Lesson 1: Customs and ethical clearance need to be reassured early on in the project, with supportive materials for all stakeholders to avoid delay in project activities due to logistical barriers.
16. Lesson 2: An early screening of financial management capacity, such as the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer (HACT) assessment, can be useful in the design phase to assess the eligibility of a Responsible Party to receive funds from UNEP.
17. Lesson 3: Initial stakeholder engagement and addressing the national interests and needs are fundamental for local ownership and sustainability.

¹¹ 6 Key Strategic Questions are listed on page 80 under the '5.1. Conclusions' section.

18. Lesson 4: Participation of more countries in the interlaboratory assessments does not necessarily result in better results but may lead to an ineffective use of resources. Focus should be placed on the quality of participation and the likelihood of sustainability.
19. Lesson 5: Involvement of regional actors as opposed to international ones could support intra-project communication, efficient project progress, and regionally coordinated capacity building.
20. Lesson 6: Instructional and result materials produced should be part of a communication and capacity strategy to support capacity building and broad uptake of materials, findings, and results.
21. Lesson 7: Gender-disaggregated data support the analysis of inclusivity.
22. Lesson 8: Awareness raising outside the scientific field is an important effort to achieve intended impacts.

Recommendations

23. Recommendation 1: Recommendation for the future phase of the project to establish a formal and standing knowledge management and communication strategy for national GMP coordinators and experts, anchored by Regional Centres, to institutionalise peer support, technical exchange, and rapid problem-solving beyond the project's lifetime.
24. Recommendation 2: Recommendation for the future phase of the project to shift the execution body to Regional Centres (or qualified consortia), with UNEP as the Implementing Agency, and constitute an independent oversight board with authority to enforce corrective actions.
25. Recommendation 3: Recommendation for the future phase of the project to consider that the project design integrates links between POPs monitoring and policymaking at the national level to support the project's sustainability.
26. Recommendation 4: Recommendation for the future phase of the project to develop a clear communication strategy to strengthen the dissemination of results to a wider audience outside the scientific sphere, and to broaden awareness, visibility, and support for POPs-related policies and monitoring.
27. Recommendation 5: Recommendation for the future phase of the project to plan to conduct detailed baseline studies in each participating region, including risk analysis and mitigation strategies, in cooperation with national governments and institutions at the design stage.
28. Recommendation 6: Recommendation for the future phase of the project to develop a set of quality indicators for robust results measurement at the design stage (or at the inception stage if the design is not found adequate).
29. Recommendation 7: Recommendation for the future phase of the project to provide necessary support to the countries/partners for a better understanding of co-financing and its reporting.
30. Recommendation 8: Recommendation for the future phase of the project to develop and promote specific gender mainstreaming project metrics based on analysis of gender equality and women's empowerment issues in the respective regions and countries.

1 THE PROJECT

1.1 Context

1.1.1 Intervention Context

31. Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) are hazardous chemical substances that persist in the environment, bioaccumulate through food webs, and can be transported over long distances via air, water, animals, and humans. POPs threaten human and animal health through long-term exposure, leading to, among others, endocrine disruption, increased cancer risk and birth defects, reproductive disorders, and immune system alterations. These compounds have been detected in various materials, such as everyday products, building supplies, pesticides, industrial chemicals, and manufacturing by-products. Due to extensive historical use, POPs are now found in many locations, including those distant from their sources.
32. Addressing the widespread presence of POPs requires international cooperation. The Stockholm Convention, which entered into force in 2004 and currently has 186 parties, addresses this issue by identifying, categorizing, and calling for the elimination, reduction, and limited use of POPs globally. Parties to the convention are responsible for implementing and operationalizing their obligations at the national level. Article 16 of the Stockholm Convention requires parties to participate in effectiveness evaluations through the Global Monitoring Plan (GMP), which monitors levels and trends of environmental and human exposure over time. This supports assessing whether the Stockholm Convention and its members' mandates and legislations have a restrictive impact, keeping POP levels low.
33. The GMP requires reliable, continuous scientific data on listed POPs to be gathered to establish baseline levels, monitor trends, support the effectiveness evaluation, and ensure that POP levels are not increasing. Apart from this, the supporting data establish the degree to which people and the environment have been exposed to POPs, and support data-driven policy decision-making. To implement the GMP, the four UNEP/GEF projects, "Supporting the Implementation of the Global Monitoring Plan of POPs" across Eastern and Southern African countries (ESA), Latin America and Caribbean States (GRULAC), West Africa (WA), and the Pacific Islands Region (PI) were implemented between 2009 and 2012. These projects aimed to support the establishment of POPs monitoring in the respective regions through the development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), inter-laboratory assessments, training, increased regional awareness, and improved national implementation Plans (NIPs).
34. Building on the experience gained on the first series of GMP projects (GMP1/phase I), the UNEP/GEF project "Implementation of the POPs Monitoring Plan in the Asian Region" (GEF ID 4894) was formulated to contribute to the second phase of the GMP (GMP2), addressing regional data gaps. It targeted seven countries in the Southeast Asian region: Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam. It aimed to strengthen national and regional capacity to sample and analyze core matrices (air, water, and human milk), apply common SOPs and Quality Assurance (QA)/ Quality Control (QC) procedures (including inter-laboratory assessments), and generate comparable data on both legacy and newly listed POPs (including HBCD) for regional and global reporting on these trends.

1.1.2 Institutional Context

35. The project was executed internally, with UNEP's GEF Chemicals and Waste Unit serving as the Implementing Agency (IA) and its Knowledge and Risk Unit as the Executing Agency (EA). Both Units are located within the Chemicals and Health Branch of UNEP's Industry and Economy Division. The project operated under the Chemicals and Pollution Action Subprogramme and was aligned with UNEP's Programme of Work (PoW Output 522 / Expected Accomplishment 5(b)).
36. The project was approved by UNEP on 18th March 2015, where it officially started, and was planned to be completed by 31st December 2020. The project was extended, and the actual operational completion date was 30th June 2024. The project was originally planned for five years, but due to repeated project extensions, it was extended to nine years.
37. Implementation drew on a multi-partner architecture with the BRS Secretariat providing Convention-related coordination, WHO collaborating on human milk monitoring, and a network of expert reference and academic laboratories (e.g., Chemisches und Veterinäruntersuchungsamt (CVUA), Research Centre for Environmental Chemistry and Ecotoxicology (RECETOX), Institute for Environmental Studies (IVM VU) Amsterdam, Människa-Teknik-Miljö (MTM) Örebro, National Institute for Environmental Studies (NIES) and Japan Environmental and Sanitation Centre (JESC)) providing technical backstopping, method transfer, and data validation ("mirror" analyses).
38. The project governance at the regional level included a Steering Committee (SC) and a Project Team to coordinate work planning, risk management, monitoring, and progress reviews with donor and project stakeholders. Four Steering Committee meetings that were focused on the Asia regional project were held. At the national level, national coordinators, mainly through Environmental Ministries, received training to establish monitoring capacity and were responsible for sampling, laboratory work, reporting, and, in some cases, analysis of POPs in samples.
39. This institutional set-up complemented parallel GMP2 projects in other regions. It was expected to be supported by a mix of GEF grant financing (USD 3,936,000) and co-financing (in-kind: USD 13,139,900 and cash: USD 25,000) from participating governments and partners. The project was previously evaluated by an external evaluator at the project's initial Mid-term year, with the MTR finalized in December 2018.

1.2 Results Framework

40. The results chain runs from enabling conditions (Output 1) to capacity-building and standardized data generation in core matrices (Output 2–3), reinforced by quality assurance and targeted national analyses to improve accuracy and relevance (Output 4), and culminates in regional reporting and an operational sustainability pathway (Output 5).
41. The project Outcomes contain elements of (i) strengthened capacities for implementation of GMP, (ii) availability of high-quality data, and (iii) established conditions for sustainable monitoring in the Asian Region. These Outcomes are aligned with the project objective. No Intermediate States were listed. Table 3 shows the project's original approved results framework.

Table 3: Summary of Project's latest Approved Results Framework (ProDoc)

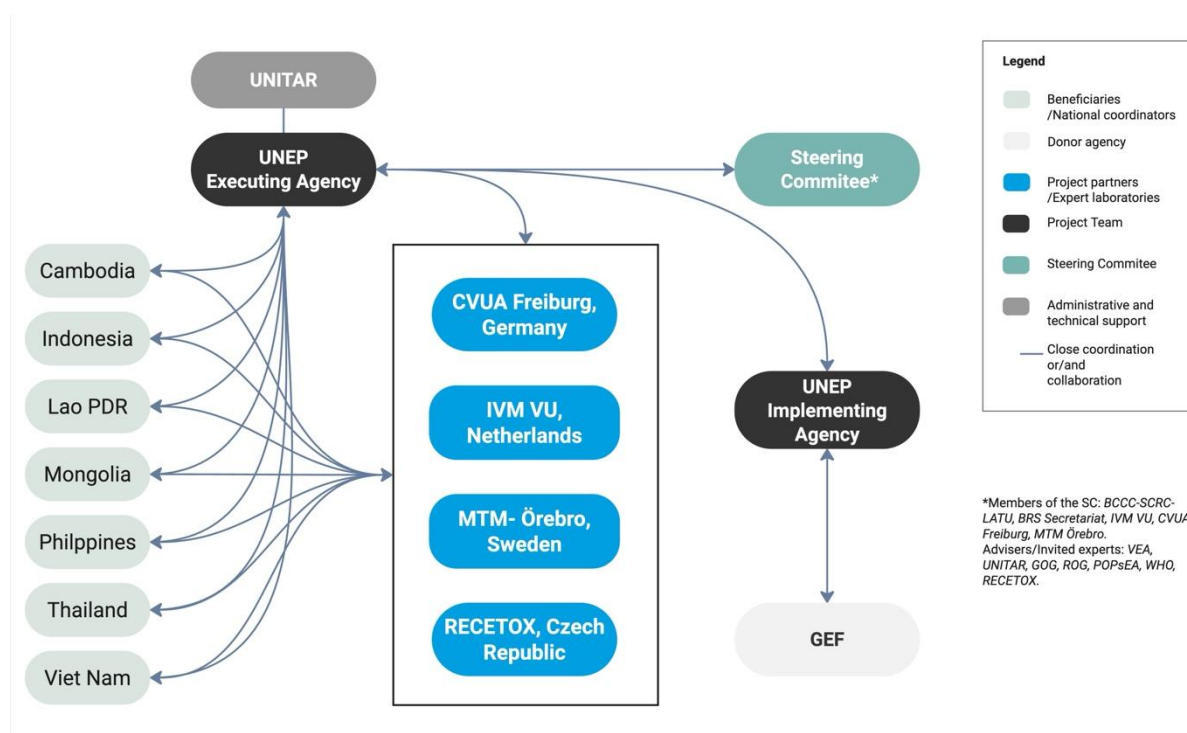
Level	Results Statement
Project objective	To strengthen the capacity for implementation of the updated POPs Global Monitoring Plan (GMP) and to create the conditions for sustainable monitoring of POPs in the Asian Region
Impact (defined as 'Overall Goal')	Protect human health and environment from toxic exposure to POPs
Intermediate state(s)	Not listed
Project outcome(s)	National capacities for implementing the updated POPs Global Monitoring Plan (GMP) are strengthened, high quality data on the presence and transport of POPs, while conditions for sustainable monitoring of POPs are in place in the Asian region
Outputs	•Output 1: Technical and administrative support provided for the implementation of the project, and organisation of process established in the Asian region; •Output 2: Training reports and sectoral reports on POPs analysis undertaken on two abiotic core matrices (i.e., air and water) in the Asian region; •Output 3: Training reports and sectoral reports on POPs analysis undertaken on one biotic core matrix (7th round of human milk survey) in the Asian region; •Output 4: Assessment report of existing analytical capacities prepared, and report on POPs analysis undertaken in samples of national priority (other than core matrices) in the Asian region; •Output 5: Assessment reports contributing to regional report for the GMP undertaken, and a roadmap for sustainable POPs monitoring developed for the Asian region.

1.3 Project Implementation Structure and Partners

42. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) funded the project, with UNEP serving as the Implementing Agency (IA). Execution was internal to UNEP (see paragraph 35) through the Industry and Economy Division, Chemicals and Health Branch, which hosted the Project Management Unit responsible for work planning, technical coordination, and reporting (e.g., PIRs) across seven participating countries. Detailed divisions of the roles between IA and EA are described in Table 4. Strategic oversight and risk management were provided through an SC, which included representatives from the BRS Secretariat to coordinate progress. At the same time, national coordinators led in-country delivery (sampling, national lab coordination, data submission for mirror analysis, and, in some countries, data analysis).
43. The project partnered with the BRS Secretariat and WHO (human milk survey collaboration), and engaged a network of academic expert laboratories to provide training, interlaboratory assessments, and "mirror" analyses: CVUA Freiburg (WHO/UNEP reference lab for human milk), MTM Örebro (PFOS reference and training), RECETOX (air monitoring support), IVM-VU Amsterdam (analysis and training), and NIES/JESC (coordination support). UNITAR provided administrative support regarding Small Scale Funding Agreements (SSFA) and Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) preparations, and later in the project, for the preparation of the Sustainability Analysis Report.

44. As seen in the diagram (Figure 1), the beneficiaries and expert laboratories, as well as beneficiaries, had a close collaboration, with UNEP's EA Unit. Beneficiaries coordinated with UNEP in administrative matters, whereas there was close technical collaboration with expert laboratories for the sampling and capacity building. Logistically, expert laboratories had to distribute sampling materials (e.g., Polyurethane Foam (PUF) disks), send samples for interlaboratory analysis (QA/QC) exercises, and provide on-site training and guidance (including Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)) throughout. Logistically, beneficiaries had to send samples to various expert laboratories for analysis and ensure that packages were received. National laboratories had to send analysis results for the analyses pursued.
45. For simplification and consistency with the ProDoc, the diagram does not visualize the institutions involved on the beneficiary's side. It is worth mentioning that multiple stakeholders were involved (Working group), and strong local collaborations between ministries of environment, health, and, in some cases, meteorological sites and academic institutions were required. The label of 'expert laboratories' for the partner laboratories in Europe denotes the role of the partner laboratories in the project.

Figure 1: Organigram of the Project with Key Project Stakeholders



1.4 Stakeholders

46. As part of the inception report, a stakeholder analysis was prepared, as it was not explicitly included in the ProDoc. The table has been revised during the Terminal Evaluation. Stakeholders whose expected roles and responsibilities changed include the Vietnamese Environmental Agency (VEA), Civil Society Organizations, and International organizations (e.g., ISO, ILAC). These are therefore not present in the table below. The most updated stakeholder analysis is described in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholder	Type	Level of influence	Level of interest	Roles and responsibilities in project implementation
UNEP/ GEF Chemicals and Waste Unit, Chemicals and Health Branch, Industry and Economy Division (IED) – Implementing Agency (IA) UNEP/ Knowledge and Risk Unit, Chemicals and Health Branch, Industry and Economy Division (IED) – Executing Agency (EA)	UN Agencies (Type A)	HIGH	HIGH	IA had the overall project supervision, overseeing the project progress through the monitoring and evaluation of project activities and progress reports. It reported the project implementing progress to GEF and took part in the project SC. The EA executed, managed, and was responsible for the project and its activities on a day-to-day basis. It provided technical support to participating countries and the regional laboratory, and established the necessary managerial and technical teams, as required, to carry out the project.
IVM VU Amsterdam, (Netherlands) and Örebro University, MTM Centre (Sweden)	Research Institutions (Type A)	HIGH	HIGH	Expert laboratory: equipped with the necessary infrastructure, capacity and resources and were responsible for analysing and mirroring the collected samples. Their role included organising trainings, conducting mirror analyses of samples, and serving as the reference laboratory for PFOS in human milk. They also organized intercalibration studies, sent consumables, provided expert advice, and acted as members of the SC.
BRS Secretariat	UN Agency (Type A)	HIGH	HIGH	Ensured harmonized project activities (i.e, protocols, methodologies, reporting). Identified strategic partners, supported workshops and meetings, and dissemination of the project results. Member of the SC.
UNITAR (External Consultant)	UN Agency (Type C)	LOW	HIGH	Provided technical and administrative support to UNEP in particular at the early stages of the project, with project partnership agreements.
CVUA Freiburg (Germany)	Research Institutions (Type A)	HIGH	HIGH	Expert laboratory. Supported selection of milk as a core matrix for the GMP. Reference laboratory for human milk at Chemisches Untersuchungsamt Freiburg. Analysis of selected (lipophilic) POPs in human milk samples. Member of the SC.
WHO	UN Agency (Type C)	LOW	HIGH	WHO supported with ethical clearance related to milk sample collection. Advisor in SC meetings.
RECETOX (Czech Republic)	Research Institution (Type A)	HIGH	HIGH	Experts in laboratory procedures. In the project, they assisted with POP air monitoring and as advisor in SC meetings.
Participating Countries, their Ministries of Environment and Ministries of Health.	Governments (Type A or B)	HIGH	LOW	To provide support in supporting the monitoring efforts in coordination with national coordinators. Support identification of relevant sites for air sampling, and the collection of human milk samples, also in coordination with departments of health.
Local partner laboratories, institutions and staff in charge of sampling, analysis, and logistics	Educational and Research institutions (Type A)	HIGH	HIGH	Coordinate sampling and analysis activities with the supervision of expert laboratories. They receive training and consumables/spares, prepare for training sessions (logistics), generate national data, and comply with required standards to achieve systematic and comparable data.
Japan Environmental Sanitation Center (JESC, Japan); And The National	Research Institutions	HIGH	HIGH	Support in-kind provision of personnel, office space, laboratory infrastructure, and equipment. They also offered bilateral assistance by

Institute For Environmental Studies (NIES, Japan)	(Type A)			coordinating with related POPs projects (e.g., POPSEA).
Individual milk donors (in participating countries)	Local community (Type A or B)	HIGH	LOW	Women who donated samples to ensure biotic data for monitoring POP levels in humans. Limited interest from milk donors was caused by low public awareness on POPs and anonymity hindering individual results.
Regional Organisation Group (ROG) Members	International Organisation (Type A)	HIGH	HIGH	ROG members had a coordinating and technical support role ensuring an aligned approach for the GMP. In the Stockholm Convention context, ROG members are, among other duties, responsible for data selection and identification of data gaps for the Regional Monitoring Reports and therefore set standards for data quality.

Type A: High power/high interest over the project = Key player

Type B: High power/low interest over the project = Meet their needs

Type C: Low power/high interest over the project = Show consideration

Type D: Low power/low interest over the project = Least important

1.5 Changes in Design during Implementation

47. During the period 2015-2024, the project had a total of five no-cost extensions and two no-cost budget amendments (see Table 21). This was due to communication, administrative, and logistical challenges in the project's initial phase, and, in later phases, mainly due to COVID-19 restrictions. This limited, among other things, sampling and training activities, and delayed reporting. At the last extension (December 2023), most activities were completed, including sampling and analysis, as well as data submission to the Data Warehouse (2019). The extension reportedly covered the reporting and publication of technical UNEP reports for wider dissemination. Additionally, the extension request correspondence referred to project delays in another region, suggesting that the Project Team sought to complete all regional projects simultaneously.

1.6 Project Financing

48. This Full-Sized Project was financed through a GEF grant for USD 3,936,000. Co-financing from partners and beneficiaries was anticipated to be USD 13,139,900 in-kind and USD 25,000 in cash, which amounted to USD 13,164,900 in total. The evaluators have counted the co-finance figures for which statements were present, totalling USD 11,721,802. No in-cash expenditure was verified. The unspent GEF funds totalled USD 71,134 at closure, as the GEF grant expenditure was USD 3,864,866 as of 30 June 2024.

49. The table below shows co-finance by source and type. The category of 'Other' in the top column includes co-financing from project partners and GEF grant beneficiaries. The 'Total Disbursed' reflects the estimated monetary value of in-kind contributions realized during project implementation. The values in Table 5 are noted in thousands of US dollars (USD). More details of co-finance figures with a detailed breakdown/ disaggregation can be found in Table 18 and Table 19 under Section 4.5.

Table 5: Project Co-finance

Co-financing (Type/Source)	UNEP own Financing (US\$1,000)		Government (US\$1,000)		Other ¹² (US\$1,000)		Total (US\$1,000)		Total Disbursed (US\$1,000)
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	
– Grants	-	-	-	-	25	0	25	0	0
– Loans	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
– Credits	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
– Equity investments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
– In-kind support	200	0	-	-	12,939	11,721	13,139	11,721	11,721
– Other	-	-	-	-			-	-	-
Totals	200	0	-	-	12,964	11,721	13,164	11,721	11,721

¹² Includes project partners and beneficiaries.

2 EVALUATION METHODS

2.1 UNEP's Evaluation Approach

50. 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 and determine outcomes and impacts 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.
51. The main target audiences for the evaluation findings are UNEP and the project team, in particular the Project Manager (PM) and the Task Manager (TM), for the evaluated project, as well as those involved in the design of future phases of the GMP projects. Target audiences also include GEF as well as various project partners that were involved in this project.
52. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy, the UNEP Programme Manual and the Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluations, the evaluation has been carried out using a set of nine 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.
53. Most evaluation criteria are rated on a six-point scale. The ratings against each criterion are 'weighted' to derive the Overall Project Performance Rating. The greatest weight is placed on achieving outcomes, followed by sustainability dimensions.
54. The UNEP Evaluation Office has developed detailed descriptions of the main elements that must be demonstrated at each level for each evaluation criterion. The evaluation team has considered all the evidence gathered to generate performance ratings. The evaluation framework, which covers the evaluation questions and data collection methodologies, is illustrated in **Annex II**.
55. In addition to the nine evaluation criteria, the evaluation addresses six key strategic questions formulated in the TOR. The UNEP Evaluation Office and the project team designed these key strategic questions. Besides, the GEF portal inputs are described in **Annex IX**.
56. 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's inception phase to develop a nuanced understanding of how the project intended to drive change and which contributing conditions ('assumptions' and 'drivers') would need to be in place to support such change. The (reconstructed) Theory of Change served as the basis for further discussion with respondents during the data collection phase.

2.2 Data Collection

2.2.1 Primary data sources

57. Primary data collection was mostly qualitative, with some quantitative data, including financial figures, participation numbers, and gender disaggregation. The qualitative data addressed the key strategic evaluation questions effectively and aided triangulation, whereas the quantitative data primarily verified the stated findings and supported the data analysis. Qualitative methods offered detailed insights into actions taken at both institutional and operational levels. They also explored subjective issues, capturing the views of beneficiaries, partners, and stakeholders to clarify, explain, and interpret project results.
58. A total of 28 stakeholders were interviewed either online or in person, of which 20 stakeholders from the UNEP project team, beneficiaries, and partners were interviewed online, and the other eight were interviewed in person during the country visit to Thailand. Table 6 covers only 25 stakeholders, but in addition to these 25, evaluators interviewed three additional individuals from GIZ (two males) and the Department of Climate Change and Environment, Thailand (DCCE) (one female), who do not fit any specified stakeholder category and are excluded from the stakeholder count in Table 6. Hence, the total number of stakeholders that were interviewed amounts to 28 (11 women/17 men).
59. To expand data collection efforts, a short 11-question questionnaire was sent to the seven national coordinators, along with an invitation to share it with relevant staff involved in the training activities. At the time of reporting, seven responses were received and then included in the evaluation.
60. A country/field mission was conducted in Thailand, including eight in-person interviews. To determine the in-country mission, a set of criteria was defined at the inception phase. All countries were assessed through the following criteria: i) what the role in the project was and how much co-finance amount was committed, ii) whether it was visited during MTR, iii) whether there was training-related documentation, iv) the preliminary overview of end-of-project national capacity for POP monitoring based on available data, v) available contacts from UNEP or other sources, and vi) the project's relation to POP regulators and decision makers. Based on these parameters, Thailand was proposed as the most suitable country for a country mission. Thailand was selected because it has an existing, but expandable, POP analysis capacity relevant to assessing laboratory-related project outputs. It represents a median co-financing case, addresses a key data gap not covered in the desk review, and enables interviews with UNEP regional representatives based in Bangkok. An itinerary of the country visit to Thailand is included in **Annex V**, and the Country Status Report of Thailand is inserted in **Annex VI**.
61. Gender representation was considered in the data collection processes. In total, 39% (11 interviewees) of the stakeholders interviewed, including online interviews, were women.
62. Contact with most country representatives was established successfully, except for those from Viet Nam, for unknown reasons. As an alternative to the interview, questions of interest and the survey were sent instead of an interview request. All reports and materials available from Viet Nam were taken into account and reviewed.
63. The contact list for the relevant stakeholders was provided by the Project team (PM and TM) in UNEP and shared by the Evaluation Manager. Only a shortlist with key representatives for each partner/beneficiary group was provided. Staff turnover and the passage of time since project activities were completed further limited access to additional information. Contacts for the country mission coordination were requested from the relevant national coordinator in Thailand and from the POPsEA representative.

64. Table 6 below reflects key stakeholders. There was no exhaustive list of all individuals involved at the evaluation team's disposal. The sampling strategy for selecting interviewees was to contact all identified stakeholders using the provided contact list. Those who did not respond to the interview request, despite reminders and attempts to contact them, were not included in the evaluation. All stakeholders who were interviewed are listed in **Annex III**.

Table 6: Evaluation Respondents and Field Visits

Stakeholders - Individuals			A. Total number involved (M/F)	B. Number contacted (M/F)	Sample size (% B/A) ¹³	C. Total number responded Total (M/F)	Response rate (% C/B) ¹⁴
Project Team	Project Team (with management responsibilities e.g. Project Management Unit)	Implementing agency	6 (6 M)	6 (6 M)	100%	4 (4 M)	67%
		Executing agency	5 (2 M/ 3 F)	5 (2 M/ 3 F)	100%	2 (0 M/2 F)	40%
Beneficiaries	Direct Beneficiaries: (e.g. duty bearers, gatekeepers, training participants, etc.) ¹⁵		58 (22 M/ 36 F)	11 (6 M/ 5 F)	19%	10 (6 M/ 4 F)	91%
Stakeholders - Entities			A. Total number involved	B. Number contacted	Sample size (% B/A) ¹⁶	C. Total number responded	Response rate (% C/B) ¹⁷
Partners	Project implementing/executing partners (receiving project funds)		10 (6 M/ 4 F)	9 (5 M/ 4 F)	90%	8 (4 M/ 4 F)	89%
	Project collaborating/ contributing partners ¹⁸ (not receiving project fund)		2 (2 M)	2 (2 M)	100%	1 (1 M)	50%
Field Visits	Region / country / locality ¹⁹		A. Total number sites	B. Number sites visited ²⁰	Sample Size (%B/A) ²¹		
	Asia		7	1	14%		

2.2.2 Strategies for inclusivity

65. To reach local beneficiaries (i.e., laboratory staff who conducted sampling and analysis activities in each country, who were part of the national coordinating team, or who received training and guidance from the expert laboratories), a simple questionnaire was used to minimize response time. It included specific (multiple-choice) and open-ended questions to allow stakeholders to address comments, ideas, or reflections. The

¹³ Percentage of people involved in the project who were contacted.

¹⁴ Percentage of people contacted who responded.

¹⁵ The numbers are based on the Asia Region Report (UNEP, 2024) and include laboratory staff involved in capacity building. Section 4.4.2 lists verified participants, with discrepancies (of 9) mainly due to one country's (Viet Nam) missing verification.

¹⁶ Percentage of individuals (with entities) involved in the project who were contacted.

¹⁷ Percentage of individuals (with entities) contacted who responded.

¹⁸ Contributing partners may be providing resources as either cash or in-kind inputs (e.g. staff time, office space etc.).

¹⁹ In case of a global project, the unit of analysis is 'region'. In case of a regional or multi-country project, the unit of analysis is 'country'. In case of a single country project, the unit of analysis is 'locality', which could refer to a city, town, village, etc.

²⁰ Representatives from three laboratories were interviewed, no laboratories visited on site.

²¹ Percentage of total number project sites in each region, country or locality that were visited.

questionnaire was sent to the national coordinators, who were asked to identify relevant contacts, distribute it, and encourage participation. These efforts were made to enhance the participation in the evaluation process for local beneficiaries outside of the formalized contact list.

66. To support effective data collection, some online interviews were conducted jointly with evaluators from the other three UNEP/GEF GMP projects. This enabled divergent views to be presented in plenum. These interviews were coordinated and facilitated by the UNEP Evaluation Manager. To address the gender/human rights dimensions of the project, every partner was asked at least one question that was related to these dimensions, including how these were integrated into the project.
67. Direct contact with individual milk donors was not possible, as their participation was anonymous. To help understand the level of engagement and manner of involvement of individual milk donors (women), questions about the sampling execution process were posted to relevant national coordinators.
68. During data collection, participants were fully informed of the purpose of data collection and were notified that their rights were respected in terms of voluntary participation and data confidentiality. Each individual interview ended with an open-ended question, so any additional reflections, thoughts, or comments that had not been discussed could be shared.

2.2.3 Secondary data sources

69. The evaluation included a systematic desk review of project and contextual documentation provided by the project team through the Evaluation Office. Core sources included the ProDoc and associated records, such as approved minutes and subsequent revisions or supplements, Annual Work Plans and Budgets, formal project reports, including PIRs, Annual Narrative Reports, and financial reports, SC and Expert or stakeholder meeting minutes, workshop reports, training reports, national reports for all participating countries, and correspondence. The evaluators also reviewed project deliverables, with a specific focus on the Asia Regional Report and sections of reports covering the Asia region. A list of documents that were reviewed is available in **Annex IV**.

2.3 Data Analysis

70. Data from interviews and questionnaires were triangulated through verification and review of the provided documents, and where relevant, supplemented with online resources. The evaluators took notes and excerpts in working documents and categorized relevant information in overarching themes. The UNEP Evaluation tools were used, specifically the Evaluation Criteria Ratings Matrix and the Likelihood of Impact sheet. A financial overview sheet was created.

2.4 Limitations and Mitigation Strategies

71. At the inception phase, a list of potential limitations, their risk levels, and mitigation strategies for data gathering was compiled. Limitations encountered included unresponsive interviewees and delayed responses. To address these limitations, the project team encouraged participation and identified some alternative contacts to get involved.

72. The evaluators noted gaps in the data and in the ratio of project beneficiaries to project team members as respondents. 70% of respondents were either project partners receiving project funds or project team members.
73. When interview or survey data were unavailable to verify the documentation, backup documentation from a different source was identified. Follow-up questions through email were sent to national coordinators and the project team where clarification was needed. For the latter, this included requests for missing documentation.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

74. Throughout the evaluation processes and in compiling the Final Evaluation Report, efforts were made to represent the views of both mainstream and more marginalized groups. Data were collected in accordance with ethical and human rights principles. All sensitive information, individual opinions, and questionnaire results were anonymized, and all information was collected according to the UN 'Standards of Conduct'.
75. AI tools, namely Copilot and ChatGPT, were used for the editing of the evaluation report, in particular for summarizing, correcting grammar, and reformulating texts. No sensitive data was shared, and none of the data is used for AI training, in line with the UNEP Ethical principles, and data protection and privacy guidelines. No AI was used to derive findings, analysis results, interpretations, or judgments. Therefore, the AI tools were used solely for editing purposes.

3 THEORY OF CHANGE AT EVALUATION

76. The Theory of Change (ToC) was not included in the original Request for CEO Endorsement document, except for the Objective Tree and Problem Tree, which were similar but essentially different from the standard ToC. Furthermore, the original results framework does not fully follow the logframe methodology – reflected in the revised results framework below. Therefore, the ToC and result framework were reconstructed at the project's Inception phase. The reconstruction was done by evaluators, based on which the UNEP Evaluation Office further standardized the ToC and results framework, as the project design was duplicated across all four regions. It was also reviewed by the project team, including the project manager and task manager, before finalization.
77. The ToC, only to a limited extent, pursues societal benefits in the participating countries; this is found crucial for the overall value of the project and for the anchoring in the participating countries. Table 7 illustrates the reformulation of results statements, and Table 8 lists reformulated drivers and assumptions.

Table 7: Justification for Reformulation of Results Statements

Formulation in original project document(s)	Formulation for Reconstructed ToC at Evaluation Inception (RTOC)	Justification for Reformulation
(LONG LASTING) IMPACT		
(Overall Goal) Protect human health and environment from toxic exposure to POPs	Risks to human health and the environment stemming from toxic exposure to POPs are reduced	'Protect' in the original Impact statement sounds like a little strong word that may not be realistic in terms of the linkage between the Impact and the project. 'Risks...reduced' would be more realistic and clearer about the project's long-term contribution to human health and environmental protection (as well as a causal pathway from the Intermediate States to Impact).
INTERMEDIATE STATES		
N/A (not explicitly defined in the ProDoc)	1. Data are effectively utilized by national and regional decision makers, contributing to the generation of policies and actions towards the protection of human health and the environment 2. Regional initiatives/cooperation for sustainable and effective GMP implementation under the Stockholm Convention is strengthened	These two Intermediate States would be helpful to clarify the causal pathway from Outcomes to Impact. The achievement of reformulated Outcome 1 leads to Intermediate State 1. The fulfilment of reformulated Outcome 2 leads to Intermediate State 2.
PROJECT OUTCOMES		
National capacities for implementing the updated POPs Global Monitoring Plan (GMP) are strengthened, high quality data on the presence and transport of POPs are generated, and conditions for sustainable monitoring of POPs are in place in the Asian Region	1. National capacities for implementing the updated POPs Global Monitoring Plan (GMP) are strengthened and demonstrated 2. Conditions for sustainable monitoring of POPs in the Asian region are in place with effective reporting taking place consistently	The original Outcome covers three different elements that cannot be easily merged. Splitting this Outcome statement into three separate parts clarifies the respective causal pathways. The first and third parts of the original Outcome statement are more at the Output level (i.e., governed by phrases like 'in place'). Hence, these are reframed as Outcome statements (and referred to as Outcome 1 and Outcome 2, respectively).

Formulation in original project document(s)	Formulation for Reconstructed ToC at Evaluation Inception (RTOC)	Justification for Reformulation
		The second part of the original Outcome (<i>'high quality data on the presence and transport of POPs are generated'</i>) is removed because this is Output rather than Outcome. This second part of the original Outcome is represented by the reformulated Output 2&3 (see Output 2 and 3 below). The achievement of reformulated Output 1&2&3&4 leads to reformulated Outcome 1. The fulfillment of reformulated Output 1&5 (mainly 5) leads to reformulated Outcome 2.
(Outcome Indicators) # of countries capable to undertake sampling in the core and other matrices for POPs analysis # of countries with reported data on up to 23 POPs # of regional roadmap for sustainable POPs monitoring published.	No change	N/A These three indicators are not sufficient conditions for the achievement of the reformulated Outcomes, but are necessary conditions for it.
OUTPUTS		
1. Technical and administrative support provided for the implementation of the project and organisation of process established in the Asian Region	The national agreements and laboratory data are in place and supporting the project in the Asian region	The original Output 1 statement is more at the activity level. Hence, it is reframed as an Output statement, clarifying its linkage with two Output indicators below.
(Output 1 Indicators) # of national project implementation agreements signed # of laboratories submitted information to UNEP for updating information in the databank	No change	N/A
2. Training reports and sectoral reports on POPs analysis undertaken on two abiotic core matrices (i.e., air and water) in the Asian Region	2. Training reports and sectoral reports on POPs analysis are available on two abiotic core matrices (i.e., air and water) in the Asian region	The original Output 2 statement is more at the activity level. Hence, it is reframed as an Output statement, using the word <i>'available'</i>. Please note that this reformulated Output 2 represents a part of the original Outcome statement (i.e., <i>'high quality data on the presence and transport of POPs are generated'</i>). Output 2 & 3 are quite similar but might have performed differently. Hence, we keep Output 2 & 3 as they are.
(Output 2 Indicators) # of countries that carried out sampling in abiotic matrices # of training reports for analysis of abiotic matrices	No change	N/A

Formulation in original project document(s)	Formulation for Reconstructed ToC at Evaluation Inception (RTOC)	Justification for Reformulation
# of sectoral reports developed in abiotic matrices		
3. Training reports and sectoral report on POPs analysis undertaken on one biotic core matrix (7 th round of human milk survey) in the Asian Region	3. Training reports and sectoral report on POPs analysis are available on one biotic core matrix (7 th round of human milk survey) in the Asian region	The original Output 3 statement is more at the activity level. Hence, it is reframed as an Output statement, using the word 'available'. Please note that this reformulated Output 3 represents a part of the original Outcome statement (i.e., 'high quality data on the presence and transport of POPs are generated'). Output 2 & 3 are quite similar but might have performed differently. Hence, we keep Output 2 & 3 as they are.
(Output 3 Indicators) # of countries that carried out sampling in biotic matrices # of training report for analysis of biotic matrices # of sectoral reports developed in biotic matrices	No change	N/A
4. Assessment report of existing analytical capacities prepared and report on POPs analysis undertaken in samples of national priority (other than core matrices) in the Asian Region	No change	N/A
(Output 4 Indicators) # of rounds for interlaboratory assessments held # of countries having high quality data reported for samples of major national interest	No change	N/A
5. Assessment reports contributing to regional report for the GMP undertaken, and a roadmap for sustainable POPs monitoring developed for the Asian region	A roadmap for sustainable POPs monitoring for the Asian region is developed with assessment reports contributing to regional report for the GMP prepared	The original Output 5 statement is rephrased as the Output statement, allowing for better alignment with the reformulated Outcome 2 ('Conditions for sustainable monitoring of POPs in the Asian region are in place with effective monitoring being taken place consistently').
(Output 5 Indicators) # of assessments on POPs presence in the region and its capacity to analyse them # of regional roadmap for sustainable POPs monitoring in the region, with strategy for implementation, milestones, and timetable in a regional roadmap	No change	N/A

Formulation in original project document(s)	Formulation for Reconstructed ToC at Evaluation Inception (RTOC)	Justification for Reformulation
# of countries providing inputs to develop conclusions and lessons learned on GMP phase 2, as well as recommendations and future plans		
GEF CORE INDICATOR		
N/A (not explicitly defined in the ProDoc)	GEF Core Indicator 11: People benefiting from GEF-financed investments (disaggregated by sex)	The GEF Core Indicator 11 has been added following the GEF requirement. However, the assessment of progress towards this GEF Core Indicator will not be factored into the rating for the 'Effectiveness' criteria. Definition: This indicator captures the total number of direct beneficiaries, disaggregated by sex.

Table 8 Justification for Reformulation/Expansion of Drivers and Assumptions

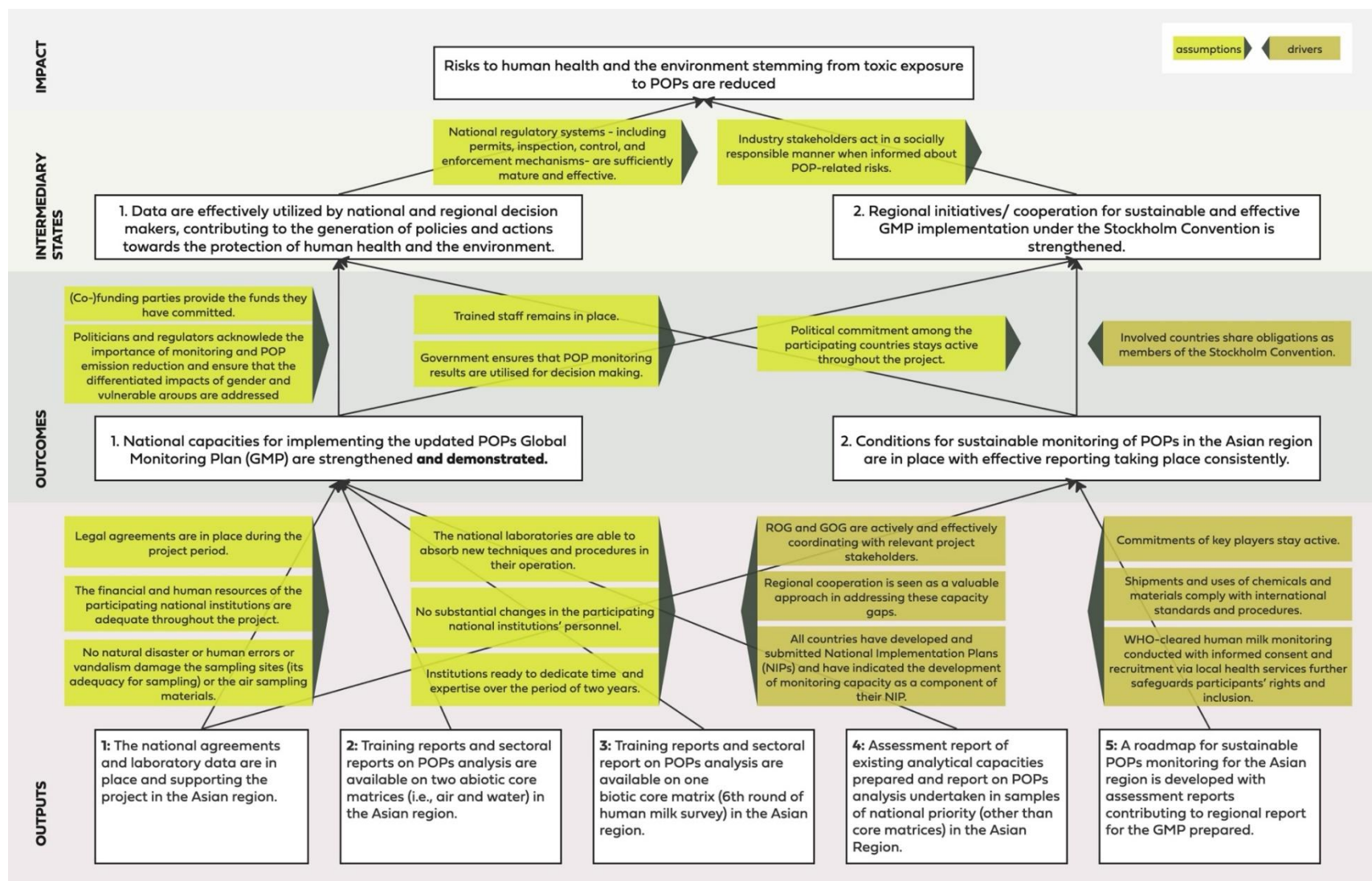
Formulation in original project document(s)	Formulation for Reconstructed ToC at Evaluation (RTOC)	Justification for Reformulation
DRIVERS		
ROG and GOG are actively and effectively coordinating with relevant project stakeholders	No change	
Commitments of key players stay active	No change	
Shipments and uses of chemicals and materials comply with international standards and procedures	No change	
Involved countries share obligations as members of the Stockholm Convention	No change	(Driver not explicitly formulated in the ProDoc but derived from the document).
All countries have developed and submitted National Implementation Plans (NIPs) and have indicated the development of monitoring capacity as a component of their NIP	No change	(Driver not explicitly formulated in the ProDoc but derived from the document).
Regional cooperation is seen as a valuable approach in addressing these capacity gaps	No change	(Driver not explicitly formulated in the ProDoc but derived from the document).
WHO-cleared human milk monitoring conducted with informed consent and recruitment via local health services further safeguards participants' rights and inclusion	No change	(Driver not explicitly formulated in the ProDoc but derived from the document).
ASSUMPTIONS		
OUTCOME		
INTERMEDIARY STATE		
-	National regulatory systems - including permits, inspection, control, and enforcement mechanisms- are sufficiently mature and effective.	Assumption not formulated by ProDoc, but added by evaluators, as a key assumption. This assumption focuses on the importance of mature national regulatory systems.

Formulation in original project document(s)	Formulation for Reconstructed ToC at Evaluation (RTOC)	Justification for Reformulation
-	Industry stakeholders act in a socially responsible manner when informed about POP-related risks.	Assumption not formulated by ProDoc, but added by evaluators, as a key assumption. This brings in the industry actors, who have a major role in the success of the desired impact.
OUTCOME		
(Co-)funding parties provide the funds they have committed	No change	
Political commitment among the participating countries stays active throughout the project	No change	
No natural or man-made disasters or occur that may affect the implementation of the project	Deleted	This assumption is more relevant under outputs
No vandalism affects the national network infrastructures (especially for air and water)	Deleted	Covered by the previous assumption
Financial and human resources are sufficient	Deleted	Not relevant as an assumption for the outcome. Refer to output assumptions below.
Trained staff remains in place	No change	
OUTPUTS		
Legal agreements are in place during the project period	No change	This should be clarified in the design phase – but with a multi-year project, the assumption is relevant.
UNEP laboratory databank is accessible	Deleted	With UNEP as project executor, this should have been clarified in the design phase and not be questioned during implementation
No natural or man-made disaster damages the sampling sites (its adequacy for sampling) or the air sampling materials	No natural disaster or human errors or vandalism damage the sampling sites (its adequacy for sampling) or the air sampling materials.	Several assumptions merged into one.
Personnel ready to dedicate time and expertise over the period of two years	Institutions ready to dedicate time and expertise over the period of two years.	The institutions are responsible for allocating staff resources to the project.
Training of national laboratories is adequate and effective	The national laboratories are able to absorb new techniques and procedures in their operation.	Quality training is an output of the project and therefore not an assumption. The assumption relates to project external factors.
Infrastructure and practical arrangements can be realized as planned	No change	
No substantial changes in personnel	No substantial changes in the participating national institutions' personnel.	This reformulation specifies further which personnel is referred to.
Financial and human resources are sufficient	The financial and human resources of the participating national institutions are adequate throughout the project.	It is not clear whether the original wording focuses on the finances and human resources of the project executors – which is then not an assumption.
Other regions, including developed country regions, are interested and participate in both rounds of interlaboratory assessment (OECD countries finance their participation)	Deleted	Irrelevant in the Asian context

Formulation in original project document(s)	Formulation for Reconstructed ToC at Evaluation (RTOC)	Justification for Reformulation
The quality of the data gathered through analysis of the matrices is of sufficient quality to undertake assessments and draw conclusions and lessons learned in order to design a roadmap	Deleted	This is a project management theme, not an assumption concerning project external conditions
Project has proceeded at pace and coverage as anticipated	Deleted	This is a project management theme, not an assumption concerning project external conditions

78. The original ToC was based on assumptions that did not hold consistently as the project progressed. Specifically, staff turnover presented challenges in both project administration and the retention of capacity among beneficiaries, due to a lack of the necessary resources to maintain them. Stakeholder interviews indicated that the assumption regarding staff stability was not met.
79. Most co-funding from beneficiaries and partners was reportedly delivered (see Section 4.5), thereby confirming the stated assumption.
80. Notably, most assumptions were in place to support the results at the Output level. Some samples were lost due to human error, e.g., damaged flasks for water samples, incorrect labelling, or arrival in non-ideal conditions (e.g., frozen). This had minimal effect at the overarching level, and the Outputs were delivered due to the larger pool of successfully collected samples. The financial and human resources posed challenges both internally at UNEP at the start of the project and for beneficiaries when funds could not be delivered. As a result, the project was extended to ensure the timely and successful delivery of results and Outputs. Figure 2 illustrates the Theory of Change at Evaluation.

Figure 2: Theory of Change at Evaluation



81. **Causal pathway 1 (Establishing the enabling conditions for implementation and coordination):** Under this pathway, the project secures the practical foundations required to run a multi-country monitoring effort: national agreements (i.e., institutional arrangements for participation, roles, and responsibilities) and laboratory data arrangements that enable the project to operate in the Asian region. With this, the project reduces transaction costs and delays that commonly prevent monitoring systems from functioning (e.g., unclear mandates, inability to share samples/data, or uncertainty on who does what). Output 1 enables delivery of Outputs 2–5, and thereby supports both Outcome 1 (“National capacities for implementing the updated POPs GMP are strengthened and demonstrated”) and Outcome 2 (“Conditions for sustainable monitoring and consistent reporting are established”). Key assumptions include legal/administrative continuity: Legal agreements remain in place during the project period, and the financial and human resources of participating national institutions remain adequate.
82. **Causal pathway 2 (Building capacity and generating GMP data for abiotic core matrices):** The project strengthens the capacity to sample and analyse POPs in two abiotic core matrices (air and water) and produces training reports and sectoral reports documenting methods, lessons, and analytical results for the Asian region. This pathway is a central technical route to Outcome 1, because implementing the updated GMP requires not just technical equipment or guidelines, but demonstrated competence in: sampling, field protocols, sample tracking, laboratory methods and practice, QA/QC, data analysis, interpretation and reporting. It also contributes to Outcome 2 because routine air and water monitoring (plus reporting products) are building blocks for an ongoing monitoring system. Key assumptions and drivers for this pathway include operational feasibility (No natural disasters, human error, or vandalism compromising sampling sites or air sampling materials) and that the government ensures monitoring results are used for decision-making. High-quality air and water POPs data and sectoral reports provide the evidence base needed for Intermediate state 1 (“Data are effectively utilized by decision makers”).
83. **Causal pathway 3 (Strengthening human milk monitoring to characterise human exposure and support health-oriented decision making):** The project supports capacity building and reporting for one biotic core matrix (human milk) linked to the 7th round of WHO human milk monitoring/survey, and produces associated training and sectoral reporting on POPs analyses in the Asian region. First, it strengthens national capacity for the collection of individual human milk samples in participating countries, including recruitment through health services, ethical procedures, sample handling, and initial laboratory procedures. Second, it supports the preparation of nationally representative pooled samples derived from these individual samples and their analysis for relevant POPs in designated reference laboratories. This pathway contributes to Outcome 1 by strengthening and demonstrating the ability of national systems (including public health actors and laboratories) to implement updated GMP procedures for a biotic matrix; and Outcome 2 by building the institutional and ethical operating procedures needed to sustain periodic human milk monitoring and reporting. Key assumptions and drivers for this pathway include that WHO-cleared human milk monitoring is conducted with informed consent, and recruitment via local health services safeguards participants’ rights and inclusion; and that trained staff remain in place, and institutions can dedicate time across the monitoring cycle (from recruitment and sampling to analysis and reporting).
84. **Causal pathway 4 (Assessing analytical capacities and expanding monitoring to national-priority matrices beyond the GMP core):** The project produces an assessment report on existing analytical capacities and documents on POPs analyses undertaken for

samples of national priority (i.e., matrices other than the GMP core matrices) in the Asian region. This pathway complements the core GMP work by focusing on “fit-for-purpose” national monitoring needs and laboratory performance across a wider set of matrices. It strengthens Outcome 1 by identifying analytical strengths/gaps and stimulating targeted improvements, and Outcome 2 by helping countries embed POPs monitoring into national systems. Key assumptions include that national laboratories can integrate new techniques/procedures, and institutions can allocate staff time for expanded analytical work; and that no substantial changes in institutional personnel disrupt the continuity of improved practices.

85. **Causal pathway 5 (Creating the conditions for long-term sustainability through regional reporting and a roadmap)** The project develops a roadmap for sustainable POPs monitoring in the Asian region and ensures that assessment outputs contribute to a regional report for the GMP. This pathway is the most direct contributor to Outcome 2 (Sustainable monitoring conditions are in place with consistent reporting) and Intermediate state 2 (Strengthened regional cooperation for effective GMP implementation). By clarifying what should happen after the project, how monitoring cycles will be financed, coordinated, and integrated with existing national obligations, this pathway increases the likelihood that capacities built under Outcome 1 will translate into a repeatable monitoring and reporting system. Key assumptions include that the commitments of key players stay active, and political commitment among participating countries remains active beyond project delivery, documented by the fact that governments use monitoring results for decision making, which helps justify continued investment.
86. Even with a roadmap and sustained monitoring, impact ultimately depends on whether evidence triggers effective controls and behaviour change. Two explicit contextual assumptions at the impact level are therefore critical: national regulatory systems are sufficiently mature/effective (permits, inspection, enforcement), and industry acts responsibly when informed about POP-related risks.

4 EVALUATION FINDINGS

4.1 Strategic Relevance

4.1.1 Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities

Table 9: 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 (2014-2017) MTS (2018- 2021)	The project was fully consistent with UNEP's Chemicals & Waste Sub-programme under the MTS 2014–2017, where countries were expected to use scientific and technical knowledge and tools to implement sound chemicals management and related Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). The project's design, with a focus on capacity development for GMP-compliant monitoring, interlaboratory QA/QC, and data provision for Article 16, operationalizes this expectation. Under the MTS 2018–2021, the stated objective that <i>"sound management of chemicals and waste and improved air quality enable a healthier environment and better health for all"</i> was advanced through the generation of comparable POPs data and institutional support for routine reporting and policy use in seven countries.	Full
POW (2014-2015) POW (2016-2017)	The project contributed directly to POW Output 522 under Expected Accomplishment 5(b)—<i>"Thematic assessments of environmental transport and fate of chemicals, and monitoring of trends in chemicals production, handling, movement, use, release and disposal, catalyse coordinated action on chemicals management in the UN system."</i> Its core outputs, standardized sampling and analysis in core matrices, interlaboratory assessments, and regional/national reports feeding the GMP delivered the assessments and data envisaged in Output 522 and supported coordinated action across agencies and countries. The ProDoc was also linked to PoW indicators on increased governmental uptake of UNEP risk assessment/management tools to address obligations under chemicals MEAs, which the project advanced by enabling countries to generate and report decision-grade POPs evidence.	Full
South-South Cooperation	The intervention was also aligned with UNEP strategic priorities on capacity-building (Bali Strategic Plan) and South–South cooperation, by strengthening government capacities to meet MEA obligations and enabling knowledge exchange among laboratories in the Asian	Full

	region and agencies through joint training and performance testing. The project engaged actors from seven countries in the Asian Region in the Global South, following UNEP's mandate to support "promotion and support of South-South cooperation". The participants were able to exchange some experience and knowledge through workshops, as well as through the interlaboratory assessment workshops, where data could be discussed and used for comparison with other participating countries. Aspects regarding country ownership, horizontality (peer-to-peer relationships), and mutual benefit were less evident in the project.	
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4.1.2 Alignment to GEF/Donor Strategic Priorities

Table 10: Alignment to GEF/Donor Strategic Priorities

Donor or partner strategic document	Alignment with donor or partner strategic priorities	Level of alignment <i>full, partial, or not at all</i>
GEF	The project was well aligned with GEF-5 strategic priorities for the Chemicals and Waste focal area by aiming to strengthen national and regional capacity to generate high-quality, comparable POPs monitoring data that directly supports the Stockholm Convention's effectiveness evaluation under Article 16 and the Global Monitoring Plan. The ProDoc framed a coherent package of capacity development, interlaboratory proficiency testing, and data generation in core matrices (air, water, human milk), culminating in a regional roadmap to sustain monitoring. This was an approach that mirrored GEF-5's emphasis on enabling conditions and country capacities for reducing POPs releases. Its positioning under GEF-5 with a Chemicals focal area grant and explicit linkage to UNEP PoW Output 522 further showed a strategic fit. The relevant GEF Core indicator (indicator 11: total number of direct beneficiaries, disaggregated by sex) result for this project showed a balanced gender inclusion of males and female direct beneficiaries (see the data in section 4.4.2).	Full

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

Table 11: 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 <i>Full, partial, or not at all</i>
Stockholm Convention	The Stockholm Convention, which entered into force on 17 May 2004, requires its parties to take measures to eliminate or reduce the release of POPs into the environment. The project was of high relevance to the Stockholm Convention's effectiveness evaluation, setting out to assess the Convention's success in achieving its objective of <i>'protecting human health and the environment from persistent organic pollutants'</i> (Article 1). Article 16, the effectiveness evaluation of the Stockholm Convention, was primarily addressed and fully aligned with the project's goal.	Full
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	The project was well aligned with the 2030 Agenda. It advanced SDG 3 (Target 3.9) by generating robust, comparable data on human exposure to hazardous chemicals (e.g., human milk) and on ambient air, informing measures to reduce illness from pollution. It also contributed to SDG 6 (Target 6.3) through water sampling and supported national analytical capacity that underpinned efforts to improve water quality and reduce contamination. The project supported SDG 12 (Target 12.4) by institutionalizing QA/QC procedures, interlaboratory assessments, and standardized reporting to the Stockholm Convention, which were core elements of environmentally sound chemicals management. SDG 17 was identified through multi-stakeholder partnerships, involving UNEP, WHO, the BRS Secretariat, and national and expert reference laboratories. Through the project, these entities shared methods and data infrastructure that supported knowledge cooperation across the participating countries at a global level. These specific SDG Goals and Targets are also explicitly referenced in the project identification table and reports.	Full
National Implementation Plans (NIPs)	All participating countries had formulated a NIP and were members of the SC, with outlined obligations. This is under Article 7 of the Stockholm Committee. The project complemented and supported activities that were relevant to participating countries' NIPs for monitoring of POPs in their respective countries, as national efforts to realise and align with the Convention. It is important to note that, while NIPs served as strategic documents to verify the project's relevance, the governments' prioritization of POPs monitoring was not necessarily high or put into practice. It	Full

	was therefore not sufficient to confirm the project's alignment with national interests for the governments and ministries currently in place in each participating country.	
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4.1.4 Complementarity with Existing Interventions/ Coherence

Table 12: 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
Continuing Regional Support for the POPs Global Monitoring Plan under the Stockholm Convention in 1) the Latin American and Caribbean region (GEF ID:4881), 2) the Africa region (GEF ID:4886), and 3) the Pacific region (GEF ID:6978) (2015 – 2024)	Within the same timeframe, three other PoPs GMP projects in African region, the Latin America and Caribbean region, and the Pacific region were executed in tandem. Multiple overlaps and duplications were identified, including the project design, approach, organization, and key stakeholders. The project team at UNEP coordinated all these regional projects. The coordination between the stakeholders was through UNEP, and for laboratory analysis, directly with national representatives. These three regional projects did not address the Asia region or its stakeholders, but were complementary to this GMP2 project. Complementarity was derived from the desired result being a global monitoring of the POPs presence through scientific data.	Full
Persistent Organic Pollutants Monitoring Network in East Asia (POPsEA)	The POPsEA project, in collaboration with the Ministry of the Environment of Japan (MoEJ) and JESC, aimed to enhance East Asia's capacity for monitoring POPs, providing data on POPs levels in ambient air across 11 countries. Its objectives included the assessment of background POPs levels, offering scientifically reliable data, and contributing to the Effectiveness Evaluation under the Stockholm Convention. The POPsEA had involved countries since 2005 (Viet Nam, Indonesia), then from 2006 (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Philippines, and Thailand), and from 2007 (Malaysia). Despite shared goals, collaboration between POPsEA and GMP2 was limited but did exist through knowledge exchange and in-kind donations. POPsEA provided HV samplers to Viet Nam, although it remains unclear to the evaluator whether this was linked to the GMP2 project or prior activities of POPsEA. Despite POPsEA representatives attending meetings, there was limited evidence of strategic regional collaboration. There is no evidence of duplication.	Partial

WHO- and UNEP-coordinated human milk surveys 2000 – 2019	The WHO and UNEP-coordinated human milk surveys were major initiatives coordinated by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in collaboration with UNEP, aiming to monitor the levels of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) in human milk as part of the GMP under the Stockholm Convention. Building on two rounds of human exposure studies coordinated by WHO, five further studies were performed between 2000 and 2019, including the 7 th round (2016-2019). The GMP project directly contributed to the WHO survey (7 th round) through this project, and the other regional projects (GEF ID: 4881, 4886, 6978), with the integration of milk sampling. Protocols established by WHO and UNEP were taken into use. Ethical clearance and implementation support were provided. No duplications were identified.	Full
Reducing uses and releases of chemicals of concern in the textiles sector. (GEF D 10523) (2022)	Project countries involved in the project included Indonesia and Viet Nam. Even though some of the ministries/stakeholders involved were the same, and the project focused on POPs, it did not focus on POPs monitoring. The focus was rather on the reduction of chemical release in the textile sector. With its different focus, the project complemented the engagement of the private sectors, targeting other important stakeholders. This addressed the same desired impact as the GMP2 projects, and thereby full complementarity was concluded.	Full
Environmental Monitoring and Governance in Asia UNU-IAS - Shimadzu Partnership Project (1996 – 2018)	Shimadzu Corporation and the United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS) launched a program that assisted 10 Asian countries in monitoring environmental pollutants and building a regional monitoring network. The goal was to improve contaminant management through scientific monitoring, with an emphasis on water environments.²² The project was a collaboration between the Japanese company Shimadzu, a manufacturer of precision instruments, measuring instruments, and medical equipment, among others, and various public institutions in the region. Among others, institutions from Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam, and Indonesia participated in the project. The project focused on capacity development and regional collaboration, as well as contributed data to the Regional Monitoring Reports. There is no record of formal collaboration between the project actors and the UNEP project.	Partial
Establishing the tools and methods to include the nine new POPs into the Global Monitoring Plan (GEF ID: 4412) (2011 – 2017)	This project laid a foundation for analyzing nine new POPs according to international standards, assessed suitable laboratories, provided training in developing countries where possible, and defined regional scientific protocols for global monitoring of environmental and human exposure. Outcomes included updated guidance materials, contributions to regional reports, and monitoring systems,	Full

²² https://www.shimadzu.com/an/news-events/unu-ias_project/overview.html

	and, for the first time, environmental and human data in regional reports to the Conference of the Parties (COP). The project's Terminal Evaluation recommended that future GMP projects focus on building analytical capacity in one or two regional laboratories per area, instead of all participating countries' labs, to serve as hubs for POPs analysis. (UNEP Evaluation Office, 2018). Complementarity was achieved, as the high-quality materials developed (e.g. SOPs) and monitoring methods were utilized and worked further on in the GMP 2 projects.	
Global Monitoring Plan (GMP) of the Stockholm Convention	The GMP is the key framework to which the project is designed to support. The project was directly aligned with the effectiveness evaluation of the Stockholm Convention, which GMP is established to deliver, and the UNEP Industry and Economy Division, Chemicals and Health Branch, is an implementation partner. The project was strongly complemented by data gaps in the region, identified at the first Global Monitoring Report in 2009. The project also strongly addressed data comparability issues at the regional levels, which was a foundational aspect of the GMP monitoring mechanisms. The project integrated and supported the standardization of the data. The project output and result materials were showcased in the Stockholm Convention's website under the GMP. This included the SOP and guidelines, results from Interlaboratory Assessments, and the reports. These results complemented and built on the existing efforts that the GMP aimed to deliver.	Full

87. While there was a high and clear alignment with UNEP MTS, PoW, and Strategic Priorities, there were no anticipated identifiable contributions to the reported Expected Accomplishment indicators. The ProDoc states that the project supports the PoW outputs and provides inputs for these in the form of lessons learned, best practices, and guidance materials. However, no materialized evidence of this at the end of the project was found to support the verification of this alignment. According to the Project Team, evidence was provided via UNEP's Integrated Planning, Management and Reporting (IPMR) platform.
88. The potential for cooperation with projects in the Asian region was evaluated for further mutual benefits. Strong collaboration with POPsEA stakeholders, along with consolidated data gathering and capacity-building efforts, was needed to avoid duplication and maximize the effectiveness of the overarching evaluation and support a cohesive regional strategy.
89. The project addressed a significant global issue and sought to benefit the well-being of living beings and the health of humans on our planet. The project addressed identified data gaps globally and provided valuable data for the Global Monitoring Plan and the Stockholm Convention. This mechanism supported the common goal of reducing pollution and chemical exposure.

Findings Statements on Strategic Relevance and Complementarity

90. The project demonstrated strong strategic relevance through its close alignment with UNEP's Medium Term Strategy and GEF priorities. It was highly consistent with UNEP's mandate on Chemical Safety and the Harmful Substances, and Chemicals and Pollution Action Sub-programme, contributing to global and regional assessments under the Stockholm Convention's effectiveness evaluation process. The project's objectives supported GEF's Chemicals focal area (GEF-5, CHEM-1) by building national capacity for the implementation of the Stockholm Convention. It also responded to regional needs and national obligations – all participating countries were Stockholm Convention parties, and the project helped them fulfil monitoring and reporting commitments.
91. The project design was complementary to other initiatives, building on earlier global monitoring efforts and collaborating with key partners (such as WHO), to avoid duplication and maximize synergies.

Rating for Strategic Relevance: Highly Satisfactory (HS)

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

Rating for Alignment to GEF/Donor Strategic Priorities: Highly Satisfactory

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

Rating for Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence: Satisfactory

4.2 Quality of Project Design

Table 13: Summary of Quality of Project Design Assessment Ratings

	SECTION	SELECT RATING*	SCORE (1-6)	WEIGHTING	TOTAL (Rating x Weighting/10)
A	Operating Context	Moderately Unsatisfactory	3	0.4	0.12
B	Project Preparation	Moderately Unsatisfactory	3	1.2	0.36
C	Strategic Relevance	Highly Satisfactory	6	0.8	0.48
D	Intended Results and Causality	Moderately Satisfactory	4	1.6	0.64
E	Logical Framework and Monitoring	Satisfactory to Moderately Satisfactory	4.5	0.8	0.36
F	Governance and Supervision Arrangements	Satisfactory to Moderately Satisfactory	4.5	0.4	0.18
G	Partnerships	Satisfactory	5	0.8	0.4
H	Learning, Communication and Outreach	Moderately Satisfactory	4	0.4	0.16
I	Financial Planning/Budgeting	Satisfactory to Moderately Satisfactory	4.5	0.4	0.18
J	Efficiency	Highly Satisfactory to Satisfactory	5.5	0.8	0.44
K	Risk identification and Social Safeguards	Moderately Satisfactory	4	0.8	0.32
L	Sustainability/Replication and Catalytic Effects	Satisfactory to Moderately Satisfactory	4.5	1.2	0.54

	SECTION	SELECT RATING*	SCORE (1-6)	WEIGHTING	TOTAL (Rating x Weighting/10)
M	Identified Project Design Weaknesses/Gaps	Unsatisfactory	2	0.4	0.08
				TOTAL SCORE (Sum Totals)	4.26 (Moderately Satisfactory)

1 (Highly Unsatisfactory)	< 1.83	4 (Moderately Satisfactory)	>=3.5 <=4.33
2 (Unsatisfactory)	>= 1.83 < 2.66	5 (Satisfactory)	>4.33 <= 5.16
3 (Moderately Unsatisfactory)	>=2.66 <3.5	6 (Highly Satisfactory)	> 5.16

92. The project design demonstrated ambition, but lacked comprehensive coherence. No thorough needs and risk assessment was identified, and the project did not sufficiently address the local context, leading to a reliance on assumptions to connect Outputs to Outcomes. Existing initiatives (e.g., POPsEA) were only partially considered, and their lessons, including established capacities, were not adequately integrated. Clear definitions, realistic targets, and robust indicators could have supported the likelihood of achieving Outcomes on GMP implementation and sustainable monitoring. Budget planning lacked clarity and appeared to prioritize logistics over explicit pathways to sustainability. Overall, the design would have benefited from deeper contextual analysis, fuller use of prior evidence, a clearer theory of change, and more precise indicators.
93. The project's design firmly anchored to Article 16 of the Stockholm Convention and the Global Monitoring Plan, with the clear objective of strengthening national and regional capacity to generate high-quality, comparable POPs data, delivered through a well-defined set of components: capacity building, data gathering from abiotic (air, water) and biotic (human milk) matrices, QA/QC interlaboratory assessments, and identifying conditions for sustainability of the monitoring. Design strengths included the use of cost-efficient passive air sampling and a cost-effective milk monitoring approach that combined individual samples into a single representative national sample, alongside standardized SOPs; the pairing of national analyses with reference "mirror" testing by expert laboratories; and purposeful partnerships. These efforts enhanced comparability across seven diverse countries and regions, thereby addressing shared global interests. As background data was the primary focus, the initiative also aimed to provide an overview of the effects on marginalized and vulnerable communities. The project's design responded directly to documented national priorities in the participating Parties' NIPs and to the Convention's call for reliable, long-term monitoring data as a foundation for policy and management decisions.
94. The score of 'Intended Results and Causality' (see Table 13 above) has been changed from the inception report. This is because a set of additional evidence was collected during the data collection phase of the evaluation and triangulated with other evidence that was initially gathered during the inception phase. As a result, the sub-score mentioned above has slightly declined since the inception phase.

Rating for Project Design: Moderately Satisfactory

4.3 Nature of the External Context

95. The COVID-19 pandemic, with its widespread global impact starting in late 2019, affected the project's performance and, along with other factors, delayed its timely completion. COVID-19 further complicated implementation, causing delays in project execution and the planned activities for participating countries and partners. This posed difficulties for all project stakeholders. Extension agreements were issued to ensure the project's continuation.
96. COVID-19 delayed sampling activities, which, in some cases, affected the samples of national interest and other matrices of interest for the GMP. Retrieval of samples, due to travel restrictions, hindered the timely shipment of the samples to the expert laboratories (the Philippines). Viet Nam stated that it cancelled the training by expert laboratories scheduled for September 2021 due to COVID-19, when lockdown restrictions were in place (WHO, 2021). It was previously rescheduled to 2020; however, that was not possible due to international travel restrictions. At expert laboratories and national laboratories, sample analysis was postponed.
97. As a result, activity was slow in 2020 and 2021. A few relevant activities held online during this period included data interpretation meetings, the final workshop for the fourth interlaboratory assessment, and an SC meeting.
98. Some country reported internal organizational changes, such as the restructuring of governmental departments, resulting in a significant change in staff. These procedures hindered participation in anticipated project activities. Although this was an unanticipated event, organizational changes are not uncommon and are therefore attributed to adaptive management.
99. Apart from those mentioned above, no other specific unanticipated event with direct impact on the project's performance was reported by project stakeholders.

Rating for Nature of the External Context: Moderately Favourable

4.4 Effectiveness

4.4.1 Availability of Outputs

Table 14: Availability of Outputs

	Narrative Assessment <i>Discuss the nature and scale of outputs delivered, as well as timeliness, quality, and utility to intended beneficiaries</i>	Sources of Information/Evidence
Output 1: The national agreements and laboratory data are in place and supporting the project in the Asian Region. Performance against Indicator(s) and Target(s) • # of national project implementation agreements signed (Baseline: 0, Target: 6) Achievement: 7 • # of laboratories submitted information to UNEP for updating	All seven national project implementation agreements, SSFA were signed by UNEP and national representatives, around two years later (2017) after the project officially started (2015). The significant delay of these agreements weakened the timelines of the Output, resulting in a delayed delivery, ultimately affecting the project's progress. The project partners and beneficiaries coordinated directly with UNEP and expert laboratories regarding the requirement and procedures to follow, for the project to advance. On an early stage (2014) prior to the commencement of the project, UNEP successfully gathered co-finance agreements from all national partners. There were three locations that data was to be submitted to: UNEPs Power BI dashboard, the Data Warehouse of the GMP, and UNEP's databank (UN Environment Databank of Laboratories Analyzing Lead, Mercury, and POPs). It is uncertain whether the databank referred to in the indicator is UNEP's own databank or the GMP Data Warehouse. The results data are not available via UNEP's own databank, developed by the UNEP Chemicals and Health Branch. This database has not been updated since 2018, as it is stated to be a voluntary registration. Three countries (Thailand, Viet Nam, and Indonesia) from the Asian Region registered 19 laboratories in total.	- Key agreements - National Reports for all countries - PIRs - Interviews with project team - Interviews with beneficiaries and partners - GMP Data Warehouse website²³ - UNEP Databank of laboratories²⁴ - UNEP Regional report for the Asia region - UNEP Power BI Dashboard²⁵ (UNEP, 2024)

²³ <https://www.pops-gmp.org/>

²⁴ <https://informea.pops.int/PbHgPOPLabs/index.html>

²⁵ <https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrJoiY2Y3MmE2NjktOWQ4NC00YWE0LTkzNWEtNjhkNWZkYThiMGYzliwidCI6IjBmOWUzNWRiLTU0NGYtNGY2MC1iZGNjLTVIYTQxNmU2ZGM3MCIslmMiOjh9>

	Narrative Assessment <i>Discuss the nature and scale of outputs delivered, as well as timeliness, quality, and utility to intended beneficiaries</i>	Sources of Information/Evidence
information in the databank (Baseline: 0, Target: 4) Achievement: 7 Other information, not related to the indicators, that demonstrates Output delivery:	An overview of the project's data is visible in UNEP's Power BI dashboard (UNEP, 2024), and the site shows data from the Asia region. At least seven country laboratories submitted data to UNEP's Power BI dashboard, updating the databank. The specific number of laboratories is not stated in the dashboard, nor found in reports specifically linking the data submitted to specific laboratories. Therefore, it is not possible to determine the exact number of laboratories that submitted information for the databank. Regardless of this, the target of this indicator was undoubtedly reached, as at least one laboratory per country submitted data to the UNEP Power BI dashboard. The target was therefore reached by at least seven laboratories. From this point, data was available for ROG members through the publicly available dashboard and databank. Separately, UNEP also reported monitoring results to ROG members in a timely manner. ROG members made the data available through the GMP Data Warehouse platform handled by the Stockholm Convention Secretariat. The data is currently available at the GMP Data Warehouse and accessible online. The efforts made by the project team and partners to coordinate and ensure that data was available were strong. Without the technical and administrative support provided by UNEP, the submission of data would have posed challenges for the countries, as they were not familiar with the procedures or system to upload data. The decision of the SC to encourage continuation of data submission post submission deadline (November 2019) provided flexibility and value to ongoing or planned activities for the countries. This allowed more data to be compiled. According to an expert interview, the data collected after the submission date will still be uploaded and available. In that sense, no data delivered went to waste. In terms of ongoing accessibility for project beneficiaries at the national level to access and share these results on these platforms, technical and administrative support would still be required. Through data analysis, interpretation, and results provided with the support of expert laboratories, data were available for comparative analysis for the project beneficiaries. These allowed for arriving at a snapshot (no trend), valuable to understand the current levels of	- SC documents - Co-finance agreements - Regional Monitoring Report

	Narrative Assessment <i>Discuss the nature and scale of outputs delivered, as well as timeliness, quality, and utility to intended beneficiaries</i>	Sources of Information/Evidence
	various POPs and therefore the potential impact. The data visualizations and comparisons allowed the countries to disseminate these findings among peers and governmental actors. The data supported the effectiveness evaluation through the Regional Monitoring report published by the ROG members in 2021. The intended users of data, according to the project team and some of the partners, are the ROG members. As some of the data was used, it is concluded that the national agreements and the data have supported the monitoring in the Asian region. No specific positive or negative effects for disadvantaged or marginalized groups were identified or reported for this output. Level of delivery: Fully delivered	
Output 2: Training reports and sectoral reports on POPs analysis are available on two abiotic core matrices (i.e., air and water) in the Asian region. Performance against Indicator(s) and Target(s) • # of countries that carried out sampling in	All seven countries participated in the air sampling (PAS), and therefore, the first indicator (<i># of countries that carried out sampling in abiotic matrices</i>) surpassed its target (five countries). Viet Nam, Indonesia, Thailand, Lao PDR, and Mongolia started their PAS activities in 2017, while Cambodia and the Philippines started them in January 2018. Thus, PAS sampling activities were carried out in a timely manner for Viet Nam, Indonesia, Thailand, Mongolia, and Lao PDR, while these activities were delayed by a year for Cambodia and the Philippines due to administrative and organizational delays. Viet Nam and Mongolia carried out Active Air sampling (AAS). The sampling was done in late 2019, and, therefore, was delivered later in comparison to the PAS sampling activity. Viet Nam and Mongolia were selected to participate and did indeed participate in water sampling. According to Expert Meeting documents, water samples were not expected to be acquired by all participating countries, but a few countries were selected for representativity.	- UNEP Sectoral Report on water monitoring - UNEP Sectoral Report on air monitoring - UNEP Capacity training report - National Reports for all countries - PIRs - Interviews with project team

	Narrative Assessment <i>Discuss the nature and scale of outputs delivered, as well as timeliness, quality, and utility to intended beneficiaries</i>	Sources of Information/Evidence
abiotic matrices. (Baseline: 0, Target: 5) Achievement: 7 • # of training reports for analysis of abiotic matrices (Baseline: 0, Target: 3) Achievement: 5 • # of sectoral reports developed in abiotic matrices (Baseline: 0, Target: 2) Achievement: 2 Other information, not related to the indicators, that demonstrates Output delivery:	Indonesia and Thailand, despite not being selected, also participated in water sampling. Thailand particularly focused on tap water, while Indonesia collected river and ocean water. The Philippines, Thailand, and Cambodia (PUF, pesticide HCB) participated in the POPs analysis. Indonesia also analyzed samples for OCPs in water. Five training reports were developed by participating countries, and four training reports were drafted by the expert laboratories, outlining the activities of the training provided. This surpassed the target (three reports) for the second indicator (<i># of training reports for analysis of abiotic matrices</i>). The curriculum for all countries was mostly the same, with a focus on analysis, with a theoretical part first, and subsequently a practical part. Thailand received training in per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) analysis. Apart from training in 2017, Mongolia received further training in 2019 by the CSIC. The gender balance of training participants shows a positive effect in the representation of women. No other aspect was identified or mentioned affecting disadvantaged or marginalized groups. Two sectoral reports were published, outlining the results and procedures for each relevant country in the water and air matrices, respectively. This fulfilled the target (two reports) of the third indicator (<i># of sectoral reports developed in abiotic matrices</i>). The sectoral reports included data from the other regional POP monitoring projects, leading to robust reports, addressing data gaps earlier identified in Phase I of the GMP project. These reports were not timely delivered for the immediate inclusion of results in the third Global Monitoring Reports (GMR) and Regional Monitoring Report (RMR). However, this was not a requirement, and most of the data was made available in a timely manner through the data warehouse as soon as the data was available. It was not possible to collect or identify in-depth analyses or reports that would facilitate the development of appropriate training programs in the individual countries. Ideally, these	- Interviews with beneficiaries and partners - Expert meeting notes. - SOPs - Protocols - Training report by expert laboratories (Appendix) - Capacity screening questionnaire - In- country mission - Video tutorials^{26, 27, 28}

²⁶ Human Milk sampling: <https://www.unep.org/resources/toolkits-manuals-and-guides/global-monitoring-plan-video-tutorial-pops-human-milk>

²⁷ Active Air sampling: <https://www.unep.org/resources/toolkits-manuals-and-guides/global-monitoring-plan-video-tutorial-pops-active-air>

²⁸ Passive Air sampling: <https://www.unep.org/resources/toolkits-manuals-and-guides/global-monitoring-plan-video-tutorial-pops-passive-air>

	Narrative Assessment <i>Discuss the nature and scale of outputs delivered, as well as timeliness, quality, and utility to intended beneficiaries</i>	Sources of Information/Evidence
	programs would address both the organizational and institutional frameworks for POP monitoring, as well as the required laboratory capacity. This included organizational framework analysis, capacity needs analysis, capacity gap analysis, stakeholder analysis, training needs assessment, and training curricula with rationale. The training reports found contained a summary of the training activities with a participant list. The initial training assessment questionnaire in their filled-out format was not found by evaluators, but their existence and use have been verified through stakeholder information. The reports identified, although not addressing the points above, were qualified as training reports and were therefore fully delivered. All targets set for the indicators were therefore reached and exceeded (number of sectoral reports and countries that carried out sampling). Apart from the aforementioned, at the early stages of the project, Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) guidelines and protocols were created to guide the sampling and analysis of POPs. These were available in English, Spanish, and French. For the water matrix, there were PFAS and PFOS protocols for analysis and one SOP for water sampling. For the air matrix, there were SOPs for both AAS and PAS, and PCB, OCP, PBDE, PCDD/PCDF, dl-PCB protocols for analysis. The SOPs for PAS, water, and milk sampling were done by April 2015 for PFOS. However, for the remaining substances, it was first done in January 2017 in a less timely manner. Nevertheless, the SOPs were active as sampling activities started in March 2017 for most countries. All these materials provided a highly valuable support to produce valuable data for the monitoring of POPs. Video tutorials were available and enhanced the accessibility of the guidance materials. However, it is unclear when video tutorials were finalized and became available, and to what extent these were utilized by the laboratory staff in the Asia region. Some stakeholders stated that it would have provided even more value if these materials had been translated into local languages to avoid misinterpretation and support inclusiveness and accessibility at the local level. All UNEP publications, including overview, sectoral, and regional reports, are available in English and online through UNEP's site. Overall, the positive effects reported by the involved national	

	Narrative Assessment <i>Discuss the nature and scale of outputs delivered, as well as timeliness, quality, and utility to intended beneficiaries</i>	Sources of Information/Evidence
	stakeholders included the gained new insight into the POPs situation in various matrices investigated. This provided a valuable insight, which would otherwise not have been possible without the support from GEF and UNEP's project. The data made available for other regions also supported the comparison and interpretation of results to further evaluate the local levels. This data was used in the national reports as part of the data interpretation. Level of delivery: Fully delivered	
Output 3: Training reports and sectoral report on POPs analysis are available on one biotic core matrix (7th round of human milk survey) in the Asian Region. Performance against Indicator(s) and Target(s) • # of countries that carried out sampling in biotic matrices (Baseline: 0, Target:5) Achievement: 4	The regional report (UNEP, 2024) contained the results from four out of seven countries (Viet Nam, Thailand, Mongolia, and Cambodia), who participated in the milk sampling. Apart from this, four out of seven countries participated in the matrices of national interest (Viet Nam, Thailand, Mongolia, and Indonesia), out of which three countries covered biotic matrices (e.g. eggs, meat, fish). Biotic matrices comprised human milk as a core matrix while other biotic matrices were supplementary and were included as matrices of national interest (e.g. eggs, meat, fish). Indonesia included soil and sediment, which was not qualified as biotic matrices. As a result, four out seven countries carried out sampling in biotic matrices, and the set target (five countries) was therefore not reached. The four national reports included training elements in their reports, although not specifically on analysis of biotic matrices, as stated by the indicator (<i># of training report for analysis of biotic matrices</i>). The type of human milk monitoring undertaken was the collection of individual samples and preparation of one representative sample by country. Any analysis undertaken was therefore not on a individual sample basis. Mongolia, Viet Nam, and Cambodia did not analyze their representative milk sampling, and training provided did not focus on this matrix. Department of Medical Science (DMSC) in Thailand analyzed the representative milk samples, which was described in their national report. The target (two reports) was thereby not reached for the second indicator (<i># of training report for analysis of biotic matrices</i>). It should be noted that the mere existence of training reports do not provide sufficient evidence of the quality of training carried out. More meaningful indicators could have been able to	- UNEP Sectoral Report on human milk survey - National Reports for all countries - SOPs for human milk sampling - Midterm workshop report - Interviews with project team - Interviews with beneficiaries and partners - Project team correspondence with beneficiaries - Book on human milk survey - Chemosphere publications

	Narrative Assessment <i>Discuss the nature and scale of outputs delivered, as well as timeliness, quality, and utility to intended beneficiaries</i>	Sources of Information/Evidence
• # of training report for analysis of biotic matrices (Baseline: 0, Target: 2) Achievement: 1 • # of sectoral reports developed in biotic matrices (Baseline: 0, Target: 1) Achievement: 1 Other information, not related to the indicators, that demonstrates Output delivery:	measure the training curricula's relevance in light of training needs assessments, and trainee evaluations. Due to clearance issues for the human milk sampling, Indonesia and Lao PDR could not participate in the milk survey. These ethical clearances were not granted in time, as these had to be provided by the Health-related departments – outside the involved organizations. National stakeholders described that the process required longer time to be successful. Efforts made by experts and project team to provide customs clearance letters and guidance did not suffice, but were present. In cases where difficulties were experienced, follow-up was provided by the project team. For Indonesia, according to a workshop report, an expert pointed out that the country had formerly participated in the milk survey in 2001. However, many changes in the government structure have taken place in Indonesia, according to stakeholder interviews. The relatively short sampling period was not sufficient to grant the necessary permit/clearance, which, according to an interview, could take six months. SC meetings showed that, within the official statements, clearance letters were still in the process and not readily available to the countries from the start of the project. Once available, the project team had to send these letters multiple times to ensure their use. In the Lao PDR, reorganization also took place. However, later in the project (2021), the reason for not being able to participate in the milk survey was stated as a lack of capacity and human resources. A sectoral report that was focused on the human milk survey results was developed (UNEP, 2023) fulfilling the set target (one report) for the last indicator (<i># of sectoral reports developed in biotic matrices</i>). Apart from data from other regional projects, the sectoral report shows data from the four participating countries. As this was the first participation in the survey for all countries, no trends were determined. The targets were reached for the last stated indicator (<i># of sectoral reports developed in biotic matrices</i>), and as per the abiotic sectoral reports, these were not published in time to be used for the GMR or RMR. However this was not a requirement. Data was provided in a timely manner through the data warehouse.	

	Narrative Assessment <i>Discuss the nature and scale of outputs delivered, as well as timeliness, quality, and utility to intended beneficiaries</i>	Sources of Information/Evidence
	Apart from the sectoral report, an open-access book (Malisch et al, 2023) on the milk survey and a scientific publication (in Chemosphere) presented the results of the GEF-funded GMP projects. The UNEP/WHO human milk survey data highlighted successful long-term collaboration among international organizations and individuals, and provided the highly relevant trend data for the Stockholm Convention on a global scale. This supported the Stockholm Conventions' effectiveness evaluation as it focused on temporal trend assessments with regional data, which can be used for regional differentiation within and between the regions in the five UN Regional groups (Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Eastern European, Latin America and Caribbean, and Western European and Others group (WEOG)). Human milk sampling was assessed to be a non-invasive approach to determine POP levels in humans. According to stakeholders, it was also a cost-effective source for monitoring within its current arrangement with support from UNEP. Level of delivery: Partially delivered	
Output 4: Assessment report of existing analytical capacities prepared and report on POPs analysis undertaken in samples of national priority (other than core matrices) in the Asian Region.	Two rounds of interlaboratory assessment - third and fourth - were held during the project duration. The target (two rounds) of the first indicator (<i># of rounds for interlaboratory assessments held</i>) was reached. The interlaboratory assessment had voluntary registration and participation for any laboratory (public and private) to take part. The assessments were done by the expert laboratories, and workshops were held with the support of regional centres (e.g. Stockholm Convention Regional Centre (SCRC) China and SCRC Technological Laboratory of Uruguay (LATU)). The performance of analytical capacities was evaluated for the participating laboratories, based on predetermined mirror samples sent by the expert laboratories. All interlaboratory results were consolidated in an anonymous form and published (UNEP, 2023a), as well as through reports focusing only on the third (UNEP, 2017) and the fourth (UNEP, 2021) rounds.	- Final Reports (MTM Orebro) - National reports - UNEP Publication on interlaboratory assessments (2023) - Expert meeting notes - Project Implementation Reports - GMP website²⁹

²⁹ <https://www.unep.org/topics/chemicals-and-pollution-action/chemicals-management/pollution-and-health/persistent-1>

	Narrative Assessment <i>Discuss the nature and scale of outputs delivered, as well as timeliness, quality, and utility to intended beneficiaries</i>	Sources of Information/Evidence
Performance against Indicator(s) and Target(s) • # of rounds for interlaboratory assessments held (Baseline: 0, Target: 2) Achievement: 2 • # of countries having high quality data reported for samples of major national interest (Baseline: 0, Target: 3) Achievement: N/A <i>(Details are elaborated in the right-hand column, 'Narrative Assessment')</i>	The project contributed largely beyond the scope, by including countries outside of the participating countries for the Interlaboratory Assessments. In total, 18 countries from the Asia region participated (UNEP, 2023a), five of which were involved in this project. While the scoring and interpretation were well-aligned to be of relevance for the GMP, the connection between the participating laboratories and their contribution to the GMP was not clear. This is because the Interlaboratory assessment is a global exercise and includes laboratories around the world and included many non-project countries for a wider benefit. Each country did not receive an individual result report from the interlaboratory assessments, as there were often more than 100 laboratories across five different regions (Africa, Asia, Central and East Europe, GRULAC, and WEOG) participating in each round. There was no explicit connection between the provided training and the interlaboratory assessments. These, therefore, offered no data on the effects of the training or quality of data. The interlaboratory assessment was not authorized to release ranking of the participating labs and their results. There were two workshops (one in-person and one online) organized to share overall results across the regions of the third and fourth interlaboratory assessments overall. The report by the BCRC China (UNEP, 2023e) discusses capacity training needs for the Maldives, Myanmar, Mongolia, and Cambodia, and includes the National Monitoring Plan of POPs in China. It states that Cambodia lacks analytical capacity and has a 'poor monitoring programme' with limited laboratory capacity. For Mongolia, it concludes that 'all laboratories dealing with environmental sample analysis in the country cannot deliver an analysis of POPs with sufficient accuracy'. Two online regional workshops (2.5 - 3 hours) were held to provide clarification of data and explain the results for the samples at the national and regional levels, not as part of the	- UNEP training report and Appendix 9 - UNEP four rounds of interlaboratory report - SC Meeting notes - Final workshop notes for the fourth round of interlaboratory assessments - Regional workshop reports - Third Regional Monitoring Report (RMR) by ROG members - Final report for the interlaboratory assessment by expert laboratories - PIR - GMP Data Warehouse³⁰ - UNEP Power BI Dashboard³¹ (UNEP, 2024)

³⁰ <https://www.pops-gmp.org/>

³¹ <https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrJoiY2Y3MmE2NjktOWQ4NC00YWE0LTkzNWVtNjhhNWZkYThiMGYzliwidCI6IjBmOWUzNWRiLTU0NGYtNGY2MC1iZGNjLTViYTQxNmU2ZGM3MCIslmMiOjh9>

	Narrative Assessment <i>Discuss the nature and scale of outputs delivered, as well as timeliness, quality, and utility to intended beneficiaries</i>	Sources of Information/Evidence																																								
	interlaboratory assessments, but as part of the GMP data sampling activities. Not all project countries participated in these workshops. Overall conclusions, such as improvements in dioxin, PBDE and POPs in air (UNEP, 2023a), did not inform or assess the capacity at national and the specific laboratory levels. It is unclear whether it was intended for the selected laboratories to represent the national analytical capacity or what the national capacity entailed specifically. To analyze national capacity, other relevant laboratories could have been included. In the Regional report, there are no conclusions or assessments on the overall regional level, based on the presented data/results. It states that comparison results have not been thoroughly assessed (UNEP, 2024). The table below, summarizes the registration and delivery of results for the seven countries in the Asian region and the four rounds of interlaboratory assessments. Cost-efficiency of the assessments has been recommended by experts and through stakeholder revisions. This, in practice, means the introduction of participation criteria to avoid registrations without participation. <table><tr><th>Country</th><th>Round I (2010-2011)</th><th>Round II (2012-2013)</th><th>Round III (2016-2017)</th><th>Round IV (2018-2019)</th></tr><tr><td>Cambodia</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>Indonesia</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>Registered, Delivered</td><td>Registered, Delivered</td></tr><tr><td>Lao PDR</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>Mongolia</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>Registered, Delivered</td></tr><tr><td>Philippines</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>Registered, Delivered</td></tr><tr><td>Thailand</td><td>Registered, Delivered</td><td>Registered, Delivered</td><td>Registered, Delivered</td><td>Registered, Delivered</td></tr><tr><td>Viet Nam</td><td>Registered, Delivered</td><td>Registered, Delivered</td><td>Registered, Delivered</td><td>Registered, Delivered</td></tr></table>	Country	Round I (2010-2011)	Round II (2012-2013)	Round III (2016-2017)	Round IV (2018-2019)	Cambodia	-	-	-	-	Indonesia	-	-	Registered, Delivered	Registered, Delivered	Lao PDR	-	-	-	-	Mongolia	-	-	-	Registered, Delivered	Philippines	-	-	-	Registered, Delivered	Thailand	Registered, Delivered	Registered, Delivered	Registered, Delivered	Registered, Delivered	Viet Nam	Registered, Delivered	Registered, Delivered	Registered, Delivered	Registered, Delivered	
Country	Round I (2010-2011)	Round II (2012-2013)	Round III (2016-2017)	Round IV (2018-2019)																																						
Cambodia	-	-	-	-																																						
Indonesia	-	-	Registered, Delivered	Registered, Delivered																																						
Lao PDR	-	-	-	-																																						
Mongolia	-	-	-	Registered, Delivered																																						
Philippines	-	-	-	Registered, Delivered																																						
Thailand	Registered, Delivered	Registered, Delivered	Registered, Delivered	Registered, Delivered																																						
Viet Nam	Registered, Delivered	Registered, Delivered	Registered, Delivered	Registered, Delivered																																						

	Narrative Assessment <i>Discuss the nature and scale of outputs delivered, as well as timeliness, quality, and utility to intended beneficiaries</i>	Sources of Information/Evidence
	Three out of seven countries (Indonesia, Thailand, and Viet Nam) participated in the Third Round of Interlaboratory Assessments. The same countries also participated in a pilot study of plastic pellet analysis towards the later stage of the project (UNEP, 2024b). Five out of seven countries (Indonesia, Mongolia, Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam) participated on the Fourth Round of Interlaboratory Assessments. Participating countries expressed their interest in taking part in the upcoming interlaboratory assessments. Participation in the assessments increased in the latest rounds. More POPs were also included. Results from the first assessments concluded that there was an overrepresentation from China with 42 laboratories, followed by Viet Nam with 16 laboratories and Thailand with 13 laboratories (UNEP, 2023a). The results for the countries participating in these rounds showed few 'Satisfactory' results for Indonesia, Mongolia, and the Philippines, and a better performance was observed for Thailand and Viet Nam, although no in-depth analysis of their performance was provided. These were not regarding samples of national interest. SOPs were developed to support the sampling of matrices of national interest. Some experts reported that it was difficult for some to identify the relevant ones, and that guidance was needed, and provided by expert laboratories, in order to select the relevant samples. Based on stakeholder interviews and meeting notes, there was still significant progress to be made, and several barriers must be overcome, before the improvement of analytical capacity for all participating countries can be considered feasible. It remains unclear how the results presented in the reports can be applied at an operational level, or what incentives exist to drive improvement of analytical capacity. The interlaboratory evaluations were highly valuable for comparing and standardizing POPs monitoring across countries and regions and were well-received by BRS Secretariat partners and GMP. Expert laboratories and other partners highlighted their importance for effective quality assessment. These evaluations supported laboratory capacity assessments and could track laboratory performance in POPs monitoring. However, it was unclear how well QA/QC	

	Narrative Assessment <i>Discuss the nature and scale of outputs delivered, as well as timeliness, quality, and utility to intended beneficiaries</i>	Sources of Information/Evidence
	methods were aligned with those used by ROG members for data validation in the Regional Monitoring Reports. The third monitoring report (UNEP, 2021a) noted that different analytical procedures and QA/QC practices were sometimes used (p.7). According to one expert laboratory, and reporting results from the countries, only four out of seven participating countries (Indonesia, Mongolia, Thailand, and Viet Nam) took the opportunity to have national samples of interest analyzed by the expert laboratories. The data gained from samples and analysis of matrices of national interest were not included in the Regional report (UNEP, 2024). The data for four countries (Viet Nam, Thailand, Indonesia, and Mongolia) are found in the UNEP dashboard (UNEP, 2024a). No trend data is available; however, it is stated that this data was submitted to the GMP Data Warehouse. The samples for the national interest matrices were not explicitly described as high-quality data by expert laboratories, and it is unclear whether the available results for the national samples were used by the ROG members and integrated into the Monitoring reports of the GMP. The second indicator (<i># of countries having high quality data reported for samples of major national interest</i>) and its target (three countries) is therefore hard to evaluate, as no clear criteria of 'high-quality' were defined, and no evidence of this qualification applied to the participating countries was found in the assessment reports. One criterion, following the envisioned use of the data, is to look at the data screened by ROG members and used for the RMR of the GMP. In the Third RMR of the Asia and Pacific regions, none of the data for samples of national interest ('other media') of the UNEP project were utilized. The evaluators conclude that the target was not met. Level of delivery: Partially delivered	
Output 5: A roadmap for sustainable POPs monitoring for the Asian region is	The first indicator (<i># of assessments on POPs presence in the region and its capacity to analyse them</i>) reportedly surpassed the target (two assessments) according to the latest PIR in 2024. Three sectoral reports assessed the presence of POPs in the region, but did not include the capacity to analyze these. The Regional report (UNEP, 2024a) summarized both the results	- UNEP road map report - UNEP global analysis report

	Narrative Assessment <i>Discuss the nature and scale of outputs delivered, as well as timeliness, quality, and utility to intended beneficiaries</i>	Sources of Information/Evidence
developed with assessment reports contributing to regional report for the GMP prepared. Performance against Indicator(s) and Target(s) • # of assessments on POPs presence in the region and its capacity to analyse them (Baseline: 0, Target:2) Achievement: 2 • # of regional roadmap for sustainable POPs monitoring in the region, with strategy for implementation, milestones and timetable in a regional roadmap (Baseline: 0, Target: 1) Achievement: 0	generated by the expert laboratories (CVUA, VU, MTM), as those generated by the national laboratories (Cambodia, Thailand, and Philippines) as well as the capacity to analyze POPs in the region. The interlaboratory assessment report (UNEP, 2023a) showed results from all four rounds and includes data from participating laboratories in the Asia region. Furthermore, it also showed the presence on POPs in the region. The indicator was therefore surpassed, through the combination of assessments, both focused on the presentation of regional results as well as narrative assessments on capacity levels. The target (2) was achieved through the interlaboratory assessment report and the regional report. For the second indicator (<i># of regional roadmap for sustainable POPs monitoring in the region, with strategy for implementation, milestones and timetable in a regional roadmap</i>), two reports focusing on the sustainability aspects for the GMP were published: 1) "Synthesis Report on the Road Map for Securing Conditions for Sustainable Monitoring of POPs"; 2) "Global Monitoring Plan on POPs: Sustainability Analysis - Synthesis Report". No explicit regional road map was provided by either report. Both reports include substantial and valuable information needed to build on for future GMP monitoring activities and strategies. A case study of the POPsEA monitoring network is detailed, and can be perceived as a regional road map to a limited extend. The regional report includes some elements from the national reports, detailing the needs for sustaining the monitoring activities and the current state of monitoring inventory and capacities. However, no timetable, milestones, and strategy for implementation is included, and therefore the evaluators have found this indicator to not be met, despite the PIR reporting states it as complete. Efforts to address the sustainability of the project were identified, including a stakeholder consultation in Brisbane, Australia, the involvement of GOG members input for the preparation of the reports, the inclusion of lessons learned from previous project in publications, clearly	- Interlaboratory assessment final report - Interviews with project team - Interviews with beneficiaries and partners - Questionnaire sent to national coordinators by evaluators - POPsEA final workshop presentation - Stakeholder meeting report - National reports - UNEP regional report - Final project report (Appendix 12) - UNEP training report - Final workshop report - MTR - In-country mission

	Narrative Assessment <i>Discuss the nature and scale of outputs delivered, as well as timeliness, quality, and utility to intended beneficiaries</i>	Sources of Information/Evidence
• # of countries providing inputs to develop conclusions and lessons learned on GMP phase 2, as well as recommendations and future plans (Baseline: 0, Target: 5) Achievement: 6	stating in the SSFAs that recommendations and inputs for a sustainability road map. A consolidated review, integrating these capacity assessments and other important initiatives, along with key partners, such as the POPsEA network, is crucial for the creation of a region level road map formulated adequately following SMART principles. In the national reports, most (six out of seven) countries contributed to conclusions and recommendations based on their experiences in the project and context. Input as recommendations and future plans are not found in the report of Lao PDR. The target (5) of the third indicator (# of countries providing inputs to develop conclusions and lessons learned on GMP phase 2, as well as recommendations and future plans) was surpassed. The timeliness of the output delivery followed the revised work plans and sequence of activities. The sustainability aspects of the project were not timely addressed, according to the complexity and coordination, consensus, and needs assessment required to create a viable roadmap. These activities could have been part of earlier discussions, ensuring sustainability throughout the project. However, the delivery of the roadmap itself, in its synthesized form, was timely delivered. The Output was partially delivered, as no cohesive road map for the Asian region was provided. However, foundational aspects, parameters, criteria, and information have been gathered to consolidate a regional road map, showing that the project has sufficient experience and integration of knowledge to proceed with. Level of delivery: Partially delivered	

100. The project delivered robust knowledge products: air and water sectoral reports based on PAS in all seven countries (with AAS and water sampling in selected sites), supported by SOPs, protocols, tutorials, and a robust human milk sectoral report. All publications were peer-reviewed, substantial, and in an easy-to-understand language for broader audiences. Despite this, not all countries were participating in the sampling, analysis, and training activities as the sectoral reports and overarching products were meant to reach a high level of global coverage through the other GMP2 regional projects running in parallel (Africa, Pacific, and GRULAC). UNEP's coordination enabled timely submission of

the attained data, despite the project delays. Continued administrative/technical support and translation into national languages would further strengthen the uptake of the Outputs of the project.

101. Countries generated comparable datasets, which exceeded abiotic sampling targets, informed the Third RMR, and were deposited in the GMP Data Warehouse. Training in governmental laboratories and sectoral reporting provided a one-time “snapshot” of POPs levels and initial analytical experience. However, institutional mandates and regular national reporting cycles remain incomplete, and conversion of results into decision-ready formats needs reinforcement.
102. Against the project plan with revised budgets and extensions, Outputs 1–3 were completed, Output 4 was narrowed to selected countries, and Output 5 was focused on an overall GMP roadmap without a defined regional tier. With further attention to differentiated local conditions, Outputs 2–3 showed scalability and could further support the project’s set outcomes. Output 4 provided the continuation of a solid approach to laboratory performance assessment. Continued focus on how this assessment will inform the GMP project and capacity development needs further consideration. Elements of Output 1 were delivered about two years late, delaying data flow, but data were still able to supply essential baseline evidence for future monitoring and trend analysis under the Stockholm Convention.

4.4.2 The GEF Core Indicator 11: Cross-cutting Strategic Areas

103. A summary of the total count of direct beneficiaries by sex, according to GEF Core Indicator 11 (GEF Secretariat, 2022), is provided in Table 15. The direct beneficiaries are further divided by the participating countries that took part in the capacity-building activities. According to the Regional Report of the Asia Region (UNEP, 2024), there were 36 female participants and 22 male participants, amounting to 58 participants in total. During the evaluation, the participant list was distributed to stakeholders, and gender verification was conducted (no responses from Viet Nam and Cambodia). Table 15 shows the results of this verification for training participants, where there was also a higher level of women's participation, as mentioned in the UNEP report.

Table 15: Total Number of Direct Beneficiaries, disaggregated by sex (from Evaluation Verification)

Participating country	Total count	Male	Female
Mongolia	11	3	8
Thailand	12	3	9
Viet Nam	-	-	-
Philippines	11	6	5
Indonesia (<i>incl. Myanmar</i>)	15	9	6
Total	49	21	28

4.4.3 Achievement of Project Outcomes

Table 16: Achievement of Project Outcomes

Outcome 1:	National capacities for implementing the updated POPs Global Monitoring Plan (GMP) are strengthened and demonstrated
Performance against Indicator(s) and Target(s):	# of countries capable to undertake sampling in the core and other matrices for POPs analysis (Baseline: 0, Target: 6) Achievement: 5
Sources of Information/Evidence: <i>List specific source(s) of information that demonstrate the uptake of outputs by intended beneficiaries</i>	• Interviews with beneficiaries • Interviews with project partners • Interviews with project team • UNEP Reports (review of outputs) • Interlaboratory assessment results (UNEP, 2023a) • Questionnaire results • Final project report (2025) • PIRs • MTR • RMR
Narrative Assessment: <i>Discuss the nature, depth, and scale of Outcome. Discuss the contribution, credible association, or attribution of the Outcome level change to the project.</i>	Five out of seven countries completed sampling activities in the core and at least one other core matrix. Two countries did only air matrix and no other matrix (the Philippines and Lao PDR). All participating countries demonstrated the capability to undertake sampling of air, specifically the capacities in PCB and dioxin-like substances. This is, however, only some components of the monitoring activities required to implement the GMP in the region. The uptake of the Outputs was limited, as not all Outputs were available for all participating countries and or integrated to support this Outcome. Not all countries were capable of undertaking sampling in the core and other matrices for POPs analysis. Indonesia, Lao PDR, and the Philippines were unable to undertake milk sampling, a biotic core matrix of the GMP. Only two selected countries (Mongolia and Viet Nam) took water samples. UNEP reports state that monitoring of water needs further development and work. The indicator suggests that it did not necessarily aim to strengthen and demonstrate monitoring capacity for all countries, but for most. A specification of a level of capacity that the Outputs were intended to deliver is required to understand the collective capacity and viability to monitor at a regional level. The minimum requirements based on the scientific representability, covering all POPs from the Convention, and the matrices required to cover the region, can support the pathways from Output to Outcome. POPsEA

	project supported this Outcome through their activities in the same countries (e.g., Lao PDR for air sampling). Their contribution v.s. the GMP2 project's contribution was not evaluated, but both projects' Outputs aimed to support this Outcome and could therefore benefit from a closer collaboration. The GMP requires a level of monitoring stability that is not clarified in the pathway from Output to Outcome. The frequency and timing of monitoring, from sampling to GMP data submission, also need to be defined to evaluate whether it is viable to be maintained by the regional network. In the span of three years, it was demonstrated that this would be possible, although strong support from UNEP, partners, and expert laboratories would be needed, heavily relying on GEF funding and analytical capacities outside of the region. Additional indicators were needed to evaluate the level of capacity for the different components (sampling, analysis, interpretation, etc). This also includes equipment and infrastructure, as reported by stakeholders. Stakeholders reported the misalignment of self-reported capacity levels and the reality of the laboratories, which often could be observed when trainers showed up at the laboratories. According to stakeholders, the conditions and available equipment did not match the expectations or requirements needed to engage in the analysis. The Lao PDR did not have sufficient equipment to receive training. Upon review of the initial questionnaire for the capacity screening, it was observed that limited parameters were investigated and deemed insufficient to evaluate the capacity level at present. The capacities of the involved laboratory staff and project team were demonstrated in their ability to gather samples according to the guidelines and procedures shared, as well as their ongoing support. The ability to analyze the samples was demonstrated to a limited degree (partially reported) for laboratories which were engaged in analysis through the project; however, there is no cohesive study to verify the demonstrated analytical capacities. As stated above, five of seven countries in the project demonstrated their increased capacity to implement the GMP plan. However, the stakeholder workshops in 2019 concluded that the maintenance of a long-term POPs monitoring program would be required to keep long-term trends under review (UNEP, 2019). According to the third RMR by the GMP, which included data produced from this project, it was concluded that there would still be a long way to go to achieve an 'Asia-Pacific Monitoring system to provide timely and reliable data for the GMPs' (United
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	Nations Environment Programme, 2021a). This has been confirmed by the fact-finding. Thus, the evaluators concluded that the outcome was partly achieved, and was in a precarious position, given the risks identified and experienced through staff turnover, and the small number of participants being able to carry out the monitoring. - Results from Mongolia's performance in the intercalibration studies were stated to have only 6.3% 'Satisfactory' results, which indicated a low performance score. - Indonesia stated that there would be no plans to increase analytical capacity in the future. - Viet Nam has certified laboratories and has demonstrated capacity to analyze POPs of relevance (dl-PCBs) to the GMP at a national level. This is, however, not all POPs. - Across countries, the laboratory results did not match the expert laboratory mirror results, suggesting a lack of national capacity to analyze most POPs.
Level of Achievement:	Partially achieved

Outcome 2:	Conditions for sustainable monitoring of POPs in the Asian region are in place with effective reporting taking place consistently
Performance against Indicator(s) and Target(s):	# of countries with reported data on up to 23 POPs (Baseline: 0, Target:5) Achievement: 7 # of regional roadmap for sustainable POPs monitoring published (Baseline: 0, Target: 1) Achievement: 1
Sources of Information /Evidence:	- Interviews with beneficiaries - Interviews with project partners - Interviews with project team - UNEP Reports (review of outputs) - Interlaboratory assessment results (UNEP, 2023a) - Questionnaire results - PIRs - MTR - RMR
Narrative Assessment: <i>Discuss the nature, depth, and scale of Outcome. Discuss the contribution, credible</i>	According to a PIR and national reports, all countries reported data of 23 POPs and in some cases more, surpassing the expected target (5) of the first indicator (# of countries with reported data on up to 23 POPs).

association, or attribution of the Outcome level change to the project.	Regarding the second indicator (<i># of regional roadmap for sustainable POPs monitoring published</i>), while an explicit collaborative regional roadmap for sustainable POPs monitoring was not identified, the Synthesis report on Sustainability Analysis (UNEP, 2024d) is acknowledged for outlining national, regional, and global strategic priorities that would be needed to establish sustainable POPs monitoring. At the national level, countries provided their perspectives and highlighted areas for further focus, which were compiled and published in The Regional Report (UNEP, 2024a). These findings and recommendations laid the groundwork for the potential development of a regional roadmap and, thus, the target of the second indicator was considered to be met in a broad sense. Nevertheless, it is recommended that an explicit regional roadmap, including roles and common interests identified at the regional level, be developed to ensure a cohesive and coordinated regional-level monitoring strategy going forward. The Outcome is stated as <i>Conditions for sustainable monitoring of POPs in the Asian region are in place with effective reporting taking place consistently</i>. Conditions – and thus indicators - should include a national vision, a designated leading entity at the national level, an effective structure, a proper budget, capacity needs assessment and training plans, a strategy for how to carry out the task and improve capacity, etc. A regional roadmap was a useful tool for planning the development of the institutional and regulatory framework around POP monitoring, but in itself, it was not an indication of the conditions being in place. On the contrary, data and interviews suggested that these conditions, particularly necessary capacities, financial allocation or political support, were not present at the national levels for all involved countries and were necessary conditions to continue ongoing laboratory practice. As identified in the reports and verified by stakeholder interviews, ongoing laboratory practice would be needed to maintain monitoring practices. Furthermore, the analysis, interpretation, and selection of data for the GMP still heavily relied on the assistance of expert laboratories. The roadmap synthesis report (UNEP, 2024d) included three pillars to strengthen the conditions for sustainable monitoring: 1) sustainable financing, 2) access to technical resources and expertise for cost-efficient monitoring, and 3) science to action at all levels. Out of the stated sub-categories, the following were addressed by the project: the establishment of QA/QC mechanisms (interlaboratory assessment), the development of guidelines and protocols to ensure comparable data (SOPs), enhanced collaboration among POPs monitoring networks and research initiatives,
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	the provision of guidance on data interpretation (limited extent through the self-paced e-course) and the participation of governmental ministries. The rest of the stated factors in the roadmap report should also be taken into account. According to stakeholders, data gaps that still remain should be addressed in future projects. The Outputs into existing networks (such as POPsEA) need integration to avoid duplication of Outputs. Regional representability has been discussed, but not defined. The project's Outputs were taken up by the ROG and GOG members, and thereby relevant key stakeholders in the Stockholm Convention secretariat. These were also successfully reported and utilized in the TMR. The extent to which this success could be repeated and built upon depends on future donor funding and a higher level of stakeholder engagement at regional levels. According to interviews, the data generated by the project was neither sufficient to justify the relevance of further monitoring activities for the governments, nor accessible to disseminate the findings to relevant departments and audiences. Despite the variety of communication materials produced by the end of the project (e.g. Worst Friends Forever Campaign, self-paced course, webinars), these did not seem to target the audiences at the national levels and were not in the local languages, limiting its propagation and use for the purpose of this stated Outcome. Through interviews, these were not brought up when discussing dissemination to broader audiences.
Level of Achievement:	Partially achieved

104. The potential for delivering the Outputs is acknowledged, with some reservations, as identified through stakeholder interviews, and the barriers yet to be overcome are also identified in the reports published by this project. As described in the ToC section, the intended Outcomes require further support, in particular in terms of country ownership, than the formulated outputs.
105. The project partly achieved Outcome 1. Five of seven countries completed sampling in at least one matrix beyond air, while one country used only passive air sampling. Four countries also sampled a national-interest matrix. Air sampling capacity was demonstrated across all countries, but broader competencies in water and human milk remained uneven. Indonesia, Lao PDR, and the Philippines did not conduct human milk sampling, and only Mongolia and Viet Nam collected water samples, with UNEP noting that water monitoring needs further development. Capacity self-assessments were not always aligned with actual readiness, and several laboratories lacked essential equipment at the beginning of training. Given staff turnover, a small pool of trained analysts, and partial verification of analytical performance, the Outcome is in a precarious state, and additional indicators are needed to track maturation across sampling, analysis, interpretation, QA/QC, equipment, and infrastructure.

106. Outcome 2 was partially achieved. The project met its data provision target, with all seven countries reporting datasets covering over 23 POPs. While a regional roadmap was not produced, the Sustainability Analysis Synthesis and the Regional Report highlighted common priorities and needs, providing a foundation for a future regional roadmap. The relevant Outcome indicator was considered to be met, with a recommendation to formalize a regional plan detailing roles, governance, and shared interests. Core conditions for sustainable monitoring, such as a national strategy, stable structures, budgets, capacity assessments, training, and improvement strategies, are not yet consistent across countries. Routine lab practices remain fragile and rely on expert labs for analysis and data. Evidence was often insufficient for continued investment, and communication efforts (campaigns, webinars, e-learning) were not systematically targeted or translated, limiting their impact. The regional representability of data has been discussed, but not defined, highlighting the need for agreed criteria and governance to ensure coherence and comparability.

4.4.4 Likelihood of Impact

Table 17: Likelihood of Impact

Factors influencing likelihood of impact	Assessment	Justification
Drivers to support transition from Outputs to the Project Outcomes	In place	1. The drivers for commitment included shared obligations as members of the Stockholm Convention, the development of National Implementation Plans (NIPs) by all involved parties, and the specification of monitoring activities within these NIPs. 2. ROG and GOG members were actively involved in making the data relevant for the GMP (in place); 3. The commitments of the key players remained active during the project, although some commitments from e.g. regional coordinator (VEA) did not (partially in place); 4. Regional cooperation was seen as a valuable approach in addressing these capacity gaps, which was in place for both beneficiaries and project partners (in place); 5. WHO-cleared human milk monitoring, conducted with informed consent and recruitment via local health services, which further safeguarded participants' rights and inclusion (in place), and; 6. Shipment and use of chemicals and materials comply with international standards and procedures (in place). The drivers at this level were largely in place.

Factors influencing likelihood of impact	Assessment	Justification
Assumptions for the change process from Outputs to Project Outcomes	Partially hold	Assumptions and the extent to which they hold are as follows: 1. <i>Legal agreements are in place during the project period.</i> This was taken care of in the project's first phase (hold). 2. <i>No natural disaster or human errors or vandalism damages the sampling sites or the air sampling materials hindered monitoring activities.</i> Some damages were reported both at national laboratories and expert laboratories, but had minor effects (hold). 3. <i>Institutions were ready to dedicate time and expertise over the period of two years</i> (hold). 4. <i>The national laboratories were able to absorb some new techniques and procedures in their operation.</i> Some laboratories were not ready for training, some staff lacked basic knowledge, and basic equipment was missing (partially hold). 5. <i>No substantial changes in the participating national institutions' personnel.</i> Staff turnover caused delays, and reorganization of some ministries hindered progress in the activities, eventually leading to minimal participation (did not hold). 6. <i>The financial and human resources of the participating national institutions are adequate throughout the project.</i> Most national representatives highlighted the need for more financial support and human resources to execute the monitoring expected (did not hold). The conditions anticipated for the change process were partially met, as project stakeholders remained committed throughout the project period with strong coordination from the project team. Additionally, no natural disasters negatively impacted the project. However, assumptions regarding resource mobilization faced challenges due to varying circumstances at the national level. Staff turnover led to reduced Outcome uptake, and trained staff had differing levels of preparedness to receive and retain the training necessary to

Factors influencing likelihood of impact	Assessment	Justification
		support progress towards Outcome-level achievements.
Proportion of Project Outcomes fully or partially achieved	Some	The two Outcomes were both partially achieved. Details are elaborated in Table 16.
Drivers to support transition from Project Outcomes to Intermediate States	Partially in place	Drivers to support the transition from project Outcomes to Intermediate States were not identified in the ProDoc. As extended by the evaluators, the list below includes drivers, with status in brackets (): 1. <i>Involved countries share obligations as members of the Stockholm Convention</i> is in place, but at varying levels of operationalization and low implementation (in place). 2. <i>High-quality data and reliable data is available</i> (this was to some extent in place by the end of the project). 3. <i>Established data flows, protocols, and digital infrastructure allow for timely sharing, analysis, and access to GMP data across agencies and at the national and regional level.</i> This was only partially in place by the end of the project, since the project has set this aside, and has not prioritized national capabilities and systems in its execution (partially in place). 4. <i>National and regional authorities prioritise POPs monitoring data in environmental and health policy-making processes.</i> This is only partially in place by the end of the project; some countries demonstrated increased focus on POP monitoring, but all countries lacked clear linkages between POP monitoring and policy making (partially in place). 5. <i>The common goals are clarified for the regional collaboration.</i> The roadmap produced stipulated goals for the regional collaboration, but it was not well documented that the countries would

Factors influencing likelihood of impact	Assessment	Justification
		commit to this plan. Resources were not allocated for the purpose (partially in place). These drivers are partially in place.
Assumptions for the change process from the Project Outcomes to Intermediate States	Partially hold	Some assumptions for the change process from the project Outcomes to Intermediate States were identified in ProDoc. These included: 1. <i>Trained staff remains in place</i> (did not hold). 2. <i>(Co-)funding parties provide the funds they have committed</i> (partially hold). 3. <i>Political commitment among the participating countries stays active throughout the project.</i> While political commitment was demonstrated through the involvement of governmental ministries, co-financing, and membership in the Stockholm Convention, there was no compelling evidence of strong or proactive political commitment to implementing the GMP at the national level (hold). As extended by the evaluator, these include: 4. <i>Evidence demand exists.</i> Most governments have not demonstrated increased demand for POP evidence after project termination (did not hold). 5. <i>Data credibility and comparability are accepted.</i> The assumption should rather focus on the quality of data than the acceptance (by whom) (partially hold). 6. <i>No blocking interest from other stakeholders (affected sectors) prevents consideration of data.</i> No evidence of such blocking interests has been identified. However, this could be changed in the future (hold). 7. <i>There is a willingness to share data.</i> Data was shared (hold). And for the second Intermediate State: 8. <i>Resource pool remains feasible.</i> The significant staff turnover indicates that this assumption did not hold (did not hold).

Factors influencing likelihood of impact	Assessment	Justification
		9. <i>Adequate legal agreements and laboratory infrastructure are in place and operational.</i> As laboratories lacked equipments, this assumption did not hold (did not hold). 10. <i>International cooperation and participation in interlaboratory assessments are maintained.</i> This is only the case if supported by new international funding. As the next rounds of project funding for the GMP were approved, it is plausible that this can hold (hold). 11. <i>Politicians and regulators acknowledge the importance of monitoring and POP emission reduction, and ensure that the differentiated impacts of gender and vulnerable groups are addressed.</i> Evidence did not support this assumption (did not hold). Some of these assumptions (e.g. 6) were not considered in the project, and were hard to assess, as no industry or private stakeholder was part of the GMP2.
Proportion of Intermediate States achieved	Some	Data are and will be effectively used in the Stockholm Convention effectiveness evaluation, which directly contributes to the fulfilment of this Intermediate State (#1). The second Intermediate State requires an effective GMP implementation, which currently has not been achieved yet. This makes the proportion of intermediate states to 'Some'.
Drivers to support transition from Intermediate States to Impact	Not in place	No drivers were identified at the ProDoc for this level. As extended by the evaluator, this includes: 1. <i>Monitoring insights on vulnerable groups (e.g., women of childbearing age, Indigenous communities) are built into priorities, budgets, and protection measures.</i> 2. <i>Accountability for societal actors is reasonably shared among actors and global cooperation shows positive effects.</i> There is no evidence identified by the evaluators that these are currently in place.

Factors influencing likelihood of impact	Assessment	Justification
Assumptions for the change process from Intermediate States to Impact	Do not hold.	No assumptions were identified at the ProDoc at this level. As extended by the evaluator, this includes: 1. <i>Industry acts socially consciously when informed about the POP situation.</i> (do not hold) 2. <i>The national regulatory cycles - permits, inspection, control and enforcement - are sufficiently mature and effective.</i> There is no evidence identified by the evaluators that these are currently in place. (do not hold).

107. Expert partners expressed a concern about the chemicals manufacturing industry's ability to adapt to the Stockholm Convention's ban and phase-out plan, given the ambition to produce new substances not listed in the Convention due to their novelty. This poses a significant challenge for achieving the project's overall desired impact.

108. The outreach communication's revision includes both concerns and positive findings. Based on stakeholder interviews, the evaluators have identified areas of risk for unintended consequences in communicating the findings regarding the POPs background data. The interpretation, use, and communication of concentration data categorized as low and under control, or even in decline, risk giving the false impression that POPs were not a risk worth prioritizing. The misinterpretation was especially at risk of misuse for members of society who were not part of the scientific community and cannot differentiate 'background data' from 'hotspot' data. An adverse effect on the communication of a downward trend could therefore risk lowering the POP agenda's priority, particularly when priority was already low. This could have implications for marginalized groups, in particular those living or working in areas where POPs pollution was high and posed human health and environmental risks. However, no evidence of negative unintended consequences was found in this regard.

109. The likelihood of the project's long-term impacts is considered relatively plausible, but contingent on critical post-project conditions, including the lack of national financial support and complementary initiatives addressing the private sector and civil organisations. Given the different circumstances of each country, the likelihood of certain Outcomes changes. The established protocols and experience gained could enable countries to continue POPs monitoring and contribute quality data to the global monitoring system. Due to the high resource requirements to participate in the GMP, this is less likely for Cambodia, Lao PDR, the Philippines, and Mongolia, which have reported funding and financial barriers, and more likely for Viet Nam and Thailand, which have established laboratory equipment, infrastructure, and financial support for monitoring actions.

Findings Statements on Effectiveness:

110. All five project components were delivered either partially or fully. Apart from the specified Outputs, deliveries, such as webinars, e-learning modules, and public awareness campaign materials, were also identified. These materials were available broadly, and most were online publications in English (for some, in Spanish and French

as well). While some Outputs were intended for national beneficiaries (e.g. SOPs, agreements, interlaboratory assessments), others (e.g. data in the warehouse, published sectoral reports) were intended for key stakeholders in the Stockholm Convention, COP, ROG, and GOG. A clearer and more outlined pathway for how the Outputs support the stated project Outcomes would benefit the project's effectiveness.

111. Outcome 1, *National capacities for implementing the updated POPs Global Monitoring Plan (GMP) are strengthened and demonstrated*, was partially achieved, as increased capacity was established through the project, as seen by the ability to deliver data to the GMP.
112. Outcome 2, *Conditions for sustainable monitoring of POPs in the Asian region are in place with effective reporting taking place consistently*, was partially achieved. The necessary conditions for sustainable monitoring of POPs in the countries were outlined. Still, those specific to the Asian region were neither defined nor operationalized, and the support to improve national organization and framework for POP monitoring in the participating countries was not sufficient to fulfil the conditions.
113. The likelihood of a long-term Impact depends on assumptions that national authorities maintain and expand regular monitoring activities, secure adequate funding, and retain skilled staff to continue the work. If governments show ownership by integrating POPs monitoring into national programs (as envisaged) and resources remain available, then the likelihood of the project's contributions could be increased to influence the expected impact. At the time of the completion of the project, the project lacked the necessary Drivers and therefore needs to address the fundamental Assumptions. The overall likelihood of Impact is rated as Moderately Unlikely.

Rating for Effectiveness: Moderately Satisfactory

Rating for Availability of Outputs: Moderately Satisfactory

Rating for Achievement of Project Outcomes: Moderately Satisfactory

Rating for Likelihood of Impact (Use 'Likely' scale): Moderately Unlikely

4.5 Financial Management

4.5.1 Adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures

114. Overall, the project adhered to the Financial Policies and Procedures of UNEP.
115. The Finance Manager and Task Manager organized weekly meetings to review projects and raise concerns. Reportedly, only concerns of delays due to lack of bank account details for recipients and contracts not being in place were raised for these GMP2 projects. Financial reporting from partners was delayed, as the project's initial disbursement to countries was delayed. This was mainly due to administrative procedures, such as no recipient bank account available or contracts not yet being in place. Therefore, in the first years, there were no or delayed expenditure reports. In later stages, the postponement of activities further delayed disbursements. The timeliness of the expenditure reports' submission was irregular. Expenditure was within the approved budgets and revisions. Six no-cost budget revisions (in 2017, 2019, 2021, 2022, March 2023 and December 2023) were submitted and approved.

116. Evaluators were provided with financial documentation for the project, including most key contracts (SSFAs, PCAs, and Internal Cooperation Agreements (ICAs)) and their amendments, all of which were available in a similar format with some deviations. A substantial overview of budgets and expenses by UNEP documents is presented appropriately, with a financial overview divided into components and budget lines.
117. There was a total of two stand-alone budget revisions. The Budget revisions also adhered to no-cost project extensions and included supporting documents and revised work plans. Decisions were implemented internally in UNEP in coordination between the project management team and the financial officers. The project team clarified the identified irregularities regarding the allocation of funds before the extension approval. Financial management risk was rated 'medium' in GEF PIR reports from 2016 to 2020 and was rated 'low' from 2023. Risk ratings for PIR for 2021 and 2022 reports were absent, but difficulties of reimbursement were narrated. The SC reviewed the budget and approved it.
118. At the early stages, some delays were attributable to internal issues, such as a change of project managers, a lack of human resources, challenges with disbursements to partners, and financial reporting and administrative issues, including the implementation and use of a new system for financial overviews (UMOJA). Later in the project, partners' institutional procurement processes and customs clearance contributed to the delay. The SSFA and PCAs were amended, and for the most part, except for some cases, these confused some parties who looked at contracts for time planning.
119. Funds sent to intermediary partners (BCCC-SCRC LATU) were returned after an unsuccessful transfer (of USD 57,000). One partner country did not receive any of the allocated grant funds (the Philippines), and another partner country (Lao PDR) received around 28% of the grant allocated. Similar issues in receiving funding from UNEP were observed in these two instances. Both recipients were unable to receive funding, either fully or partially, because internal verification processes required time, hindering the timely delivery of funds and delaying the execution of project activities. In both instances, the involvement of the Finance Ministries or Treasury Departments of the respective governments was required to open bank accounts to receive funding or to grant permits to receive these funds through existing accounts. For both, the inclusion of BCCC-SCRC-LATU in their SSFA was intended to mitigate these issues. Still, it proved unsuccessful in facilitating the transfers for the Philippines, which is why a regional institution might have been a better choice. According to a stakeholder interviewed, a Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer evaluation (HACT) could be useful in the design phase to assess the eligibility of a beneficiary who has the means to receive the funding/grant.
120. At the inception workshop (2016) and later in the Experts meeting (2016), it was noted that some countries requested funds to be transferred through UNIDO. A representative from Viet Nam offered to receive and transfer to other countries.
121. No cash advances were requested, and therefore no cash transfers were documented; countries, such as the Philippines and the Lao PDR, paid costs in advance from their own budgets to proceed with initial activities. For participating countries, specific activities were delayed, eventually dropped, and amended, which had implications for the countries' ability to complete the intended activities. The evaluators found no evidence that the initial unavailability of funds hindered project activities for the expert laboratory partners, as co-finance was committed. Securing co-finance from partners positively affected the project's progress, demonstrating strong commitment from IGOs and academic institutions. The project attracted and secured significant additional co-

financing from WHO, CSIC, IVM VU, BCCC-SCRC LATU, and BCRC China. Details are shown in Table 19.

4.5.2 Completeness of Financial Information

122. Co-finance reports were not found for all project partners and their expenditure results. Correspondence between UNEP and partners shows that UNEP requested an email confirmation as sufficient documentation. For the statements received, it was at times unclear to discern which share specifically belonged to the Asian project for partners who contributed to all four regional projects. No internal overview of co-finance by source and UNEP budget lines was found. The confirmed co-finance is therefore based on partner email confirmations, statement documents, or reports with varying degrees of detail. The evaluators confirmed only the amounts where documentation was present. Expenditure reports did not specify in-cash contributions. Therefore, these were not confirmed.
123. Direct communication from UNEP to partners shows limited ambition in requiring a well-documented picture of the co-financing. Accordingly, the reported co-financing appears to have covered factors external to the project and heavy investments in equipment with function, and lifetime way beyond the GMP2 project (CVUA).
124. The identified co-finance amounts are stated in Tables 18 and 19. The 'Confirmed' columns reflect the figures discerned by evaluators with documentation available. A total co-financing of **USD 11,721,802** has been documented (including the additional co-finance secured), matching closely the originally envisaged co-financing of **USD 13,164,900**. In-cash transaction approvals were missing and are therefore not counted in this amount.
125. As seen in the 'difference' columns in Tables 18 and 19, co-financing amounts were not verified due to missing verification statements for Lao PDR, UNEP, and RECETOX. These were therefore not added to the total verified amount. Apart from this, there were some amounts confirmed but reported differently, some with amounts less than planned or reported, and others exceeding amounts. Mongolia, the Philippines, and BCRC China reported less than expected, while Indonesia, Thailand, MTM, and JESC/NIES reported higher amounts. The evaluators were able to confirm **USD 11,721,802** for the total value of co-financing.
126. It is unclear how the BCRC China contributed to their reported in-cash amounts in the co-financing documentation. The Philippines did not receive any funding, yet carried out activities, and their reported expenses were therefore taken here as in-kind cofinance. MTM Orebro reported additional funds of USD 42,140, but, as co-finance was provided to the other three regional projects, the amount was divided among them, and the project team reported the final amount for this project to be committed from ProDoc.
127. WHO and CVUA statements are available, but the calculation of actual co-financing is not robust for several reasons: The WHO statement covers activities that explicitly are not part of the GMP project, and the CVUA statement includes a large amount (4 M\$) for equipment, which has not been purchased or used solely for this project, and therefore the amount should be depreciated over the equipment's lifetime, and split between the GMP project and other activities. It is also unclear how the CVUA co-financing was distributed among regional projects or what the actual amounts were implied in the statements. However, CVUA's significant involvement in the GMP projects is recognized, and its co-financing significantly covered the costs required to complete POP monitoring. Their co-finance costs include relevant project-related expenses, such as method validation, technical equipment, staff, infrastructure, and the expansion of the

number of POPs analyzed to include all those listed in the COP-9 (2019) and two POPs listed by the POPRC in agreement with UNEP.

128. Despite the reporting uncertainty and missing proof of co-financing, it is undoubtedly clear from the project activities and resources mobilized that RECETOX and UNEP have substantial, dedicated in-kind contributions, and Lao PDR also mobilized resources to complete air sampling activities. Therefore, it is important to highlight that although these in-kind contributions were not verified in their quantifiable amounts, and were part of the total co-finance sum stated, co-finance was provided by all partners and beneficiaries.
129. By 2018, the PIR stated that three participating countries submitted their financial reports. Expenditure reports were received from all countries. Substantive progress reports were delivered by countries as part of activity monitoring, which did not include financial information but provided descriptions of the progress of activities undertaken by each country.
130. Not all audited financial reports from grant recipients were provided to the evaluators. One audited report is in a foreign language (Swedish) and lacks expenditure overviews. Two audited reports, where six were expected, were found to be valuable and adequate for the involvement of the grant recipient. The audited financial reports are, therefore, incomplete. Details of the project's financial management are listed in Table 20.

Table 18: Initial Co-financing planned, actual and difference for sources committed in ProDoc

Co-financing Type/Source	Planned (USD)		Confirmed (USD)		Difference (USD)
	In-kind	In-cash	In-kind	In-cash	Planned vs. actual
Cambodia	682,900	-	682,900	-	0
Mongolia	600,000	-	3,500	-	-596,500
Indonesia	951,000	-	980,864	-	29,864
Lao PDR	550,000	-	-	-	-550,000
Philippines	985,000	-	10,356	-	-974,644
Thailand	650,000	-	688,741	-	38,741
Viet Nam	1,800,000	-	1,855,000	-	55,000
UNEP	200,000	-	-	-	-200,000
MTM	1,200,000	-	1,200,000	-	0
CVUA	3,726,000	-	3,545,200	-	-180,800
RECETOX	995,000	-	-	-	-995,000
BRS	270,000	25,000	270,000	-	-25,000
JESC/NIES	530,000	-	688,741	-	158,741
TOTALS	13,139,900	25,000	9,925,302		-3,239,598

Table 19: Additional Co-finance leveraged as documented in the Final report and confirmed by the evaluators

Co-financing Type/Source	UNEP final Report (USD)		Confirmed (USD)		Difference (USD)
	In-kind	In-cash	In-kind	In-cash	Reported vs. statements
WHO	187,000	-	187,000	-	0
CSIC	250,000	-	250,000	-	0
IVM VU	55,500	-	55,500	-	0
BCCC-SCRC LATU	14,000	-	14,000	-	0
UNEP	625,000	-	-	-	-625,000
BCRC China	1,915,440 (unspecified if in-kind or cash)		1,290,000	-	-625,440
TOTALS	3,046,940		1,796,500		-1,250,440

Table 20: Financial Management

Financial management components:		Rating	Evidence/ Comments
1. Adherence to UNEP's/GEF's policies and procedures:		S	
Any evidence that indicates shortcomings in the project's adherence ³² to UNEP or donor policies, procedures, or rules		No	Shortcomings in the financial management were not related to the project's adherence to UNEP policies, procedures, or rules.
Was first disbursement carried out within 9 months of UNEP's project approval date		Yes	UNEP internal financial documentation. A sum of USD 971,551 was sub-allotted by the Implementing Unit to the Executing Unit (Chemicals and Health Branch, Industry and Economy Division) in 2015. No evidence of actual disbursement was provided.
Were the procurement policies of UNEP and the donor(s) followed? (<i>where applicable</i>)		Yes	Documentation gaps of supporting expenditure documentation (for e.g. equipment and material purchases) were identified.
2. Completeness of project financial information³³:		MS	
Provision of key documents to the evaluator (based on the responses to A-H below)			
A.	Co-financing and Project Cost's tables at design (by budget lines)	Yes	ProDoc includes both.
B.	Revisions to the budget	Yes	Revisions of the budget included correspondence and documents.
C.	All relevant project legal agreements (e.g. SSFA, PCA, ICA)	Yes	Legal agreements and their amendments were complete.
D.	Proof of fund transfers	No	Proof of first fund transfers for the year 2015 was provided from UNEP's internal system. No other fund transfer documentation was available.
E.	Proof of co-financing (cash and in-kind)	Yes	Partial and limited level of detail on the expense/budget components.
F.	A summary report on the project's expenditures during the life of the	Yes	An Excel overview for the quarters with budget lines, project components, and at an annual level. No

³² 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.

³³ See also document 'Criterion Rating Description' for reference.

Financial management components:		Rating	Evidence/ Comments
	project (by budget lines, project components, and/or annual level)		written report or statements of any other kind were identified.
G.	Copies of any completed audits and management responses (<i>where applicable</i>)	No	Three financial audit reports were received and reviewed, out of which only two followed the PCA agreement and provided a relevant expense overview for the project period. According to PCAs, three more audits (Viet Nam, RECETOX and CVUA) were to be delivered four-six months after the completion of the project, but were not found.
H.	Procure documents ³⁴ , including the approved requisition document and Source Selection Plan (<i>where applicable</i>)	N/A	Procurement guidelines are included in PCA agreements to a limited extent. Aspects of the UN Code of Conduct could have been included. Procurement Plans, without specified codes of conduct or procurement guidelines, are present. No competitive solicitation processes or partner procurement processes seem to have taken place.
I.	Any other financial information that was required for this project (list):	N/A	Substantive progress reports by recipient countries, as stated in the SSFA agreement. This was provided for all countries and included a summary of the status of the delivery of activities. No financial information is part of this report.
Overall rating		S	

Findings Statements on Financial Management:

131. The overview of funds and the clear allocation of the budget for cross-cutting Outputs and administrative costs relevant to all four regional projects appear to have been adequately managed, despite some inconsistencies and the complexity of the project. Delays in disbursement were identified. The co-financing of all project stakeholders ensured that these delays did not significantly hinder scheduled and accorded activities for expert laboratories. Still, activity commitments were cut short for partners experiencing delays or disbursement failures. Clear communication between financial officers and project management mitigated the risks of further delays. None of the extensions required additional funds to be allocated, which is evidence of good follow-up on financial monitoring and the ability to adapt project activities accordingly.

132. The overall picture of co-financing is unclear or vaguely documented. UNEP did not require substantiated accounts, and partners delivered co-finance statements that appeared to cover factors external to the project.

Rating for Financial Management: Satisfactory

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

Rating for Completeness of Financial Information: Moderately Satisfactory

³⁴ Relevant for procurement action over USD 10,000 in value.

4.6 Efficiency

133. The project was built on partnerships and experience established through the GMP1 project (2009-2012). Key stakeholders gained experience in GMP implementation in other regions (Africa, Latin America and Caribbean region, and the Pacific), and some recommendations were integrated into this project to avoid duplication. Continuity with the project, "Assessment of Existing Capacity and Capacity Building Needs to Analyse POPs in Developing Countries" (GEF ID: 2423) (2004 – 2012) has been identified. This project supported the development of the Interlaboratory assessment procedures as well as initial insights on capacity building needs in selected countries (Ecuador, Fiji, Moldova, Kenya, and Uruguay). Stakeholders from IVM, VU, and MTM were involved in the project's implementation. Relevant findings and lessons learned for the capacity-building elements (as stated in the project's TE) were not necessarily directly addressed by this project, such as the benefits of the involvement of industry and policy actors. There was no duplication of both project locations, as none of these projects were in the partnering countries of the GMP2 Asia Region project.
134. Early project delays included the retirement of the project management team at UNEP (2016), administrative delays, and contractual delays between the participating countries and UNEP. These meant that training and sampling activities were delayed, with the start of the first training (in Mongolia) almost midway through the initial project timeline (February 2017), requiring project extensions at a later stage of the project implementation to finalize all project components. In later stages, COVID-19 caused delays, specifically for interlaboratory workshops, which led to the cancellation of training activities in Viet Nam. Mitigation measures included organizing meetings and workshops online. Details of no-cost extensions are described in Table 21.
135. Work plans were updated and revised, and the project proceeded with set milestones, despite not all national stakeholders being on board due to various administrative and communication issues. The project team successfully maintained the progress of activities, which supported the project's progress, ensuring that no further time was wasted waiting for a coordinated start to sampling activities. Once the SOPs were published, sampling activities began soon after in the majority of countries (five of seven countries). For the remaining two countries, activities started a year later.
136. The wide use of prepared training materials, such as guidance documents, SOPs, and video tutorials (milk sampling), ensured resource efficiency in the preparation of these materials. This was possible due to the coordinated approach of the four similarly designed regional projects and the involvement of the project's experts in their design. The project benefited from SOPs developed by CSIC, to which funding was sourced from the GRULAC project. The project maintained the budget, ending with leftover funds, which showed effective use of resources to achieve (partially or fully) the project outputs.
137. Some resources were not spent as intended. This has been identified in the human milk survey: glassware for milk sampling was delivered to all countries, but only four countries sent samples for analysis. In the interlaboratory assessment, the distinction between registered laboratories and delivered sample results resulted in inefficient use of resources. This point of resource use has been identified as a lesson learned and is included in Section 5 of this Terminal Evaluation report.

138. The SC oversaw all four regional projects. At some of their meetings, all four projects were discussed in tandem, ensuring efficient use of resources at the decision-making level. These constitute time-saving measures put in place to maximize results. Additionally, expert meetings were held separately to discuss technical aspects and more in-depth approaches for the training, monitoring, interlaboratory assessments, etc. The configuration of a centralized administration through UNEP was also part of the time-saving measures put in place.
139. The project's key environmental impact arose from air travel, the number of which appeared on the low side; in fact, more face-to-face meetings with project staff and governmental representatives could have increased the likelihood of achievement of project outcomes (with an additional project environmental impact to be accepted).

Table 21: Overview of Project Extensions

Type of project extension (cost/no-cost)	Duration (# months)	Reason for no-cost extension
1 st No-cost extension (Completion date extended from 30/12/2020 to 30/06/2021)	6 months	Delay of progress
2 nd No-cost extension (Completion date extended from 30/06/2021 to 30/06/2022)	12 months	Delays caused by COVID-19
3 rd No-cost extension (Completion date extended from 30/06/2022 to 30/06/2023)	12 months	More time needed for the completion of activities
4 th No-cost extension (Completion date extended from 30/06/2023 to 31/12/2023)	6 months	More time needed for finalization of reports and remaining activities
5 th No-cost extension (Completion date extended from 31/12/2023 to 30/06/2024)	6 months	More time needed for interim sampling, closure of activities, and coordinated closure with other regional projects.

Findings Statements on Efficiency:

140. The same resources could be utilized to benefit multiple projects, thereby reducing spending on their preparation. These materials were reportedly used in all regional projects, indicating significant benefits beyond the projects. The project's timeliness was compromised because regional projects were expected to proceed in tandem. The required synergy among all four projects to achieve efficient benefits was challenged by various administrative, technical, and logistical issues encountered at the execution level for each stakeholder.

Rating for Efficiency: Moderately Unsatisfactory

4.7 Monitoring and Reporting

4.7.1 Monitoring of Project Implementation

141. The project established relevant progress and risk monitoring mechanisms through reporting and ongoing communication, supported by the clear delegation of reporting responsibilities. Reporting included PIRs (2016-2024) and narrative reports (2017-2020) covering the yearly progress. Progress report updates at the activity level were completed quarterly (2022-2024). The expenditure forecast for internal use at UNEP was also part of the financial monitoring for all regional projects (2019-2023). Financial reports, including budgets, expenditures, balances, obligations, and cumulative totals, supported the financial management and monitoring of funds on a yearly basis (2016), half-yearly (2017-2020), and quarterly (2021-2024).
142. The monitoring and evaluation budget was set to USD 70,000 in total. The components constituting the monitoring and evaluation were (i) inception workshop and report, (ii) half-yearly progress reports, (iii) Project Implementation Reports (PIRs), (iv) final report, (v) project review, and steering by SC, (vi) Mid Term Review (MTR), (vii) End-term financial audit at national levels (not completed), (viii) independent terminal evaluation, and (ix) Independent financial audit (not completed). The only elements that were covered by the allocated amounts were the MTR and the TE. The other activities were part of the project budget and integrated as part of the project activities. No independent financial audits for the SSFAs were completed, as it was not required unless requested by UNEP, as stated in the agreements. No requests were made, and therefore no funds were used for this purpose.
143. PIRs were completed by the UNEP Project Manager and Task Manager, and were a substantial part of the project's internal monitoring. The PIR template was changed throughout the project. However, it mostly included progress ratings, implementation status, risk assessments, narrative status reports, action plans, and problem identifications. No mid-term targets were defined. Action plans and problem identification tables were not described in substantial detail in the first PIRs, but they were more comprehensive in 2020, when more risk factors were present, including COVID-19. Completed work plans were present, which were revised as the project was extended.
144. The project framework did not specify clear or measurable indicators. Instead, it listed Outputs and reporting on planned activities. Activity descriptions often combined several components, making it hard to track the individual components required, such as technical support, SOP development, and training. The monitoring reports should define clear indicators relevant to the project Outputs and Outcomes. This was also specified in the MTR (2018). The reporting format changed, but it did not include appropriate indicators.
145. The budget allocation for monitoring and evaluation activities followed the UNEP guidelines and was thereby adequate. However, the project would benefit from more frequent and close cooperation and monitoring of activities on the ground at the country level. Apart from the substantive progress reports from countries (delivered with varied frequency), monitoring on the ground in each country was unclear and not well-documented. More extensive communications and frequent monitoring could have

supported the project's adaptive ability to respond to issues, which eventually caused overall delays.

146. Major issues documented were raised and addressed either internally or at the SC meetings, as described by the project team and documented in the meeting minutes.
147. Many logistical and administrative elements were used to ensure timely coordination of sent and received packages containing samples or equipment, which were tracked closely and communicated, and to inform of upcoming adaptations to the project implementation.
148. In its implementation, the UNEP project team and the SC demonstrated adaptive management by extending project closure dates, for instance, for late sampling activities in the Philippines and Cambodia.

4.7.2 Project Reporting

149. There were no training or workshop feedback materials that represented the perspectives of project beneficiaries for project evaluation or monitoring. There could have been a beneficial feedback mechanism, enabling the project to adapt and address the uncovered needs of beneficiaries, ensuring further inclusion.
150. According to the SSFA for project beneficiaries, these were required to support project monitoring by delivering substantive progress and expenditure reports to UNEP on a biannual basis. Financial and progress reports for all countries were delivered, thereby supporting monitoring at the local level. Where disbursements were actualized, evaluators identified no irregularities indicating they were not delivered as expected. Further support from UNEP at the local levels could be identified if monitoring were systematically done at this level. No budget line in the SSFA was allocated to the monitoring at these levels.
151. The documented narrative and data in the PIR were sometimes broad and non-specific. For instance, it mentioned "three countries" instead of the specific countries in question. There is, therefore, room for improvement in the specificity.
152. The same was applied to gender-disaggregated data, which was not present in the monitoring and reporting documentation reviewed by the evaluators. The monitoring reports reviewed were qualified as gender neutral, as the data and conclusions presented neither reflected gender-based assumptions nor favoured/marginalized any specific gender. Gender-disaggregated data were present in the output UNEP report (2024b) and expert laboratory training reports (UNEP, 2018). It is noted that the project's funding cycle and reporting requirements changed over the course of the project, affecting what was included and recorded as part of the monitoring. For example, gender aspects were not required by the donor at the time of project approval (2014).
153. Information was shared with UNEP colleagues working on the GMP projects in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Pacific. The evaluators have not identified meeting minutes, workshop agendas, or other documentation, demonstrating that the four regional projects cooperated closely to understand barriers and prepare solutions that could increase the likelihood of achieving the outcomes. There is no evidence that the information and knowledge compiled in the project were discussed with UN colleagues working with governments in the countries.

Findings Statements on Monitoring and Reporting:

154. Monitoring and Reporting (M&R) were largely adequate and adaptive, with some reservations in the level of detail and specificity, and not all stated parameters were addressed. The project maintained regular PIRs, narrative progress reports, quarterly activity updates, and a structured cadence of financial reporting and expenditure forecasting that informed management decisions and SC oversight. Work plans were revised in line with successive extensions, and adaptive management was evident in schedule adjustments for late sampling (e.g., the Philippines, Cambodia).
155. The system lacked beneficiary-facing feedback tools (e.g., training/workshop surveys); however, progress/financial reports supported progress tracking at the local beneficiary level. Monitoring at the national and local implementation was less robust. Efforts to strengthen this aspect would support the oversight of the project, enabling the project management team to provide timely support.

Rating for Monitoring and Reporting: Satisfactory

Rating for Monitoring of Project Implementation: Satisfactory

Rating for Project Reporting: Satisfactory

4.8 Sustainability

4.8.1 Socio-political Sustainability

156. The sustainability of project outcomes has a high degree of dependency on political factors. The strongest factor for commitment to the monitoring is through the Stockholm Convention. As all the participating countries are members and have developed NIPs, their interest in the Stockholm Convention has been demonstrated. Multiple countries received financial and technical support in formulating updates to their NIPs through GEF funding, which assisted their ongoing efforts to fulfil their obligations to the SC. Assuming this assistance will prevail, the commitments can remain strong.
157. The science-oriented GMP project had a very limited focus on the political processes, as the focus was on providing POP-monitoring results for the global monitoring effort. The data resulting from countries' involvement did not have a significant impact on national-level policymaking. The MTR recommended establishing a stronger link between policymakers, which was not sufficiently addressed.
158. The project was characterized by a disconnection between project processes/results and political decision-making at the national level, leading to a low likelihood of ownership among government and stakeholders.
159. In Thailand, a national Sub-Committee on Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants was organized years before the project approval, as stated in the project's national report. At the implementation phase of the project in 2018, it appointed a Working Group on the Development of the National Master Plan and Action Plan for the Analysis and Monitoring of Persistent Organic Pollutants, which included government departments, universities, and a governmental research centre, e.g., the National Metal and Materials Technology Center (MTEC). The organizational and political support required is comparatively at a higher maturity level. Thus, the likelihood of continuation of monitoring is relatively higher for a country like Thailand.

160. None of the national stakeholders who were interviewed considered monitoring of background POP concentrations a priority within their governments. The consequences of POP pollution are long-term and invisible. According to some stakeholders, POPs are perceived neither as problematic as, e.g., mercury contamination, which has visible acute health effects, nor as tangible as addressing a specific sector, such as the plastic sector or a specified industrial area or product. In the field of POPs, more attention goes to areas such as the destruction or waste handling of contaminated sites, food chain contamination, or sector-specific assessments. Some stakeholders hope for monitoring of high-risk areas (hotspots), which are limited parts of the GMP and addressed strategically by this project through the inclusion of samples of national interest.

4.8.2 Financial Sustainability

161. According to national representatives interviewed, the countries typically have not continued their monitoring activities past the project completion date. This is due to a lack of funding, organizational changes, personnel changes, and, in general, a prioritization of other environmental issues. Sufficient funding is not allocated to continue monitoring in the Philippines, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, and Indonesia.

162. A roadmap was developed with relevant elements, where funding was mentioned as a key barrier for ongoing monitoring. The GMP project has secured financing for the next round of the GMP through a UNEP-led Global Chemicals Monitoring Programme. However, overall, and specifically for funding, there is no exit strategy to address the identified needs and issues as addressed by national reports. The project relies, therefore, on donor funding and the continuation of external financial support for the continuation of monitoring activities in the region. This does not sufficiently address the financial sustainability of the project.

4.8.3 Institutional Sustainability

163. The project contributed to strengthening laboratories in POP monitoring. However, limited future budgets, increased demands for POP monitoring competencies and equipment, and a high staff turnover significantly diminished the likelihood of institutional sustainability. As stated in UNEP reports (UNEP, 2024d) and through stakeholder interviews, the expansion of 'regrettable substitutions' (i.e. the phenomena where banned harmful substances are replaced with new potentially harmful, not yet listed, substances) seen by the chemical manufacturing industry is a concern that needs to be strategically addressed in order not to undermine the efforts to reduce harmful chemicals and protect human health.

164. Institutionalization of monitoring activities was also challenged by organizational changes in the national governments, which, in most cases, were to oversee the laboratories involved. During the project implementation, challenges stemming from these shifts in government structures (e.g. merging of government departments) were already present. Although these were external factors, considerations on how to address, navigate, or integrate other mechanisms to support overall project sustainability, given the contexts and conditions, were not adequately made.

165. The capacities gained during the project implementation were not institutionalized in a way that ensured knowledge and learning transfer to future staff at the laboratories. Only a few individuals were involved in the capacity development, and no plan for the transfer of skills or peer-to-peer learning was made. The lack of institutionalization placed the success of ongoing monitoring on individual staff. In most cases, staff who had gained monitoring capacities were no longer working in the laboratories, resulting in lost or precarious monitoring capacity and no institutional sustainability.

166. An exit strategy supporting institutional sustainability has not been identified.

Findings Statements on Sustainability:

167. The sustainability of the project's outcomes is highly dependent on political factors, particularly the continued commitment of participating countries to the Stockholm Convention. While countries have received technical and financial support through GEF funding to update their NIPs, this support needs to be sustained for continued commitment. However, the GMP project itself had a limited focus on integrating political processes, resulting in minimal impact on national policymaking. Despite strong institutional support in some countries, such as Thailand, where a Sub-Committee for the Stockholm Convention existed before project approval, national stakeholders did not view POPs monitoring as a high priority. The long-term and invisible nature of POP pollution, compared to more immediate issues like mercury contamination, reduced the perceived urgency of monitoring, with some stakeholders focusing more on contaminated site management and sector-specific assessments. This disconnection from political decision-making created challenges in fostering national ownership of the project outcomes.

168. The financial sustainability of the project is at risk, as national representatives reported that monitoring activities were not sustained post-project due to a lack of funding, personnel turnover, and shifting government priorities. Absence of a clear exit strategy to ensure ongoing monitoring beyond donor funding further compounds this issue. While a roadmap was developed, it identified funding as a significant barrier without offering long-term solutions. Without dedicated national budgets for continued monitoring, the project remains reliant on external financial support, raising concerns about the sustainability of its outcomes, particularly in the Philippines, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, and Indonesia. According to national representatives interviewed, the countries typically have not continued their monitoring activities past the project completion date. This is due to a lack of funding, organizational changes, personnel changes, and, in general, a prioritization of other environmental issues. Sufficient financial funds have not been allocated to continue monitoring in the Philippines, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, and Indonesia.

Rating for Likelihood of Sustainability (use 'Likely' scale): Moderately Unlikely

Rating for Socio-political Sustainability: Moderately Unlikely

Rating for Financial Sustainability: Moderately Unlikely

Rating for Institutional Sustainability: Moderately Unlikely

4.9 Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

4.9.1 Quality of Project Management and Supervision

4.9.1.1 UNEP/Implementing Agency:

169. Collaboration between the IA (GEF CW Unit) and EA was closely coordinated to monitor progress and provide technical backstopping to support the overall implementation of planned activities. The IA was responsible for overall project supervision, overseeing the project process, and providing administrative support. It is unclear to what extent the IA was able to support the administration, beyond the financial

management provided by the Fund Management Officer. Turnover of staff challenged the project early on, and monitoring and evaluation were challenged by gaps in information for new staff members, which suggests that handover processes have room for improvement. The particular details of these processes were not verified by the evaluators.

170. The IA and EA underwent staff changes during the project. This affected the ability to deliver results on time due to internal rearrangements to a certain extent, particularly at the beginning of the project. There were three Project Managers and two Task Managers overall throughout the project implementation.
171. Communication with the SC was integrated into strategic decision-making, allowing for timely revisions to project progress. Toward the end of the project, however, certain SC decisions were driven by UNEP internal factors, which, according to some stakeholders, led to cancellations (e.g., regional workshop).
172. National stakeholders communicated with both expert laboratories and UNEP EA. Project documentation and interviews indicate that most day-to-day technical communication flowed directly between national counterparts and expert laboratories, which then relayed implementation insights to UNEP, while UNEP primarily tracked and addressed administrative issues.
173. Stakeholders' understanding of the project's main priorities varied, especially regarding the balance between building monitoring capacity and delivering reliable monitoring data. This ambiguity made scoping and alignment difficult, as options to extend activities were discussed (e.g., analysis of more POPs, more countries, additional matrices, sustainability strategies, and more training materials).
174. At mid-term, the SC emphasized data delivery (noting that additional training and capacity building were not the core objective of the GMP project). At the same time, the ProDoc, national reports, and GMP statements consistently underscored capacity building as central to enabling effective POPs monitoring. In practice, the project rebalanced toward capacity building by the end of implementation, using remaining funds for e-learning modules, webinars, and a pilot on training needs (Maldives, Myanmar, Mongolia, and Cambodia).

4.9.1.2 Partners/Executing Agency:

175. The Executing Agency role was to provide technical support, establish the necessary managerial teams in each country, execute, and manage the project and its activities on a day-to-day basis. While the EA followed through on most of its responsibilities, it was challenged by its long distance from implementation locations, making it difficult to stay up-to-date with day-to-day activities. This responsibility was shared with national coordinators, but the geographical distance, without a mechanism to address this, inevitably challenged a close follow-up, which eventually challenged the project's ability to respond immediately to emerging issues (ethical clearances, shipment delays, etc.). Some risks were raised, but PIRs showed little concrete follow-up action and mitigation strategies.
176. National partners were responsible for the nominations of laboratories, the selection of national coordinators, and the selection of sampling locations, according to specified criteria provided by UNEP. Each country engaged relevant local stakeholders from different governmental and academic institutions in order to carry out the expected activities. National coordinators were supported by coordinators of a specified matrix, completing the national coordinating team, typically two or three representatives per

country, and collaborated with counterparts beyond their home departments. There was a high level of responsibility at the local level for the national coordinators.

177. Several expert laboratories encouraged open, direct communication with beneficiaries and the project team, which supported knowledge exchange, progress tracking, and monitoring.
178. It is clarified that testing new POPs will require new methods, different and potentially expensive equipment, and new capacities. However, it is not for all new POPs. POPs not initially listed in the ProDoc were agreed to be analyzed midway through the project. These included PFOA and PFHxS, which were evaluated for listing by the POP review committee (POPRC) of the Stockholm Convention. This was feasible without further costs and was in the interest of expert laboratories. A cost analysis for monitoring different POPs can help identify those at the feasible end.
179. In arranging the third Interlaboratory Assessment rounds, expert laboratories were involved in managing the shipment of mirror samples, and analysis found it difficult to determine the exact number of samples that needed to be prepared. This is because registrations did not necessarily guarantee participation, as seen in the publication of results. Sending samples to registered laboratories that did not deliver their results resulted in project costs being wasted. New criteria and prioritization of participation need to be established to prevent the loss of resources and further waste.

4.9.2 Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation

180. The UNEP project team made organizational efforts to promote stakeholder ownership among some key stakeholders. Key partners, such as ROG, WHO, expert laboratories, and BRC members, were engaged in decision-making through the SC, and the support was present. Apart from the relevant elements in the project design (see paragraph 198), evidence of efforts made by the project team to promote stakeholder ownership for national coordinators and participating countries was limited. Some valuable efforts, as a response to the MTR, that were worth highlighting included rounds of virtual workshops to support data interpretation elements for local stakeholders, to support the dissemination of the data. This was, however, not strategically followed up on or supported to the extent where it could enable and engage local actors. Stakeholders' interests outside the SC were not sufficiently addressed. This is understood to be largely due to the project team's understanding of the overall goal and scope of the project, as focused on the Stockholm Convention effectiveness evaluation, and as a 'data development project' rather than local anchoring of monitoring.
181. From the inception, VEA was designated as a regional coordinating partner for Asia based on its experience and national capacity, and it organized the first regional SC meeting (2016). Viet Nam had a notable presence (13 participants). According to the 2020 PIR, VEA could not coordinate regional activities as planned due to personnel changes and regional issues. No corroboration was found in Viet Nam's national report; interviews with these stakeholders were not possible, and SC notes provide no further substantiation.
182. Expert laboratories, the BRS Secretariat, and other organizations (e.g., BCCC-SCRC LATU) participated in SC decision-making. There were no formal representatives mandated to voice regional or national interests. Decisions were therefore taken without structured representation at the regional/national levels.

183. To resolve import permit bottlenecks for national interest matrices (e.g. food samples), expert laboratory partners used MTM Örebro as the entry point because it held food import permits, enabling onward analysis by laboratories in the Netherlands and Spain. Overall, the expert laboratories' collaboration appeared strong and well-coordinated through expert meetings, bilateral meetings, and SC meetings.
184. Early expert meetings drew on GMP1 experience to mitigate risks, including customs clearance issues (pre-prepared letters, labelling, and coding of samples). Beyond SC meetings, expert laboratories held bilateral coordination meetings and calls with UNEP (e.g., 2016–2018). In total, five Expert Meetings were convened, supporting effective coordination among expert laboratories.
185. The SC (July 2016) recognized the importance of engaging national Ministries of Health (MoH) and the WHO in human milk sampling. WHO was invited to the GRULAC SC meeting (June 2018), but it could not participate; subsequent invitations were also unsuccessful. WHO first joined the SC in October 2021, after Asia's milk sampling and analysis had concluded (2018–2019). MoHs were engaged during implementation, but WHO's SC-level engagement came too late to influence the milk-survey timeline.
186. The BRS Secretariat played a key role in ensuring the policy usefulness of the data produced, which was why BRS was a project partner. Collaborations with representatives from the BRS Secretariat were close and continuous throughout the project, and their presence in the SC ensured ongoing dialogue and coordination with the GMP. This mitigated the risks of deviation of monitoring methods and approaches.
187. The inception workshop contributed only marginally to the alignment of implementation plans and shared understanding. Presentations were highly technical and delivered before capacity screening and expectation-setting, increasing the risk of low comprehension and limited utility for intended beneficiaries.
188. Stakeholders at the 2019 Consultation Workshop, addressing sustainability efforts, suggested defining a minimum regional coverage threshold for future projects. The POPsEA project framework of selecting 'core laboratories' to do analysis and support other countries in the region was recognized by the SC. Such scoping and regional strategy would enhance the results and POP monitoring efforts.
189. The POPsEA project representatives participated in some SC meetings and workshops to present the POPsEA project, including its history, methods, and strategy. POPsEA pursued AAS and did not overlap with PAS, human milk, and water matrices. According to interviews, the AAS results and the PAS results are not comparable, and conversion is required. This issue was not deemed resolved through verification, and it was essential to address it to ensure the complementarity of efforts to a greater extent. The SC did not consider this as an issue of concern, as, reportedly, there were methods available that could convert data across these two methods. Additionally, it is worth mentioning that the PAS allows for an affordable long-exposure sampling method, while AAS provides a more detailed short-exposure result.

4.9.3 Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality

190. Countries participating in the human milk survey used a standard informed consent form explaining the project's purpose and also collected anonymous demographic data, including gender, occupation, and body data, e.g., height. SOPs that were developed included consent procedures suitable for both literate and illiterate participants, and

emphasized the right to withdraw. These pre-made guidelines supported countries that had no experience in appropriately conducting milk sampling. Mongolia specified that short lectures on the importance of breastfeeding preceded sampling, as a response to the documents provided. Some deviations were also found, as Viet Nam's co-finance report noted that donors received USD 100. Although not verified, it could suggest that a practice deviation occurred.

191. The project donor (GEF) did not require a gender mainstreaming plan at the time of the project's approval. The project was gender-blind by design; nonetheless, expert-led training collected gender-disaggregated data. Evaluators identified 57% female participation overall, while UNEP reported 62%. It is likely that the figure gap reflects coverage/method differences. In all cases, participation was broadly balanced. A gender dimension integrated into the project design was the use of human milk as a core matrix, which placed a particular focus on the vulnerabilities of POPs exposure of women of childbearing age.
192. Through the evaluator's verification, workshop records indicate: inception workshop (39 participants; 41% female), mid-term workshop (26 participants; 50% female), and final workshop (49 participants; 38% female), indicating generally fair representation of both women and men in the project's main activities at the national level.
193. SC participation varied over time, but the core group included both women and men. Combined with the training/workshop data, this indicates generally well-balanced gender participation, although the project was a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths (STEM)-focused.

4.9.4 Environmental and Social Safeguards

194. Individual donor identities (mothers) were protected; milk was used solely for POPs monitoring under procedural and administrative controls. Unused samples were to be destroyed or transferred to CVUA's milk bank for later analysis. Concerns about negative social impacts on donors, such as decreased willingness to breastfeed due to POP contamination risks, were addressed by implementing SOPs that required sampling staff to emphasize breastfeeding benefits during milk collection.
195. Waste from sampling and laboratory activities (including interlaboratory assessments, monitoring, and training) was recognized as an environmental risk. The project team reported efforts to ensure appropriate waste treatment to avoid soil, water, or air contamination. No contrary evidence was found.
196. However, no documented follow-up by management on environmental or social safeguards risk assessments was identified. While PIRs recorded low risk ratings for implementation parameters, the evaluation found no evidence of follow-up on waste management, climate-impact considerations (e.g., shipments, overseas flights), or their related procurement. More emphasis on this would have been needed, particularly when dealing with chemical waste with long-term consequences.
197. Other environmental and social impacts of the project on the most vulnerable and marginalized groups were neither considered nor addressed substantially and explicitly. The ProDoc and early project review documentation identified indigenous communities as particularly vulnerable to POP contamination and, therefore, a relevant potential beneficiary group to be considered. However, this was deemed out of scope. Details are elaborated in **Annex VII**.

4.9.5 Country Ownership and Driven-ness

198. The project integrated national coordinators in each participating country, enabling local organization and execution independent of UNEP. Roles for national and regional coordinators were set out in the ProDoc and SSFAs. Countries could analyze matrices beyond GMP standards to reflect national interests; the selection proved challenging for some, but the management provided reiteration and guidance. These adjustments reflected flexibility that supported country ownership and drivenness. Provision of in-kind financing, endorsing project results, and advocating for changes through recommendations and roadmaps demonstrated the leadership role that these beneficiaries played.
199. SC meeting notes and interviews indicate that some countries, which were delayed, did not perceive urgency, revealing limited shared concerns and uneven communication. Repeatedly, countries participating in interlaboratory assessments struggled to understand their purpose fully, suggesting communication or relevance gaps for national stakeholders. A higher level of inclusion of national stakeholders could have supported both their commitment and participation, as well as ensured that decisions are well communicated and understood by all relevant parties. Representation of the countries or regional interests in the SC was missing, and leadership in strategic guidance of project delivery was not integrated.
200. Opportunities to translate results into national benefits were insufficiently addressed. Stakeholders emphasized the need to link data to sectoral decisions (e.g., trade) and to strengthen data-interpretation skills to deepen ownership. The MTR provided this recommendation to the project. Although reports with data specifying levels of POPs detected and interpretation of results were provided to the countries, they were not sufficient to address national-level decision-makers and create a link to policy development in order to reach relevant public sector agencies and ministries essential to move the project's outputs to achieve its outcomes.
201. Interviews and national reports suggested that private and research laboratories with POPs capacity existed in most countries. Mid-term workshop notes indicated that some Vietnamese laboratories with high capacity perceived the GMP project as small-scale and therefore less attractive. This was not verified by other sources, but it is important to note that incentives for high-capacity laboratories to engage merit attention.

4.9.6 Communication and Public Awareness

202. Communication campaigns were reported, although these were not linked to a documented strategy. Multiple open-access scientific articles in *Chemosphere* (e.g. Fiedler and Sadia, 2021; Abad et al., 2022; Fiedler et al., 2022; Fiedler et al., 2023) and the book, *Persistent Organic Pollutants in Human Milk* (Malisch, Fürst and Šebková, 2023) disseminated results to the scientific communities, including contributions from Mongolian partners with expert-lab support. The latter, which can meaningfully be fed into the body of research, recognized the efforts of researchers in the country.
203. Webinars (2023) aimed to share results with authorities, researchers, and others interested in plastics management and POPs-related chemicals. Available materials

were technically detailed and suitable for academic/scientific audiences; participant registration lists were not available.

204. Public materials targeting broader English-speaking, Spanish-speaking, and French-speaking audiences (infographics, fact sheets), including children (videos, posters, a colouring book), were produced under the “Worst Friends Forever” campaign. The implementation and impact resulting from these materials are unclear. Stakeholders presented results at a COP meeting, which reportedly drew strong interest. It is also unclear whether these materials were used in that context.
205. No national-level public information campaigns on POPs or POPs monitoring were conducted. Some government departments disseminated results to peer agencies (e.g., Mongolia) to bridge the gap between science and policy, with no concrete result, potentially because the data presented was in the form of the national report. Strategic presentation of data was not discussed, but was needed, especially when interest was low.

Findings Statements on Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues:

206. Governance and communication structures were only partially fit for purpose, particularly for ensuring relevant data delivery to the GMP. While the Steering Committee enabled course corrections, late decisions were constrained by internal agency factors, and national/regional voices were weakly institutionalized. Without a regional collaborator, expert laboratories became intermediaries for implementation intelligence, with UNEP providing support to address the administrative and coordinating issues. UNEP encouraged direct communication with project beneficiaries, which supported a good dialogue between national and expert laboratories. Direct communication led to strong engagement and collaborative implementation between expert laboratories and national coordinators. There was also robust cooperation between partners and UNEP through the SC. However, collaboration among participating countries, UNEP, and the SC was limited. As a result, engagement of beneficiary countries varied, and national-level ownership was lower. A more representative governance model, coupled with minimum communication standards, could have improved alignment and predictability.
207. The inclusion of the nationally relevant matrices selected by participating countries, along with the delegation of local implementation responsibilities to national coordinators, supported local ownership in principle. As noted by scientific stakeholders involved, the project generated technically robust data outputs that were scientifically valuable for regional comparison and interpretation of POPs exposure trends. However, to achieve local ownership, the project lacked clarity on how monitoring outputs would inform policy decision-making and address local needs. The translation of monitoring data into policy decisions largely depended on national institutional mandates, governance structures, and political ownership, which extended beyond the role of technical monitoring activities alone.
208. Dissemination efforts through campaign materials and publications seemed to target a broader audience rather than policymakers. No coherent communications strategy was identified, and the distribution of campaign materials was limited. On the other hand, scientific dissemination was robust (open-access papers, technical webinars) and supported future scientific research and regional comparisons of monitoring data. However, without clear audience targeting or national-level campaigns, broader uptake in the non-scientific, policy-related domains remained constrained.

Rating for Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues: Moderately Satisfactory

*Rating for Quality of Project Management and Supervision: Moderately Satisfactory
(UNEP/Implementing Agency: Moderately Satisfactory, Partners/Executing Agency: Moderately Satisfactory)*

Rating for Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation: Moderately Satisfactory

Rating for Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality: Satisfactory

Rating for Environmental and Social Safeguards: Moderately Unsatisfactory

Rating for Country Ownership and Driven-ness: Moderately Unsatisfactory

Rating for Communication and Public Awareness: Moderately Satisfactory

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

209. Overall, the project performed at the **Moderately Satisfactory** level. The strongest performing aspects were the project's strategic relevance to the UNEP and GEF's strategic priorities and coherence with existing interventions. Comparative weaknesses were apparent in the project's efficiency and sustainability, as multiple no-cost project extensions were needed to complete project activities, and the long-term institutional, socio-political, and financial sustainability was not sufficiently considered.
210. The main achievements of the project were expanding the global evidence base on persistent organic pollutants (POPs) and addressing data gaps in Asia. It partially or fully delivered all its planned Outputs with credible quality across seven countries, supported capacity development in PAS, AAS, water, and human milk sampling, as well as sampling and analysis of matrices of national interest (e.g., sediment, fish, eggs, etc.), and ensured quality assurance through the use of expert reference labs and inter-laboratory assessments. All of these supported the individual laboratories in getting insight into the POPs situation in their countries and across regions.
211. The project addressed gender dimensions through the balanced inclusion of male and female participation represented in the different levels of the project execution, from the SC to training participants at the laboratories. Special focus was placed on women's vulnerability to POPs contamination through the sampling of human milk integrated in the project design. Consent, data anonymization, informed participation, ethical guidelines, and procedures were used and applied in the milk sampling.
212. These achievements were brought about largely by the involvement and support of the participating countries in monitoring activities and establishing the necessary means to complete data generation through training activities and guidance with backstopping in administrative and technical areas.
213. The project demonstrated a multi-regional approach through the simultaneous implementation of projects with the same design in Africa, GRULAC, and the Pacific, with the same key stakeholders and project team, and different locations around the world. This challenged the on-the-ground focus and management in the project execution, but also benefited from the creation of materials relevant to all projects.
214. The sustainability of the project is rated at the Moderately Unlikely level. A design decision, rigidly followed in project execution, to disconnect between project processes/results and political decision-making severely reduced the likelihood of socio-political sustainability. Financial sustainability could only be achieved if governments allocate resources for this purpose, which is unlikely to take place, among other reasons, due to the lack of involvement of decision-makers in the project. Likewise, institutional sustainability is unlikely due to budget constraints, lack of political will, and the absence of an exit strategy developed with national institutions. The main features that support the sustainability of the project's benefits are the availability of a roadmap and a deepened understanding of the needs and contexts of the participating countries, as reflected in the national reports and UNEP publications (e.g. sustainability analysis report) resulting from this project. These experiences and lessons learned in this area could guide future GMP projects in integrating sustainability across all aspects of the project.

215. No unintended negative effects were identified or observed.
216. The project achievements contribute to the Stockholm Convention effectiveness evaluation and GMP body of work.

Responses to Key Strategic Questions

Strategic Questions from Evaluation TOR:

Strategic Question 1: *To what extent did the project incorporate lessons from the previous phase and any recommendations from its Mid Term Review into the project design/implementation?*

Strategic Question 2: *To what extent did the project promote cross learning/knowledge sharing with three other GMP regional projects? How did the project benefit from having three other regional projects?*

Strategic Question 3: *How did the project link scientific monitoring data with decision-making at various levels?*

Strategic Question 4: *How were the national-level monitoring mechanisms integrated or coordinated with POPs monitoring under GMP?*

Strategic Question 5: *To what extent have data from the project been included in the data warehouse and is there evidence of this data being used in subsequent effectiveness evaluation report?*

Strategic Question 6: *To what extent have inter-lab assessments contributed to laboratories from developing countries improving their quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) practices and ultimately improving the quality of analysis?*

217. The evaluation Terms of Reference included a set of key strategic questions of interest to UNEP. These are listed above.
218. Regarding Strategic Question one, some lessons from the GMP1 project were implemented in practice. These included the need for guidelines for selecting matrices for national samples and strengthening the analytical capacity of national laboratory staff through expert laboratories. The project addressed the recommendations on the development of analytical capacity through the Outputs and Outcomes, despite not being appropriately implemented. The GMP1's observation that laboratories with low capacity (and typically in smaller countries) delivered unsatisfactory POP data was not fully taken into account. Recommendations for countries and the executing agencies on the dissemination of results targeting ministries, institutions, and NGOs were not adequately incorporated. However, dissemination to the public at large, which was also recommended, was incorporated at a later stage of the project. The Mid-Term Review recommends 'to increase the level of engagement with policy- and decision-makers at the national level to secure ongoing support for POPs monitoring'(MTR). This was not strategized or operationalized during the project and remains a missing aspect for the GMP's success.
219. For Strategic Question two, the project generally enabled cross-learning and knowledge sharing among management, experts, ROG, and UNEP, as well as participating countries' representatives and expert laboratories. Knowledge-sharing opportunities for national stakeholders across regions were provided primarily through workshops (e.g., the Interlaboratory assessment). However, evidence of cross-learning and knowledge sharing among these stakeholders is limited and mostly entailed access

to data gathered for comparative analysis of results. As UNEP staff, expert laboratory partners, and other steering committee members were directly involved in implementing the other three regional projects, their experiences, lessons, and knowledge were shared at the management level. This setup benefited the project by enabling efficient decision-making, consistency, and resource use, and by supporting the transferability of knowledge, which in turn supported the standardized approach to implementation. A shortcoming of this centralized approach was that it also limited management's capacity to adequately address local realities, relevance, and feasibility, thereby limiting the project's Outcomes.

220. Regarding Strategic Question three, the project was characterized by a lack of connection between monitoring scientific data and decision-making. This was explained by project staff as a prerequisite for the GEF-funded project, but it was seen as a significant weakness. Efforts to disseminate to a broader audience were identified, as were the well-received results among ROG members. The hope is that these results would eventually affect legislation; it is not sufficient to rely on broad, top-down political mechanisms to sustain ongoing monitoring or to link the scientific knowledge to decision-making.
221. Regarding Strategic Question four, the existing national-level monitoring mechanisms (with varying strengths), mainly supported by the POPsEA collaboration, were well integrated into the GMP monitoring, except for the ability to directly compare AAS and PAS data. Some of the sites selected by the national coordinators were also ones previously or currently used for monitoring activities under POPsEA.
222. Regarding Strategic Question five, the evaluators concluded that the data produced during the project were included in the Data Warehouse. Selected data by the ROG members were further utilized in the Stockholm Convention Reporting (Third RMR for the Asia region).
223. Regarding Strategic Question six, there was no reported improvement in laboratory standards for the participating countries in the region to improve results for the upcoming interlaboratory assessments, although engagement was clear. To see an improvement, results for more rounds are needed. The only countries in the project that participated in both rounds are Indonesia, Thailand, and Viet Nam. The Interlaboratory report on the four rounds (UNEP, 2024a) did not include comparisons of z-scores or performance across the specific laboratories. It is noted that, unfortunately, some laboratories did not show improvement, including some in the Asia region. As other countries in the region also participated, beyond the defined beneficiaries, it is hard to conclude the extent to which these constitute laboratories in developing countries (IMF classification). From expert interviews and stakeholder interviews, it is highly unlikely that laboratories will improve performance if there is no ongoing practice.
224. It is found that, in addition to updating time plans, the project adapted to COVID-19 circumstances and continued activities, such as sample analyses, reporting, and the organization of online workshops (instead of face-to-face workshops). COVID-19 caused delays, the cancellation, and postponement of some activities (e.g. training and workshops), for which one no-cost project extension was requested specifically due to COVID-19.
225. Table 22 below provides a summary of the ratings and findings discussed in Section 4.

Table 22: Summary of Project Findings and Ratings³⁵

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
Strategic Relevance	The Strategic Relevance is rated as 'Highly Satisfactory' .	Highly Satisfactory (HS)
1. Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities	The project was aligned well with UNEP's MTS, PoW, and Strategic priorities, with a lack of supporting evidence of direct output contribution.	Satisfactory (S)
2. Alignment to UNEP Donor/GEF/Partner strategic priorities	A high level of alignment with the donor (GEF) strategic priorities is observed.	Highly Satisfactory (HS)
3. Relevance to global, regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities	Through the Stockholm Convention, the project was aligned largely with the GMP and was relevant to the cross-regional effort required to limit harmful substances globally.	Highly Satisfactory (HS)
4. Complementarity with existing interventions/ Coherence	Coherence with the other regional projects is evident. Some efforts to engage stakeholders from relevant networks (POPsEA) are acknowledged. A higher degree of collaboration could have been needed to avoid duplication risks.	Satisfactory (S)
Quality of Project Design	The project design supported the standardization of procedures, which were essential for ensuring data quality and enabled comparability across countries and regions to support the effectiveness evaluation (Article 16). The project design could have benefited from clearer pathways, indicators to monitor project progress, and integrated, in-depth risks and needs assessments. The Quality of Project Design is rated as 'Moderately Satisfactory' .	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)
Nature of External Context	The external conditions are evaluated to be Moderately Favourable, with no specific unanticipated events occurring during the project period, which explicitly affected the project's progress, apart from the COVID-19 outbreak. This is rated as 'Moderately Favourable' external context.	Moderately Favourable (MF)
Effectiveness	Clarifying the causal pathways of project Outputs to project Outcomes could benefit the effectiveness. It is rated as 'Moderately Satisfactory' .	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)
1. Availability of outputs	All Outputs were partially or fully delivered. The delivery and participation of each country varied for each project component. Relevance also varied for project stakeholders.	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)
2. Achievement of project outcomes	Two Outcomes were both partially achieved, with assumptions for the change process from Outputs to Project Outcomes only partially held. Drivers to support the transition from Outputs to the Project Outcomes were in place.	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)

³⁵ Most criteria will be 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, also on a six-point scale, from Highly Likely (HL) down to Highly Unlikely (HU) and Nature of External Context is rated from Highly Favourable (HF) to Highly Unfavourable (HU).

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
3. Likelihood of impact (use 'likely' scale)	The likelihood for the project to achieve the envisioned impact (<i>'Risks to human health and the environment stemming from toxic exposure to POPs are reduced'</i>) is Moderately Unlikely, as assumptions for progress at various levels do not hold.	Moderately Unlikely (MU)
Financial Management	Financial Management is rated as 'Satisfactory' .	Satisfactory (S)
1. Adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures	The project adhered to UNEP's financial policies and procedures and kept expenditure reports with budget revisions. Delays in disbursement posed challenges to project progress.	Satisfactory (S)
2. Completeness of project financial information	The project maintained updated financial information, including budget and expenditure, but lacked adequate co-financing verification and expenditure statements.	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)
Efficiency	The project was extended five times, resulting in an extension of the project period by 5 years. Therefore, the project's Efficiency is rated as 'Moderately Unsatisfactory' .	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)
Monitoring and Reporting	Satisfactory monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and activities were in place, but the lack of indicators hindered an adequate assessment of various project factors, particularly at the national levels of implementation.	Satisfactory (S)
1. Monitoring of project implementation	The project ensured an appropriate, minimum allocation of funds to M&E activities. The project team, including IA and EA, ensured follow-up of project progress through, e.g. SC meetings. Key indicators to support monitoring were absent.	Satisfactory (S)
2. Project reporting	Annual PIRs, Mid-term Review, an overview of financial expenses, and a budget on a half-year basis supported the project reporting and decision-making. Reporting documentation was gender-neutral.	Satisfactory (S)
Sustainability (use 'likely' scale)	The likelihood for the project to sustain its effects in the long term and to achieve its intended outcomes and impacts is rated as 'Moderately Unlikely' .	Moderately Unlikely (MU)
1. Socio-political sustainability	The project lacked a significant connection with policy development at the national level. The governments and broader societal spheres do not currently prioritize POP's monitoring to the necessary extent that demonstrates stakeholder engagement and commitment.	Moderately Unlikely (MU)
2. Financial sustainability	No funds, apart from donor-sourced and co-financing during the project period, were identified to ensure the monitoring activities for participating laboratories and countries.	Moderately Unlikely (MU)
3. Institutional sustainability	The training received was not sufficiently institutionalized, and it benefited only individuals involved rather than institutions.	Moderately Unlikely (MU)
Factors Affecting Performance	Cross-sectional factors are rated as 'Moderately Satisfactory' .	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
1. Quality of project management and supervision	SC functioned moderately well. The working relationships between PM and TM were generally constructive, except for challenges faced by IA and EA, respectively, that are described below. Good management practices are identified.	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)
1.1 UNEP/Implementing Agency:	The IA maintained its presence in the SC meetings and coordinated closely and constructively with EA. Turnover of staff challenged project progress.	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)
1.2 Partners/Executing Agency:	The EA had some difficulty in maintaining oversight of on-the-ground implementation on a day-to-day basis, and the necessary mechanisms to support these were limited.	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)
2. Stakeholders' participation and cooperation	Some key stakeholders showed a high level of interest in the project results and cooperation for knowledge exchange and provided good support to collective actions. For national stakeholders, consultations and participations were less regular. Moderate efforts with mixed effectiveness to promote ownership were evidenced.	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)
3. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality	Gender and human rights considerations, although not necessarily systematic and strategic as part of the project design, were demonstrated to a moderate extent in project implementation.	Satisfactory (S)
4. Environmental and social safeguards	While some important risks were identified and documented, these were addressed and considered only to a limited extent.	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)
5. Country ownership and driven-ness	The public sector agencies and ministries, which were essential to reach the project's intended outcomes, were only marginally engaged. They did not provide significant strategic guidance for project delivery.	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)
6. Communication and public awareness	Campaigns to the broader public were organized, but without a clear communication strategy.	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)
Overall Project Performance Rating	The overall Project Performance Rating is as 'Moderately Satisfactory'.	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)

5.2 Lessons Learned

Lesson Learned #1:	Customs and ethical clearance need to be reassured early on in the project, with supportive materials for all stakeholders to avoid delay in project activities due to logistical barriers.
Context/comment:	In the SC meetings from 2018, the importance of clearance and permit letters was discussed and highlighted for the successful sampling of the implementation of the human milk survey. Although not triangulated with an exact date, these appear not to have been sent until after the meeting, according to stakeholders. The project team and involved stakeholders identified logistical or administrative issues as the cause of delay. Future

	projects would benefit from a proactive strategy to enable the necessary documents to be delivered ahead of time.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	175, 211, Table 12, Output 3

Lesson Learned #2:	An early screening of financial management capacity, such as the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer (HACT) assessment, can be useful in the design phase to assess the eligibility of a Responsible Party to receive funds from UNEP.
Context/comment:	Transfer of funds after signature of SSFAs was particularly time-consuming. As a result, funds arrived late and, in some cases, did not even reach project beneficiaries. This was primarily due to the inability of beneficiaries to provide accounts where the grant could be received, which, in turn, was due to internal procedures for the involved ministries. To facilitate transfer issues at the beginning of the project, intermediary partners were involved (BCCC- BCRC LATU) to receive and direct UNEP funds. However, this strategy neither sufficiently mitigated nor solved the issue of the fund transfer. Instead, early capacity assessment of the partner to receive donor grants should be done for relevant stakeholders to facilitate the fund transfer during the project implementation.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	119

Lesson Learned #3:	Initial stakeholder engagement and addressing the national interests and needs are fundamental for local ownership and sustainability.
Context/comment:	Efforts to support country ownership were present in the project through the formulation of pilot projects (plastic pellet analysis), sampling and mirror analysis of matrices of national interest, evaluation procedures through the interlaboratory analysis, self-organizing project management approaches, and by supporting the obligations of each country as members of the Stockholm Convention. All these addressed country ownership and, for some, also national interests, which engaged the national laboratories. For some countries, the interest was higher for analysis of source and waste releases, as they provided tangible areas to work with in a policy development environment. This went hand-in-hand with recommendations by the COP 11 for future GMPs, which stipulates that monitoring should <i>'not only detect POPs but also contribute to identifying the source and ending releases.'</i> (BRS, 2023). Importantly, through the project, it is clear that participation and engagement depend on the ability to participate and therefore the basic capacity, organizational stability, infrastructure, and political need to be present; otherwise, engaged participants would fail to fulfill their agreements.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	108, 172, 198, 201, Output 4

Lesson Learned #4:	Participation of more countries in the interlaboratory assessments does not necessarily result in better results but may lead to an ineffective use of resources. Focus should be placed on the quality of participation and the likelihood of sustainability.
Context/comment:	Across the Interlaboratory assessment, the number of participants and thereby interest in taking part has been increasing. It is noted by expert laboratories that the higher number of participating countries does not necessarily mean better results. In terms of the overall result performance, no significant improvement was made, as lower scores brought down the share of positive scores. It was concluded by project stakeholders that participants with less experience require more preparation, resources, and accessible guidance. This lesson could benefit the next rounds of interlaboratory assessment to support the sustainability of the initiative.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	105, 137, Output 4

Lesson Learned #5:	Involvement of regional actors as opposed to international ones could support intra-project communication, efficient project progress, and regionally coordinated capacity building.
Context/comment:	Although European expert laboratories are highly qualified and capable of providing quality data, their participation is not aligned with fostering regional long-term sustainability. With existing expert capacity identified in countries in the Asian region, such as China, Japan, and Korea, it is viable to focus on strengthening regional and existing efforts. This could also help minimize logistical impact and financial costs, and solve administrative issues, as the existing collaborating experiences are gained through POPsEA.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 188, 199, Output 4, Output 5

Lesson Learned #6:	Instructional and result materials produced should be part of a communication and capacity strategy to support capacity building and broad uptake of materials, findings, and results.
Context/comment:	The development of results and dissemination materials, such as Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), provided effective guidance to implementing activities in participating countries at the local level and successfully supported their execution. However, national coordinators reported that the absence of local language translations restricted the distribution and use of materials, such as SOPs and national reports, in their local context. To address the risk of staff turnover, the production of accessible, easy-to-understand materials is a key to capacity-building efforts required for the project's success. Providing the materials in the local language, with clear step-by-step guides and the involvement of various media for engagement, is essential to ensure accessibility and widespread use of the produced materials. As this project demonstrated, it is important to address the ability for these materials to be reused and accessed easily, not only at the regional level but at the local level, where more staff or local stakeholders could benefit from the materials, as their local relevance becomes evident.

Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	100, 106, 174, 200, Output 2
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Lesson Learned #7:	Gender-disaggregated data support the analysis of inclusivity.
Context/comment:	As the project was part of the GEF-5 cycle, neither a gender-inclusive strategy nor gender mainstreaming was elaborated at the outset of the project. Gathering gender-disaggregated data helps the project address balanced participation and representation at various levels and comply with gender equality and human rights principles, leading to enhanced inclusive approaches in the project implementation.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	57, 61, 152

Lesson Learned #8:	Awareness raising outside the scientific field is an important effort to achieve intended impacts.
Context/comment:	The project emphasized the generation of high-quality scientific data. While this contributed to the intended Impact outlined in the Theory of Change, it represents only one aspect and is not sufficient by itself to achieve the desired impact. Other aspects, which are fundamental to the achievement of the project goal and intended impact, include public engagement, policy development, and production practices. The project had a fixed budget and timeline and could therefore not address every aspect. However, it is crucial to ensure that scientific results are relevant and remain connected to other aspects. The project engaging stakeholders through attending a COP event was seen as a success by the project team. Media publications enable public dissemination, creating pathways out to broader audiences. These publications could support the establishment of partnerships and disseminate knowledge gained in the project to relevant stakeholders.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	202, 203, 204, 205

5.3 Recommendations³⁶

Recommendation #1:	Recommendation for the future phase of the project to establish a formal and standing knowledge management and communication strategy for national GMP coordinators and experts, anchored by Regional Centres, to institutionalise peer support, technical exchange, and rapid problem-solving beyond the project's lifetime.
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³⁶ 8 recommendations were identified through the synthesis of terminal evaluations of all 4 regional projects, namely "Implementation of the POPs Monitoring Plan in the Asian Region (GEF ID 4894)", "Continuing Regional Support for the POPs Global Monitoring Plan under the Stockholm Convention in the Africa Region (GEF ID 4886)", "Continuing Regional Support for the POPs Global Monitoring Plan under the Stockholm Convention in the Latin American and Caribbean Region (GEF ID 4881)", and "Continuing Regional Support for the POPs Global Monitoring Plan under the Stockholm Convention in the Pacific Region (GEF ID 6978)". Each recommendation is broadly cross-referenced to findings of each evaluation, but is not necessarily perfectly linked to specific paragraphs of each evaluation report.

	The above strategies include Community of Practice (CoP) activities, such as having regular online sessions on a rotational basis, organising peer support sessions, and sharing experiences, best practices, and lessons on selected topics in order to enhance communications and coordination among the respective regions. CoP should also cover key stakeholders who are involved in the implementation of the National Implementation Plans under the Stockholm Convention in participating countries, to broaden stakeholder engagement, facilitate policy reform, and enhance sustainability.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	While the objectives of the project (i.e., to strengthen capacity for implementation of the updated POPs GMP and to create the conditions for sustainable monitoring of POPs) were clear, the number of people engaged in the projects was limited in many participating countries. The continuity of project implementation was affected by the engagement of a small number of people, e.g., through the turnover of key staff. Furthermore, cooperation and knowledge sharing were not strong enough due to a lack of sustained interest from the people involved, staff turnover, and a lack of institutional structures that facilitate inter-country cooperation. Involvement of a broader number and type of stakeholders, coupled with enhanced cooperation/knowledge sharing among them, would help mitigate the risk of discontinuity, and facilitate communication across sectors and stakeholder groups.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	85, 106, 181, 182, 199, 206
Priority Level:	High level
Type of Recommendation	Project level
Responsibility:	UNEP Task/Project Manager
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Within one year, during the inception stage of the next phase of the project

Recommendation #2:	Recommendation for the future phase of the project to shift the execution body to Regional Centres (or qualified consortia), with UNEP as the Implementing Agency, and constitute an independent oversight board with authority to enforce corrective actions. Initiate the formulation of a coherent regional strategy and collaboration, especially on POPs monitoring, which considers the current capacities, networks, and interests of the member countries.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	An internal execution (IA/EA modality within the same Branch under the same Division) challenged the perceived independence of oversight. Additionally, the third round of interlaboratory assessments concluded that none of the participating countries was able to carry out all analyses set out, as full-spectrum analysis of POPs requires advanced laboratory performances and as laboratories are often specialized in matrix or compound types. This could also relate to the unavailability of the equipment and laboratory infrastructure to undergo the specified analysis. As more POPs are revised and annexed by the Stockholm Convention, it is unrealistic, according to experts and through experience

	gained in the project, that laboratories, especially in low-and middle-income countries, can monitor all listed POPs and produce high-quality data. Instead, a regional strategy that considers current capacities and interests, enabling countries to contribute and rectify their commitments as members of the Stockholm Convention, needs to be established in the future. Further collaborations in the region are also vital for an efficient and coherent regional strategy.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	92, 174, 206, 214
Priority Level:	High level
Type of Recommendation	Project level
Responsibility:	UNEP Task Manager, UNEP Senior Management at the Branch/Unit level
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Within one year, during the inception stage of the next phase of the project

Recommendation #3:	Recommendation for the future phase of the project to consider that the project design integrates links between POPs monitoring and policymaking at the national level to support the project's sustainability. Plan and prepare to conduct a training needs assessment that covers the entire decision-making process from POP monitoring to policy decisions. Prepare training to meet national/local needs and requirements.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The project faced insufficient national funding during and after the project and a lack of mechanisms to sustain enhanced national capacities over the long term. As a result, there was limited evidence to substantiate a connection between POP monitoring and national decision-making. Furthermore, based on a lesson learned from the project, the implementation of the guidance on establishment of national POPs monitoring programmes needs to be further strengthened not only to ensure more routine POPs analytical work for national laboratories, but also to strengthen links between the scientific monitoring data and national policies for enhanced usage of the monitoring data for informing policy decisions on POPs management and control. In addition, especially in relation to the linkage between POPs monitoring and national decision-making, the screening of capacity at the start of the project based on self-reporting provided only a rough understanding of training needs. More efforts in detailing a capacity baseline would support targeted training and create a foundation for future capacity-building efforts.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	157, 167, 200, 205, 218
Priority Level:	High level
Type of Recommendation	Project level
Responsibility:	UNEP Task/Project Manager
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Within one year, during the inception stage of the next phase of the project

Recommendation #4:	Recommendation for the future phase of the project to develop a clear communication strategy to strengthen the dissemination of results to a wider audience outside the scientific sphere, and to broaden awareness, visibility, and support for POPs-related policies and monitoring.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The project did not necessarily utilise communication tools effectively to promote advocacy for a wider audience, which resulted in low prioritisation and buy-in at the governmental level. This partly affected a weak linkage between POPs monitoring, and national decision-making. Public dissemination and campaigning could have been designed and implemented more effectively to increase awareness among various stakeholders, including government officials, on the POPs monitoring. It would help strengthen the connection between POPs monitoring and decision-making at the national level.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	180, 202, 208, 220, Outcome 2
Priority Level:	Medium level
Type of Recommendation	Project level
Responsibility:	UNEP Task/Project Manager
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Within one year, during the inception stage of the next phase of the project

Recommendation #5:	Recommendation for the future phase of the project to plan to conduct detailed baseline studies in each participating region, including risk analysis and mitigation strategies, in cooperation with national governments and institutions at the design stage. This also includes ensuring the involvement of more than one laboratory per participating region.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Due to the project design, the project delivered limited support to the establishment of conducive local conditions for POP monitoring and related decision-making, resulting in a project with limited impact on the national POP monitoring efforts and low likelihood of sustainability. Furthermore, the sustainability of capacities generated by the project was low due to staff turnover. And cooperation between POPs laboratories at the regional level could further be improved.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	33, 78, 105, 163, Outcome 1
Priority Level:	Medium level
Type of Recommendation	Project level
Responsibility:	UNEP Task/Project Manager
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Within one year, during the inception stage of the next phase of the project

Recommendation #6:	Recommendation for the future phase of the project to develop a set of quality indicators for robust results measurement at the design stage (or at the inception stage if the design is not found adequate). In particular, desired outcomes should be properly explored and spelled out with meaningful indicators.
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	To enhance timely adaptive management, utilize a monitoring system to include monthly traffic-light dashboards and time-bound reviews that trigger automatic management responses and help avoid delays.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The formulation of project outcomes was not necessarily perfect, leaving room for interpretation. Outcome 1 'National capacities for implementing the updated POPs Global Monitoring Plan (GMP) are strengthened' should have been followed up with an explanation of the desired capacities and tangible targets for strengthening, and Outcome 2 'Conditions for sustainable monitoring of POPs in the Asian region are in place' lacks substance if the term, 'Conditions', was not investigated and detailed. Designing relevant indicators would lead to a better understanding of the direction of the project. During the project implementation, monitoring did not consistently prompt preventive action. Indicators lacked milestone specificity in parts. Furthermore, excessive implementation delays were driven by SSFA/legal bottlenecks, ethics approvals, and late-cycle publication processes. To address these issues, monitoring should be done reactively rather than preventively.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	92, 105, 144, Outcome 2, Output 3.
Priority Level:	High level
Type of Recommendation	Project level
Responsibility:	UNEP Task/Project Manager
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Within one year, during the inception stage of the next phase of the project

Recommendation #7:	Recommendation for the future phase of the project to provide necessary support to the countries/partners for a better understanding of co-financing, and its reporting.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The evaluation reveals that co-financing reporting among the project's co-financing partners was inconsistent and incomplete. This might potentially prevent effective financial tracking, and financial management as a whole. Furthermore, particularly as most of the co-financing was provided in kind rather than in cash for this project, the lack of understanding of co-financing reporting also adversely affected financial management.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	122, 126, 127, 128
Priority Level:	Medium level
Type of Recommendation	Project level
Responsibility:	UNEP Task Manager/ Project Manager
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Within one year, during the inception stage of the next phase of the project

Recommendation #8:	Recommendation for the future phase of the project to develop and promote specific gender mainstreaming project metrics based on analysis of gender equality and women's empowerment issues in the respective regions and countries.
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Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The project was developed at a time when gender action plans were not required, and, hence, the project results framework did not include gender-responsive indicators and targets. However, through a focused gender analysis, gender-specific issues associated with differences in exposure, health impacts, and participation related to POPs monitoring would help inform a gender-responsive action plan for future projects.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	152, 190, 191, 192, 193
Priority Level:	Medium level
Type of Recommendation	Project level
Responsibility:	UNEP Task/Project Manager
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Within one year, during the inception stage of the next phase of the project

ANNEX I. RESPONSE TO STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

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

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Evaluators Response	UNEP Evaluation Office Response
Page xi, Table 1	Table 1 says 0 for co-finance, but the main body of the report says USD 11,861,748.	Agreed with UNEP Evaluation Office's response. The figure has also been revised to be USD 11,721,802.	Table 1 indicates only co-financing in cash as specified in the pre-fixed table template. Detailed co-finance information, covering both in-kind and cash co-finance, is described in Section 1.6.
Page 8, Paragraph 46	Stakeholder analysis is described in the ProDoc.	The ProDoc stipulates the roles and responsibilities to an adequate extent, but it is not a stakeholder analysis. Types of actors, their level of influence, and their level of interest are not denoted. For instance, are there any points of conflict for any stakeholder? No analysis specified how to engage these actors. Therefore, it is reported as <i>"was not explicitly included in the ProDoc"</i> .	Agreed with the evaluators. The roles and responsibilities are only parts of the stakeholder analysis – it is a necessary component, but not sufficient.
Page 10, Paragraph 48	The actual co-finance mobilized was reported in the last PIR in 2024. After that, we received a few more proofs of co-finance from partners, which led to a total co-finance of USD 13,753,111. The updated co-finance report is saved in the shared folder with relevant evidence.	Several co-financing contributions lacked sufficient documentation; only verified amounts were counted. Co-finance documentation for Lao PDR (no report), UNEP (no verification), RECETOX (no report), and the in-cash finance from BRS (no cash transfer documentation) were assessed as insufficient in this evaluation. Therefore, the amount the evaluators were able to verify amounts to USD 11,721,802.	Agreed with the evaluators. Co-financing documents (and co-financing reporting in general) are not well organized, as observed and commented on by evaluators of the other 3 regional projects.
Page 40, Table 14, Output 3	Biotic matrices include dairy, eggs, meat, and other non-abiotic samples, not only human milk samples. Given that many countries did not have the capacity to analyze human milk samples, trainings were not planned for the analysis of human milk. However, the trainings did cover critical skills required for analysis of biotic samples, such as drying of fish samples, sample storage, extraction and clean up, GC analysis, safety issues, and QA/QC, etc. Several reports of the	The text was updated for clarity, but this does not affect the achievement of the indicator target. The indicator specifies <i>"# of training report for analysis of biotic matrices"</i> and not whether the training covered critical skills required for analysis. Therefore, the target was not met.	Agreed with the evaluators. The evaluators made a valid response to the stakeholder's comment.

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Evaluators Response	UNEP Evaluation Office Response
	national training (e.g. those for Indonesia and the Philippines) provided evidence on this. Therefore, the target was fulfilled and exceeded.		
Page 43, Table 14, Output 4	The two online regional workshops were not associated with interlaboratory assessments. An in-person workshop was organized for the 3rd round interlab assessment, and online workshops were organized for the 4th round of interlaboratory assessment. The interlaboratory assessment was not authorized to release the ranking of labs; therefore, it could not give an assessment to an individual country or lab in the final reports. Besides, laboratories registered for the interlab assessment on a voluntary basis. They were not nominated by countries to represent their analytical capacity.	The first sentence states that the two online regional workshops are <u>not</u> part of the interlaboratory assessments. We agree to this point. The clarification on the authorization is understood; however, it is added in more detail. This does not change the conclusion that the analytical capacity was not assessed sufficiently, and that the indicator is undetermined, as there is no adequate evidence that supports qualifying that the data reported was of high quality by a number of countries.	Agreed with the evaluators. The comment provided by the stakeholder is not directly relevant to the findings that the evaluators have identified.
Page 46, Table 14, Output 4	The inclusion of the data on national matrices can justify that the data generated is of high quality and has passed quality verification by the ROGs. As the preparation of the SC GMP regional and global reports has different timelines from the GMP2 project, the results on national samples were not available in time to be used in the previous rounds of SC GMP reports. However, as results have been included in the SC GMP Data Warehouse, they will for sure be used in the next round of SC GMP reports, which will be prepared in 2027. Therefore, the project has met this target.	The inclusion of data by the ROG in the data warehouse is not necessarily an indication of high data quality. The ROG follow their own criteria, and data gaps are covered with some data, but not necessarily high-quality data. Stakeholder interviews with experts have different perspectives on the level of data quality.	Agreed with the evaluators. The inclusion of data into the data warehouse does not necessarily correspond to the quality of the data. Also, this finding comes from the evaluators' interviews with relevant stakeholders.
Page 47, Table 14, Output 5	A joint sustainability roadmap was developed to avoid duplication across regions. The target regarding the regional roadmap for sustainable POPs monitoring in the region was therefore met.	A region-specific Asian roadmap <u>with milestones and timelines for implementation</u> was not produced as required. Therefore, the target was not met as specified.	Agreed with the evaluators. A region-specific roadmap is directly linked with the target. A joint roadmap across the different regions may be useful, but not be sufficient to demonstrate the achievement of the target.
Page 49, Paragraph 101	The TE report says <i>"institutional mandates and regular national reporting cycles remain incomplete, and conversion of results into decision-ready formats needs reinforcement."</i> But these are beyond the scope of the GMP2 project.	We focus on this evaluation not only at the Output level but also at the Outcome, Intermediate States, and Impact levels. This is not seen as out of scope for the GMP projects.	Agreed with the evaluators. The Effectiveness assessment in the UNEP evaluation covers not only Outputs but also Outcomes, Intermediate States, and Impact as well, which are often beyond the scope of the project. And the project's contribution to the

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Evaluators Response	UNEP Evaluation Office Response
		Regular reporting cycles are needed to be maintained in order to create a monitoring system that can provide comparable trend data. Institutional mandates are needed to support these on-the-ground activities, and in turn, the data needs to reach decision-makers so the scientific data can ultimately help maintain low levels of POPs. The effectiveness evaluation of the Stockholm Convention links the monitoring data with the policy implementation.	achievement of these higher-level results still needs to be assessed in the evaluation.
Page 51, Table 16, Outcome 1	All countries sampled at least one core matrix (air), which means that the project met the target of the Outcome indicator.	The Outcome indicator refers to both core <u>and</u> other matrices; the Philippines and Lao PDR did only air and no other matrix.	Agreed with the evaluators. The evaluators' interpretation of the indicator is correct.
Page 52, Table 16, Outcome 1	All seven project countries conducted sampling activities. As the GMP project was implemented in the Asia region for the first time, all seven countries moved a step forward.	Participation alone does not demonstrate increased national capacity without supporting evidence.	Agreed with the evaluators. The country's participation in sampling activities does not necessarily correspond to the increased national capacities.
Page 53, Table 16, Outcome 1	The outcome, <i>"National capacities for implementing the updated POPs Global Monitoring Plan (GMP) are strengthened and demonstrated"</i> , comes from the retrospectively constructed TOC. It is beyond the scope of the original project. The project does not have the authority or resources to achieve national capacities for full implementation of the GMP. It is way too ambitious.	Capacity strengthening was an explicit objective in the original ProDoc. From the ProDoc: <i>"Project Objective: To strengthen the capacity for implementation of the updated POPs Global Monitoring Plan (GMP) and to create the conditions for sustainable monitoring of POPs in the Asian Region"</i> .	Agreed with the evaluators. The project's objectives, as defined in the original ProDoc, clearly refer to the national capacities. Besides, the Outcome-level results are not always within the scope of the project. Outcomes are often achieved by the uptake of Outputs, potentially with drivers and/or external factors that are often beyond the scope of the project.
Page 58, Table 17	National reports reflect countries' commitment to sustainability. A roadmap provides a regional overview.	Sustainability requires government approval and budgets, which were not demonstrated.	Agreed with the evaluators. The countries' commitment often requires their approval and budget allocation.
Page 60, Table 17	Monitoring of vulnerable groups is outside the Stockholm Convention mandate.	Background monitoring remains relevant to vulnerable groups, including women of childbearing age.	Agreed with the evaluators. The evaluators made a valid response to the stakeholder's comment.
Page 62, Paragraph 113	A newly-approved GEF programme supports the uptake of monitoring results into policymaking.	The new GEF Programme is needed, but it does not reflect that governments are incorporating POP monitoring in national programs and budgets.	Agreed with the evaluators. The approval of the new donor programme does not necessarily guarantee the government's

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Evaluators Response	UNEP Evaluation Office Response
			ownership and its uptake of monitoring results into policymaking.
Page 64, Paragraph 127	GEF policy does not require co-finance within the project lifetime.	Reported co-finance amounts were ambiguous and difficult to attribute to the project. This is an observation and recommendation that can support clearer co-finance reporting.	Agreed with the evaluators. The stakeholder's comment is not directly relevant to the findings that the evaluators have identified.
Pages 65, 66, Tables 18, 19, 20	Updated co-finance documentation is available in shared folders.	Only verified co-finance within the evaluation timeframe was included, resulting in a total of USD 11,721,802.	Agreed with the evaluators. Co-financing documents (and co-financing reporting in general) are not well organized, as observed and commented on by evaluators of the other 3 regional projects.
Page 71, Paragraph 153	Steering Committee meetings and consultations were conducted across regions, which contributed to collaboration and cooperation.	Steering Committee's cross-regional meetings do not constitute regional monitoring collaboration; national engagement could have been stronger.	Agreed with the evaluators. There is no clear relationship between the global Steering Committee meeting and enhanced regional collaboration.
Page 74, 'Rating for Likelihood of Sustainability'	A new GEF programme has been approved in relation to the likelihood of sustainability.	This does not demonstrate a high likelihood of sustainability at national or regional levels.	Agreed with the evaluators. The approval of the new donor programme does not necessarily indicate a higher likelihood of sustainability at the national/ regional level.
Page 76, Paragraph 180	Additional analyses, workshops, and tools responded to stakeholder needs after MTR.	Activities neither clearly addressed specific stakeholder needs (e.g. availability of materials in local languages, specification of role in GMP, funding, further capacity building efforts for monitoring) nor demonstrated national-level data use.	Agreed with the evaluators. The evaluators made a valid response to the stakeholder's comment.
Page 78, Paragraphs 196, 197	As safeguard procedures were followed at laboratories conducting analysis and as the project does not generate chemical wastes beyond laboratory analysis, with low-risk rating provided, the project did not observe additional needs on waste management. Moreover, there is no established guidance or template for reporting the climate impact of a science-based project of this kind.	As it is already stated, waste management practices could have been more thoroughly documented and followed up on.	Agreed with the evaluators. The evaluators made a valid response to the stakeholder's comment.
Page 80, Paragraph 208	The communication materials were developed based on the communication strategy developed. The communication strategy was not a required deliverable of the ProDoc; therefore, we did not upload it to the shared	In terms of effective communication, the communication strategy is evidently important and could have been included in the shared folder to document the thinking behind the campaign materials and other efforts. For this evaluation, no	Agreed with the evaluators. The stakeholder's comment does not directly correspond to the evaluators' finding.

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Evaluators Response	UNEP Evaluation Office Response
	folder under any output. Please let us know if you need the communication strategy. Meanwhile, the campaign materials were available in English, Spanish, and French, were presented in regional workshops, were published on UNEP channels, and were presented to country representatives at several COPs. Broader dissemination, such as national campaigns, was not feasible given the limited resources.	stakeholder or documentation supported the existence of the coherent communication strategy. Particularly, the languages available for these materials (Spanish and French) are not relevant to the Asian region.	
Page 82, Paragraph 218	Activities were conducted to enhance data use at the national level in response to MTR recommendations.	Activities did not clearly target national policymakers and decision-makers as recommended in MTR.	Agreed with the evaluators. There is no evidence that these activities aimed to increase the level of engagement with policymakers at the national level to strengthen the usage of data.
Page 86, Lesson Learned #1	Supporting letters could be prepared to facilitate the successful sampling of the implementation of the human milk survey, following Steering Committee discussions.	No evidence was available to confirm that letters were prepared or shared.	Agreed with the evaluators. Unless the evaluators confirm the letters and their details, it would be challenging to accept the stakeholder's comment.

ANNEX II. EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Evaluation questions	Potential Information source	Data collection method
Strategic Relevance		
To what extent was the project aligned with the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS) and Programme of Work (PoW) and the GEF strategic priorities? To what extent did the project align with and address global, regional, and national environmental priorities and needs? To what extent did the project complement and build on relevant existing interventions?	Documents: UNEP's and GEF's Publications (e.g. MTS, PoW) ProDoc National Implementation Plans (NIP) submitted to the Convention and described in UNEP publications. GMPs Regional Monitoring Reports³⁷ UNEP Regional and Overview Reports published³⁸ Informants: National government partners. Regional Organisation Group's(ROG) representatives Representatives from POPSEA and other complementary project representatives. UNEP staff (including Task Manager and Project Manager) Project management and project team. Project management or representative from Phase I GMP projects.	Desk Review Interviews
Quality of Project Design		
How adequate was the Project Design to achieve the project's impact, Objectives, Outcomes and Outputs? <i>The Quality of Project Design is assessed using the template provided by the UNEP Office.</i>	ProDoc Available Project Review Reports (PIRs) Project amendments/revisions Comments and revisions available prior to project start.	Desk review Interviews
Nature of External Context		
To what extent have significant external and unanticipated operational factors affected the project's performance? (COVID-19*, natural disasters, security issues and conflicts, political instability, etc.)	Documents: ProDoc Project and budget revisions, delays and extension requests/amendments PIRs Final project report	Desk review Interviews

³⁷ <https://chm.pops.int/Implementation/GlobalMonitoringPlan/MonitoringReports/tabid/525/Default.aspx>

³⁸ <https://www.unep.org/topics/chemicals-and-pollution-action/pollution-and-health/persistent-organic-pollutants-pops/pops>

Evaluation questions	Potential Information source	Data collection method
*To what extent did COVID-19 pandemic affect the project's expected results?	Mid-Term Review (MTR) Informants: UNEP staff and project team (including Task Manager, FMO, and Project Manager) Local and national government representatives	
Effectiveness		
Did the project achieve the intended outputs, as per the ProDoc?	Reconstructed ToC ProDoc	Desk review
Were the project outputs available, accessible and timely delivered to the project's beneficiaries?	Workplans and project timelines PIR and monitoring reports Final project report	Interviews Questionnaires Field visits
Quality of outputs: how relevant, appropriate and useful were the delivered outputs to the project's beneficiaries?	Meeting minutes from Project Steering Committee GMP Data Warehouse	
To what extent did the outputs contribute to the project's outcomes? ³⁹	Standard Operational Procedures (SOP) developed Informants: SC members	
Did the project intervention lead, or contribute to, unintended negative effects?	UNEP staff and project team (including Task Manager and Project Manager) Representatives from international standard organisations (ISO, ILAC and IUPAC) Expert laboratories involved	
What is the likelihood, that the project contributes to adverse, environmental, social or economic impacts?	Project beneficiaries e.g. national and local representatives and coordinators from participating countries.	
Did intended positive impacts materialise, post project intervention?	ROG members Local implementing partners (sampling and analysis laboratories) and participants of capacity building/training activities	
What is the likelihood that the project makes a substantive contribution to the long-lasting changes represented by the SDGs and/or UNEPs Expected Accomplishments and strategic priorities?	Relevant project partners e.g. Viet Nam Environment Administration (VEA)	
Financial Management		

³⁹ For the reconstructed ToC.

Evaluation questions	Potential Information source	Data collection method
Did the financial management adhere to UNEP's financial policies and procedures, and comply with financial audit requirements? Was the project's key financial data complete? Where is financial documentation missing, inaccurate, incomplete or unavailable? Was the project's disbursement consistent with actual spending, the workplan, length of implementation and the outputs delivered? Was the communication between the PM/TM and Fund Management Officer adequate to enable an effective delivery of the planned project?	Project budget and expenditure reports Financial and audit reports ProDoc Financial and approvals and revisions. Contracting documents UNEP/GEF financial management policies. Informants: FMO, Task Manager, and Project Manager UNEP staff, specifically UNEP Executing Agency (EA) and Implementing agencies (IA).	Desk review Interviews
Efficiency		
To what extent were cost-effectiveness and timeliness considered during project implementation, and how did they impact project performance and resource efficiency? To what extent did the project make efficient use of pre-existing networks, agreements, partnerships, infrastructure, data sources, complementarities, monitoring activities and local resources from relevant projects? To what extent were lessons from former and relevant projects considered and implemented? Were costs or time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the project budget and agreed project timeframe? What factors and needs caused project extensions and how did these affect project execution and efficiency? Could project extensions been avoided?	Project budget and actual expenditure reports ProDoc Financial and approvals and revisions. PIRs PSC meeting minutes Workplans TE for Phase I project Project Inception Report Informants: National coordinators and representatives UNEP project team (including Task Manager, FMO, and Project Manager) UNEP staff Project partners (expert laboratories)	Desk review Interviews Field visit
Monitoring and Reporting		

Evaluation questions	Potential Information source	Data collection method
To what extent was the monitoring plan financially adequate to cover for monitoring, MTR and TE? To what extent was the monitoring system operational, appropriately documented and relevant to track project progress towards the project's objectives? Were findings, recommendations (if any) and/or information from monitoring and evaluation activities, used to adapt and improve the project execution? Have the project status reports been delivered in a timely manner and did the project comply with UNEP and donor reporting commitments? Was the monitoring plan designed to track progress against SMART indicators, sufficient to monitor results and track progress toward achieving project outputs and outcomes?	ProDoc PIRs delivered/uploaded in PIMS and IPMR PM and project team Meeting minutes from workshops Mission reports MTR and monitoring documentation Mid-term workshop report UNEP project team (including Task Manager, FMO, and Project Manager)	Desk review Interviews
Sustainability		
How do socio-political, financial and institutional factors affect the probability of project outcomes being maintained and developed after the project's completion? To what extent has the project identified and ensured that the resources needed to deliver benefits (e.g. financial, human, capacity, infrastructural) are available or secured in the operational context? What is the declared willingness and sense of ownership for relevant beneficiaries and project partners to take the project's achievements forward? Did the project design and implement an appropriate exit/handover strategy and measures to mitigate risks to sustainability?	ProDoc Project Inception Report Final report Presentation materials and report/minutes from Final workshop ProDoc PIRs Budgets and financial reports Overview Reports published (Deliverables) Informants: National coordinators and representatives UNEP project team (including Task Manager, FMO, and Project Manager) UNEP staff Project partners (expert laboratories) National government representatives.	Desk review Interviews Field visit questionnaires

Evaluation questions	Potential Information source	Data collection method
Are the governance, institutional structures and processes set in place, robust enough to continue delivering the benefits associated with the project outcomes, long-term? How likely is that the project will continue to deliver benefits after the project has ended? Are capacity development efforts likely to be sustained and amplified to the extent that allows the Asia region to comply with the effectiveness monitoring of the Stockholm Convention (GMP2)?	Local laboratories and regional stakeholders with interest to continue POPs monitoring.	
Factors and Processes Affecting Project Performance		
Were appropriate measures taken to address weaknesses in the project design or respond to changes in the context that took place between project approval and project mobilisation? To what degree were the stakeholder groups and partners engaged, and their needs integrated in the project design? Were all relevant stakeholder properly identified in the project design and adequately involved in the project implementation? Did the project's management team (IA and EA), provide quality and timely project management and support? Was project management proactive and responding adequately to issues encountered in the project's implementation? How were risks managed by the project management team and key partners? How were risks mitigated, and problems encountered, solved? What communication mechanisms were put in place to ensure an active stakeholder engagement and ownership? Were the stakeholder communication and consultation mechanisms effective and inclusive of differentiated?	Partnership agreements (Key Agreements) Project budgets ProDoc Project Inception Report Mid-Term workshop report Co-financing verification Partner meeting minutes Planning documents Report deliverables published (Deliverables) Interactive Dashboard available Materials developed to raise awareness Standard Operational Procedures Informants: UNEP project team (including Task Manager and Project Manager) National coordinators and representatives UNEP staff Project beneficiaries e.g. national and local representatives and coordinators from participating countries. ROG members	Desk review Interviews Questionnaires Field visit

Evaluation questions	Potential Information source	Data collection method
To what extent did the project apply the UN Human rights-based approach, the UN Declaration on the rights of Indigenous People and UNEP's Policy and Strategy for gender Equality and the Environment? What support was provided to maximise collaboration and coherence between stakeholders? To what extent were effective partnerships arrangements established for implementation of the project with relevant stakeholders involved in the country/region? To what extent did the project design, implementation and monitoring consider gender inequalities and differentiation? To what extent did the management of the project minimise UNEP's environmental footprint? What measures were taken to minimise this impact? Was the level of involvement of government and/or public sector representatives or officials sufficient to ensure ownership over project outputs and outcomes and representation (of relevant sectors as well as all gender and marginalized groups)? What public awareness activities were conducted during project implementation, and to what extent did they influence attitudes and behaviors in communities and civil society? How were experiences, knowledge and lessons learned communicated between project partners and interested groups?		

ANNEX III. STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED DURING THE EVALUATION

Stakeholders consulted during the evaluation

Organization	Position	Role in the project	Gender
UNEP	Associate Programme Management Officer, Knowledge and Risk Unit, Chemicals and Health Branch, Industry and Economy Division	Project Manager	F
UNEP	Programme Management Officer, Knowledge and Risk Unit, Chemicals and Health Branch, Industry and Economy Division	Supervisor of Project Manager	F
UNEP	Programme Management Officer, GEF Chemicals and Waste Unit, Chemicals and Health Branch, Industry and Economy Division	Task Manager	M
UNEP	Associate Programme Management Officer, GEF Chemicals and Waste Unit, Chemicals and Health Branch, Industry and Economy Division	Assisting Task Manager	M
UNEP	Fund Management Officer (FMO), GEF Chemicals and Waste Unit, Chemicals and Health Branch, Industry and Economy Division	Financial Manager	M
UNEP	Head of Knowledge and Risk Unit, Chemicals and Health Branch, Industry and Economy Division	Former Task Manager	M
POPsEA	Deputy Director, senior manager	SC Regional advisor and project support	M
Government of Cambodia	Government staff	National coordinator	M
Government of Indonesia	Government staff	National coordinator	M
Government of Lao PDR	Government staff	National coordinator	M
Government of Mongolia	Government staff	National coordinator	F
Government of Philippines	Government staff	National coordinator	M
Government of Thailand (PCD)	Government staff	National coordinator	F
RECETOX	Regional Centre Director	Expert Laboratory	F
IVM VU	Professor Emeritus	Expert Laboratory	M
CVUA	Director	Expert Laboratory	M
CVUA	Former director	Expert Laboratory	M
Senior Program Officer	Senior Program Management Officer	SC GMP Advisor	F
SCRC China	Senior Program Officer	Partner, technical support	F
Environment and Climate Change Canada	GOG member	Partner, technical support	M
BCCC-SCRC-LATU	Co-director	SC member, ROG member	F
MTEC	Research Specialist	Laboratory staff	F
Chulabhorn Research Inst.	Senior research scientist	Laboratory staff	M

Organization	Position	Role in the project	Gender
DCCE	Environmental Expert	No role	F
GIZ	Senior Environmentalist	No role	M
GIZ	Senior Environmentalist	No role	M
Pollution Control Department, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Thailand (PCD)	Professional Expert	GMP, ROC member	F
Mahidol University	Senior Research Scientist	Laboratory staff	M

ANNEX IV. KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

Project planning and reporting documents

- Project Document (ProDoc) Request for CEO Endorsement (2013).
- Project Mid-term Evaluation (MTR) report (2018).
- Financial documentation including revised budgets and workplans from (2021 – October 2023), expenditure reports, audit reports, co-finance agreements and co-finance verification documentation (i.e. reports, correspondence and signed statements)
- Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) from 2016 – 2024.
- Project Narrative Reports from 2017-2020.
- Minutes from Project Steering Committee meetings and Expert Meetings from January 2016 – November 2023.
- Final Project Report from 2025.
- STAP Scientific and Technical screening of the Project Identification Form (PIF), Version 5 from 2013.
- Capacity Screening questionnaire.

Key Agreements signed and amendments.

Project outputs – Overall

- Inception workshop (January 2016), mid-term workshop (August 2018) and final workshop (April 2023) reports.
- Video tutorials for:
 - PAS: United Nations Environment Programme Global Monitoring (2015) Global Monitoring Plan: Video tutorial - POPs passive air sampling, Available at: <https://www.unep.org/resources/toolkits-manuals-and-guides/global-monitoring-plan-video-tutorial-pops-passive-air> [Accessed February 2026]
 - AAS: United Nations Environment Programme Global Monitoring (2019a) Global Monitoring Plan: Video tutorial - POPs passive air sampling, Available at: <https://www.unep.org/resources/toolkits-manuals-and-guides/global-monitoring-plan-video-tutorial-pops-active-air> [Accessed February 2026]
 - Human milk sampling: United Nations Environment Programme Global Monitoring (2019b) Global Monitoring Plan: Video tutorial - POPs passive air sampling, Available at: <https://www.unep.org/resources/toolkits-manuals-and-guides/global-monitoring-plan-video-tutorial-pops-human-milk> [Accessed February 2026]
- United Nations Environment Programme (2025) Campaign: Worst friends forever. UNEP. Available at: <https://www.unep.org/interactives/worst-friends-forever/> [Accessed: 21 October 2025]
- IPCP (2023) IPCP Webinar Series: POPs in plastic and monitoring approaches. Available at: <https://www.ipcp.ch/ipcp-webinar-series-pops-in-plastic-and-monitoring-approaches/> [Accessed: 20 October 2025]
- United Nations Environment Programme (2023c) eCourse - Data Handling and Interpretation for the Monitoring of POPs under the Stockholm Convention. Available at: <https://www.unep.org/resources/e-learning/ecourse-data-handling->

[and-interpretation-monitoring-pops-under-stockholm](#) [Accessed: 22 October 2025]

- United Nations Environment Programme (2023c) Press release: Some chemical pollutants reducing in humans and the environment, but new ones keep popping up. Chemicals Pollution & Action, Nairobi, 17 June 2024. Available at: <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/press-release/some-chemical-pollutants-reducing-humans-and-environment-new-ones> [Accessed: 20 October 2025]
- Fiedler, H., Abad, E. and de Boer, J. (2023) 'Analysis of Persistent Organic Pollutants for the Stockholm Convention's Global Monitoring Plan' [Special issue], Chemosphere. Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/special-issue/10W6KR916BB> [Accessed 20 October 2025]
- United Nations Environment Programme (2023d) Training Report: Capacity building on POPs monitoring in biota and abiotic matrices in the Africa, Asia, Pacific and GRULAC regions. **Appendix 10:** Procedure for the Analysis of PFAS in Pellets. Available at: <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/46310> [Accessed 20 October 2025]
- United Nations Environment Programme (2023e) Training Report: Capacity building on POPs monitoring in biota and abiotic matrices in the Africa, Asia, Pacific and GRULAC regions. **Appendix 9:** Assessment of national capacity on POPs monitoring and technical support to strengthen regional coordination on sustainable monitoring of POPs in the Asia Pacific Region. Available at: <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/46315> [Accessed 20 October 2025]

Project outputs Component 1: The national agreements and laboratory data

- Cofinance verification for partners (2014)
- Correspondence between project management and beneficiaries (limited).
- SSFA and PCAs for partners and countries and ICA for UNEP.
- United Nations Environment Programme (2024) POPs monitoring data dashboard, Global Monitoring Plan Projects 2008-2012, 2016-2023. Available at: <https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoieY2Y3MmE2NjktOWQ4NC00YWE0LTkzNWEtNjhkNWZkYThiMGYzliwidCI6IjBmOWUzNWRiLTU0NGYtNGY2MC1iZGNjLTVlYTQxNmU2ZGM3MCIslmMiQjh9> [Accessed 20 August 2025]

Project outputs Component 2: Training reports and sectoral report (water and air)

- United Nations Environment Programme (2024f). Sectoral Report: Results of Water Monitoring of Persistent Organic Pollutants. Geneva. Production: nited Nations Environment Programme DOI:<https://doi.org/10.59117/20.500.11822/45465>
- United Nations Environment Programme (2024e). Sectoral Report: Results of Air Monitoring of Persistent Organic Pollutants. Geneva. DOI:<https://doi.org/10.59117/20.500.11822/45466>
- United Nations Environment Programme (2018). *Training reports in the African region - Appendix*. Available at: <https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/46306> [Accessed: 21 October 2025]

Project outputs Component 3: Training reports and sectoral report (milk survey)

- United Nations Environment Programme (2023). Results of the 2016-2019 WHO/UNEP Human Milk Survey on Persistent Organic Pollutants. Geneva. DOI - <https://doi.org/10.59117/20.500.11822/44829>
- Malisch, R., Fürst, P. and Šebková, K. (2023) Persistent Organic Pollutants in Human Milk. Springer. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-34087-1>

Project outputs Component 4: Assessment report of existing analytical capacities

- United Nations Environment Programme (2024b). Training Report: Capacity building on POPs monitoring in biota and abiotic matrices in the Africa, Asia, Pacific and GRULAC regions. Geneva. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.59117/20.500.11822/46305>
- United Nations Environment Programme (2023a). Organization and Outcomes of Four Interlaboratory Assessments on Persistent Organic Pollutants. Geneva. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.59117/20.500.11822/44155>
- United Nations Environment Programme (2021). Bi-ennial Global Interlaboratory Assessment on Persistent Organic Pollutants – Fourth Round 2018/2019. Available at: <https://www.unep.org/resources/other-evaluation-reportsdocuments/bi-ennial-global-interlaboratory-assessment-2> [Accessed 22 October 2025]
- United Nations Environment Programme (2017). Bi-ennial Global Interlaboratory Assessment on Persistent Organic Pollutants - Third Round 2016/2017. Available at: <https://www.unep.org/resources/other-evaluation-reportsdocuments/bi-ennial-global-interlaboratory-assessment-1> [Accessed 22 October 2025]

Project outputs Component 5:

- National report for Cambodia
- National report for Indonesia
- National report for Lao PDR
- National report for Mongolia
- National report for Philippines
- National report for Thailand
- National report for Viet Nam
- United Nations Environment Programme (2024c). Global Monitoring Plan on POPs: Sustainability. Geneva. Production: United Nations Environment Programme. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.59117/20.500.11822/46592>
- United Nations Environment Programme (2024d). Synthesis Report on the Road Map for Securing Conditions for Sustainable Monitoring of POPs. Geneva. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.59117/20.500.11822/46104>
- United Nations Environment Programme. (2024a). Implementation of the POPs Monitoring Plan under the Stockholm Convention in the Asian Region. Geneva. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.59117/20.500.11822/45421>
- United Nations Environment Programme (2019). Stakeholder consultation on securing sustainable conditions for the monitoring of POPs under the Stockholm Convention, 10 December. Available at: <https://www.unep.org/events/workshop/stakeholder-consultation-securing-sustainable-conditions-monitoring-pops-under> [Accessed 25 October 2025]

- United Nations Environment Programme (2023b). Review of Facts, Experiences, Achievements, and Challenges in Relation to POPs Monitoring. Geneva. DOI - <https://doi.org/10.59117/20.500.11822/44539>

Previous evaluations

- The Project's Mid-Term Evaluation (2018) by Pesticide Action Network UK.
- United Nations Environment Programme, Evaluation Office (2018) Terminal evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project "Establishing the Tools and Methods to Include the Nine New POPs into Global Monitoring Plan" (GEF ID 4412). Nairobi: Evaluation Office of UN Environment. Available at: https://publicpartnershipdata.azureedge.net/gef/GEFDocuments/852894ef-de7c-e811-8124-3863bb2e1360/TE/_4412%20TE.pdf [Accessed 21 October 2025]
- United Nations Environment Programme, Evaluation Office (2013) Terminal Evaluation of the Four UNEP GEF Medium Size Projects (GEF ID GFL/2328-2760-4A37/4A76/4A77/4A80): Supporting the Implementation of the Global Monitoring Plan of POPs in the four Sub-Regions: Eastern Southern Africa, West Africa, Latin America and Caribbean, and Pacific islands.

Reference documents

- COP11 (2023) Meeting Documents: SC-11/17 Effectiveness evaluation of the Stockholm Convention, available at:
- Fiedler, H., Ábalos, M., Parera, J., Abad, E., Lohmann, N., Neugebauer, F., Rottler, H. and Horstmann, M. (2023) *Dioxin-like POPs in national samples from global monitoring plan projects (2017–2019)*. *Chemosphere*, 332, 138686. Available at:
- Fiedler, H., Li, X. and Zhang, J. (2023) *Persistent organic pollutants in human milk from primiparae – correlations, global, regional, and national time-trends*. *Chemosphere*, 336, 139221. Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0045653523009153> [Accessed 5 February 2026]
- Fiedler, H., & Sadia, M. (2021). Regional occurrence of perfluoroalkane substances in human milk for the global monitoring plan under the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants during 2016-2019. *Chemosphere*, 277, 130287. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chemosphere.2021.130287>
- Fiedler, H., Sadia, M., Baabish, A. and Sobhanei, S. (2022) *Perfluoroalkane substances in national samples from global monitoring plan projects (2017–2019)*. *Chemosphere*, 307(Part 3), 136038. Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0045653522025310> [Accessed 5 February 2026]
- GEF Secretariat (2022) *Guidelines on the Implementation of the GEF-8 Results Measurement Framework*. GEF/C.62/Inf.12/Rev.01, 62nd GEF Council Meeting (21-23 June 2022), Washington, D.C.
- Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention of Persistent Organic Pollutants (2023) Report on the activities to support the global monitoring plan for persistent organic pollutants, 23rd February 2023, UNEP/POPS/COP.11/INF/9. Geneva.
- United Nations Environment Programme (2021a) Global monitoring plan for persistent organic pollutants under the Stockholm Convention Article 16 on effectiveness evaluation: Third regional monitoring report – Asia-Pacific region. Geneva: Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, United

- Nations Environment Programme. Available at:
<https://www.pops.int/Implementation/GlobalMonitoringPlan/MonitoringReports/tabid/525/Default.aspx> [Accessed 24 October 2025]
- Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (n.d.) Capacity building (Global Monitoring Plan). Available at:
<https://www.pops.int/Implementation/GlobalMonitoringPlan/CapacityBuilding/tabid/271/Default.aspx> [Accessed 20 October 2025]
 - Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. Revised in 2025. Available at: <https://www.pops.int/Portals/0/download.aspx?e=UNEP-POPS-COP-CONVTEXT-2025.English.pdf> [Accessed 27 October 2025]
 - United Nations Environment Programme (2018) UN Environment Databank Of Laboratories Analyzing Lead, Mercury And POPs - UN Environment Databank of Laboratories Analyzing POPs. Last update April 14th 2018. Available at: <https://informea.pops.int/PbHgPOPsLabs/index.html> [Accessed 5 February 2026]
 - United Nations Environment Programme (2021a) Global monitoring plan for persistent organic pollutants under the Stockholm Convention Article 16 on effectiveness evaluation: Third regional monitoring report – Asia-Pacific region. Geneva: Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, United Nations Environment Programme. Available at:
 - World Health Organisation (2021). Viet Nam COVID-19 situation report #59, 14 September, World Health Organisation, Representative Office for Viet Nam. Available at: <https://www.who.int/vietnam/internal-publications-detail/covid-19-in-viet-nam-situation-report-59> [Accessed 19 October 2025]

ANNEX V. EVALUATION ITINERARY

Data collection mission to Thailand was organized from 7th July 2025 to 11th July 2025.

Date	The organisations/individuals that Evaluator interviewed
07/07/25	Arrival and meeting with a representative from PCD and a representative from The National Metal and Materials Technology Center (MTEC).
08/07/25	Meetings and interview with a representative from The Department of Climate Change and Environment (DCCE), representative of Chulabhorn Research Institute (CRI) and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
09/07/25	Interview with a representative from Regional Organisation Group(ROG).
10/07/25	Interview with representative staff at Mahidol University and another representative from GIZ.
11/07/25	Departure

ANNEX VI. COUNTRY STATUS REPORT (THAILAND)

COUNTRY STATUS REPORT

Date template completed:	01.10.2025
Country:	Thailand
Key country partner/focal point	The responsible national agency for the POPs process is the Pollution Control Department, PCD, under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment. The responsible contact person is Ms. Piyanan Udomtang. Interviews included: 7th July 2025 10.00 - 11.00 PCD 13.00 - 14.00 MTEC 8th July 2025 08.00 - 09.00 DCCE 13.00 - 14.00 CRI 16.30 - 17.30 GIZ 9th July 2025 10.00 - 11.00 GMP 10th July 2025 09.00 - 10.00 Mahidol University 13.00 - 14.00 GIZ
Date of joining Stockholm Convention and signing any amendments:	Thailand joined the Stockholm Convention by signing it in May 2002 and formally ratifying it in January 2005.
Status of the National Implementation Plan:	Thailand prepared its initial National Implementation Plan (NIP) to outline its policy, legislative, institutional, and technical approaches to managing POPs based on its first national inventory. This initial NIP was formally approved by the Government and transmitted under the Convention as required. Thailand has adopted its Second National Implementation Plan for POPs (2023–2027). The National Environment Board approved the plan in December 2022, and the Cabinet of Thailand formally endorsed it on 14 March 2023. This second NIP update was prepared by reviewing and updating the previous implementation plan and POPs inventories from 2018–2022, and incorporates new obligations and action plans. The plan was developed with support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and in consultation with international bodies such as the UN Environment Programme (UNEP).
Status of the project in the country:	
a) Project start date and end date; 3/2015 – 6/2024	

b) Total country-level project budget and expenditure (including summary of any in-kind contributions and/or co-financing received): Thailand contributed with co-financing amounting to USD 688,741.

c) Briefly describe the progress of the Thai key activities under each of the 5 components

Component 1: The national agreements and laboratory data are in place and supporting the project in the Asian Region. Thailand performed well in this aspect and all information was submitted as planned. Fully delivered.

Component 2: Training reports and sectoral reports on POPs analysis are available on two abiotic core matrices (i.e., air and water). Training was conducted and sectoral reports developed with Thailand as an active partner. Fully delivered.

Component 3: Training reports and sectoral report on POPs analysis are available on one biotic core matrix (7th round of human milk survey). Training was conducted and sectoral reports developed with Thailand as an active partner. Fully delivered.

Component 4: Assessment report of existing analytical capacities prepared and report on POPs analysis undertaken in samples of national priority (other than core matrices). Thailand played an active role in this component and performed well. Fully delivered.

Component 5: A roadmap for sustainable POPs monitoring for the Asian region is developed with assessment reports contributing to regional report for the GMP prepared. This component included limited national efforts. Thailand provided input to the conclusions and lessons learned. Fully delivered.

Significant changes in plans/personnel:	- The global COVID-19 pandemic severely affected the implementation of the project, especially in 2020 and 2021, which inevitably delayed activities and reporting. Ethical clearance for human milk monitoring made it difficult for the project team to implement relevant activities. - Customs clearance for shipment of packages was a challenge for the project's procurement of equipment and goods, which negatively impacted the project implementation. - Personnel changes became barriers to the smooth implementation of the project. It also adversely affected long-term impacts/outcomes of the project implementation, including capacity building activities that the project supported
Key challenges/negative effects:	- Initial stakeholder engagement and addressing the national interests and needs are fundamental for local ownership and sustainability of the POP reducing efforts. - The regional cooperation could have been more significant.
Key positive lessons/unexpected achievements:	- International training was highly appreciated
Contribution to the UN Environment PoW [indicator (a) (i) (1)]	<i>Briefly specify information on the country level progress towards set PoW targets ["adoption of policies, legislation at the national level for the implementation of the Stockholm Convention, besides the endorsement of the updated NIP [UN environment PoW indicator (a) (i) (1)"]</i> - No additional information identified.

○

ANNEX VII. 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.) ⁴⁰	SS 1.12 collection of genetic resources. SS 3.4 the use of chemicals subject to international bans or phase-out.
For any ESS issues identified at project design, were <u>mitigation strategies</u> developed (Y/N)? (If yes, briefly describe)	Yes, for the collection of genetic resources from human milk, the use of SOP for sampling and the involvement of WHO to support appropriate implementation are highlighted. For SS 3.4, there is no production of chemicals. Rather, the sampling and monitoring of existing amounts, and thus no mitigation strategies make sense to address, other than their disposal after sampling.
Were any <u>gaps</u> in ESS issues identified at the evaluation inception phase (Y/N)? (If yes, briefly describe)	Not at inception, but at terminal evaluation, the following were identified: SS 2.5 increases of greenhouse gas emissions. SS 3.2 generation of waste (hazardous or non-hazardous).

ESS MONITORING AT PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	
Is there evidence that the potential emergence of ESS issues was actively <u>monitored</u> during project implementation (Y/N)? ⁴¹ (If yes, briefly describe)	Yes, but to a limited extent. Following the approval of GEF Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards (2018) and UNEP's Safeguard Risk Identification Form (SRIF), there is evidence of reporting on the generation of waste and waste handling of the samples from 2020. This was integrated into the PIR reports.
Is there a justification for the absence of ESS monitoring (Y/N)? (If yes, briefly describe) ⁴²	Yes, it is stated that 'all laboratories have established waste management standards and routines' and that the project is thereby 'able to ensure that an appropriate waste treatment system is in place at the laboratories to avoid unintentional contamination of soil, water or air.'

MANAGEMENT RESPONSIVENESS DURING PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	
Identify the ESS issues/events <u>triggered</u> ⁴³ by the project. ⁴⁴	None identified.

⁴⁰ Select from the list of Environmental and Social Safeguards Risks in Table 1 of the template (tool 14, Safeguards Assessment Template).

⁴¹ **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.

⁴² For instance, during COVID-19, access to the field may have been restricted

⁴³ '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.

⁴⁴ Select from the list of Environmental and Social Safeguards Risks in Table 1 of the template (tool 14, Safeguards Assessment Template).

Describe consequences of ESS issues/events during project implementation.	None identified.
Describe the management response and identify supporting documentation. ^{45, 46}	None identified.
Were negative ESS effects offset by management response (Y/N)? (If yes, briefly describe)	No

⁴⁵ 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 minimise the identified potential risks without preparing a separate safeguard management plan.

⁴⁶ E.g., GEF Project Implementation Report (PIR), Progress Report, Minutes, etc.

ANNEX VIII. BRIEF CV OF THE EVALUATOR

Name	Bjørn Bauer
Profession	Consultant, Director of Norion Consult, Denmark
Nationality	Danish
Country experience	• Europe: Almost all EU MS • Africa: South Africa, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Uganda, and more • Americas: Colombia, Brazil, Bolivia, El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Nicaragua • Asia: Thailand, Sri Lanka, Viet Nam, Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Philippines, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Bhutan, Mongolia
Education	• Cand.Tech.Soc. – MSc Technological and Socio-Economic Planning

Bjørn Bauer holds a Master's in Technological and Socio-Economic Planning. He has worked with all elements of the project cycle, prepared around 25 international donor-supported programs, and evaluated around 15. He has been leading the evaluation of UNEP's SPELL program and of the EU-supported SWITCH African Green programs, and he participated in the evaluation of EU environmental support to developing countries. He has 35 years of international experience covering more than 100 countries. He is presently leading the impact assessment of the new EU WEEE Directive and co-leading the IA of the new EU Circular Economy Act.

Name	Dunia Huarachi Jørgensen
Profession	Design and Environmental Consultant
Nationality	Danish and Bolivian
Country experience	• Europe: Denmark, Germany • Africa: Uganda • Asia: Myanmar • Latin America: Bolivia
Education	• BEng. Interaction Design • MSc. Sustainable Design

Ms. Dunia is a design and environmental consultant at Norion. With a technical background as a design engineer within Interaction design and sustainable design, Dunia has a strong focus on development processes, involving technology and people. She has experience with projects within education and skills development, the healthcare sector and international development. She has experience working with change processes that support sustainability, innovation and the involvement of various stakeholders.

ANNEX IX. GEF PORTAL INPUTS

The following table contains text to be uploaded to the GEF Portal. **It will be drawn from the Evaluation Report, either as copied or summarized text.** In each case, references should be provided for the paragraphs and pages of the report from which the responses have been copied or summarized.

Table 23: GEF Portal Inputs

Question: What was the performance at the project's completion against Core Indicator Targets? (For projects approved prior to GEF-7⁴⁷, these indicators will be identified retrospectively and comments on performance provided⁴⁸).
Response: The project was part of the GEF-5 cycle. The GEF Core Indicator 11: 'People benefiting from GEF-financed investments (disaggregated by sex)' applies to this project. This indicator captures the total number of direct beneficiaries, disaggregated by sex. According to the Regional Report of the Asia Region (UNEP, 2024), there were 36 female participants and 22 male participants, making a total of 58 participants. During the evaluation, the participant list was distributed to stakeholders, and gender verification was conducted (no responses from Viet Nam and Cambodia). The evaluators were able to confirm 49 participants: 21 males and 28 females. Regardless of the small discrepancy in numbers, these were direct beneficiaries, and a generally fair representation of both sexes was present. (Section 4.4.4).
Question: What were the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program as evolved from the time of the MTR? <i>(This should be based on the description included in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan or equivalent documentation submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval)</i>
Response: The stakeholder descriptions and structure for coordination are present in the ProDoc, including the roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders. Some stakeholders, such as the regional coordinator VEA, did not fulfil the envisioned role. The challenges in communication with the national-level actors affected the project's performance. (Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-cutting issues). As a result, the EA in UNEP had the regional coordinating responsibility. The MTR recommended engaging some of the experts in the region. The same year, the Steering Committee included a POPsEA representative in their meeting to share a bit of their project. The challenge in coordinating closely with the POPsEA entailed different data gathering approaches and seeing no overlap in activities or risk for duplication. There has been progress in coming closer to a regional collaboration through the future GMP3 project. The scientifically-oriented GMP project placed very limited focus on the political processes, as it was focused on providing POP-monitoring results for the global monitoring effort. The data resulting from countries' involvement did not have a significant impact on national-level policymaking. The MTR recommended establishing a stronger link between policymakers, which was not sufficiently addressed (Section 4.8).
Question: What were the completed gender-responsive measures and, if applicable, actual gender result areas? <i>(This should be based on the documentation at CEO Endorsement/Approval, including gender-sensitive indicators contained in the project results framework or gender action plan or equivalent)</i>

⁴⁷ The GEF is currently operating under the seventh replenishment period of the GEF Trust Fund covering the period July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2022. The GEF Portal Reporting Guide for FY20 Reporting Process indicates that GEF-6 projects that have yet to map existing indicators to GEF-7 Core Indicators need to do so at MTR stage or (if already there) at the time of the TE. (i.e. not GEF projects approved before GEF-6)

⁴⁸ This is not applicable for Enabling Activities.

Response: Neither gender-sensitive indicators nor a gender action plan was developed in the project design, as this was not required for GEF-5 projects. However, the completed gender-responsive measures in the project included the collection of gender-disaggregated data through expert-led training, with 57% female participation overall, and the representation of both women and men in the project's key activities, such as workshops and scientific committees. Gender-sensitive indicators were indirectly addressed by focusing on the vulnerabilities of women of childbearing age to POPs exposure, which was central to the project's design. The project also ensured gender equity in participation across national-level workshops, with 41% female attendance at the inception workshop, 50% at the mid-term workshop, and 38% at the final workshop. Although the project was gender-blind by design, it demonstrated a broadly balanced gender representation in key activities and data collection.

Question: What was the progress made in the implementation of the management measures against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval? The risk classifications reported in the latest PIR report should be verified and the findings of the effectiveness of any measures or lessons learned taken to address identified risks assessed. *(Any supporting documents gathered by the Consultant during this review should be shared with the Task Manager for uploading in the GEF Portal)*

Response: No Safeguards Plan was submitted for CEO Approval.

Question: What were the challenges and outcomes regarding the project's completed Knowledge Management Approach, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables (e.g. website/platform development); Knowledge Products/Events; Communication Strategy; Lessons Learned and Good Practice; Adaptive Management Actions? *(This should be based on the documentation approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval)*

Response: No specified Knowledge Management Approach was found in the ProDoc. The outcomes the learning deliverables aimed to support were the capacity building efforts to establish the GMP and support ongoing monitoring in the long term. Learning materials produced in this project included SOPs, video-guides, an e-course, webinars, and campaign materials. SOPs and video-guides were used effectively by the participating countries in the sampling activities, enabling them to follow standardized procedures and ultimately produce data that could be compared and could support the GMP. Challenges included language barriers, as these were not available in the local languages.

The e-course and webinar were aimed at supporting further capacity development efforts in data management and overall knowledge on POPs monitoring. Both of these were intended for a broad audience. Participant data was not gathered, and the materials were produced towards the end of the project, making the assessment of their actual outcome and challenges not viable.

Similarly, the campaign "Worst Friend Forever" was available towards the later phases of the project. There was no communication strategy identified, which could have supported the dissemination to the broader public.

Question: What are the main findings of the evaluation?

Response: The project made a strategically vital contribution to the Stockholm Convention's effectiveness evaluation and the global evidence base on POPs, delivering most planned Outputs of credible quality across seven countries.

The project design scope was overly ambitious due to the involvement of countries with different interests, levels of engagement, capacities, languages, and resources. The analysis and preparation for the operating context were limited. No regional strategy was articulated to address newly listed (and 'regrettable substitutions') POPs.

The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated no-cost extensions of the project. UNEP managed to maintain the engagement of project stakeholders, and meetings were held online to continue communication during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Capacities were strengthened, particularly for passive/active air sampling and QA/QC through inter-laboratory assessments; however, comprehensive and routine national monitoring (including human milk and water) was not yet institutionally secured and sustainable across all countries. Not all countries attained the same levels of capacity, and capacity building and funding are still needed. Continuation of core matrices, particularly air, human milk and water, is recommended to consolidate trends and strengthen national use of results.

Financial management was rated as Satisfactory, although one country did not receive any of the planned funds, and gaps in co-financing and expenditure documentation were identified. However, the project stayed within budget, with surplus funds, and attracted more co-financing sources.

Despite early administrative/contractual delays and staff turnover, the project adapted work plans and leveraged shared SOPs/guidance/videos across the four regional projects under SC oversight. Timeliness was not sufficiently ensured, due to cross-project interdependencies and some inefficiencies, with materials/registrations exceeding actual submissions.

Overall, resource use was moderately unsatisfactory in terms of efficiency, with a large mobilization of existing resources from partners and participating countries, while timeliness was only moderate, yielding five no-cost project extensions.

Monitoring and reporting were Satisfactory. PIRs supported annual decision-making, but the absence of measurable indicators and baselines/targets limited evaluability.

Sustainability is Moderately Unlikely. The project's deliberate distance from policy processes reduced socio-political traction. Sustainability prospects are not strong due to a lack of explicit national conditions for GMP, budget, and integration of GMP reporting into routine institutional cycles.

Project performance was affected by shifting priorities (data v.s. capacity), partly offset by an active SC engagement and strong expert-national collaboration. Cross-cutting issues of uneven representation at the national and regional levels affected communication and implementation. Despite not having an explicit gender inclusive approach, there was generally fair representation of females and males across beneficiaries, the project team, and SC.

ANNEX X. QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF THE EVALUATION REPORT

Evaluation Title:

Terminal Evaluation: UNEP/GEF Project, "Implementation of the POPs Monitoring Plan in the Asian Region (GEF ID 4894)" (2015 - 2024)

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 <i>Executive Summary</i> 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	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> All required elements are covered in the Executive Summary. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The Executive Summary serves as a concise presentation of evaluation analyses, which covers both achievements and drawbacks of the project in a well-balanced manner. Important points of the project's performance are effectively presented, which enables readers to understand the gist of the evaluation report. In general, the Executive Summary is well articulated in a concise manner, following the UNEP template. However, insertion of more convincing storylines could have made the Executive Summary even more robust. Responses to key strategic questions are well summarized. Gender and human rights dimensions of the project are also briefly described in a separate paragraph.	5
Section B: The Project	Assessment	
2. Does the report clearly describe the <i>key parameters, scale and complexity of the evaluand</i>? 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 organized according to relevant common characteristics	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The section includes all the required information on the project. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> Various project information is well presented in this section, enabling readers to verify key dimensions of the evaluand. All sub-sections are well elaborated with the required information in a well-balanced manner. Especially, project implementation structures and stakeholders are well described. Co-financial data are generally well analyzed. A detailed analysis of the project's co-finance, covering data on different sources of co-financing, is elaborated in the section '4.5 Financial Management'. Changes in design during implementation are also generally well described but could have been more detailed.	5.5

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
- 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		
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 (<i>including in a table broken down by gender</i>) - 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, marginalized) - 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	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> All required elements are presented in the section. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The section is well elaborated with all the required information, which enables readers to easily understand the details of evaluation methodologies. Almost all elements are generally well described. Especially, data collection methodologies are well elaborated with practical details. Similarly, strategies for inclusivity are extensively described. The use of AI is also briefly described. Data analysis methods and approaches that are adopted to include the voices of women and other excluded groups are briefly mentioned, but could have been further elaborated.	5
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 (<i>narratively and diagrammatically</i>)? Consider how well the report presents: - whether the project design included a TOC - how the <i>TOC at Evaluation</i> ⁴⁹ was designed (e.g. who was involved, etc) - confirmation/reconstruction of results in accordance with UNEP definitions (<i>including reformulation table, which may</i>	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> All required elements are covered. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> Reconstruction of the TOC is well done and described properly in the section, incorporating all the required information. Especially, the analysis, reformulation, and expansion of assumptions and drivers are thoroughly done, which serves as the core framework of this evaluation.	5.5

⁴⁹ 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
<i>have initially been presented in the Inception Report and should appear in the Main Evaluation report.)</i> • articulation of causal pathways • identification of drivers and assumptions • identification of key actors in the change process	Five different causal pathways of the reconstructed TOC are well articulated, in narrative form, along with the reformulation table, which serves as a core part of this section. The TOC diagram highlights the linkages between different levels of the results, including their relationships with respective drivers and assumptions. Key actors in the change process are broadly mentioned, especially in relation to drivers. How the TOC at Evaluation was designed (e.g. who was involved, etc) is also described accurately. Human rights/gender-related drivers and assumptions are briefly mentioned across the section, but could have been more explicit and extensive.	
Section D: Evidence and Analysis	Assessment	
5. Is the report based on <i>sufficient and adequate data</i> and <i>clear and credible evidence</i>? 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	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The report includes sufficient data and credible evidence in general. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> Evidence, i.e., interviews and documents, is generally well presented to support findings, although these are not necessarily cited in the main texts. The Annex includes lists of interviewees and documents consulted. In general, triangulation is done in some parts of the report. Although not all evidence is articulated in narrative form, some of them are clearly cited in the report. Readers can generally see many findings being backed up by certain evidence. While securing interview appointments was not always easy, the evaluators made efforts to collect primary data through various data collection methods, including an online questionnaire and follow-up emails. The evaluator also travelled to Bangkok, Thailand, to conduct in-person interviews with key national stakeholders to collect hands-on information. Secondary data are also effectively collected, utilized, and triangulated with different sources of data to draw findings. Overall, data sources are adequate to support findings and ratings as credible evidence.	5.5

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
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	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> Analyses are generally rigorous, and findings are logical in the report. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> In general, findings are supported by clear analysis that is consistent with evidence, which makes the evaluator's argument logical, clear, and coherent. Findings and analyses are well aligned with the evaluation framework. Consistent support for findings and performance ratings is ensured in line with UNEP's Criteria Ratings Matrix. Many findings that are derived from the evaluator's in-depth analysis also provide insights that enhance learning. Overall, the report is generally well-balanced, demonstrating both successes and weaknesses of the project, based on which lessons learned and recommendations are derived.	5.5
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/mobilisation⁵⁰), with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups.	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The section includes all necessary elements. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> Alignments with various strategies, policies, and priorities are well elaborated with details. The project's alignment with relevant indicators, including the GEF Core Indicator, is also mentioned. Overall, relevance assessment is well done. Especially, coherence analysis is comprehensive and extensive, covering both external coherence and internal coherence. Complementarities and their effects brought from the project to other interventions (and vice versa) are well elaborated. The detailed coherence analysis gives added value to the relevance assessment.	5.5
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?	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The section presents a summary of the project design. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> Both strengths and weaknesses of the project design are described in a well-balanced manner, which serves as a good summary of the quality of the project design. The table	*NOT RATED⁵¹

⁵⁰ 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.

⁵¹ The Quality of Project Design criterion is not rated in this table because the majority of the analysis is presented in the Inception Report and the Final Terminal Review report only contains a summary.

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
	indicates all scores of the respective sub-criteria of the project design quality. Key aspects of the project design that require the readers' attention are well elaborated, including issues that are related to contextual analysis and Theory of Change/ indicators, respectively. The strengths of the project design are also well analyzed, mainly from technical and thematic perspectives.	
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?	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The section includes an analysis of key external features of the project's implementing contexts. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The analysis of the external context is briefly done, especially from the perspectives of the COVID-19 pandemic. The negative effects brought by the COVID-19 pandemic are described. Additionally, organizational changes in the government are briefly mentioned, which gives added value to the section. A little more in-depth analysis of external contexts disaggregated by the sub-regions/countries would have benefited the section, as the project covers 7 different countries where the sub-regional/country contexts may vary.	*NOT RATED⁵³
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	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> All required elements are covered in the section, especially the assessments of outputs versus the project output statements, indicators, and targets. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The Output analysis is very detailed to assess the project's performance at the Output level, referring to the baseline and targets set during the project design phase. In particular, the results and progress of each indicator are well analyzed. Evidence is well collated and triangulated to identify valid and coherent findings. The analysis of each Output is very detailed, including brief country-wise analyses, which	5.5

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.

⁵³ The Nature of External Context is not rated in this table because it is not consistently applicable across all projects. Some review reports will simply record that there was no unexpected unfavourable external factors, while others may have to describe critical external events.

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).	cover timeliness, quality, and utility of the Output. Gender and human rights considerations are analyzed, but could have been more detailed.	
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).	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The section covers almost all the required information. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The assessment of the project's Outcome is generally well done, covering the analysis of indicator-wise Outcome results and the assessment of the nature, depth, and scale of the project Outcomes. The analyses include barriers to the achievement of the Outcomes. The contribution and attribution of Outcome-level changes to the project's interventions are broadly described. A few analyses are also disaggregated by country. The uptake of outputs by intended beneficiaries is described, but could have been a little more detailed. Similarly, the identification of positive or negative effects of the project on disadvantaged groups is not very explicit.	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).	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> Almost all the required information is covered in the section, including a discussion of drivers and assumptions. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The section presents an analysis of the likelihood of impact, supported by evidence. Causal pathways to the impact are well examined in a table, along with an overall assessment of the roles of drivers and assumptions in the causal pathways. However, each of the drivers and assumptions could have been analyzed in more detail. The roles played by key actors and change agents are broadly mentioned, especially in relation to drivers and assumptions. Challenges are also analyzed and described, including staff retention and political commitments. Identification of the unintended negative effects of the project on disadvantaged groups is well analyzed and described.	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:	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> All the required information is presented in the section. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The project's financial management is analyzed in detail, which provides insights into how the	6

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
• <i>adherence</i> to UNEP's financial policies and procedures • <i>completeness</i> of financial information, including the actual project costs and actual co-financing used and explanation of any variances between planned and actual expenditures	financial management could have been improved. The analysis on adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures is comprehensive, with diverse perspectives, following parameters that are required to determine the rating of the sub-criterion. Multiple pieces of evidence are collated and triangulated to identify detailed findings. Similarly, the evaluators did a detailed analysis of the completeness of financial information. In addition to an overview of the completeness of the required financial documents, the project's co-finance is analyzed extensively, especially for gaps in co-finance reporting. The section includes two separate co-financing tables, which include a detailed disaggregation of sources of co-finance. It also allows for comparison between planned co-finance figures and confirmed ones, which enhances the quality of the section. Overall, the section is very comprehensive and provides many insights into the project's financial management.	
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 minimized UNEP's environmental footprint.	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> All the required information is covered in the section. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> Efficiency assessment is well done. In-depth analyses are conducted, especially for the cost-effectiveness of the project, including the project's use of pre-existing arrangements and partnerships coming from the Phase I project. The resource efficiency stemming from coordination with the other three regional projects is well analyzed and elaborated. The project's delay and its repeated no-cost extensions are well described to draw a convincing finding. The project's measures to mitigate the environmental footprint are also briefly mentioned.	5.5
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 <i>monitoring of project implementation</i> (including use of monitoring data for adaptive management) • the quality of <i>project reporting</i> (e.g. PIMS and donor reports)	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> Almost all required elements are well covered in the section. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The analysis of the project's monitoring and reporting function is generally well done, with most of the required information. The detailed analyses include, but are not limited to, M&E budget, indicators, reporting,	5

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
	and gender/ human rights dimensions of monitoring and reporting. Especially, gender aspects are well analyzed. Drawbacks of the project's monitoring and reporting are also well analyzed and elaborated, which provides insights into what could have been improved for the next phase of the project and/or similar projects. The project's adaptive management with the use of data and information is briefly mentioned but could have been analyzed and described in more detail.	
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	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> All required elements are included in the section. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> All three dimensions of sustainability are generally well analyzed to substantiate findings and ratings. Various factors that affect the project's sustainability are analyzed and described, including political commitments, funding status, institutionalization, and exit strategies. Particularly, a weak linkage between the project's results and political decision-making at the national level is well analyzed to substantiate a low likelihood of ownership among the government and stakeholders. For socio-political sustainability and financial sustainability, country-wise analyses are also well incorporated to demonstrate the variance among different countries in Asia in terms of the likelihood of sustainability. Especially, a specific country case is described to expand the analysis of socio-political sustainability, which provides in-depth insights.	5.5
15. Does the report present a well-evidence analysis of the Factors Affecting Performance, either in this section or in cross-referenced sections? <i>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.</i> Consider how well the report addresses the following cross-cutting issues:	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The section covers most elements that are required for each sub-section as a standalone section. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> All sub-criteria are generally well analyzed with the required information. Each sub-section is well elaborated, and most necessary parameters that are required to determine the respective ratings are described. It is noted that a few sub-sections, such as 'Quality of Project Management and Supervision', are well elaborated with concrete examples, while the 'Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality' sub-section could have been further analyzed from more diverse perspectives.	5

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
- quality of project management and supervision⁵⁴ - 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		
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'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	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> All required elements are included in the section. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The Conclusions section is generally well-articulated. The section presents a series of summative statements, covering major findings of the project's performance, which enables readers to understand the overview of the performance. It includes both achievements and limitations of the project in a well-balanced manner. The narratives are generally well-organized, which makes the Conclusions well-structured and reader-friendly. However, adding more compelling storylines and summarizing key findings in an integrated manner could have further strengthened the Conclusions, providing deeper insights and analysis beyond the findings under each criterion. Gender and human rights dimensions are described in a separate paragraph. Responses to key strategic questions are well elaborated with concrete details. All lessons learned are properly derived from evaluation findings. Many of these lessons cover 1) identification of the problem (based on evaluation analysis/findings), 2) the root cause of the problem, and 3) proposed course correction, although potential benefits and applicability to other projects/similar contexts could have been further described.	5
17. Does the report present Recommendations for specific action to be taken by identified people/position-holders to resolve concrete problems affecting the project or the sustainability of its results? Consider how well	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> All required elements are covered in the section. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u>	5.5

⁵⁴ 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
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 eight common recommendations in a table format, covering all required information. These eight recommendations are derived from the synthesis of the four regional project evaluations, all of which are the same across the four evaluations, except for Recommendation #2 in the Latin America and Caribbean project. Each recommendation entails sufficient detail with in-depth analyses. All are derived from the findings of the evaluation, which makes them realistic. All recommendations are also feasible, concrete, and measurable, which enables UNEP to make a detailed action plan to address these recommendations. These are intended for practical application. All recommendations can be addressed within the timeframe. Recommendation #8 directly addresses the strengthening of the gender dimensions of UNEP interventions.	
Section G: Report Structure and Presentation	Assessment	
18. Is the report <i>well-structured and complete</i>? 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	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> All necessary sections are covered in the report, following the UNEP guidelines. The report includes all required Annexes. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The report is well-structured and formatted. The report follows the UNEP Evaluation Office reporting structure and formatting guidelines in principle. The language is professional and adequate, and the tone is also appropriate. Visual aids, especially tables, are generally well used where needed. The report contains over 90 pages due to detailed analyses of each evaluation criterion, but it does not significantly compromise the readability of the report. Important points are well summarized in the Executive Summary. The report initially included grammatical errors that might potentially compromise the clarity of the report. EOU has corrected as many of them as possible before finalization of the report, but a well-written English report could have been	4.5

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
	produced by the evaluators (as part of their responsibility), which would have enhanced the readability of the report.	
OVERALL REPORT QUALITY RATING		5.3 (Satisfactory)

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?	✓	
2. Was the Evaluation Consultant given direct access to identified external stakeholders?	✓	
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?		✓
4. If Yes to Q3: Were these concerns resolved to the mutual satisfaction of both the Evaluation Consultant and the Evaluation Manager?	N/A	
Project's engagement and support:		
5. Did the project make available all required/requested documents?	✓	
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?	✓	
7. Was adequate support provided by the project to the evaluator(s) in planning and conducting evaluation missions?	✓	
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)?	✓	
Quality assurance of key deliverables:		

9. Were the Terms of Reference peer-reviewed?	✓	
10. Was the inception report peer-reviewed, including the Theory of Change?	✓	
11. Were evaluation preliminary findings presented to the project team in a format allowing discussion, before drafting the report?	✓	
12. Was the draft report peer-reviewed?	✓	
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?	✓	
14. Was the draft evaluation report sent directly by the Evaluation Consultant to the Evaluation Office?	✓	
15. Were all stakeholder comments to the draft evaluation report sent directly to the Evaluation Office?	✓	
16. Did the Evaluation Consultant(s) respond adequately to all factual corrections and comments?	✓	
17. Did the Evaluation Office share substantive comments and Evaluation Consultant responses with those who commented, as appropriate?	✓	
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.	✓	
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.	✓	
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 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?	✓	
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.	✓	

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

Evaluation Process Criterion Number	Evaluation Office Comments
20	The Evaluation Office decided to launch four separate evaluations of the respective regional POPs Global Monitoring Plan projects simultaneously to enable a potential standardization across the four evaluations. Given this, the launch of this evaluation was delayed by about a month because four regional projects were completed at slightly different timelines. However, by launching all four evaluations simultaneously, the Evaluation Office was able to implement these four evaluations in a harmonized, coordinated manner, including the development of the common reconstructed Theory of Change and a synthesis of recommendations across the four evaluations. This approach helped ensure the quality and coherence of all four evaluation reports.