2024 — 2025

Biennial Evaluation Synthesis Report



UN environment programme | Evaluation Office

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Acknowledgements

This report was prepared by the UNEP Evaluation Office, based on the work managed by the Office during 2024 and 2025. We would like to thank all 74 external evaluation specialists who shared their expertise over the biennium in the preparation of the evaluation reports mentioned in this Evaluation Synthesis Report.

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Oct 2026
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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AF	Adaptation Fund
CAG	Concept Approval Group
CCAC	Climate and Clean Air Coalition
CPA-SP	Chemicals and Pollution Action Subprogramme
CPR	Committee of Permanent Representatives
DM	Delivery Model
EbA	Ecosystem-based Adaptation
EOU	Evaluation Office of UNEP
EPI	Evaluation Performance Indicator
GEEW	Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IPMR	Integrated Planning, Management and Reporting System
IRI	Interfaith Rainforest Initiative
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
MLTR	Management-Led Terminal Review
MTS	Medium-Term Strategy
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
PA	Programmatic Approach
PCP	Programme Coordination Project
POW	Programme(s) of Work
PPD	Policy and Programme Division
PRC	Project Review Committee
SAICM	Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals

TE	Terminal Evaluation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEA	United Nations Environment Assembly
UNEG	UN Evaluation Group
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate change
UN-SWAP	UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Executive Summary

'The objective of evaluation is: (a) To determine as systematically and objectively as possible the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the Organization's activities in relation to their objectives; (b) To enable the Secretariat and Member States to engage in systematic reflection, with a view to increasing the effectiveness of the main programmes of the Organization by altering their content and, if necessary, reviewing their objectives.' (ST/SGB/2018/3)

Background

This report is prepared as an inter-sessional document of the United Nations Environmental Assembly (UNEA) and serves as part of the input of UNEP to the Secretary-General's report on evaluation to the UN General Assembly. The report provides stakeholders such as Governments, UNEP senior management and partners with an evaluative assessment of UNEP's programme and project performance in 2024 and 2025. Specifically, it provides the evidentiary basis for reporting on two indicators under Outcome 3 of the Executive Direction and Management component of the UNEP Programme of Work, 2024-25.

Outcome 3, ii	Evaluations providing a rating of 'Satisfactory' or higher for project overall performance. **2025 target: 55%;** 2021 baseline: 39%
Outcome 3, iii:	Implementation of accepted evaluation recommendations within the time frame defined in the implementation plan. **2025 target: 90%;** 2021 baseline: 86%

The independent Evaluation Office of UNEP (EOU) is mandated to coordinate, conduct and oversee evaluations in UNEP. The mandate derives from UNEP Governing Council decisions, the UN Secretariat's Administrative Instruction on Evaluation ST/AI/2021/3 and is summarised in the 'Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation' (ST/SGB/2018/3[1]). The EOU undertakes a variety of evaluations in accordance with the requirements of the UN General Assembly, the UNEA and in accordance with the Norms and Standards for Evaluation in

[1] This covers several UN General Assembly Resolutions

the UN system[2]. The scope of work of the EOU covers all programmes and projects in UNEP's Programmes of Work (POW), including work funded through the Environment Fund, trust funds, earmarked contributions and bilateral partnerships, including through projects supported by the Adaptation Fund (AF), Global Climate Facility (GCF) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

The EOU functions in an independent manner and reports on evaluation findings without interference. To give the Office independence from substantive Divisions and operational subprogrammes, the Director of the Evaluation Office reports to the UNEP Executive Director, and through the Executive Director, to the Governing Bodies—Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) and the UNEA. Summaries of completed subprogramme and strategic evaluations are shared in UNEP's quarterly reporting to the CPR, through a standing agenda item on evaluations and audits. The EOU regularly engages with the Executive Director, has observer status in Senior Management Team meetings and provides evaluation recommendation's compliance data as an integrated part of UNEP's Quarterly Business Review.

The **Biennial Evaluation Synthesis Report 2024-25,** this report, serves as part of the Evaluation Office's mission to promote a results-oriented approach within UNEP, emphasizing organizational learning, informed decision-making, and accountability. Aligned with the Secretary General's guidelines, the report aims to systematically assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, likelihood of impact and sustainability of UNEP's programmatic activities. It provides a summary of the performance of UNEP's programmes and projects evaluated in 2024 and 2025, a period marking the second half of the UNEP Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2022-25.

The 2024-25 scope of work of the EOU includes subprogramme and strategic evaluations; evaluations of completed projects; validations of project level management-led terminal reviews and evaluation follow-up and recommendation compliance. The majority of evaluation deliverables are either project-level Terminal Evaluations (TEs) or project-level validated Management-Led Terminal Reviews (MLTRs).

Programme and project performance is assessed against nine evaluation criteria, several with specific sub-categories. The criteria cover: strategic relevance, quality of project design, nature of external context, effectiveness (including availability of outputs, achievement of outcomes and likelihood of impact), financial management, efficiency, monitoring and reporting, sustainability, and factors affecting performance and cross-cutting issues.

[2] https://www.unevaluation.org/uneg_publications/uneg-norms-and-standards-evaluation-un-system

The total of the reported expenditures declared by the 55 projects assessed through Terminal Evaluations is more than USD 454,498,000 (compared with USD 157m in 2022-23). This amount includes Environment Fund contributions, extra-budgetary funding, cash co-financing and resources covered by strategic cooperation agreements (e.g., European Commission) or distributed through ear-marked resource allocation mechanisms. This amount does not include sources that are recorded as 'in-kind' co-financing. Reporting on project co-financing is not always available, accurate or consistent, and in some cases, there is no disaggregation between 'cash' and 'in-kind' financing, making it difficult to determine the true value of the actual co-financing investment.

The value of the 50 projects that met their performance assessment requirements through Management-Led Terminal Reviews and were independently validated by the Evaluation Office totalled more than USD 198,810,133.

Main Findings

POW Outcome 3, ii: The 2025 target for evaluations providing a rating of 'Satisfactory' or higher for overall project performance was 55%. **The 2024-25 performance was 52% and the 8-year[3] average was 55%.**

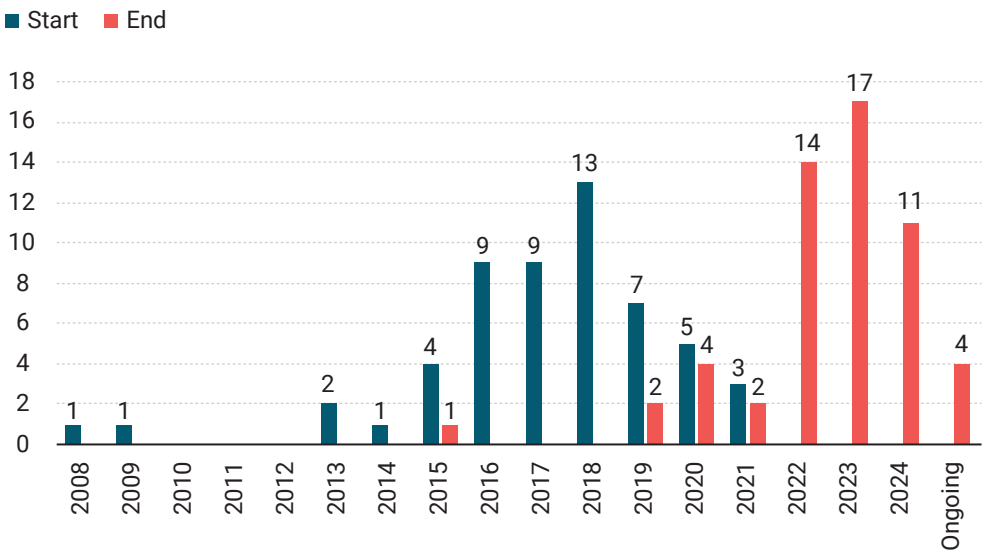
POW Outcome 3, iii: The 2025 target for compliance with evaluation recommendations was 90%. **The 2024-25 combined performance was 89% and the average across the last 6 years was 74%.**

The Biennial Evaluation Synthesis Report (BESR) highlights the performance trends across 55 UNEP projects that were evaluated during the period and sets them in the context of project performance trends across 8 years (four biennia; 2018-25). Terminal Evaluations take place at the end of project implementation and, as such, provide a retrospective picture.

In the 2024-25 sample of project evaluations, the largest number of projects started in 2018 (24%) and the majority completed in 2023 (31%) – **see Figure ES. 1**. This means that implementation spanned the COVID-19 pandemic, with traumatic events in personal lives, significant changes to working practises and disruptions in wider national contexts.

[3]An 8-year average, based on performance during 2018-25, is used for comparative purposes throughout this report.

Figure ES. 1 **Project start and end dates for 2024-25 evaluated projects**



Overall Programme/Project Performance

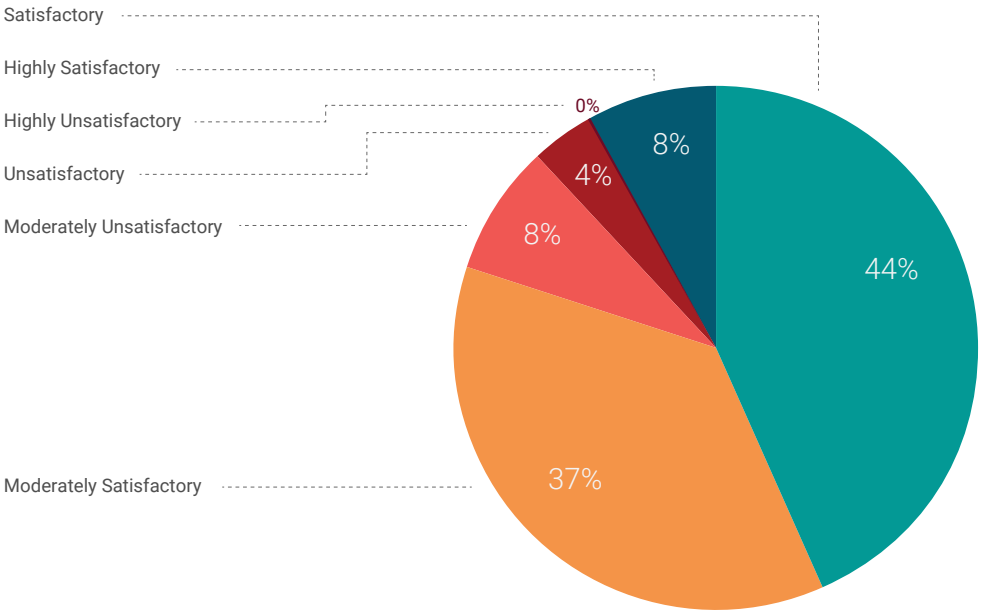
UNEP projects are evaluated against a standard set of nine[4] evaluation criteria that are consistent with international good practice (see Table 1, page 27). Performance against all criteria is rated on a six-point scale from 'Highly Unsatisfactory' through to 'Highly Satisfactory'. **The benchmark for good performance is set by the UNEP Evaluation Office at ratings of 'Satisfactory' or 'Highly Satisfactory' (S/HS), with a 2025 target of 55% reaching this threshold.**

- **52% of evaluated projects reached the targeted threshold of S/HS overall performance rating** (reduced from 74% in 2022-23 and below the 8-year average of 55%), Figure ES. 2

Individual evaluation criteria are aggregated in each evaluation using a 'weighted' ratings scale in order to derive an overall project performance rating. Within this scale the greatest emphasis is placed on the achievement of Outcomes (30% of the overall performance score) and the sustainability/durability of outcomes (20% of the overall performance score).

[4] One criterion 'Nature of External Context' is assessed in order to allow evaluations to be adjusted for unexpected crisis situations to be. However, the rating for this criterion is not part of the overall project performance calculation.

Figure ES. 2 Overview of overall project performance, 2024-25



Biennium		2024-2025
Number of evaluated projects		52[5]
% of projects with overall performance rated	**Satisfactory or better**	52%
% of projects with overall performance rated	**Moderately Satisfactory or better**	89%

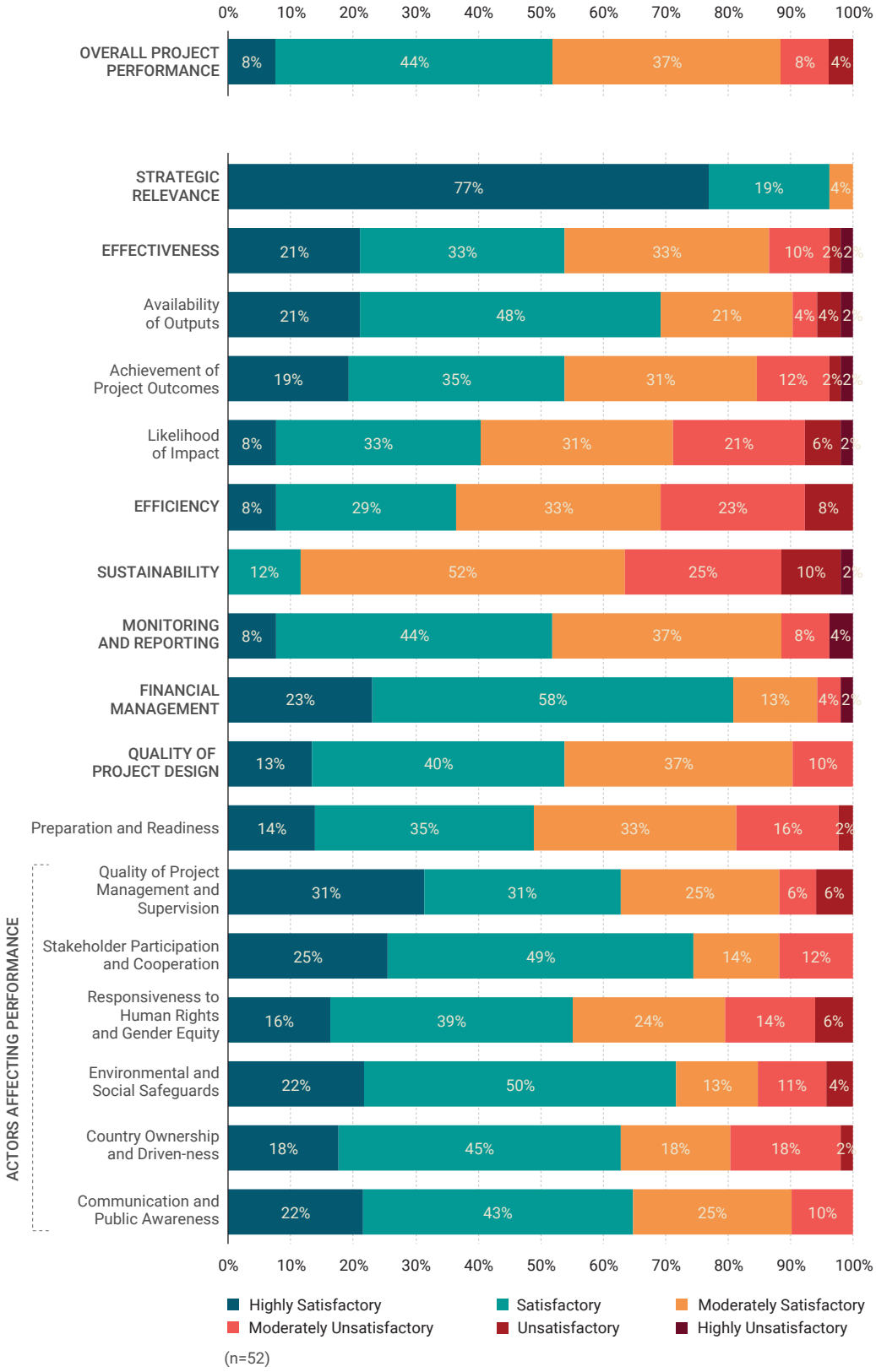
Two aspects of performance (Achievement of Outcomes and Sustainability) make up half of the overall weighted project performance score and performance against them both has fallen since the last biennium:

- **54% of projects reached the S/HS threshold in Achievement of Outcomes** (reduced from 63% in 2022-23, but remaining above the 8-year average of 50%)
- **12% of projects reached the S/HS threshold in Sustainability** (reduced from 31% in 2022-23 and below the 8-year average of 22%)

Among the three sub-categories of Sustainability (socio-economic, financial and institutional sustainability), Financial Sustainability has the lowest level of performance (24% of the evaluated projects scored S/HS against financial durability of outcomes). Figure ES. 3, below, shows the performance of projects evaluated in 2024 and 2025 against the standard evaluation criteria:

[5] A total of 55 project-level evaluations (inclusive of 51 terminal evaluations and 4 mid-term/interim evaluations) were completed during the biennium. The performance ratings from 3 terminal evaluations have been excluded from the analysis of performance ratings as the data available for the evaluations were, in different ways, limited beyond our standards. The performance ratings from the 4 mid-term/interim evaluations have been included because their data support the trend analysis reflected in this Report. It is noted that there are, however, some differences in a mid-term/interim evaluation approach.

Figure ES. 3 Summary of project performance against evaluation criteria, 2024-25



(n=52)

Areas of Improvement Over Time

The following criteria show improvements in 2024-25 compared with the 8-year average. **UNEP should still aim to improve performance in these areas.**

	projects rated S/HS in 2024-25	S/HS average across 8-years
Financial Management	81%	70%
Achievement of Outcomes	54%	50%
Monitoring and Reporting	52%	49%

Areas of Constancy

The following criteria have neither improved nor declined in 2024-25 compared with the 8-year average. **More attention should be directed to the areas that have not yet reached the 55% S/HS threshold.**

	projects rated S/HS in 2024-25	S/HS average across 8-years
Quality of Project Design	53%	53%
Overall Effectiveness	54%	54%
Availability of Outputs	69%	70%
Likelihood of Impact	41%	42%
Strategic Relevance	96%	97%

Areas Requiring Continued Attention

The following criteria have declined in 2024-25 compared with the 8-year average. **These are areas that should be prioritised for attention.**

	projects rated S/HS in 2024-25	S/HS average across 8-years
Sustainability	12%	22%
Efficiency	37%	47%

Factors Affecting Performance

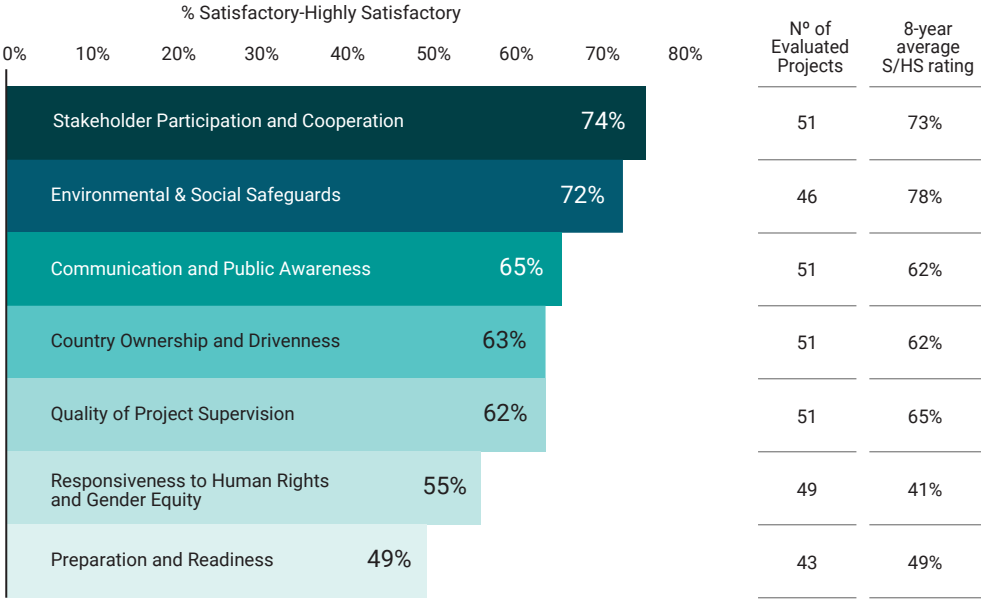
Seven cross-cutting issues are examined under Factors Affecting Performance[6]. These are factors that can affect performance in Effectiveness, Sustainability and the realisation of Equality. The 2024-25 biennium performance is consistent with data over time in 5 of these areas (i.e. no substantial change) and the remaining two show improvements, below:

Performance factors showing improvement

Responsiveness to Gender and Human Rights:
55% of projects rated S/HS in 2024-25; 41% S/HS average across 8-years.

The figure below (Figure ES. 4) shows performance against all seven factors in 2024 and 2025.

Figure ES. 4 Summary of project performance against factors affecting performance, 2024-25



[6] The Factors Affecting Performance assessed by the Evaluation Office are: 1) Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation; 2) Environmental & Social Safeguards; 3) Communication and Public Awareness; 4) Country Ownership and Driven-ness; 5) Quality of Project Management and Supervision; 6) Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equity; 7) Preparation and Readiness

Performance of Projects Assessed through Management-Led Terminal Reviews

In 2022, UNEP approved a new Evaluation Policy[7] which introduced a new performance assessment modality, namely Management-Led Terminal Reviews (MLTR). In 2022 and 2023, a small group of 15 MLTR reports were completed and submitted to the Evaluation Office for independent validation and an assessment of each report's quality. In 2024-25, a further 50 MLTR reports were validated and quality assessed.

The purpose of validation is to ensure an acceptable level of consistency in assigning performance ratings among a large number of consultants and in varying project scenarios—it is a form of 'bench-marking' through which Evaluation Managers in the EOU assess the evidence presented in the reports and either confirm it is consistent with the EOU guidance or adjust the rating, with a justification. Overall, 72% of the 2024-25 MLTRs were validated with a S/HS overall project performance rating. In 22% of the 2024-25 MLTR reports the EOU adjusted the overall project performance rating.

Evaluation Recommendation Compliance

Each evaluation process managed by the Evaluation Office is followed by a recommendation compliance process. Increasing the compliance with recommendations, via a formal management response and tracking action over a 12-month period, is one means of ensuring that learning from evaluations is translated into improved designs or implementation. This report records improvements over time in a) the completion of management responses, b) the timely submission of management responses and c) compliance with actual project-level recommendations:

- **Completion of management responses:** 98% in 2024-25
- **Timely submission of management responses (within 1 month):** 67% in 2024-25; 44% average across 8-years.
- **Compliant actions against recommendations:** 89%[8] in 2024-25; 74% average across 6-years.

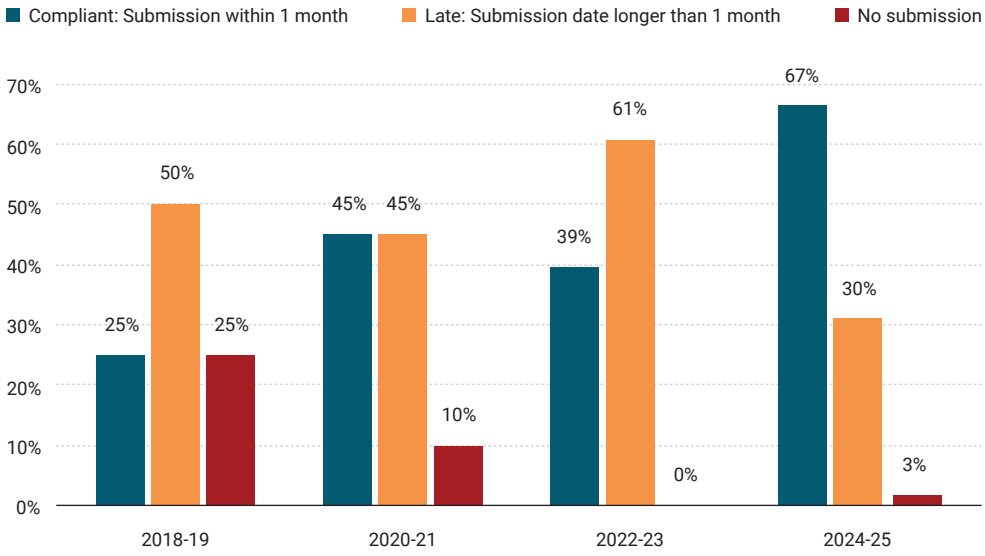
The preparation of a management response in the form of a recommendation implementation plan is a mandatory requirement for all evaluations. Compliance rates for completion of management responses to evaluation remain high at 98%.

[7] https://wedocs.unep.org/items/26c8da10-c1f4-486d-8c4a-70e307b2436e

[8] 82% of recommendations were closed as 'compliant' and 89% were closed as either 'compliant' or 'no further action required

There has been a marked improvement in the timely submission of management responses for project evaluation recommendations. Figure ES. 5 shows that of the 64 recommendation implementation plans for the biennium, 67% (43) were submitted within the required[9] timeframe compared to 39% in the last biennium.

Figure ES. 5 Submission of management responses' compliance levels, 2018-25



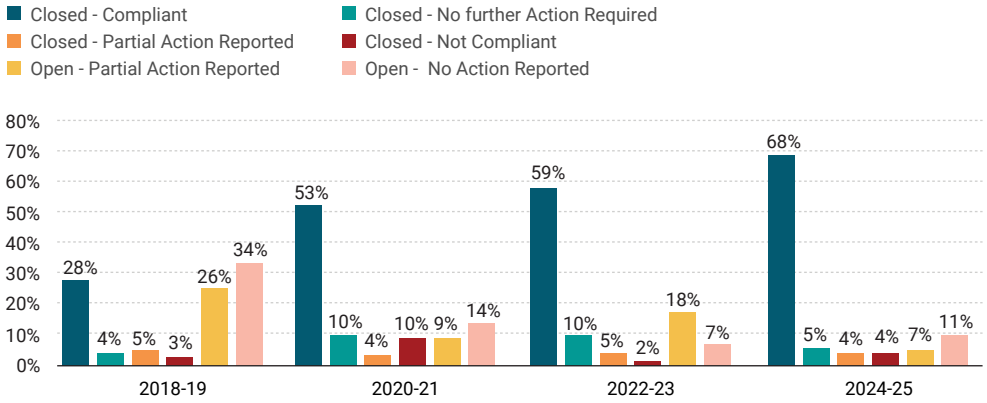
Timely Submission of Project-level Management Response	2018-19	2020-21	2022-23	2024-25
No. Recommendation Implementation Plans	56	40	33	64
Compliant: Submission within 1 month	14	18	13	43
Late: Submission date longer than 1 month	28	18	20	19
No submission	14	4	0	2

Improvements in recommendation implementation compliance are evident in 2024-25. As Figure ES. 6 shows, a larger proportion (68%)[10] of recommendations were closed as 'Compliant' in 2024-25 compared to the previous biennium (59%). The Evaluation Office attributes much of the improvement to the use of corporate dashboards that are reviewed by the Senior Management Team every quarter. **Continuous management attention is recommended for sustained progress in meeting UNEP's recommendations' compliance targets.**

[9] Completed Recommendation Implementation Plans are required to be submitted to the Evaluation Office no more than one month after being shared with the relevant UNEP Project Manager.

[10] The EOU notes that the 'recommendations compliance' indicator in the POW is calculated as all 'compliant' responses as well as those recommendations that no longer need action by the time the compliance tracking process begins (i.e. the underlying challenge that the recommendation was intended to address has been resolved).

Figure ES. 6 Recommendation compliance status, 2018-25



Compliance Status	2018-19	2020-21	2022-23	2024-25
Closed - Compliant	74	120	75	197
Closed - No further Action Required	11	23	13	16
Closed - Partially Compliant	13	9	6	13
Closed - Not Compliant	8	22	2	13
Open - Partial Action Reported	67	21	23	33
Open - No Action Reported	88	33	9	19
% compliant out of all project recommendations (compliant + no further action)	33%	63%	69%	89%[11]
Total	**261**	**228**	**128**	**291**

Emerging Lessons

The Report draws attention to the following areas of discussion:

1. UNEP is still strong at relevance, but relevance is not translating reliably into durable results.

The clearest positive message is that UNEP projects remain highly strategically relevant: 96% of projects were rated Satisfactory or Highly Satisfactory for Strategic Relevance. This suggests UNEP is generally selecting and designing work that aligns well with its mandate, partner priorities and environmental needs.

[11] This figure, 89%, reflects the percentage of Closed recommendations recorded as 'Closed-Compliant' or 'Closed-no further action required', which is reported annually as 'recommendations compliance'. The bar graph shows the same compliance categories as a percentage of All issued recommendations, which is the consistent approach that has been taken over time.

The lesson, however, is that strategic fit is not enough. The much weaker ratings for Likelihood of Impact and Sustainability show that projects can be well-aligned, yet still struggle to convert outputs and outcomes into lasting environmental change. UNEP should therefore shift more attention from 'Is this the right issue?' to 'What will make the results endure after project closure?'

2. Sustainability is the most serious performance weakness and should be treated as a design-stage issue.

The standout concern is sustainability. Only 12% of evaluated projects reached Satisfactory or Highly Satisfactory for Sustainability, down from 31% in 2022-23 and below the 8-year average of 22%. Financial sustainability was particularly weak, with only 24% of evaluated projects rated S/HS for financial durability of outcomes.

The lesson is that sustainability cannot be handled as an end-of-project handover activity. It needs to be built into project design, resourcing, partnership agreements, institutional anchoring and exit strategies from the start. UNEP should require clearer sustainability pathways at approval stage, including realistic post-project financing, institutional responsibility and uptake mechanisms.

3. Outcome achievement is improving, but the 'last mile' from outcome to impact remains fragile.

Achievement of Outcomes was one of the areas showing modest improvement against the 8-year average: 54% of projects were rated S/HS in 2024-25, compared with an 8-year average of 50%. But this is still below the desired 55% threshold and has declined from 63% in 2022-23. Meanwhile, Likelihood of Impact remained low at 41% S/HS, broadly unchanged from the 8-year average of 42%.

The lesson is that UNEP is reaching the outcome level, but not consistently creating the conditions for impact. This points to a 'last mile' challenge: uptake by governments, institutions, markets or communities may occur, but scaling, replication, policy enforcement or continued financing often remains uncertain.

4. Efficiency has declined and needs more active adaptive management.

Efficiency is another area that needs attention. Only 37% of projects were rated S/HS for Efficiency, compared with an 8-year average of 47%. The report links declining efficiency partly to COVID-19 disruptions, extensions, changing work practices and implementation delays.

The lesson is not simply that external shocks reduce efficiency. It is that UNEP projects need stronger adaptive management systems that can respond to shocks without losing momentum. This includes better contingency planning, more realistic implementation timelines, faster reprogramming processes, and clearer decision-making when contexts change.

5. Financial management is a relative strength but monitoring and reporting still require management attention.

Financial Management is one of the strongest areas in this Biennium, with 81% of projects rated S/HS in 2024-25, above the 8-year average of 70%. Monitoring and Reporting also improved slightly, with 52% S/HS compared with a 49% 8-year average, but it remains below the desired threshold.

The lesson is that UNEP appears to be better at managing financial compliance than at generating consistently strong performance intelligence. Monitoring and reporting should be treated less as a compliance function and more as a live management tool for course correction, risk detection, learning and outcome tracking.

6. Cross-cutting factors are improving, but preparation, readiness and inclusion still need stronger institutional discipline.

The performance in some cross-cutting factors is encouraging. Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation was the strongest factor at 75% S/HS, while Environmental and Social Safeguards reached 72% S/HS. Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equity improved to 55% S/HS, above the 8-year average of 41%. However, Preparation and Readiness remained the weakest factor at 49% S/HS.

The lesson is that UNEP has made progress in participation, monitoring and managing for safeguards issues and gender/human rights responsiveness, but early-stage project readiness remains a recurring constraint. Weak preparation creates downstream problems for delivery, efficiency, ownership and sustainability. Stronger inception processes, clearer partner roles, earlier procurement planning and more rigorous readiness checks are likely to improve several performance areas at once.

Chapter 1

Objectives and Scope of the Biennial Evaluation Synthesis Report

The work of the Evaluation Office of UNEP (EOU) enhances accountability and learning. Evaluations generate evidence to identify 'what works' and 'what doesn't' and provide feedback for the improvement of planning, design and management processes. The EOU body of work includes:

- **Programme/project evaluations:** undertaken by the EOU as projects reach, or approach, their operational completion.
- **Management-Led Terminal Reviews:** are managed by the Project/Task Manager and final performance ratings are validated by the EOU and their reports quality assessed.
- **Subprogramme**[12] **evaluations** are carried out by the EOU on a 6-yearly cycle[13], in accordance with ST/AI/2021/3.
- **Thematic evaluations** are carried out for their adaptive learning potential, to meet the requirements of funding partners and Senior Management.
- **Compliance with evaluation recommendations** is tracked for a 12 (projects) or 18-month (subprogramme/strategic) period and compliance assessed once closed.

This Evaluation Synthesis report has been prepared as part of the mission of the Evaluation Office to promote a results-focus approach in UNEP that reflects an organizational culture of learning, informed decision-making and accountability. The 2024-25 biennium marks the end of the UNEP Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2022-25, which comprises seven subprogrammes: three thematic subprogrammes (Climate Action, Nature Action and Chemicals and Pollution Action); two foundational subprogrammes (Science-Policy

[12] A UNEP subprogramme is a major thematic area within UNEP that groups together related projects and activities aimed at achieving specific environmental outcomes. UNEP has 7 subprogrammes.
[13] Prior to 2021 the frequency of subprogramme evaluations was 8 years, in accordance with the UNEP Evaluation Policy. The EOU is currently transitioning to the new, shorter frequency.

and Environmental Law and Governance) and two enabling subprogrammes (Financial and Economic Transformations and Digital Transformations).

The Report presents the evidence and analysis that support UNEP's reporting on two indicators under Outcome 3 of the Executive Direction and Management component of the Programme of Work, 2024-25.

Outcome 3, ii Evaluations providing a rating of 'Satisfactory' or higher for project performance.
2025 target: 55%; 2021 baseline: 39%

Outcome 3, iii: Implementation of accepted evaluation recommendations within the time frame defined in the implementation plan.
2025 target: 90%; 2021 baseline: 86%

The 2024-25 Report utilises information drawn from in-depth evaluations including:

- Terminal Evaluations of 52[14] UNEP projects, implemented between 2018 and 2025 (majority – 24% - started in 2018[15]; majority – 31% - ended in 2023[16]);
- 50 validated Management-Led Terminal Reviews;
- Formative evaluation of the Delivery Model Policy (2022);
- Summative evaluation of the Climate Action Subprogramme (2014 - 23);
- Summative evaluation of the Chemicals and Pollution Action Subprogramme (2015-24), and
- Progress evaluation against the UN-SWAP Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (2024-25).

This Report also contains a review of the compliance status, at the end of 2025, of 291 project-level evaluation recommendations issued during the biennium.

[14] A total of 55 project level Terminal Evaluations were carried out but the performance ratings from 3 of them have been excluded from the analysis of performance ratings as the data available for the evaluations were, in different ways, limited beyond our standards.
[15] Highest proportion (13 projects, 24%) started in 2018 and 43 projects (78%) had start dates ranging between 2016-20.
[16] Highest proportion (17 projects, 31%) completed in 2023 and 42 projects (76%) had end dates ranging between 2022-24

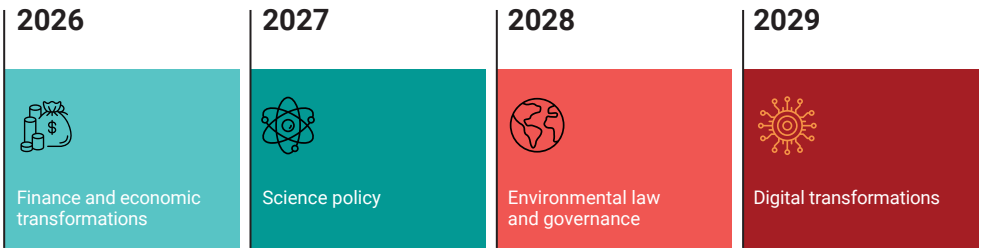
1.1 Types of Performance Assessment: Evaluations and Validated Reviews

The EOU recognises six main types of evaluation and validated review:

- Strategic and thematic evaluations, including subprogramme evaluations;
- Joint evaluations with other United Nations agencies, donors and partners, including synthesis reports;
- Impact/influence evaluations;
- Formative evaluations, including interim/mid-term evaluations;
- Independent project, portfolio or programme evaluations, and
- Validations of management-led project reviews.

The frequency of **subprogramme evaluations** is governed by ST/AI/2021/3. The planned sequence of subprogramme evaluations is set out in the biennial evaluation workplan, included as an Annex in each Programme of Work (PoW), Figure 1. The EOU encountered some delays in initiating subprogramme evaluations during the years affected by COVID-19. The following subprogramme evaluations were each launched approximately one year later than planned: Climate Action in 2023, Chemicals and Pollution Action in 2024 and Nature Action in 2025.

Figure 1 Planned schedule of subprogramme evaluations launch years, POW 2026-29, Annex I



Joint evaluations are undertaken with other UN agencies where projects have been designed and implemented on a joint basis. The EOU plays either a lead agency role in carrying out the joint evaluation or plays a consultative and collaborative role in a process led by a fellow agency. The Norms and Standards of the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) are followed in both cases.

The capacity to carry out **impact evaluations** lies within the EOU. The engagement of this capacity is dependent on project designs, monitoring during project implementation and evaluation resources.

At project level, mid-term reviews are seen as primarily management responsibilities necessary to monitor the progress of projects towards achieving their

targets and results. In cases where a specific utility is identified, the EOU undertakes an independent **Mid-Term Evaluation**. In some cases, funding partners require mid-term performance assessments to be carried out independently. In other instances, for example in more strategic evaluations, the EOU undertakes **interim evaluations with a strong formative dimension**.

Figure 2 Selection criteria for a project evaluation

More likely to be selected

- Projects make a large contribution to the UNEP PoW results framework.
- Projects contribute to parts of the UNEP PoW that have had less evaluative attention in the recent past.
- Projects that, together with others, form a coherent portfolio/cluster evaluation.
- Projects that represent an area of work of strategic importance to UNEP, (either perceived to have contributed to past strategic achievements or anticipated to play a strategic role in the near future).
- Among Global Environment Facility (GEF) projects, when UNEP acts as both the Implementing and Executing Agency; or projects that coordinate a GEF programme.
- Projects that are implemented in geographic regions that have previously been less evaluated and/or projects managed by Regional Offices.
- Projects that fall under the scope of upcoming strategic evaluations (e.g. subprogramme evaluations).

Less likely to be selected

- Organisational units and the work of Project/Task Managers have been exposed to frequent evaluation in the past.
- Projects have been evaluated frequently in previous phases.
- Projects have output-oriented designs.
- Projects have low levels of expenditure.
- A GEF Project is a 'Child Project' within a GEF Programme.

At the project level, all projects over a threshold value, as set out in the Evaluation Manual[17], are eligible for a terminal assessment of their performance. Four modalities are applied: self-assessment through an Operational Completion Report [18]; **Management-Led Terminal Review (i.e. decentralised modality), with the main report validated by the EOU; and terminal evaluation, including joint evaluations, managed by the EOU**. The assignment of projects into these modalities is driven, primarily, by the need to create an appropriate biennial sample of independent evaluations to represent the key features of the Programme of Work in terms of its: subprogrammes, operational divisions/ offices, geographic distribution of

[17] https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/42025

[18] Projects with expenditure below the EOU threshold value and those governed by funding partner policies, such as GEF Enabling Activities and GCF Readiness Projects, may submit an Operational Completion Report (or funding partner equivalent).

efforts, thematic focus and funding sources. The factors that inform purposeful selection of projects for the sample are set out in the current Evaluation Manual[19].

The Evaluation Office provides technical backstopping to Project Managers whose projects have been assigned, by the EOU, to a **Management-Led Terminal Review** modality by: providing a suite of tools, templates and guidelines[20] to support the project review process; providing technical guidance on a needs-basis, including through online 'clinics'; and completing a quality assessment and validation of the final project Management-Led Terminal Review report. Guidelines, formal requirements and practical advice in planning for evaluations and management-led reviews is specified in detail in the UNEP Programme and Project Management Manual[21] and further elaborated in evaluation documents available on the UNEP Evaluation website[22].

1.2 Evaluation Criteria and Rating Scales

The UNEP Evaluation Office assesses performance against a total of nine evaluation criteria, six of which have sub-criteria (see Table 1 below). While these criteria reflect standard internationally accepted[23] performance criteria, they are also adapted to be relevant to those areas of performance of most interest to UNEP. For example, UNEP's evaluation criteria allow for assessments against 'Financial Management' and 'Monitoring and Reporting' and also cover a range of other factors affecting performance and cross-cutting issues.

Table 1 UNEP project performance evaluation criteria

Evaluation criteria
A. Strategic Relevance
1. Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities
2. Alignment to Donor/GEF/ Partner strategic priorities
3. Relevance to global, regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities
4. Complementarity with relevant existing interventions/ coherence
B. Quality of Project Design

[19] https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/42025

[20] https://communities.unep.org/spaces/EOU/pages/64487446/INDEPENDENT+EVALUATION+TOOLS+AND+TEMPLATES

[21] https://wecollaborate.unep.org/download/attachments/17104964/PPMM%202024%20edition.pdf?version=1&modificationDate=1744366461681&api=v2

[22] www.unep.org/evaluation-office

[23] The evaluation criteria described by the OECD/DAC are widely accepted as an international standard. UNEP Evaluation Office also works in accordance with the descriptions reflected in the UN Evaluation Group Norms and Standards.

Evaluation criteria
C. Nature of External Context[24]
D. Effectiveness
1. Availability of outputs
2. Achievement of project outcomes
3. Likelihood of impact
E. Financial Management
1.Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures
2.Completeness of project financial information
3.Communication between finance and project management staff
F. Efficiency
G. Monitoring and Reporting
1. Monitoring design and budgeting
2. Monitoring of project implementation
3. Project reporting
H. Sustainability
1. Socio-political sustainability
2. Financial sustainability
3. Institutional sustainability
Factors Affecting Performance
1. Preparation and readiness
2. Quality of project management and supervision[25]
3. Stakeholder's participation and cooperation
4. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality
5. Environmental, social and economic safeguards
6. Country ownership and driven-ness
7. Communication and public awareness

Across all UNEP project evaluations and management-led reviews, a six-point scale is used to rate performance against each evaluation criterion, as presented in Table 2 below. The rating system and evaluation quality control processes used by UNEP are consistent with those applied by the GEF, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank, among others.

[24] The criterion 'Nature of the external context' is not used directly for assessing overall project performance. It is used indirectly in situations where operational conditions are especially challenging

[25] This sub-category provides disaggregated performance ratings for i) UNEP/Implementing Agency and ii) Partner/ Executing Agency.

UNEP Evaluation Office sets the desired performance level at 'Satisfactory'. On a six-point scale, Satisfactory is the fifth category and, therefore, its lower threshold represents a percentage score of 73%.

Throughout this report, commentary is provided on the percentage of project evaluations that have been assessed with either a 'Satisfactory' or 'Highly Satisfactory' rating against a specific criterion.

The abbreviation used for 'Satisfactory' or better is S/HS.

Table 2 Performance rating scale

Criteria	Rating	Abbrev.	Range	Desired Performance
Strategic Relevance; Quality of Project Design; Effectiveness; (Availability of Outputs; Achievement of Project Outcomes; Likelihood of Impact); Financial Management; Efficiency; Monitoring and Reporting; Sustainability; and Factors Affecting Project Performance	Highly Satisfactory	HS/HL	'Satisfactory' range	S/HS ✓
	Satisfactory	S/L		
	Moderately Satisfactory	MS/ML		
	Moderately Unsatisfactory	MU	'Unsatisfactory' range	
	Unsatisfactory	U		
	Highly Unsatisfactory	HU		

**Sustainability and Impact are rated against a 6-point 'likelihood' scale, ranging from 'Highly Likely' to 'Highly Unlikely'.*

To arrive at an overall project performance rating, the UNEP Evaluation Office applies a **weighted scale**[26] to the individual evaluation criterion ratings. In this weighted scale, 45% of the overall performance score is determined by the rating for Effectiveness (30% of which is assigned to the sub-category 'Achievement of Project Outcomes') and a further 20% is determined by the rating for 'Sustainability' (i.e. endurance of outcome level benefits). This means that the

[26] See Annex III

overall performance rating for all UNEP evaluations is strongly results-oriented and places great importance on a project's effectiveness and the likelihood that the benefits derived from a project will have durability.

1.3 Limitations of the Report

To fulfil its mandate of evaluating projects under the Programme of Work, the Evaluation Office relies on information regarding the operational completion of projects from organizational units managing them, and the provision of adequate financial resources from within the projects to support the direct costs of evaluation processes (consultant evaluator fees, travel etc.). The EOU begins planning its annual schedule of project-level evaluations by downloading the most up-to-date list of completing projects from the Integrated Planning, Management and Reporting System (IPMR) which is a system that UNEP has used to maintain project information since 2023. However, this list is frequently incomplete and inaccurate, requiring significant manual checking, revision, and supplementation by staff in the Divisions. In future biennia, it is hoped that the IPMR will provide comprehensive and reliable information on all projects under implementation and nearing completion, greatly aiding evaluation planning.

There remains a possibility of a positive performance bias in the projects the Evaluation Office evaluates. Completing a project on time, keeping institutional records up-to-date and ensuring that an adequate evaluation budget is available by the time it is needed are all characteristics of good project management. It is logical to assume that strong project management skills are likely to be associated with stronger project performance. By contrast projects that have uncertain or unclear completion dates, which do not keep evaluation funds secure to the end of the project, or whose managers fail to update the completion date in UNEP's systems, will tend to be under-represented in the sample of projects evaluated.

This report refers to the performance results from two assessment modalities: Terminal Evaluations and Management-Led Terminal Reviews. As projects are assigned to these two groups on a purposive basis (see Figure 2 above), the aggregated results are not comparable. Instead, within-group analysis is appropriate and the examination of trends over time within each modality can provide valid learning.

While the overall sample size (55 project evaluations in the current biennium) forms a robust basis for identifying trends over time and learning lessons, when this sample is disaggregated by dimensions of interest to the house (e.g. sub-programmes, their financial value, or projects implemented in Africa, etc.), its reliability for providing insights is more limited because of the small number of projects involved in any sub-category.

Chapter 2

Description of Projects Evaluated in 2024-25

The mandate of the UNEP Evaluation Office is to evaluate projects implemented under the Programme of Work. With the current staffing complement, the Evaluation Office has the capacity to complete[27] approximately 25 - 30 evaluations each year and this number fluctuates depending on the complexity and actual duration of evaluation processes. In the period spanning 2010 to 2025, UNEP's Evaluation Office has completed over 437 [28] project evaluations.

In 2024 and 2025 the Evaluation Office completed **55 independent project evaluations** and validated the performance ratings and assessed the quality of 50 Management-Led Terminal Review reports. See Annex I for full list of projects evaluated or validated.

Table 3 shows a breakdown by subprogramme of the number of completed project evaluations within the MTS/PoW time periods listed.

The individual character and funding base of each subprogramme leads to variations in the volume of possible project evaluations, see Figure 3 for the distribution of evaluated projects in this biennium.

The following figures present the 2024-25 portfolio of project evaluations across several dimensions relevant to UNEP, namely:

- UNEP Division - Figure 4
- Funding modality - Figure 5
- Global geographic region - Figure 6
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - Figure 7

[27] The Evaluation Office launches more evaluations each year than it completes as the timeframes for evaluation processes vary.
[28] In some cases, evaluations were completed that did not include an evaluation ratings table and are therefore not included in this total.

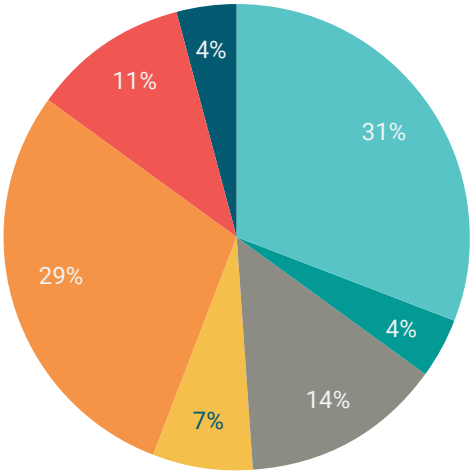
Table 3 Number of completed evaluations by subprogramme and MTS/POW, 2010-25

	Climate Action	Resilience to Disasters and Conflicts	Nature Action	Environmental Governance	Chemicals and Pollution Action	Finance and Economic Transformations	Science Policy	Cross-cutting	Total
PoW 2024-25	**16**	**n.a**	**17**	**6**	**4**	**2**	**2**	**8**	**55**
MTS 2022-25	29	n.a.	35	7	5	2	7	16	101
MTS 2018- 21	28	1	19	19	28	2	2	3	102
MTS 2014-17	30	4	41	35	7	9	1	2	129
MTS 2010-13	40	0	40	14	6	5	0	0	105
2010-25	**127**	**5**	**135**	**75**	**46**	**18**	**10**	**21**	**437**

Within each sample there is considerable heterogeneity in the types of projects that have been evaluated (e.g. single country, regional, global, field-based, normative etc.).

In addition, each of the dimensions listed above has some element of complexity. For example, some projects contributed to more than one Subprogramme or were managed by more than one Division; secondly, the data on funding modality has only been captured on a few named donors and, third, it is assumed that a common definition of a 'global' project is being applied (i.e. any project operating in more than one region or if there is no involvement of specific countries)

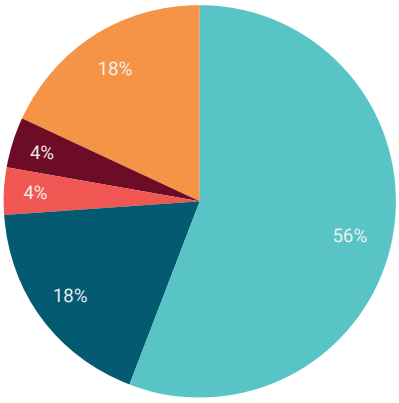
Figure 3 Distribution of evaluated projects by subprogramme, 2024-25



Subprogrammes	Number of Projects
Nature Action	17
Climate Action	16
Cross-cutting	8
Environmental Governance	6
Chemicals and Pollution Action	4
Finance and Economic Transformations	2
Science Policy	2
Digital Transformations (new Subprogramme)	0
Total	**55**

The project evaluations completed during 2024 and 2025 with respect to the UNEP Division under which they were managed are presented in Figure 4 below. There is variety across Divisions; some have few projects with long implementation time periods, while others oversee many shorter projects within multiple branches/units.

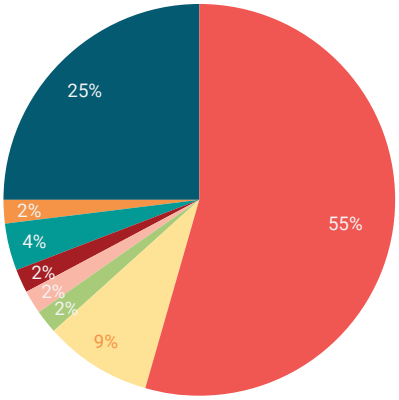
Figure 4 Distribution of evaluated projects by UNEP Division, 2024-25



UNEP Division	Number of Evaluated Projects
Ecosystems	31
Climate Change	10
Industry and Economy	10
Early Warning and Assessment	2
Law [28]	2
Total	**55**

The number of project evaluations conducted with respect to the project's funding modality (see Figure 5) clearly highlights the strength of UNEP's partnership with the GEF; 55% of the project evaluations carried out in PoW 2024-25 were funded through GEF grants.

Figure 5 Distribution of evaluated projects by funding modality, 2024-25

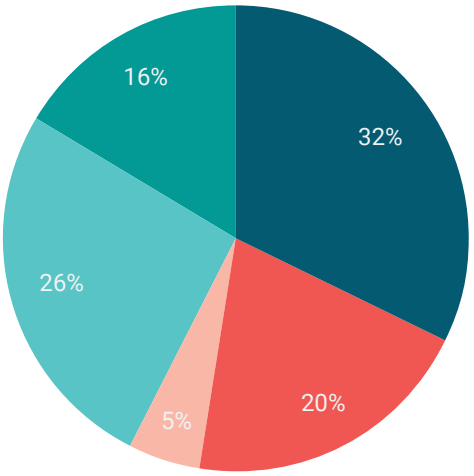


Funding Partner	Number of Evaluated Projects
Global Environment Facility (GEF)	30
European Union (EU)	5
Green Climate Fund (GCF)	2
Adaptation Fund (AF)	1
Agence Française de Développement (AFD)	1
Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD)	1
International Climate Initiative (IKI)	1
Multi-Donor (i.e. more than one funding partner in a project, from the list below) (Environment Fund, Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), Australia, Belgium, Canada, China, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Kuwait, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Switzerland, United Kingdom, USA, etc. including various Foundations, Organisations and UN Agencies)	14
Total	**55**

[29] Faith for Earth Initiative (PIMS 2053); and Coherent Implementation of the Environmental Dimension of Sustainable Development Goals at the Regional and National Levels in the Pan-European Region (SMA ID 41008)

The proportion of projects evaluated in 2024 and 2025 with respect to the UNEP regions where implementation took place is shown in Figure 6 below. There are overlaps (hence the larger number of instances – 74 rather than 55 projects) as some projects were operating in more than one region.

Figure 6 Distribution of evaluated projects by geographic region, 2024-25



Regional Office	Number of Instances
Africa	24
Latin America and the Caribbean	19
Asia and the Pacific	15
Global	12
Europe	4
West Asia	0
Total	**74**

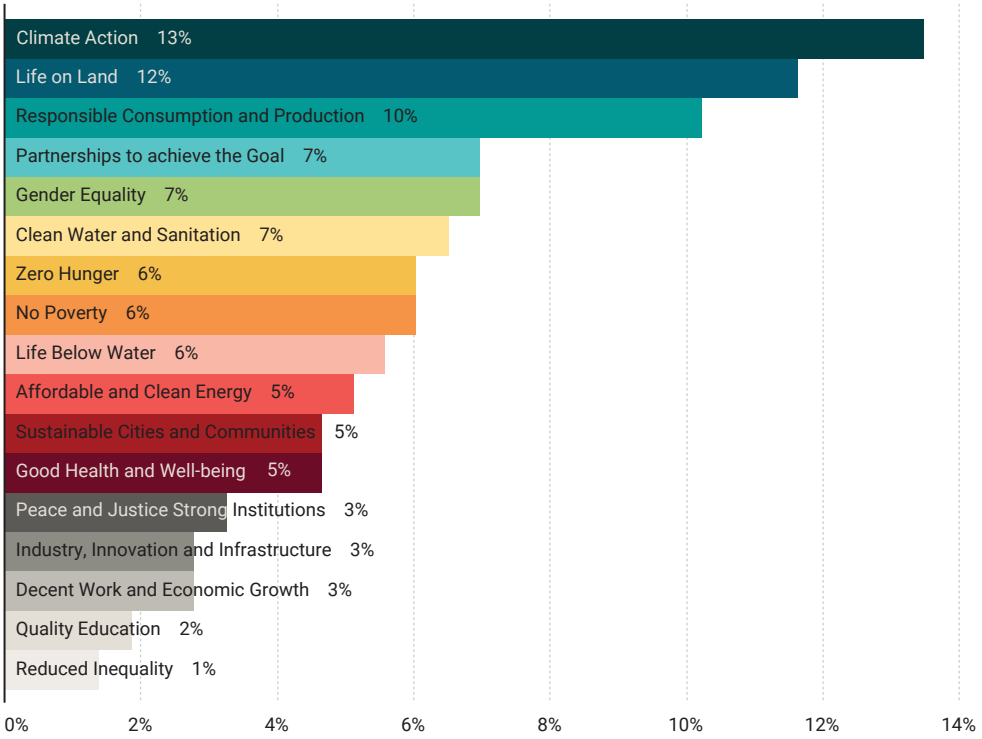
Regarding the link between a project intervention and the relevant SDGs, it is emphasised that this alignment has been determined retrospectively for some projects. In addition, where a project has been considered as aligned to more than one SDG, all goals have been counted. This underpins the high number of instances of SDGs recorded in Figure 7 below (n=224).

The three SDGs to which UNEP project interventions most frequently referred to were: **SDG 13** Climate Action; **SDG 15** Life on Land and **SDG 12** Responsible Consumption and Production.

The Evaluation Office recruits external evaluation consultants to undertake Mid-Term and Terminal Evaluations. The disaggregation by gender of the consultants who completed evaluations in 2024 and 2025 shows that among 74 consultancy contracts, 59% were awarded to men and 41% to women, compared to 43% to women in the previous biennium (Figure 8, below), compared to 43% women in the previous biennium. The UN system-wide Strategy on Gender Parity calls for an inclusive workforce; while the strategy's goal is 50/50 parity, representation within a 47%-53% margin[30] is considered acceptable. The Evaluation Office has not yet met the lower end of this margin.

[30] System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity, October 2017

Figure 7 Alignment of evaluated projects to Sustainable Development Goals, 2024-25

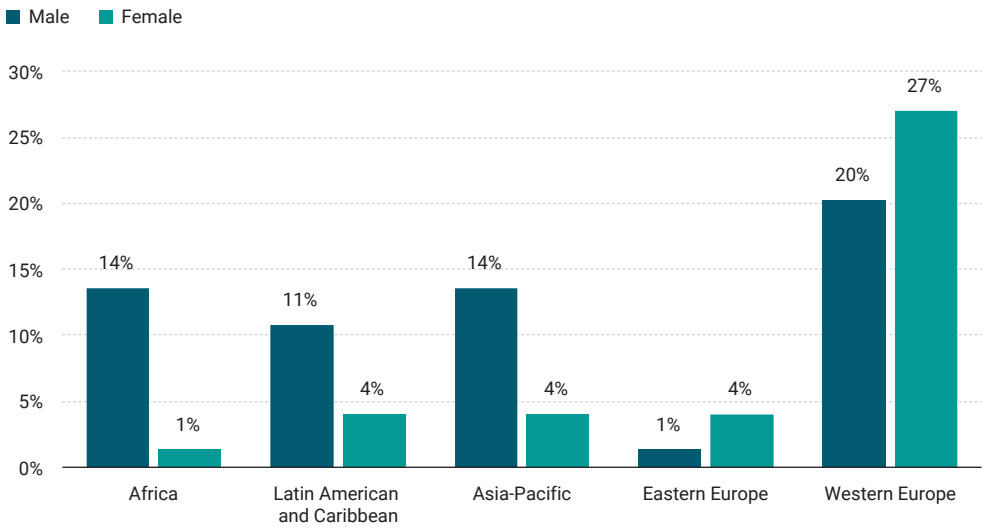


SDG	Number of Instances
Climate Action	30
Life on Land	28
Responsible Consumption and Production	24
Gender Equality	17
Partnerships to achieve the Goal	15
Clean Water and Sanitation	14
Zero Hunger	14
No Poverty	13
Life Below Water	12
Affordable and Clean Energy	11
Sustainable Cities and Communities	10
Good Health and Well-being	10
Peace and Justice Strong Institutions	7
Decent Work and Economic Growth	6
Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	6
Quality Education	4
Reduced Inequality	3
Total	**224**

The Strategy also calls for geographic diversity, particularly from under-represented groups, and considers the twin goals of parity and diversity as mutually reinforcing. The 74 consultants referred to in the preceding paragraph were recruited from five geographic sub-regions, as shown in Figure 8 below. The

geographic distribution in this biennium is similar to that in 2022-23 when 63 consultancy contracts were issued. Continued efforts are being made to diversify the geographic representation of evaluation consultants; 47% were recruited from Western Europe and Other Groups in this biennium, similar to the figure of 49% in 2022-23.

Figure 8 Evaluation consultants by gender and region, 2024-25



Geographical Region	Number of Contracts
Western Europe (and other groups, includes North America, Australia and New Zealand)	35
Asia and the Pacific	13
Africa	11
Latin American and the Caribbean	11
Eastern Europe	4
Total	**74**

Chapter 3

Analysis of Project Performance

3.1 Terminal Evaluations

In 2024 and 2025, a total of 55 evaluations[31] were completed for projects with start dates ranging between 200832 and 2021 (see Figure ES. 1):

- The largest number of projects (24%) **started** in 2018 and 78% started between 2016 and 2020;
- The largest number of projects (31%) **ended** in 2023 and 75% ended between 2022 and 2024.

The data used for the analysis in this Chapter cover 52 of these projects for which performance ratings by criteria were included in the evaluation reports[33]. Trends across evaluation criteria are presented and analysed based on data from evaluation reports completed over a span of four biennia, with a focus on 2024-25 performance and comparison across the 8-year average performance.

The total value of project funds evaluated in the biennium was approx. USD 454,498,000 compared to approx. USD 157,000,000 in 2022-23. The value of projects assessed through a management-led modality (MLTR) in 2024-25 was approx. USD 198,810,133. These figures do not include in-kind co-finance.

Since project interventions are very diverse thematically, geographically, and in terms of their resource envelopes, conscious effort is needed to ensure that performance assessments are made in a consistent manner. In this regard, the Evaluation Office is continually aiming to improve the objectivity and

[31] Of these, four were mid-term/ interim evaluations

[32] The data on start dates includes two outliers. Two projects began in 2008 and 2009 respectively and the launch dates of their evaluations were unfortunately delayed: GEF 2123 Conservation and Management of Pollinators for Sustainable Agriculture Through an Ecosystem Approach, implemented between 2008 - 2015 and GEF 1902 Development and Application of Decision-Support Tools to Conserve & Sustainably Use Genetic Diversity in Indigenous Livestock and Wild Relatives, implemented between 2009 - 2020.

[33] Three project evaluations were carried out with a larger delay between operational completion and evaluation than usual. In those cases, there were substantive gaps in evidence due to interviewees not being available, gaps in documentation and/or low recall. These three cases have not been included in the analysis. Also, in some instances, programme evaluations and special studies do not confer any criteria-based performance ratings, so references to the number of completed evaluations may vary within this report.

comparability of its evaluation approach across UNEP projects. External evaluation consultants are routinely provided with standard Terms of Reference for project evaluations, as well as detailed guidance on evaluation processes and methods, report structure, content, and quality, to help maintain consistent approaches and performance assessments.

To reduce the variability that could be introduced across the work of a large number of individual consultants and evaluation processes, and to improve the transparency of evaluative judgements, the Evaluation Office provides a Criterion Ratings Description Matrix[34] as a basis for making the determination of evaluation ratings more explicit. This Matrix presents the evidence requirements to support each performance level under each criterion.

UNEP Evaluation Office sets the minimum **desired level for Overall Project Performance at 'Satisfactory'** and focuses its attention on the percentage of cases where ratings have been awarded at the levels of 'Satisfactory' or better (i.e., either 'Satisfactory' or 'Highly Satisfactory', **abbreviated to S/HS**). In the PoW 2024-25 the target set (55%) was as shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4 Programme of Work, 2024-25, Outcome 3

Outcome 3: UNEP has strengthened its transparency and accountability as a results-based organization and improved the sustainability of its operations.

Performance indicators	Baselines and targets	Unit of measure[35]	Data source
(ii) Evaluations providing a rating of 'satisfactory' or higher for project performance	December 2021 baseline: 39% Progress expected by December 2023: 50% **Progress expected by December 2025: 55%**	Project level evaluation report overall performance ratings.	Biennial Evaluation Synthesis Report

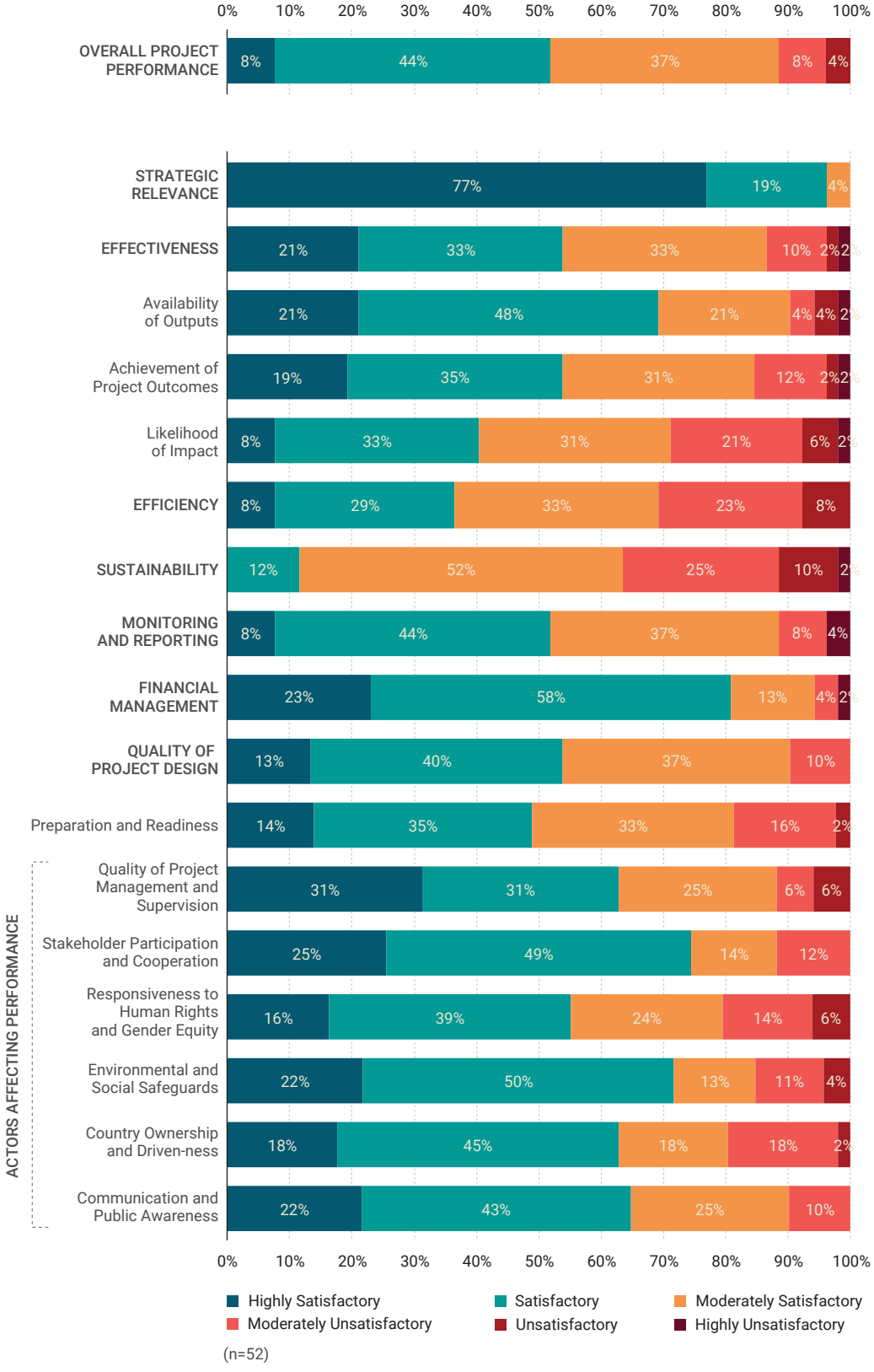
The actual achievement against this indicator was 52%, which is below the 2025 target. This is below both the 2022-23 level of 74% and just below the 8-year average of 55%.

In Figure 9, below, a summary of project performance by criteria is presented based on data collated from the evaluation reports completed in the 2024-25 biennium and using a six-point ratings scale from 'Highly Satisfactory' down to 'Highly Unsatisfactory'.

[34] https://communities.unep.org/spaces/EOU/pages/64487446/INDEPENDENT+EVALUATION+TOOLS+AND+TEMPLATES (Tool #04)

[35] Unit of measure and Data source taken from Programme of Work 2026-27 as the entry was blank in PoW 2024 -25

Figure 9 Summary of project performance against evaluation criteria, 2024-25



Focusing on areas of high performance, Figure 9 shows that the evaluation criteria/sub-categories with the highest proportion of projects achieving **'Satisfactory' or better (S/HS)** ratings include:

- Strategic Relevance (96% S/HS)
- Financial Management (81% S/HS)
- Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation (74% S/HS)
- Availability of Outputs (69% S/HS)

Focusing on areas of low performance, Figure 9 shows that the evaluation criteria/sub-categories with the highest proportion of projects performing in the **'Unsatisfactory' range[36] (HU, U or MU)** are:

- Sustainability (37% HU, U or MU)
- Efficiency (31% HU, U or MU)
- Likelihood of Impact (29% HU, U or MU)
- Responsiveness to Gender and Human Rights (20% HU, U or MU)
- Country ownership and Drivenness (20% HU, U or MU)

Focusing on changes over time:

- The criteria of **Sustainability** (Figure 18) and **Efficiency** (Figure 20) show the highest rates of declining high performance over the previous biennium (61% and 39% declines in S/HS ratings, respectively).
- **Effectiveness** (Figure 14) shows a 19% decline in S/HS ratings (Outputs,17%; Outcomes 14% and Likelihood of Impact 17% decline). Given that Effectiveness makes up 45% of the overall project performance score, reductions in this area have a substantive effect on overall project performance.

The reduction in performance may be partly due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which began in early 2020 and continued to have substantive effects on lives and work practices at least through until the end of 2022. This is reflected in the changes in work practice and increased implementation timeframes, clearly impacting negatively on efficiency levels. Large numbers of projects were extended during the pandemic, although they also exhibited cost savings when in-person events were transferred online and field and meeting travel was suspended. There is a plausible link between the wide-ranging disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and dimensions of sustainability (e.g. the need for socio-political agendas to respond to the crisis; loss and movement of staff in institutions and the diversion of funding to emergency lines).

[36] The Unsatisfactory range encompasses 'Highly Unsatisfactory' (HU), 'Unsatisfactory' (U) and 'Moderately Unsatisfactory' (MU).

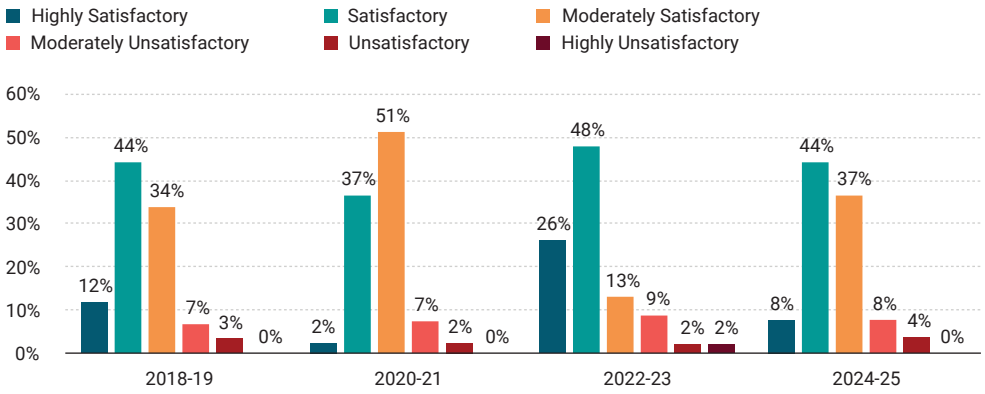
3.1.1 Overall Project Performance

The 2025 target for evaluations providing a rating of 'Satisfactory' or 'higher' Overall Project Performance was 55%. **The 2024-25 performance was 52% and the 8-year average (2018-25) was 55%.**

Overall Project Performance is calculated as a weighted total of performance ratings across all 9 UNEP evaluation criteria. The weighting places emphasis on Achievement of Outcomes (30% weight) and the Sustainability of project effects (20% weight).

Figure 10 below shows the general trend in Overall Project Performance over an 8-year period since 2018. At least 41 projects were evaluated in each biennium and no significant changes in evaluation criteria were made since 2018, making these data suitable for comparison.

Figure 10 Comparison of overall project performance, 2018-25



Biennium	2018-19	2020-21	2022-23	2024-25
No. of evaluated projects with criteria performance ratings	59	41	46	52
% of projects with overall performance rated 'Satisfactory' or better (i.e. S/HS)	56%	39%	74%	52%
% of projects with overall performance rated in the 'Satisfactory' range (MS/S/HS)	90%	90%	87%	89%

- **Slightly more than half (52%) of the projects evaluated in 2024-25 achieved a S/HS rating,** which is 30% lower compared to 2022-23 level, which recorded 74% projects in the same category. It is, however, in keeping with the 8-year average (55%).

- The 2024-25 biennium shows a shift away from 'Highly Satisfactory' overall performance (from 26% in 2022-23 down to 8% in 2024-25) and a greater concentration of performance around the 'Satisfactory' and 'Moderately.
- Satisfactory' levels (61% MS/S in 2022-23 up to 81% MS/S in 2024-25). Taking a broader perspective, the **proportion of projects performing within the Satisfactory range (MS/S/HS) has remained fairly constant** over time (ranging from 87% to 90% in the four biennia).
- **The same low proportion of project evaluations were rated at the 'Highly Unsatisfactory' and 'Unsatisfactory' levels** in 2022-23 and 2024-25 (4%) and a similar proportion performed in the 'Unsatisfactory' range across the four biennia (between 9% and 13%).

The sum total (in USD) of project grants recorded in evaluation reports completed in 2024 and 2025 is **USD 454,497,931**[37]. Figure 11 below shows the Overall Project Performance, categorised according to the secured funding indicated in the projects' approved budgets, as follows:

- **Small** project grants of ≤ USD 2 million
- **Medium** project grants of > USD 2 million to USD 5 million
- **Large** project grants of > USD 5 million to USD 10 million
- **Very large** project grants of > USD 10 million

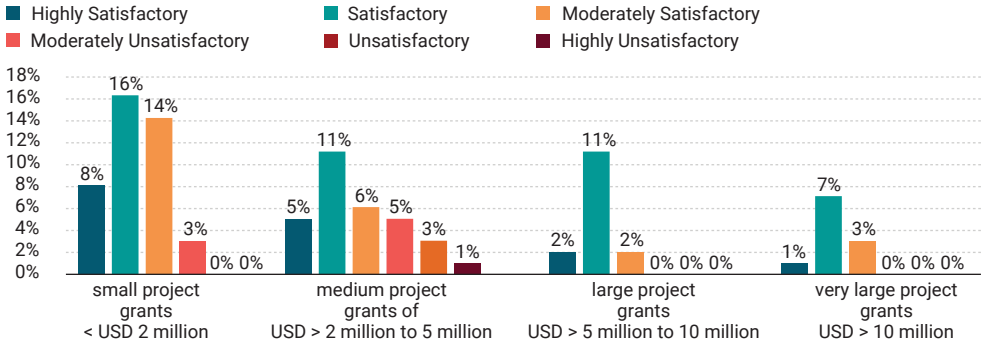
The performance of UNEP projects in relation to their financial envelope was introduced in the 2022-23 biennium and a combined picture across two biennia (2022-23 and 2024-25) is provided below in Figure 11.

- The majority of evaluated projects (42%) fall under the category 'small project grants', followed by 'medium project grants' (33%).
- The category 'large project grants' has the highest proportion of projects (87%) achieving S/HS rating for their overall performance, followed by 'very large project grants' at 73%.[38]
- The highest proportion of projects rated MS or lower for overall performance fall under 'medium project grants' and 'small project grants' categories, with 41% and 48% of projects respectively.

[37] In-kind co-finance amounts have not been included due to inconsistencies that make it difficult to verify the actual co-funded amounts on a fully consistent basis.

[38] The EOU notes that the categories 'large project grants' and 'very large project grants' only represent small numbers of projects (15 and 11 projects respectively). The % figures need to be treated with caution.

Figure 11 Overall project performance by project size, 2022-25



Overall Project performance	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU	Totals
small project grants ≤ USD 2 million	8	16	14	3	0	0	**41**
medium project grants of USD >2 million to 5 million	5	11	6	5	3	1	**31**
large project grants USD >5 million to 10 million	2	11	2	0	0	0	**15**
very large project grants USD >10 million	1	7	3	0	0	0	**11**
	16	**45**	**25**	**8**	**3**	**1**	**98**[38]

The value of the portfolio evaluated by the EOU in this biennium (USD 454m) is substantially larger than that of 2022-23 (USD 157m). This may be reflective of UNEP's move towards 'fewer, larger projects' as the 2024-25 evaluated portfolio includes several projects well over USD 10m[40] (Table 5):

Table 5 Projects with a value over USD 10m, evaluated in the 2024-25 biennium

Project Identification	Project Title	Project Value (excluding co-finance)
GEF 10452	Sustainable Cities Impact Programme41 - Global Platform (GP)	16,213,761
PIMS ID 01992	Building high-level support and capacities to enhance climate and ozone protection through cooling efficiency (Cooling Project)	17,785,597
GEF ID 9142	Promoting Sustainable Cities in Brazil through integrated urban planning and innovative technologies investment	22,635,780
SB-OI 6313	REDD+ Results-based Payments in Paraguay for the period 2015-2017 (Paraguay + Verde Project) - Project FP 121 GCF	50,000,000
PIMS 01626	Joint UNEP-UNIDO Programme to host and manage the Climate Technology Centre and Network and Support to Climate Technology Transfer Services and Partnership (EU Contract DCI-ENV/2016/377-145)	97,334,988

[39] This figure excludes three project evaluations that did not give rise to an overall project performance rating.
[40] These five large projects represent 45% of the project/programme budget evaluated in this biennium.
[41] The term 'Programme', when used in a title of work, does not always represent a programme design as per UNEP's Results Definitions, see Annex IV.

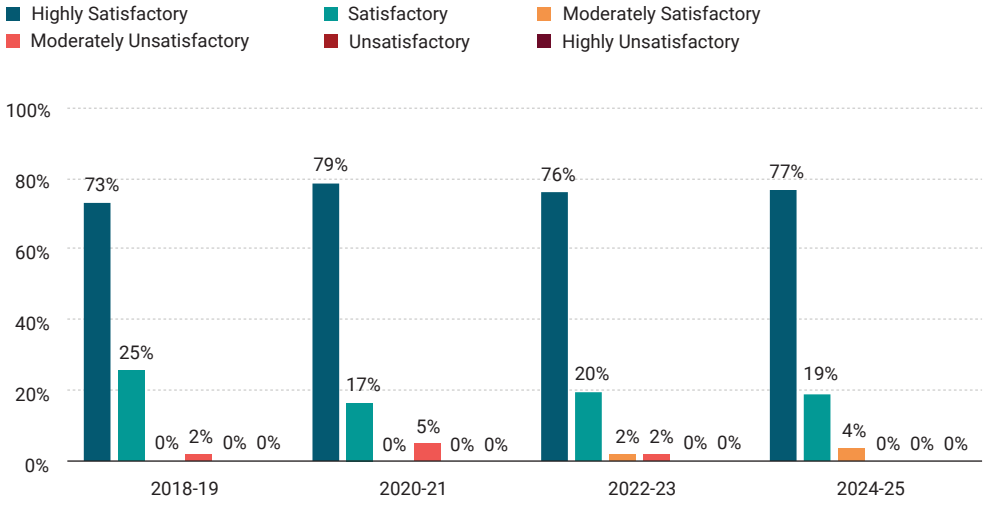
3.1.2 Strategic Relevance

Strategic Relevance remains the evaluation criterion with a consistently high proportion of S/HS ratings in every biennium. It has four sub-categories that address whether the project's intentions and activities are aligned with the strategic priorities, in place at the time of project design, of UNEP's MTS/PoW, the recipient country or region and the funding partner. As the EOU expects this alignment to be strongly supported by various project approval processes, the criterion is not heavily weighted in the calculation of the overall project performance.

The EOU aims to differentiate, at the high performing level, between projects that are not only aligned with strategic objectives but have also made a strong contribution to achieving these.

This criterion also includes a sub-category on complementarity, which corresponds with the OECD-DAC criterion Coherence. Complementarity refers to how well the project, either at design stage or during the project inception or mobilization, took account of ongoing and planned initiatives that address similar needs of the same target groups.

Figure 12 Comparison of strategic relevance by biennium, 2018-25



Biennium	2018-19	2020-21	2022-23	2024-25
No. of evaluated projects with criteria performance ratings	59	42	46	52
% of projects with overall performance rated 'Satisfactory' or better (i.e. S/HS)	98%	96%	96%	96%
% of projects with overall performance rated in the 'Satisfactory' range (MS/S/HS)	98%	96%	98%	100%

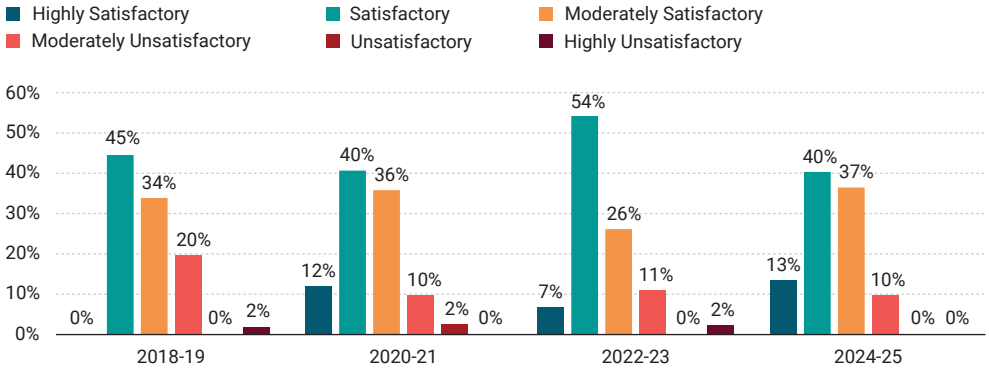
- The proportion of projects performing at the S/HS level is no less than 96% across the biennia.
- This criterion assesses the alignment of project goals with UNEP, funding partner and global/regional/national priorities. Such alignment is supported by all project approval systems, which contributes to this being, typically, the highest performing criterion over time.

3.1.3 Quality of Project Design

The Quality of Project Design is assessed during the inception phase of all evaluations against various criteria, and an overall Project Design Quality rating is established using a weighted scoring approach. The rating for Quality of Project Design has the smallest weight (4%) in the overall project performance score. This is because the main purpose of assessing this is to: a) guide the design of the evaluation and its framing and b) serve as a point of comparison for any adaptive management efforts.

The proportion of project designs achieving a S/HS rating has returned, in 2024-25, to the slightly lower levels of 2020-21, following an increase in 2022-23 (Figure 13).

Figure 13 Quality of project design by biennium, 2018-25



Biennium	2018-19	2020-21	2022-23	2024-25
No. of evaluated projects with criteria performance ratings	56	42	46	52
% of projects with overall performance rated 'Satisfactory' or better (i.e. S/HS)	45%	52%	61%	53%
% of projects with overall performance rated in the 'Satisfactory' range (MS/S/HS)	79%	88%	87%	90%

- 2024-25 shows an improvement in the HS performance ratings (13%) over the last biennium (7%) and returns to the levels seen in 2020-21 (12%). However, combined S/HS ratings in 2024-25 (53%) are lower than in the previous biennium 2022-23 (61%).

- The proportion of lower-tier ratings (U and HU) are at their lowest levels in 2024–25, with 'Unsatisfactory' and 'Highly Unsatisfactory' both eliminated entirely as compared with previous biennia. However, combined HU, U and MU ratings have been more constant over the last 8 years, ranging between 10% and 13%). *[The EOU assumes that a minimum threshold is being applied to design quality through the project approval system and that this supports the exclusion of U/HU ratings].*

3.1.4 Effectiveness

The assessment of Effectiveness consists of three sub-categories (Availability of Outputs; Achievement of Outcomes and Likelihood of Impact), and accounts for 45% of the overall project performance weighted score (5%, 30% and 10% respectively). Performance ratings for the Effectiveness criterion therefore have a large influence on the overall project performance rating.

The EOU weights performance at the Outcome level heavily because this is the point at which agency[42] to drive change should be transferred from the project team to the intended beneficiaries (i.e. the point at which the intended beneficiaries 'take up' the Outputs that the project has made available to them).

As shown in Figure 14 below, projects evaluated in 2024 and 2025 showed a 19% decrease in the proportion or projects rated S/HS for their overall Effectiveness, with 54% of the sample at this level as compared to an average of 50% across the 8-years (67% in 2022-23; 39% in 2020-21 and 55% in 2018-19).

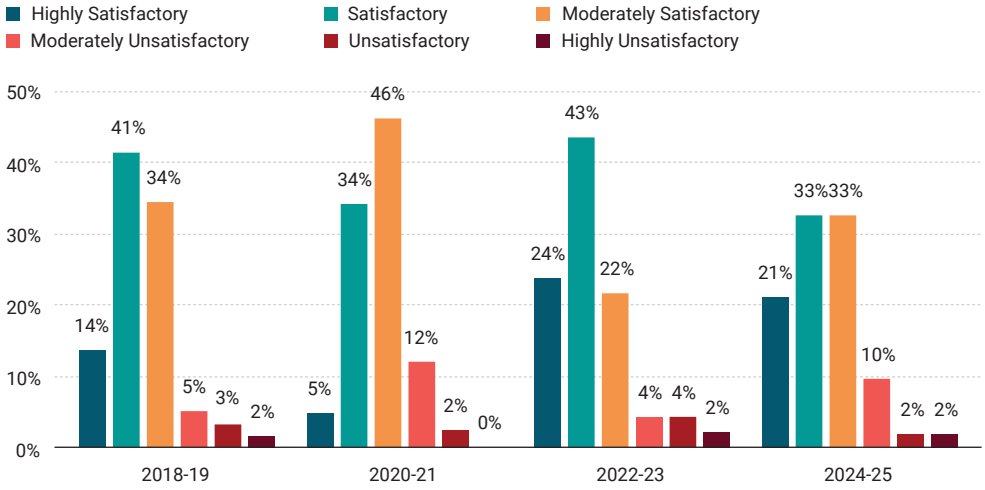
However, the EOU also notes that this biennium also records a high proportion (21%) of projects achieving a 'Highly Satisfactory' performance rating against this criterion. This is similar to the proportion recorded in the 2022-23 biennium (24%) at this level.

- There is a 19% decrease in the proportion of projects rated S/HS in 2024-25 (54%) as compared to 2022-23 (67%).
- Compared to the last biennium, 2024-25 shows a shift away from 'Satisfactory' toward 'Moderately Satisfactory' ratings (with 43% S in 2022-23 declining to 33% and 22% MS in 2022-23 increasing to 33%).
- From a broader perspective, the performance in the 'Satisfactory' range (MS/S/HS) is constant over time, ranging only between 85 and 89%.

The three sub-criteria under the Effectiveness criterion are discussed separately in consecutive sections below.

[42] Refers to the capacity, condition, or state of acting or of exerting power (Merriam-Webster definition).

Figure 14 Comparison of effectiveness by biennium, 2018-25



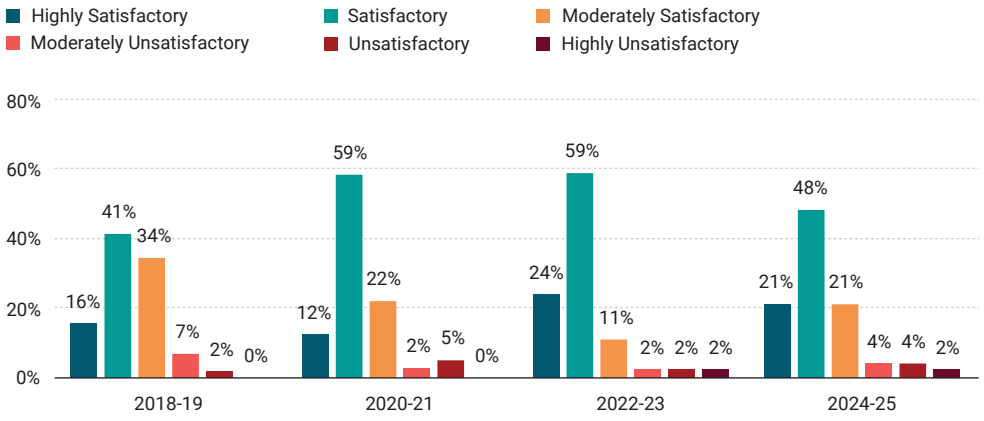
Biennium	2018-19	2020-21	2022-23	2024-25
No. of evaluated projects with criteria performance ratings	58	41	46	52
% of projects with effectiveness rated as 'Highly Satisfactory'	14%	5%	24%	21%
% of projects with effectiveness rated as 'Satisfactory' or better	55%	39%	67%	54%
% of projects with effectiveness rated in the 'Satisfactory' range (MS/S/HS)	89%	85%	89%	87%

3.1.5 Availability of Outputs

UNEP defines an output as the 'availability (for intended beneficiaries/users) of new products and services and/or gains in knowledge, abilities and awareness of individuals or within institutions'. Project evaluations consider the following elements in the assessment:

- Proportion of planned outputs made available to the target users or beneficiaries;
- Timeliness and suitability for purpose of those outputs that are most important for the achievement of outcomes; and
- Quality and utility of the outputs to identified users.
- There is a lower proportion of projects attaining S/HS ratings for this criterion (69%) in the 2024-25 biennium, as compared to the all-time high of 83% in 2022-23 and an average of 71% across the last 8 years.
- In comparison to 2022-23, 2024-25 shows a redistribution between 'Satisfactory' into 'Moderately Satisfactory' ratings. This contributes to comparative consistency, over the four biennia, in performance ratings in the 'Satisfactory' range (MS/S/HS), which only varies across 4 percentage points (90% - 94%).

Figure 15 Comparison of availability of outputs by biennium, 2018-25



Biennium	2018-19	2020-21	2022-23	2024-25
No. of evaluated projects with criteria performance ratings	58	41	46	52
% of projects with outputs rated as 'Satisfactory' or better	57%	71%	83%	69%
% of projects with outputs rated in the 'Satisfactory' range (MS/S/HS)	91%	93%	94%	90%

3.1.6 Achievement of Project Outcomes

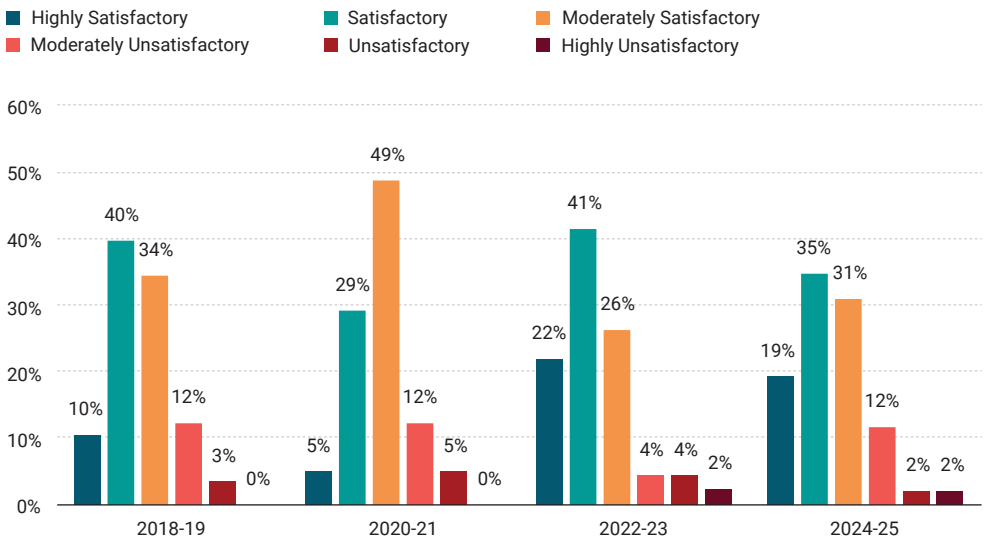
According to UNEP's results definitions[43], outcomes refer to the use (i.e., uptake, adoption, application) of outputs by intended beneficiaries, observed as changes in their behaviours, attitudes or conditions[44]. Outcomes are also the points in the change process at which agency is clearly transferred from those who are responsible for delivering the project, to those who are expected to benefit from, or use and take forward, the projects' results.

Although results frameworks and the structure of Theories of Change often show a linear relationship between Outputs and Outcomes, the provision of project outputs alone is often a weak predictor of actual uptake.

- The performance in achieving Outcomes suggests conversion of outputs into benefits in just over half (54%) of the evaluated projects.
- Over time, the proportion of projects performing in the Satisfactory range (MS/S/HS) has remained fairly consistent, ranging from an 83% low to an 89% high-point.

[43] UNEP Glossary of Results Definitions, 2023
[44] UNEP updated its articulation of the definition of a project outcome, along with other results terminology, in 2023.

Figure 16 Comparison of achievement of outcomes by biennium, 2018-25



Biennium	2018-19	2020-21	2022-23	2024-25
No. of evaluated projects with criteria performance ratings	58	41	46	52
% of projects with outcomes rated as 'Satisfactory' or better	50%	34%	63%	54%
% of projects with outcomes rated in the 'Satisfactory' range (MS/S/HS)	84%	83%	89%	85%

3.1.7 Likelihood of Impact

This criterion considers the extent to which: a) project outcomes have been achieved, and b) assumptions[45] and drivers[46] are being seen to contribute to the projects' results emerging or developing. It is recognised that impacts, (i.e. long-lasting positive effects and therefore stable changes of state), are not under the sole influence of a project. Further, evaluations are undertaken as soon after a project's operational completion as is feasible, thus it is often too early to gather clear evidence of impacts.

Evaluations, therefore, assess the *likelihood* that the intervention may lead, or contribute to, the intended impacts (and in some cases, unintended negative effects). The Evaluation Office supports this assessment process by providing structured guidelines and tools to support consistency among evaluation consultants in their assessment of this criterion (Table 6).

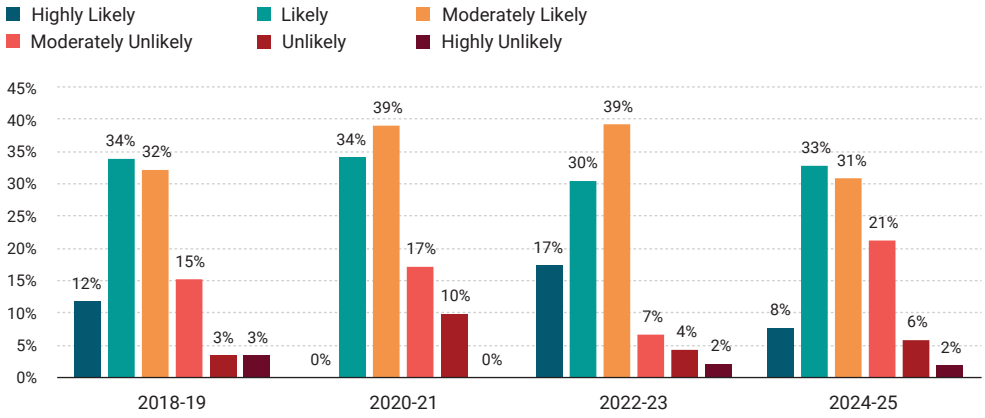
[45] An assumption is a significant external factor or condition that needs to be present for the realization of the intended results but is beyond the influence of the project and its partners.
[46] A driver is a significant external factor that, if present, is expected to contribute to the realization of the intended results of a project. Drivers can be influenced by the project and its partners.

Table 6 Sample assessment of likelihood of impact from a 2024-25 project evaluation report

Factors influencing the likelihood of impact	Assessment	Justification
Drivers to support the transition from Outputs to the Project Outcomes	Fully in place	Enabling legal frameworks, particularly the Environmental Protection and Management Act and the NAP, are established and strongly aligned with the project objectives. Likewise, public institutions, such as the DOE and DCA, which support the achievement of project outcomes, are in place.
Assumptions for the change process from Outputs to Project Outcomes	Partially hold	The DCA has retained trained personnel and begun integrating capacity into its processes, specifically LAP development. However, there remains a need for further training and mainstreaming into processes. Regarding the SIRF Fund, there has been a high level of delinquency in loan repayments. While the governance structure is in place, key operational and governance mechanisms are deficient or not yet fully integrated.
Proportion of **Project Outcomes** fully or partially achieved	Partially	The project has made substantial progress in achieving its outcomes, particularly through the SIRF Fund's RLP and the integration of ecosystem-based adaptation into planning frameworks and development policies, such as the LAPs and the Building Code. Vulnerable households and communities were able to adopt and implement climate-resilient infrastructure, though mechanisms are needed to ensure continuity and scaling. While there is evidence of regional knowledge sharing, some unmet outputs limit the possibility of regional uptake and replication. Similarly, the incomplete policy briefs hinder consideration and uptake in national processes.

Factors influencing the likelihood of impact	Assessment	Justification
Drivers to support transition from Project Outcomes to Intermediate States	Partially in place	Some enabling factors exist, such as a functioning SIRF Fund and revised planning tools; however, drivers for wider institutional and systemic uptake, including mainstreaming into national planning and multi-ministry/multi-sector coordination, remain underdeveloped or inactive.
Assumptions for the change process from the Project Outcomes to Intermediate States	Partially hold	Most assumptions are only partially in place. While political support for adaptation integration is present, there is no evidence to support the assumption that institutions will retain trained personnel and budgetary support. High repayment delinquency also exists among loan recipients.
Proportion of **Intermediate States** achieved	Partially	There is emerging evidence of change at a small scale, such as in the St. John's watershed and among loan beneficiaries, but key systematic shifts, such as the mainstreaming and institutionalisation of outcomes, have not yet been realised. For instance, while climate adaptation considerations have been integrated into planning, national mainstreaming has not occurred. Again, while regional knowledge sharing has occurred, there is limited evidence of replication/uptake.
Drivers to support the transition from Intermediate States to Impact	Fully in place	Strong and established regional knowledge networks, such as CARICOM and OECS, do exist. Additionally, there is abundant international guidance on gender-responsive and ecosystem-based adaptation.
Assumptions for the change process from Intermediate States to Impact	Partially hold	Except for gender inclusion throughout project implementation, the assumptions do not hold fully. For instance, local community ownership was not fully promoted throughout project implementation.

Figure 17 Likelihood of impact, 2018-25



Biennium	2018-19	2020-21	2022-23	2024-25
No. of evaluated projects with criteria performance ratings	59	41	46	52
% of projects with likelihood of impact rated as 'Likely' or better	46%	34%	47%	41%
% of projects with likelihood of impact rated in the 'Likely' range (ML/L/HL)	78%	73%	86%	72%

- The 2024-25 proportion of 41% S/HS ratings is a decrease on 2022-23 (47%) and consistent with the 8-year average of 42%.
- The greater concentration of ratings at the 'Moderately Unlikely' level contributes to a higher proportion of projects rated in the 'Unlikely' range (29% MU/U/HU) compared with the 8-year average of 23%.
- A reasonable assessment of the likelihood of a project's long-lasting impacts requires a clear understanding of how the project expects to drive change (causality) and the main contributing conditions (Assumptions and Drivers) that must be in place for that change process to occur.

3.1.8 Sustainability

The assessment of Sustainability considers the key conditions or factors that are likely to either support or undermine the persistence of project benefits after external funding and assistance ends. Based first on evidence of whether the project's outcome state has been achieved, the evaluation team aims to assess if: a) any measures have been taken to mitigate risks that might threaten the endurance of project benefits or b) any conditions are evident that will support the continuation of the intended changes.

This criterion carries a weight of 20% in the Overall Project Performance score. It comprises three sub-categories: **socio-political**, **institutional** and **financial sustainability**. Conceptually, these three sub-criteria are regarded as interrelated

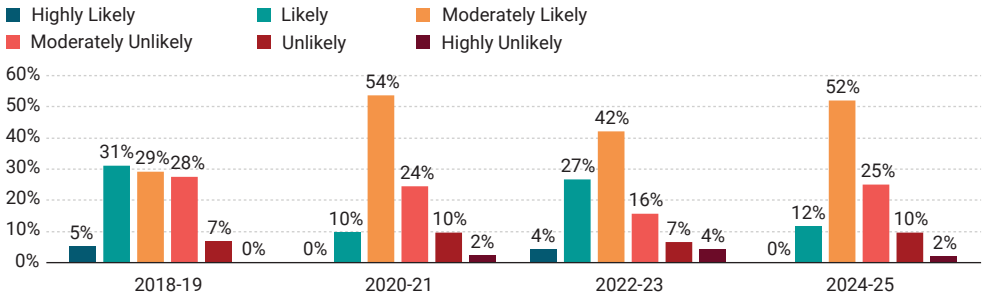
limiting factors, therefore the aggregated rating for Sustainability is always set at the lowest rating achieved across these sub-criteria.

As part of assessing this criterion, the evaluation team considers whether an appropriate exit strategy has been put in place, which might indicate what follow-up work is necessary, has been planned or initiated. Even in cases where a project has demonstrated that project outcomes have been achieved, the momentum can only be sustained if there is an exit strategy that is owned by the intended project beneficiaries.

For example: socio-political sustainability may be threatened if there is weak ownership by key leadership figures; financial sustainability may be challenged if there are substantial maintenance costs for which there is no budget or institutional sustainability may be compromised if trained staff are few in number and/or have high rates of movement out of the institution.

Projects rarely have mechanisms or budget for monitoring results beyond the funded implementation period. While there are frequent calls for more 'post-project impact studies', the reality is that project teams disband very quickly at the end of a project, not all project documentation is accessibly in centralised storage and reliable recall can rapidly be eroded by other initiatives and projects.

Figure 18 Sustainability by biennium, 2018-25



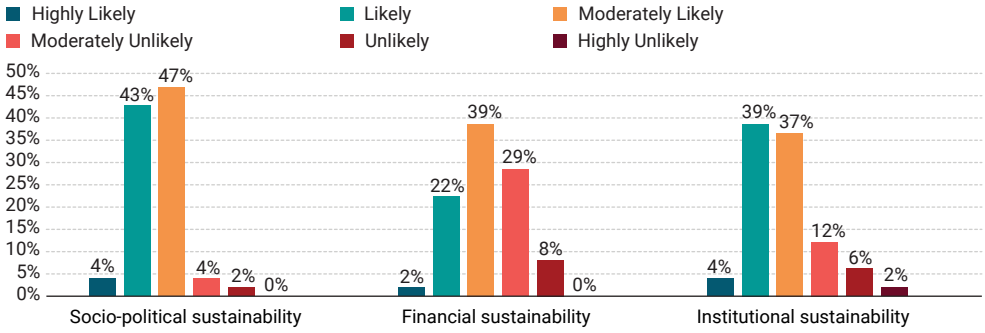
Biennium	2018-19	2020-21	2022-23	2024-25
No. of evaluated projects with criteria performance ratings	58	41	45	52
% of projects with likelihood of impact rated as 'Likely' or better	36%	10%	31%	12%
% of projects with likelihood of impact rated in the 'Likely' range (ML/L/HL)	65%	64%	73%	64%

- Performance in 2024–25 shows a substantially lower percentage of projects rated L/HL (12%) compared to 2022-23 (31%), which is also noticeably lower than the 8-year average of 22%.

- The 2024-25 data show a distribution very close to 2020-21, with the most frequent performance rating being 'Moderately Likely' (52% in 2024-25 and at an average of 44% across the last 8 years)

Project performance by sustainability sub-category in 2024 and 2025 is presented in Figure 19 below.

Figure 19 Project performance in socio-political, financial and institutional sustainability, 2024-25



Sub-category	Socio-political sustainability	Financial sustainability	Institutional sustainability
No. of evaluated projects	49	49	49
Percentage rated L/HL	47%	24%	43%

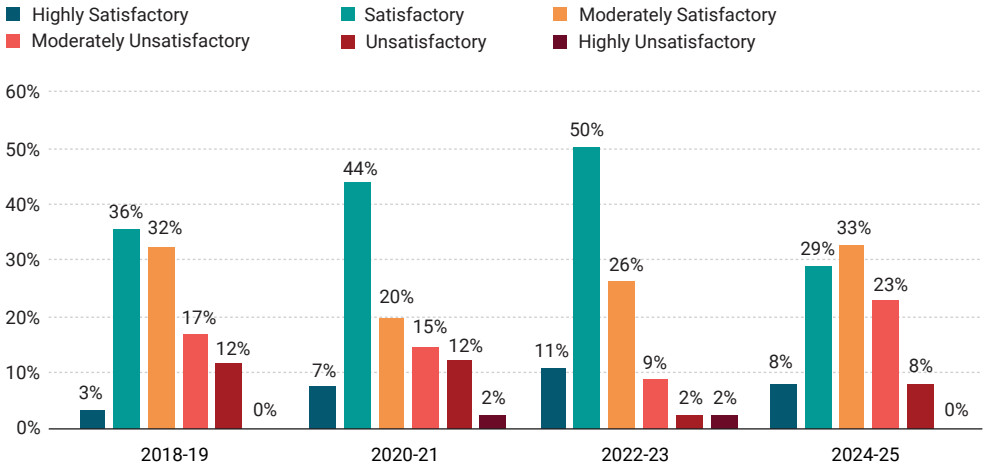
- The strongest sub-category is 'Socio-political Sustainability' with almost half (47%) of projects rated L/HL.
- At the level of the sub-categories, evaluated projects have shown stronger performance in socio-political sustainability and institutional sustainability (with L/HL ratings in 47% and 43% of projects respectively), and weaker performance in financial sustainability (L/HL ratings in 24% of projects). This picture of financial sustainability being assessed at lower levels of likelihood is persistent over time.
- Financial sustainability is often thought to focus on whether new or continued project funds have been secured, whereas its focus lies more truly on an assessment of what financial resources are needed to continue on the change path, and whether they are available from multiple sources.

3.1.9 Efficiency

Under this criterion, the evaluation undertakes an assessment of the **timeliness** (whether planned activities were delivered according to expected timeframes as well as whether events were sequenced efficiently) of project execution and, at a general level, **cost-effectiveness** (the extent to which an intervention has achieved, or is expected to achieve, its results at the lowest possible cost).

So-called 'no-cost' extensions are considered under Efficiency because they reflect an increase in operating costs when the implementing timeframe is extended.

Figure 20 Efficiency by biennium, 2018-25



Biennium	2018-19	2020-21	2022-23	2024-25
No. of evaluated projects with criteria performance ratings	59	41	46	52
% of projects with overall performance rated 'Satisfactory' or better (i.e. S/HS)	39%	51%	61%	37%
% of projects with overall performance rated in the 'Satisfactory' range (MS/S/HS)	71%	71%	87%	70%

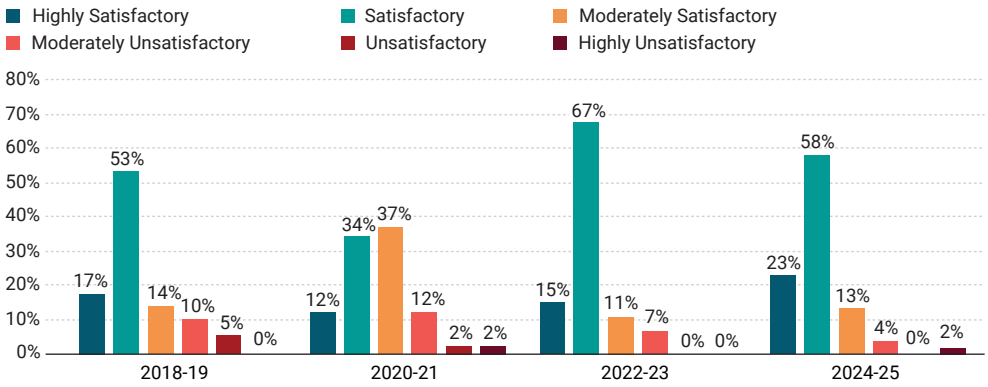
- 2024–25 shows a decline in S/HS ratings (37%) compared to 2022-23 (61%) and a decrease against the 8-year average of 47%. This is the criterion most likely to have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The distribution is more dispersed in 2024–25 than in the other biennia: fewer top-rated projects (HS and S) and more mid-tier ratings (MS and MU).

3.1.10 Financial Management

In 2016, financial management was established as a stand-alone evaluation criterion. It is assessed under three sub-criteria: **adherence** to UNEP's financial policies and procedures; **completeness** of financial information and **communication** between finance and project management staff.

During 2025 the EOU removed the sub-category of 'communication' as part of an effort to reduce duplication and the length of evaluation and review reports. Major insights were not being generated under the sub-category.

Figure 21 Financial management by biennium, 2018-25

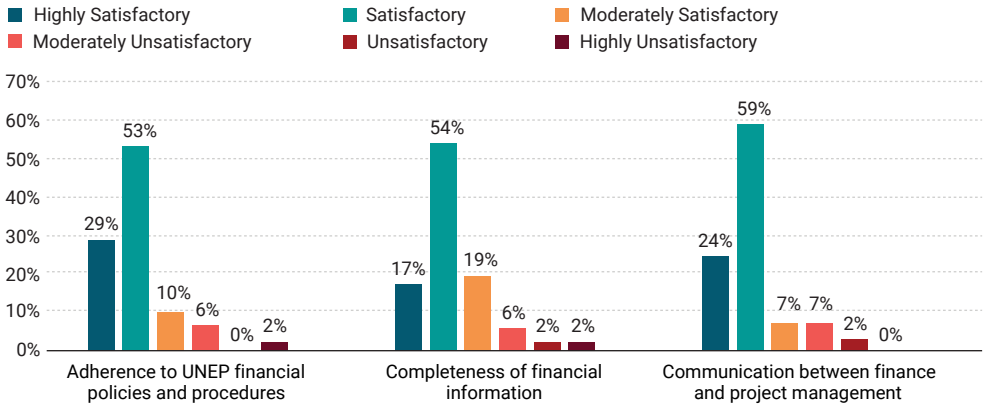


Biennium	2018-19	2020-21	2022-23	2024-25
No. of evaluated projects with criteria performance ratings	58	41	46	52
% of projects with overall performance rated 'Satisfactory' or better (i.e. S/HS)	70%	46%	82%	81%
% of projects with overall performance rated in the 'Satisfactory' range (MS/S/HS)	84%	83%	93%	94%

- Overall, performance in this criterion is robust in the 2024-25 period with more than 81% of projects achieving 'Satisfactory' and better ratings. This is in comparison with a similar proportion in 2022-23 (82%) and a lower 8-year average of 70%.
- There are notable gains in the share of projects rated HS in 2024-25 (23% in 2024-25 ompared to 15% in 2022-23).

Below (Figure 22) is a breakdown of ratings for the three sub-categories.

Figure 22 Financial management by sub-category, 2024-25



Sub-category	Adherence to UNEP financial policies & procedures	Completeness of financial information	Communication between finance & project management
No. of evaluated projects	49	52	41
Percentage rated L/HL	82%	71%	83%

- Of the three sub-categories, 'Communication between finance and project management' and 'Adherence to financial policies' are the strongest, with 83% and 82% of projects, respectively, achieving S/HS ratings.
- Performance in the sub-category 'Completeness of financial information' is weaker at 71% S/HS, having the highest proportion in the 'Moderately Satisfactory' band (19%), suggesting room for improvement in documentation consistency or completeness.

As highlighted in the previous biennium, there is a lack of institutional guidance in defining, estimating, reporting, and verifying co-finance (cash and in-kind contributions). Experience suggests a need for better protocols on managing project co-finance due to insufficient clarity on the definitions, methods for estimation (at design and implementation), and procedures for monitoring and reporting of co-financing. The differentiation between cash and in-kind co-finance is also important as both need to be accounted for. While evidence of cash co-finance is often available through financial transaction documents, in-kind co-finance is often more complex and requires further guidance in terms of definitions, means of valuation, recording provision and validation.

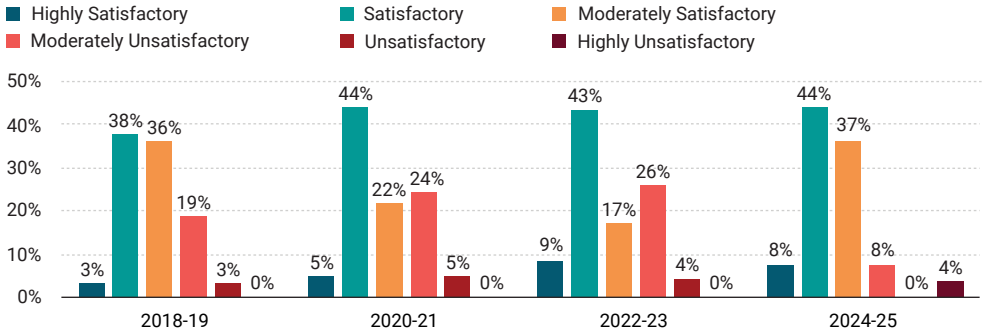
3.1.11 Monitoring and Reporting

Evaluations assess monitoring and reporting across three sub-criteria: monitoring **design and budgeting**, monitoring **implementation** and **project reporting**.

During 2025 the EOU removed the sub-category of 'design and budgeting' as part of an effort to reduce the time it takes to carry out a project evaluation and the length of evaluation and review reports. This sub-category is considered under the assessment of the Quality of Project Design and, if significant findings arise under that criterion, they can be considered against the Monitoring and Reporting criterion at an integrated level.

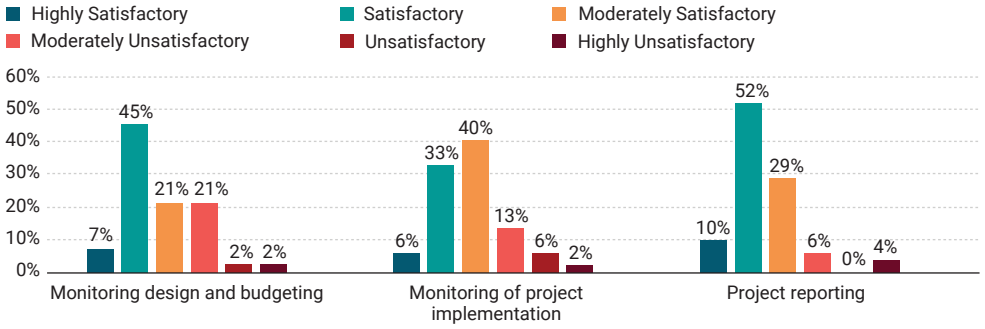
- The data show similar levels of performance between 2022-23 and 2024-25 in the share of projects (52%) rated 'Satisfactory' and better for this criterion. This is an increase on the 8-year average of 49%.
- 2024-25 is the only biennium with incidents of projects (4%) rated HU for this criterion, which is the equivalent of 2 projects. Nevertheless, it also has the least share of projects with ratings in the unsatisfactory range (MU/U/HU) as compared to the other three biennia, particularly 2022-23 which peaked at 30% projects rated MU and lower.

Figure 23 Monitoring and reporting by biennium, 2018-25



Biennium	2018-19	2020-21	2022-23	2024-25
No. of evaluated projects with criteria performance ratings	58	41	46	52
% of projects with overall performance rated 'Satisfactory' or better (i.e. S/HS)	41%	49%	52%	52%
% of projects with overall performance rated in the 'Satisfactory' range (MS/S/HS)	77%	71%	69%	89%

Figure 24 Monitoring and reporting by sub-criteria, 2024-25



Sub-category	Monitoring design and budgeting	Monitoring of project implementation	Project reporting
No. of evaluated projects	42	52	52
Percentage rated L/HL	52%	39%	62%

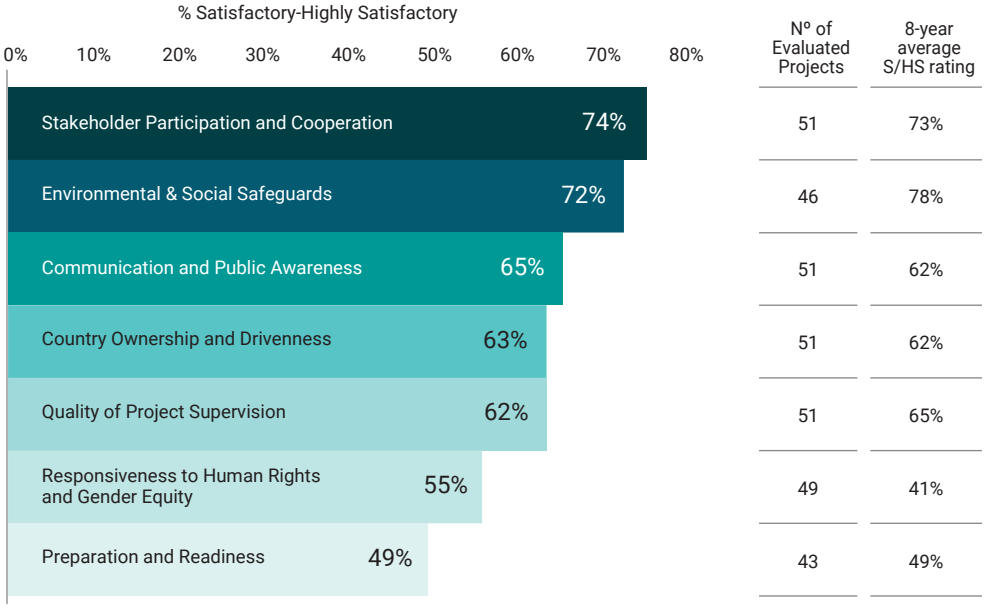
- In 2024-25, as in other biennia, the 'project reporting' sub-category has the highest proportion of projects rated S/HS (62%).
- Timely project reporting is frequently a requirement in funding agreements and may be a requirement for the release of funding tranches. Within UNEP compliance with reporting requirements is tracked, at least in terms of entries having been made in IPMR, on a regular basis.
- Monitoring of project implementation is a critical part of project supervision, adaptive management and, ultimately, high quality performance. This is the. lowest rated sub-category of 'monitoring project implementation' at 39%.

In summary, just less than half of the projects evaluated in the last four biennia have not reached the desired performance target (S/HS) for the criterion on monitoring and reporting. **Since monitoring and reporting are aspects of project management that are fully under UNEP's control or oversight, this is an area for continued management attention.**

3.1.12 Factors Affecting Project Performance

This section describes the assessment of cross-cutting themes that encompass factors that commonly affect project performance. These factors include: preparation and readiness; environmental and social safeguards; quality of project management and supervision; stakeholders' participation and cooperation; responsiveness to human rights and gender equity; country ownership and drivenness; and communication and public awareness.

Figure 25 Projects rated 'Satisfactory' and better in the factors affecting performance, 2024-25



- Figure 25 illustrates the share of projects rated S/HS, so higher percentages indicate stronger performance.
  - **Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation** (75%) is the strongest-performing area overall, indicating that most projects excel at engaging stakeholders, maintaining collaboration, and ensuring participatory processes throughout implementation.
  - **Environmental & Social Safeguards** (72%) follows closely and reflects the successful integration of environmental and social considerations into project design and implementation. This is a relatively new area of

assessment. Evaluation teams are requested to assess: whether UNEP requirements[47] were met to: review risk ratings on a regular basis; monitor project implementation for possible safeguard issues; respond (where relevant) to safeguard issues through risk avoidance, minimization, mitigation or offsetting and report on the implementation of safeguard management measures taken.

- The following criteria show generally strong performance but with room for improvement: **Communication and Public Awareness** (65%), **Country Ownership and Driven-ness** (63%) and **Quality of Project Management and Supervision** (63%). Performance here suggests that the fundamentals are in place but would benefit from conscious reinforcement.
- The lower-performing categories are **Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equity** (55%) and **Preparation and Readiness** (49%). Human rights and gender mainstreaming may be inconsistently applied, while shortcomings in the early-stage project preparation may point to institutional delays or planning gaps.

Project performance against these factors for evaluations completed in 2022 and 2023 are presented in Figure 25 above.

Preparation and Readiness

This criterion focuses on the inception or mobilisation stage of the project (i.e. the time between project approval and first disbursement). Evaluations assess, among other things, the measures taken to address weaknesses in the project design or changes occurring at project mobilisation, engagement with stakeholder groups, confirmation of partner capacity, development of partnership agreements, initial staffing and financing arrangements.

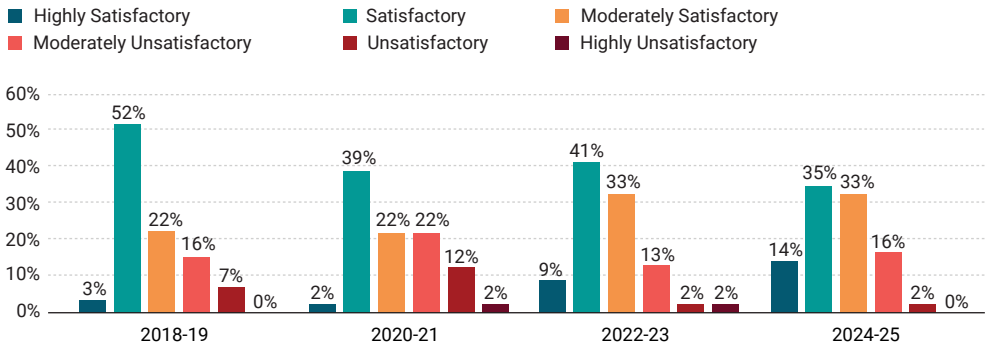
- In 2024-25, the share of projects rated S/HS (49%), is similar to that of the previous biennium (50%) and the same as the 8-year average of 49%.
- The proportion of projects rated HS for this criterion in 2024-25 (14%) is the highest across all four biennia.

From the experiences recorded in evaluation reports, lengthy delays at inception are often due to the amount of time required to: sign MOU/agreements, disburse funds, and recruit project staff at partner level. The inception workshop is critical for confirming any adjustments to the project design, results and/or partnerships, and this is particularly important where the implementing

[47] For the review of project concepts and proposals, the Safeguard Risk Identification Form (SRIF) was introduced in 2019 and replaced the Environmental, Social and Economic Review note (ESERN), which had been in place since 2016.

countries/partners are either not known during project design or have been changed after project approval.

Figure 26 Preparation and readiness by biennium, 2018-25



Biennium	2018-19	2020-21	2022-23	2024-25
No. of evaluated projects with criteria performance ratings	58	41	46	43
% of projects with overall performance rated 'Satisfactory' or better (i.e. S/HS)	55%	41%	50%	49%
% of projects with overall performance rated in the 'Satisfactory' range (MS/S/HS)	77%	63%	83%	82%

Quality of Project Management and Supervision

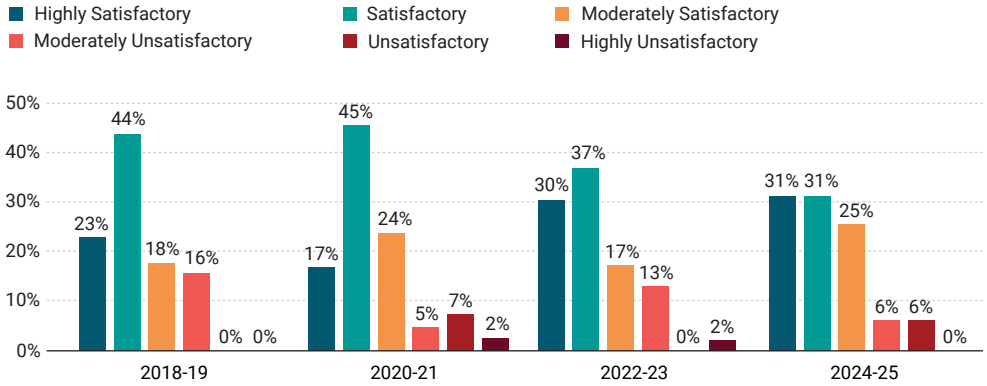
Under this criterion, the effectiveness of project management is assessed with regard to: provision of leadership towards achieving the planned outcomes; managing team structures; maintaining productive partner relationships (including steering groups, etc.); maintaining project relevance within changing external and strategic contexts; communication and collaboration with UNEP colleagues; risk management; use of problem-solving; project adaptation and adaptive management; and overall project execution.

- The portfolio has remained relatively stable in performance in this sub-category, with projects rated S/HS ranging between 62%-67% across the biennia.
- In 2024-25, the share of projects rated S/HS (62%), is lower than that of the previous biennium (67%) and the 8-year average of 65%.

Based on learning from past evaluations, it is very important to strengthen the institutionalisation of project documentation. Project implementation periods are typically 4-7 years, and many receive extensions. Consequently, staff turnover in the project management role is not uncommon as individuals pursue their own career development. When staff leave or move, project information should not be leaving with them; there needs to be routine institutional retention of critical project information to allow for a smooth transition in the project

management and/or oversight role. In addition, the value of supervision missions should also not be underestimated; they should be encouraged, clearly recorded, and with written justifications when they do not take place.

Figure 27 Quality of project management and supervision by biennium, 2018-2025



Biennium	2018-19	2020-21	2022-23	2024-25
No. of evaluated projects with criteria performance ratings	57	42	46	51
% of projects with overall performance rated 'Satisfactory' or better (i.e. S/HS)	67%	62%	67%	62%
% of projects with overall performance rated in the 'Satisfactory' range (MS/S/HS)	85%	86%	84%	87%

Stakeholders' Participation and Cooperation

The assessment against this criterion considers the quality and effectiveness of all forms of communication and consultation with stakeholders[48] throughout the project life, and the support given to maximise collaboration and coherence between various stakeholders, including sharing plans, pooling resources and exchanging learning and expertise. The inclusion and participation of all differentiated groups, including gender groups is also considered.

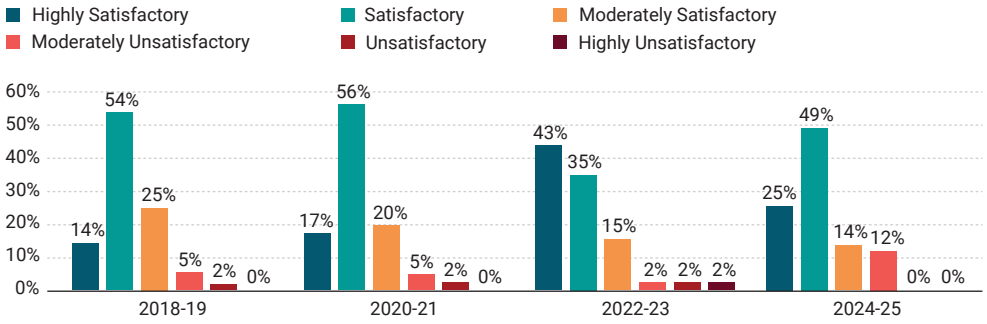
This is one of the criteria against which projects have substantial proportions of S/HS ratings over the years. Performance over time is shown in Figure 28 below.

- In 2024-25, the share of projects rated S/HS (74%), is lower than that of the previous biennium (78%) and slightly higher than the four-biennia average of 73%.

[48] The term 'stakeholder' is considered here in a broad sense, encompassing all project partners, duty bearers with a role in delivering project Outputs and target users of project Outputs and any other collaborating agents external to UNEP.

The main learning related to this criterion, based on past project evaluations, is that the absence of critical stakeholders during the project lifetime has a significantly adverse effect on project implementation and sustainability of results. It is important to ensure that the stakeholders who should be engaged in the project (i.e., in terms of interest, commitment, knowledge, decision power, as well as those who should benefit) are selected on a targeted basis, and that the selection criteria are documented and shared. This includes the selection criteria for demonstration/implementation sites.

Figure 28 Stakeholders' participation and cooperation, 2018-25



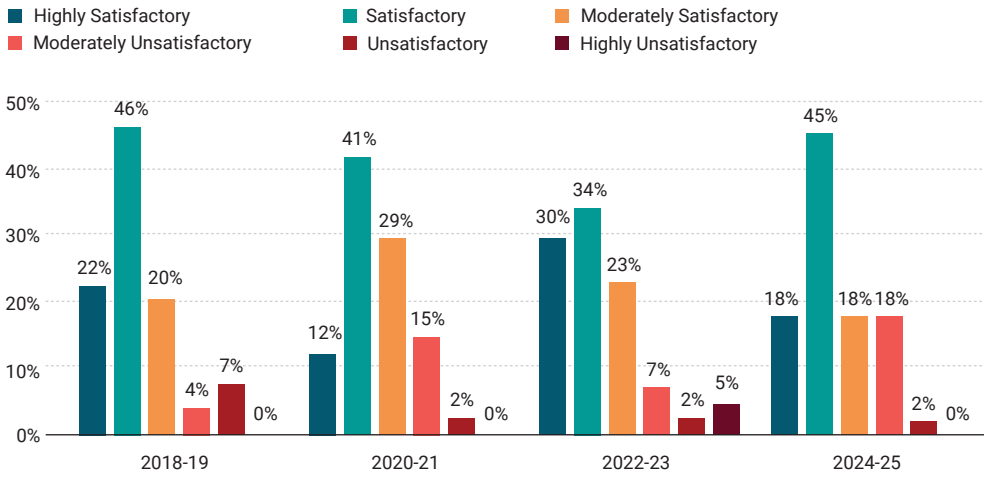
Biennium	2018-19	2020-21	2022-23	2024-25
No. of evaluated projects with criteria performance ratings	56	41	46	51
% of projects with overall performance rated 'Satisfactory' or better (i.e. S/HS)	68%	73%	78%	74%
% of projects with overall performance rated in the 'Satisfactory' range (MS/S/HS)	93%	93%	93%	88%

Country Ownership and Driven-Ness

This factor is concerned with the level of ownership generated by the project over outputs and outcomes, and that is necessary for long-term impact to be realised. Evaluations assess the quality and degree of engagement of government/ public sector agencies in projects. They consider the involvement not only of those directly involved in project execution and those participating in technical or leadership groups, but also those official representatives whose cooperation is needed for change to be embedded in their respective institutions and offices (e.g., representatives from multiple sectors or relevant ministries beyond Ministry of Environment).

- In 2024-25, the share of projects rated S/HS (63%), is similar to that of the previous biennium (64%) and slightly above the 8-year average of 62%.
- The 2024-25 biennium however records the largest share of scores in the Unsatisfactory range (20% HU/U/MU) compared to an average of 16% across 8 years.

Figure 29 Country ownership and drivenness, 2018-25



Biennium	2018-19	2020-21	2022-23	2024-25
No. of evaluated projects with criteria performance ratings	56	41	46	51
% of projects with overall performance rated 'Satisfactory' or better (i.e. S/HS)	68%	53%	64%	63%
% of projects with overall performance rated in the 'Satisfactory' range (MS/S/HS)	88%	82%	87%	81%

Communication and Public Awareness

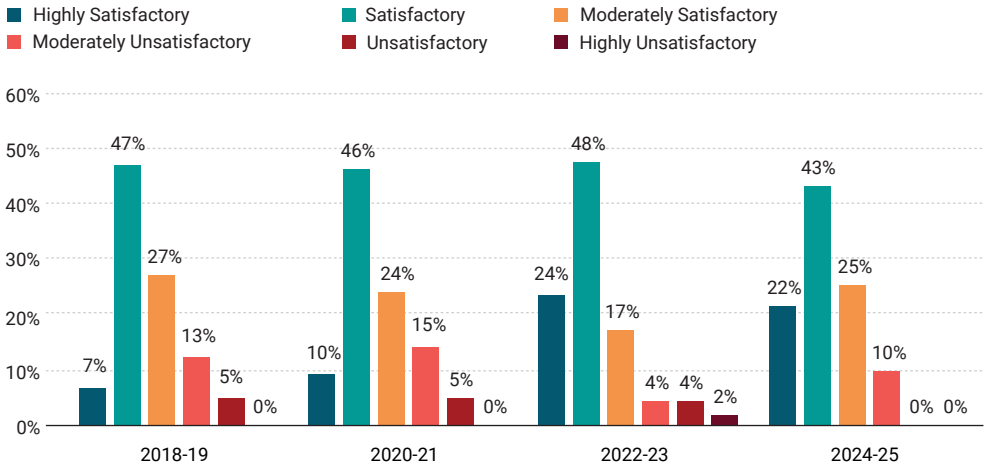
This sub-category is intended to assess the effectiveness of: (i) communication of learning arising from the project during its life, and experience-sharing between project partners and interested groups; and (ii) public awareness activities that were undertaken during the implementation of the project to influence attitudes or shape behaviour among wider communities and civil society at large.

- In 2024-25, the share of projects rated S/HS (65%), is lower than that of the previous biennium (72%) and higher than the 8-year average of 62%.
- Performance in the Unsatisfactory range (HU/U/MU) has been lower since 2022 (at 10% in this and the last biennium).

From experiences reported in evaluations, projects with sub-optimal performance against this criterion include those where communication/ knowledge-sharing products were produced in the later stages of project implementation and could then not play the catalytic/ awareness-raising role intended because they were not available to the intended audiences in a timely manner. The realistic timing of communication products within the project implementation timeframe requires more attention, and their role within the Theory of Change adjusted accordingly. In addition, projects should integrate methodical

communication strategies with specific budget allocations made available for their implementation.

Figure 30 Communication and public awareness, 2018-25



Biennium	2018-19	2020-21	2022-23	2024-25
No. of evaluated projects with criteria performance ratings	55	41	46	51
% of projects with overall performance rated 'Satisfactory' or better (i.e. S/HS)	54%	56%	72%	65%
% of projects with overall performance rated in the 'Satisfactory' range (MS/S/HS)	81%	80%	89%	90%

Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality

Evaluations assess the extent to which projects have taken into consideration: (i) possible inequalities (especially those related to gender) in access to, and the control over, natural resources; (ii) specific vulnerabilities of disadvantaged groups (especially women, children and those living with disabilities) to environmental degradation or disasters; and (iii) the role of disadvantaged groups in mitigating or adapting to environmental changes and engaging in environmental protection and rehabilitation.

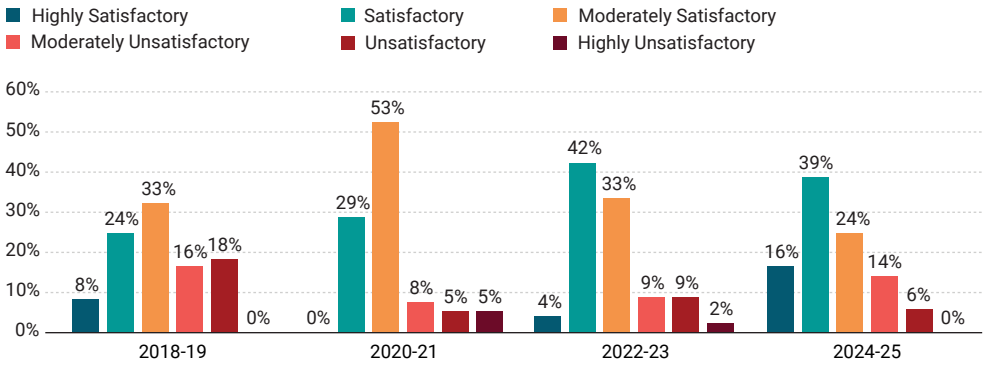
- In 2024-25, the share of projects rated S/HS (55%), is substantially higher than that of the previous biennium (46%) and above the 8-year average of 41%. The data show steady increases over time.
- Performance in the Unsatisfactory range has been stable over this and the last two biennia.

Learning from completed evaluations has shown that being responsive to human rights and gender may not involve additional costed activities and may,

therefore, not be very clear in the workplan or budget. The integration of gender and human rights in project implementation therefore needs a conscious effort and action to be included in a project's design including the Theory of Change[49].

UNEP takes part in the UN System-wide Approach on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP) and, as part of this process, an external consultant is commissioned by the Evaluation Office to review all the project evaluations completed within the year. Although this exercise primarily focuses on how well the evaluation function is addressing gender equality in its evaluation processes and approaches, the exercise also provides some insight into UNEP's performance at project level. A summary of the findings from the UN-SWAP Report on UNEP is presented in Section 5.4 of this report.

Figure 31 Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality, 2018-25



Biennium	2018-19	2020-21	2022-23	2024-25
No. of evaluated projects with criteria performance ratings	49	38	45	49
% of projects with overall performance rated 'Satisfactory' or better (i.e. S/HS)	32%	29%	46%	55%
% of projects with overall performance rated in the 'Satisfactory' range (MS/S/HS)	65%	82%	82%	79%

Environmental and Social Safeguards

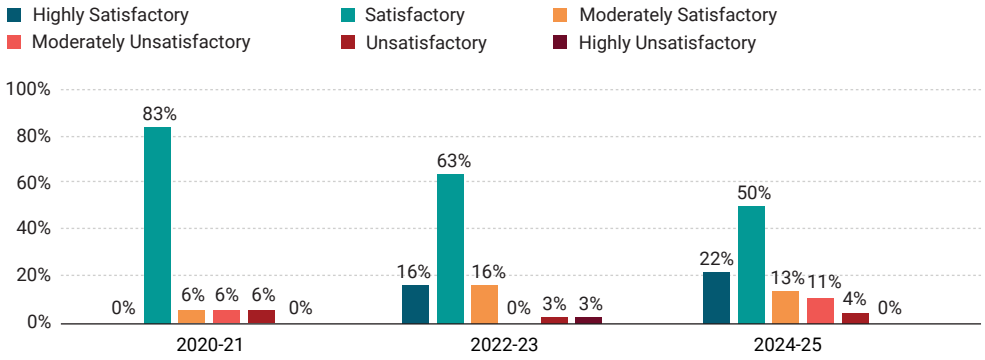
This factor was included for the first time in the 2020-21 biennium, therefore the data collected on this sub-category covers only three biennia. Under this criterion evaluators consider whether: UNEP requirements were adequately met for screening environmental and social safeguards; environmental and social risk ratings were reviewed on a regular basis; project implementation was monitored for possible safeguard risks; responses (where relevant) to safeguard

[49] The Evaluation Office is already requiring consultants to incorporate an 'equality' Driver/Assumption in the Theory of Change produced during an evaluation process.

issues were adequate; and reporting on the implementation of safeguards risk management was undertaken.

- In 2024-25, the share of projects rated S/HS (72%), is lower than that of the previous biennium (79%) and the 8-year average of 78%.
- The performance ratings against this sub-category may still vary across future biennia as the Evaluation Office fine-tunes its method of assessing performance. For example, the focus at present is on adherence to UNEP's policies and process guidance whereas aspects of safeguarding effects could be highlighted under this sub-category in the future.

Figure 32 Environmental and social safeguards, 2021-25



Biennium	2020-21	2022-23	2024-25
No. of evaluated projects with criteria performance ratings	18	38	46
% of projects with overall performance rated 'Satisfactory' or better (i.e. S/HS)	83%	79%	72%
% of projects with overall performance rated in the 'Satisfactory' range (MS/S/HS)	89%	95%	85 %

3.2 Project Performance in Management-Led Terminal Reviews

Reminder on terminology: In UNEP, the Evaluation Office has the sole prerogative to issue evaluations. All other assessments overseen by UNEP Managers are considered to be management-led reviews and are validated by the Evaluation Office.

In 2022, UNEP approved a new Evaluation Policy, which introduced a decentralised assessment modality. The Evaluation Office assigns either a centralised/independent modality (Terminal Evaluation, TE) or a decentralised/management-led modality (Management-Led Terminal Review, MLTR) to each project

reaching operational completion in the upcoming year. Project Managers are advised to manage a decentralised processes for their selected projects and do so by contracting an external consultant. The Project Manager selects and contracts a consultant; ensures the consultant uses the suite of guidance and tools (20 documents) provided by the Evaluation Office; oversees the complete MLTR process; reviews all deliverables and supports a draft-report commenting process and submits the final version of the MLTR report to the EOU for validation and quality assessment.

Validation is a form of benchmarking to support consistency in the interpretation and assignment of performance ratings across all MLTRs, as well as between Terminal Evaluations and MLTRs. Evaluation Managers review each MLTR report and assess whether the contents of the report, a) support the performance ratings assigned by the MLTR consultant and b) have been interpreted and applied in a way that is consistent with the EOU guidance, which is common to both MLTRs and Terminal Evaluations. Evaluation Managers apply the following assumptions when carrying out an MLTR validation:

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

Performance ratings are either 'validated' or 'adjusted', with an explanation. The validated ratings are recorded as the final performance assessment.

In 2024 and 2025, a total of 50 MLTR reports (23 and 27 respectively) were submitted to the Evaluation Office for validation and an assessment of the report's quality. This is a substantive increase in the number of MLTRs (15) validated and quality assessed during 2022-23. Common findings are:

- Project Managers have been able to identify and hire experienced evaluators to carry out MLTRs. Where consultants have already carried out Terminal Evaluations under the management of the Evaluation Office, the review

approach and resulting reports tend to be more consistent with UNEP's expectations and guidance.

- The areas of greatest adjustment are the three sub-categories of Effectiveness and Sustainability. As these two criteria carry the most weight in determining the Overall Project Performance (45%[50] and 20% respectively), adjustments in these areas may affect the Overall Project Performance rating.
- Common errors occur in applying the correct aggregation approach for evaluation criteria with sub-categories and recording performance ratings consistently within the narrative text and summary tables. For example, the criterion on Sustainability has three sub-categories (Socio-Political, Institutional and Financial Sustainability) and is rated on a 'Likelihood' scale. The Evaluation Office considers the three aspects of Sustainability to be self-limiting, i.e. if one aspect is unlikely then the overall likelihood of benefits at the project outcome level enduring is reduced. Therefore, the ratings of the three sub-categories are aggregated by taking the lowest performance rating among the three sub-categories.

Figure 33 Sample sustainability performance rating excerpt from MLTR

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation	EOU Validated Rating
Sustainability		ML	**The rating is adjusted to Moderately Unlikely** Sustainability sub-categories are aggregated to the lowest rating, as they are considered mutually limiting factors	MU

[50] Effectiveness consists of: Availability of Outputs (5%); Achievement of Outcomes (30%) and Likelihood of Impact (10%)

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation	EOU Validated Rating
1. Socio-political sustainability	The project generated meaningful socio-political support—evidenced by the accession to the Nagoya Protocol, adoption of the ABS Act, and continued institutional leadership by DEPP. The ABS Committee provides a mechanism for sustaining coordination beyond the project. However, long-term sustainability will depend on addressing concerns raised by researchers and other potential users regarding specific provisions of the ABS framework—particularly those perceived as placing constraints on research and collaboration. Renewed outreach and dialogue will be needed to strengthen confidence and encourage broader uptake.	MU	Rating validated	MU
2. Financial sustainability	The ABS legal framework remains in place; however, the continued operation and improvement of the permitting system requires stable financial and technical resources. Ongoing needs include IT technical maintenance, IT capacity, user support, and staff time. Since project closure, technical issues and reduced platform performance have affected the permitting process, and discussions on replacing or redesigning the system indicate that current resources may be insufficient to ensure its long-term functionality. Without sustained operational funding and technical capacity, the practical uptake of the ABS framework may remain limited.	ML	Rating validated	ML
3. Institutional sustainability	The project established a solid institutional basis for ABS implementation through the adoption of the ABS Act and the formalization of the ABS Committee, providing clear governance roles and procedures. DEPP continues to demonstrate leadership and commitment to advancing the ABS agenda. While coordination among institutions has been less consistent since project closure, and some users seek clearer guidance on procedures and fees, these issues could be addressed through renewed inter-agency engagement and strengthened communication. Continued leadership from DEPP, accompanied by consistent coordination and procedural clarification, will be key to maintaining institutional functionality over time.	ML	Rating validated	ML

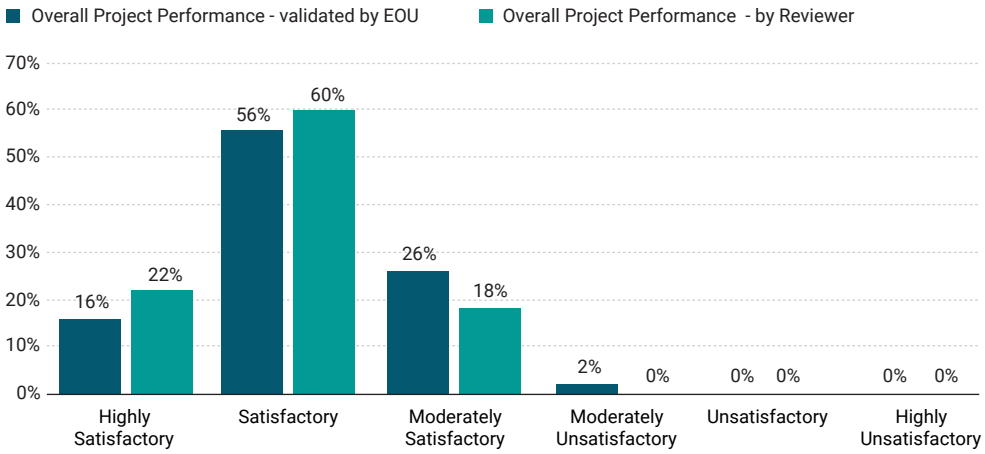
Given the small sample in 2022-23, the data from the two biennia are combined when looking at trends within MLTRs. The performance data for MLTRs should

be analysed either within its own category or over time and not against the Terminal Evaluation data set. This is because the assignment of projects to either MLTRs or Terminal Evaluations is not randomised—it is weighted towards avoiding risk, while supporting an appropriate representation of UNEP's work, relevant to the PoW.

The chart below, Figure 34, shows the distribution of ratings for Overall Project Performance among projects that were assessed through a management-led process. The figure differentiates between the Evaluation Office's validated rating (left-hand bar) and the MLTR consultant's assessment (right-hand bar).

The data show that the vast majority of these projects were rated in the 'Satisfactory' range (MS/S/HS) for overall performance by both the Evaluation Office and the MLTR consultants (98% and 100% respectively).

Figure 34 Overall project performance in Management-Led Terminal Reviews, 2022-25



Biennium	EOU Validated Ratings	MLTR Reviewer Ratings
No. of evaluated projects with criteria performance ratings	65	65
% of projects with overall performance rated 'Satisfactory' or better (i.e. S/HS)	72%	82%
% of projects with overall performance rated in the 'Satisfactory' range (MS/S/HS)	98%	100%

- Between 2022-25, 72% of projects assessed through Management-Led Terminal Reviews were validated by the EOU at the S/HS threshold for overall performance, while external Reviewers rated 82% of the projects at that level.

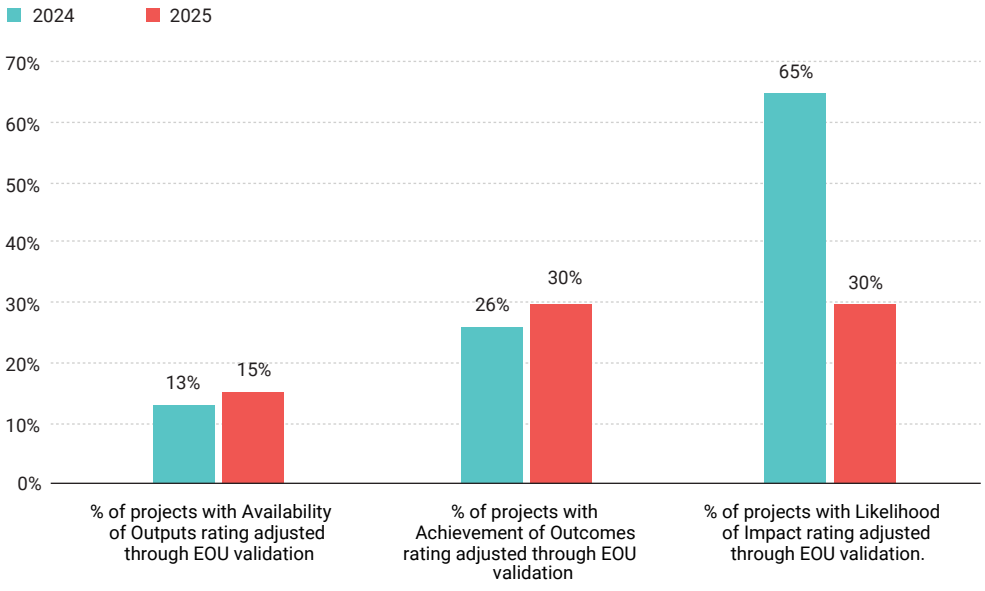
- No projects had Overall Project Performance ratings at the HU/U levels, either from the Evaluation Office validation or the MLTR consultants' assessments.

3.2.1 Effectiveness

Within the group of 50 MLTRs validated in the single 2024-25 biennium, a total of 11 (22%) had their overall project performance rating adjusted as a result of the EOU validation.

Most of the adjustments were made within the Effectiveness criterion, which contains three sub-categories: Availability of Outputs; Achievement of Outcomes and Likelihood of Impact. The data below (Figure 35) show the pattern between 2024 and 2025 with a substantial reduction over the two years in the number of MLTRs in which the EOU adjusted the likelihood of impact rating.

Figure 35 Proportion of MLTR effectiveness sub-category ratings adjusted through EOU validation



Biennium	2024	2025
No. of evaluated projects with criteria performance ratings	23	27
% of projects with **Availability of Outputs** rating adjusted through EOU validation	13%	15%
% of projects with **Achievement of Outcomes** rating adjusted through EOU validation	26%	30%
% of projects with **Likelihood of Impact** rating adjusted through EOU validation.	65%	30%

The Evaluation Office received a reflection from the Joint Implementation Unit[51] in its 2025 Review of Management and Administration in the United Nations Environment Programme (JIU/REP/2025/1) to provide training in UNEP to address the apparent weakness of understanding of how performance under the Effectiveness is assessed, along with Monitoring and Reporting and some individual Factors Affecting Performance. The first training is planned to be carried out in the third quarter of 2026.

In addition, during 2025, the Evaluation Office extended its guidance materials to incorporate a table in the template for the MLTR report to address an apparent inconsistency in approaches to assessing the likelihood of impact. It is hoped that this will better guide consultants on the way to assess Likelihood of Impact and this is expected to contribute to fewer adjustments during validation on this criterion in the future.

Figure 36 Excerpt from MLTR main report template

Likelihood of impact

Import data from the 'Likelihood of Impact Assessment Decision Tool' into the table below and provide justification for the assessment of each of the factors (e.g., achievement of Outputs/Intermediate States, and status of drivers and assumptions) that influence the likelihood of the impact statements) becoming a reality.

Factors influencing likelihood of impact	Assessment	Justification
Drivers to support transition from Outputs to the Project Outcomes	In place /partially /not in place	
Assumptions for the change process from Outputs to Project Outcomes	Hold/ partially /do not hold	
Proportion of **Project Outcomes** fully or partially achieved	All/ some/ none	
Drivers to support transition from Project Outcomes to Intermediate States	In place /partially /not in place	
Assumptions for the change process from the Project Outcomes to Intermediate States	Hold/ partially /do not hold	

[51] JIU, 2025, Review of Management and Administration in the UN Environment Programme, para 129.

Factors influencing likelihood of impact	Assessment	Justification
Proportion of **Intermediate States** achieved	All/ some/ none	
Drivers to support transition from Intermediate States to Impact	In place /partially /not in place	
Assumptions for the change process from Intermediate States to Impact	Hold/ partially /do not hold	

Chapter 4

Compliance with Evaluation Recommendations

The 2025 target for compliance with evaluation recommendations was 90%. **The 2024-25 recommendation compliance rate was 89%** and the average across the last 6 years was 74%.

Evaluations aim to promote accountability and learning, partly by issuing recommendations, soliciting a management response to them, tracking the actions taken and ultimately assessing compliance with the recommendations. Recommendations are proposals for specific action to be taken by identified people/position-holders to resolve concrete problems affecting a project, programme or policy or the sustainability of its results. They are distilled from evidence-based findings from evaluation processes involving Project Managers, evaluation managers, evaluation consultants and a wide range of stakeholders. This chapter reports on the formal response to evaluations, and the implementation of evaluation recommendations issued.

The formal evaluation recommendation compliance system also reinforces learning opportunities that evaluations can provide to the organization. In addition to formal recommendations for action, the 'process benefits' from evaluation work can be considerable in terms of encouraging staff, partners and other stakeholders to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of past performance, and to integrate existing good practices and ideas for improvement into future programme strategies, intervention designs and management actions.

The Programme of Work 2024-25 performance indicator for recommendation compliance is the '*Percentage of accepted evaluation recommendations implemented within the time frame defined in the implementation plan*'. The target level expected by December 2025 was 90%. The actual compliance level

achieved was 89%[52]. **Ultimately, recommendation compliance should reach 100% and UNEP should continue its diligence in fulfilling the management responses created to address recommendations.** Tracking compliance in the quarterly reports to the Senior Management Team should be continued as it appears to have been a positive factor influencing performance.

4.1 Compliance with Recommendations

All formal recommendations must have a compliance dimension. The Evaluation Office monitors compliance of all project-level implementation plans every six months for a total period of 12 months and prepares compliance assessments of the implementation of accepted recommendations. The compliance assessment is based on action reports submitted by the organizational unit responsible for the management response, along with their supporting evidence. The compliance performance against the recommendations is then reported to senior management on a six-monthly basis and to Member States in the Biennial Evaluation Synthesis Report.

During the 12-month monitoring period, recommendations are deemed to be:

- **OPEN: Partial action taken** (some evidence of a response has been provided)
- **OPEN: No action taken** (no response yet reported)

At closure (after 12 months), recommendations are deemed to be:

- **CLOSED: Compliant** *(fully implemented)*
- **CLOSED: Partially compliant** *(only partially implemented)*
- **CLOSED: Not compliant** *(not implemented)*
- **CLOSED: No further action required** *(for instances where a recommendation has been overtaken by events)*
- **TRANSFERRED to UNEP-Wide**

Recommendations' compliance is calculated as those recommendations that have been closed as 'Compliant', plus those that were closed because 'No further action was required', as a proportion of all project-level recommendations issued in the same time period. Recommendations that have been 'transferred' as being more appropriately addressed at an institutional level, are not included in the calculation.

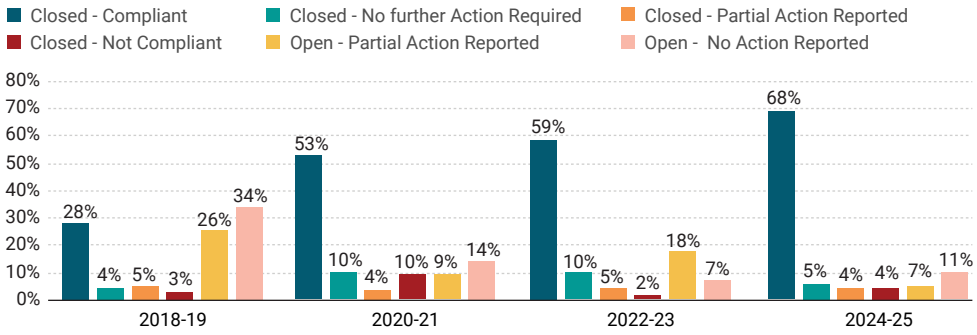
[52] The percentage includes the categories 'Closed – compliant' and 'No further action required' and excludes the category 'Closed - Transferred to UNEP-Wide'

UNEP cannot enforce compliance for any recommendation made to a third party unless there is a contractual/ legal agreement in force. If no binding legal agreement with the third party is in place, UNEP can only communicate the recommendation to the third party for their consideration.

When 12 months from the date of finalisation of the recommendation implementation plan have elapsed, the implementation status of all recommendations is updated and the compliance status recorded. All recommendations in the plan are then recorded as 'closed'. This means that staff responsible for implementing the evaluation recommendation have 12 months from the date the implementation plan is received by the Evaluation Office to implement them fully.

In Figure 37 below, the data show that UNEP is steadily increasing its rates of recommendation compliance, with an 8-year average of above 60%. **Recommendations compliance was at 89% (203 recommendations) in the 2024-25 Biennium, against a 2025 target of 90%.** The steady upward trends in percentage compliance rates suggests that the capacity to implement management responses and report on actions taken is both stable and widely spread in UNEP.

Figure 37 Comparison of recommendation compliance status, 2018-25



Compliance Status	2018-19	2020-21	2022-23	2024-25
Closed - Compliant	74	120	75	197
Closed - No further Action Required	11	23	13	16
Closed - Partially Compliant	13	9	6	13
Closed - Not Compliant	8	22	2	13
Open - Partial Action Reported	67	21	23	33
Open - No Action Reported	88	33	9	19
% compliant out of all project recommendations (compliant + no further action)	33%	63%	69%	89%[53]
Total	**261**	**228**	**128**	**291**

[53] This figure, 89%, reflects the percentage of Closed recommendations recorded as 'Closed-Compliant' or 'Closed-no further action required', which is reported annually as 'recommendations compliance'. The bar graph shows the same compliance categories as a percentage of All issued recommendations, which is the consistent approach that has been taken over time.'

4.2 Categorisation of Recommendations by Type and Actor

Evaluation recommendations are categorised according to their priority level, defined by the Evaluation Office in the following manner:

- **Critical (high level recommendations):** Address significant and/or widespread deficiencies in governance, risk management, or internal control processes such that the likelihood of compromising relevant project management/implementation principles or policies is reduced.
- **Important (medium level recommendations):** Address moderate and/or isolated deficiencies or weaknesses in governance, risk management, or internal control processes such that the likelihood of weakening relevant project management/implementation principles or policies is reduced.
- **Opportunity for improvement (low level recommendations):** Address 'less than optimal' practices in governance, risk management, or internal control processes such that the likelihood of best practices being overlooked is reduced.

Table 7 below shows the proportion of recommendations for each of these priority levels that were issued in 2024 and 2025.

Table 7 **Priority level of recommendations, 2024-25**

Type of Recommendation	Number of Instances	%
Critical	114	33%
Important	149	44%
Opportunity for Improvement	80	23%
Total	**343**	

The Evaluation Office also characterises recommendations by type based on the 'span / locus of management' required to resolve the problem/issue, in the following manner:

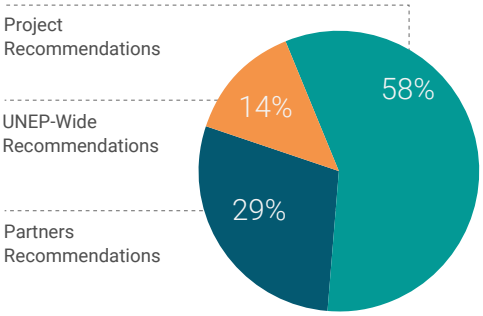
- **Project level recommendations:** Where the actions of those UNEP staff managing the evaluand, or the staff within the corresponding unit / branch can address the recommendation or the underlying problem independently.
- **Partner recommendations:** where the actions to be taken to resolve the problem require approval/leadership from UNEP partners (e.g., Executing

Agencies; National Governments/Ministries; Research Organisations; Private Sector; Steering Committees; Academia; UN agencies)

- **UNEP-Wide (institutional/ cross-cutting/corporate) recommendations:** where the actions of those UNEP staff managing the evaluand cannot address the recommendation or the underlying problem independently; or where the action(s) to be taken to resolve the problem, which could have been caused by systemic issues or gaps in UNEP's operational requirements, require approval/ leadership from UNEP senior management and/or coordination among several different parts of UNEP.

Figure 38 below shows the proportion of recommendations for each of these categories. In 2024 and 2025, a total of 343 recommendations were issued comprising those addressed to projects (198) and their respective partners (98), those addressing projects but also have corporate (UNEP-Wide) implications (47).

Figure 38 Distribution of the type of recommendations issued, 2024-25



Type	No. of instances
Project Recommendations	198
Partners Recommendations	98
UNEP-Wide Recommendations	47
Total	**343**[52]

The UNEP-wide (corporate/high-level) recommendations category captures recommendations where the required management actions need to be taken by several actors and at levels beyond the management authority of the project or programme manager that received the implementation plan. The nature of such recommendations means they often take more time to implement.

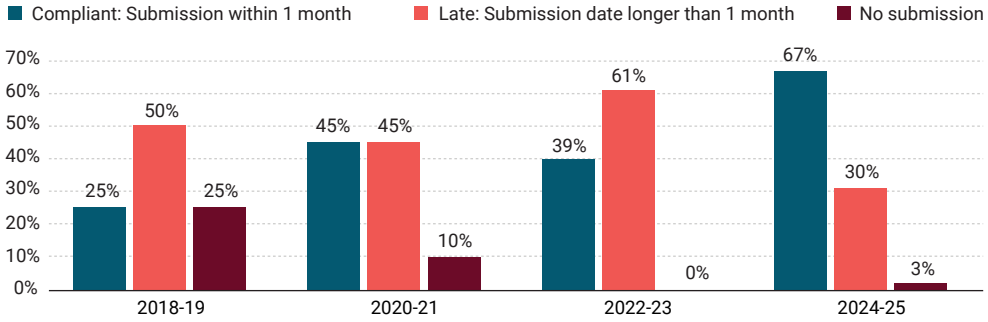
4.2.1 Management Response Preparation and Submission

As per the UNEP Evaluation Policy (2022) the findings from evaluations are to be discussed with relevant programme staff and senior management where specific evaluation recommendations will be reviewed. Subsequently, programme staff/senior management prepare a formal management response to the evaluation that specifies which recommendations were accepted, what action will be taken and a timeline. A management response to the evaluation

[54] 11 recommendations did not specify the type of recommendation

recommendations, in the form of a formal Recommendations Implementation Plan, should be prepared and sent back to the Evaluation Office within one month.

Figure 39 Submission of management response compliance levels, 2018-25



Timely Submission of Project-level Management Response	2018-19	2020-21	2022-23	2024-25
No. Recommendation Implementation Plans	56	40	33	64
Compliant: Submission within 1 month	14	18	13	43
Late: Submission date longer than 1 month	28	18	20	19
No submission	14	4	0	2

In 2024 and 2025, 64 implementation plans for evaluation recommendations were sent to UNEP substantive offices. As shown in Figure 39 above, submission of management responses to recommendation implementation plans by the responsible project officers was at 98%. However approximately 31% of the responses were received after the required timeframe of 1 month. **The timeliness of management response submission needs increased management attention.**

Chapter 5

Key Findings from Strategic Evaluations

This chapter presents abridged evaluation findings from four evaluations of high strategic importance that were completed in 2024 and 2025. The summaries provide links to the full evaluation reports.

5.1 Formative Evaluation of UNEP's Delivery Model and the Associated Programmatic Approach, 2022

Link to report: https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/47005 , completed Dec 2024

The 2022-25 MTS introduced a strong focus on the triple planetary crises; a revised subprogramme structure[55] including three thematic, two foundational and two enabling subprogrammes and a commitment to establishing a strong 'line of sight'[56] between leadership and the delivery of results.

In order to fully capitalise on its regional presence and political engagement and to match this capability to its technical expertise to ensure delivery as 'One-UNEP' at the country level, UNEP developed and formally approved the Delivery Model Policy in Sept 2022, (DM). The Policy was developed in response to a prior 'transformation process' and aimed to address challenges being faced in the management context, namely: siloed entrepreneurialism; constrained collaboration; stagnant system capability; lack of shared leadership and impaired accountability. The primary features of the Delivery Model (DM) are: a re-alignment of roles and responsibilities between Divisional and Regional Offices; the subsequent movement of regionally managed projects to the appropriate

[55] Thematic: Climate Action, Nature Action and Chemicals and Pollution Action; Foundational: Science Policy and Environmental Governance; Enabling: Finance and Economic Transformations and Digital Transformations.

[56] This 'line of sight' requires a clear articulation of where accountability lies and has implications for a wide range of roles and responsibilities.

technical division; an emphasis on the 'co-creation' of new work and the introduction of a 'typology of interventions' for UNEP projects. Although not explicitly named in the Policy, the introduction of the DM was accompanied by an interwoven initiative referred to as the 'Programmatic Approach' (PA). The PA is a mechanism to improve programmatic integration and alignment with the MTS/POW in delivering UNEP's three strategic priorities. It involves grouping UNEP's projects into a series of thematically coherent 'programmes', each guided/managed by a Programme Coordination Project (PCP).

The evaluation determined features that were ready to be built upon (where there was traction already); those that needed further discussion and guidance and those that needed to be renewed attention and effort (areas that had not gained ground).

Areas where traction is evident:

- Consensus on the value of the focus in the MTS on the triple planetary crisis;
- Widespread support for the principle of responding to regional/country priorities and needs;
- Widespread support for the principle of increased co-creation; and
- Considerable efforts on the part of individuals and teams to respond to the expectations of the DM and PA although these are largely un-orchestrated (beyond the Office or Division/Branch they belong to) and reliant on pre-existing relationships and work patterns.

Areas where more discussion, operational guidance and leadership is needed:

- Guidance on the change management process, key milestones and success indicators;
- How to operationalise co-creation;
- Clarification of new roles and responsibilities and their operationalisation;
- Transfer of project management from Regional Offices to Divisions and its financial repercussions, especially on Regional Offices;
- Assessment and adaptation of human resource capacities of Divisions and Regional Offices;
- Support for communicating UNEP's normative and operational 'offer';
- Strengthening causal thinking and articulation;
- Ways in which to enhance synergy across projects within a programme;
- Correct use of RBM and its terminology
- The effect of the DM/PA on working in partnership; and
- Strengthening the quality of project implementation rather than focusing on project approval.

Areas that have not yet gained ground:

- Use of Typology of Interventions;
- Mechanisms for phasing out less strategic or lower-priority work;
- Programmatic adaptations to partnerships; and
- Shared knowledge management strategy and platforms.

5.1.1 Recommendations

The evaluation gave rise to 16 recommendations, presented in four categories. Provided to the House in late 2024, these insights were available for the final stages of the preparation of the MTS 2026-29 and Programmes of Work. A Management Response was prepared and the Evaluation Office is tracking compliance over an 18-month period from June 2025.

Delivery Model Policy and Implementation

- **Review the DM Policy to add missing roles, incorporate the PA, introduce a set of performance metrics for the DM itself and revise the evaluation approach:** The review would include the following: a) include a set of success metrics for the DM that focus on tangible benefits/results as well as process milestones; b) update any changed roles (e.g. reflecting the incorporation of GEF and GCF into Policy and Programme Division (PPD) and the recent move of GSPCs into Divisions); c) add any key roles that have been overlooked (e.g. UNCT Focal Points, Regional Development Coordinators); d) mainstream the country engagement plan, which is a key factor in having a coordinated approach at the country level, into the PA and e) revise, in conjunction with the Evaluation Office, the plans for evaluating the PCPs.
- **Review the DM/PA from a partnership perspective:** Review the DM Policy from a partnership perspective and clearly communicate, both internally and externally, any expected adjustments to partnership relationships and modalities.
- **Develop and implement a consultative change management process to guide DM/PA implementation beyond the initial workshops and to provide leadership.** A detailed change management plan, beyond the initial workshops, should be developed and implemented to drive progress towards a more strategic, effective and efficient operationalisation of the policy. The plan should include a regular opportunity for discussion, feedback and problem-solving between those taking on new roles, responsibilities or procedures and those leading the implementation of the DM/PA. It should also include a common set of targets or milestones (e.g., each PCP to hold one Programme Steering Committee meeting by a certain time etc.) so that the change process moves forward with some consistency. This would also be a mechanism to provide stronger leadership.

Medium-Term Strategy and Programme of Work

- **Revise MTS outcomes and MTS and POW indicators:** The DM and PA aim to deliver the results set out in the MTS and the PoW and these need to act as appropriate and effective goals for UNEP's programmatic work:
  - reformulate the MTS Outcomes as environmental benefits relevant to the triple planetary crises, with new indicators (e.g. derived from the Paris Agreement, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate change (UNFCCC), Global Biodiversity Framework, GEF Global Environmental Benefits, etc.). This evaluation endorses the finding from the evaluation of the Climate Action Subprogramme on this topic (i.e., that the indicators refer to reach rather than environmental progress).
  - revise the indicators for the PoW Direct Outcomes so that they: a) follow a normal direction from outcome to indicator (and not the reverse); b) are SMART and c) have baseline measurements.
  - support the consistent and compelling communication of UNEP's strategic orientation.
- **Provide subprogramme Theory of Change (foundational/enabling) and develop concise causal narratives (all Subprogrammes):** Causal thinking underpins effective change processes and is currently lacking at the subprogramme level:
  - develop concise causal narratives to illuminate the change processes in the Theory of Changes (ToCs) for Thematic Subprogrammes. These should describe how the composition of Subprogramme projects relates to UNEP's mandate and mission and reflects its comparative advantage or technical expertise and focus. Create ToCs for the Foundational and Enabling Subprogrammes.
  - develop ToCs and concise causal narratives for each of the Foundational and Enabling Subprogrammes showing: a) the causal pathway(s) of the change process driven by the subprogramme itself and b) the role(s) the subprogramme plays in the Thematic Subprogrammes.
  - Review and revise the PCPs, which currently have the features of *portfolios* of projects rather than programmes.
- **Strengthen the social development aspects of the PCPs:** Enhance attention to social development issues with UNEP's approach to planet and people.

Project Design, Implementation and Exit

- **Strengthen co-creation processes, providing guidelines across the planning and project cycle:** UNEP should develop guidance on operationalising co-creation holistically rather than solely at the individual project level.
- **Develop a set of criteria as part of a mechanism for phasing out work if/ when it is not the most strategically relevant work or is not, or no longer, a**

priority: Develop a set of criteria that reflect the strategic direction and prioritisation of the MTS for: phasing out long-standing work that is no longer as strategically relevant as other options or low-priority initiatives; curtailing projects after multiple phases; rejecting new project proposals and, potentially, declining funding offers.

- **Enhance quality of project and programme implementation:** Strengthen mechanisms to support the quality of implementation by emphasizing supervision, monitoring, adaptive management, and continuous improvement in project execution.
- **Clearly state the results' link from all funded work to Project Review Committee (PRC) approved projects that are visible in the POW:** Project-level funding agreements (grants) must clearly identify a commitment to delivering / attaining at least one result statement (output or outcome) that forms part of the PRC-approved project to which it contributes. All project concepts, proposals and PRC-approved projects should articulate a plausible causal pathway to their PCP results, and at least one PoW Direct Outcome within the context of a subprogramme.
- **Enhance the strategic purpose of the Concept Approval Group (CAG):** The CAG should prioritise strategic alignment and minimise its focus on more administrative compliance.

Fund Allocation and Knowledge Management

- **Prioritise the transparent allocation, and timely and predictable disbursement, of core resources:** Reinforce and closely monitor the timetable for disbursement of core resources through the SMT meeting agendas to improve the predictability and timeliness of core fund disbursements to enhance operational effectiveness and efficiency.
- **Ensure allocation of Thematic Funds is transparent and associated results can be reported to support sustainable replenishment:** Decision-making around the allocation of Thematic Funds to programmatic work should be transparent, especially in terms of funding allocations to the Foundational and Enabling Subprogrammes. The link between intended results and the allocation of resources within the Thematic Funds needs to be clearly documented to support accountability and reporting to funding partners.
- **Develop an institutional knowledge management strategy:** UNEP should commit resources to engage external specialists to develop a comprehensive Knowledge Management Strategy that integrates programme-specific and organisational knowledge needs, promoting systematic knowledge sharing and application to enhance programme results.

5.2 Evaluation of the UNEP Subprogramme on Climate Action, 2014-23

Link to report: https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/46140, completed Sept, 2024

This evaluation assessed the Climate Action Subprogramme (CA-SP) over the period 2014-23. The evaluation scope included all projects and programmes under the CA-SP portfolio for each year in the evaluation period. The evaluation took place during the establishment of UNEP's new Climate Change Division. This process reorganises a significant share of the teams and projects that are reporting into the subprogramme into one organizational entity of UNEP. Overall, about 30% of the subprogramme project portfolio remained in other Divisions.

The evaluation finds that the subprogramme is strategically highly relevant for UNEP and the global community. The subprogramme addresses decarbonization, dematerialization and resilience efforts in a comprehensive way and covers both the adaptation and mitigation goals of the Paris Agreement including the transparency framework. UNEP is more important for the climate conversation in general, and the evolution and implementation of the Paris Agreement in particular, than its own narratives imply.

The performance of the subprogramme in the PoWs with respect to achieving its targets is reported in the Programme Performance Reports to be high. The subprogramme recorded strong performance in achieving its targets from 2014-23: 86% of targets were fully achieved, while an additional 11% were partially achieved (60% or above). It was not possible to validate these results independently for reasons of indicator definition and documentation. Adaptation-focused work consistently met all targets across the time-period covered by the evaluation. However, mitigation efforts and REDD+ initiatives fell short of some targets during the period.

Based on a meta-analysis of project-level evaluations, performance is rated as 'Satisfactory' on average, with the lowest ratings being on Likelihood of Impact and Sustainability of results where the average rating is 'Moderately Likely'.

5.2.1 Impact Achievements

Where has UNEP's work on climate action been most impactful?

- 'Through its influence on member countries, facilitated by the provision of accessible and relevant scientific data on climate change.' This knowledge

enables member countries by providing guidance on ways to advance and, specifically, to formulate informed strategies.

- Through 'the influence on the debate'. UNEP's flagship reports, including publications such as the Adaptation Gap Report, the Emissions Gap Report, and the Global Environment Outlook series, serve as crucial instruments of influence in this dimension. These reports distil complex scientific information into comprehensible and actionable insights for member states, as well as other organizations working in similar areas, serving as a starting point for many discussions.
- Another identified impact has been how UNEP plays a pivotal role in convening diverse stakeholders—member countries, NGOs, civil society organizations, businesses, and academia—to collaborate on various aspects in the field of adaptation and mitigation, including on reporting and influencing the UNFCCC negotiations.
- Lastly, UNEP has managed to start global climate action around specific topics e.g., Ecosystem-based Adaptation. UNEP's work in this domain has demonstrably shaped its image and reputation. UNEP is widely recognised as a thought leader and central player in Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA).

5.2.2 Recommendations

Recommendation 1: UNEP should continue to create and manage knowledge-cum-implementation partnerships around important climate solutions.

UNEP's specific trait is that it can link global advocacy and science-based knowledge management with action on the ground, in a sectoral, global-umbrella-with-country-pillars approach. By streamlining its priorities and leveraging its strengths as a knowledge-based and normative organization through strategic partnerships, UNEP can potentially enhance its overall effectiveness in tackling climate change and avoid being distracted into areas that do not play to its strengths.

Recommendation 2: UNEP should develop more strategies to provide countries with readily applicable information on solutions for both mitigation and adaptation measures.

While highlighting gaps through high-level science-based publications is important to provide a call for action, communicating and providing scalable solutions might be a more active contribution to overcoming the challenge. The organization should develop (digital) tools for available solutions based on evidence and provide active knowledge management on what works (and not only on what are the gaps) – and lobby for their implementation through its networks. If this can be linked with the scientific core and approach of the organisation, this can ensure that scientific knowledge is effectively translated into actionable information.

Recommendation 3: Internally, UNEP should improve transparency and communication on resource allocation and should enhance clarity on where long-term resources are needed to ensure continuity versus where project-based initiatives are better suited.

The evaluation underscores the critical need for improved communication regarding resource allocation within UNEP, impacting both internal and external stakeholders. Internally, a lack of transparency in resource allocation processes leads to budgetary unpredictability for the subprogramme as well as a lack of clarity regarding the availability of staff resources. This not only hinders the development of strategic long-term plans but is also resulting in staff dissatisfaction. Externally, donor countries have also expressed discontent with the current system, citing difficulties in tracing the flow of their contributions. While the introduction of the Planetary Funds mechanism represents a potential step forward, further strategic development is necessary to ensure their effectiveness. Decisions cannot be based on valid assumptions about the functioning and needed resources without a remapping of the existing staff positions to the subprogrammes.

Recommendation 4: UNEP should fully implement its strategic paradigm and strive to utilise indicators that are tied to the Paris Agreement, suited for management and reporting and able to demonstrate UNEP's contribution to filling the gap.

Generally, UNEP's indicators do not measure the contribution of the organization towards 'closing the gap'. This means that the Programme Coordinating Projects[57] (PCPs) and thematic Divisions cannot use these indicators for their internal strategic coordination or demonstrate that they cover the gaps in climate action as demonstrated by the Emissions Gap Reports and Adaptation Gap Reports. The PCPs still base their Theories of Change on the CA-SP building blocks, lacking a coherent or complete programme logic behind it – and thus, also no (or very few) SMART indicators. As the MTS 2022-25 already follows the Paris Agreement's logic, closing the gaps on the lower-level indicators is possible with the PoW (2026-27).

Recommendation 5: Further clarify roles and responsibilities of CA-SP involved staff, including integration of the CA-SP coordination function in the new Climate Change Division.

Noting the establishment of the new Climate Change Division, if greater clarity is desired with respect to the roles of the CA-SP coordination function (i.e., Policy and Programme Division, Global Subprogramme Coordinator, Regional Subprogramme Coordinator, other staff), and UNEP's Divisions and Regional

[57] Programme Coordinating Projects were introduced in UNEP's MTS 2022-25

Offices on climate action, then UNEP could consider supplementing the UNEP Delivery Model Policy 2022 with a high-level outline of the functions of the divisions, regions and subprogramme coordination function on climate action, including specifying a Directly Responsible Individual for specific areas such as engagement with external partners.

Recommendation 6: UNEP should increase practical relevance and internal utilization of flagship reports by improving coordination and communication across divisions.

UNEP employs the Emissions Gap Reports and similar gap analyses and similar gap analyses to identify potential areas for intervention by contrasting scientific findings with the current state. By leveraging these analyses to inform its approach and projects on climate action, UNEP could achieve a more strategic direction. This would necessitate enhanced internal coordination and communication within the organization. These efforts could involve systematically evaluating which findings hold the most relevance for UNEP's collaborations with member countries and exploring how these insights can be translated into solution-oriented deliverables.

Recommendation 7: UNEP should increase its leadership visibility in the global climate action arena.

If UNEP wants to be perceived as a champion and trendsetter in climate action through its activities and products, the organization will need to make itself more visible at the major negotiations, such as the COP.[58]

5.3 Evaluation of the UNEP Subprogramme on Chemicals and Pollution Action, 2014-23

Link to report: https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/48943, completed Oct, 2025.

The current Medium-Term Strategy 2022-25 explicitly places the Chemicals and Pollution Action Subprogramme (CPA-SP) as one of the three core thematic pillars that is fundamental to UNEP's achievement of its intended impacts. Covering the period 2015-23, the evaluation scope includes work carried out under three MTS documents:

[58] The implementation of this recommendation was overtaken by the establishment of the Climate Change Division in February 2024.

- **MTS 2014–17: Chemicals and Waste** (chemical-by-chemical approach)
- **MTS 2018–21: Chemicals, Waste, Air Quality** (introduced air quality and SDG alignment)
- **MTS 2022–25: Chemicals and Pollution Action** (triple planetary crisis framing and emphasizing circularity)

An analysis of the strategic evolution of the subprogramme, formulated under the three consecutive MTS documents, highlights the following:

- The thematic evolution reflects global environmental complexity and an adaptive response to emerging crises. However, the overall strategic objectives have remained consistent and aspirational.
- There has been a gradual shift from a chemical-by-chemical focus (e.g., Mercury, Persistent Organic Pollutants) to a sectoral safety/integrated approach. Also, an increasing emphasis on circularity and Life Cycle Management.
- A gradual shift towards fewer/ larger projects on high-impact sectors of the economy is evident. However, the portfolio still lags behind the strategy because of legacy projects and the development of partner priorities (e.g., funding partner strategic objectives and/or national priorities etc.).
- The high rate of innovation in UNEP's institutional frameworks during this period (i.e., MTS 2022-25) reform; New Delivery Model, 2022; Programme Coordinating Projects; Planetary Funds mechanism, etc.) all point to a system that is evolving but not yet optimised.

Focusing on strategic relevance, design and structure, overall performance, and factors affecting performance the evaluation finds the CPA-SP central to UNEP's mandate and essential to addressing the pollution dimension of the triple planetary crises. At the project level the subprogramme performs overall at the 'Satisfactory' level, particularly in strategic relevance, effectiveness and output delivery. Sustainability, long term impact tracking, and post project learning remain areas of concern. At the PoW level the performance of the subprogramme against the indicators and targets is recorded as 'Highly Satisfactory', although the evaluation notes that the target indicators are broad.

UNEP shows strong global leadership in policy guidance, standard-setting, and treaty support, though country-level impact remains limited due to fragmented delivery, modest regional presence, and donor driven project design. The subprogramme has shifted toward a more systemic, sectoral approach, improving coherence with UNEP's strategic vision, though implementation is uneven. While individual projects perform well, long term outcome measurement and aggregation are weak, hindering evidence of system level change. In some areas, efficiency is constrained by many small, siloed projects and limited integration across funding streams. Partnerships such as Climate and Clean Air Coalition

(CCAC), GEF and MEAs strengthen influence, but collaboration with industry, civil society, and UN agencies is underdeveloped. Knowledge management and visibility require improvement.

5.3.1 Impact Achievements

Where has UNEP's work on chemicals and pollution action been most impactful?

- Providing normative leadership: Played a pivotal role in convening diverse stakeholders on global agreements (Minamata), global frameworks (SAICM[59]/ Global Framework on Chemicals, GFC) and leveraging impact through a large range of partnerships with private sector engagement;
- Good support given to countries for the relevant MEAs through GEF funded projects;
- Raised the visibility of life cycle thinking and circularity;
- The marine litter/plastic pollution groundwork has significantly influenced UNEA resolutions shaping the development of the global agreement on plastics;
- Supported the growing integration of environment and health e.g., the work on air quality and Anti-Microbial Resistance, AMR;
- The subprogramme has delivered some impactful projects, including: Special Programme, Rapid Environmental Assessments for crisis affected countries, Secretariat services to SAICM/GFC; GEF enabling projects to meet commitments on MEAs.

5.3.2 Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Strengthen Strategic Planning and Continuity Across MTS Cycles. Ensure that future iterations of the CPA-SP maintain strategic continuity across MTS cycles to support long-term coherence, learning, and impact assessment.

Recommendation 2: Strengthen CPA-SP Governance and Strategic Coherence. Improve internal governance, coordination mechanisms, and accountability to enhance CPA-SP's ability to deliver coherently across Divisions and Regional Offices.

Recommendation 3: Improve Delivery Through Focused Portfolios, Knowledge Systems, and Sustainable Resourcing. Strengthen the operational delivery of CPA-SP by streamlining its portfolio, investing in institutional learning, and addressing resourcing gaps.

[59] Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management

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

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

5.4 UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP), 2024 and 2025

The UN-SWAP (UN system-wide Action Plan) is a UN system-wide accountability framework designed to measure, monitor, and drive progress towards a common set of standards to aspire and adhere to for achieving Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (GEEW). The performance against these standards is assessed through 15 GEEW performance indicators for tracking six main elements of gender mainstreaming: accountability, results-based management, oversight, human and financial resources, capacity, and knowledge exchange and networking.

The oversight element of the UN-SWAP 2.0 includes an 'Evaluation Performance Indicator (EPI)' that is linked to meeting the gender-related UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards and demonstrating effective use of the UNEG guidance on integrating gender in evaluation. The EPI also calls on all reporting UN system entities to conduct at least one evaluation to assess corporate performance on gender mainstreaming every 5-8 years. The Evaluation Office conducted an '*Independent Evaluation of UNEP's Policy & Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment 2015-2020'*, published in June 2022.

Fourteen (14) of the 15 indicators assess the progress made within the institution in mainstreaming gender-responsive strategies and systems. In this context, the evaluand is the institution itself, including its systems and the actions it has taken to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. The

scores are based on a self-assessment guided by a common approach developed by UN Women in conjunction with UNEG.

The Evaluation Performance Indicator comprises 3 criteria (below) and is assessed[60] by an external consultant who reviews the coverage of GEEW in **all** the evaluation reports completed in the preceding year. Based on a meta-analysis of the individual project-evaluation scores, an overall score is derived for UNEP's evaluation function. The overall score reflects a five-point rating scale (not applicable; missing; approaches requirements; meets requirements and exceeds requirements).

- **Criterion 1:** GEEW is integrated into the evaluation scope of analysis and evaluation criteria and questions are designed in a way that ensures GEEW related data will be collected
- **Criterion 2:** A gender responsive methodology, methods and tools, and data analysis techniques are selected.
- **Criterion 3:** The evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendation reflected a gender analysis.

In **2024** the UNEP Evaluation Office carried out an internal review of the 21 project evaluation reports completed in the year. The overall score was 6.18, which meets the threshold of **'Approaches Requirements'**.

In **2025**, a total of 31 project evaluations were assessed (25 Terminal Evaluation reports and a small sample of 6 Management-Led Terminal Review reports) by an external consultant. The aggregated score was 6.65 (Meets Requirements) and 3 points were added for UNEP having reviewed its Gender Policy within the past 5 years, giving an overall score of 9.65, **Exceeds Requirements**.

Of the 31 evaluations reviewed in 2025, 20 'Meet Requirements', 9 'Approach Requirements' and 2 'Miss Requirements'. This indicates that 65% of all evaluations reviewed met the requirements in accounting for and addressing GEWE considerations; this is higher than in 2024, when only 29% of all evaluations met requirements.

The six MLTR reports performed at a level (average score of 7) similar to the average of the whole sample (average score of 6.65), which suggests that the tools and guidance provided by the Evaluation Office in support of these

[60] The guidance for the UNSWAP allows for either an internal review of project evaluation performance in relation to GEEW or an external assessment. As UNEP regularly completes 20+ project evaluations each year, the work is usually carried out by an external consultant.

management-led processes makes it likely that GEEW will be adequately addressed within this decentralised modality.

The **main GEEW achievements** in 2025 in the evaluation function and its reports included the following:

- The improvements in this aspect of evaluation can, in large part, be credited to the UNEP evaluation guidelines, terms of reference, strategic questions and templates, allowing for a basic threshold of gender information to be collected and allowing evaluations to generally approach requirements.
- All but one evaluation provided gender disaggregated data with regards to their informants/consultations.
- Sampling information improved, with evaluations being far more likely provide explicit sampling data, clearly highlighting the percentage of women engaged in the evaluation process.
- The inclusion of a strategic question[61] on GEEW and Human Rights resulted in more information and insights being gathered.

The **main GEEW challenges** that appear in the evaluation function and its reports include:

- The challenge of providing qualitative analysis with regards to intersectionality, unanticipated impacts on marginalised communities, and power dynamics remained, particularly for projects that did not articulate a social dimension in their theory of change or were institutional in nature.
- **Intersectional analyses** are still weak despite improvement in providing more contextual information. In the case of technical projects, there is a need to contextualise how the subject issue at hand may intersect with gender, class, ethnicity, or other social groupings. For instance, if the evaluation is focused on an international framework or policy, the evaluator may want to tease out how framework/policy outcomes could have a differentiated impact on women, based on the intersection of their identities. For projects that have fieldwork, evaluators may require guidance on the extent of information and type of analysis they should provide to meet these criteria.
- One notable challenge this year was that many evaluation reports (6 evaluations, representing 19%) were conducted with lengthy delays after the project closure thereby limiting access to stakeholders, beneficiaries and in particular marginalised groups.

[61] A standard strategic question on GEEW is: 'In what ways, and to what extent, have the needs and interests of differentiated groups been considered in the implementation and monitoring of the project?)

- Three evaluations were of projects implemented in conflict zones (Haiti, Iraq and Sudan) and, as field missions could not be conducted, access to diverse stakeholders and beneficiaries was more limited.
- Despite having improved presentation of sampling data, as noted above, the beneficiary categories lump together various social groups and do not distinguish among them. There is also very little consistency among the evaluations on the number of beneficiaries interviewed.
- In some cases, the opportunity to assess impacts on beneficiary groups and identifying what were the anticipated and unanticipated impacts on the most vulnerable, were missed.
- Disabilities were addressed meaningfully in only two evaluations. While sampling tables provided a breakdown of groups included in general terms, many evaluations did not distinguish further among social groups—attributable results to differentiated social groups were therefore difficult to infer.

5.5 Evaluations of Two Faith-Environment Projects

Faith for Earth Initiative, link to report: https://wedocs.unep.org/items/4ce26a76-0c68-4230-a3e0-5a4e11579609

Interfaith Rainforest Initiative, link to report: https://wedocs.unep.org/items/65603523-fbcc-477a-a490-136a10da1f13

The faith-environment nexus was at the core of two projects evaluated in the 2024-25 biennium, which connected faith-based and interfaith environmental thinking with broader efforts to meet environmental goals. The *Faith for Earth Initiative* focused on encouraging, empowering and engaging with Faith-Based Organizations (FBO's) as partners, at all levels, toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and fulfilling Agenda 2030. The *Interfaith Rainforest Initiative* aimed at building faith-based movements in programme countries (Brazil, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Indonesia, and Peru) that mobilise religious leaders on the protection of forests, climate change and the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and that are grounded in the values, ethics and moral guidance of faith communities. The projects were assigned overall project performance ratings of 'Highly Satisfactory' and 'Satisfactory' respectively.

The Faith for Earth project captured many initiatives that sought to empower leadership, mobilise faith-based investments, and provide faith-science evidence. Among these initiatives, a key achievement was the adoption in 2020 of Our Sacred Commitment by over 500 faith leaders calling for the

institutionalization of interfaith engagement at UNEP through the Faith for Earth Coalition, including calling for greater involvement by women faith leaders and faith-youth leaders, demonstrating a vastly expanded scope beyond the initial target of 10 faith-based organisations signing the Faith for Earth Charter. The evaluation found that 'Faith for Earth now represents a vast network seeking to connect faith-based and interfaith environmental thinking with broader global efforts to meet environmental goals' and '…a clear niche in Faith for Earth made possible through the role of UNEP in coordinating, mobilising, informing, and realising channels for dialogue and influence that could not be accessed without UN action.' The evaluation found that there was an untapped potential to integrate faith-sensitive approaches across a range of UNEP policy and programming contexts and in institutional systems and recommended further refection in UNEP on how to embed faith-sensitivity and FBO engagement.

The Interfaith Rainforest Initiative (IRI) project's main achievement was its innovative approach of framing environmental protection as a shared moral and spiritual responsibility. This narrative proved exceptionally powerful, fostering unprecedented trust and collaboration between religious leaders and Indigenous Peoples. Its decentralised, country-driven model fostered deep ownership with faith constituencies and religious leaders towards influencing environmental policy and public awareness on forest and climate governance.

A key success of IRI was its ability to bridge divides between historically sceptical groups, such as religious and indigenous leaders, by reframing rainforest protection as a moral imperative. This approach proved highly effective in fostering trust, creating a shared purpose, and uniting disparate groups into a more powerful front for advocacy. Being housed within UNEP provided IRI with valuable access to the organization's extensive information, knowledge bases, resources, and a network of specialists in environmental science and policy. This access enriched the project's content and strategic direction.

Advocacy was a successful driver in both projects. The Faith for Earth Initiative built an impressive public-facing knowledge repository, with a set of web pages under UNEP's wider site, and published knowledge products, training resources and a newsletter. The IRI created faith-specific teaching guides and focused on relatable issues, such as the 'Right to Breathe Clean Air,' which significantly boosted public engagement. The project leveraged a commendable reach of religious networks, which extend into remote areas often beyond the reach of conventional government or NGO initiatives. This, combined with strategic use of mass media (radio, TV, social media), enabled the project to reach an audience of over 11 million people. Yet, the evaluation found that there was limited leveraging of the project's successful communication assets by UNEP itself,

and it recommended that UNEP take a more proactive approach to integrating messaging around faith-based engagement on environmental issues to cohere with wider policy processes and opportunities for influence.

5.6 Performance of the Evaluation Office and Evaluation Quality

In its 2025 'Review of Management and Administration in UNEP', the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) of the United Nations System provided an overall positive assessment of UNEP's evaluation function.

The JIU acknowledged that the latest United Nations Evaluation Dashboard issued by the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) provided a positive overall assessment of UNEP's evaluation function, recognizing strengths across its framework, resources, coverage, output and report quality.

The JIU also noted that when the revised evaluation policy was presented to the Senior Management Team in 2022, the Evaluation Office outlined five key objectives guiding its ongoing improvement efforts: (a) establishing and maintaining a strategic evaluation agenda; (b) enhancing the use of evaluation across the organization; (c) maintaining the quality of evaluation processes and products; (d) building capacity for managementled reviews; and (e) establishing a stable resource base and funding approach for the evaluation function.

While the Inspector acknowledged overall progress in all these areas, it was also noted that increased attention and further efforts would be needed to undertake more strategic and corporate evaluations. This conclusion was based on a JIU analysis of the Office's outputs over recent years, which showed an opportunity to conduct more evaluations on strategic, corporate and crosscutting topics to better support organizational management. A recent example is the Formative Evaluation of the 2022 Delivery Model, which included findings, conclusions and recommendations not only on the delivery model policy but also on broader adjacent corporate matters.

In this context, the Review called on the Committee of Permanent Representatives to request the Evaluation Office to consider including a higher number of strategic or corporate evaluations in its annual work programme and to report back on their findings and conclusions. In UNEP's management response to this recommendation, the Evaluation Office noted that additional funding resources

would need to be allocated to the Office commensurate with the number of planned strategic/corporate evaluations.

The JIU also observed that project evaluations remain the most resource-intensive activity, primarily because most donors require terminal evaluations. In this regard, the JIU highlighted as a good practice the approach adopted by the Evaluation Office to manage its growing workload, whereby half of UNEP's projects undergo terminal evaluations directly managed by the Office, while the remaining half are subject to managementled reviews conducted by programme or project officers and validated by the Evaluation Office for quality assurance.

The JIU further noted that the monitoring of evaluation recommendations currently takes place through two systems: an internal tracking system for project-level recommendations and, since 2024, a recommendation implementation plan for each strategic evaluation. The JIU expects that the introduction of the latter will facilitate monitoring and compliance with recommendations from strategic evaluations, streamline the collection of related information and support periodic reporting to the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

Annex I

List of Evaluations and Management-Led Terminal Reviews included in the Biennial Evaluation Synthesis Report 2024-25

Strategic/thematic evaluations prepared in the 2024-25 biennium

- Formative Evaluation of the Delivery Model Policy, 2022. Published *Dec 2024*
- Evaluation of the Subprogramme on Climate Action (2014-23). Published *Sept 2024*
- Evaluation of the UNEP Subprogramme on Chemicals and Pollution Action (2015-24). Published *Oct 2025*
- UN-SWAP 2025, submitted *Jan 2026*

Below is a list of the projects evaluated[62] in this biennium period, organised by their overall project performance ratings (Table 8). Unless otherwise indicated these are Terminal Evaluations, managed by the Evaluation Office. This is followed by Table 9, which lists Management-Led Terminal Reviews validated in this biennium.

In both tables: Highly Satisfactory = **6**, Satisfactory = **5**, Moderately Satisfactory = **4**, Moderately Unsatisfactory = **3**, Unsatisfactory = **2**, Highly Unsatisfactory = **1**.

[62] The following projects had an interim evaluation completed during the 2024-25 biennium: Mediterranean Sea Basin Environment and Climate Regional Support Project GEF 9686, which is the Coordinating Project of the Mediterranean Sea Programme (MedProgramme); Enhancing Environmental Security (GEF 9607); Sustainable Cities Impact Programme - Global Platform (GEF 10452); REDD+ Results-based Payments in Paraguay for the period 2015-2017 (Paraguay + Verde Project) – (FP 121 GCF); and Building resilience of urban populations with ecosystem-based solutions in Lao PDR (SAP009/S1-32GCF-000007).

Table 8 List of evaluation reports, 2024-25

Project Title	ID	Year	Overall rating
HIGHLY SATISFACTORY			
Strengthening the environmental management of the oil and gas sector in fragile and developing countries	PIMS ID 1957	2025	6
Climate Change and Security	PIMS ID 01970	2024	6
Building high-level support and capacities to enhance climate and ozone protection through cooling efficiency (Cooling Project)	PIMS ID 01992	2024	6
Faith for Earth Initiative	PIMS ID 2053	2024	6
SATISFACTORY			
The Wadi El Ku Catchment Management Project - Phase 2	PIMS ID 01990	2025	5
Secretariat Services to the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management -	PIMS ID 02005	2025	5
Capacity Building for National and Regional Environmental Information and Knowledge Management	PIMS ID 02020	2025	5
The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity: Promoting a sustainable agriculture and food sector (which contributed to the UNEP project Valuing the Essentials)	PIMS ID 2026	2025	5
Generating and Sharing Knowledge for Influencing Decision-Making on Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste	PIMS ID 2029	2025	5
Implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for the protection of the Western Indian Ocean from land-based sources and activities (WIO-SAP)	GEF ID 4940	2025	5
Generating Enhanced Political Will for Natural Resource Management and Conservation	GEF ID 9678	2025	5
Adapting to Climate Change in the Lake Victoria Basin	AFR/MIE/ Water/2015/1	2025	5
Sustainable Management of Marine and Coastal Ecosystem Services	PIMS 02019	2025	5

Project Title	ID	Year	Overall rating
Coherent Implementation of the Environmental Dimension of Sustainable Development Goals at the Regional and National Levels in the Pan-European Region	SMA ID 41008	2025	5
Strengthening the Capacity of Institutions in Zimbabwe to conform to the Transparency Requirements of the Paris Agreement	GEF ID 10429	2025	5
Adapting coastal zone management to climate change considering ecosystem and livelihoods	GEF ID 4568	2025	5
Strengthening Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project (HYPREP) for initiating clean-up from oil contamination in Ogoniland	PIMS 2030	2025	5
Interfaith Rainforest Initiative, Phase 2	PIMS 2118	2025	5
Development and Application of Decision-Support Tools to Conserve & Sustainably Use Genetic Diversity in Indigenous Livestock and Wild Relatives	GEF ID 1902	2024	5
Environmental Education and Youth	PIMS ID 02007	2024	5
321.3 Macaya Grand Sud Phase II (MGS II) – Regenerating Ecosystems, Building Green and Blue Economies to Achieve Sustainable Livelihoods	PIMS ID 02027	2024	5
Demonstration of Effectiveness of Diversified, Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Interventions and Strengthening National Capacity for Innovative Implementation of Integrated Vector Management (IVM) for Disease Prevention and Control in the WHO AFRO Region	GEF ID 4668	2024	5
Multi Country Project to Strengthen Institutional Capacities on LMO Testing in Support of National Decision Making	GEF ID 5283	2024	5
Ecosystem Approach to Haiti Cote Sud	GEF ID 5531	2024	5
Promoting Sustainable Cities in Brazil through integrated urban planning and innovative technologies investment	GEF ID 9142	2024	5
Addressing Marine Plastics – A Systemic Approach	GEF ID 9681	2024	5
Sustainable Cities Impact Programme - Global Platform (GP)	GEF ID 10452	2024	5

Project Title	ID	Year	Overall rating
MODERATELY SATISFACTORY			
Support Programme for Watershed Management through Strengthening Sustainable Value Chains in the Department of the South, Haiti	PIMS ID 02013	2025	4
Promoting Protected Areas Management through Integrated Marine and Coastal Ecosystems Protection in Coastal Area of Montenegro	GEF ID 9762	2025	4
Conserving, Enhancing and Managing Carbon Stocks and Biodiversity in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone	GEF ID 4634	2025	4
Initial Steps for the Establishment of the National Protected Areas Network in Iraq	GEF ID 5392	2025	4
Building Climate Resilience through Innovative Financing Mechanisms for Climate Change Adaptation	GEF ID 5523	2025	4
REDD+ Results-based Payments in Paraguay for the period 2015-2017 (Paraguay + Verde Project)	FP 121 GCF	2025	4
Building resilience of urban populations with ecosystem-based solutions in Lao PDR	SAP009/ S1-32GCF-000007)	2025	4
Strengthening South Africa's capacity to comply with enhanced transparency reporting requirements under Article 13 of the Paris Agreement	GEF ID 9673	2025	4
Shepherding Biodiversity Back into South Africa's Productive Landscapes	GEF ID 9382	2025	4
Land Use Finance Project: Leveraging private finance to systematically transition to sustainable land use decoupled from deforestation, climate and ecosystem impacts	PIMS ID 2009	2025	4
Piloting Innovative Investments for Sustainable Landscapes	GEF ID 9719	2025	4
Joint UNEP-UNIDO Programme to host and manage the Climate Technology Centre and Network and Support to Climate Technology Transfer Services and Partnership (EU Contract DCI-ENV/2016/377-145)	PIMS ID 01626	2024	4
Driving sustainable consumption in Latin America with better product information and design (ICSAL) (which contributed to the UNEP project Strengthening Consumer Information for Sustainable Consumption and Production -)	PIMS ID 2011	2024	4

Project Title	ID	Year	Overall rating
Sustainable Water and Air Quality Monitoring and Assessment Systems in Africa	PIMS ID 2062	2024	4
Agricultural Biodiversity Conservation and Man and Biosphere Reserves in Cuba: Bridging managed and Natural Landscapes ()	GEF ID 4158	2024	4
Advancing Sustainable Resource Management to Improve Livelihoods and Protect Biodiversity in Palau	GEF ID 5208	2024	4
Delivering the Transition to Energy Efficient Lighting in Residential, Commercial, Industrial and Outdoor Sectors in Pakistan	GEF ID 5799	2024	4
Enabling Transactions – Market Shift to Deforestation Free Beef, Palm Oil and Soy	GEF ID 9696	2024	4
Aligning Financial Systems with Sustainable Development: A transformational Approach	GEF ID 9775	2024	4
MODERATELY UNSATISFACTORY			
Accelerating the shift to sustainable public procurement and monitoring progress	SMA ID 43577	2025	3
Delivering the Transition to Energy Efficient Lighting	GEF ID 5299	2025	3
Advancing and Measuring Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) for a Low-Carbon Economy in Middle-Income and Newly Industrialized Countries (which contributed to the UNEP project Strengthening Consumer Information for Sustainable Consumption and Production)	PIMS ID 2011	2024	3
Mediterranean Sea Basin Environment and Climate Regional Support Project (Which is the Coordinating Project of the Mediterranean Sea Programme (MedProgramme): Enhancing Environmental Security GEF 9607)	GEF ID 9686	2024	3
UNSATISFACTORY			
Sustainable Pathways – Protected Areas and Renewable Energy (SPPARE)	GEF ID 5390	2025	2
Healthy Ecosystems for Rangeland Development (HERD): sustainable rangeland management strategies and practices	GEF ID 9407	2025	2

An additional three projects were evaluated during the Biennium. However, a longer time period had elapsed between the completion of the project and the terminal evaluation, leading to significant gaps in primary data (e.g. limited interviewees, gaps in documentation, memory loss etc). While the best efforts were made to assign appropriate performance ratings, the work is prone to larger potential variances than normal and has **not** been included in the analysis for this Biennium.

List of Performance Assessments based on limited primary data sources, 2024-25

1. Engaging policy makers and the judiciary to address poaching and illegal wildlife trade in Africa GEF ID 5821 *(Project implemented 2015-20; TE completed Jan 2025)*

2. Enhancing legislative, policy, and criminal justice frameworks for combating poaching and illegal wildlife trade in Africa GEF ID 9882 *(Project implemented 2017-19; TE completed Jan 2025)*

3. Conservation and Management of Pollinators for Sustainable Agriculture Through an Ecosystem Approach GEF ID 2123 *(Project implemented 2008-15; TE completed May 2025)*

A Performance Assessment of the UNEP Haiti Portfolio (2013-23) was also carried out in 2025 based on secondary sources.

In the list of validated Management-Led Terminal Reviews, both the initial overall project performance rating, assigned by the external review consultant, and the validated rated determined by the Evaluation Office are shown.

Table 9 List of validated Management-Led Terminal Review reports, 2024-25

Project Title	ID	Year	Review Rating	Validated/ Final Rating
HIGHLY SATISFACTORY				
Leapfrogging Chilean's markets to more efficient refrigerator and freezers	GEF ID 9496	2025	6	6
Mainstreaming agricultural biodiversity conservation and utilization in agricultural sector to ensure ecosystem services and reduce vulnerability	GEF ID 5137	2025	6	6
Strengthening Plastic Pollution Management in Asia and the Pacific (Mekong River Basin)	SB-021354	2025	6	6

Project Title	ID	Year	Review Rating	Validated/ Final Rating
Up-scaling Community Resilience through Ecosystem-based Disaster Risk Reduction	PIMS ID 2023	2025	6	6
Strengthening Trinidad and Tobago's capacity in transparency for climate change mitigation and adaptation	GEF ID 10596	2025	6	6
Georgia's Integrated Transparency Framework for Implementation of the Paris Agreement	GEF ID 10028	2024	6	6
Renewable Energy Solutions for Industrial Clients in Africa (CICSA)	PIMS ID 0268	2024	5	6
Enhanced capacity for measuring progress towards the Environmental Dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals (2020-2023) - EC grant implemented under the UNEP project 'Informing Policy through strengthening national, regional and global data and indicator frameworks and integrated analysis on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs'	PIMS 2082	2024	6	6
UN Peace Operations Rapid Environment and Climate Technical Assistance Facility (REACT Project)	PIMS ID 1954	2024	6	6
SATISFACTORY				
Building and strengthening Sierra Leone's national capacity to implement the transparency elements of the Paris Agreement	GEF ID 10027	2025	5	5
Capacity Building for Burkina Faso's transparency system for climate change mitigation and adaptation	GEF ID 10025	2025	5	5
Coherent Integration of the Environmental Dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals in Regional and National Policy Frameworks in Africa	PIMS ID 2086	2025	5	5
Conservation of Key, Endemic, Threatened and Economically Valuable Species	GEF ID 5352	2025	5	5
Environmental Treaties Programme – Realizing Synergies for Biodiversity	PIMS ID 1988	2025	5	5
Global Opportunities for Sustainable Development Goals	SMA ID 43459	2025	6	5

Project Title	ID	Year	Review Rating	Validated/ Final Rating
Malawi Climate Transparency Framework	GEF ID 10149	2025	4	5
Reducing marine litter by addressing the management of the plastic value chain in Southeast Asia (SEA circular)	SMA ID 130677	2025	5	5
Solar Water Heater Market Development and Energy Efficiency Project	GEF ID 5287	2025	5	5
Strengthening Argentina's Transparency Framework on GHG Inventories and Mitigation	GEF ID 9955	2025	5	5
Strengthening Lao PDR's institutional capacity to comply with the Enhanced Transparency Framework under the Paris Agreement	GEF ID 10039	2025	5	5
Strengthening the capacity of the Dominican Republic to generate climate information and knowledge in the framework of the Paris Agreement	GEF ID 9869	2025	5	5
UNEP-GEF project Building National and Regional Capacity to Implement Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEA) by Strengthening Planning and State of Environment Assessment and Reporting in the Pacific	GEF ID 5195	2025	5	5
Building National Capacity to Implement the National Biosafety Framework of Islamic Republic of Iran and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety	GEF ID 3730	2024	5	5
Building the Foundation for Forest Landscape Restoration at Scale Project	GEF ID 5775	2024	5	5
Circular Economy approaches for the electronics sector in Nigeria	GEF ID 10141	2024	5	5
Conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biodiversity to improve regulating and supporting ecosystem services in agriculture production in Uzbekistan	GEF ID 5403	2024	5	5
Costa Rica's integrated reporting and transparency system	GEF ID 9652	2024	5	5
Development of the National Framework for Climate Transparency of Panama	GEF ID 10023	2024	6	5

Project Title	ID	Year	Review Rating	Validated/ Final Rating
Global Support for the Ratification and Entry into Force of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS)	GEF ID 5172	2024	5	5
Integrated Stockholm convention toolkit to improve the transmission of information under articles 07 and 15	GEF ID 9884	2024	5	5
Promotion and Delivery of Environmentally Sound Waste Management Technologies and Methods and in-Country Technical and Advisory Support	PIMS ID 2010	2024	5	5
Protecting the Marine Environment from Land-based pollution through strengthened coordination of Global Action	PIMS ID 2049	2024	5	5
Strengthening Low Carbon Energy Island (LCEI) Strategies in Maldives	GEF ID 4629	2024	5	5
Technology Needs Assessment Phase III (TNA III)	GEF ID 9452	2024	5	5
Togo Climate Transparency Framework	GEF ID 10026	2024	5	5
Zero Carbon Buildings for All: from Energy Efficiency to Decarbonization	GEF ID 10321	2024	5	5
MODERATELY SATISFACTORY				
Building Climate Resilience through Rehabilitated Watersheds, Forests and Adaptive Livelihoods	GEF ID 5694	2025	4	4
Capacity Building for Peru’s Transparency System for Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation	GEF ID 9872	2025	5	4
Implementing adaptation technologies in the fragile ecosystems of Djibouti’s central plains	GEF ID 5021	2025	4	4
Intergovernmental Consultations on Nature-based Solutions	SMA ID 149153	2025	5	4
PCB Reduction in Cameroon through the use of local expertise and the development of national capacities	GEF ID 5367	2025	5	4

Project Title	ID	Year	Review Rating	Validated/ Final Rating
Ratification and Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol in the countries of the Pacific	GEF ID 5634	2025	4	4
Sharing Experience and Knowledge for a Sustainable Belt and Road	PIMS ID 1993	2025	5	4
Stocktaking and Update of the National Biosafety Framework of Mauritania	GEF ID 5639	2025	5	4
Strengthening climate services and early warning systems in the Gambia for climate resilient development and adaptation to climate change	GEF ID 5071	2025	4	4
Consolidation of National Capacities for the Full Implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety in Panama	GEF ID 3631	2024	4	4
Enhancing livelihoods in rural communities of Armenia through mainstreaming and strengthening agricultural biodiversity conservation and utilization	GEF ID 5483	2024	4	4
Solar chill Development, Testing, and Technology Transfer Outreach	GEF ID 4682	2024	5	4
Supply Change: Promoting Reduction of Deforestation Impacts of Commodity Supply Chains	GEF ID 9858	2024	4	4
MODERATELY UNSATISFACTORY				
Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework of Ecuador under the Biosafety Program	GEF ID 3405	2024	4	3

Annex II

List of Evaluation Criteria and their Development Over Time

The UNEP Evaluation Office assesses performance against a total of nine evaluation criteria, six of which have sub-criteria (see Table 11 below). While these criteria reflect standard internationally accepted63 performance criteria (Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Impact and Sustainability), they are also adapted to be relevant to those areas of performance of most interest to UNEP. For example, UNEP's evaluation criteria allow for assessments against 'financial management' and 'monitoring and reporting' but also cover a range of other factors affecting performance and cross-cutting issues.

This set of performance evaluation criteria have evolved over time to: a) be responsive to UNEP's policies and areas of priority; b) make necessary areas of learning visible and c) create a comprehensive and transparent framework against which all performance aspects of UNEP's work can be evaluated. In Table 10 below the major adjustments made in recent years are noted.

Table 10 UNEP performance evaluation criteria and adjustments over time

Evaluation criteria	
A. Strategic Relevance	Prior to 2018 this criterion included a sub-category related to gender. At that time this placement reflected the place of gender in UNEP's policies and strategic priorities. In 2018-19 'gender' was moved to its own sub-category under cross-cutting issues to better reflect its central importance, along with human rights, during project implementation. Project alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is covered under sub-criterion A.3. The sub-criterion 'complementarity' (A.4) is consistent with the latest (2019) OECD criterion of 'coherence'.
1. Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities	
2. Alignment to Donor/GEF/ Partner strategic priorities	
3. Relevance to global, regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities	
4. Complementarity with relevant existing interventions/ coherence	

= The evaluation criteria described by the OECD/DAC are widely accepted as an international standard. UNEP Evaluation Office also works in accordance with the descriptions reflected in the UN Evaluation Group Norms and Standards.

Evaluation criteria	
B. Quality of Project Design	Assessment against this dimension has been longstanding – with formal ratings for the criterion continuous since 2017. The assessment template used in evaluations, was the original basis for, and is consistent with that used during the project design approval process.
C. Nature of External Context	Introduced in 2018, this is not a performance criterion, and its rating is not used in the calculation of overall project performance. However, when a project is found to have faced some specific unfavourable external conditions that could not have been anticipated, the ratings on Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability may be adjusted to take unexpected disruptions into account (e.g. conflict, natural disasters and political upheaval). Adjustments in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic were addressed here in recent years.
D. Effectiveness	
1. Availability of outputs	Since 2019, the emphasis has been placed on the availability of Outputs to intended beneficiaries rather than the less specific term 'delivery' of Outputs. This is in keeping with UNEP's revised results definitions, 2019 (Annex IV)
2. Achievement of project outcomes	Emphasis is placed on those outcomes (Project Outcomes) that a project is expected to achieve within its project timeframe and with its secured funding.
3. Likelihood of impact	Since 2018 an excel-based tool that supports a combined assessment of a) the extent to which Outcomes have been achieved and b) the extent to which contributing conditions needed to create long-lasting change (i.e. assumptions and drivers) have been seen to hold, has been tested and strengthened.
E. Financial Management	
1.Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures	Assessment against this sub-criterion has been continuous since 2019
2.Completeness of project financial information	Assessment against this sub-criterion has been continuous since 2018.

Evaluation criteria	
3.Communication between finance and project management staff	Assessment against this sub-criterion was continuous between 2018 and 2024. During 2025 it was removed as it was generating little new learning.
F. Efficiency	Assessment against this criterion has been continuous as a stand-alone criterion since 2014.
G. Monitoring and Reporting	This criterion was changed from 'Monitoring and Evaluation' in 2016 and new sub-categories were defined during 2018-19.
1. Monitoring design and budgeting	The design of monitoring is, since 2018, combined with its budgeting. During 2025 this sub-category was removed as it is already addressed in the assessment of the project design and was adding few insights under this criterion.
2. Monitoring of project implementation	Since 2018, emphasis has been placed on the adequacy and effectiveness of monitoring project implementation rather than the delivery of a monitoring plan. This allows evaluations to give credit to projects that develop a range of ways of monitoring that were not part of the monitoring design.
3.Project reporting	Assessment against this sub-criterion has been continuous since 2018. It allows evaluations to give full credit to those projects that meet reporting requirements outside of an effective monitoring approach.
H. Sustainability	This criterion focuses on the 'endurance'/ 'durability' / longevity of Outcomes. Assessment against these sub-criteria has been continuous since 2010, although the way in which the terms are understood and how likelihood should be assessed has been developed and refined over time.
1. Socio-political sustainability	
2. Financial sustainability	
3. Institutional sustainability	
I. Factors affecting performance and cross-cutting issues	
1. Preparation and readiness	Assessment of this factor has been continuous since 2010 although the category included an assessment of the quality of project design up until 2015. During 2025 this sub-category was removed as it was found to be adding little to overall learning.

Evaluation criteria	
2. Quality of project management and supervision	Project management and supervision were brought together as one factor from 2018 as the boundaries between the two terms were found to be unhelpful in terms of learning and accountability for non-GEF projects. Requirements for evaluation of GEF projects specify that project supervision (by the Implementing Agency) be assessed separately from project management (by the Executing Agency).
3. Stakeholder's participation and cooperation	Assessment of this factor has been continuous since 2018.
4. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity	Introduced as a stand-alone factor since 2018. Previously assessed as part of UNEP's policies and strategic priorities.
5. Environmental, social and economic safeguards	Introduced as a stand-alone factor in late 2019. Previously assessed as a negative, unintended effects under Effectiveness.
6. Country ownership and driven-ness	Assessment of this factor has been continuous since 2010.
7. Communication and public awareness	Assessment of this factor has been continuous since 2016.

Annex III

Weightings for Evaluation Criteria

UNEP Evaluation Office applies a weighted approach in calculating the overall project performance ratings against nine evaluation criteria.

Table 11 Weightings applied across evaluation criteria for overall performance ratings

Criterion	Sub-criteria/ factor weight	Criterion Weightings
A. Strategic Relevance		6
1. Alignment to UNEP's MTS, POW and strategic priorities	0.5	
2. Alignment to Donor/Partner strategic priorities	0.5	
3. Relevance to regional, sub-regional & national environmental priorities	2.5	
4. Complementarity with relevant existing interventions	2.5	
B. Quality of Project Design		4
C. Nature of External Context *		
D. Effectiveness		45
1. Availability of Outputs	5	
2. Achievement of project Outcomes	30	
3. Likelihood of impact	10	
E. Financial Management		5
1.Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures	1.66	
2.Completeness of project financial information	1.66	
3.Communication between finance and project management staff	1.66	
F. Efficiency		10
G. Monitoring and Reporting		5
1. Monitoring design and budgeting	1.66	

Criterion	Sub-criteria/ factor weight	Criterion Weightings
2. Monitoring of project implementation	1.66	
3.Project reporting	1.66	
H. Sustainability		20
1. Socio-political sustainability	6.66	
2. Financial sustainability	6.66	
3. Institutional sustainability	6.66	
I. Factors Affecting Performance / Cross-Cutting Issues		5
1. Preparation and readiness	0.71	
2. Quality of project management and supervision	0.71	
3. Stakeholders participation and cooperation	0.71	
4. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality	0.71	
5. Environmental and social safeguards	0.71	
6. Country ownership and driven-ness	0.71	
7. Communication and public awareness	0.71	
Overall Project Performance Rating		100

The criterion **'Nature of the external context' is not used directly for assessing overall project performance. It is used indirectly in situations where operational conditions are especially challenging.*

Annex IV

UNEP's Results Definitions

The UNEP Evaluation Office and the Quality Assurance Unit of the Policy and Programme Division (PPD) have, over several years worked together to develop and periodically refine a glossary of UNEP results definitions64. The application of these definitions informs project design implementation and evaluation. A summary of those terms most closely associated with evaluation processes is shown below in Table 12. Several important distinctions continue to need emphasis in the application of Results-based Management principles:

Activity - Deliverable - Output

The work on results' definitions provided an opportunity to clarify that **activities** (work performed) and **deliverables** (products or services derived from a completed activity) differ from **Outputs** (immediate gains experienced from the work performed and products or services delivered) by the inclusion of the intended beneficiary or user. From a results perspective, the attention is placed on those who are affected by projects rather than those who are responsible for delivering them. Importantly, this refinement in the definition of an output shifts the perspective from that of the supplier (what has been delivered) to that of the beneficiary (what has been gained); it does not change the ambition underpinning the output, nor does it change the timeframe within which Outputs are made available. For example, in this way the 'provision of technical assistance' (activity) builds the knowledge and understanding of a target audience (output), which may lead to a change of behaviour, based on that new knowledge and understanding, by the target audience (outcome).

Project Direct Outcome - Project Outcome

Evaluations aim to assess what has been achieved against what was planned (and committed to). To clearly represent the ambition of, and commitment made by, a project the term **Project Outcome** is used by UNEP to refer to those Outcomes a project is expected to achieve by the time it is operationally complete. However, it is recognised that some Outcomes (i.e., the use or uptake of Outputs) occur before the end of the project and these are referred to, in all parts of the house, as **Project Direct Outcomes**. Project Outcomes are the highest level of result to which UNEP evaluations hold projects to account.

[64] The UNEP results definitions build on those of OECD-DAC, UNDA, UNDP, UNEG, and the World Bank.

Attribution - Contribution - Credible Association

The gold standard of proving that a project has achieved its results is demonstrating attribution between the observed effects and the efforts of the project. However, this is not always possible, and it is helpful to consider a wider range of ways of establishing claims between project efforts and observed results.

In order to **attribute** any Outcomes and impacts to a project intervention, one needs to consider the difference between what has happened *with*, and what *would* have happened without, the project (i.e., take account of changes over time and between contexts in order to isolate the effects of a project). This requires appropriate baseline data and the identification of a relevant counterfactual, both of which are frequently not available for evaluations.

Establishing the **contribution** made by a project in a complex change process relies heavily on prior *intentionality* (e.g., approved project design documentation, logical framework) and the articulation of *causality* (e.g., narrative and/or illustration of the Theory of Change). Robust evidence that a project was delivered as intended and that the expected causal pathways developed as designed, can be used to support claims of contribution. Such claims can be strengthened where an alternative theory of change can be excluded (e.g., that the 'business as usual' behaviour pattern is no longer evident or prevalent).

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

Programme - Portfolio

There has been a tendency, both in UNEP and elsewhere, for these two terms to be used either interchangeably or at least, loosely. There is, however, an important distinction between the two. Whereas the projects within both a portfolio and a programme will share certain common characteristics with each other, only those projects in a programme will be working towards common Outcomes and be managed in a coordinated way that generates additional benefits not available when implemented separately.

Evaluations of portfolios can provide insights on key issues based on multiple experiences of working on a common theme or in a common geographic area etc., but evaluations of programmes can provide evidence of aggregated and synergistic effects across a group of projects.

Table 12 UNEP results definitions relevant to evaluations

TERM	UNEP results definitions - relevant to evaluations
Activity	An action taken, or work performed, through which inputs are utilized to realize specific results
Assumption	An assumption is a significant external factor or condition that needs to be present for the realization of the intended results but is beyond the influence of the project and its partners. Assumptions are often positively formulated risks. (See also Driver)
Attribution	Attribution can be claimed when comprehensive evidence proving the cause-and-effect relationship between the project and the observed results is presented. To make a strong claim of attribution one needs to be able to isolate the effects of an intervention from changes over time and differences in contexts (i.e. have an M&E design that provides data on indicators before and after project implementation and a robust counterfactual).
Contribution	Contribution can be claimed when compelling evidence is presented that supports a cause-and-effect relationship through which intended collective results are achieved by the combined efforts of more than one project.
Credible association	Credible association can be claimed when compelling evidence supporting a cause-and-effect relationship between the project and the observed results is present. A claim to a credible association between project and results can be made based on 'intentionality' (normally reflected in a project design document), the articulation of causality (ideally through a detailed/nuanced TOC) and evidence (through the chronology of events, action of identified key stakeholders etc) that the intention was followed, and the expected causality pathways emerged.
Driver	A driver is a significant external factor that, if present, is expected to contribute to the realization of the intended results of a project. Drivers can be influenced by the project and its partners. (See also Assumption).
Direct outcome(s)	A direct outcome is an outcome that is intended to be achieved from the uptake of Outputs and occurring prior to the achievement of Project Outcome(s).
Deliverable	A deliverable is a specified product or service derived from completed activity(ies). For example, a draft report, a revised manual, X number of workshop facilitation days are all frequent deliverables in a UNEP project context. (Deliverables are viewed from the perspective of the supplier/provider of the product or service).

TERM	UNEP results definitions - relevant to evaluations
Effect	An effect is a change which is a consequence of an action or other social, economic, political or environmental cause. These changes can be intended, unintended, positive or negative.
Evaluand	The evaluand is the entity being evaluated.
Evaluand parameters	An evaluand's parameters are the features of an evaluand that define its scope (e.g. timeframe, funding envelope, results framework, geographic dimensions).
Evaluation	Evaluation is the systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, programme, strategy or policy (i.e. 'entities'), its design, implementation, results and likelihood of impact
Expected accomplishments	Expected Accomplishments are the Outcomes of a UNEP Programme of Work (i.e. the Outcomes specified in a Subprogramme).
Goals	Goals are the higher-order result(s) to which a project is intended to contribute.
Impact	Impacts are long-lasting results arising, directly or indirectly from a project. Impacts are intended and positive changes and must relate to UNEP's mandate.
Impact pathway / Causal pathway / Results chain	Impact or Causal Pathways and Results Chains all describe cause and effect relationships between Outputs, Outcomes and impacts and are the basis of a programme/project's 'Theory of Change'.
Intermediate states	Intermediate states are changes (i.e. changes at the outcome level) beyond the Project Outcome(s) that are required to contribute towards the achievement of the intended impact of a project.
Lessons learned	Lessons learned reflect the new knowledge or understanding gained by the experience of implementing a project that is applicable to, and useful in, other similar contexts
Logical framework	A Logical Framework (or logframe) is a tool for summarizing a project or programme's intended results. It specifies project results, indicators and their baseline and target values. It also includes a milestone schedule to deliver the expected output(s) and/or achieve intended result(s). The format or content of a logframe may vary from one organization to the other.
Mid-term Evaluation	A Mid-Term Evaluation is a formative evaluation performed towards the middle of the period of implementation of a project.

TERM	UNEP results definitions - relevant to evaluations
Monitoring	Monitoring is a continuing function that uses the systematic collection of data on project / programme implementation (e.g. completion of activities, rate of expenditure, emergence of risks, milestone delivery, inclusive participation of intended stakeholders, etc.) to provide management with indications of the extent of progress against plans and targets.
Objectives	An objective describes the overall intention, which should be achieved at the end of a defined period. (In UNEP, the Project Objective is not considered a higher-order result and does not appear in the Logical Framework or Theory of Change).
Outcome(s)	An outcome is the use (i.e., uptake, adoption, application) of an output by intended beneficiaries, observed as a change in institutions or behaviours, attitudes or conditions
Outputs	An output is the availability (for intended beneficiaries/users) of new products and services and/or gains in knowledge, abilities and awareness of individuals or within institutions. For example, access by the intended user to a report; new knowledge held by a workshop participant at the end of a training event; heightened awareness of a serious risk among targeted decision-makers. (Outputs are viewed from the perspective of the intended beneficiary or user of the output rather than the provider).
Performance	Performance is the degree to which a project is implemented, or a partner operates, according to specific criteria /standards/ guidelines or achieves intended results.
Portfolio	A group of projects and/or programmes that share a common characteristic relevant to the organization's strategic objectives (e.g. funded by the same donor, operating in the same country, thematic area etc).
Programme	A programme is a group of synergistic projects contributing to a common outcome(s) and managed in a coordinated way to obtain benefits not available from managing the projects individually.
Project	A project is a time-bound intervention with a specific funding envelope that addresses a defined set of results within an identified implementation context or geographic area3. The main components of the project must be interlinked/interdependent to achieve the project outcome(s).
Project components	A descriptive label related to the way in which work is planned and managed. A Project Component can define a stream of work
Project outcome(s)	Project Outcome(s) are those Outcomes that are intended to be achieved by the end of project timeframe/funding envelope.

TERM	UNEP results definitions - relevant to evaluations
Results	Results are intended changes in a state or condition that derive from a cause-and-effect relationship. Such changes must be describable and measurable/discernible. A results statement, the associated targets and their indicators should conform collectively to the SMART4 and/or CREAM5 principles. Outputs, Outcomes and impact are considered 'results' (as opposed to inputs and activities).
Safeguard	Safeguards are a management approaches taken to avoid negative unintended effects of a project
Sustainability	Sustainability is the continuation of project Outcomes and their associated benefits after the completion of a project
Terminal Evaluation	A Terminal Evaluation is a summative evaluation performed at the operational completion of a project or programme
Theory of Change	A Theory of Change is a method used for planning a project, describing the participation that will be needed by different actors and for evaluating the project's performance. It articulates long lasting intended impact and then maps backward to identify the preconditions necessary to achieve this impact(s). It is a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a context. A Theory of Change also allows for unintended positive and/or negative effects to be depicted

UN environment programme

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