

**Validated Terminal Review report of the UNEP Project
“Intergovernmental Consultations on Nature-based
Solutions” (SMA ID 149153)**

2023 – 2024



UNEP Ecosystems Division

Validation date: July 2025



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

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Intergovernmental Consultations on Nature-based Solutions

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Terminal Review was prepared for UNEP Ecosystems Division, Biodiversity and Land Branch, Biodiversity, People and Landscapes Unit by Kathryn M. Conway.

The reviewer would like to express their gratitude to all persons who contributed to this review, as listed in [Annex I](#).

The reviewer would like to thank the current project team, in particular Ms. Maudie Fraser, Mr. Luis Pineda Salazar and Ms. Mercy Mumo for their contributions and collaboration throughout the review process.

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

BRIEF EXTERNAL CONSULTANT(S) BIOGRAPHY

Ms. Conway is an independent consultant with three decades of experience developing, managing and evaluating international market transformation and climate change mitigation programs that respond to stakeholder needs and environmental concerns. From 2012 to 2015, Conway served as UNEP Programme Officer for the UNEP/GEF “en.lighten initiative.” Subsequently she has conducted reviews and evaluations for UNEP. She also has authored, edited and illustrated publications on flora and fauna in diverse ecosystems worldwide.

ABOUT THE REVIEW

Joint Review: No

Report Language: English.

Review Type: Terminal Review

Brief Description: This report is a management-led Terminal Review of a UNEP project implemented between 2023 and 2024. The project's overall development goal was to respond to the 2022 United Nations Environment Assembly's request for intergovernmental consultations on nature-based solutions, as called for in Resolution 5/5 "Nature-based solutions for supporting sustainable development." This Terminal Review assesses project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determined outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The Terminal Review has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, the donors—Canada, France and the European Commission—and the relevant agencies of the project participating countries.

Key words: Nature-based Solutions; Climate Change Adaptation; Climate Change Mitigation; Ecosystem Management; Indigenous Peoples; Convention on Biological Diversity; Sustainable Development Goals; UNEA Resolution 5/5; United Nations Environment Assembly.

Primary data collection period: January 2025 to March 2025

Field mission dates: (not applicable)

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

BLB	Biodiversity and Land Branch
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
COP	Conference of the Parties
DG	Directorate General
EA	Expected Accomplishment
EC	European Commission
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
MGS	Major Groups and Stakeholders
MS	Member State (UNEA)
MTS	Medium Term Strategy
N4C	Nature for Climate Branch
NbS	nature-based solutions
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
OP	Operative Paragraph
PoW	Programme of Work
project, the	Intergovernmental consultations on nature-based solutions for supporting sustainable development (SB-023357)
Res. 5/5	UNEA 5 Resolution 5/5, "Intergovernmental consultations on nature-based solutions for supporting sustainable development."
RTOC	Reconstructed Theory of Change
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR TR	Terms of Reference, Terminal Review
TR	Terminal Review
UN	United Nations
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNEA	United Nations Environment Assembly
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNEP-FI	UNEP Finance Initiative

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION TABLE

Project Identification Table

UNEP PIMS/SMA ID:	149153	Grant ID:	SB-022746 (SB-023357 for Project Extension)
UNEP Management (Division/Branch/Unit):	Ecosystem Division		
Donors	Countries:	Canada; France	Institution Name: European Commission
Implementing Partners	UNEP implemented project		
Relevant SDG(s):	SDGs: 1.5, 2.4, 6.6, 8.4, 9.1, 11.7, 13.1, 14.2, 15.1, 15.2, 15.4		
MTS (all that apply):	2022-2025	MTS 2025 Outcome(s) number/reference	Outcomes 2A, 2B
POW Direct Outcome(s) number/reference	2.5, 2.7, 2.8	Programme Coordination Project:	Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity
Sub-programme:	Nature Action		
UNEP approval date:	17 March 2023	Programme of Work Outcomes):	2A, 2B
Expected start date:	01/03/2023	Actual start date:	17/03/2023
Planned completion date:	30/04/2024	Actual operational completion date:	30/04/2024 (initial) 31/12/2024 (Project no-cost extension)
Planned project budget at approval:	USD 1,003,961	Actual total expenditures reported as of 7 March 2025	USD 778,803.52
Planned Environment Fund allocation:	USD 90,000.00	Actual Environment Fund expenditures reported as of 7 March 2025:	USD 72807.60
Planned Extra-Budgetary Financing:	Cash: USD 1,316,944.64 In-kind: (none)	Secured Extra-Budgetary Financing:	Cash: USD 1,316,944.64 In-kind: (none)
		Actual Extra-Budgetary Financing expenditures reported, 7 March 2025:	Cash: USD 77,8803.52
First disbursement:	n.a.	Planned date of financial closure:	Estimated 1 year after operational completion (31.12.2025)
No. of formal project revisions:	none	Date of last approved project revision:	n.a
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	n.a	Date of last/next Steering Committee meeting:	Last: n.a. Next: n.a.
Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (planned date):	n.a	Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (actual date):	n.a
Terminal Review (planned date):	n.a.	Terminal Review (actual date):	31/03/2025
Coverage - Country(ies):	Global	Coverage - Region(s):	UN regional groups: Africa, Asia Pacific, Eastern Europe, Latin America and Caribbean, Western Europe and Others
Dates of previous project phases:	n.a.	Status of future project phases:	n.a.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project background

1. The “Intergovernmental Consultations on Nature-based Solutions (UMOJA ID: SB-022746)” was a 22-month duration project implemented from March 2023 to December 2024 by the United Nations Environment Programme, under the Nature Action Sub-programme, in the Ecosystems Division, Biodiversity and Land Branch, Biodiversity, People and Landscapes Unit at the request of the United Nations Environment Assembly Resolution 5/5 of 2022. The project is part of the Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity Program Coordination Project.
2. Member States and accredited Major Groups and Stakeholders participated in the project’s activities and contributed to the project outputs. Project support was contributed by: Canada; the European Commission’s Directorate General Environment; France; and the Environment Fund of the United Nations Environment Programme. The total planned and secured funding was USD 1,316,945.
3. The project’s objective was to achieve, “a common understanding of Nature-based Solutions among decision makers.” The project aligned with UNEP’s Mid-term Strategy for 2022 to 2025. The project’s impacts contribute to Outcomes 2A, “An economically and socially sustainable pathway for halting and reversing the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem integrity is established,” and 2B, “Sustainable management of nature is adopted and implemented in development frameworks.” The project also supports UNEP’s contributions to achieving Sustainable Development Goals 1.5, 2.4, 6.6, 8.4, 9.1, 11.7, 13.1, 14.2, 15.1, 15.2, and 15.4 and to Target 8 and Target 11 of the Global Biodiversity Framework.

This Review

4. The objective of this management-led Terminal Review is: to assess project performance with regard to: project relevance, effectiveness and efficiency; and, to determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The review was conducted from January through March 2025 by an independent consultant.
5. The review examines and summarizes the actual and possible future outcomes and impacts attributable to the project and remarks upon their sustainability while presenting evidence of results to meet external donor and internal accountability expectations. The reviewer also addressed three key strategic questions posed by the United Nations Environment Programme Review Project Manager. The Review highlights Lessons Learned to improve operations, opportunities to learn and means to share knowledge. Lessons Learned and the Recommendations are offered to support proposal development for the Ecosystem Division’s future Nature-based Solutions projects.
6. The Reviewer and the Project Manager and team worked together to revise, update and validate the project’s Theory of Change, producing a Reconstructed Theory of Change at Review to cover the original project period plus a no-cost extension period. The Reviewer conducted remote interviews, discussions and correspondence with 19 stakeholders; examined evidence of project outputs including global and regional intergovernmental consultations and regional workshops; and, considered key project documentation such as the *Background Paper* (in six languages) and *Co-Chairs Summary*. The terminal review report was circulated by the Project Manager to the Unit Head and project team for comments and then revised accordingly by the Reviewer.

7. The project's Reconstructed Theory of Change consists of one logical pathway, starting with four interdependent outputs: 1) A Background Document prepared by the Ecosystems Division and consisting of three scoping papers, to support the intergovernmental consultations which were led by two Co-chairs and arranged by the project team; 2) Regional intergovernmental consultations (one round virtual, one in-person); 3) global intergovernmental consultations (one virtual and the final in-person); 3) Co-chairs Summary of all the participants' contributions and all the consultations, including two Appendices, Co-Chairs' recommendations to support the implementation of Nature-based Solutions for sustainable development and Resource Guide for Nature-based Solutions; and, 4) presentation of Output 3 at the sixth United Nations Environment Assembly. A fifth output was added to the project in 2024; 5) to conduct Regional Practitioner Workshops to increase the impact of the project.
8. The intended Outcomes of the project were: 1) Member States accept Co-Chairs Summary at UNEA 6; 2) Increased awareness, understanding and uptake of Nature-based Solutions as defined by Resolution 5/5; and 3) Identify the needs and priorities of key regions for Nature-based Solutions. Next along the logical pathway are two Intermediate States: 1) A common understanding of Nature-based Solutions is agreed among decision makers; and, 2) Implementation of Nature-based Solutions increases while the United Nations Environment Programme helps to mainstream them. Finally, the Impact of the project, by 2030, is a reduction in country-specific social, economic and environmental challenges through Nature-based Solutions. Achievement of this impact delivers benefits to human well-being, ecosystem services, resilience and biodiversity, all of which contribute to eight of the Sustainable Development Goals and two of the Targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework.

Key findings

9. Regarding strategic relevance, the Intergovernmental Consultations on Nature-based Solutions project is in Highly Satisfactory alignment with the Medium Term Strategy and Programme of Work plans and strategic priorities of the United Nations Environment Programme and the donors' strategic priorities. It also performed Highly Satisfactory for alignment with global, regional and national priorities, especially with those of some of the Member States and some of the participating international non-governmental organizations, per some of the Nationally Defined Contributions posted by some Member States and some of respondents' comments. The project complements other internal efforts, particularly those that support the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Global Biodiversity Framework, the Climate Change Division and UNEP-Finance Initiative.
10. The quality of the project design was Satisfactory; it corresponded directly to the requests of the United Nations Environment Assembly Resolution 5/5 although it lacked communications and detailed monitoring plans (these were waived internally due to "exceptional circumstances."). From the Theory of Change presented in the original project concept the Reconstructed Theory of Change was agreed upon with the project team to better align with the addition of a project extension. The nature of the external context was Highly Favourable overall because no negative external factors were identified during the project planning or implementation, 2023 to 2024.
11. The overall project effectiveness was rated Satisfactory, as were the sub-ratings for Availability of Outputs and Achievement of Project Outcomes. All outputs were completed and accepted by the donors and made available in a satisfactory manner to Member States and other stakeholders. The three Outcomes were achieved. The assumptions in the Reconstructed Theory of Change hold and the drivers are in place for progress toward impact by 2030. The project's overall sustainability is rated as Likely, but with reliance on availability of financial support for Nature-based Solutions

actions. Achievement of Likelihood of Impact is Likely, given that the project has achieved Intermediate State 1 by 2025 and is beginning to make progress on Intermediate State 2. Continued progress will depend upon drivers remaining in place, especially the influence of the driver stimulating sustainable innovation and scientific research on the results of Nature-based Solutions actions.

12. Financial management of the project followed United Nations Environment Programme policies and procedures, financial information was complete and communication between the Fund Management Officer and Project Manager was frequent. Overall, financial management was rated as Satisfactory. Likewise, the rating for Efficiency was Satisfactory: the project delivered the expected outputs from the project resources, operating within the United Nations' rules of engagement with stakeholders, financial constraints and a no-cost extension beyond the originally planned project duration.
13. Outputs and Outcomes were monitored and reported in a Moderately Satisfactory manner, according to the Branch's established internal monitoring systems. Regular reports were made by the Project Manager and accepted by the project donors. Monitoring could have been improved during the project by use of an updated Theory of Change and Logical Framework.
14. Overall, factors affecting project performance and cross-cutting issues were rated as Highly Satisfactory. Environmental and Social Safeguards were not rated (due to exceptional circumstances at the initiation of the project).
15. Summary responses to the review's three key strategic questions follow.
16. *Question 1. Was the mandate of the UNEA Resolution 5/5 fulfilled to the scope and objectives of the project?*
17. Yes, the project convened Member States and key stakeholders to discuss and reflect on Nature-based Solutions in inclusive and transparent global and regional intergovernmental consultations. The project documented that it had raised awareness among hundreds of decision-makers. The project also developed the resources requested in the Resolution and has made these publicly available through the project's website.
18. *Question 2. Did the process design and execution successfully foster an inclusive and constructive dialogue among Member States and other key stakeholders; and, were the different opinions and perspectives accurately gathered in the output documents?*
19. Yes, the reviewer found evidence in the project participants' written submissions and the review interview respondents' replies to confirm that experiences with Nature-based Solutions, divergent opinions, current needs and future plans for Nature-based Solutions were aired and considered respectfully.

Recommendations

20. *Question 3. What potential follow-up actions could UNEP undertake beyond the Intergovernmental consultations and technical practitioner workshops to support the implementation and scale-up of Nature-based Solutions?*
21. The many constructive suggestions made by the Project Managers, project event participants and review respondents are summarized in the terminal review's three recommendations, in order of highest priority.
22. Recommendation 1: To support increased impact of the project's awareness-raising of Resolution 5/5 and actions based thereof, that within one year, the Biodiversity and Land Branch and Unit leaders should work with regional offices to explore ways to develop and find support for regional and topical "communities of practice" for Nature-based Solutions.

23. Recommendation 2: To align Nature-based Solutions resources within the United Nations Environment Programme, that within six months, the Unit Head, Project Manager and Communications Officer should better organize the existing project resources on the project website and reach out to colleagues to encourage their uptake of Nature-based Solutions and Resolution 5/5, in an internally consistent manner.
24. Recommendation 3: To update project outputs and outcomes and to improve monitoring methods with measurable indicators for ongoing and future projects, within three months, the Unit Head and Project Manager, with input from Evaluation Office, should strive to better integrate the use of Theory of Change tools.

Lessons Learned

25. Lesson 1: The review found that the project had documented a strong level of participation of key stakeholders, including each targeted region's Member States and many intergovernmental organizations, a balance of women and men, and, Major Groups and Stakeholders including local communities and Indigenous Peoples. Furthermore, respondents noted that they appreciated the opportunity to share in their own voices their priority topics and issues regarding Nature-based Solutions.
26. Lesson 2: The review found that there is potential for the United Nations Environment Programme to accelerate and increase the impact of the project by reaching out to engage more national-level policy decision-makers and to engage more financial resources to support further Nature-based Solutions actions.

Conclusions

27. Based on the findings from this terminal review and in line with the United Nations Environment Programme Evaluation Office guidance, the project demonstrates performance at the Satisfactory level. The Conclusions section includes details of ratings against all review criteria.
28. The project demonstrated strongest performance in the areas of Strategic Relevance due to its high degree of alignment with the United Nations Environment Assembly's Resolution 5/5. Inclusiveness of stakeholder diversity and incorporation of participants' perspectives was central to the project's performance because the aim of the project was to raise awareness and gain decision-makers' support to scale-up actions that meet the definition of Nature-based Solutions in Resolution 5/5.
29. While hundreds of decision-makers were direct beneficiaries of the project—and none rejected the project outputs or outcomes—the full impact envisioned for the project remains to be realized in the next five years. As respondents noted, national policies that would fund, test and monitor the results of Nature-based Solutions are yet to be enacted in most countries. This leaves an opportunity for the United Nations Environment Programme to reach out to national-level policymakers to offer the project's resources, and, to reach out to donors, Member States and international non-governmental organizations to encourage supportive communities of practice that are dedicated to Nature-based Solutions.

Validation

The report has been subject to an independent validation exercise performed by UNEP's Evaluation Office. The performance ratings for the "Intergovernmental Consultations on Nature-based Solutions" (SMA ID 149153) project, set out in the Conclusions and Recommendations section, have been adjusted as a result. The overall project performance is validated at the '**Moderately Satisfactory**' level. Moreover, the Evaluation Office has found the overall quality of the report to be 'Satisfactory' (see Annex X).

I. INTRODUCTION

30. This management-led Terminal Review (TR) concerns UNEP's "Intergovernmental consultations on Nature-based Solutions" (NbS, "the project") (UMOJA ID: SB-022746), conducted from March 2023 through December 2024.
31. The TR is managed by the Head of the Biodiversity People and Landscapes Unit, in the Biodiversity and Land Branch of UNEP's Ecosystems Division. Per the Terms of Reference (TOR) the TR assesses performance in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency; and, it presents the documented outcomes and impacts of the project. Also, the TR remarks upon the sustainability of the project concept and its potential for use in subsequent projects to be proposed by UNEP.
32. The two main purposes of the TR are to a) provide evidence of project results that meet the accountability requirements of UNEP and the project donors; and, b) present results and lessons learned that could help foster learning, operational improvement and sharing of knowledge among UNEP, donors and the project's key stakeholders.
33. The project was established in response to the request from Member States in UNEA 5.2 Resolution 5/5, unanimously adopted on 2nd March 2022, for UNEP's Executive Director "to further support the implementation of nature-based solutions [...], to convene intergovernmental consultations in a transparent, inclusive, regionally balanced manner, striving for gender balance [...]" (Resolution 5/5) (**Annex II**). The project addressed the Resolution's multilateral priorities and primarily served the interests and needs of Member States by means of an in-person and virtual consultation process whereby stakeholders convened globally and regionally to provide NbS examples and discuss their needs, priorities and perspectives on NbS.
34. The project was led by staff in UNEP's Ecosystem Division (based in Nairobi, Kenya), with support from UNEP Regional Offices. Two co-chairs, H. E. Mrs. Giovanna Valverde Stark, Costa Rica Ambassador to Kenya and Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to UNEP and UN-Habitat, and Ms. Sikeade Egbuwalo, Senior Forest Officer and Convention on Biological Diversity Focal Point, Ministry of Environment of Nigeria, were appointed by the President of UNEA, Dr. Leila Benali of Morocco¹. They facilitated the consultations and co-authored project summary outputs.
35. The project did not have a Steering Committee or Advisory Board. The project did not undergo a Mid-term Review. The project outputs requested in UNEA Resolution 5/5 were presented and submitted to UNEA 6 as an Information Document.
36. The budget for the project at approval was USD 1,003,961 (per TOR). Secured funds of USD 1316944.64 (per FMO, 7 March 2025) were provided by donors: Canada; France; the European Commission (EC), Directorate-General for Environment; and, UNEP Environment Fund.
37. At project inception, UNEP issued an internal waiver of exceptional circumstances². The project's concept paper was accepted by the European Commission (donor)³; it served in lieu of a project document. (There is no ProDoc for this project.) The project was conducted as part of the Nature Action Subprogramme and within the

¹ Letter from Leila Benali to the Minister of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development, Kingdom of Morocco, 31 October 2022.

² Email correspondence: C. Frechou to B. Dickson, 9 February 2023. Subject: Waiver of CRC / PRC.

Project Coordination Project, “Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity” (SB: 023357).

38. Launched in mid-March 2023, the project was initially approved for one year. Subsequently, when a budget underspend was realized, an extension for the project was requested by the UNEP Project Manager. It was approved in April 2024 and a new project end date for December 2024 (22 months duration) was agreed upon by UNEP and the donors. The extension was requested to enable the UNEP project team to supplement the intergovernmental consultations through Regional Practitioner Workshops, wherein they could provide technical information and hear about NbS needs from project participants including Member States (MS) and UNEA accredited Major Groups and Stakeholders (MGS).
39. The Reviewer, with the agreement of the current Project Manager and project team, includes both the project concept and the project concept extension in the scope of this TR and in the project’s Reconstructed Theory of Change.
40. The target audience for the TR includes: the UNEP project team and the Ecosystems Division; the project donors; UNEP regional offices; and the UNEP Evaluation Office. Potentially, the audience could include other UNEP divisions with interests or ongoing activities in NbS topics (for example, the Climate Change Division). Prospective donors and partners for future NbS-related projects to be proposed by the Ecosystems Division may also have an interest in a summary of the TR.
41. References are made to the TR Inception Report and the TR Preliminary Findings presentation which previously were reviewed and approved by the Project Manager.

II. REVIEW METHODS

42. All aspects of the approach to the Terminal Review were designed to be transparent and participatory. Methods included: a desk review of project documentation; regular discussions with the project team to facilitate communication and exchange of documents; and, virtual interviews with UNEP staff and key stakeholders who had participated in at least one event or activity during the NbS project. As explained below, some of the respondents provided comments via email.
43. The desk review sources included project documentation provided by the UNEP project team, the FMO and the NbS website (including participant-provided NbS case study examples submitted during the intergovernmental consultation process). The reviewer conducted online searches for media articles about UNEA 5 and UNEA 6, recent NDCs that include priorities for NbS, and articles regarding NbS authored by interviewees and respondents.
44. The Reviewer analysed documentation with respect to the implementation of the Project Results Framework and considered them as evidence in each step of logical pathway in the Theory of Change. [Annex III](#) lists key documents consulted. Where possible, responses including mention of NbS events, policies, conventions or international agreements were cross-checked with online document and event repositories (news articles, media recordings, publishers' websites, etc.).
45. No missions or travel were planned or undertaken for this TR.
46. In February and March 2025, the Reviewer conducted structured interviews or discussions with individuals from three main stakeholder types: UNEP staff; representatives of UNEP Member States and representatives of UNEP-accredited MGS. Criteria for consideration of prospective interviewees included: participation and role(s) in one or more project events (intergovernmental consultations and/or regional practitioner workshops); status as a donor; and, willingness to participate in the TR process. Consideration was also given to recruiting: a balance of women and men; member states and MGS; and, geographic region representation.
47. At the request of the Reviewer, the project team provided lists of event participants and suggested those who would be most likely be available for contact. Given the relatively short window of opportunity for interviews (February 2025), the Reviewer and Project Manager agreed on a target of eight to ten completed interviews. All interviews were conducted in English.
48. The TR Inception Report's Annex F includes the key questions for the review and additional questions designed to elicit information and perspectives to support assessments of performance for each of the criteria provided by the UNEP Evaluation Office. The key questions posed for the TOR were:

Question 1. Was the mandate of the UNEA R5/5 fulfilled to the scope and objectives of the project?

Question 2. Did the process design and execution successfully foster an inclusive and constructive dialogue among Member States and other key stakeholders; and, were the different opinions and perspectives accurately gathered in the output documents?

Question 3. What potential follow-up actions could UNEP undertake beyond the Intergovernmental consultations and technical practitioner workshops to support the implementation and scale-up of NbS?

49. To encourage participation, the UNEP TR project manager introduced the Reviewer to prospective interviewees via email. The Reviewer next emailed an invitation

(solely to each interviewee prospect) with three to five questions (including at least one or two key questions) tailored to the interviewee's role in the NbS project. All invitations requested that the person describe their role(s) in the project and offered a final, open-ended question to encourage interviewees to comment on lessons learned, recommendations, or, possible follow-on topics for future UNEP projects).

50. To accommodate distant time zones, language preferences or organizational practices, the Reviewer also offered invitees the option of providing written responses via email. All invitees were informed in writing that their comments would be held confidential by the Reviewer.
51. The interviewees and the Reviewer used video or teleconferencing services for 30- to 45-minute virtual interviews. Respondents were welcome to include colleagues in their interviews. As needed, the Reviewer sent reminder emails to garner as much participation as possible.
52. **Table 1** summarizes and characterizes the yield of respondents. **Annex I** lists the people consulted during the preparation of this Draft Terminal Review Report.
53. The Reviewer also requested information to support the TR process from the UNEP Project Manager and team. The Reviewer consulted regularly with the team, providing updates on progress via email and virtual discussions regarding the TR Inception Report and TR Preliminary Findings.
54. Project information gleaned from the desk review and the interviews and written responses helped the Reviewer to cross-check, triangulate, confirm and assess the quality of the project deliverables, outputs, timing of activities and participation by key players and stakeholder groups.

Table 1: Respondents: stakeholder type, number, gender (women, men) and response rate

Stakeholders (having participated in at least one NbS project event)	Number of people contacted (W/M)	Number of respondents (W/M)	Percent of respondents
Implementing agency: UNEP Project team and Financial Management Office	6 (2W, 4M)	6 (2W, 4M)	100%
UNEA Member States (including donors)	9 (4W, 5M)	5 (2W, 3M)	56%
Major Groups and Stakeholders accredited by UNEA	8 (7W, 1M)	8 (7W, 1M)	100%
Totals	23 (13W, 10M)	19 (11W, 8M)	83%

III. THE PROJECT

A. Context

55. The NbS project responded to a mandate from UNEA 5. The objective of the project was to build a “common understanding of NbS among decision-makers” (LogFrame).
56. The scope of the project was clarified by the definition of NbS included in Resolution 5/5, Operative Paragraph (OP) 1, a–d. Resolution 5/5 cited multiple global resolutions, conventions and other high-level efforts that highlight the “importance of strengthening actions for nature.” (Efforts listed in [Table 2](#).) Additional references to the context of the NbS project were made in the Project Concept agreement with the European Commission (donor).
57. Although recognizing a trend toward increased interest in and use of NbS, Resolution 5/5 identified several issues to be addressed: lack of a basis and method for analysing the effects of NbS on climate actions (OP 2); and, concern for the potential impacts of NbS products, innovations and technologies on sustainable consumption and production, particularly any risks for local communities and indigenous peoples (OP 3).

Table 2 Efforts and Reports cited in Resolution 5/5

Efforts noted in Resolution 5/5
2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals
Convention on Biological Diversity (especially CoP decisions V/6, VI/12, VII/11 and IX/7 and 14)
Leaders’ Pledge for Nature: United to Reverse Biodiversity Loss by 2030 for Sustainable Development
Rio Declaration on Environment and Development
Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030
United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa
United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021–2030 and the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development 2020–2030
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement
Efforts noted in the Project Concept Note
NbS for Climate Manifesto (UN Climate Action Summit, 2019)
Leaders Pledge for Nature (UN Summit on Biodiversity, 2020)
ENACT Partnership for Nature-based Solutions: Enhancing Nature-based Solutions for an Accelerated Climate Transformation (UNFCCC COP27)
Relevant reports noted in Resolution 5/5
Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (2019), <i>Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services</i>
Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Working Group I (2021): <i>Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis</i>
Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Working Group II (2022): <i>Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability</i>

58. OP 5 of the Resolution specified the course of action—convening of intergovernmental consultations— and three key tasks for the NbS project:

1. Requests the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, subject to the availability of resources and to further support the implementation of nature-based solutions, as defined in the present resolution, to convene intergovernmental consultations in a transparent, inclusive, regionally balanced manner, striving for gender balance, in order to undertake the following:

- (a) Compile examples of best practice in nature-based solutions, based on the best available science;
- (b) Assess existing and discuss potential new proposals, criteria, standards and guidelines to address divergences, with a view to achieving a common understanding among Member States for the implementation of nature-based solutions, including to support Member States in designing, implementing and evaluating nature-based solutions, building on existing work, initiatives and platforms, as appropriate, and without prejudice to existing efforts and initiatives of and new proposals from individual Member States;
- (c) Identify options for supporting sustainable investment in nature-based solutions and share information on bilateral and multilateral sources of finance to enable developing countries to develop and deploy nature-based solutions;

- 59. In unanimously adopting Resolution 5/5, Member States at UNEA 5 acknowledged NbS as an opportunity to grapple with “interdependencies between biodiversity loss, pollution, climate change, desertification and land degradation and their interlinkages with human well-being, including health, and the importance of ensuring the integrity of all ecosystems.” Given the environmental nature of these challenges, UNEA 5 called upon UNEP’s Executive Director to initiate and support the intergovernmental consultations, “including enabling the participation of developing countries and relevant partners and stakeholders...” (Resolution 5/5, OP 6).
- 60. The NbS project is the intervention called for in Resolution 5/5. It was conceived as a means to address the issues noted above.
- 61. The outcomes of the project were meant to increase awareness of NbS, clearly link NbS to the noted high-level efforts and begin to develop resources so that Member States and their partners and stakeholders could increase implementation of NbS for the benefit of their constituencies, especially for local communities, women and youth (OP7).
- 62. Interventions by the project were limited to virtual global and regional, intergovernmental consultations and in-person global and regional, intergovernmental consultations held in Nairobi, Kenya; and, in-person regional practitioner workshops held in Bangkok, Thailand, Nairobi, Kenya, and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Participants for events were invited from countries in each region.
- 63. No external challenges were faced by the project.

B. Objectives and components

64. The project design did not include components.
65. The outputs of the project were requested in Resolution 5/5 and are reflected in the Project Concept Agreement with the European Commission (which serves in lieu of a UNEP project proposal/plan) (UNEP-EC DG Env 2023). Originally the project concept had four outputs; a fifth was added with the approval of a no-cost project duration extension (UNEP-EC DG Env 2023). The fifth output is included in this TR. The Reviewer notes that the fifth output was not reflected in the project LogFrame because the LogFrame was not required by UNEP to be updated (as confirmed to the Reviewer by the Project Manager).
66. **Table 3** presents the project Results Framework at Review, updated for the TR with input from and as agreed upon with the Project team.
67. After the project was designed, the Co-Chairs of the Consultations acknowledged that given their mandate and the consultative nature of the process involving stakeholders and Member States, seeking agreement from Member States on “key findings” was not suitable.
68. According to the Project Managers, the Co-Chairs took sole responsibility for preparing an overall summary of the intergovernmental consultations, ensuring it accurately reflected the consultations, encompassing areas of consensus as well as divergent opinions. Thus the Reviewer has replaced “key findings report” with “*Co-Chairs Summary*” in the Project Results Framework but notes that this change was not reflected in the UNEP LogFrame.

Table 3 Project Results Framework at Review

Outcomes and Outputs	Indicators	Targets	Description
Outcome 1 (Project Concept) UNEA and Member States receive the <i>Co-Chairs Summary Information Document</i> agree the <i>Key Findings report</i> at UNEA 6	UNEA6 proceedings endorse the key findings reports include a presentation on the <i>Co-Chairs Summary Information Document</i> and UNEA 6 accepts its submission without objection.	Target: 1, Actual: 1 Co-Chairs Summary	Results achieved The opinions, issues, priorities and examples shared during the consultations are documented in the <i>Co-Chairs' Summary</i> . This comprises: the summary of the whole regional and global consultations; Appendix 1: Co- chairs' Recommendations comprising Co-Chairs' recommendations to support the implementation of NbS solutions for Sustainable Development; and Appendix 2: Resources Guide which features a compilation of relevant technical documents related to NbS. Although there were no formal requirements to report back to UNEA, the full <i>Co-Chairs' Summary</i> (with its two appendices) was prepared as an <i>Information Document</i> ,

Outcomes and Outputs	Indicators	Targets	Description
			submitted to UNEA 6 and officially introduced during a side event on the topic held by the Co-Chairs.
Outcome 2 (Project Extension) Increased awareness, understanding and uptake of NbS as per the UNEA 5/5 definition by implementing partners	Number of national or subnational entities that, with UNEP support, adopt integrated approaches to address environmental and social issues and/or tools for valuing, monitoring and sustainably managing biodiversity.	Target: (none specified; noted as “not applicable” in Final Report to donor (UNEP signed, 14/04/2025))	Results achieved (The Reviewer considered respondents’ comments and examined Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) formally submitted to the UNFCCC <i>NDC Registry</i> from January 2024 to 15 March 2025 for evidence of “uptake of NbS”.)
Outcome 3 (Project Extension) Identification of the needs and priorities of key regions for implementation of NbS, and a strategy for how these can be addressed.	Regional needs and priorities described in a final report to donor	(none specified by UNEA or by project donor agreements) One project extension final report	Project Manager’s “GPGC Programme Cooperation Agreement I-III (PCA I, II , III Annex 4 – Final Project Report,” approved and signed 14/04/2025)
Output 1 Short scoping papers on best practice ³ , on assessment of proposals, criteria, standards, and guidelines, and on financing options prepared and made available as knowledge products to inform the consultations.	Number of scoping papers prepared and disseminated to all Member States and stakeholders prior to the first global meeting.	Target: 3 Actual: 3 UNEP Secretariat drafted and released a <i>Background Document</i> which included the three scoping papers. The English version was distributed to all participants by April, 2023. Translations into UN languages ⁴	Immediate Benefits to target groups This document served as background for the experts and delegates from Member States and Major Groups and Stakeholders participating in the consultations and outlined the key issues to be addressed in the consultations. This document addressed the three tasks set for the consultations: best practices; criteria, standards, and guidelines; and sustainable finance,

³ According to the Project Concept Note, “This output will be funded by the co-financing provided to the project, and not by the contribution from the European Commission.”

⁴ Translations from English to Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish.

Outcomes and Outputs	Indicators	Targets	Description
		were posted on NbS website.	especially for developing countries.
Output 2 Regional consultations held for Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin American and the Caribbean, Western Europe and Others, to address divergences and to build a common understanding of the implementation of nature-based solutions at the regional level.	Number of regional consultation meetings held.	Target: 10 (2 per UN region) Actual: 10 (2 per UN region) In 2023, the first round of regional consultations was held virtually: • Africa, 10 & 11 July • Asia-Pacific, 25 & 26 July • Eastern Europe, 18 July • Latin America & Caribbean, 22 & 23 July • Western Europe and Others, 27 June & 6 July The second round of regional consultations for all five regions were held in-person in Nairobi, 9 & 10 November, 2023.	Immediate Benefits to target groups The regional consultations, conducted both virtually and in person, offered opportunities for regions to identify key issues and perspectives specific to their respective regions. These insights were instrumental in shaping the global consultations. The Co-Chairs' summary of the first consultations was distributed on 12 September 2023. The Co-Chair's summary of whole consultation process, including the regional consultations, was distributed on 4 December 2023. The summaries written by the regional co-facilitators of the in-person regional consultations were shared with participants and posted on the webpage of the consultations.
Output 3 Global consultation meetings held to address divergences and to build a common understanding of implementation of NbS at the global level.	Number of global consultation meetings held.	Target: 2 Actual: 2 First global consultation (online) was held on 16 & 17 May 2023. Second consultations (in person) were held in Nairobi on 11-13 October 2023.	Immediate benefits to target groups Across the consultations, 790 eligible participants registered from over 90 Member States, as well as nearly 100 stakeholder groups. Outcome documents were posted on the NbS website.
Output 4 Co-Chairs Summary Key findings report prepared on outcomes of consultations. The report will be presented at UNEA 6 and will address the three tasks: 1) Compile	Co-Chairs Summary Information Document Key findings report prepared for presentation at UNEA6	Target: 1 Actual: 1 First Co-Chairs' summary of whole consultation process, made available on 4 December 2023. The summary addressed both the three tasks set out in UNEA	Immediate benefits to target groups The Co-Chairs' summary, including two appendices, provides a comprehensive summary of the consultation process. It is available on the consultation website, together with other documents generated during the consultations, including submissions from participants. This summary, together with

Outcomes and Outputs	Indicators	Targets	Description
examples of best practice 2) Assess proposals, criteria, standards, and guidelines to address divergences with a view to achieving a common understanding for the implementation of nature- based solutions 3) Identify options for financing NbS, especially for developing countries		Resolution 5/5, and three additional issues identified by the Co-Chairs as important to the participants: 4) Measuring benefits & costs; 5) NbS for climate change mitigation; and 6) Policy for NbS	the two appendices, were submitted to UNEA 6 as an Information Document.
Output 5 (Extension) The needs and priorities of Member States and stakeholders are recorded and analyzed per region, and common concerns and opportunities are identified to enhance UNEP's support to scale up NbS implementation. Likewise, UNEP's support to regional offices' work related to NbS is enhanced.	Number of "Regional Practitioner Workshops for NbS Solutions" convened	Target: 3 Actual: 3 In 2024, three in-person practitioner workshops were conducted by UNEP staff. Latin America and the Caribbean, 09-13 September, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Asia Pacific 08-09 October, Bangkok, Thailand; Africa: 2-3 December, Nairobi, Kenya	Immediate benefits to target groups The needs and priorities of Member States and stakeholders are recorded and analyzed per region, and common concerns and opportunities are identified to enhance UNEP's support to scale up NbS implementation. Likewise, UNEP's support to regional offices' work related to NbS is enhanced, to enable UNEP to address the needs and priorities in the regions.

C. Stakeholders

69. During the Inception phase of the TR, four main groups of stakeholders were identified and described, in accordance with Evaluation Office guidelines (Inception Report). However, during the research and discovery phase of the TR, it became clear to the Reviewer that due to the "exceptional circumstances" nature of the NbS project being implemented on behalf of UNEA, the scope of stakeholders would be limited to UNEP and to UNEA's membership (Member States) and UNEA accredited MGS, all of which had a high or strong level of interest in the project, with highest or strong level of influence over the project.

70. **Figure 1** shows the main stakeholder groups considered in this Main Report: UNEP; UNEA leadership; UNEA Member States and civil society represented by UNEP Major Groups (Indigenous Peoples; Women; and, Children and Youth) and, UNEA accredited MGS.

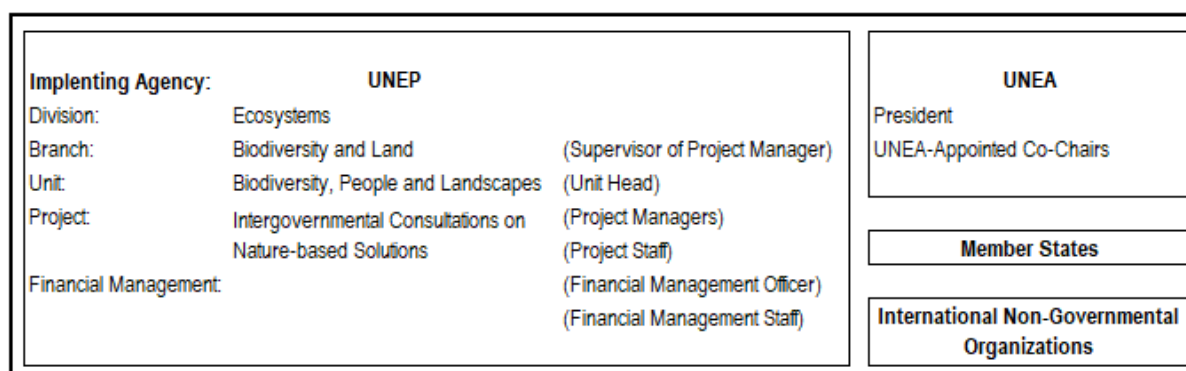


Figure 1: Organigram of the project with key project key stakeholders

71. The stakeholders with highest interest and influence over the project are UNEP Ecosystems Division and project leadership and team⁵; and, the leadership of UNEA and its Member States (including the donor countries and the appointed Co-chairs of the intergovernmental consultations).
72. Stakeholders with strong interest but less influence over the project were UNEP regional offices and the Financial Management Office; and, Member States (especially those with representatives facilitating or participating in the project events).
73. Stakeholders with strong interest but less influence over the project include MGS that were accredited by UNEA (at the time of the project) and that participated in the project events and/or submitted interventions and examples of NbS.
74. In keeping with the emphases placed on inclusiveness in UNEA Resolution 5.5, and with UN guidance regarding South-South and triangular cooperation (2016), cross-cutting characteristics of the stakeholder groups were: geographic diversity, gender balance (women and men) and inclusion of indigenous peoples.
75. In particular, the Project Managers and the Co-Chairs noted the request in Resolution 5.5 Operating Paragraph 5, "...to convene intergovernmental consultations in a transparent, inclusive, regionally balanced manner, striving for gender balance..." and in Operating Paragraph 7, to implement the project "...in partnership with local communities, women and youth as well as with indigenous peoples, with their free, prior and informed consent, as their knowledge and methods have proved effective in conserving restoring and sustainably using biodiversity." For example, the Co-Chairs Note (27 March 2023) clearly lays out how they intend to conduct the consultations, encourage stakeholder participation in accordance with the Resolution's requests.

⁵ The NbS project UNEP team leaders and members included the following individuals. NbS Unit Head: Mr. Juan Carlos Vasquez; Project Managers: Mr. Barney Dickson, Ms. Melissa De Kock (the first two UNEP leads were in BPLU/BLB and Climate Adaptation Unit (in the Nature for Climate Branch) and, subsequently, Ms. Maudie Fraser (BPLU). Project team members: Mr. Luis Pineda and Ms. Mercy Mumo. Financial Management Office: Mr. Martin Okun, Mr. Arshad Hussain and Mr. Steven Kamande.

D. Project implementation structure and partners

76. UNEP was the sole project implementer. The project stakeholder groups included UNEP, UNEA, UNEA Member States and UNEA accredited MGS. (For this TR, the three project donors, Canada, France and the European Commission, are included in the Member States stakeholder group.)
77. The NbS project was prepared in response to UNEA Resolution 5/5 which was approved in March 2022. Co-Chairs were appointed in October 2022. By October 2023 UNEP had begun to receive donor funding, arranged staffing for the project, and launched the project.
78. The Ecosystems Division resources were well-matched to the topic of NbS. Based on discussions with the current project team, the project has been well-managed and supervised, continuing beyond the initial project end date to deliver the project extension output despite changes in leadership at the Unit and project levels.
79. The UNEP Project Managers and team in the Biodiversity, People and Landscapes Unit supported the UNEP-appointed Co-chairs in arranging the intergovernmental consultations and later, by organizing and conducting the regional practitioner workshops. UNEP's Financial Management Office supported the UNEP project team. Each of the three donors liaised with the UNEP project team and the Financial Management Office. The UNEP project team provided progress and financial reporting to the donors.
80. Upon invitation from UNEP to participate in consultations and workshops, Member States and MGS contributed representatives to the events and in some cases provided meeting facilitators and submittals of examples of NbS.

E. Changes in design during implementation

81. The project design was not changed formally during implementation. However, during the intergovernmental consultations some stakeholders (among the Member States and MGS) requested additional practitioner-focused, technical information. Subsequently, in 2024, the UNEP Project Managers, with the support of the donors, responded to this need by adding a series of regional practitioner workshops to the project outputs. Delivery of this additional output was intended to enhance the outcome of the project.
82. During the project, UNEP reorganized divisions, regrouping some units into the Climate Division. Also, during the 22 month duration of the project, staffing changes occurred, including a change in NbS project leadership. These changes are detailed in the TR inception report (Section C, Institutional Context). These changes, however, did not alter the initial design of the project.

F. Project financing

83. The most recent project financing data was provided by the Fund Management Office to the Reviewer on 7 March 2025, as follows and as presented in [Annex IV](#). Funds to support the NbS project were contributed by: UNEP Environment Fund, USD 90,000; Canada USD 146755.13; France, USD 73320.76; European Commission's Directorate General-Environment, USD 748822.75; and, Thematic funds, USD 258,046. The total planned and secured funding was USD 1,316,944.64.

84. The estimated cost of the project at design was USD 1,316,944.64. Actual expenditures⁶ as of 30 April 2024 were USD 778,803.52, for a calculated expenditure ratio (actual to planned) of 59%. According to the FMO, any balance of funds remaining at closure of the project will revert to the Programme Coordination Project, “Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity” (SB: 023357).
85. As required, the UNEP Project Managers provided periodic reports to donors, including financial updates. **Annex V** assesses the project’s financial management.
86. At the outset of the project—to start on time even before all funds had been secured—the Project Managers and Co-Chairs chose to conduct some consultations remotely, to stay within the funding available at that time. Later in the project, when all funds had been secured, the Project Managers requested a project extension to conduct in-person events (regional practitioner workshops). Funding for some travel expenses was offered to one delegate from every developing Member State and two representatives from each of the nine categories of MGS (except to Business and Industry) to enable them to participate in these events. The Reviewer was provided with copies of signed Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) logs as evidence of the DSA disbursements.

⁶ Date provided per project team, 31 March 2025.

IV. THEORY OF CHANGE AT REVIEW

87. The Reconstructed Theory of Change (RTOC) statements are presented in **Table 4**, showing the statements from the project's initial TOC in the Project Concept, statements added or modified for the Project Concept Extension and finally, the statements formulated and justified for this Terminal Review, with input from and approval of the Project Team.
88. **Figure 2** presents the diagram of the RTOC. It has one logical pathway, starting from interrelated Outputs that all support the three Project Outcomes, which in turn link to UNEP's PoW Outcomes. The Outcomes lead to two Intermediate States and ultimately to Impact. Of significance to this project, the Impact achieved by this project also would contribute to many benefits that are emphasized in the Sustainable Development Goals and to two Targets (8 and 11) put forth in the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Table 4 Theory of Change Statements

Formulation in original project concept + concept extension	Formulation for Reconstructed ToC at Review	Justification for Reformulation
IMPACT		
Reduction in country-specific social, economic and environmental challenges through the use of NbS	Reduction in country-specific social, economic and environmental challenges through the use of NbS by 2030	Given that many of the strategic priorities of the Member States are linked to international conventions and agreements that have 2030 as a target date for achievement, the Reviewer and project team agreed to add 2030 to this statement.
Benefits of Impact	Benefits to human well-being, ecosystem services, resilience and diversity	Statement added to emphasize the recognition of benefits in the preamble of Resolution 5/5. The list of SDG and CBD targets linked to Impact is added to reflect the strategic priorities of the UN, UNEA Member States and MGS.
FIRST LEVEL INTERMEDIATE STATE		
A common understanding of NbS among decision makers	A common understanding of NbS is agreed among decision makers	Changed to full sentence.
SECOND LEVEL INTERMEDIATE STATE		

Formulation in original project concept + concept extension	Formulation for Reconstructed ToC at Review	Justification for Reformulation
Implementation of NbS increases	Implementation of NbS increases; UNEP helps to mainstream NbS throughout UN agencies and in conventions and agreements.	Based on the project outputs and the Reviewer’s discussions with Member States and MGSSs, this statement is expanded to emphasize UNEP’s pivotal opportunity to leverage uptake of the definition of NbS in Resolution 5/5.
PROJECT OUTCOMES		
Outcome: Member States agree the key findings report at UNEA 6	Outcome 1. Member States accept the <i>Co-Chairs Summary</i> at UNEA 6	Changed title to <i>Co-Chairs Summary</i> .
	Outcome 2. Increased awareness, understanding and uptake of NbS as per the UNEA 5/5 definition by implementing partners	Included to reflect the Project Concept Extension
	Outcome 3. Identify the needs and priorities of key regions for implementation of NbS, and develop a strategy for how these can be addressed	
OUTPUTS		
Output 1. Short scoping papers on best practice, on assessment of proposals, criteria, standards, and guidelines, and on financing options prepared and made available as knowledge products to inform the consultations.	<i>Background Document (Scoping Papers)</i>	Simplified for TOC diagram. Change to refer to one document that includes the three requested scoping papers.

Formulation in original project concept + concept extension	Formulation for Reconstructed ToC at Review	Justification for Reformulation
Output 2. Regional consultation meetings held for Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin American and the Caribbean, Western Europe and Others, to address divergences and to build a common understanding of the implementation of nature-based solutions at the regional level. Cross- regional participation for the introductory sessions of the consultation meetings will be considered.	Regional consultations	Simplified for TOC diagram.
Output 3 Global consultation meetings held to address divergences and to build a common understanding of the implementation of nature-based solutions at the global level. Subject to the availability of resources, and the opportunities for holding the consultations back-to- back with other meetings, a maximum of two will be held.	Global consultations	Simplified for TOC diagram.
Output 4. Key findings report prepared on outcomes of consultations. The report will be presented at UNEA 6 and will address the three tasks: • Compile examples of best practice • Assess proposals, criteria, standards, and guidelines to address divergences with a view to achieving a common understanding for the implementation of nature- based solutions • Identify options for financing nature-based solutions, especially for developing countries	<i>Co-Chairs Summary</i> prepared on outcomes of consultations. The report will be presented at UNEA 6	Simplified for TOC diagram. Changed title to <i>Co-Chairs Summary</i> .
	Output 5. Regional practitioner workshops	Added to reflect the Project Concept Extension's output

Formulation in original project concept + concept extension	Formulation for Reconstructed ToC at Review	Justification for Reformulation
ASSUMPTIONS		
Assumption 1. Member States commit to achieving agreement		(no change)
Assumption 2. Key Findings report wins wide support outside UNEP and Member States	<i>Co-Chairs Summary</i> wins wide support outside UNEP and Member States	Changed title to <i>Co-Chairs Summary</i> .
Assumption 3. Finance and other means of implementation available for NbS		(no change)
DRIVERS		
Driver 1. Stakeholders and partners support key findings	Stakeholders support the <i>Co-Chairs Summary</i>	Changed title to <i>Co-Chairs Summary</i> . No partners participated in the project. The donors are included as Member States stakeholders.
Driver 2. Common understanding of NbS translates into commitment to implement	A common understanding of NbS translates into stakeholders' commitment to implement NbS plans and actions	Expanded to clarify intent.
	Driver 3. NbS commitments stimulate sustainable innovation and scientific research	Noted in Res 5/5.1(d) and added to reflect needs articulated by TR respondents.

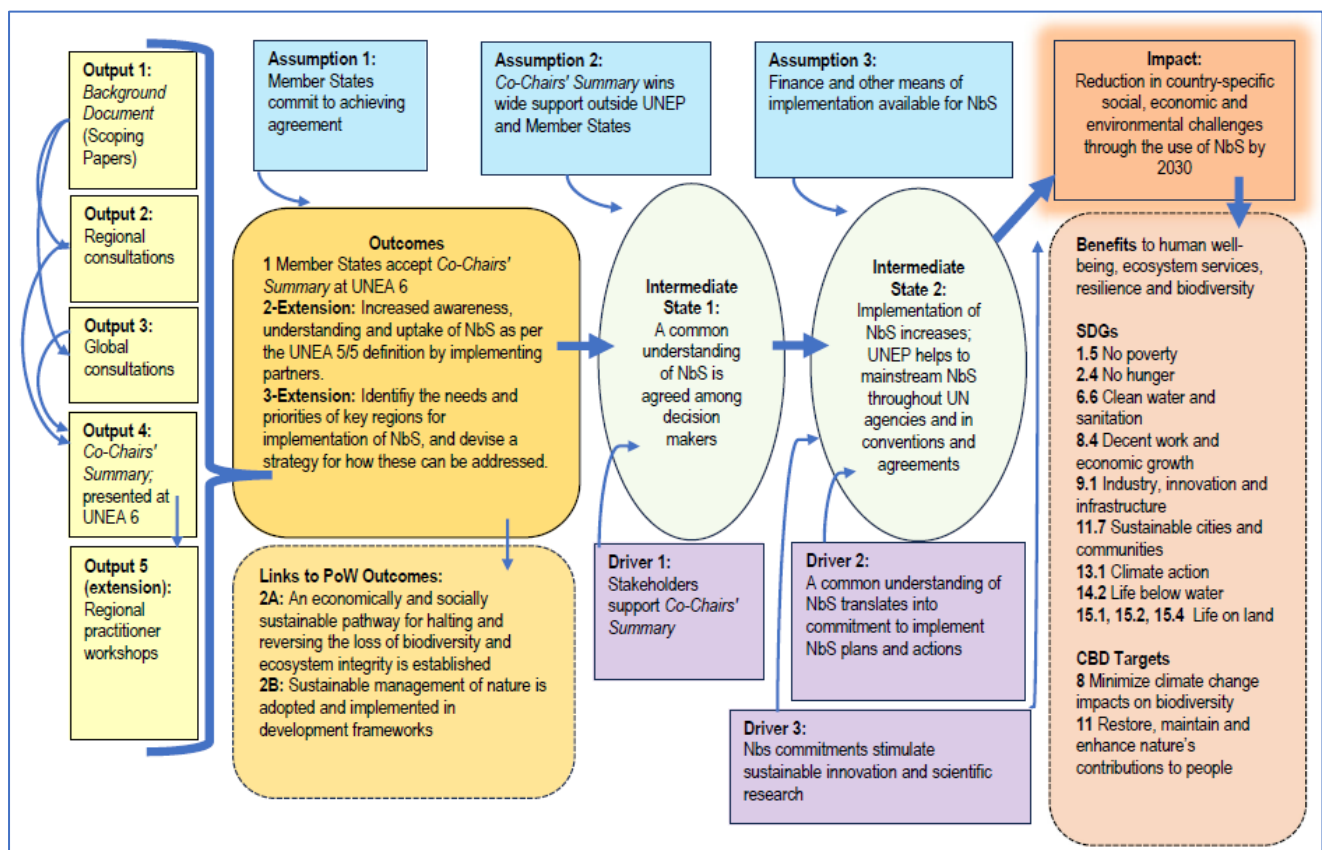


Figure 2 Reconstructed Theory of Change at Review

V. REVIEW FINDINGS

A. Strategic Relevance

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

89. The project aligned with the Nature Action Subprogramme of UNEP's Mid-term Strategy (MTS) for 2022-2025 (originally 2022-2024). It is part of the Programme Coordination Project (PCP) "Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity".
90. The project contributes specifically to Outcomes 2A, "An economically and socially sustainable pathway for halting and reversing the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem integrity is established," and 2B, "Sustainable management of nature is adopted and implemented in development frameworks." (Project Concept Form, n.d.) For the associated Programme of Work (PoW), the project contributes to three Direct Outcomes:
 - 2.5 Nature is integrated into national and international public health decision-making.
 - 2.7 Natural assets are valued, monitored and sustainably managed.
 - 2.8 A sustainable ocean and coastal economy contributes to prosperity and pollution-free development.
91. The project also supports UNEP's contributions to achieving Sustainable Development Goals 1.5, 2.4, 6.6, 8.4, 9.1, 11.7, 13.1, 14.2, 15.1, 15.2, and 15.4.
92. Discussions with the Unit Head, Project Manager and team members confirmed that the NbS project was and continues to be aligned with UNEP's strategies and priorities. They are presently preparing proposals and anticipate continued NbS-related projects. They are also planning to promote awareness of the results of the NbS project with UNEP colleagues, in an informal lunchtime presentation.
93. Many respondents noted that they are familiar with and supportive of UNEP's strategic priorities and contributions to the SDGs. They appreciate UNEP's long-standing experience with and knowledge of NbS and global biodiversity. They also regard UNEP and UNEA as valuing their perspectives and programmatic inputs. Some made these comments in the context finding other institutions involved with NbS to be less transparent or not as welcoming to South-South Cooperation.
94. Alignment, UNEP: Rating is **Highly Satisfactory**

Alignment to Donor Strategic Priorities

95. Canada's contribution was made in support of "the objectives of ECCC's Departmental Results Framework with the expected result(s) of: if) Canada contributes to reducing greenhouse gas emission and increasing climate resilience globally."
96. France's contribution was agreed via email correspondence and UNEP's submittal of a grant invoice for "extra-budgetary resources to support the NbS implementation process," (email, Annie Muchai to Clement Payeur, 13 October 2022).
97. The European Commission's contribution was articulated in a Project Concept Note prepared by UNEP and accepted by the EC DG-ENV in March 2023, specifically in support of the DG-Env "GPGC Priority area 1 – Component 4: International

environment and Climate governance,” and furthermore, for the EC’s strategic contributions to the SDGs (1.5, 2.4, 6.6, 8.4, 9.1, 11.7, 13.1, 14.2, 15.1, 15.2 and 15.4). The Project Concept Note (no-cost) Extension for the same strategic priorities was approved in April 2024 (email, Karin Zaunberger to Maudie Fraser, 22 April 2024).

98. The respective donor funds provided are included in **Annex IV**.
99. Interviews with the Member States (including some donors) and comments received confirmed that the Outputs and Outcomes of the NbS project were highly aligned with their strategic priorities and international commitments.
100. Alignment, Donor: Rating is **Highly Satisfactory**

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

101. The project’s timing and awareness-raising of the UNEA Resolution 5/5 definition of NbS was evident at CBD COP 16 where, “Decision 16.22 Biodiversity and climate change” was taken. It specifically recalls UNEA Resolution 5/5 and in its OP 3(d), urges Parties to integrate NbS into National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and relevant national targets.
102. The NbS project is relevant to Parties to the UNFCCC Paris Agreement. The application of NbS is an emerging trend for many countries that seek to integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation with increased economic and social benefits to constituents. For example, the reviewer found that 13 of 25 (52%) Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) registered with UNFCCC from January 2024 through 15 March 2025 specifically describe NbS ambitions, goals, objectives, indicators or projects. Of these 13 NDCs, 10 were placed in the NDC Registry by Member States that were registered with UNEP to participate in one or more NbS project events⁷.
103. Respondents from Member States and MGS emphasized to the Reviewer their high levels of driven-ness to adopt, test and evaluate NbS that would be most appropriate and effective in their countries and in their respective ecosystems and social communities, especially in their Percountries’ indigenous communities. Many noted the origins and legacy of NbS and the value of respecting the origins and rightful ownership of local ways of living sustainably. They also expressed a strong interest in developing mutually supportive NbS partnerships regionally.
104. Among the respondents were some who voiced concerns that Resolution 5/5 and the NbS project outputs—while aligning with their priorities—did not go far enough to advance issues of particular importance to their authentic language and practices and ownership of rights to indigenous NbS. However, they remain committed to participating in UNEA and with UNEP to advance evidence-based decision-making, sharing of data on results from NbS pilot projects and development of more detailed guidance on how to select and implement NbS that will meet their climate change crisis challenges.
105. Relevance: Rating is **Highly Satisfactory**

Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence

⁷ Member States including NbS in their NDCs published on the UNFCCC registry between 2024 and mid-March 2025 include but may not be limited to: Botswana; Brazil; Canada; Cuba; Maldives; Montenegro; United Kingdom; United Arab Emirates; Uruguay; and, Zambia. The registry of NDCs is continually updated and so additional Member States may in the future include NbS in their NDCs. Note that registration for an NbS event by of a representative of a Member State does not confirm that the individual or state actually participated.

106. The NbS project complements many UNEP projects in the Ecosystems Division, including UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and its Flagships, Generation Restoration: Catalyzing a nature-based transformation in Finance, Jobs, and Cities) as well as many present and proposed projects⁸ in the Climate Change Division. For example, many of UNEP's climate change mitigation projects funded by the Global Environment Facility and UNEP partners integrate NbS into their country and regional partners' activities.
107. The Climate Change Division's Cities Unit, in its collaborative Urban Shift program offers NbS outreach education through publications and webinars such as "Business models for financing NbS in urban climate action" and "Growing resilience: unlocking the potential of NbS for climate resilience in sub-Saharan Africa."
108. UNEP-Finance Initiative (UNEP-FI) also has featured NbS in its outreach programming, with a series of seven webinars in 2023, "Investing with Nature."

Rating for Strategic Relevance: **Highly Satisfactory**

B. Quality of Project Design

109. The overall rating for the Quality of Project Design was assessed and presented in the TR Inception Report's Annex C, using the Evaluation Office criteria and rating algorithm.
110. The weighted strengths (Highly Satisfactory) of the Project Design were its Strategic Relevance, Efficiency and Sustainability/Replication and Catalytic Effects. Other factors were rated as Satisfactory or Moderately Satisfactory. Two factors (Partnerships, and, Identified Project Design Weaknesses/Gaps) were not rated because they were not applicable due to this project's "exceptional circumstances."

Rating for Project Design: **Satisfactory**

C. Nature of the External Context

111. No negative external context factors (such as conflict, natural disasters or political upheaval) were identified prior to project initiation nor during the project.

Rating for Nature of the external context: **Highly Favourable**

D. Effectiveness

Availability of Outputs

112. All documentation of the project was posted (and remains available) on the six-page [NbS website](#) as the project progressed during 2023 and 2024. Participants in the consultations and workshops also received information from the UNEP project team via email prior to each event. For example, a *Note from the Co-Chairs* explained how each consultation would be conducted.

⁸ Other Ecosystems Division projects identified by the project team include: Strengthening the Wild Biodiversity Economy (still under development), Global Peatland Initiative, Resilient Mountain Project, and, Community-based management of land and forests in the Congo Basin.

113. The *Background Paper* (Output 1) that was prepared by UNEP to support the intergovernmental consultations was a key resource for all stakeholders; it was translated into the remaining five UN languages to increase the availability of the contents. Summaries after each of the consultations were also posted on the NbS website.
114. In addition to information prepared by UNEP and the Co-Chairs, parties to the intergovernmental consultations participated in working groups and contributed generously with a total of 80 written submissions that provided examples of NbS, issues regarding NbS and perspectives on NbS plans, policies and actions. **Table 5** Written submissions to the NbS intergovernmental consultations summarizes the written submissions that remain available on the NbS website.

Table 5 Written submissions to the NbS intergovernmental consultations

NbS Examples of practice submitted by participants (16 submissions)
Working Group: First Global Consultation on Nature-based Solutions , 16-17 May 2023 (22 submissions)
Working Group: First Regional Consultations on Nature-based Solutions , 22 June-26 July 2023 (7 submissions)
Working Group: Final Intergovernmental Consultations on Nature-based Solutions , 9-13 October 2023 (35 submissions)

115. At the conclusion of the intergovernmental consultations the Co-Chairs prepared and presented the *Co-Chairs Summary* (Output 4) in lieu of a “key findings” paper.
116. The project lacked a communications plan. The Reviewer finds that this only marginally hindered uptake of the project outputs beyond the immediate participants in the project. The project had a simple, dedicated, six-page website for document posting and downloads. This was sufficient: the website analytics provided by the project team for a limited number of documents showed a level of access that was beyond the numbers of registrants to the project events (**Table 6**).
117. The website did not facilitate any delegate interactions, as noted by some respondents who are more accustomed to using fully-featured document repositories and interactive peer-sharing platforms. These limitations reduced the likelihood of follow-up peer networking and use of the documents post-project. In turn, this may reduce public awareness of NbS, progress toward public awareness, the Intermediate States and the ultimate Impact of the project. (See RTOC, **Figure 2**) (Recommendation 1)

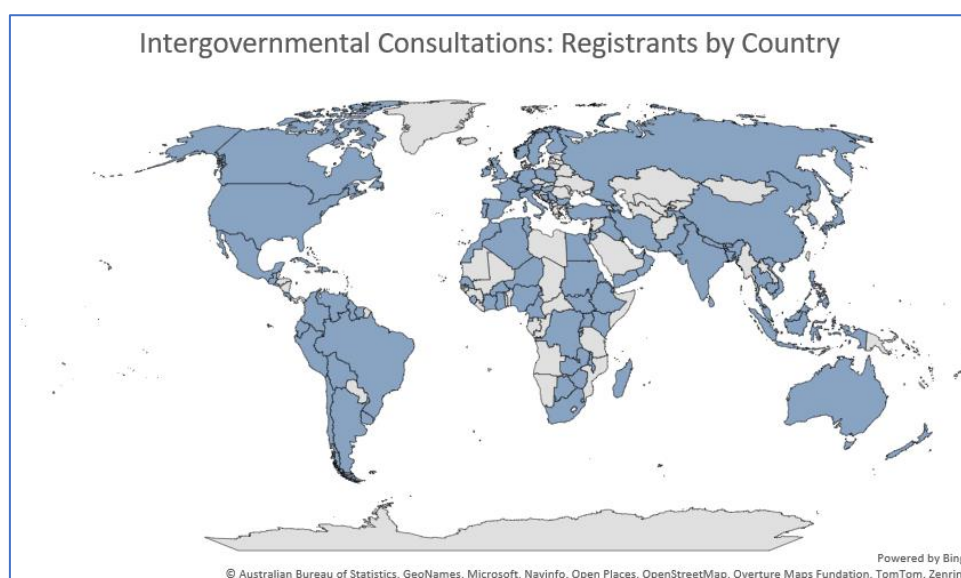
Table 6 Number of document downloads from NbS website, 2023 to 2024

Background Paper	English	1777
	Chinese	302
	French	289
	Spanish	273
	Arabic	179
	Russian	134
	Subtotal	2954

Schedule of Consultations		678
Co-Chairs' Summary of the First Global Consultation		1275
UNEA Resolution 5/5: NbS for sustainable development		62229

118. Communication with event participants was mainly via email and virtual meetings, with the exception of the in-person regional and global intergovernmental consultations in Nairobi and the three regional workshops. The consultations and workshops were not recorded for posting online but the preparatory materials (output-supporting documents) remain posted. At least two media sources (Third World Network, 2023 & 2024 and Dialogue.Earth 2023) reported on some of the project events.
119. Respondents noted that the virtual consultations were only moderately satisfactory, partly due to technical issues, and due to the apparent reluctance of some delegates to participate verbally online. The project team had advance emailed the delegates a technical guide to the online application used for the virtual consultations, but it may not have been used, or may not have been useful, for some of the participants. These concerns had been raised in the Co-Chairs Note, but a communications plan might have been better able to mitigate these problems. The project team noted that simultaneous interpretation into all UN languages was available in all of the consultations. However, language was also noted as a barrier for some participants, especially those not familiar with the six UN languages.
120. To confirm that the target audience of stakeholders acted on the availability of the regional (Output 2) and global (Output 3) intergovernmental consultations and regional practitioner workshops (Output 5), the Reviewer examined the lists of registered delegates that were provided by the project team.

Figure 3 Geographic distribution of the registered delegates to the NbS intergovernmental consultations



121. The Reviewer found that the inclusiveness efforts of the project leadership were highly satisfactory. Respondents confirmed that they observed a high degree of inclusiveness at the events in which they participated noting that both of the Co-Chairs were women, the Project Managers included women, and that the UNEP project team made a best effort to extend invitations to women and men from many

regions and Member States and to representatives of Major Groups, local communities, youth and indigenous peoples.

122. **Figure 3** shows the delegates' registrations for intergovernmental consultations by geography (indicated in dark blue).
123. For the regional practitioner workshops, a total of 70 delegates attended, of whom 56% were men and 44% women. They were from 34 Member States and 65 organizations or governments. The workshop in for the Latin America and the Caribbean region had 25 participants; the workshop in the Africa region had 30 participants; and; the workshop in the Asia Pacific region had 15 participants.
124. In addition to assessing the availability of outputs, this TR was tasked with answering key Question 2: *"Did the process design and execution successfully foster an inclusive and constructive dialogue among Member States and other key stakeholders; and, were the different opinions and perspectives accurately gathered in the output documents?"* Briefly, the answer is, "Yes."
125. The respondents agreed that their contributions were represented in the project *Background Paper*, online archive of submitted NbS examples and in the *Co-Chairs Summary*. They confirmed that they participated in discussions where divergent opinions were aired and considered respectfully. They stated that they recognized that the project was conducted for UNEA under United Nations rules, that it did not aim for consensus and that it was not a negotiation. Nonetheless, as in any open forum, some respondents were more satisfied than others, but not enough to dissuade them from continuing to participate.
126. The issue of South-South Cooperation was mentioned, as was a concern about tensions between developed countries and less developed countries being represented in the language of Resolution 5/5. Respondents acknowledged that these perspectives and discussions will continue, perhaps in other venues, such as the CBD COPs or in regional groups. The Reviewer views these comments positively as evidence of dialogue and potential future cooperation.
127. Availability of Outputs: Rating is **Highly Satisfactory**.

Achievement of Project Outcomes

128. The reviewer found that the three project outcomes were achieved, with a few caveats.
129. Outcome 1: "Member States accept *Co-Chairs Summary* at UNEA 6." The summary was presented at a UNEA 6 Side Event held in Nairobi. According to the Final Report submitted by the Project Manager to the EC, "Although there were no formal requirements to report back to UNEA, the full *Co-Chairs' Summary* + appendices were prepared as an InfoDocument, submitted to UNEA 6 and officially introduced during a side event on the topic held by the Co-Chairs."
130. The Reviewer finds it difficult to assess the achievement Outcome 1 because the lack of a requirement to report and no formal process for "acceptance" of the NbS project outcome leave only the document itself and qualitative comments from respondents as evidence.
131. Some respondents suggested that the lack of a rejection of the *Co-Chairs Summary* was equivalent to UNEA 6 acceptance. From other respondents, the Reviewer heard that there may not have been widespread acceptance of the outcome of the project but that

some delegates “went along” with the outcome as presented in the *Co-Chairs Summary* because they strongly support continued discussion and engagement with NbS via UNEA.

132. The Reviewer finds that the *Co-Chairs Summary*, a 92-page document, is well-organized, duly covers the original three topics requested by Resolution 5/5 and adds three additional topics raised during the first (virtual) round of intergovernmental consultation. The appendices include recommendations and a compendium of NbS resources. Throughout the text differing experiences, examples, opinions and recommendations from the delegates are presented. **Figure 5** shows the Table of Contents of the *Co-Chairs Summary*.
133. Respondents who were familiar with and commented on the document judged it as being a good effort at summarizing a “challenging process,” noting that it was a difficult task to organize and represent multiple consultations with many delegates voices. Respondents suggested that the examples of NbS submitted were valuable and should be further developed by UNEP into a more accessible resource.

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Measuring Benefits and Costs	11
Finance for Nature-based Solutions	12
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APPENDIX 1: Co-Chairs’ recommendations to support the implementation of nature-based solutions for Sustainable Development.....	26
APPENDIX 2: Resource Guide for Nature-based Solutions	28

Figure 4 Table of Contents of the Co-Chairs Summary

134. Outcome 2, “Increased awareness, understanding and uptake of NbS as per the UNEA 5/5 definition by implementing partners,” was achieved at a Highly Satisfactory level, as evidenced by the large number and inclusiveness of registered delegates to the intergovernmental consultations and practitioner workshops.
135. Respondents agreed that the NbS project events were unique opportunities to learn about NbS, to influence policymakers and to interact with global and regional delegates. Many commented that the UNEA 5 adoption of Resolution 5/5 had been a milestone in their own government’s, organization’s or constituents’ advocacy efforts. Some noted that even if the definition was not “perfect,” in their opinion, it represented a major step forward and they were eager to apply it to their future plans and projects. They agreed that having more people worldwide become aware of Resolution 5/5 was very valuable.
136. Outcome 3, “Identification of the needs and priorities of key regions for implementation of NbS and a strategy for how these can be addressed” was viewed by some respondents as partially achieved and as having value as a first step toward identifying NbS applicable to more specific regional environments, ecosystems and human communities. For example, the types of environments and communities highlighted by respondents included: islands and marine coastal subject to rising oceans; high-altitude arid; mountainous, deforested areas prone to flash floods and landslides; drought-prone and high-heat prone areas adjacent to deserts; and urban and peri-urban areas subject

to flooding⁹. The respondents emphasized that far more work needs to be done collaboratively via South-South Cooperation to develop their respective regional strategies, and, they are seeking “triangular cooperation” support to do so.

137. Respondents expressed a need for NbS information to be more “relatable” to their regions and to “prove” that NbS should be a national and regional policy priority as they face climate change accelerating rapidly and extremely. They suggested that financial support mechanisms and economic models for NbS that are specific to each region are crucial for NbS scale-up. They requested more awareness-raising of NbS and strategic support from regional multilateral banks.
138. The Reviewer considers the respondents observations and requests to be significant and finds that Outcome 3 is still at an early stage of achievement, with potential for far more progress before 2030.
139. Achievement of Project Outcomes: Rating is **Satisfactory**.

Achievement of Likelihood of Impact

140. Using the Evaluation Office’s “Likelihood of Impact Flow Chart,” the Reviewer considered the project’s achievements along the RTOC logical pathway, recalling the RTOC statement of impact, “Reduction in country-specific social, economic and environmental challenges through the use of NbS by 2030.”
141. The achievement of Impact is Likely because the nearly all the statements in the Theory of Change up to the first Intermediate State are partially or fully achieved or hold true (assumptions); and, the overall project achievement as of early 2025 is at Intermediate State 1 and approaching Intermediate State 2. Several respondents who are familiar with theories of change concurred with this assessment for the NbS project.
142. Achievement of Impact by 2030 will depend largely upon Assumption 3 (available finance) holding true; it was most often mentioned as a concern and a need by respondents. Also, Driver 2 (common understanding of NbS) and Driver 3 must remain in place to achieve Impact. Driver 3 (stimulating sustainable innovation and scientific research) was mentioned by many respondents who are actively conducting regional, national or local NbS pilot projects and who are seeking stronger evidence of NbS benefits to include in their proposals for funding for future NbS actions.
143. Achievement of Likelihood of Impact: Rating is **Likely**.

Rating for Effectiveness: **Satisfactory**

E. Financial Management

Adherence to UNEP’s Financial Policies and Procedures

144. The Reviewer found that the UNEP policies and procedures for the project were followed and that the budgets and financial expenditure and other finance information provided to donors in their required reports was approved. The FMO did not report any problems.
145. Financial, adherence: Rating is **Satisfactory**.

Completeness of Financial Information

⁹ Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries are especially at risk, may have unique environmental and social challenges but also have unique potential NbS, yet they are likely to lack access to financing and expertise to implement NbS actions, according to several respondents.

146. The detailed financial tables are presented in **Annex IV**, with data provided by the FMO as of 7 March 2025. The only information lacking was evidence of all disbursements for funds provided by donors. The Reviewer, with input from the project team, considers that this may be due to the NbS project being located within a Programme Coordination Project (PCP), where disbursements may be linked with programmatic fund accounts; and/or it may be due to disbursements/contributions to this project as part of larger Framework Agreements with donors, involving other projects within the same PCP.
147. Financial, completeness: Rating is **Satisfactory**.

Communication Between Finance and Project Management Staff

148. Financial information was provided upon request between the FMO and the Project Manager and updated in a timely manner, upon request.
149. The current FMO indicated that there had been change in staff in the FMO office and in the Project Management team. This required frequent meetings to ensure continuity of managing the project finances. The meetings have been helpful to both parties.
150. Contact by the FMO and communication with the current Project Manager has been regular (weekly or biweekly).
151. Financial, communication: Rating is **Satisfactory**.

Rating for Financial Management: Satisfactory

F. Efficiency

152. The project delivered the expected outputs from the project resources, operating within UNEA's rules of engagement with stakeholders.
153. Some respondents noted that there was a gap between the project participants (MS representatives and MGS) and policy-level decision-makers in their countries (national and subnational policy advisors and financial institutions and NbS practitioners in the private sector) and in their regions (regional policy-coordinating bodies and regional development banks that could potentially support pilot studies and scale-up of NbS projects most relevant to the regional ecosystems).
154. Not having all funding secured at the initiation of the project, which resulted in a shift from in-person event plans to virtual plans for the first round of intergovernmental consultations may have led to some inefficiency in achieving results because some respondents noted a lower level of engagement in online discussions versus their preferred in-person mode of meetings. However, some expenses were reduced and, (per the project team) significant carbon savings were achieved because travel for those meetings was avoided¹⁰.
155. The extension of the project remained within the anticipated budget, but entailed personnel expenses for the extra months. However, the project duration's extension did enable delivery of an additional output (Output 5, regional practitioner workshops). In sum, the project efficiency was Satisfactory.

¹⁰ The project team did not provide an accounting of carbon emissions avoided, nor of carbon credits acquired by UNEP as offsets. However, the reviewer accepts the team's assertion that lower carbon emissions were incurred because travel by hundreds of delegates was avoided.

Rating for Efficiency: Satisfactory

G. Monitoring and Reporting

Monitoring Design and Budgeting

156. The project was exempted from creating a monitoring design due to the “exceptional circumstances” waiver. If the project had had guidance and input from a Project Review Committee, it is likely that the project targets and indicators would have been more detailed and reflective of the UNEA focus on Member States and MGS.
157. Monitoring, Design: Rating is **Moderately Satisfactory**.

Monitoring of Project Implementation

158. A LogFrame was created to track progress on the initial Outputs 1-4. The targets and indicators were very simple for the Outputs, without regard to their quality. The LogFrame was not required to be updated for the project extension, but doing so could have better supported monitoring of achievements toward Intermediate States or Impact.
159. Monitoring, Project: Rating is **Moderately Satisfactory**.

Project Reporting

160. Required annual project reports to donors were prepared and submitted in a timely manner. Project Progress Reports were entered in UMOJA against standard UNEP indicators. Mission Reports for the workshops were prepared and approved.
161. A “Final Project Report: Reporting period: 01/03/2023 - 30/04/2024 and backward looking since beginning of project implementation” covering Outputs 1 through 4 was prepared by the Project Manager (De Kock, 2024) and approved on 09/07/2024.
162. Subsequently, to cover the project extension, “Final Project Report: Reporting period: 01/03/2023 - 30/04/2024 and backward looking since beginning of project implementation” was prepared by the Project Manager (Vasquez, 2025) and approved on 14/04/2025 [sic]. It explains that, “The project ended on 30/04/2024 but a no-cost extension for the use of the underspend was granted to 30/12/2024, which will be operationalized under the PCP Conservation, Restoration & Sustainable Use of Biodiversity: SB 023357. This report focuses on the objective of the original project which was to support the intergovernmental consultations called for in UNEA Resolution 5/5: Nature-based solutions for supporting sustainable development.”
163. Monitoring, Reporting: Rating is **Moderately Satisfactory**.

Rating for Monitoring and Reporting: Moderately Satisfactory

H. Sustainability

Socio-political Sustainability

164. At the Outcomes level, the benefits that were delivered through the project will need to be sustained by the Member States and MGS. The project’s documentation is a valuable asset that could be used by many of the groups that participated, but the Reviewer did not find evidence that these resources continue to be accessed post-project. The uptake of the definition of NbS in Resolution 5/5 relies on advocates driving it forward into other social and political spheres so that awareness is increased among policymakers. For

example, many of the respondents noted that they likely will continue their efforts to advance NbS through the CBD COPs but will need peer cooperation to do so.

165. Sustainability, Socio-political: Rating is **Likely**.

Financial Sustainability

166. At the Outcomes level, development of financing for NbS scale-up will depend on conditions that enable practitioners to demonstrate, evaluate and popularize the benefits of NbS. Respondents were keenly aware that financial sustainability at this time is not secure; they expressed a strong need for science-based evidence and economic analysis that would help them make more convincing arguments for financial support.
167. Financing for projects that fully respect and conform to the Resolution 5/5 definition of NbS will be especially critical for indigenous communities; they hold valuable knowledge, tools and experience but are concerned that their authentic voices and rights to natural assets are not at present recognized sufficiently. Some expressed that this project offered a small step forward, but was only moderately likely to help establish a sustainable financial pathway by 2030 for NbS that would protect their interests and ecosystems.
168. Sustainability, Financial: Rating is **Moderately Likely**.

Institutional Sustainability

169. No partners were engaged in this project. However, the BLP Unit is developing follow-on proposals with the intent of engaging this project's and other UNEP donors, Member States and prospective MGS partners.
170. Sustainability, Institutional: **Moderately Likely**.

Rating for Sustainability: Moderately Likely

I. Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

Preparation and Readiness

171. Rating: **Satisfactory**. (See Project implementation structure)

Quality of Project Management and Supervision

172. Rating: **Highly Satisfactory**. (See Project implementation structure)

Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation

173. Rating: **Highly Satisfactory**. (See Strategic Relevance; Effectiveness; Annex I. People Consulted; Annex III. Documents Consulted)

Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality

174. Rating: **Highly Satisfactory** (See Stakeholders; Availability of Outputs)

Environmental and Social Safeguards

175. Rating: **Not rated**

Country Ownership and Driven-ness

176. Xxx Rating: **Highly Satisfactory** (See Strategic Relevance)

Communication and Public Awareness

177. Rating: **Satisfactory** (See Effectiveness)

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

VI. CONCLUSIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions

178. The NbS project was initiated in March 2023 under “exceptional circumstances,” in direct response to the 2022 UNEA Resolution 5/5 “Nature-based solutions for supporting sustainable development.” The project was granted a UNEP Project Review Committee waiver to expedite its planning and launch. The timing of the project (2023 to 2024) coincided with an increasing worldwide interest in NbS. The Highly Favourable external context post-COVID enabled participants to join both virtual and in-person events.
179. The project was implemented by UNEP, through the Ecosystems Division, Biodiversity and Land Branch, Biodiversity People and Landscapes Unit. Placement within the Ecosystems Division enabled the Project Managers and team to build on UNEP’s regional offices, global network of contacts and its human and knowledge resources related to NbS and biodiversity. (Recommendation 2) The project demonstrated Highly Satisfactory performance against several criteria.
180. Notably, the project was strongly aligned with UNEP’s MTS, POW and strategic priorities, especially UNEP’s association with the three Rio conventions (UNFCCC; CBD; and, UNCCD). With funding from Canada, France and the European Commission, the project brought together UNEA Member States that also are strategically aligned to apply NbS to tackle global challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and desertification. UNEP excelled in identifying and welcoming to the intergovernmental consultations and regional practitioner workshops the MGS (including Indigenous Peoples) that have global, regional, national and local assets and experiences with NbS.
181. Inclusiveness of stakeholder diversity and perspectives was central to the project’s performance because the aim of the project was to raise awareness and gain decision-makers’ support to scale-up actions that meet the UNEA definition of NbS. With strong leadership from the Co-Chairs and the UNEP Project Managers, the intergovernmental consultations, both regional and global, served to document examples of current practices for NbS, available guidelines and potential financial resources.
182. Examples of NbS from Member States and MGS were welcomed through an open submission process. These submissions remain accessible through the NbS website. In the regional practitioner workshops, participants/respondents placed a high value on learning about each others’ NbS actions, especially those that were unique and successful in their respective region.
183. The project performed Highly Satisfactorily in its quality of management, stakeholders’ participation and cooperation, country ownership and driven-ness and responsiveness to human rights and gender equality. There was broad geographic representation in project events, with high levels of participation by women. (Lesson Learned 1)
184. Overall, the project was effective and performed satisfactorily. The outputs resulted in the achievement of the intended outcomes of the project. Regarding the project’s Theory of Change, decision-makers’ awareness of and actions toward adopting NbS achieved Intermediate Stage 1 and are approaching Intermediate Stage 2, showing satisfactory progress for a 22-month project.
185. Achievement of the desired project Impact, “Reduction in country-specific social, economic and environmental challenges through the use of NbS by 2030,” is assessed as Likely for several reasons. As more national decision-makers become aware of NbS and declare that they will employ NbS in their climate change and biodiversity strategies and other relevant national plans and policy priorities increased evidence posted in the

respective online reporting platforms¹¹ will become available and may reflect their local, national and regional NbS projects. Such evidence, especially if it references standardized indicators, will help practitioners improve best practices and guidance for future NbS actions. (Lesson Learned 2)

186. By definition, NbS generate benefits to “human well-being, ecosystem services, resilience and biodiversity.” These benefits will contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and will support progress toward two Convention on Biological Diversity Targets, #8 “Minimize climate change impacts on biodiversity,” and, #11 “Restore, maintain and enhance nature’s contributions to people.”
187. The TR findings answer affirmatively the first key question posed for the TR, “*Was the mandate of the UNEA R5/5 fulfilled to the scope and objectives of the project?*” The Co-Chairs, Project Managers and project team worked diligently to conduct global and regional intergovernmental consultations, bringing together UNEA Member States and MGS to listen, reflect and document their interests and issues regarding NbS. In doing so in the “transparent, inclusive regionally balanced manner” specified in the Resolution, they raised awareness among hundreds of decision-makers. They also developed and provided resources requested in the Resolution: a *Background Paper* (consisting of three short scoping papers) and the *Co-Chairs Summary* (in lieu of a “key findings report”).
188. To accelerate along the project’s logical pathway to increased Impact, performance on several factors (design, monitoring and sustainability) could have been strengthened. With a more rigorous design during project development, including a communications and outreach plan and a monitoring plan incorporating relevant indicators for impact, the project could have reached more stakeholders beyond those directly participating in the project. (Recommendation 3).
189. By increasing access to the project’s existing resources, UNEP has an opportunity to highlight contributions from the project participants, many of whom would like to expand on the experiences and network they had during the project by working together to devise regional NbS strategies. If project participants can secure sustainable financing from regional institutions and set up new finance mechanisms better designed for national and local community NbS actions, the potential for achieving project Impact by 2030 is Likely. (Recommendation 1)

B. Summary of project findings and ratings

190. **Table 7** provides a summary of the ratings and finding discussed in Chapter V. Overall, the project demonstrates a rating of “**Satisfactory**”.

¹¹ For examples, see:

National Adaptation Plans ([NAP Central](#))

National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans ([NBSAP](#))

Nationally Determined Contributions (UNFCCC [NDC Registry](#))

SDG Sustainable Development Goals (SDG [Reports](#))

UNEP Evaluation Office Validation of Performance Ratings:

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

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

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

In this instance the Evaluation Office finds that the overall quality of the report to be 'Satisfactory' and validates the overall project performance rating at the **'Moderately Satisfactory'** level.

Table 7 Summary of project findings and ratings

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
Strategic Relevance		HS	The rating is validated	HS
1. Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and strategic priorities	Per document review and Project Managers' reports: Highly aligned with Nature Action Subprogramme of MTS for 2022-2025, Outcomes 2A & 2B.	HS	The rating is validated	HS
2. Alignment to Donor strategic priorities	Per donor agreements: highly aligned with Canada's ECCC's Departmental Results Framework; France's grant programme; and, EC DG-ENV GPGC Priority area 1, Component 4, & SDGs.	HS	The rating is validated	HS
3. Relevance to global, regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities	Project design is direct response to UNEA Resolution 5/5. Per document review, media, and respondents: CBD COP Decision 16.22; CBD Targets 8 & 11; UNFCCC Paris Agreement: Nationally Determined Contributions from some Member States; and, projects underway or proposed by accredited MGS.	HS	The rating is validated	HS
4. Complementarity with relevant existing interventions/coherence	Direct relevance to existing and proposed projects biodiversity and climate change projects in UNEP's Ecosystems Division, Climate Change Division and UNEP-FI. Many of these projects feature NbS.	HS	The rating is validated	HS
Quality of Project Design	Strong design for: Strategic Relevance, Efficiency and Sustainability/Replication and Catalytic Effects. Per waiver for exceptional circumstances, no design was required for communications or monitoring plans.	S	The rating is validated	S
Nature of External Context	No negative or mitigating factors identified at project initiation or during implementation.	HF	The rating is validated	HF
Effectiveness		S	The rating is adjusted based on a weighted scoring of the sub-categories below	MS

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
1. Availability of outputs	All outputs were delivered on time, within budget, and were of good quality. Outputs were inclusive of key stakeholders (including Member States and accredited MGS), targeted regions, and reflected multiple perspectives. Some specific outputs requested by Res. 5/5 were adapted by Co-Chairs to better fit resources (for example: Background Paper includes 3 scoping papers; Co-Chairs' Summary delivered as an InfoDoc at UNEA-6 in lieu of a "key findings" report). Most of the outputs delivered in English (some translations made available).	HS	Although all major outputs were delivered and generally accessible, the document mentioned that some respondents found the virtual consultations only moderately satisfactory due to the technical issues and less active participation online (para 119). This affects the quality of the output and its score The rating has been adjusted to 'Satisfactory'	S

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
2. Achievement of project outcomes	Three outcomes achieved. Outcomes 1 and 3 at Satisfactory level. Notably, Outcome 2 was achieved at Highly Satisfactory level, as evidenced by the large number and inclusiveness of registered delegates to the intergovernmental consultations and practitioner workshops.	S	It is noted that Outcomes 2 and 3 were introduced during the reconstruction of the TOC in consultation with and approval of the Project Team, following an attempt to clarify the original (and only) Outcome statement, and broaden the scope of the Outcomes expected from the project's programmed outputs. Only Outcome 1 was reported to the donors during the project lifetime. It is considered as the most important outcome to attain the intermediate states, and it was not fully achieved. There are no indicators identified for the reconstructed Outcome 2 and 3, making it difficult to rate their performance. The evidence for these Outcomes relies primarily on qualitative feedback rather than on specific examples of NbS being adopted/applied/scaled. Further, the report notes that although the documents delivered by the project (i.e. outputs) were considered an asset that could be used by many of the groups that participated, the Reviewer did not find evidence that these resources continue to be accessed post-project (para 164) The rating has been adjusted to 'Moderately Satisfactory'	MS

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
3. Likelihood of impact	Considering that project is approaching Intermediate State 2, the achievement of Impact by 2030 (per RTOC logical pathway) is Likely, if Driver 1 (financing for NbS) increases and Driver 2 (common understanding of NbS) and Driver 3 (stimulating sustainable innovation and scientific research) are also advanced by project participants (including future triangular cooperation).	L	Impact is dependent on establishing the two intermediate states in the TOC. The review notes good progress in reaching Intermediate State 1 (<i>A common understanding of Nature-based Solutions is agreed among decision makers</i>); on the other hand, the establishment of Intermediate State 2 by 2030 is less likely (Implementation of Nature-based Solutions increases while UNEP helps to mainstream them) because some of the TOC Drivers and Assumptions have not held true. Finally, the Impact of the project - a reduction in country-specific social, economic and environmental challenges, through Nature-based Solutions – would require that the Outcomes are adequately achieved in order for the causal pathways to progress to longer-term results. The review findings presented in the sections under 'Effectiveness' and 'Sustainability' do not support the rating given. The rating has been adjusted to 'Moderately Likely'	ML
Financial Management		S	The rating is validated	S
1. Adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures	No irregularities noted by reviewer or reported by FMO or PMs.	S	The rating is validated but with some reservation. The review indicates a weakness in the tracking of funds transfers from the project donors – implying there were limitations to upholding UNEP procedures for financial reporting.	S

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
2. Completeness of project financial information	Satisfactory evidence presented by PM and FMO of budgets, donor contributions and project expenditures were made available.	S	As mentioned above, there were challenges in the tracking of funds transfers from the project donors. Further, an expenditure ratio (actual: planned) of 59% is reported but not explored, perhaps due to insufficient documentation. It therefore remains unclear which project activities experienced an under-spend, why it happened, and with what implications on expected results. The rating has been adjusted to 'Moderately Satisfactory'	MS
3. Communication between finance and project management staff	Per respondents, frequent and regular meetings between FMO and PMs supported management of finances and transitions during project team and FMO staff changeovers.	S	The rating is validated	S
Efficiency	Expected outputs delivered using planned and secured resources, operating within UNEA's rules of engagement with stakeholders. Initial delays in securing funds led to "hybrid" meeting approach (virtual & in-person) which may have been slightly less efficient at supporting discussions. However, a no-cost project extension enabled delivery of an additional output (in-person, regional practitioner workshops), with technical content requested by participants. Reviewer regards additional output as balancing out the inefficiency of the earlier hybrid approach, leading to an overall efficiency rating of Satisfactory.	S	The rating is validated but with some reservations. It is not explicitly clear whether the budget underspend (Annex IV, Table 9) compromised the quality of outcomes.	S
Monitoring and Reporting	Overall, the monitoring and reporting could have been improved by integrating the original Project Concept and the project extension, and by inclusion of more detailed indicators.	MS	The rating is validated. Note that, on account of the "exceptional circumstances" waiver and subsequent exemption of the project from developing a monitoring plan (para 156), only one of the sub-categories (Project Reporting) can reasonably be rated.	MS

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
1. Monitoring design and budgeting	No project-specific monitoring design or budget allocation was required (per PRC waiver). Budgets were established in each donor agreement, with the Project Concept (EC-DG-ENV serving as the main point of reference).	MS	The review indicates that the project, being exempt from having a monitoring plan due to its “exceptional circumstances” waiver, did not have a monitoring design or budget. For this reason, this sub-category is not rated.	N/R
2. Monitoring of project implementation	UNEP standard monitoring process using Logframe for progress on outputs and outcomes, and for budget and expenditures, was followed (UMOJA).	MS	Due to the “exceptional circumstances” waiver, there was no formal requirement for monitoring results during implementation. Further, the review does not provide an assessment of the Progress Reports that were entered in Umoja, to provide some insights into the quality and utility of the monitoring effort undertaken. For this reason, this sub-category is not rated.	N/R
3. Project reporting	PMs prepared progress reports, donor reports and final reports, per UNEP and donor agreements and UNEP reporting procedures.	MS	According to the review, all required project reports, and mission reports were produced regularly, met UNEP and donor requirements, and were submitted in timely manner. The rating is adjusted to ‘Satisfactory’	S
Sustainability		ML	Rating adjusted. Sustainability sub-categories are aggregated to the lowest rating, as they are considered to be mutually limiting factors	MU
1. Socio-political sustainability	Use of project resources and uptake of definition of NbS in Res. 5/5 relies on advocates driving them forward into other social & political spheres (beyond project’s direct beneficiaries) so that awareness will increase, especially among national-level policymakers.	L	The rating is validated	L

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
2. Financial sustainability	More financing for NbS actions depends on enabling practitioners to demonstrate, evaluate and popularize multiple benefits of NbS. Respondents noted insecurity of financial sustainability & expressed strong need for science-based evidence & economic analyses of NbS.	ML	The review indicates that financial support mechanisms and economic models for NbS that are specific to each region are crucial for NbS scale-up; awareness-raising of NbS and strategic support from regional multilateral banks is also needed (para 137). Sustainable financing for NbS has however not yet been leveraged/secured and there is no indication that it will be done by 2030 (para 166-167). The rating has been adjusted to 'Moderately Unlikely'	MU
3. Institutional sustainability	No partners were engaged in project. However, BLP Unit is developing NbS action proposals with intent of engaging this project's and other UNEP donors, Member States and prospective MGS partners.	ML	The report presents insufficient evidence regarding the robustness of governance structures, policies, sub-regional agreements, legal and accountability frameworks etc. to ensure the uptake of NbS as per the UNEA 5/5 definition, after project closure. The rating has been adjusted to 'Moderately Unlikely'	MU
Factors Affecting Performance		HS	The report does not provide sufficient information in the stand-alone section (Chapter I), to provide meaningful insights into the factors that affected project performance. The validation of the ratings below is therefore based on a reading of the report in its entirety.	HS
1. Preparation and readiness	Within one year, UNEP secured funds, planned the project and arranged staffing for the UNEP project team.	S	The rating is validated	S
2. Quality of project management and supervision	The project was well-managed, with significant effort made by the Co-Chairs and the UNEP Project Managers and team members to be highly inclusive and supportive of invitees and registrants to project events.	HS	The rating is validated	HS
2.1 UNEP/Implementing Agency:	Although there were some UNEP staffing changes during the project, respondents noted that the changeovers were handled with care and good communication.	HS	The rating is validated	HS

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
2.2 Partners/Executing Agency:		--		N/R
3. Stakeholders' participation and cooperation	In total, hundreds of stakeholders participated in the intergovernmental consultations and regional practitioner workshops, a strong indicator of high interest and cooperation. As documented in the project outputs participants also contributed significantly by submitting NbS examples, serving as co-chairs and facilitators of meetings and presenting issues, perspectives and suggestions for scaling up future NbS actions.	HS	The rating is validated	HS
4. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality	The project was designed to respond to Res. 5/5, which defined NbS with respect to human rights and diversity of peoples. The project responded with highly inclusivity in all respects, as reflected in the outputs and the progress along the logical pathway toward impact.	HS	Although gender and human rights were considered in design, implementation, and outputs and there is evidence of participation by women, indigenous peoples, and marginalized groups, there is no clear evidence-based analysis or interpretation of results or changes from this perspective because there were no gender-specific indicators or targets established in the logframe. The rating adjusted to 'Satisfactory'	S
5. Environmental and social safeguards	Not rated (waived by PRC)	--		N/R
6. Country ownership and driven-ness	Member States expressed strong ownership and driven-ness regarding NbS prior to UNEA 5, during the NbS project and subsequently at UNEA 6. This continuity is also reflected in the Member States' contributions to the project outputs.	HS	The rating is validated	HS

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
7. Communication and public awareness	The project communicated extensively with stakeholders to implement the intergovernmental consultations and regional practitioner workshops. Project output documentation was made available via the dedicated NbS website. Public awareness was limited by a lack of a communications plan; however, some media did cover some of the events.	S	Awareness creation efforts were limited by the lack of a communication plan. The review notes that the project website did not facilitate any delegate interactions and interactive peer-sharing platforms. These limitations reduced the likelihood of follow-up peer networking, use of the documents post-project, and public awareness of NbS (para 117). The rating has been adjusted to 'Moderately Satisfactory'	MS
Overall Project Performance Rating		S	The overall rating is adjusted to 'Moderately Satisfactory' based on a weighted scoring of the criteria	MS

C. Lessons learned

Lesson Learned #1:	UNEP is trusted to convene NbS stakeholders and to facilitate discussions in a transparent and inclusive manner.
Context/comment:	Respondents appreciated UNEP facilitating the opportunity to engage in open, consultative discussions, in their own voices, regarding their priority NbS topics and issues. Respondents noted that as a forum, this project was unique and engaged more of the potential beneficiaries of NbS (including local communities, women and indigenous peoples) than do other meetings regarding NbS.
Lesson Learned #2:	While a common understanding of NbS is now agreed upon by many of the project participants, further communication and outreach from UNEP could help to engage more national-level policy decision-makers and financial resources for NbS.
Context/comment:	The lack of a communications plan and limited numbers of national-level decision makers able to participate directly (per UNEA rules) in the intergovernmental consultations may have limited progress along the logical pathway to achieving project Impact. While the project did deliver direct benefits to hundreds of representatives of Member States and MGS, but national scale-up traceable to the project will not be possible without making the outputs more embedded in more national policies and plans. Especially critical to emphasize are the elements of the definition of NbS in Resolution 5/5 that describe human well-being, ecosystem services and biodiversity. These benefits should also be linked to potential contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals and Targets 8 and 11 of the Global Biodiversity Framework..

D. Recommendations

191. The following Recommendations are based on several sources: the Co-Chairs Summary; the Project Managers' final reports; respondents' suggestions; and, the Reviewer's assessments of project performance. They respond to the TR key Question 3, *"What potential follow-up actions could UNEP undertake beyond the Intergovernmental consultations and technical practitioner workshops to support the implementation and scale-up of NbS?"*

Recommendation #1:	For future NbS proposals, UNEP should consider a "communities of practice" strategy to support regional, country and sub-national NbS policy-making and actions. This strategy could include partnering with existing global or regional partners that already have NbS networks or related resources.
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Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	In the opinion of respondents, the project did not reach enough national-level policymakers to be effective in scaling up NbS by 2030 to respond to accelerating climate change at the national level. Also, rather than put more effort into consensus-building on global NbS guidance they emphasized the need to rapidly respond to climate change events (fire, floods, heat waves) in tangible, measurable ways that draw upon regional indigenous knowledge and regional resources. Possible communities of practice for NbS could focus on 1) policy guidance 2) pilot testing and results monitoring of local NbS projects 3) guidelines for best practice NbS for particular regional biomes (especially for those in regions that are predicted to be most at risk of devastating climate change impacts) and 4) financial mechanisms for NbS that are sustainable and accessible in the near-term. UNEP has some projects underway that include NbS in their intervention strategies and also could benefit from having communities of practice that would foster peer-to-peer exchanges. These could be drawn upon as models and resources to help plan, propose and launch a NbS communities of practice platform, preferably in collaboration with other partners, especially ones with existing platforms with features such as document repositories, best practices guidance, webinar presentation technology and peer-to-peer communication exchanges. For example, in 2023 UNEP-FI and UNDP-BIOFIN launched Public-Private Community of Practice for Nature and Development Finance. Another example is the Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction for which the Cities Unit, Climate Change Division serves as Secretariat.
Priority Level:	Highest (requested often by respondents)
Type of Recommendation	Proposal development / cooperation with existing UNEP interventions
Responsibility:	Branch and Unit leaders, working with UNEP regional offices, to explore and develop proposals with UNEP partners, donors and MGS
Proposed implementation time-frame:	One year

192. Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions--Sections: Availability of Outputs, Effectiveness; Country Ownership and Driven-ness.

Recommendation #2:	To help align UN resources around NbS as defined in Resolution 5/5, UNEP should implement an internal plan to mainstream the key elements of the definition, describe the desired impacts and benefits and increase stakeholder access to the project's existing resources (outputs) via the NbS website.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	This project offers valuable existing resources that are as yet underutilized. If recognized and promoted by Branches outside of the Ecosystems Division, the NbS outputs would be used by more countries to achieve the project's Impact by 2030. Additional donors and finance institutions could also be made aware of the project by UNEP regional offices. The posted documents should be organized by topic area and filters added to identify items of interest by key word searches. Adding to each

	document a searchable title page with author names, dates and keywords (in the language of the document) would make the documents citation-compatible and be a simple way to make these NbS resources more accessible via search engines.
Priority Level:	Medium
Type of Recommendation	Internal communications
Responsibility:	Unit Head,, Project Manager and Communications Officer
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Six months

193. Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions--Sections: Availability of Outputs, Effectiveness

Recommendation #3:	For future projects (not limited to NbS as a topic), UNEP project managers should better integrate the use of Theory of Change and monitoring methods with relevant, measurable indicators, applying and adapting these tools throughout the project to achieve and track greater impact, faster.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	UNEP's present method of project management, tracking and evaluation did not encourage adaptive design or management to focus this project on accelerating and achieving greater impact. For example, the NbS TOC was created early in the proposal/designprocess but was not updated dynamically during project implementation or during the preparation for the Terminal Review. Although the Evaluation Office provides many tools, templates and guidance documents, they were not used proactively. Future NbS project designs and monitoring plans could benefit from incorporating indicators that are adopted in the relevant international agreements. (188)
Priority Level:	High
Type of Recommendation	Project Management and preparation for review
Responsibility:	Unit Head and Project Manager, with input from Evaluation Office
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Three months

194. Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions--Sections: Theory of Change; Likelihood of Impact; Findings and performance ratings

ANNEX I. PEOPLE CONSULTED DURING THE REVIEW
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Listed in alphabetical order of family name

1. Xiomara Acevedo, Barranquilla+20
2. Nicolas Barber, Environment and Climate Change Canada
3. Kathryn Bimson, IUCN
4. Helena Borges, (*consultant to*) Instituto Raoni
5. Maudie Fraser, UNEP
6. Elvina Henriette, Terrestrial Restoration Action Society of Seychelles
7. Maya Hunt, Department of Conservation, New Zealand
8. Arshad Hussain, UNEP
9. Steven Kamanade, UNEP
10. Barney Kgope, Department of Environmental Affairs, South Africa
11. Rakib Miah, UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
12. Mercy Mumo, UNEP
13. Luis Pineda Salazar, UNEP
14. Cheyenne Rendon, Society of Native Nations
15. Edwin Seah, SCeNe Coalition
16. Bandana Shakya, ICIMOD
17. Ruth Spencer, Marine Ecosystem Protected Areas Trust
18. Juan Carlos Vasquez, UNEP
19. Karin Zaunberger, European Commission Directorate General—Environment

ANNEX II. UNEA RESOLUTION 5/5

Text of Resolution 5/5

UNEP/EA.5/Res.5 Distr.: General 7 March 2022 Original: English. United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme Fifth session Nairobi (hybrid), 22 and 23 February 2021 and 28 February–2 March 2022

Resolution adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly on 2 March 2022

5/5. Nature-based solutions for supporting sustainable development

The United Nations Environment Assembly,

Underlining the importance of strengthening actions for nature for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the Convention on Biological Diversity and other biodiversity-related conventions, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement adopted thereunder, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021–2030 and the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development 2020–2030; looking forward to the adoption and implementation of an ambitious, balanced, practical, effective and robust post-2020 global biodiversity framework; and noting the Leaders' Pledge for Nature: United to Reverse Biodiversity Loss by 2030 for Sustainable Development,

Welcoming the report by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services entitled *Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*¹² and the contribution of Working Group I, entitled *Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis*,¹³ and Working Group II, entitled *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*,¹⁴ to the sixth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and taking note of other relevant reports,

Recognizing the interdependencies between biodiversity loss, pollution, climate change, desertification and land degradation and their interlinkages with human well-being, including health, and the importance of ensuring the integrity of all ecosystems,

¹² Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, *Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services* (Bonn, Germany, IPBES secretariat, 2019).

¹³ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis*. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (Cambridge University Press, 2021).

¹⁴ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability*, Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (Cambridge University Press, 2022)

Recognizing also that a key opportunity for strengthening actions for nature to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals is to enhance cooperation, implementation and the scaling up of nature-based solutions, while ensuring their social and environmental safeguards, given that nature-based solutions are efficient and effective when designed on a context-specific basis to achieve multiple benefits and applied in accordance with the best available science,

Recalling decisions V/6, VI/12, VII/11 and IX/7 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity on the ecosystem approach, and its decision 14/5 on biodiversity and climate change, and recognizing, for the parties to the Convention, the indispensable role of the Convention in the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biodiversity and in the integrated management of natural resources,

Acknowledging the need for a multilaterally agreed definition of the concept of nature-based solutions, cognizant of and in harmony with the concept of ecosystem-based approaches, and in the light of concerns about the potential misuse of the concept of nature-based solutions,

1. *Decides* that nature-based solutions are actions to protect, conserve, restore, sustainably use and manage natural or modified terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems which address social, economic and environmental challenges effectively and adaptively, while simultaneously providing human well-being, ecosystem services, resilience and biodiversity benefits, and recognizes that nature-based solutions:

(a) Respect social and environmental safeguards, in line with the three “Rio conventions” (the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), including such safeguards for local communities and indigenous peoples;

(b) Can be implemented in accordance with local, national and regional circumstances, consistent with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and can be managed adaptively;

(c) Are among the actions that play an essential role in the overall global effort to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, including by effectively and efficiently addressing major social, economic and environmental challenges, such as biodiversity loss, climate change, land degradation, desertification, food security, disaster risks, urban development, water availability, poverty eradication, inequality and unemployment, as well as social development, sustainable economic development, human health and a broad range of ecosystem services;

(d) Can help to stimulate sustainable innovation and scientific research;

2. *Recognizes* that nature-based solutions may contribute significantly to climate action, while recognizing the need for analysis of their effects, including in the long term, and acknowledging that they do not replace the need for rapid, deep and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, but can improve action for adaptation and resilience to and mitigation of climate change and its impact;

3. *Also recognizes* the potential of sustainable and environmentally sound bio-based products, innovation and technologies that result from nature-based solutions,

when they contribute to sustainable consumption and production and are beneficial to nature and consistent with international commitments and relevant multilateral agreements on biodiversity, climate, environment and sustainable development, while cognizant of the potential associated risks, including for local communities and indigenous peoples;

4. *Acknowledges* that the concept of nature-based solutions is cognizant of and in harmony with the concept of ecosystem-based approaches identified under the Convention on Biological Diversity and other management and conservation approaches carried out under existing national policy and legislative frameworks and established under relevant multilateral environmental agreements;

5. *Requests* the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, subject to the availability of resources and to further support the implementation of nature-based solutions, as defined in the present resolution, to convene intergovernmental consultations in a transparent, inclusive, regionally balanced manner, striving for gender balance, in order to undertake the following:

(a) Compile examples of best practice in nature-based solutions, based on the best available science;

(b) Assess existing and discuss potential new proposals, criteria, standards and guidelines to address divergences, with a view to achieving a common understanding among Member States for the implementation of nature-based solutions, including to support Member States in designing, implementing and evaluating nature-based solutions, building on existing work, initiatives and platforms, as appropriate, and without prejudice to existing efforts and initiatives of and new proposals from individual Member States;

(c) Identify options for supporting sustainable investment in nature-based solutions and share information on bilateral and multilateral sources of finance to enable developing countries to develop and deploy nature-based solutions;

6. *Also requests* the Executive Director, subject to the availability of resources, to support the intergovernmental consultations, including enabling the participation of developing countries and relevant partners and stakeholders, consistent with applicable United Nations rules;

7. *Calls upon* Member States and the Executive Director, in collaboration with other relevant United Nations entities, to support the implementation of the present resolution in partnership with local communities, women and youth as well as with indigenous peoples, with their free, prior and informed consent, as their knowledge and methods have proved effective in conserving, restoring and sustainably using biodiversity;

8. *Calls upon* Member States to follow a country-driven, gender-responsive, participatory and fully transparent approach when designing, implementing and monitoring nature-based solutions.

ANNEX III. KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

PROJECT OUTPUTS

UNEP. n. d. Background paper: Prepared by UNEP to support the intergovernmental consultations on nature-based solutions.

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De Kock, Melissa. Intergovernmental consultations on Nature-based Solutions. Operational Project Closure Template. [Project Start Date (March/2023) Project End Date (April/2024). Prepared for UN Environment Programme. [unsigned report provided by project team].

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CBD. n.d. Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, Target 8: Minimize the Impacts of Climate Change on Biodiversity and Build Resilience. <https://www.cbd.int/gbf/targets/8>

UNEP. 2022. Resolution adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly on 2 March 2022, "5/5. Nature-based solutions for supporting sustainable development." <https://www.unep.org/resources/resolutions-treaties-and-decisions/UN-Environment-Assembly-5-2>

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ANNEX IV. PROJECT BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES

Table 8 Project Funding Sources (FMO data, from Steven Kamanade, 7 March 2025)

Funding by source (life of project)	Planned funding (USD)	% of planned funding	Secured funding ¹⁵ (USD)	% of secured funding
<i>Cash</i>				
Funds from the Environment Fund	90,000.00	7%	90,000.00	7%
Funds from the Regular Budget	-	-	-	-
Extra-budgetary funding: EC DG-ENV	748,822.75	59%	748,822.75	59%
Extra-budgetary funding: Canada	146,755.13	11%	146,755.13	11%
Extra-budgetary funding: France	73,320.76	2%	73,320.76	2%
Extra-budgetary funding: Thematic Funds	258,046.00	20%	258,046.00	20%
Sub-total: Project Funding (Cash contributions)	1,316,944.64		1,316,944.64	100%
<i>In-kind</i>				
Environment Fund staff-post costs	n.a.		n.a.	
Regular Budget staff-post costs				
Extra-budgetary funding for staff-posts (listed per donor)				
Sub-total: In-kind contributions				
<i>Co-financing*</i>				
Co-financing cash contribution				
Co-financing in-kind contribution				
Sub-total: Co-financing contributions				
Total	1,316,944.64		1,316,944.64	

Table 9 Expenditure by Outcome/Output (FMO data, from Steven Kamanade, 7 March 2025)

Component/sub-component/output	Estimated cost at design (USD)	Actual Cost expenditure (USD)	Expenditure ratio (actual/planned)	Overspend / Underspend (estimated cost-actual cost) (USD)
Outcome 1: Member States agree on the key findings report at UNEA 6	USD 1,316,944.64	USD 778,803.52	59.14%	538,141.12

¹⁵ Secured funding refers to received funds and does not include funding commitments not yet realised.

ANNEX V. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Table 10 Financial Management

NON-GEF PROJECT			
Financial management components:		Rating	Evidence/ Comments
1. Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures:		HS	
Any evidence that indicates shortcomings in the project's adherence ¹⁶ to UNEP or donor policies, procedures or rules		No	No problems noted, per discussions with Project Manager and FMO
2. Completeness of project financial information¹⁷:		S	
Provision of key documents to the reviewer (based on the responses to A-H below)			
A.	Co-financing and Project Cost's tables at design (by budget lines)	Yes	Provided in TOR.
B.	Revisions to the budget	n.a.	None.
C.	All relevant project legal agreements (e.g. SSFA, PCA, ICA)	Yes	Canada agreement; France; European Commission Project concept and project extension. Copies of email approvals in lieu of signed agreements.
D.	Proof of fund transfers	No	Not provided.
E.	Proof of co-financing (cash and in-kind)	n.a.	
F.	A summary report on the project's expenditures during the life of the project (by budget lines, project components and/or annual level)	Yes	Provided by FMO, data as of 7 March 2025/
G.	Copies of any completed audits and management responses (<i>where applicable</i>)	n.a.	
H.	Any other financial information that was required for this project	Yes	Signed logs of disbursements for Daily Subsistence Allowance for participants in the Regional Workshops were provided
3. Communication between finance and project management staff		S	
Project Manager's level of awareness of the project's financial status.		S	The current FMO indicated that there had been change in staff in the FMO office and in the Project Management team. This required frequent meetings to ensure continuity of understanding the project finances. The frequent meetings were helpful to both offices.
Fund Management Officer's knowledge of project progress/status when disbursements are done.		S	
Level of addressing and resolving financial management issues among Fund Management Officer and Project Manager.		MS	
Contact/communication between & by Fund Management Officer & Project Manager during the preparation of financial and progress reports.		S	Contact and communication has been regular and satisfactory.
Project Manager and Fund Management Officer responsiveness to financial requests during the review process		HS	Financial information was provided and updated in a timely manner, upon request.
Overall rating		S	

¹⁶ If the Review raises concerns over adherence with policies or standard procedures, a recommendation may be given to cover the topic in an upcoming audit, or similar financial oversight exercise.

¹⁷ See also document 'Criterion Rating Description' for reference

ANNEX VI. BRIEF CV OF THE REVIEWER

Kathryn M. Conway

Profession	Research and evaluation consultant
Nationality	USA
Country experience	• Europe: France, Germany, Sweden • Americas: Canada, Chile, USA • Asia: China, Japan, India, The Philippines • Oceania: New Zealand
Education	• MS in Technical Communication, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute • BA in Biology, Swarthmore College • Board-certified Editor in the Life Sciences (BELS)

Short biography

Ms. Conway is an independent consultant with three decades of experience developing, managing and evaluating international market transformation and climate change mitigation programs that respond to stakeholder needs and environmental concerns. She also has edited and illustrated publications on flora and fauna in diverse ecosystems worldwide.

From 2012 to 2015, Conway served as UNEP Programme Officer for the UNEP/GEF “en.lighten initiative.” Subsequently, she authored or edited the following UNEP publications:

- 2024. Terminal Review of the UNEP/GEF project, “Zero Carbon Buildings for All: from Energy Efficiency to Decarbonization, 2021 to 2023.
- 2022. Interim Review of the United Nations Environment Programme “Seed Capital Assistance Facility II,” Project 124.4 and PIMS 1657, January 2018 to June 2022.
- 2022. Terminal Review of the Cities and Lifestyles Work of UNEP under “PoW 618 UN Environment Cities Hub” and “PIMS ID 02069” July 2019 to June 2022.
- 2021. Interim Review of the United Nations Environment Programme Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction (GlobalABC) PIMS ID 2069, December 2015 to June 2021.
- 2021. Mid Term Review Report: UNEP/GEF Global Program 9083 to Leapfrog Markets to Energy Efficient Lighting, Appliances and Equipment and Project 9337.
- 2018. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF Project: Scaling up the Sustainable Energy for All Building Efficiency Accelerator.
- 2016. [Technical copy editor.] UNEP/International Resource Panel’s Green Energy Choices: The Benefits, Risks and Trade-Offs of Low-Carbon Technologies for Electricity Production.
- 2015. Terminal Review of the UNEP Project: Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action (NAMA) Development for the Building Sector in Asia.

Prior to 2001, Conway was employed by: Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, School of Architecture, and, School of Humanities and Social Sciences; New York State Department of Education, Science Service; and, the United States Department of Agriculture, Agriculture Research Service.

ANNEX VII. REVIEW TOR (WITHOUT ANNEXES)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terminal Review of the UNEP project

"Intergovernmental consultations on Nature-based Solutions" (SMA ID: 157481; UMOJA ID: SB-023357)

Section 1: PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

(This section describes what is to be reviewed. Key parameters are: project timeframe, funding envelope, results framework and geographic scope)

1. Project General Information

Table 1. Project summary

UNEP PIMS ID/SMA ¹ ID:	157841	Grant ID ² (if applicable):	SB-023357
UNEP Management (Division/Branch/Unit):	Ecosystem Division		
Implementing Partners:	UNEP implemented project.		
Sources of Funding:	Country ³ (ies): France, Canada	Institution ⁴ Name/Type: European Commission	
Relevant SDG(s):	SDGs: 1.5, 6.6, 8.4, 9.1, 11.7, 13.1, 14.2, 15.1,15.2, 15.4		
MTS (all that apply):	(2022-2025)	UNEP approval date:	17th March 2023
POW Direct Outcome(s) number/reference (applicable for projects approved from 2022): OR POW Output(s) number/reference (applicable for projects approved pre-2022)	POW Direct Outcome: 2.5, 2.7, 2.8	MTS 2025 Outcome(s) number/reference (applicable for projects approved from 2022):	MTS 2025 Outcome: Outcome 2A & 2B
	POW Output: N.A.	OR POW Expected Accomplishment(s) number/reference (applicable for projects approved pre-2022):	POW Expected Accomplishment: N.A.
Sub-programme:	Nature Action	Programme Coordination Project:	PCP: Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity SB: 023357
Expected start date:	01/03/2023	Actual start date:	17/03/2023
Planned completion date:	30/04/2024	Actual operational completion date:	30/04/2024
Planned total project budget ⁵ at approval:	1,003,961.00	Actual total expenditures reported as of [date]:	922,312.04 (As of 30/05/2024)
Planned Extra-budgetary Funds ⁶ :	Cash: 1,003,961.00 In-kind: 0.00	Secured Extra-budgetary Funds:	Cash: 1,224,264.51 In-kind: 0.00
		Actual Extra-budgetary Funds expenditures reported as of [date]:	Cash: 779,504.44 (as of 30/05/2024)

¹ SMA refers to the ID provided by the Integrated Planning, Management and Reporting Solution (IPMR) system, which was introduced by UNEP in July 2023.

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

³ Where applicable, list countries who have provided project funds and/or co-finance.

⁴ Indicate where funding institutions are any/all of the following: Foundation/NGO; Private Sector; UN Body; Multilateral Fund; Environment Fund; Other.

⁵ Total budget may include; Regular Budget, Environment Fund, Extra-Budgetary, including 'softly-earmarked' etc.

⁶ Extra-budgetary funds may include co-finance (cash/in-kind)

First disbursement:	N.A.	Planned date of financial closure:	<i>Estimated 1 year after operational completion.</i> 30/04/2025
No. of formal project revisions:	0	Date of last approved project revision:	N.A.
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	0	Date of Last Steering Committee meeting:	N.A.
Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (planned date):	N.A.	Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (actual date):	N.A.
Terminal Evaluation (planned date):	N.A.	Terminal Evaluation (actual date):	N.A.
Coverage – Implementing Country(ies):	Global	Coverage – Implementing Region(s):	Global
Dates of previous project phases:	N.A.	Status of future project phases:	N.A.

1. Project Rationale⁷

This project responded to the unanimous request for Intergovernmental consultations on nature-based solutions in Resolution 5/5 “Nature-based solutions for supporting sustainable development”, adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly on 2nd March 2022. The project therefore reflects multilateral priorities, as evidenced by the passing of the resolution.

The aim of the consultations was “to further support the implementation and scale-up of nature-based solutions” which significantly supports the Nature Action pillar of UNEP’s MTS and PoW and UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. NbS have the potential to support all 17 SDGs, especially 2, 3, 6, 11, 13, 14, 15. The purpose of these consultations was to foster a shared understanding of NbS among decision-makers and to address three specific tasks related to compilation of examples of best practices, to assess existing and potential principles, criteria and standards and to identify options for sustainable financing.

The broader context for this project was based on the growing prominence of nature-based solutions (NbS) in global and national policy agenda in recent years. The project was therefore highly relevant to global, regional, and national environmental priorities and aligned with the strategies of funding partners such as the European Union, European Commission, France, and Canada. The project provided a fruitful discussion as well as a space in which many countries and all regions were able to express their priorities and needs. Furthermore, the funds also covered various activities in the preparation of a short scoping paper which covers the three topics that were addressed by the regional and global consultations.

The concept of the project was based on the UNEA resolution, and the outcome and outputs developed in line with this. The resolution also requested UNEP to support the intergovernmental consultations, including enabling the participation of developing countries and relevant partners and stakeholders, consistent with applicable United Nations rules.

2. Project Results Framework

Objective: Common understanding of NbS among decision makers.

Outcome: Member States agree the key findings report at UNEA 6.

Output 1: Developing scoping papers on best practice, on assessment of proposals, criteria, standards and guidelines, and on financing options prepared and made available as knowledge products to inform the consultations.

Output 2: Regional consultation meetings held for Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin American and the Caribbean, Western Europe and Others, to address divergences and to build a common understanding of the implementation of nature-based solutions at the regional level. Cross-regional participation for the introductory sessions of the consultation meetings will be considered.

Output 3: Global consultation meetings held to address divergences and to build a common understanding of the implementation of nature-based solutions at the global level. Subject to the availability of resources, and the opportunities for holding the consultations back-to-back with other meetings, a maximum of two will be held.

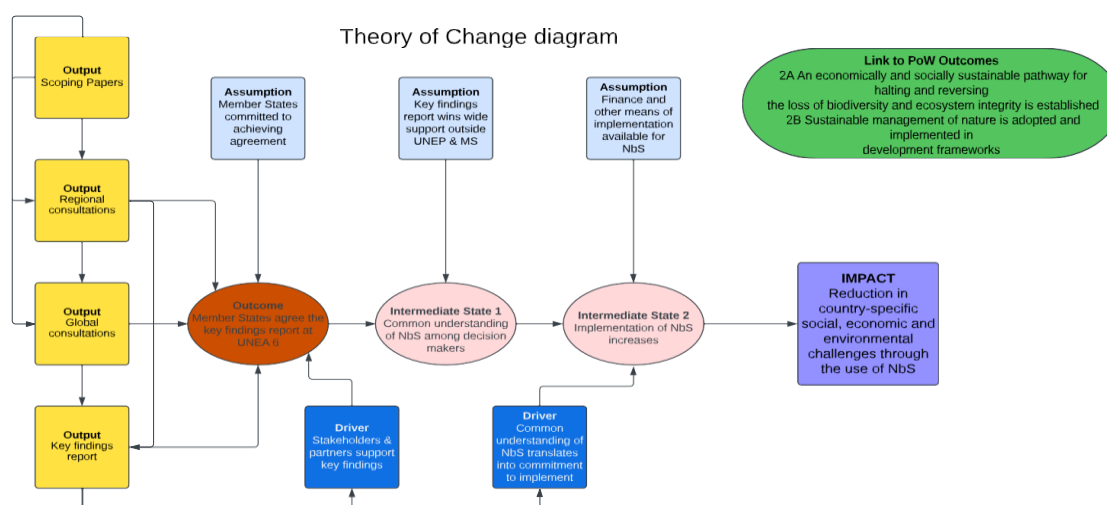
Output 4: Key findings report prepared on outcomes of consultations. The report was presented at UNEA 6 and addressed the following three tasks:

- Compiled examples of best practice
- Assessed proposals, criteria, standards and guidelines to address divergences with a view to achieving a common understanding for the implementation of nature-based solutions.
- Identified options for financing nature-based solutions, especially for developing countries.

Table 1: Results Framework			
Outcome 1	Indicator(s)	Target vs. Actual result	Description of the results achieved
Member States agree the key findings report at UNEA 6	UNEA6 proceedings endorse the key findings reports	Target: 1 Actual: 1 The Co-Chairs of the Consultations acknowledged that given their mandate and the consultative nature of the process involving stakeholders and Member States, seeking agreement from Member States on the 'key findings' was not suitable. They took sole responsibility for preparing the overall summary, ensuring it accurately reflected the consultations, encompassing areas of consensus as well as divergent opinions.	The opinions, issues, priorities and examples shared during the consultations are documented in the <u>Co-Chairs' Summary</u>. This comprises: the summary of the whole regional and global consultations; <u>Appendix 1: Co-chairs' Recommendations</u> comprising Co-Chairs' recommendations to support the implementation of nature-based solutions for Sustainable Development; and <u>Appendix 2: Resources Guide</u> which features a compilation of relevant technical documents related to Nature-based Solutions. Although there were no formal requirements to report back to UNEA, the full Co-Chairs' Summary + appendices was prepared as an InfDocument, submitted to UNEA 6 and officially introduced during a side event on the topic held by the Co-Chairs.
Output (s)	Indicator(s)	Target vs. Actual result	Description on immediate benefits to target groups
Output 1. Short scoping papers on best practice, on assessment of proposals, criteria, standards, and guidelines, and on financing options prepared and made available as knowledge products to inform the consultations.	Number of scoping papers prepared and disseminated to all MS and stakeholders prior to the first global meeting.	Target: 3 Actual: 3 UNEP Secretariat drafted and released a <u>Background Document</u> which included the three scoping papers. The English version of was distributed to all participants by April, 2023. Translations into all UN languages were subsequently posted on the consultations' website.	This document served as background for the participating experts and delegates from Member States of the consultations and outlined the key issues to be addressed in the consultations. This document addressed the three tasks set for the consultations: best practices; criteria, standards, and proposals; and sustainable finance, especially for developing countries.

Output 2. Regional consultation meetings held for Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin American and the Caribbean, Western Europe and Others, to address divergences and to build a common understanding of the implementation of nature-based solutions at the regional level. Cross-regional participation for the introductory sessions of the consultation meetings will be considered.	Number of regional consultation meetings held.	Target: 10 (2 per UN region) Actual: 10 (2 per UN region) The first round of regional consultations was held, virtually, as follows: Africa – 10 & 11 Jul 2023; Asia-Pacific – 25 & 26 Jul; Eastern Europe – 18 Jul; Latin America & Caribbean – 22 & 23 Jul; Western Europe and Others – 27 Jun & 6 Jul. 2° round of regional consultations for all 5 regions were held in-person in Nairobi on 9 & 10 Nov. 2023.	The regional consultations, conducted both virtually and in person, offered a significant opportunity for regions to identify key issues and perspectives specific to their respective regions. These insights were instrumental in shaping the global consultations. The Co-Chairs' summary of the first consultations was distributed on 12 September and the Co-Chair's summary of whole consultation process, including the regional consultations, was distributed on 4 December 2023.
Output 3. Global consultation meetings held to address divergences and to build a common understanding of the implementation of nature-based solutions at the global level. Subject to the availability of resources, and the opportunities for holding the consultations back-to-back with other meetings, a maximum of two will be held.	Number of global consultation meetings held.	Target: 2 Actual: 2 First global consultation (online) was held on 16 & 17 May. Second global consultations (in person) held in Nairobi on 11-13 Oct.	The first global consultations were held on 16-17 May 2023. The second global consultations were held in person, in October 2023 in Nairobi. Across the consultations, 790 eligible participants registered from over 90 Member States, as well as nearly 100 stakeholder groups. The outcome documents from these consultations can be found here.
Output 4. Key findings report prepared on outcomes of consultations. The report will be presented at UNEA 6 and will address the three tasks: • Compile of examples of best practice • Assess proposals, criteria, standards, and guidelines to address divergences with a view to achieving a common understanding for the implementation of nature-based solutions • Identify options for financing nature-based solutions, especially for developing countries	Key findings report prepared for presentation at UNEA6	Target: 1 Actual: 1 Co-Chairs' summary of whole consultation process, made available on 4 Dec. The summary addressed both the three tasks set out in UNEA Resolution 5/5, and three additional issues identified by the Co-Chairs as important to the participants (Measuring benefits & costs; Nature-based solutions for climate change mitigation; and Policy for nature-based solutions)	The Co-Chairs' summary, including the 2 appendices, provides a comprehensive summary of the consultation process. It is available on the consultation website, together with other documents generated during the consultations, including submissions from participants. As per Outcome 1, the Co-Chairs deemed it more appropriate to prepare a summary of the process from their perspective than a 'key findings report' per se, due to the nature of the consultations and the discussions they comprised. This summary, together with the two appendices, were submitted to UNEA 6 as an Information Document.

Figure 1. Theory of Change Diagram.



1. Executing Arrangements

After the passing of the resolution two Co-chairs, from Costa Rica and Nigeria, were appointed for the intergovernmental consultations. Two UNEP staff (P5 level) were selected to support the Co-chairs and the intergovernmental process in the operationalization of the project and its corresponding implementation.

Division managing	Ecosystems Division		
Branch	Biodiversity and People	Unit	BLPU
Project Managers	Melissa De Kock P5	Percent of staff time on project 40%	
	Barney Dickson P5	Percent of staff time on project 50%	
Other Members of Project team	Maudie Fraser (P2)	Percent of staff time on project 75%	
	Luis Pineda (IUNV)	Percent of staff time on project 100%	
	Mercy Mumo (G5)	Percent of staff time on project 25%	
Name of Supervisor of UNEP Project Manager	Doreen Lynn Robinson		
Name of Fund Manager	Martin Okun		

1. Project Cost and Financing

[Present total project budget at design, broken down per component and per funding source. Use tables as appropriate. Present most recent figures on disbursement.]

Breakdown of Project budget per funding source

Funding by source (Life of project)	Planned funding	Secured funding	Expended
<i>All figures as USD</i>			
Funds from the Environment Fund (1)	90,000	90,000	67,699.22
Funds from the Regular Budget	-	-	-
Extra-budgetary funding (listed per donor):			
Donor EU: (2)	748,822.75	748,822.75	732,301.48
Donor Canada: (4)	144,075	144,075	25,950.86
Donor France (3)	19,210	19,210	21,252.1
Thematic Funds (5)	258,046	258,046	200,000
<i>Sub-total: Project Funding</i>			

Expenditure by Component, Outcome or Output.

Component/sub-component/output All figures as USD	Estimated cost at design	Actual Expenditure	Expenditure ratio (actual/planned)
Outcome 1: Member States agree on the key findings report at UNEA 6	USD 1,260,154	USD 1,047,204	1.203

2. Implementation Issues

No revision to logframe or funds allocations were implemented.

The main issues/challenges faced during the implementation of the project (and their corresponding actions taken) were the following:

- Lack of funding available to facilitate the first round of global and regional consultations as in-person meetings

A thorough cost analysis comparing virtual and in-person meeting expenses revealed a lack of adequate funding for in-person meetings. Consequently, the team decided to convene the first round of meetings virtually. This involved prioritizing participant input on key issues rather than fostering extensive interactive exchanges, which were less effective in this format. Additionally, meeting durations were shortened to avoid excessive screentime for participants.

The second response involved significant investment in the in-person meeting held in Nairobi from October 9-13. This meeting was extended beyond its usual duration to allow for enhanced interactive exchanges at both regional and global levels. The agenda was structured around six key issues, with discussion panels scheduled throughout the week to facilitate meaningful engagement.

- Concern from some participants about the authority of the Co-Chairs to introduce three additional issues alongside the three specific tasks outlined in UNEA Resolution 5/5.
- The original tasks were to compile examples of best practices, to assess existing and potential proposals, criteria, standards, and guidelines, and to identify options for sustainable investment in nature-based solutions. The Co-Chairs introduced the additional issues of measuring the benefits and costs of NbS, exploring the relationship between NbS and climate mitigation, and developing policies related to NbS.

This challenge was addressed by carefully advocating for the significance of the additional issues. It's important to note that the issues were not introduced by the Co-Chairs but were raised by participants themselves during the initial global and regional consultations. The Co-Chairs were simply addressing these participant-driven concerns. Similarly, these issues were not entirely 'new' as they were closely linked to the original three specific tasks and informed how those tasks could be addressed. Finally, it was remarked that the process was one of 'consultation' not negotiation, and the Co-Chairs' mandate did not exclude responding to the issues raised in the early stages of the consultation.

Section 2. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

1. Objective of the Review

In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy⁸ and the UNEP Programme and Project Management Manual⁹, the Terminal Review (TR) is undertaken at operational completion of the project to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The Review has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP. Therefore, the Review will identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation, especially for future phases of the project, where applicable.

2. Key Review principles

Review findings and judgements will be based on **sound evidence and analysis**, clearly documented in the Review Report. Information will be triangulated (i.e. verified from different sources) as far as possible, and when verification is not possible, the single source will be mentioned (whilst anonymity is still protected). Analysis leading to evaluative judgements should always be clearly spelled out.

The “Why?” Question. As this is a Terminal Review and a follow-up project is likely [or similar interventions are envisaged for the future], particular attention will be given to learning from the experience. Therefore, the “why?” question should be at the front of the consultant(s)’ minds all through the review exercise and is supported by the use of a theory of change approach. This means that the consultant(s) need to go beyond the assessment of “what” the project performance was and make a serious effort to provide a deeper understanding of “why” the performance was as it was (i.e. what contributed to the achievement of the project’s results). This should provide the basis for the lessons that can be drawn from the project.

Attribution, Contribution and Credible Association: In order to *attribute* any outcomes and impacts to a project intervention, one needs to consider the difference between what has happened with, and what would have happened without, the project (i.e. take account of changes over time and between contexts in order to isolate the effects of an intervention). This requires appropriate baseline data and the identification of a relevant counterfactual, both of which are frequently not available for reviews. Establishing the *contribution* made by a project in a complex change process relies heavily on prior intentionality (e.g. approved project design documentation, logical framework) and the articulation of causality (e.g. narrative and/or illustration of the Theory of Change). Robust evidence that a project was delivered as designed and that the expected causal pathways developed supports claims of contribution and this is strengthened where an alternative theory of change can be excluded. A *credible association* between the implementation of a project and observed positive effects can be made where a strong causal narrative, although not explicitly articulated, can be inferred by the chronological sequence of events, active involvement of key actors and engagement in critical processes.

⁸ <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/41114>

⁹ <https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/42752>

Communicating Review Results. A key aim of the Review is to encourage reflection and learning by UNEP staff and key project stakeholders. The consultant should consider how reflection and learning can be promoted, both through the review process and in the communication of review findings and key lessons. Clear and concise writing is required on all review deliverables. Draft and final versions of the main review report will be shared with key stakeholders by the UNEP Project Manager¹⁰. There may, however, be several intended audiences, each with different interests and needs regarding the report. The consultant will plan with the UNEP Project Manager which audiences to target and the easiest and clearest way to communicate the key review findings and lessons to them. This may include some or all of the following: a webinar, conference calls with relevant stakeholders, the preparation of a review brief or interactive presentation.

1. Key Strategic Questions

In addition to the review criteria outlined in Section 10 below, the Review will address the **strategic questions**¹¹ listed below (no more than 5 questions are recommended). These are questions of interest to UNEP and to which the project is believed to be able to make a substantive contribution:

- (a) [List up to 5]
 - (i) Was the mandate of the UNEA R5/5 fulfilled to the scope and objectives of the project?
 - (ii) Did the process design and execution successfully foster an inclusive and constructive dialogue among Member States and other key stakeholders? Were the different opinions and stands accurately gathered in the output documents?
 - (iii) Potential follow-up actions that UNEP could undertake beyond the Intergovernmental consultations to support the implementation and scale-up of NbS
- (b) (Where relevant) What changes were made to adapt to the effects of COVID-19 and how might any changes affect the project's performance?

2. Review Criteria

All review criteria will be rated on a six-point scale. Sections A-I below, outline the scope of the review criteria. The set of review criteria are grouped in nine categories: (A) Strategic Relevance; (B) Quality of Project Design; (C) Nature of External Context; (D) Effectiveness, which comprises assessments of the availability of outputs, achievement of outcomes and likelihood of impact; (E) Financial Management; (F) Efficiency; (G) Monitoring and Reporting; (H) Sustainability; and (I) Factors Affecting Project Performance.

A. Strategic Relevance

The Review will assess the extent to which the activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the donors, implementing regions/countries and the target beneficiaries. The Review will include an assessment of the project's relevance in relation to UNEP's mandate and its alignment with UNEP's policies and strategies at the time of project approval. Under strategic relevance an assessment of the complementarity of the project with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups will be made. This criterion comprises four elements:

i. *Alignment to the UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy*¹² (MTS), *Programme of Work (POW)* and *Strategic Priorities*

¹¹ The strategic questions should not duplicate questions that will be addressed under the standard review criteria described in section 10.

¹² UNEP's Medium Term Strategy (MTS) is a document that guides UNEP's programme planning over a four-year period. It identifies UNEP's thematic priorities, known as Sub-programmes (SP), and sets out the desired outcomes, known as *POW Outcomes* and *POW Direct Outcomes*, of the Sub-programmes. <https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/our-evaluation-approach/un-environment-documents>

The Review should assess the project's alignment with the MTS and POW under which the project was approved and include, in its narrative, reflections on the scale and scope of any contributions made to the planned results reflected in the relevant MTS and POW. UNEP strategic priorities include the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building¹³ (BSP) and South-South Cooperation (S-SC). The BSP relates to the capacity of governments to: comply with international agreements and obligations at the national level; promote, facilitate and finance environmentally sound technologies and to strengthen frameworks for developing coherent international environmental policies. S-SC is regarded as the exchange of resources, technology and knowledge between developing countries.

i. Alignment to Donor/Partner Strategic Priorities

Donor strategic priorities will vary across interventions. The Review will assess the extent to which the project is suited to, or responding to, donor priorities. In some cases, alignment with donor priorities may be a fundamental part of project design and grant approval processes while in others, for example, instances of 'softly-earmarked' funding, such alignment may be more of an assumption that should be assessed.

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

The Review will assess the alignment of the project with global priorities such as the SDGs and Agenda 2030. The extent to which the intervention is suited, or responding to, the stated environmental concerns and needs of the countries, sub-regions or regions where it is being implemented will also be considered. Examples may include: UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) or, national or sub-national development plans, poverty reduction strategies or Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action (NAMA) plans or regional agreements etc. Within this section consideration will be given to whether the needs of all beneficiary groups are being met and reflects the current policy priority to leave no-one behind.

ii. Complementarity with Relevant Existing Interventions/Coherence¹⁴

An assessment will be made of how well the project, either at design stage or during the project inception or mobilization¹⁵, took account of ongoing and planned initiatives (under the same sub-programme, other UNEP sub-programmes, or being implemented by other agencies within the same country, sector or institution) that address similar needs of the same target groups. The Review will consider if the project team, in collaboration with Regional Offices and Sub-Programme Coordinators, made efforts to ensure their own intervention was complementary to other interventions, optimized any synergies and avoided duplication of effort. Examples may include work within Cooperation Frameworks or One UN programming. Linkages with other interventions should be described and instances where UNEP's comparative advantage has been particularly well applied should be highlighted.

Adaptation Fund	To encourage utilization, each review should optimize <u>relevance</u> by ensuring (i) that the primary intended users of the evaluation and their intended uses are clearly identified and engaged at the beginning of the evaluation process; (ii) that "intended users" include funding, implementing, and beneficiary stakeholders; and (iii) that evaluators ensure these intended users contribute to decisions about the evaluation process.
Green Climate Fund	<u>Coherence</u> in climate finance delivery with other multilateral entities.

B. Quality of Project Design

The quality of project design is assessed using an agreed template during the review inception phase. Ratings are attributed to identified criteria and an overall Project Design Quality rating is established. The complete Project Design Quality template should be annexed in the Review Inception Report. Later, the overall Project Design Quality rating¹⁶ should be entered in the final review ratings table (as item B) in the Main Review Report and a summary of the project's strengths and weaknesses at design stage should be included within the body of the Main Review Report.

C. Nature of External Context

¹³ <http://www.unep.fr/ozonaction/about/bsp.htm>

¹⁴ This sub-category is consistent with the new criterion of 'Coherence' introduced by the OECD-DAC in 2019.

¹⁵ A project's inception or mobilization period is understood as the time between project approval and first disbursement.

Complementarity during project implementation is considered under Efficiency, see below.

¹⁶ In some instances, based on data collected during the review process, the assessment of the project's design quality may change from Inception Report to Main Review Report.

At review inception stage a rating is established for the project's external operating context (considering the prevalence of conflict, natural disasters and political upheaval¹⁷). This rating is entered in the final review ratings table as item C. Where a project has been rated as facing either an *Unfavourable* or *Highly Unfavourable* external operating context, and/or a negative external event has occurred during project implementation, the ratings for Effectiveness, Efficiency and/or Sustainability may be increased at the discretion of the Review Consultant and UNEP Project Manager together. A justification for such an increase must be given.

A. Effectiveness

i. Availability of Outputs¹⁸

The Review will assess the project's success in producing the programmed outputs and making them available to the intended beneficiaries as well as its success in achieving milestones as per the project design document (ProDoc). Any formal modifications/revisions made during project implementation will be considered part of the project design. Where the project outputs are inappropriately or inaccurately stated in the ProDoc, reformulations may be necessary in the reconstruction of the Theory of Change (TOC). In such cases a table should be provided showing the original and the reformulation of the outputs for transparency. The availability of outputs will be assessed in terms of both quantity and quality, and the assessment will consider their ownership by, and usefulness to, intended beneficiaries and the timeliness of their provision. It is noted that emphasis is placed on the performance of those outputs that are most important to achieve outcomes. The Review will briefly explain the reasons behind the success or shortcomings of the project in delivering its programmed outputs and meeting expected quality standards.

ii. Achievement of Project Outcomes¹⁹

The achievement of project outcomes is assessed as performance against the project outcomes as defined in the reconstructed²⁰ Theory of Change. These are outcomes that are intended to be achieved by the end of the project timeframe and within the project's resource envelope. Emphasis is placed on the achievement of project outcomes that are most important for attaining intermediate states. As with outputs, a table can be used to show where substantive amendments to the formulation of project outcomes is necessary to allow for an assessment of performance. The Review should report evidence of attribution between UNEP's intervention and the project outcomes. In cases of normative work or where several actors are collaborating to achieve common outcomes, evidence of the nature and magnitude of UNEP's 'substantive contribution' should be included and/or 'credible association' established between project efforts and the project outcomes realised.

iii. Likelihood of Impact

Based on the articulation of long-lasting effects in the reconstructed TOC (*i.e. from project outcomes, via intermediate states, to impact*), the Review will assess the likelihood of the intended, positive impacts becoming a reality. Project objectives or goals should be incorporated in the TOC, possibly as intermediate states or long-lasting impacts. The Evaluation Office's approach to the use of TOC in project reviews is outlined in a guidance note available and is supported by an excel-based flow chart, 'Likelihood of Impact Assessment Decision Tree'. Essentially the approach follows a 'likelihood tree' from project outcomes to impacts, taking account of whether the assumptions and drivers identified in the reconstructed TOC held. Any unintended positive effects should also be identified and their causal linkages to the intended impact described.

¹⁷ Note that 'political upheaval' does not include regular national election cycles, but unanticipated unrest or prolonged disruption. The potential delays or changes in political support that are often associated with the regular national election cycle should be part of the project's design and addressed through adaptive management of the project team. From March 2020 this should include the effects of COVID-19.

¹⁸ Outputs are the availability (for intended beneficiaries/users) of new products and services and/or gains in knowledge, abilities and awareness of individuals or within institutions (UNEP, 2023)

¹⁹ Outcomes are the change at institutional level, or changes in behaviors, attitudes or conditions achieved from the use (*i.e.*, uptake, adoption, application) of outputs by intended beneficiaries (UNEP, 2023) (UNEP, 2023)

²⁰ UNEP staff are currently required to submit a Theory of Change with all submitted project designs. The level of 'reconstruction' needed during a review will depend on the quality of this initial TOC, the time that has lapsed between project design and implementation (which may be related to securing and disbursing funds) and the level of any formal changes made to the project design. In the case of projects pre-dating 2016 the intervention logic is often represented in a logical framework and a TOC will need to be constructed in the inception stage of the review.

The Review will also consider the likelihood that the intervention may lead, or contribute to, unintended negative effects (e.g. will vulnerable groups such as those living with disabilities and/or women and children,

be disproportionately affected by the project?). Some of these potential negative effects may have been identified in the project design as risks or as part of the analysis of Environmental and Social Safeguards.

The Review will consider the extent to which the project has played a ~~catalytic role~~²¹ ~~or has promoted scaling up and/or replication~~ as part of its Theory of Change (either explicitly as in a project with a demonstration component or implicitly as expressed in the drivers required to move to outcome levels) and as factors that are likely to contribute to greater or long-lasting impact.

Ultimately UNEP and all its partners aim to bring about benefits to the environment and human well-being. Few projects are likely to have impact statements that reflect such long-lasting or broad-based changes. However, the Review will assess the likelihood of the project to make a substantive contribution to the long-lasting changes represented by the Sustainable Development Goals, and/or the intermediate-level results reflected in UNEP's Expected Accomplishments and the strategic priorities of funding partner(s).

Adaptation Fund	The Review should consider, under Effectiveness, the extent to which the evaluand is reaching Strategic Results Framework indicator targets.
Adaptation Fund	The Review should consider, under Effectiveness, the extent to which the intervention demonstrates that Climate Change Adaptation can be increased or replicated at a broader scale, as well as in other contexts.
Green Climate Fund	The Review should consider, under Effectiveness, the project's <u>Innovativeness</u> in result areas – the extent to which interventions may lead to paradigm shift towards low-emission and climate-resilient development pathways.
Global Environment Facility	The Review should consider, under Effectiveness, the extent to which the evaluand is reaching Core Indicator targets (from GEF-6 onwards).
Global Environment Facility	The Review will determine, under Effectiveness, the project's <u>additionality</u> by comparing the benefits of GEF support to a scenario without GEF support. It will identify specific areas where GEF support has contributed additional results and what these additional results were. It will provide quantitative and qualitative evidence to support the findings.

A. Financial Management

Financial management will be assessed under three themes: *adherence* to UNEP's financial policies and procedures, *completeness* of financial information and *communication* between financial and project management staff. The Review will establish the actual spend across the life of the project of funds secured from all donors. This expenditure will be reported, where possible, at output/component level and will be compared with the approved budget. The Review will verify the application of proper financial management standards and adherence to UNEP's financial management policies. Any financial management issues that have affected the timely delivery of the project or the quality of its performance will be highlighted. The Review will record where standard financial documentation is missing, inaccurate, incomplete or unavailable in a timely manner. The Review will assess the level of communication between the UNEP Project Manager and the Fund Management Officer as it relates to the effective delivery of the planned project and the needs of a responsive, adaptive management approach.

Global Environment Facility	The Review will determine, under Financial Management, i) time from CEO endorsement (FSP) / CEO approval (MSP) to first disbursement; ii) disbursement balance; iii) whether the project has secured co-financing higher than 35% and iv) time between CEO Endorsement and (likely) end of Terminal Review.
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B. Efficiency

Under the efficiency criterion, the Review will assess the extent to which the project delivered maximum results from the given resources. This will include an assessment of the cost-effectiveness and timeliness of project execution.

²¹ The terms catalytic effect, scaling up and replication are inter-related and generally refer to extending the coverage or magnitude of the effects of a project. Catalytic effect is associated with triggering additional actions that are not directly funded by the project – these effects can be both concrete or less tangible, can be intentionally caused by the project or implied in the design and reflected in the TOC drivers, or can be unintentional and can rely on funding from another source or have no financial requirements. Scaling up and Replication require more intentionality for projects, or individual components and approaches, to be reproduced in other similar contexts. Scaling up suggests a substantive increase in the number of new beneficiaries reached/involved and may require adapted delivery mechanisms while Replication suggests the repetition of an approach or component at a similar scale but among different beneficiaries. Even with highly technical work, where scaling up or replication involves working with a new community, some consideration of the new context should take place and adjustments made as necessary.

Focusing on the translation of inputs into outputs, *cost-effectiveness* is the extent to which an intervention has achieved, or is expected to achieve, its results at the lowest possible cost. *Timeliness* refers to whether planned activities were delivered according to expected timeframes as well as whether events were sequenced efficiently. The Review will also assess to what extent any project extension could have been avoided through stronger project management and identify any negative impacts caused by project delays or extensions. The Review will describe any cost or time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe and consider whether the project was implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternative interventions or approaches.

The Review will give special attention to efforts made by the project teams during project implementation to make use of/build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities²² with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency.

The factors underpinning the need for any project extensions will also be explored and discussed. Consultants should note that as management or project support costs cannot be increased in cases of 'no cost extensions', such extensions represent an increase in unstated costs to UNEP and implementing parties.

A. Monitoring and Reporting

The Review will assess monitoring and reporting across three sub-categories: monitoring design and budgeting, monitoring implementation and project reporting.

i. Monitoring Design and Budgeting

Each project should be supported by a sound monitoring plan that is designed to track progress against SMART²³ results towards the provision of the project's outputs and achievement of project outcomes, including at a level disaggregated by gender, marginalisation or vulnerability, including those living with disabilities. In particular, the Review will assess the relevance and appropriateness of the project indicators as well as the methods used for tracking progress against them as part of conscious results-based management. The Review will assess the quality of the design of the monitoring plan as well as the funds allocated for its implementation. The adequacy of resources for Mid-Term and Terminal Evaluation/Review should be discussed, where applicable.

ii. Monitoring of Project Implementation

The Review will assess whether the monitoring system was operational and facilitated the timely tracking of results and progress towards project objectives throughout the project implementation period. This assessment will include consideration of whether the project gathered relevant and good quality baseline data that is accurately and appropriately documented. This should include monitoring the representation and participation of disaggregated groups, including gendered, marginalised or vulnerable groups, such as those living with disabilities, in project activities. It will also consider the quality of the information generated by the monitoring system during project implementation and how it was used to adapt and improve project execution, achievement of outcomes and ensure sustainability. The Review should confirm that funds allocated for monitoring were used to support this activity.

iii. Project Reporting

UNEP has a centralised project information management system²⁴ in which project managers upload six-monthly progress reports against agreed project milestones. This information will be provided to the Review Consultant(s) by the UNEP Project Manager. Some projects have additional requirements to report regularly to funding partners, which will be supplied by the project team. The Review will assess the extent to which both UNEP and donor reporting commitments have been fulfilled. Consideration will be given as to whether reporting has been carried out with respect to the effects of the initiative on disaggregated groups.

Global Environment Facility	For internally executed projects the Review Consultant should review the quality of regular reports and confirm they have been submitted on a timely basis.
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²² Complementarity with other interventions during project design, inception or mobilization is considered under Strategic Relevance above.

²³ SMART refers to results that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-oriented. Indicators help to make results measurable.

A. Sustainability (for Adaptation Fund, read Human and Ecological Sustainability and Security)

Sustainability²⁵ is understood as the probability of the benefits derived from the achievement of project outcomes being maintained and developed after the close of the intervention. The Review will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the endurance of achieved project outcomes (i.e. 'assumptions' and 'drivers'). Some factors of sustainability may be embedded in the project design and implementation approaches while others may be contextual circumstances or conditions that evolve over the life of the intervention. Where applicable an assessment of bio-physical factors that may affect the sustainability of direct project outcomes may also be included.

i. Socio-political Sustainability

The Review will assess the extent to which social or political factors support the continuation and further development of the benefits derived from project outcomes. It will consider the level of ownership, interest and commitment among government and other stakeholders to take the project achievements forwards. In particular the Review will consider whether individual capacity development efforts are likely to be sustained.

ii. Financial Sustainability

Some project outcomes, once achieved, do not require further financial inputs, e.g. the adoption of a revised policy. However, in order to derive a benefit from this outcome further management action may still be needed e.g. to undertake actions to enforce the policy. Other project outcomes may be dependent on a continuous flow of action that needs to be resourced for them to be maintained, e.g. continuation of a new natural resource management approach. The Review will assess the extent to which project outcomes are dependent on future funding for the benefits they bring to be sustained. Secured future funding is only relevant to financial sustainability where the project outcomes have been extended into a future project phase. Even where future funding has been secured, the question still remains as to whether the project outcomes are financially sustainable.

iii. Institutional Sustainability

The Review will assess the extent to which the sustainability of project outcomes (especially those relating to policies and laws) is dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance. It will consider whether institutional achievements such as governance structures and processes, policies, sub-regional agreements, legal and accountability frameworks etc. are robust enough to continue delivering the benefits associated with the project outcomes after project closure. In particular, the Review will consider whether institutional capacity development efforts are likely to be sustained.

Adaptation Fund	The Review should consider, under <u>Human and ecological sustainability and security</u> – the extent to which the intervention is likely to generate continued positive or negative, intended and unintended impacts beyond its lifetime, taking into consideration, social, institutional, economic, and environmental systems. Is the intervention sensitive to conflict and fragility, i.e., to what extent does it consider the political context and the sharing of natural resources? Is it contributing towards targeted communities' livelihoods and to the health or well-being of the ecosystems on which they depend?
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I. Factors Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

(These factors are rated in the ratings table but are discussed within the Main Review Report as cross-cutting themes as appropriate under the other review criteria, above. If these issues have not been addressed under the Review Criteria above, then independent summaries of their status within the reviewed project should be given in this section)

i. 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). The Review will assess whether appropriate measures were taken to either address weaknesses in the project design or respond to changes that took place between project approval, the securing of funds and project mobilisation. In particular, the Review will consider the nature and quality of engagement with stakeholder groups by the project team, the confirmation of partner capacity and

²⁵ As used here, 'sustainability' means the long-lasting maintenance of outcomes and consequent impacts, whether environmental or not. This is distinct from the concept of sustainability in the terms 'environmental sustainability' or 'sustainable development', which imply 'not living beyond our means' or 'not diminishing global environmental benefits' (GEF STAP Paper, 2019, Achieving More Enduring Outcomes from GEF Investment) development of partnership agreements as well as initial staffing and financing arrangements. *(Project preparation is included in the template for the assessment of Project Design Quality).*

i. Quality of Project Management and Supervision

In some cases 'project management and supervision' may refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments while in others it may refer to the project management performance of an implementing partner and the technical backstopping and supervision provided by UNEP. The performance of parties playing different roles should be discussed and a rating provided for both types of supervision (UNEP/Implementing Agency; Partner/Executing Agency) and the overall rating for this sub-category established as a simple average of the two.

The Review will assess the effectiveness of project management with regard to: providing 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 overall project execution. Evidence of adaptive management should be highlighted.

Adaptation Fund	The Review should consider the extent to which the evaluand was <u>adapted in response to lessons and reflections during implementation</u> ; and the extent to which the intervention supported the use, development, or diffusion of innovative practices, tools, or technologies to improve or accelerate Climate Change Adaptation.
Global Environment Facility	For internally executed projects the Review Consultant should review whether the segregation of responsibilities met the GEF requirements ²⁶ (the GEF Agency must separate its project implementation and execution duties and establish each of the following: (a) A satisfactory institutional arrangement for the separation of implementation and executing functions in different departments of the GEF Agency; and (b) Clear lines of responsibility, reporting and accountability within the GEF Agency between the project implementation and execution functions.

ii. Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation

Here the term 'stakeholder' should be considered in a broad sense, encompassing all project partners, duty bearers with a role in delivering project outputs, target users of project outputs and any other collaborating agents external to UNEP and the implementing partner(s). The assessment will consider the quality and effectiveness of all forms of communication and consultation with stakeholders 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, should be considered.

iii. Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality (for Adaptation Fund, read 'Equity'; for GCF, read 'Gender Equity')

The Review will ascertain to what extent the project has applied the UN Common Understanding on the human rights-based approach (HRBA) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. Within this human rights context the Review will assess to what extent the intervention adheres to UNEP's Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment²⁷.

The report should present the extent to which the intervention, following an adequate gender analysis at design stage, has implemented the identified actions and/or applied adaptive management to ensure that Gender Equality and Human Rights are adequately taken into account. In particular the Review will consider to what extent project design, implementation and monitoring 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, youth and children and those living with disabilities) to environmental degradation or disasters; and (iii) the role of disadvantaged groups (especially

²⁶ GEF Minimum Fiduciary Standards: Separation of Implementation and Execution Functions in GEF Partner Agencies (2019).

²⁷ The Evaluation Office notes that Gender Equality was first introduced in the UNEP Project Review Committee Checklist in 2010 and, therefore, provides a criterion rating on gender for projects approved from 2010 onwards. Equally, it is noted that policy documents, operational guidelines and other capacity building efforts have only been developed since then and have evolved over time. <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/7655/->

Adaptation Fund	The Review should consider the extent to which the project's design and implementation includes input of the designated authority (DA) and vulnerable groups such as women, youth, persons with disability, Indigenous Peoples, minorities, and other potentially marginalized groups or locations. It also encompasses the degree to which the intervention reduced or perpetuated inequalities, and how equitably benefits were accrued to vulnerable groups.
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Note that the project's effect on equality (i.e. promoting human rights, gender equality and inclusion of those living with disabilities and/or belonging to marginalised/vulnerable groups) should be included within the TOC as a general driver or assumption where there is no dedicated result within the results framework. If an explicit commitment on this topic is made within the project document then the driver/assumption should also be specific to the described intentions.

i. Environmental and Social Safeguards

UNEP projects address environmental and social safeguards primarily through the process of environmental and social screening at the project approval stage, risk assessment and management (avoidance, or mitigation of potential environmental and social risks and impacts associated with project and programme activities. The Review will confirm whether UNEP requirements²⁸ 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. UNEP requirements for proposed projects to be screened for any safeguarding issues; for sound environmental and social risk assessments to be conducted and initial risk ratings to be assigned, are reviewed above under Quality of Project Design).

The Review will also consider the extent to which the management of the project minimised UNEP's environmental footprint.

ii. Country Ownership and Driven-ness

The Review will assess the quality and degree of engagement of government / public sector agencies in the project. While there is some overlap between Country Ownership and Institutional Sustainability, this criterion focuses primarily on the forward momentum of the intended projects results, i.e. either: a) moving forwards from outputs to project outcomes or b) moving forward from project outcomes towards intermediate states. The Review will 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). 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. Ownership should extend to all gender and marginalised groups.

iii. Communication and Public Awareness

The Review will assess the effectiveness of: a) communication of learning and experience sharing between project partners and interested groups arising from the project during its life and b) public awareness activities that were undertaken during the implementation of the project to influence attitudes or shape behaviour among wider communities and civil society at large. The Review should consider whether existing communication channels and networks were used effectively, including meeting the differentiated needs of gendered or marginalised groups, and whether any feedback channels were established. Where knowledge sharing platforms have been established under a project the Review will comment on the sustainability of the communication channel under either socio-political, institutional or financial sustainability, as appropriate.

²⁸ 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. In GEF projects safeguards have been considered in project designs since 2011.

Section 3. REVIEW APPROACH, METHODS AND DELIVERABLES

(This section has both standard text and parts that are specific to the project, to be filled in)

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

The findings of the Review will be based on the following: A **desk review** of:

- Relevant background documentation, inter alia *[add items]*:
 - [UNEA Resolution 5/5 of 2 March 2022](#)
 - [Scoping paper](#)
 - Project design documents (including minutes of the project design review meeting at approval); Annual Work Plans and Budgets or equivalent, revisions to the project (Project Document Supplement), the logical framework and its budget;
 - Project reports such as six-monthly progress and financial reports, progress reports from collaborating partners, meeting minutes, relevant correspondence and any other monitoring materials etc.;
 - Project deliverables (e.g. publications, assessments etc) *[list]*:
 - [Co-Chairs Summary: Intergovernmental Consultation](#)
 - [Co-Chairs' Summary: First Global Consultations](#)
 - [Co-Chairs' summary: First Regional Consultations](#)
 - [Appendix 1: Co-chairs' Recommendations](#)
 - [Appendix 2: Resources Guide](#)
 - Mid-Term Review or Mid-Term Evaluation of the project;
 - Evaluations/Reviews of similar projects.
- (a) **Interviews** (individual or in group) with:
- UNEP Project Manager²⁹ *[add people as appropriate]*:
 - Project management team;
 - UNEP Fund Management Officer (FMO);
 - Sub-Programme Coordinator;
 - Project partners, including *[list]*:
 - *None (Project implemented by UNEP)*
 - Relevant resource persons.
 - Representatives from civil society and specialist groups (such as women's, farmers and trade associations etc).
- (b) **Surveys** *[provide details, where appropriate]*
Survey/interview to key participants of the online and in-person consultations to obtain insights of the process from participants' perspective.
- (c) **Field visits** *[provide details, where appropriate]*
N.A. (Project was implemented online and at UNEP Headquarters)
- (d) **Other data collection tools** *[provide details, where appropriate]*

1. Review Deliverables and Review Procedures

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

- 1. Inception Report: (see Annex 3 of these TOR)** containing an assessment of project design quality, a draft reconstructed Theory of Change of the project, project stakeholder analysis, review framework and a tentative review schedule.
- 2. Preliminary Findings Note:** typically in the form of a PowerPoint presentation, the sharing of preliminary findings is intended to support the participation of the project team, act as a means to ensure all information sources have been accessed and provide an opportunity to verify emerging findings.
- 3. Draft and Final Review Report: (See Annex 4 of these TOR)** containing an Executive Summary that can act as a stand-alone document; detailed analysis of the review findings organised by review criteria and supported with evidence; lessons learned and recommendations and an annotated ratings table.

A **Review Brief** (a 2-page overview of the evaluation and review findings) for wider dissemination through the UNEP website may be required. This will be discussed with the UNEP Project Manager no later than during the finalization of the Inception Report.

Review of the Draft Review Report. The Review Consultant will submit a draft report to the UNEP Project Manager and revise the draft in response to their comments and suggestions. The UNEP Project Manager will then forward the revised draft report to other project stakeholders, for their review and comments. Stakeholders may provide feedback on any errors of fact and may highlight the significance of such errors in any conclusions as well as providing feedback on the proposed recommendations and lessons. Any comments or responses to draft reports will be sent to the UNEP Project Manager for consolidation. The UNEP Project Manager will provide all comments to the Review Consultant for consideration in preparing the final report, along with guidance on areas of contradiction or issues requiring an institutional response.

The UNEP Evaluation Office provides templates and tools to support the review process and provides a formal assessment of the quality of the final Terminal Review report, which is provided within this report's annexed material. In addition, the Evaluation Office formally validates the report by ensuring that the performance judgments made are consistent with evidence presented in the Review report and in-line with the performance standards set out for independent evaluations. As such the project performance ratings presented in the Review report may be adjusted by the Evaluation Office.

At the end of the review process, the UNEP Project Manager will prepare a **Recommendations Implementation Plan** in the format of a table, to be completed and updated at regular intervals, and circulate the **Lessons Learned**.

2. The Review Consultant

The Review Consultant will work under the overall responsibility of the UNEP Project Manager Maudie Fraser, in consultation with the Fund Management Officer Martin Okun, the Head of Unit/Focal Area/Branch Juan Carlos Vasquez and the Sub-programme Coordinators of the Nature Action UNEP, Marieta Sakalian.

The Review Consultant will liaise with the UNEP Project Manager on any procedural and methodological matters related to the Review. It is, however, the consultants' individual responsibility (where applicable) to arrange for their visas and immunizations as well as to plan meetings with stakeholders, organize online surveys, obtain documentary evidence and any other logistical matters related to the assignment. The UNEP Project Manager and project team will, where possible, provide logistical support (introductions, meetings etc.) allowing the consultants to conduct the Review as efficiently and independently as possible.

The Review Consultant will be hired over a period of **3 months [01 January/2025 to 31 March/2025]** and should have the following: a university degree in environmental sciences, international development or other relevant political or social sciences area is required and an advanced degree in the same areas is desirable; a minimum of 7 years of technical / evaluation experience is required, preferably including evaluating large, regional or global programmes and using a Theory of Change approach; and a good/broad understanding of Nature-based Solutions is desired. English and French are the working languages of the United Nations Secretariat. For this consultancy, fluency in oral and written English is a requirement and proficiency in English is required. Working knowledge of the UN system and specifically the work of UNEP is an added advantage. The work will be home-based with possible field visits.

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

1. Schedule of the Review

The table below presents the tentative schedule.

Table 3. Tentative schedule for the Review

Milestone	Tentative Dates
Inception Report	31 st January, 2025
Review Mission	N.A.
E-based interviews, surveys etc.	February 2025
PowerPoint/presentation on preliminary findings and recommendations	25 th February, 2025
Draft Review Report to UNEP Project Manager	15 th March, 2025
Draft Review Report shared with wider group of stakeholders	18 th March, 2025
Final Main Review Report	24 th March, 2025
Final Main Review Report submitted to the UNEP Evaluation Office for validation and quality assessment	28 th March, 2025
Final Main Review Report shared with all respondents	31 st March, 2025

2. Contractual Arrangements

The Review Consultant(s) will be selected and recruited by the UNEP Project Manager under an individual Special Service Agreement (SSA) on a “fees only” basis (see below). By signing the service contract with UNEP/UNON, the consultant certifies that they have not been associated with the design and implementation of the project in any way which may jeopardize their independence and impartiality towards project achievements and project partner performance. In addition, they will not have any future interests (within six months after completion of the contract) with the project’s executing or implementing units. All consultants are required to sign the Code of Conduct Agreement Form.

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

Schedule of Payment:

Deliverable	Percentage Payment
Approved Inception Report (<i>as per Guidance Note</i>)	33%
Approved Draft Main Review Report (<i>as per Guidance Note</i>)	33%
Approved Final Main Review Report (<i>as per Report Template</i>)	34%

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

The consultant may be provided with access to UNEP’s information management systems (e.g. PIMS, IPMR, Anubis, SharePoint, etc.) and, if such access is granted, the consultants agree not to disclose information from that system to third parties beyond information required for, and included in, the Review Report. In case the consultant is not able to provide the deliverables in accordance with these guidelines, and in line with the expected quality standards by the UNEP Project Manager, payment may be withheld at the discretion of the Head of Branch/Unit until the consultants have improved the deliverables to meet UNEP’s quality standards.

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

ANNEX IX. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Implementation Plan of Recommendations

Project Title and Reference No.: "Intergovernmental Consultations on Nature-based Solutions" (SMA ID 149153)

Contact Person (TM/PM): Juan Vasquez Murillo, Head of Biodiversity People and Landscape Unit.
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	PLANS			
RECOMMENDATIONS	ACCEPTED (YES/NO/PARTIALLY)	WHAT WILL BE DONE?	EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER/ UNIT/ DIVISION/ AGENCY
For future NbS proposals, UNEP should consider a "communities of practice" strategy to support regional, country and sub-national NbS policy-making and actions. This strategy could include partnering with existing global or regional partners that already have NbS networks or related resources.	Yes	The request for such a networks or "communities of practice" to facilitate knowledge exchange, collaboration and support among stakeholders (prioritizing but not limited to practitioners) was likewise identified during the regional workshops. The NbS team is currently working on options to operationalized said network and potentially include it as a component of the project proposal which is currently	2025 (for project proposal)	Nature-based Solutions Team, BPLU, BLB, Ecosystems Division, UNEP.

		under development.		
To help align UN resources around NbS as defined in Resolution 5/5, UNEP should implement an internal plan to mainstream the key elements of the definition, describe the desired impacts and benefits and increase stakeholder access to the project's existing resources (outputs) via the NbS website.	Yes	The team is currently developing a plan to mainstream NbS from and beyond R5/5 internally to ensure alignment to UNEA R5/5 and technical consistency of UNEP's efforts and projects; consequently, positioning the NbS Team as the key focal point and support of NbS across UNEP. Other ongoing actions for internal/external awareness and mainstreaming: - NbS thematic sub-page in UNEP's website (Nature Action section) to highlight UNEP's work on NbS. - Inputs for key documents and strategic meetings on NbS: G20, LAC ministeri	2025 - onwards	Nature-based Solutions Team, BPLU, BLB, Ecosystems Division, UNEP.

		al forum, Finance Initiative, among others.		
For future projects (not limited to NbS as a topic), UNEP project managers should better integrate the use of Theory of Change and monitoring methods with relevant, measurable indicators, applying and adapting these tools throughout the project to achieve and track greater impact, faster.	Partially* *Application limited to project under the Unit.	For future projects implemented by the team and Unit, further attention will be paid to integrate the ToC elements in the monitoring framework, and overall project framework, during the design phase and onwards, to ensure seamless implementation, monitoring-evaluation process and achievement of outcomes.	N.A.	BPLU, BLB, Ecosystems Division, UNEP.

The following is a summary of lessons learned from some of the project's experiences and based upon explicit findings of the review. They briefly describe the context from which the lessons are derived, and the potential for wider application:

Lesson Learned #1:	UNEP is trusted to convene NbS stakeholders and to facilitate discussions in a transparent and inclusive manner.
Context/comment:	The trust and vast experience of UNEP to bring stakeholders together and foster transparent discussions presents a great opportunity to create a community of practitioners that connects key actors within and across regions to facilitate knowledge exchange, foster collaboration and create synergies among existing efforts.

Lesson Learned #2:	While a common understanding of NbS is now agreed upon by many of the project participants, further communication and outreach from
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	UNEP could help to engage more national-level policy decision-makers and financial resources for NbS.
Context/comment:	There is potential for UNEP's communication efforts to play a strategic role engaging with policy makers, at different levels, and transmitting key messages to mainstream NbS into environmental and national policies and accelerate changes on funding and support mechanisms to create an enabling environment for NbS implementation and scale-up.

ANNEX X. QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF THE REVIEW REPORT

Review Title: Terminal Review of the UNEP project “Intergovernmental Consultations on Nature-based Solutions” (SMA ID 149153)

Consultant: Kathryn M. Conway

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

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
Report Quality Criteria		
Quality of the Executive Summary <u>Purpose:</u> acts as a stand alone and accurate summary of the main review product, especially for senior management. To include: • concise overview of the review object • clear summary of the review objectives and scope • overall review rating of the project and key features of performance (strengths and weaknesses) against exceptional criteria • reference to where the review ratings table can be found within the report • summary response to key strategic review questions • summary of the main findings of the exercise/synthesis of main conclusions • summary of lessons learned and recommendations.	Final report (coverage/omissions): All required elements are adequately addressed, except for reference to where the review ratings table can be found within the report Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The Executive Summary serves as a concise presentation of the evaluand, scope and objectives of the review, the main findings and conclusions - including responses to key strategic questions, as well as the review recommendations and lessons learned	5.5
Quality of the 'Introduction' Section <u>Purpose:</u> introduces/situates the evaluand in its institutional context, establishes its main parameters (time, value, results, geography) and the purpose of the review itself. To include: • institutional context of the project (sub-programme, Division, Branch etc) • date of PRC approval, project duration and start/end dates • number of project phases (where appropriate) • results frameworks to which it contributes (e.g. POW Direct Outcome) • coverage of the review (regions/countries where implemented) • implementing and funding partners • total secured budget • whether the project has been reviewed/evaluated in the past (e.g. mid-term, external agency etc.)	Final report (coverage/omissions): All required elements are adequately addressed except for the POW and Direct Outcomes to which the project contributes - although these are fully addressed in the Executive summary. And in the Section V.A Strategic Relevance Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The 'Introduction' section is well presented, covering most required information in sufficient detail. It serves as a good introduction of the scope and purpose of the review, the evaluand and its parameters, partners, funding sources and amounts, including an explanation of how the project came to be granted “exceptional circumstances” status	5.5

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
concise statement of the purpose of the review and the key intended audience for the findings.		
Quality of the 'Review Methods' Section Purpose: provides reader with clear and comprehensive description of review methods, demonstrates the <u>credibility</u> of the findings and performance ratings. To include: - description of review data collection methods and information sources - justification for methods used (e.g. qualitative/ quantitative; electronic/face-to-face) - number and type of respondents (see <i>table template</i>) - selection criteria used to identify respondents, case studies or sites/countries visited - strategies used to increase stakeholder engagement and consultation - methods to include the voices/experiences of different and potentially excluded groups (e.g. vulnerable, gender, marginalised etc) - details of how data were verified (e.g. triangulation, review by stakeholders etc.) - methods used to analyse data (scoring, coding, thematic analysis etc) - review limitations (e.g. low/ imbalanced response rates across different groups; gaps in documentation; language barriers etc) - ethics and human rights issues should be highlighted including: how anonymity and confidentiality were protected. Is there an ethics statement? E.g. <i>'Throughout the review process and in the compilation of the Final Review Report efforts have been made to represent the views of both mainstream and more marginalised groups. All efforts to provide respondents with anonymity have been made.'</i>	Final report (coverage/omissions): The section addresses most of the required information with the exception of a clear description of data analysis methods, consideration for ethics and human rights and limitations of the review. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The review methods are elaborated with most of the required information, which enables readers to understand the approaches and data collection methods used. A table summarising the respondents' sample is included and is disaggregated by gender. The section also demonstrates the approaches of both the reviewer and project team to increase the participation in data collection. On the downside, methods used for data analysis could have been described with greater clarity. Not all sampling or analytical approaches are fully provided. Table 1 can also be expanded by the region to show the representativeness indicated in the report. There is limited reference to the inclusion of the voices/ experiences of potentially excluded groups, and no mention of how ethics and human rights issues were considered. Limitations to the review are also not described explicitly	4.5
Quality of the 'Project' Section Purpose: describes and <u>verifies</u> key dimensions of the evaluand relevant to assessing its performance.	Final report (coverage/omissions): The section addresses all the required elements to varying levels of detail Final report (strengths/weaknesses):	4

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
To include: • <i>Context</i>: overview of the main issue that the project is trying to address, its root causes and consequences on the environment and human well-being (i.e. synopsis of the problem and situational analyses) • <i>Results framework</i>: summary of the project's results hierarchy as stated in the ProDoc (or as officially revised) • <i>Stakeholders</i>: description of groups of targeted stakeholders organised according to relevant common characteristics • <i>Project implementation structure and partners</i>: description of the implementation structure with diagram and a list of key project partners • <i>Changes in design during implementation</i>: any key events that affected the project's scope or parameters should be described in brief in chronological order • <i>Project financing</i>: completed tables of: (a) budget at design and expenditure by components (b) planned and actual sources of funding/co-financing	The project's context, stakeholders, financing and changes encountered during implementation are adequately described and annexes have been used to provide supplementary information. However, the following weaknesses are observed: <i>Results framework</i>: Here it is noted in Table 3, that the original Outcome 1 statement was altered during the TR, following consultation and agreement with the Project team; however, we note that the change may have reduced the original Outcome statement into an 'Output' level result (i.e. terminating at <u>receipt</u> of the Co-Chairs Summary). The original statement on the other hand included an element of 'uptake' of the Key Findings Report (output), by contemplating both its receipt and agreement by the target groups; this aspect has been lost in the reformulation. <i>Stakeholders</i>: In terms of the stakeholder analysis, there is inconsistency between Para 60 and Figure 1 in Para 70. (3 groups vs 4 groups). Detailed information on the key stakeholders, such as UNEA accredited MGS, would be useful to understand the project's stakeholders. <i>Project implementation structure and partners</i>: There is no clear distinction made regarding the hierarchy of the relationships between the key stakeholders. It is noted, however, that the project had a limited scope of stakeholders and did not follow the conventional implementation arrangements due to the exceptional circumstances cited in the report (para 69-70). A diagram of the project implementation structure and partners would have been useful for describing the project's supervision and reporting structure. <i>Financing</i>: The report provides the concise context of the project and a clear project funding source table 8 in Annex IV, while 'Table 9 expenditure by outcomes/output' is incomplete as it explains Outcome 1 only.	
Quality of the Theory of Change Purpose: to set out the TOC at Review in diagrammatic and narrative forms to support consistent project performance; to articulate the causal pathways with drivers and assumptions and justify any reconstruction necessary to assess the project's performance. To include:	Final report (coverage/omissions): The section includes a depiction of the TOC in diagrammatic format, accompanied by a very brief narrative. Reconstruction/ reformulation of results is presented in a tabular format. Final report (strengths/weaknesses):	4

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
• description of how the <i>TOC at Review</i>¹⁸ was designed (who was involved etc) • confirmation/reconstruction of results in accordance with UNEP definitions • articulation of causal pathways • identification of drivers and assumptions • identification of key actors in the change process • summary of the reconstruction/results re-formulation in tabular form. <i>The two results hierarchies (original/formal revision and reconstructed) should be presented as a two-column table to show clearly that, although wording and placement may have changed, the results 'goal posts' have not been 'moved'. This table may have initially been presented in the Inception Report and should appear somewhere in the Main Review report.</i>	The reconstructed Output results have been over-simplified, omitting verbs that would describe the correlation between the product/service delivered and the intended beneficiaries. It appears the original Outputs statements were, by comparison, far more comprehensive. The reconstructed TOC introduces two additional Outcomes (#2 and #3), and one Output (#5) – it is noted that this was done to reflect additional results that were integrated through the Project Concept Extension. The TOC presented in diagrammatic format is clear and shows the interlinkages between results, including Drivers and Assumptions. The TOC narrative, however, is weak and lacks a comprehensive articulation of the TOC causal pathways; it also fails to give a detailed description of the Drivers, Assumptions and key actors in the change process.	
Quality of Key Findings within the Report <u>Presentation of evidence:</u> nature of evidence should be clear (interview, document, survey, observation, online resources etc) and evidence should be explicitly triangulated unless noted as having a single source. <u>Consistency within the report:</u> all parts of the report should form consistent support for findings and performance ratings, which should be in line with UNEP's Criteria Ratings Matrix. <u>Findings Statements (where applicable):</u> The frame of reference for a finding should be an individual review criterion or a strategic question from the TOR. A finding should go beyond description and uses analysis to provide insights that aid learning specific to the evaluand. In some cases a findings statement may articulate a key element that has determined the performance rating of a criterion. Findings will frequently provide insight into 'how' and/or 'why' questions.	Final report (coverage/omissions): Findings are embedded within the report under the relevant criteria, in the 'Executive Summary', the 'Summary Table of Ratings', and in the responses to key strategic questions. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): Evidence, especially interviews and documents, are generally well presented to back up findings. Many findings also provide insights that enhance learning. Under some criteria, however, analyses could have been more comprehensive to provide stronger evidence for the ratings given.	5

¹⁸ During the Inception Phase of the review process a *TOC at Review Inception* is created based on the information contained in the approved project documents (these may include either logical framework or a TOC or narrative descriptions), formal revisions and annual reports etc. During the review process this TOC is revised based on changes made during project intervention and becomes the *TOC at Review*.

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
Quality of 'Strategic Relevance' Section Purpose: to present evidence and analysis of project strategic relevance with respect to UNEP, partner and geographic policies and strategies at the time of project approval. To include: Assessment of the evaluand's relevance vis-à-vis: • Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities • Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partners Strategic Priorities • Relevance to Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities • Complementarity with Existing Interventions: complementarity of the project at design (or during inception/mobilisation¹⁹), with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups.	Final report (coverage/omissions): The section is complete and discusses all the required aspects of relevance. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): Alignment to strategies and priorities of UNEP and donors is well analysed and includes suitable examples. Analysis of coherence with global and national initiatives is included, also including supporting evidence	5
Quality of the 'Quality of Project Design' Section Purpose: to present a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the project design, on the basis that the detailed assessment was presented in the Inception Report.	Final report (coverage/omissions): The section presents rather limited information on the assessment of the project design quality Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The assessment identifies the evaluation criteria that attained good scores and those that did not, however, it does not offer a detailed description of what the key strengths and/or weakness were. It also mentions that certain criteria were not rated because of "special circumstances", which limited the extent to which the overall rating of the quality of project design could be assessed. The rating for this criterion (S) was validated on the strength of findings presented in other parts of the report, which state that the project design corresponded directly to the requests of the United Nations Environment Assembly 5.2 Resolution 5/5, and that a Concept Paper served in lieu of the conventional Project Document	4

¹⁹ A project's inception or mobilization period is understood as the time between project approval and first disbursement. Complementarity during project implementation is considered under Efficiency, see below.

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
Quality of the 'Nature of the External Context' Section <u>Purpose:</u> to describe and recognise, when appropriate, key <u>external</u> features of the project's implementing context that limited the project's performance (e.g. conflict, natural disaster, political upheaval²⁰), and how they affected performance. While additional details of the implementing context may be informative, this section should clearly record whether or not a major and unexpected disrupting event took place during the project's life in the implementing sites.	Final report (coverage/omissions): The section is complete Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The review states that there were no external factors that significantly affected project performance.	5
Quality of 'Effectiveness' Section (i) Availability of Outputs: <u>Purpose:</u> to present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the outputs made available to the intended beneficiaries. To include: - a convincing, evidence-supported and clear presentation of the outputs made available by the project compared to its approved plans and budget - assessment of the nature and scale of outputs versus the project indicators and targets - assessment of the timeliness, quality and utility of outputs to intended beneficiaries - identification of positive or negative effects of the project on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).	Final report (coverage/omissions): The section demonstrated evidence-based assessment of the outputs. However, the information on achievement compared to plans and budget using indicators and targets was omitted. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The section demonstrated availability of outputs by providing various evidence with links, respondents' comments, media sources, and related analysis, including gender disaggregated data. Both quantitative and qualitative aspects of the Outputs are discussed. The review also discusses issues on gender and marginalised groups. However, the section does not clearly indicate the extent to which the outputs were achieved in comparison to the approved plans and budget, using project indicators and targets.	5
ii) Achievement of Project Outcomes: <u>Purpose:</u> to present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the uptake, adoption and/or implementation of outputs by the intended beneficiaries. This may include behaviour changes at an individual or collective level. To include: a convincing and evidence-supported analysis of the uptake of outputs by	Final report (coverage/omissions): The section provided analysis based on the revised loframe at review that was agreed with the project team during the review. The report includes evidence-supported analysis of the updates of outputs, discussion of outcome-level changes to the work of the project. However, it does not clearly address attribution or contribution, and omits the	4.5

²⁰ Note that 'political upheaval' does not include regular national election cycles, but unanticipated unrest or prolonged disruption. The potential delays or changes in political support that are often associated with the regular national election cycle should be part of the project's design and addressed through adaptive management of the project team.

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
intended beneficiaries - assessment of the nature, depth and scale of outcomes versus the project indicators and targets - discussion of the contribution, credible association and/or attribution of outcome level changes to the work of the project itself - any constraints to attributing effects to the projects' work - identification of positive or negative effects of the project on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).	consideration of gender and vulnerable groups. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The review attempts to assess outcomes in relation to objectives and indicators and addresses examples of uptake, policy references, and stakeholder feedback. The limitations affecting Outcome achievement have also been discussed. There is no specific discussion on gender, but the review looks at the implications of the project on (geographically) marginalised and/or vulnerable groups. The section could have benefitted from a brief clarification that the reconstructed TOC Outcomes formed the basis of the analysis. The review should have demonstrated the achievements based on planned targets and indicators referring to the result framework, including the rating based on this analysis. The assessment relies heavily on stakeholder feedback. More triangulations and an analysis of barriers to outcome achievement would have been beneficial.	
(iii) Likelihood of Impact: Purpose: to present an integrated analysis, guided by the causal pathways represented by the TOC, of all evidence relating to likelihood of impact, including an assessment of the extent to which drivers and assumptions necessary for change to happen, were seen to be holding. To include: - an explanation of how causal pathways emerged and change processes can be shown - an explanation of the roles played by key actors and change agents - explicit discussion of how drivers and assumptions played out - identification of any unintended negative effects of the project, especially on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).	Final report (coverage/omissions): The section is complete and is guided by the causal pathways represented in the reconstructed TOC Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The review discusses the causal pathways from Outcomes, intermediate states, through to Impact and includes an assessment of the relevant Drivers and Assumptions. The review could have benefited from a more robust explanation of the roles played by key actors/ change agents, and how the Drivers (3 no.) and Assumptions (3 no.) played/are likely to play out in the achievement of the intended Impact. The identification of any unintended negative effects of the project is omitted. Overall, the section would be strengthened with a more robust analysis, including demonstrating how the country-specific social, economic, and environmental challenges would be reduced using NbS by 2030. In addition, making linkages between these two criteria – 'likelihood of impact' and 'financial sustainability', especially regarding the status and implications of Assumption 3 (availability of financing), would strengthen the overall credibility of this analysis.	4.5

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
Quality of 'Financial Management' Section Purpose: to present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under financial management and include a completed 'financial management' table (may be annexed). Consider how well the report addresses the following: • <i>adherence</i> to UNEP's financial policies and procedures • <i>completeness</i> of financial information, including the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used • <i>communication</i> between financial and project management staff	Final report (coverage/omissions): The section is complete; all three sub-categories are included. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): Financial information was found to be incomplete due to the lack of evidence of the disbursements of funds provided by donors. The assessment of 'Adherence to policies and procedures' is based on discussions with the PM and FMO and is rated as 'Satisfactory', however, the gaps in tracking funds transfers from donors implies a shortcoming in upholding UNEP procedures for financial reporting. In addition, as the analysis heavily relies on interviews, a lack of triangulation with other evidence (reports, meeting minutes, etc.) weakens the analysis. <i>The assessment could have benefitted from financial information relating to Outcome 2, and 3, and Output 5. It should also have provided more detail as to why the project had an expenditure ratio (actual/planned) of 59%, including an exploration on which activities/results the under-spend relate to (see Annex IV, Table 9).</i>	4
Quality of 'Efficiency' Section Purpose: to present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under efficiency (i.e. the primary categories of cost-effectiveness and timeliness). To include: • time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe • discussion of making use, during project implementation, of/building on pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. • implications of any delays and no cost extensions • the extent to which the management of the project minimised UNEP's environmental footprint.	Final report (coverage/omissions): While most of the dimensions are addressed, the use of pre-existing partnerships, institutions, data, or synergies is not addressed. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The review includes an assessment of relevant issues such as time-saving measures, carbon footprint and no-cost extensions. It could have benefitted from the inclusion of a discussion on actual/potential synergies and complementarities that could have increased project efficiency. The section should also have had a more detailed look into the underspend- 59% expenditure ratio (actual: planned). Although a budget underspend doesn't always indicate inefficiency, it can be a red flag that warrants investigation.	4.5

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
Quality of 'Monitoring and Reporting' Section Purpose: to present well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the evaluand's monitoring and reporting. Consider how well the report addresses the following: - quality of the monitoring design and budgeting (<i>including SMART results with measurable indicators, resources for MTE/R etc.</i>) - quality of monitoring of project implementation (<i>including use of monitoring data for adaptive management</i>) - quality of project reporting (e.g. PIMS and donor reports) \	Final report (coverage/omissions): The section is complete in that it covers the three dimensions of monitoring, but the assessment is significantly limited on account of a lack of documentation. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): Note: on account of the "exceptional circumstances" waiver and subsequent exemption from allocating a monitoring budget or developing a monitoring plan (para 156), only one of the sub-categories (Project Reporting) could be reasonably assessed.	3.5
Quality of 'Sustainability' Section Purpose: to present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under sustainability (i.e. the endurance of benefits achieved at outcome level). Consider how well the report addresses the following: - socio-political sustainability - financial sustainability - institutional sustainability	Final report (coverage/omissions): The section is complete in that it covers the three dimensions of sustainability Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The review discusses sustainability of outcomes in a cursory manner. It does not provide a detailed analysis of the continuation and further development of the benefits derived from project outcomes. <i>Socio-political sustainability:</i> the review failed to provide a robust assessment of the level of ownership, interest and commitment among government and other stakeholders. <i>Financial sustainability:</i> the risks and needs for financial sustainability are identified, however, more concrete evidence on the financing mechanism or planning can support the findings and their rating. <i>Institutional sustainability:</i> the review failed to provide an assessment of the extent to which governance structures and processes, policies, sub-regional agreements, legal and accountability frameworks etc. are robust enough to continue delivering the benefits associated with the project outcomes after project closure	4.5
Quality of Factors Affecting Performance Section Purpose: These factors are not always discussed in stand-alone sections and may be integrated in the other performance criteria as appropriate. However, if not addressed substantively in this section, a cross reference must be given to where the topic is addressed and that entry must be sufficient to justify the performance rating for these factors. Consider how well the review report, either in this section or in cross-referenced sections, covers the following cross-cutting themes:	Final report (coverage/omissions): There is a stand-alone section for the factors affecting performance. However, the section only lists the factors, accompanied by cross references to other sections of the report, with no accompanying narrative. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): Cross references used in this section identify report headings/sub-headings, and the reader is expected to revisit the referred section and infer for themselves how the	2

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
• preparation and readiness • quality of project management and supervision²¹ • stakeholder participation and co-operation • responsiveness to human rights and gender equality • environmental and social safeguards • country ownership and driven-ness • communication and public awareness	factor in subject might have affected project performance. In several cases, the reference given is not at all helpful (for instance - '<i>Preparation and readiness</i>' and '<i>Quality of Project Management and Supervision</i>' refer you to '<i>Project Implementation Structure</i>' with no further explanation provided). These references do not provide any useful insights into how the various cross-cutting issues influenced project implementation. A brief explanation of why Environmental and Social Safeguards was 'not rated' by the review would be helpful. Overall, the section would be significantly strengthened by directly providing a summary of findings and justifications for each factor in the appropriate section. Cross-referencing at the paragraph level would have been more beneficial, as the level of the section heading is too broad.	
Quality of the Conclusions Section (i) Conclusions Narrative: <u>Purpose:</u> to present summative statements reflecting on prominent aspects of the <u>performance of the evaluand as a whole</u>, they should be derived from the synthesized analysis of evidence gathered during the review process. To include: • compelling narrative providing an integrated summary of the strengths and weakness in overall performance (achievements and limitations) of the project • clear and succinct response to the key strategic questions • human rights and gender dimensions of the intervention should be discussed explicitly (e.g. how these dimensions were considered, addressed or impacted on)	Final report (coverage/omissions): The conclusion covers all key elements Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The conclusion is succinct and provides an integrated summary based on the findings. It highlights of the main successes and shortcomings of the project and is consistent with the findings presented in the report. Human rights and gender dimensions are noted in the conclusion but could be more specific on outcomes. In addition, while the conclusion section touches on all three of the key review questions, it does so in a broad generalised manner rather than as clear, direct answers (e.g. response to Q1 fails to address the aspect of "acceptance/agreement" of the Co-chair's Summary which is a key element of the project's objective).	5
ii) Utility of the Lessons: <u>Purpose:</u> to present both positive and negative lessons that have potential for wider application and use (replication and	Final report (strengths/weaknesses): Lessons Learned #1 is formulated in a generalised way that makes it applicable in a wider context, and is rooted in actual project	4.5

²¹ In some cases 'project management and supervision' will refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments while in others, specifically for GEF funded projects, it will refer to the project management performance of the executing agency and the technical backstopping provided by UNEP. This includes providing the answers to the questions on Core Indicator Targets, stakeholder engagement, gender responsiveness, safeguards and knowledge management, required for the GEF portal.

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
generalization) Consider how well the lessons achieve the following: - are rooted in real project experiences (i.e. derived from explicit review findings or from problems encountered and mistakes made that should be avoided in the future) - briefly describe the context from which they are derived and those contexts in which they may be useful - do not duplicate recommendations	experiences. The context is adequately described. Lesson learned #2 on the other hand is formulated as a recommendation prescribing actions needed to remedy problems identified by the review (i.e. addressing communication and outreach with policy-makers, and leveraging financial resources for NbS)	
(iii) Utility and Actionability of the Recommendations: <u>Purpose:</u> to present proposals for specific action to be taken by identified people/position-holders to resolve concrete problems affecting the project or the sustainability of its results. Consider how well the lessons achieve the following: - are feasible to implement within the timeframe and resources available (including local capacities) and specific in terms of who would do what and when - include at least one recommendation relating to strengthening the human rights and gender dimensions of UNEP interventions - represent a measurable performance target in order that the UNEP Unit/Branch can monitor and assess compliance with the recommendations. NOTES: (i) In cases where the recommendation is addressed to a third party, compliance can only be monitored and assessed where a contractual/legal agreement remains in place. Without such an agreement, the recommendation should be formulated to say that UNEP project staff should pass on the recommendation to the relevant third party in an effective or substantive manner. The effective transmission by UNEP of the recommendation will then be monitored for compliance. (ii) Where a new project phase is already under discussion or in preparation with the same third party, a recommendation can be made to address the issue in the next phase.	Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The proposed remedial actions are practical and actionable; they specify what challenges/problems need to be addressed, what action are to be undertaken, and the agency for their implementation. One shortfall is that the review has not followed UNEP guidelines for categorising 'priority level' and type of recommendation'	5
Quality of Report Structure and Presentation (i) Structure and completeness of the report: To what extent does the report follow the UNEP Evaluation Office structure and formatting guidelines? Are all requested Annexes included and complete?	Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The report is mostly complete, as per the UNEP guidelines. Although the report generally complies with the structure and formatting guidelines given by UNEP, some annexes (review framework/matrix, communication and outreach tools) are not attached.	5

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
(ii) Writing and formatting: Consider whether the report is well written (clear English language and grammar) with language that is adequate in quality and tone for an official document? Do visual aids, such as maps and graphs convey key information?	Final report (<i>strengths/weaknesses</i>): The language is clear and easy to comprehend. The tone is professional and adequate for an official document. The report is very easy to follow, enabling all readers to understand what is written across the report. Use of visual aids included tables, diagrams and map, used to support the narrative. Better use of cross-referencing (e.g. to paragraphs) would help to navigate some sections. In addition, the source of the information for tables, figures should always be included. Proofreading (the number formatting in the report, typos, strikethrough, spacing) is required.	5
OVERALL REPORT QUALITY RATING		4.5

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