

Validated Terminal Review of the UNEP grant 'South-South Cooperation to Build Capacity on Reducing Plastics Pollution in ASEAN Countries' (SB-012354) 2024-2025, implemented under the ONE UNEP Plastics initiative (SMA ID 130677)



UNEP Industry and Economy Division

Validation date: May 2026

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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 grant'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 grant 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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(IPMR SB-012354)
(February 2026)
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Terminal Review was prepared for the UNEP Industry and Economy Division by Frank Noij.

The reviewer would like to express his gratitude to all persons met and who contributed to this review, as listed in Annex III.

The review team would like to thank the grant team and in particular Mr. Feng Wang, Coordinator UNEP Plastics Initiative and Ms. Ran Xie, UNEP Project Manager and Associate Programme Officer as well as Fuaad Alkizim, Financial Management Officer and Ligia Simoni Ikeda, Project Assistant for their contribution and collaboration throughout the review process. Sincere appreciation is also expressed to the Implementing partner, the Foreign Environmental Cooperation Center of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment of the Government of the People's Republic of China, to other UNEP staff, Civil Society partners as well as to technical advisors to the grant who all provided valuable inputs to the present Terminal Grant Review. The evaluator would also like to thank the Chinese Trust Fund as the donor to the grant.

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

BRIEF EXTERNAL CONSULTANT(S) BIOGRAPHY

Frank is an evaluator with 30 years of experience in the evaluation and review of international development programming, primarily in the Asia and Pacific region. His expertise includes the conduct of complex evaluations and reviews, development and implementation of evaluation quality assurance systems and country level support to capacity development on evaluation and its use in results-based management. His approach to evaluation is informed by his experience in project and programme design and management. He has worked with UNEP as well as multiple other UN Agencies on the evaluation of projects and programmes with a focus on sustainable development. Earlier, he served as Regional Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor for CARE in its Asia Regional Management Unit and worked on international development projects and programmes for Wageningen Agricultural and Leiden Universities, the Netherlands.

**Grant Review Evaluator,
February 2026.**

ABOUT THE REVIEW

Joint Review: No

Report Language(s): English

Review Type: Terminal Review

Brief Description: This report is a management-led Terminal Review of a UNEP grant implemented between 2024 and 2025 in collaboration with the Foreign Environmental Cooperation Center, Ministry of Ecology and Environment, People's Republic of China. The grant's overall development goal was to strengthening capacities of ASEAN countries to reduce plastic pollution. The review sought to assess grant performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the grant, including their sustainability. The 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 China Trust Fund and the relevant agencies of the grant participating countries.

Source(s) of Funding by Country: China Trust Fund, People's Republic of China

Source(s) of Funding by Institution Type: *(indicate all that apply)*

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

Key words: Circular economy, life-cycle approach, upstream solutions, capacity development.

Primary data collection period: January and early February 2026

Field mission dates: -

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3
ABOUT THE REVIEW	4
TABLE OF CONTENTS	5
LIST OF ACRONYMS	6
PROJECT IDENTIFICATION TABLE	7
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	9
I. INTRODUCTION	13
II. REVIEW METHODS	15
III. THE GRANT	18
A. Context	18
B. Objectives and components	19
C. Stakeholders	20
D. grant implementation structure and partners	20
E. Changes in design during implementation	22
F. Project financing	22
IV. THEORY OF CHANGE AT REVIEW	23
V. REVIEW FINDINGS	26
A. Strategic Relevance	26
B. Quality of grant Design	31
C. Nature of the External Context	32
D. Effectiveness	32
E. Financial Management	52
F. Efficiency	54
G. Monitoring and Reporting	55
H. Sustainability	57
I. Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues	58
VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	63
A. Conclusions	63
B. Summary of grant findings and ratings	65
C. Lessons learned	70
D. Recommendations	71
ANNEX I. RESPONSE TO STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS	75
ANNEX II. REVIEW FRAMEWORK/MATRIX	77

ANNEX III. PEOPLE CONSULTED DURING THE REVIEW	80
ANNEX IV. KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED	81
ANNEX V. DETAILS OF SURVEY RESULTS DECEMBER 2025 EVENT	84
ANNEX VI. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT	86
ANNEX VII. COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH TOOLS	87
ANNEX VIII. BRIEF CV OF THE REVIEWER	88
ANNEX IX. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN OF RECOMMENDATIONS	89
ANNEX X. QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF THE REVIEW REPORT	93

LIST OF ACRONYMS

3Rs	Reduce, Reuse and Recycle
4R1D	Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Renew and Degradable
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CTF	China Trust Fund
EOU	Evaluation Office of UNEP
FECO	Foreign Environmental Cooperation Center
GE	Green Economy
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approach
IG	Inter-Governmental
INC	Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee
IPMR	Integrated Planning, Management and Reporting
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTR	Mid-Term Review
MTS	Medium Term Strategy
MEE	Ministry of Ecology and Environment
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NA	Not Applicable
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PCP	Programme Coordination Project
PRC	People's Republic of China
PRC	Project Review Committee (UNEP)
POW	Programme of Work
ProDoc	Project Document (must be reviewed by PRC before any project can be undertaken, with the approval of the managing division director)
ROAP	Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (UNEP)
SC	Sustainable Consumption
SD	Sustainable Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SSC	South-South Cooperation
SSTC	South-South and Triangular Cooperation
TOC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEA	United Nations Environment Assembly
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
USD	United States Dollar
WEEE	Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment

GRANT IDENTIFICATION TABLE

Table 1. Grant Identification Table

UNEP IPMR ID/SMA ¹ ID:	SB-012354	Grant ID ² (if applicable):	S1-32CFL-000024
UNEP Management (Division/Branch/Unit):	Industry and Economy Division / Industry Innovation Branch / Plastics Unit		
Implementing Partners:	The Foreign Environmental Cooperation Center (FECO), Ministry of Ecology and Environment, People's Republic of China;		
Sources of Funding:	Country ³ (ies): People's Republic of China	Institution ⁴ Name/Type: Government of PRC, China Trust Fund	
Relevant SDG(s):	12 Responsible consumption and production (target 12.4 and 12.5), 13 Climate Action (target 13.2), 14 Life below water (target 14.1) and 17 Global partnership for sustainable development (target 17.16)		
MTS (all that apply):	Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2022–2025	UNEP approval date:	26 March 2024
POW Direct Outcome(s) number/reference <i>(applicable for projects approved from 2022):</i>	POW Direct Outcomes: 3.3. Global plastic pollution is reduced, 3.6. Resource efficiency and circularity in key sectors are improved The grant will also contribute to the following outcomes: ▪ 3.1. Regional and national integrated policy has shifted towards the sound management of chemicals and waste ▪ 3.2. Land-based sources of pollution in fresh water and oceans, including marine litter and nutrients, are reduced ▪ 3.5. Inst. capacity to adopt and act on national and international commitments is enhanced ▪ 3.9. Use of harmful chemicals in products and processes is reduced in key sectors ▪ 3.12. Markets, supply chains, trade and consumer behaviours have shifted towards reduced pollution, influenced by transparency enabled by digital technologies ▪ 3.13. Sound science, data, and statistics, analysis, information and knowledge are generated and shared	MTS 2025 Outcome(s) number/reference <i>(applicable for projects approved from 2022)</i>	<i>MTS 2025 Outcome:</i> 1A, 3A, 3B, 2C, 3C Contributing to : <i>ProDoc: ONE UNEP Plastic Project on Accelerating a Global Circular Plastic Economy to Reduce Plastic Pollution and Its Impacts</i>
Sub-programme:	Chemicals and Pollution	Programme Coordination Project:	Circularity in Sectors (Plastics)

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.

<i>Expected start date:</i>	January 2024	<i>Actual start date:</i>	26 March 2024
<i>Planned completion date:</i>	31 December 2025	<i>Actual operational completion date:</i>	31 December 2025
<i>Planned total grant budget⁵ at approval:</i>	Original Budget: USD 540,000.00	<i>Actual total expenditures reported as of 9 February 2026</i>	USD 528,439
<i>Planned Extra-budgetary Funds⁶:</i>	<i>Cash:</i> <i>In-kind:</i>	<i>Secured Extra-budgetary Funds:</i>	USD 217,649
		<i>Actual Extra-budgetary Funds expenditures reported as of 9 February 2026</i>	<i>Cash:</i> USD 217,649
<i>First disbursement:</i>	USD 540,000.00	<i>Planned date of financial closure:</i>	31 March 2026
<i>No. of formal grant revisions:</i>	None	<i>Date of last approved grant revision:</i>	NA
<i>No. of Steering Committee meetings:</i>	NA	<i>Date of Last Steering Committee meeting:</i>	NA
<i>Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (planned date):</i>	-	<i>Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (actual date):</i>	-
<i>Terminal Review (planned date):</i>	Dec 2025 – March 2026	<i>Terminal Review (actual date):</i>	Dec 2025 – March 2026
<i>Coverage – Implementing Country(ies):</i>	Brunei, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam, Singapore	<i>Coverage – Implementing Region(s):</i>	Asia
<i>Dates of previous project phases:</i>	NA	<i>Status of future project phases:</i>	NA

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)

Grant background

1. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) grant entitled South-South Cooperation (SSC) to Build Capacity on Reducing Plastics Pollution in ASEAN Countries aimed at strengthening capacities of ASEAN countries to reduce plastic pollution in all stages of the plastic life cycle and transitioning towards a circular economy of plastics. The grant was part of the global ONE UNEP Plastics initiative and was implemented by UNEP in collaboration with the Foreign Environmental Cooperation Center (FECO) of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE) of the People's Republic of China (PRC). The grant was financially supported by the China Trust Fund for USD 540,000 with co-financing of the United Nations Peace and Development Fund (UNPDF) at USD 12,492 and in-kind staff support from UNEP at USD 205,157. The grant had three output level results: 1. case studies on circular economy of plastics; 2. capacity development and knowledge sharing events using SSC; and 3. a study on the status of the plastic life cycle in the food and beverage sector in China, and design of new project concepts.

This Review

2. The purpose of the review combined learning and accountability and aimed to contribute to evidence-based decision-making. The Review had 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, FECO, donor Government of the PRC and participating countries and organizations. The intended audience of the review included the UNEP's Industry and Economy Division, UNEP's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) and FECO and the MEE in their ongoing and future initiatives in relation to the plastics value chain and reducing plastic pollution in the SEA region, China and beyond. The review used both qualitative and quantitative methods of data gathering and analysis with primary data gathered in the month of January 2026, covering all types of stakeholders to the grant. The risk of the relatively large number of evaluation questions jeopardizing the focus of the review was mitigated through ensuring a relevant balance across assessment of evaluation criteria and questions and tailoring questions to each of the respondents concerned.

Key findings

3. Based on the findings from this review, the grant demonstrated performance at the 'Satisfactory' level (a table of ratings against all review criteria is found in the Conclusions section, below). The grant demonstrated strong performance in the areas of strategic relevance, project design, availability of output level results, financial management, efficiency of project implementation, and reporting. Areas that would benefit from further attention were achievement of outcome level results, likelihood of impact, project monitoring and ensuring sustainability of results, with the need to pay additional attention to the publishing and dissemination of case studies developed as part of the grant and promotion of the concepts for future action under the ONE UNEP Plastic Project, of which the grant under review was a part, once the INC process has come to a close.

Conclusions

4. The SSC grant with its focus on capacity development and learning on ways to reduce plastic pollution across ASEAN countries and China proved relevant in terms of UNEP's MTS and POW as well as donor and implementing partner's strategies and

priorities. Moreover, the grant aligned with the needs of participating countries, who appreciated the use of South-South and Triangular Cooperation. Grant activities were coordinated with other initiatives as part of ONE UNEP plastics project.

5. The grant was successful in producing the expected outputs with case studies developed under output 1, five events of capacity development and knowledge sharing organized under output 2, studies on plastic pollution developed regarding the food and beverage sector in China, and concepts for future plastic related initiatives developed under output 3. In particular in terms of events organized and concept notes developed, the grant outperformed the original targets from its design.
6. Limitations of the output level achievements included the relative lack of attention to results achieved of good practices included in case studies as well as reference to the evidence concerned in some of these, which limited the confidence provided for their use in other contexts. Meetings and workshops organized were considered effective in developing capacities and sharing knowledge on plastic pollution. Nevertheless, needs for technical support required to implement some of the approaches at the country level have persisted. This included the use of the UNEP Policy Toolbox at country level. While the number of concept notes outnumbered the target, it did not provide a shared approach to the use of SSC to reduce plastic pollution.
7. At the outcome level, the grant was successful in terms of capacity development through organization of several events. It was less effective in terms of sharing the results of case studies developed, where UNEP's role in the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) process, on development of an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, prevented publishing and disseminating of several of the studies produced. With most of the events organized at national level, there remained a need for support at sub-national level, where many responsibilities in terms of waste management resort. As the grant was a part of the ONE UNEP Plastic project, which will continue until the end of 2027, some of these shortcomings may be addressed by the global UNEP project.
8. The grant results framework guided monitoring and reporting, though it had some limitations. Tracking of sex disaggregated data in terms of participation in events was limited. Only in one of the events organized as part of the grant, a survey was conducted, gathering details on the results of the event. Survey results, together with the need assessment data from bilateral meetings between UNEP and country level participants as part of one of the events, have the potential to inform future programming in the region on reducing plastic pollution, including using SSC.
9. Sustainability of results achieved by the grant proved moderately likely, with relatively high levels of ownership, which though may depend in the future on agreement on a strong legally binding instrument regarding plastic pollution worldwide.
10. The grant, though starting few months later than originally planned, finalized in time with all expected output level results achieved and with some of these overperformed. The grant benefitted from the provision of UNEP staff time, which was a form of co-financing. The grant made use of efficient means, like organization of meetings back-to-back with other relevant meetings, reducing travel and related costs as well as reducing carbon footprints and applying a zero-waste approach for meetings.
11. Most important constraining factor for reaching results concerned UNEP's role in the INC process, which prevented the organization from playing an outspoken role in terms of policy advocacy in order to maintain an independent position as the host to the on-going negotiations. Attention to human rights and gender equality as cross-cutting issue was limited. This also went for communication and public awareness, due to UNEP's hosting of the INC process.

12. South-South and Triangular Cooperation were seen by grant stakeholders as a useful means of building capacities and sharing knowledge and experiences on reducing plastic pollution across countries in the region as well as beyond. Given the limitations of the grant in terms of its coverage and timeframe, several of the issues will need to be followed up in order to maximize the higher-level results that the grant was to achieve or contribute towards.

Lessons Learned

13. Lesson 1: Plastic pollution is a complex issue with detrimental environmental effects and with the initiatives that aim to reduce it requiring attention beyond environmental issues, to include economic, social, political and consumer related aspects of plastics along all phases of its lifecycle.
14. Lesson 2: The regional approach employed by the grant in terms of reducing plastic pollution is useful from an economic perspective as approaches like Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and restrictions in terms of plastic production can easily be avoided by companies if only applied in few countries in the region. Countries with less regulations in this respect could easily distort the market.
15. Lesson 3: In addition to learning across countries on aspects of reducing plastic pollution at regional or sub-regional levels, there is a need to follow-up with more focused SSC support amongst selected countries or with technical support by UNEP or other parties addressing country level needs identified.
16. Lesson 4: With the UNEP practice of nesting grants in larger initiatives, it is useful for a project design document to include explicitly details concerned, including those aspects of the design that are formulated as part of the larger initiative and not repeated in the project design document in order to ensure a common understanding across stakeholders concerned and to inform accountability.

Recommendations (abridged, for full recommendations consult main text)

17. Recommendation 1: To further explore the opportunities for South-South and Triangular cooperation between ASEAN countries and China, making use of the concept notes developed as a result of the grant and develop an intermediate term approach to the use of South-South and Triangular Cooperation in support of reducing plastic pollution, including prioritization of countries requiring support within the region.
18. Recommendation 2: Review the case studies developed as part of the grant, ensuring sufficiently comprehensive descriptions, and provide details on results achieved and references to the evidence concerned and disseminate the results as widely as possible in the region and beyond, targeting relevant audiences in line with the communications strategy of the ONE UNEP Plastic project.
19. Recommendation 3: Support monitoring and evaluation of plastic initiatives in order to get sufficient data to inform policy making, including methodologically robust assessments on what works to enhance the availability of data regarding ways to reduce plastic pollution and inform scaling up of approaches concerned.
20. Recommendation 4: In addition to national level assistance, provide focused support to aspects of implementation of policies at sub-national level along relevant phases of the plastic life cycle, with a focus on local government / city level authorities, in close cooperation with UNCT members and other relevant stakeholders in prioritized countries in the region.
21. Recommendation 5: Follow up at country level regarding the use of the UNEP policy toolbox, with support adapted to the various needs of countries in the region, dependent on different contexts and current capacities with support organized and

provided in close cooperation with UNCT members and other relevant stakeholders at country level.

Validation

The report has been subject to an independent validation exercise performed by UNEP's Evaluation Office. The performance ratings for the South-South Cooperation to Build Capacity on Reducing Plastics Pollution in ASEAN Countries (SB-012354) grant, set out in the Conclusions and Recommendations section have not been adjusted as a result. The overall grant performance is validated at the '**Satisfactory**' level. Moreover, the Evaluation Office has found the overall quality of the report to be 'Satisfactory' (see Annex X).

I. INTRODUCTION

22. The UNEP grant entitled *South-South Cooperation (SSC) to Build Capacity on Reducing Plastics Pollution in Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)* aimed at strengthening capacities of ASEAN countries reducing plastic pollution in all stages of the plastic life cycle and transitioning towards a circular economy of plastics. This was to be achieved through development and sharing of best practices, supporting of South-South cooperation events, a study on the plastic life cycle in the food and beverage sector in China and the preparation of concepts for future reducing of plastic pollution. The grant was initially planned for a two-year time frame, with activities started only in March 2024, when UNEP's internal memo confirmed the budget allocation for this grant, and was terminated at the end of December 2025. The grant was financially supported by the China Trust Fund for USD 540,000 with co-financing of the United Nations Peace and Development Fund (UNPDF) at USD 12,492 and in-kind staff support from UNEP at USD 205,157.
23. The grant was implemented by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in collaboration with the Foreign Environmental Cooperation Center (FECO) of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE) of the People's Republic of China (PRC), financially supported by the China Trust Fund.⁷ The grant had three output level results: 1. case studies on circular economy of plastics; 2. capacity development and knowledge sharing events using SSC; and 3. a study on the status of the plastic life cycle in the food and beverage sector in China, and design of new project concepts. Outputs contributed to increased knowledge and capacities of ASEAN countries on ways to reduce plastic pollution and apply circular economy approaches for plastics.
24. The grant was managed by the UNEP Industry and Economy Division, and its Industry Innovation Branch, Plastics Unit. The grant formed a part of the ONE UNEP Plastic Project on Accelerating a Global Circular Plastic Economy to Reduce Plastic Pollution and its Impacts, usually referred to as the ONE UNEP Plastic Project, which started 1 January 2023 and is expected to terminate 31 December 2027. Given this organizational setup, the grant design did not require Project Review Committee approval. The SSC grant formed part of the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS) of the period 2022 – 2025 and the Chemicals and Pollution Action Sub-programme. The grant, moreover, contributed to the UNEP sub-programmes of Climate stability and Living in harmony with nature.⁸
25. With the grant ending 31 December 2025, a grant terminal review was conducted covering the entire grant period. The present review was commissioned by UNEP's Industry and Economy Division. The purpose of the review combined learning and accountability and aimed to contribute to evidence-based decision-making. The Review had two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning

⁷ The grant formed a part of the Framework Agreement of Strategic Cooperation between the Ministry of Ecology and Environment of the People's Republic of China and UNEP, which was signed on 28 February 2024. UN Environment Programme, UNEP Senior Management Team Memorandum on the 2024 China MEE – UNEP agreement allocation, 26 March 2024. UNEP, Ministry of Ecology and Environment of the People's Republic of China, Framework Agreement on Strategic Cooperation between The Ministry of Ecology and Environment of the People's Republic of China and The United Nations Environment Programme, February 2024. The grant was guided by: UNEP Industry and Economy Division, Project Cooperation Agreement between United Nations Environment programme and Foreign Environmental cooperation Center, Ministry of Ecology and Environment of P.R. China of December 2024. UNEP, South-South Cooperation to Build Capacity on Reducing Plastics Pollution in ASEAN Countries (Internal Project document).

⁸ United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme Fifth session, For people and planet: the United Nations Environment Programme strategy for 2022–2025 to tackle climate change, loss of nature and pollution, Nairobi, 17 February 2021.

and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, FECO, donor Government of PRC and participating countries and organizations.⁹

26. The intended audience of the review included the UNEP's Industry and Economy Division, UNEP's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) and FECO and the MEE in their ongoing and future initiatives in relation to the plastics value chain and plastic pollution in the Southeast Asia region, China and beyond. Moreover, results were expected to be used by partners at regional level and in the participating countries in terms of their future involvement in reducing plastic pollution through SSC initiatives, including Chinese agencies and businesses and national organizations working on the plastic agenda in ASEAN countries. For the donor, Government of PRC, the terminal review was expected to be of use both in terms of accountability of resources and in terms of learnings, which would be of value to Government of PRC's support to environmental projects, particularly those with a focus on reducing plastic pollution, in all stages of the plastic life cycle and transitioning towards a circular economy of plastics, making use of SSC.¹⁰

⁹ UNEP, South-South Cooperation to Build Capacity on Reducing Plastics Pollution in ASEAN Countries grant, Terms of Reference Terminal grant Review, Paris, December 2025 (internal project document).

¹⁰ Ibid.; Key informant interviews.

II. REVIEW METHODS

27. For the present review, the standard UNEP review criteria for Terminal grant Reviews were used as presented in the TOR template for Terminal Reviews, which apply for all funders. The review criteria and questions are presented in Table 2 below. For each of the criteria, the main questions were specified, in line with the details from the TOR template. These review criteria and questions were used to guide the entire review process.¹¹

Table 2: Review criteria and questions

Review Criteria	Review Questions
1. Strategic Relevance	To what extent was the grant suited to the priorities and policies of UNEP, ASEAN countries, the donor and other stakeholders?
2. Quality of Project Design	What was the design quality and what were the grant's strengths and weaknesses at design stage?
3. Nature of External Context	What was the grant's external operating context (considering the prevalence of conflict, natural disasters and unanticipated political upheaval)?
4. Effectiveness	To what extent have results been realized at output and outcome levels?
5. Financial Management	What was the quality of the financial management system in place and its implementation?
6. Efficiency	To what extent have grant activities been efficient in achieving output level results?
7. Monitoring and Reporting	What was the quality of grant monitoring and reporting?
8. Sustainability	To what extent are the results achieved by the grant likely to be maintained without additional support?
9. Factors and Processes Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues	i. Preparation and Readiness (part of assessment of Project Design Quality) ii. Quality of Project Management and Supervision iii. Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation iv. Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equity v. Environmental and Social Safeguards vi. Country Ownership and Driven-ness vii. Communication and Public Awareness

28. In order to assess the achievements of the grant, the review covered the entire grant period March 2024 - December 2025, including all types of activities conducted. The review made use of a theory-based approach, guided by the grant's results framework and the reconstructed theory of change (see details below). The review made use of a non-experimental design, which aligned with the review time frame and available resources.
29. For data gathering, use was made of a mixed methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods of data gathering. This in order to assess the qualitative issues concerned in terms of results reached and ways in which these were achieved as well as getting an indication on quantitative aspects of results. The use of a variety of methods allowed for triangulation of data across these methods and enhanced validity of findings.

¹¹ UNEP, Terms of Reference, Management-Led Terminal Review, template; UNEP, South-South Cooperation to Build Capacity on Reducing Plastics Pollution in ASEAN Countries grant, Terms of Reference Management-Led Terminal Review, Paris, December 2025 (internal document).

30. The review made use of a participatory approach, including as much as possible a wide range and variety of stakeholders in the various stages of the review process. The use of a participatory approach enabled the inclusion of a range of perspectives of stakeholders concerned. This, moreover, allowed for triangulation of data across the various respondents and in this way enhanced validation of findings. The use of a participatory approach, moreover, enhanced the level of ownership of the review process and its findings and conclusions, which in turn was expected to enhance the likeliness of the use of the recommendations. Gender and human rights were mainstreamed throughout the review process. Data were disaggregated as much as possible by sex and other relevant social categories and vulnerability criteria.
31. The review made use of appreciative inquiry, apart from a problem-oriented approach. Through appreciative inquiry, the focus was turned away from finding solutions to problems towards a more positive approach, focusing on what worked and how this could be reinforced. Through its focus on appreciative questioning, appreciative inquiry provided a powerful way to engage participants in evaluative discussions. Rather than addressing problems as negatives, the use of appreciative inquiry enabled addressing what does not work by assessing what participants would wish to be different in the future in similar projects in order to enhance results and in this way informed the development of forward-looking recommendations.
32. The review made use of a variety of methods for data gathering, including desk review, the review of project monitoring and reporting data, semi-structured online interviews, mini-survey and e-mail communications. The use of a variety of methods enabled triangulation across these methods. A variety of methods were also used in terms of data analysis. These included qualitative content analysis and quantitative data analysis. Moreover, stakeholder and results framework analysis were used.
33. In terms of selection of stakeholders, in each relevant group, use was made of purposive sampling, guided by the contribution of the agencies to the implementation of the grant. Those agencies with high levels of participation were prioritized as they were likely to have contributed most to obtaining results. Moreover, stakeholder selection ensured representation from all types of partners that the grant had been working with. For details of sampled respondents, see Table 3 below.

Table 3: Details on the sample of respondents of the Terminal review

Type of Respondents	Details	# people involved (M/F)	# people contacted (M/F)	# respondent (5M/12F)	Percentage respondents
Grant team (those with management responsibilities e.g. PMU)	UNEP	6	5	5	100 %
Grant (implementing/ executing) partners (received funds from grant)	FECO	3	2	2	100 %
	Consultants	3	3	3	100 %
Grant (collaborating / contributing¹²) partners (not received funds from grant)	Workshop participants	22	5	4	80 %
	CSOs	3	3	3	100%

34. Throughout the review process and in the compilation of the Final Review Report, the UNEP Evaluation Policy and the UN Evaluation Group Norms and Standards for Evaluation and Review in the UN System were adhered to. Efforts were made to

¹² Contributing partners may have provided resources as either cash or in-kind inputs (e.g. staff time, office space etc.).

represent the views of both mainstream and more marginalized groups of stakeholders. Data were collected with respect for ethics and human rights issues. All discussions were based on informed consent, details remained anonymous and all information was collected according to the UN Standards of Conduct.¹³

35. The number of questions of the review was relatively large, which could have jeopardized the focus of the review. This was mitigated through ensuring a relevant balance across assessment of evaluation criteria and questions and to tailor questions to each of the stakeholders, taking into consideration their ability to address evaluation criteria and questions in line with their role in the grant and the wider organizational context.
36. For the involvement of a broader range of stakeholders than could be reached through interviews, use was made of a survey questionnaire for participants of selected key grant events. With a survey completed for the December 2025 meeting, use was made of the data concerned, with were analysed as part of the review. For an overview of survey results, see Annex V below.

¹³ UNEG, United Nations Evaluation Group, Norms and Standards for Evaluation, 2016, 2017; UNEG, Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, March 2008; UNEG, UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System, March 2008, UN Environment Programme, Evaluation Policy, revised, October 2022.

A. Context

Plastic pollution

37. Plastic production and consumption have grown exponentially since the 1950s, when plastics were first introduced. Annual global production of plastics doubled in the first twenty years of the 21st century, from 234 to 460 million tonnes between 2000 and 2019. Under a business-as-usual scenario, plastic use is projected to double in OECD countries between 2019 and 2060 while it is expected to triple in the same period in non-OECD countries. Plastics are associated with the use of chemical additives, many of which pose concerns for human health and a clean environment.¹⁴
38. Plastic waste is on the rise with the packaging, textiles, building, construction and transport sectors being among the largest generators. While some of the plastic is recycled, the amount remains low and is largely outnumbered by plastic mismanaged. Globally, 46 per cent of plastic waste is landfilled, 22 per cent is mismanaged and becomes litter, 17 per cent is incinerated, and 15 per cent is collected for recycling resulting in less than 9 per cent recycled, after losses.¹⁵
39. The effects of plastic pollution are increasingly evident with the possibility of plastic posing risks to human health in every stage of its life cycle. Mismanagement of plastic waste has resulted in contamination of the entire marine environment, from shores to the deepest ocean sediments. Moreover, plastic contributes to climate change through the release of greenhouse gas across its life cycle. The negative effects of plastic pollution are disproportionately carried by the most vulnerable populations, including people whose livelihoods depend on coastal and marine ecosystems as well as garbage collectors in the informal sector. Negative effects of plastic waste have gender related aspects. Root causes of plastic pollution include the unsustainable consumption and production of plastic products under a linear economy, resulting in increased generation of plastic waste.
40. This situation is aggravated by limitations in terms of waste management capacities, including infrastructure, policies in place and enforcement capabilities. Bulk of the leakage into the environment emerges from the use and waste stages of the plastic value chain rather than the sourcing or manufacturing parts of the chain. Plastic waste mismanagement is estimated at over 75 percent in most East Asia Seas countries, which results in high levels of leakage in waterways and the ocean. Leakage of plastic waste in the ocean is a result of the huge gap that exists between waste generation and waste management, including wastewater management. The amount of plastic waste entering the ocean appears mostly a function of population density, miles of coastline, amount of mismanaged waste and the amount of (single use) plastic in the waste stream. Ocean currents and waves transport plastic waste across all five main gyres and to all the corners of the world, resulting in plastic waste even ending up on uninhabited islands.
41. About 40 percent of global land-based plastic litter was estimated to come from four rapidly developing countries: China, Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam.¹⁶ A recent

¹⁴ OECD (2022), Global Plastics Outlook: Economic Drivers, Environmental Impacts and Policy Options, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/de747aef-en>.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Jambeck, J.R., et al., Plastic waste inputs from land into the ocean. *Science*, 2015. 347(6223): p. 768-771, cited in Moss, E., Eidson, A., and Jambeck J., 2017, Sea of Opportunity: Supply Chain Investment Opportunities to Address Marine Plastic Pollution, Encourage Capital on behalf of Vulcan, Inc., New York, February 2017.

study of the Resilience Center of Stockholm University found that plastic pollution exacerbates the impacts of all planetary boundaries, including climate change, ocean acidification and biodiversity loss and affects the environment as well as human health and well-being. The study stresses the need to address all stages of the lifecycle of plastic.¹⁷

42. Ongoing conflict in Myanmar and emerging conflict between Cambodia and Thailand in the middle and towards the end of 2025 constrained grant implementation.

South-South Cooperation

43. The idea of sharing knowledge, technology and technical expertise across Southern countries, as both a complementary approach as well as an alternative to traditional North-South cooperation, has been around for about fifty years. An early expression of it concerned the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries of 1978, after which SSC has been further developed, incorporating new elements and concepts. In 2009, the High-Level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation was held in Nairobi, Kenya, celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action. The conference acknowledged SSC as an important element of international development cooperation, recognizing that developing countries tend to face similar development challenges. The outcome document adopted by the UN General Assembly included six principles of SSC and eight elements to inform SSC practices.¹⁸
44. Recent UN guidance has focused on transitioning SSC from peripheral activities to mainstream pillars of the global development architecture, with SSC a more effective, credible and impactful approach to development cooperation. This in an increasingly complex development landscape with the SDGs having redefined development beyond economic growth, to include social inclusion and environmental sustainability. Several South-South Cooperation modalities have been identified, including bilateral and regional forms of SSC as well as triangular forms in which multilateral organizations or other Southern or Northern countries play an intermediate or facilitating role. A strategic framework has been developed to serve as a comprehensive roadmap for continued effectiveness of SSC, including an inclusive agenda, a framework for funding, strengthening of knowledge sharing, advocating for inclusive governance and promotion of cultural exchanges.¹⁹

B. Objectives and components

45. The SSC grant aimed to achieve the following objectives:²⁰
 - To strengthen capacities of ASEAN countries to reduce plastic pollution by sharing knowledge and enhancing South-South cooperation
 - To develop a study to understand the status of plastic production, consumption and pollution in food and beverage sector in China, and to prepare potential project concepts for implementation

¹⁷ The planetary boundaries framework highlights the rising risks from human pressure on nine critical global processes that regulate the stability and resilience of the Earth. Villarrubia-Gomez, P., B. Carney Almoth, M. Eriksen, M. Ryberg & S.E. Cornell, Plastics pollution exacerbates the impacts of all planetary boundaries, One Earth, 2024.

¹⁸ United Nations, the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries, 1978. Referenced in: BRICS Policy Center and South-South Cooperation Research and Policy Centre, Paths for Developing South-South Cooperation Monitoring and Evaluation Systems, Rio de Janeiro/São Paulo, July 2017.

¹⁹ United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, Bridging horizons and continents: Forging Transformative Pathways in South-South and Triangular Cooperation, 2025.

²⁰ UNEP, South-South Cooperation to Build Capacity on Reducing Plastics Pollution in ASEAN Countries (Internal project document).

46. The grant used an overarching Circular Economy approach, ensuring interventions were designed and implemented with an understanding of the entire life cycle and value chain of plastics. The outcomes that the grant was expected to contribute towards and the outputs that the grant was expected to deliver were included in the project document. Three output level results were to contribute to three outcome level changes. The details, as presented in the project document, did not include indicators, targets and baseline data. grant outcome and output details are presented in Table 4 below.²¹

Table 4: Grant outcomes and outputs

Grant Outcome	Grant Output
1. Increased knowledge on the best practices and lessons learnt on reducing plastic pollution through life cycle, built upon existing policy and business practices at global level	Compilation of best practices and case studies on circular economy of plastics based on the regional, and national experiences, including the ones from China (by Q2, Y2)
2. Increased capacity of the countries in the ASEAN countries in applying circular economy approach for plastics	Capacity development and knowledge sharing events on South-South Cooperation (by Q3, Y2)
3. Increased understanding on the plastic value chain in the food and beverage sector in China	Study on the status of plastics production, consumption and pollution in the food and beverage sector in China, and preparation of potential project concepts for implementation (by Q4, Y2)

C. Stakeholders

47. A variety of stakeholders were involved in the implementation of the grant. This included UNEP staff at headquarters, division and regional levels, Government of PRC agencies including MEE and FECO, ASEAN participating countries and civil society organizations. Different stakeholders have had different levels of influence over plastic pollution related issues as well as different levels of interest in the grant. An overview of stakeholders to the grant is provided in Table 5 below, based on their level of interest in the grant and their expected influence over plastic pollution related issues.²²

D. Grant implementation structure and partners

48. The grant was jointly implemented by UNEP in collaboration with FECO. In line with the UNEP Delivery Model, the grant was managed by UNEP's Industry and Economy Division, Industry Innovation Branch, Plastics Unit.²³ The UNEP Project Manager was part of the One UNEP Plastics project under Plastics Unit. MEE, on behalf of the China Trust Fund, appointed FECO as the main implementing partner of the grant, to work on project implementation together with UNEP. For UNEP, the SSC project manager was in charge of daily activities and was supervised by the ONE UNEP Plastic Project Manager, who is part of the Plastics Unit of the Industry and Economy Division. The project manager and her supervisor, as part of the Division, coordinate on a regular

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.; Key informant interviews.

²³ UNEP, South-South Cooperation to Build Capacity on Reducing Plastics Pollution in ASEAN Countries (Internal document); UN Environment Programme, UNEP Delivery Model, Policy for One UNEP Delivery for Better Collaboration and Country Support, 26 September 2022.

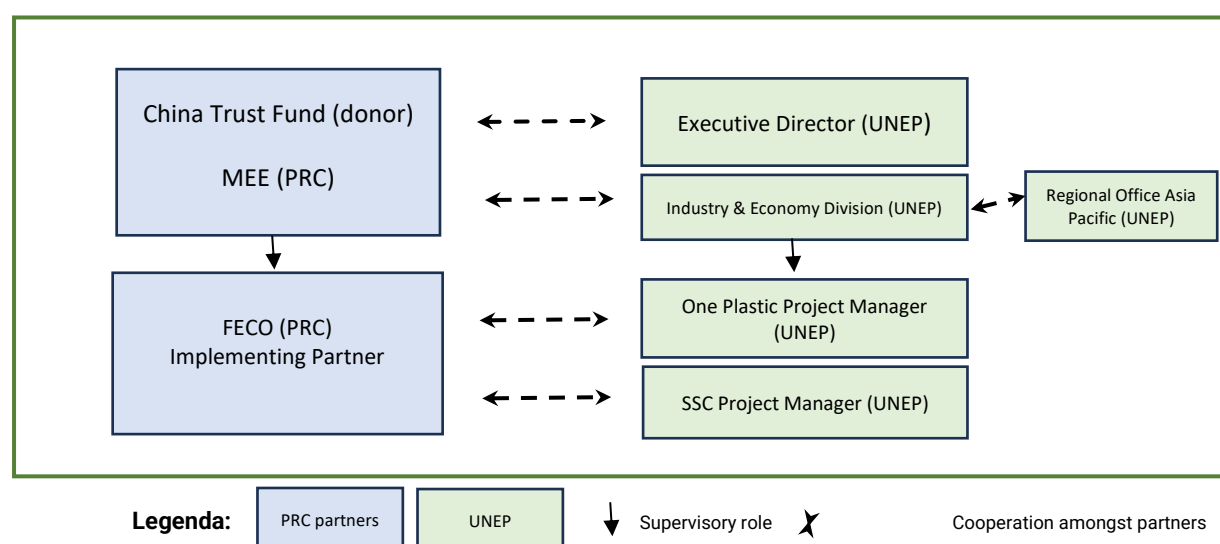
basis with the UNEP Asia Pacific Regional Office (ROAP). For an overview, see Figure 1 below.²⁴

Table 5: Stakeholder characteristics along interest and influence criteria

Increased influence / of stakeholders over plastic pollution issues	B: High influence, low interest in grant <i>Meeting their needs</i> • Governments of developed countries	A: High influence, high interest in grant <i>Key players</i> • UNEP • UN RCO / country teams • Government of PRC / MEE / FECO • China Trust Fund (donor) • Governments of participating countries • ASEAN Secretariat • Business leaders • World Bank and other financial institutions
	D: Low influence, low interest in grant <i>Marginal players</i> • Individual citizens • Consumer associations	C: Low influence, high interest in grant <i>Show consideration</i> • Civil society organizations • Informal sector incl. waste pickers • Vulnerable groups, incl. women, children, indigenous groups • Academia / Research institutes

Increased interest of stakeholders in the project

Figure 1: Overview of the Grant implementation structure



²⁴ UNEP, South-South Cooperation to Build Capacity on Reducing Plastics Pollution in ASEAN Countries (Internal document); Key informant interviews.

E. Changes in design during implementation

49. Few adaptations were made to the original design of the grant. This concerned the addition of indicators for outcome and output level results in the second grant progress report of August 2025 as these had been missing in the design of the grant. While both outcome and output indicator did have baseline data, targets were only included for the output level indicators. It was not made clear in the Progress Report what these indicators, baselines and targets were based on.²⁵

F. Grant financing

50. A total budget of 540,000.00 USD was made available for the implementation of the grant as part of the 2024 China Ministry of Ecology and Environment – UNEP agreement.²⁶ Towards the end of the grant, in-kind support was obtained from the UN Peace and Development Fund (UNPDF) for the organization of the event of December 2025. Moreover, UNEP staff time was provided as in-kind support. For details on the grant budget, see Table 6 below with further details provided in Table 15, 16 and 17 as part of the discussion of the evaluation criterion of Financial Management.

Table 6: Grant budget (in USD)

Budgetary items	Grant budget
Global and regional consultant/agencies (UNEP)	163,760 USD
Transfers and Grants Issued to Implementing Partner	220,000 USD
Procurement for meetings and trainings	24,940 USD
Travel for UNEP and meeting participants	40,144 USD
Evaluation (4.5% of the total grant budget)	24,300 USD
Grant Support Cost, PSC (13% of actual expense)	61,509 USD
1% UN Levy	5,347 USD
Total	540,000 USD

²⁵ UN Environment Programme, China Trust Fund Progress Report, grant South-South Cooperation to Build Capacity on Reducing Plastics Pollution in ASEAN Countries, March 2024 – August 2025.

²⁶ UN Environment Programme, UNEP Senior Management Team Memorandum on the 2024 China MEE – UNEP agreement allocation, 26 March 2024.

IV. THEORY OF CHANGE AT REVIEW

51. The SSC grant document, while including a results framework, did not include a theory of change (TOC), identifying the various levels of change that the grant is expected to contribute towards. Therefore, the TOC needed to be reconstructed, which was done by the reviewer of the present Terminal review. Reconstruction was done making use of the information provided on various levels of change that the grant was meant to contribute to, and which were referred to in the grant document. This included details of the primary sub-programme to which the grant pertained, POW Outcomes and Direct Outcomes as well as grant level outputs and outcome level changes.²⁷
52. The reconstructed TOC heavily focuses on capacity development and knowledge management with the compilation of best practices and focused studies at the output level. This in order to enhance knowledge and understanding of national governments and other stakeholders on ways to reduce plastic pollution and in particular on the plastic value chain in the food and beverage sector in China. The outcome level, besides increased knowledge and capacities, includes the identification of new business models and product design towards a circular plastic economy. At the intermediate level, this is to result in regional and national policies and strategies towards sound waste management and prevention and reduction of waste. Moreover, markets, supply chains and consumer behavior are to have shifted with results achieved in reduced land-based pollution and marine litter. At the impact level, outcomes are to contribute towards reduced pollutants of plastics, enhanced nature conservation and restoration and optimization of human health. For details see Figure 2 below.
53. When comparing the reconstructed TOC with the TOC of the larger ONE UNEP Plastic Project it can be observed that the present grant mostly overlaps with Output 4: *Enhanced knowledge and capacities of governments to develop fiscal policies*, Output 5: *Governments, industry, financial institutions, NGOs and individuals have enhanced capacity to shift behavior practices towards a circular plastics economy* and Output 6: *Governments, industry and other partners have the means to report and monitor progress and enhanced access to knowledge products*. This shows that the SSC grant focus was on government agencies and enhancing their knowledge and capacities, to enable them to address circular solutions and plastic pollution. In terms of actions, the SSC grant focused on *Regulation development for policy implementation* and *Enabling and planning actions*, with less attention paid to *Inspire and support industry action*, and *Address non-recyclable waste*.²⁸ For details see Figure 3 below.

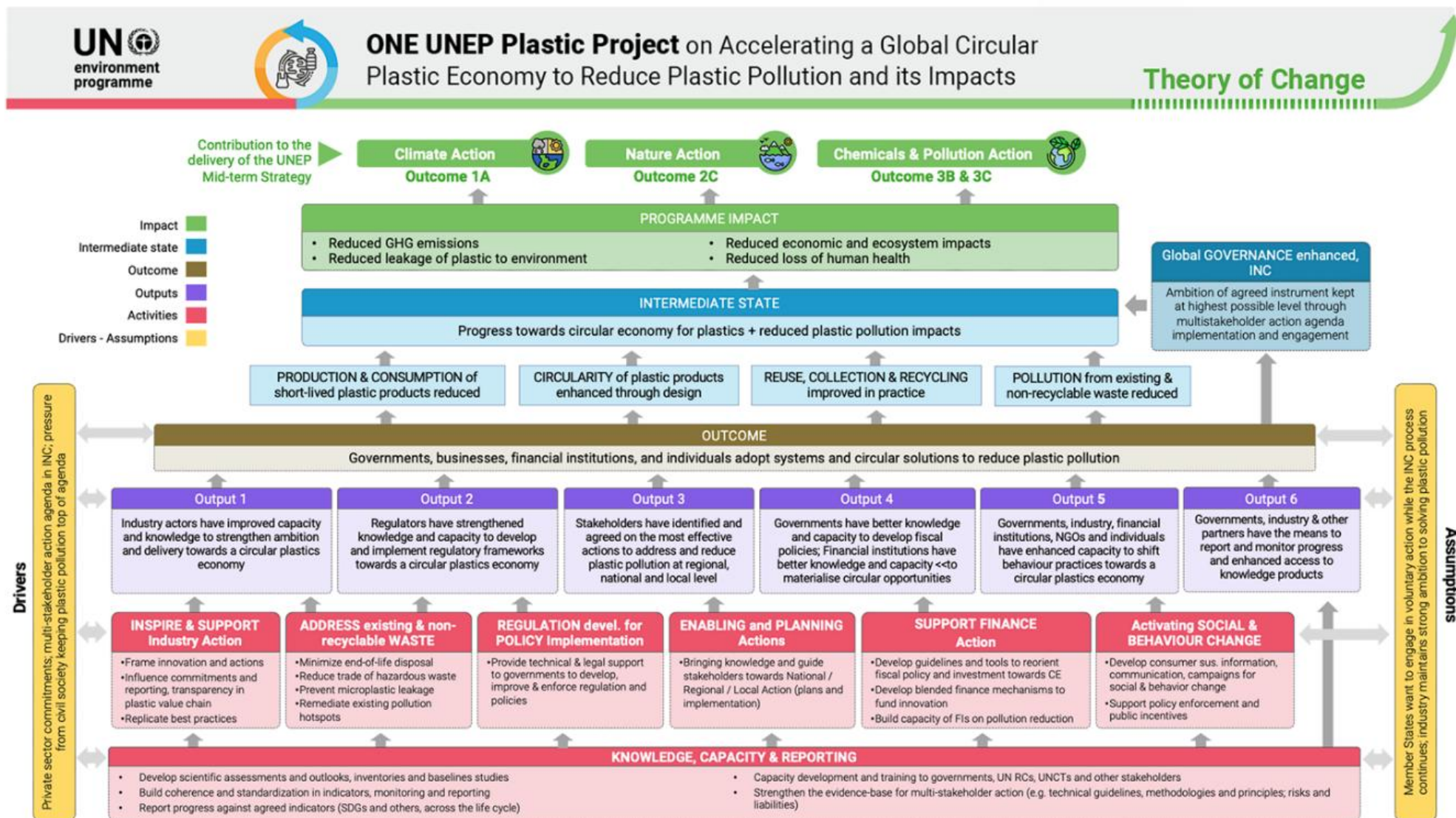
²⁷ UNEP, South-South Cooperation to Build Capacity on Reducing Plastics Pollution in ASEAN Countries (Internal project document).

²⁸ UN Environment Programme, ONE UNEP Plastic Project on Accelerating a Global Circular Plastic Economy to Reduce Plastic Pollution and its Impacts, Project Document, July 2021.

Figure 2: Reconstructed Theory of Change at Review

Impact level results: Human and environmental conditions	Global plastic pollution is reduced	Releases of pollutants to air, water, soil and the ocean are reduced	Nature conservation and restoration are enhanced	Human health is optimized
Intermediate level results: Resource efficiency and circularity in key sectors are improved	Regional and national integrated policy regulatory, financial and technical measures have shifted towards circular economy and the sound management of chemicals and waste	Governments developing or implementing policies, strategies and mechanisms to prevent or reduce waste and ensure environmentally sound waste treatment or disposal	Markets, supply chains, trade and consumer behaviours have shifted towards reduced pollution	Land-based sources of pollution in fresh water and oceans, including marine litter and nutrients, are reduced
Outcome level results: Enhanced knowledge, understanding and capacities	Increased capacity of the countries in the ASEAN countries in applying circular economy approach for plastics	Strengthened capacity of national governments to access best practices and experiences through the collaboration with multilateral, regional and national platforms, initiatives on plastics and enabling economic frameworks	Increased knowledge on the best practices and lessons learnt on reducing plastic pollution through life cycle; Increased understanding on the plastic value chain in the food and beverage sector in China	Effective new business models and product design identified towards circular economy
Output level results: Informing capacity development and knowledge management	Capacity development and knowledge sharing events	Compilation of best practices and case studies on circular economy of plastics	Study on the status of plastics production, consumption and pollution in the food and beverage sector in China	Potential project concepts for implementation developed
Drivers: - Member states' commitment to learning across countries - Multi-stakeholder action agenda in INC - Pressure to keep plastic pollution top of agenda		Assumptions: - Member states' commitment to voluntary action during INC process - Support to industry and consumers as well as on finance issues addressed through other initiatives - Monitoring and evaluation beyond the output and outcome level changes informs project management - Human rights and gender equality are used in terms of objectives and process		

Figure 3: Theory of Change of the ONE UNEP Plastic Project



A. Strategic Relevance

Alignment to UNEP's Medium Term Strategy²⁹ (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities

54. The grant was part of the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS) of the period 2022 – 2025³⁰ and part of the Chemicals and Pollution Action Sub-programme. It contributed to the following POW outcomes:³¹

- Outcome 1A: Decision-makers at all levels adopt decarbonization, dematerialization and resilience pathways
- Outcome 3A: Human health and environmental outcomes are optimized through enhanced capacity and leadership in the sound management of chemicals and waste
- Outcome 3B: Waste management is improved, including through circular processes, safe recovery of secondary raw materials and progressive reduction of open burning and dump sites
- Outcome 2C: Nature conservation and restoration are enhanced
- Outcome 3C: Releases of pollutants to air, water, soil and the ocean are reduced

55. Moreover, the grant contributed to the following POW Direct Outcomes:

- 3.3. Global plastic pollution is reduced
- 3.6. Resource efficiency and circularity in key sectors are improved

As well as to the following outcomes:

- 3.1. Regional and national integrated policy has shifted towards the sound management of chemicals and waste
- 3.2. Land-based sources of pollution in fresh water and oceans, including marine litter and nutrients, are reduced
- 3.5. Institutional capacity to adopt and act on national and international commitments is enhanced
- 3.9. Use of harmful chemicals in products and processes is reduced in key sectors
- 3.12. Markets, supply chains, trade and consumer behaviours have shifted towards reduced pollution, influenced by transparency enabled by digital technologies
- 3.13. Sound science, data, and statistics, analysis, information and knowledge are generated and shared

56. As part of the UNEP Chemicals and Pollution Action Sub-programme, the grant contributed to the following indicators of the Sub-programme:

- Number of Governments that, with UNEP support, are developing or implementing policies, strategies, legislation or action plans that promote sound chemicals and waste management and/or the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements and the existing framework on chemicals and waste

²⁹ 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 Expected Accomplishments (EAs), of the Sub-programmes. <https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/our-evaluation-approach/un-environment-documents>.

³⁰ United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme Fifth session, For people and planet: the United Nations Environment Programme strategy for 2022–2025 to tackle climate change, loss of nature and pollution, Nairobi, 17 February 2021.

³¹ UN environment programme, For People and Planet, Annex I: UNEP Programme of Work and Budget for 2022-2023, Nairobi (with the POW extended to cover the period 2024-2025 with budgets and targets pro-rated accordingly).

- Number of Governments developing or implementing policies, strategies and mechanisms to prevent or reduce waste and ensure environmentally sound waste treatment or disposal, including in the context of disaster or conflict-related environmental emergencies, with UNEP support
- Number of policy, regulatory, financial and technical measures developed with UNEP support to reduce pollution in air, water, soil and the ocean
- Reduction in releases of pollutants to the environment achieved with UNEP support

57. The One UNEP Plastics Project concerns a programmatic approach in response to the identification of plastics as one of the high impact sectors in terms of environmental pollution. This grant enables coordination across multiple initiatives, reducing overlap and enabling synergy. The One UNEP Plastics Project, in turn, is part of the Circularity in Sectors Programme Coordination Project (PCP) and concerns one of the larger initiatives of the PCP.³²

58. The above shows that the grant was fully aligned with UNEP's mandate and thematic priorities as represented in the MTS and POW under which the grant was approved. The grant was also in line with the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building, including its paragraph on South-South cooperation. While the grant has not so much been applying SSC as bilateral cooperation between two countries, it has applied it in terms of sharing of information across multiple countries and building capacities in a regional setup. As the grant formed a part of the larger One UNEP Plastics Project, the contributions of the grant need to be understood within the framework of the wider ONE UNEP Plastic project.

59. However, the design document does not include details in terms of anticipated identifiable contribution(s) to reported Direct Outcomes indicator(s) in the POW. Also, the project monitoring and reporting system in terms of outcome level indicators focused on best practices documented and disseminated, capacities built and understandings improved, which while contributing to, are relatively far from achieving the Direct Outcome indicators of the POW concerned.³³

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

Alignment to Donor/Partners Strategic Priorities

60. The grant and its outputs and outcomes aligned well with the strategies of the China Trust Fund, the Ministry of Ecology and Environment of China and its Foreign Environmental Cooperation Center (FECO). The project document was strongly in line with MEE and Government of China with their needs taken into account from the project design stage. Strongly aligned in terms of SSC, reducing of plastic pollution, green development and circular economy and sharing of experiences with developing countries. Plastic policy is part of China's Environmental cooperation.³⁴
61. This is also reflected in the Framework of ASEAN-China Environmental Cooperation Strategy and Action Plan (2021-2025). This framework follows up on two precious

³² UN Environment Programme, ONE UNEP Plastic Project on Accelerating a Global Circular Plastic Economy to Reduce Plastic Pollution and its Impacts, Project Document, July 2021; The Circularity in Sectors Project Coordination Project, in addition to plastics, focuses on electronics and textiles and mining. UNEP, "Circularity in Sectors", Coordination Project, Internal document.

³³ United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme Sixth session, Implementation of decision 5/4 on the provisional agenda, dates and venue of the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, Annex: Programme of work and budget for 2022–2025, Nairobi, 2024.

³⁴ Key informant interviews.

cooperation strategies and action plan. This latest iteration includes the ASEAN-China Strategic Partnership Vision 2030 and the principles of building an ASEAN-China community with a shared future. The Framework consists of four components:

1. Environmental policy dialogue and capacity building;
 2. Sustainable cities and marine plastic reduction;
 3. Climate change and air quality improvement;
 4. Biodiversity conservation and ecosystem management.
62. The grant related in particular with components 1 and 2. In component 1, the action plan covers high-level environmental policy dialogue and exchange, including seminars and workshop on marine plastics and micro plastic issue, strategic environmental impact assessment and environmental hotspots. The component also covers environmental data and information management, including the sharing and application of environmental good practice cases. In component 2, the action plan focuses on policy dialogue, aimed to reduce marine plastics; joint research and knowledge sharing related to marine plastic pollution prevention and control, in particular in major coastal cities and coastal areas; and capacity building and community activities. The latter includes joint actions to control marine land-based pollution and reduce plastics in coastal cities, implement clean ocean action plans among coastal cities, organize and launch community plastic reduction and waste collector campaigns, design and promote the Youth Leadership Plan on Marine Plastic Reduction and raise public awareness of marine ecosystem protection.³⁵
63. However, the project document did not make explicit the anticipated identifiable contributions to donor/partners' reported results' indicator(s) which is a requirement of the UNEP Management led terminal review criteria ratings matrix for the rating of highly satisfactory in this instance.³⁶

Rating for Alignment to Donor/Partners Strategic Priorities: Satisfactory

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

64. The grant was aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular the following:³⁷
- **SDG 3 Good Health and Well-being:** Risks to human health and well-being arise from the open burning of plastic waste, ingestion of seafood contaminated with plastics, exposure to pathogenic bacteria transported on plastics, and leaching out of substances of concern to coastal waters.
 - **SDG 6 Clean water and sanitation:** The presence and potential hazards of (micro)plastics has been recognised in municipal and bottled drinking water, which influence water quality.
 - **SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth:** Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
 - **SDG 11 Sustainable cities and communities:** Cities are concentrated locations with a high-density of population, thus high level of plastic consumption, waste and pollution.
 - **SDG 12 Responsible consumption and production:** Solving plastics pollution needs a fundamental shift towards a more sustainable consumption and production pattern.

³⁵ China-ASEAN Environmental Cooperation Center, Framework of ASEAN-China Environmental Cooperation Strategy and Action Plan (2021-2025), Beijing, China.

³⁶ UNEP Management led terminal review criteria ratings matrix.

³⁷ UNEP, South-South Cooperation to Build Capacity on Reducing Plastics Pollution in ASEAN Countries (Internal project document); UN Environment Programme, ONE UNEP Plastic Project on Accelerating a Global Circular Plastic Economy to Reduce Plastic Pollution and its Impacts, Project Document, July 2021; <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>.

- **SDG 13 Climate action:** Plastics and Greenhouse gas emissions are interconnected with every step of the plastic life cycle, including production, transportation, and waste disposal.
- **SDG 14 Life below water** (protection of the seas and oceans): Currently, an estimated 11 million tonnes of plastic waste flow into the ocean every year. With no action, this is projected to triple by 2040 - adding 2337 million tonnes.

65. Focus of the grant has been on ASEAN in terms of participating countries. This on the one hand related to the cooperation framework between China and ASEAN, which is aimed to enhance cooperation in environmental protection and sustainable development.³⁸ On the other hand, it related to the ASEAN countries having agreed on a roadmap for reducing plastic pollution which has been endorsed by the member states. The plan outlines the proposed phased implementation of a systematic and integrated response to guide regional actions in addressing the issue of marine plastic pollution in ASEAN. The focus on ASEAN countries and China, was considered a very useful approach by participants to grant activities, given that the contexts of the countries have many similarities while in terms of plastic pollution, they are all dealing with similar problems. Experiences from China in the downstream of the plastic value chain were considered of use to ASEAN countries, while experiences in ASEAN countries were considered of use to China, including regarding the development of policies and frameworks for the implementation of Extended Producer Responsibility schemes.³⁹
66. In terms of alignment with national strategies and policies, the grant included assessments of the specific needs of countries in terms of addressing plastic pollution issues. On the one hand, an overview of country profiles was made for ASEAN countries including Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and for China with a focus on the state of affairs, legislation, labour and investment related issues and support provided by UNEP regarding the following issues: Production, import and export of polymers and resins; Single-use and problematic plastic products; Chemicals of concern in plastic products; Alternatives to plastic; Plastic product design; Re-use and refill; Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR); Waste collection and recycling; and Public-Private partnerships.⁴⁰
67. Moreover, as part of the December workshop organized by UNEP and FECO (see details below), bilateral discussions with participants from participating countries were conducted to identify needs concerned. These and earlier learnings have been used in the present grant as much as possible and will be used, in particular in terms of the needs identified in the December meeting, in the on-going activities of the ONE UNEP Plastic Project, of which the grant is a component.
68. As with the above-mentioned ratings, also regarding the grant's alignment with the SDGs, no details were provided in the design of the grant in terms of anticipated identifiable contributions to global, regional, sub-regional and/or national environmental results' indicator(s). Therefore, the resulting rating for this part of the report is as indicted below.

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

³⁸ China-ASEAN Environmental Cooperation Center, Framework of ASEAN-China Environmental Cooperation Strategy and Action Plan (2021-2025), Beijing; Key Informant Interviews.

³⁹ The ASEAN Secretariat, ASEAN Regional Action Plan for Combating Marine Debris in the ASEAN Member States (2021-2025), Jakarta, 2021; Key Informant Interviews.

⁴⁰ UNEP, UNEP Plastics Country Profiles, 2025. Draft document.

Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence

69. The grant was designed as an integral part of the ONE UNEP Plastic project on Accelerating a Global Circular Plastic Economy to Reduce Plastic Pollution and its Impacts, which started January 2023 and is expected to end in December 2027, with a total implementation period of five years. The grant aimed to contribute directly to the ONE UNEP Plastics Project and was in this way closely linked to and coordinated with other UNEP projects on plastics in ASEAN countries and beyond. The linkages between the grant and the ONE UNEP Plastic project were facilitated by the staffing setup, with the Project Manager and her supervisor, being at the same time technical staff and project manager respectively of the ONE UNEP Plastic project.⁴¹
70. Due to the interconnectedness of the grant with the ONE UNEP Plastic project, in certain instances, the countries from the global South participating in the grant could be expanded beyond ASEAN countries based on their capacity to contribute and benefit from participation in events, including participants from Fiji in the December 2025 workshop. This also enabled co-funding of the latter event by the UN Peace and Development Fund project, implemented by UNEP.
71. While the grant title focused on South-South Cooperation (SSC), part of the activities conducted as through the grant concerned in practice Triangular Cooperation. The latter is characterized by the supporting role of a developed country or multilateral agency, in this case UNEP in addition to the Global South countries concerned.⁴²
72. Though not made explicit in the design document, the grant, with its focus on capacity development and knowledge management, contributed in terms of the TOC framework of the ONE UNEP Plastic project, to Output 5 and 6, with a focus on enhanced capacities in output 5 and access to knowledge products in output 6.⁴³
- Output 5: Government, industry and financial institutions, NGOs and individuals have enhanced capacities to shift behaviour practices towards a circular plastics economy
 - Output 6: Government, industry and other partners have the means to report and monitor progress and enhanced access to knowledge products

Rating for Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence: Satisfactory

Rating for Strategic Relevance:	Satisfactory
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B. Quality of Project Design

73. The grant was designed as part of the Framework Agreement of Strategic Cooperation between the Ministry of Ecology and Environment of the People's Republic of China and UNEP, which was signed on 28 February 2024. Given the limited size of the grant at 0.54 million USD, the grant was designed making use of the UNEP

⁴¹ UNEP, South-South Cooperation to Build Capacity on Reducing Plastics Pollution in ASEAN Countries (Internal project document); UN Environment Programme, ONE UNEP Plastic Project on Accelerating a Global Circular Plastic Economy to Reduce Plastic Pollution and its Impacts, Project Document, July 2021; Key Informant Interviews.

⁴² The United Nations definition of triangular cooperation: Triangular cooperation involves Southern-driven partnerships between two or more developing countries supported by a developed country(ies)/or multilateral organization(s) to implement development cooperation programmes and projects. United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, bridging horizons and continents: Forging Transformative Pathways in South-South and Triangular Cooperation, 2025 global Report on South-South and Triangular Cooperation, New York, 2025; Key Informant Interviews.

⁴³ UNEP, ONE UNEP Plastic Project on Accelerating a Global Circular Plastic Economy to Reduce Plastic Pollution and its Impacts, Project Document, approved May 2023.

Concept Approval Form. The design of the grant was conducted by UNEP and FECO with, from UNEP side, the Plastics Unit of the Industry and Economy Division leading the design process. Given the geographical focus on ASEAN, UNEP ROAP provided inputs to the design process.⁴⁴

74. With the grant's focus on reducing of plastic pollution, it was developed as an integral part of the *ONE UNEP Plastic Project on Accelerating a Global Circular Plastic Economy to Reduce Plastic Pollution and its Impacts*. This also meant that for some of the details of the design, the grant relied on the broader framework and setup provided by the ONE UNEP Plastic project. This also went for the setup of UNEP staffing, with the Project Manager already being part of the ONE UNEP Plastic project's staffing setup and bringing the wider overall grant perspective to the UNEP-FECO project.⁴⁵
75. An assessment of the design document of the grant was conducted as part of the present review inception phase. The assessment of quality of project design made use of the design documents of the grant as well as the design document of the ONE UNEP Plastic project, with the SSC grant, for some aspects of its design, depending on the broader ONE UNEP Plastic project design details.
76. For the assessment, use was made of the format provided by the UNEP Evaluation Office, including the application of the UNEP rating system concerned. The review of the SSC grant design scored a rating of 4.40 on a scale from 1 to 6, which reflected an assessment of 'satisfactory'.
77. Limitations of the connection between the SSC grant and the ONE UNEP Plastic Project concerned the lack of making this relationship explicit, including the identification of where and how the results of the SSC grant fitted into the results framework of the larger ONE UNEP initiative.

Table 7: Overall quality of project design scores

	SECTION	RATING (1-6)	WEIGHTING	TOTAL (Rating x Weighting/10)
A	Operating Context	4	0.4	0.16
B	Project Preparation	5	1.2	0.6
C	Strategic Relevance	5	0.8	0.4
D	Intended Results and Causality	5	1.6	0.8
E	Logical Framework and Monitoring	5	0.8	0.4
F	Governance and Supervision Arrangements	5	0.4	0.2
G	Partnerships	4	0.8	0.32
H	Learning, Communication and Outreach	4	0.4	0.16
I	Financial Planning / Budgeting	5	0.4	0.2
J	Efficiency	5	0.8	0.4
K	Risk identification and Social Safeguards	4	0.8	0.32
L	Sustainability / Replication and Catalytic Effects	4	1.2	0.48
M	Identified Project Design Weaknesses/Gaps	0	0.4	0.0
			TOTAL SCORE:	4.44

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

⁴⁴ UNEP, South-South Cooperation to Build Capacity on Reducing Plastics Pollution in ASEAN Countries, Internal project document; Key Informant Interviews.

⁴⁵ UNEP, ONE UNEP Plastic Project on Accelerating a Global Circular Plastic Economy to Reduce Plastic Pollution and its Impacts, Project Document, approved May 2023.

3 (Moderately Unsatisfactory)	$\geq 2.66 < 3.5$	6 (Highly Satisfactory)	> 5.16
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Rating for Project Design: Satisfactory

C. Nature of the External Context

78. While the project document does pay attention to the context in which the grant was implemented, it did not mention any issues of ongoing or the likelihood of conflict, natural disaster or changes in national governments. However, some contextual aspects related to conflict did affect grant implementation. The ongoing conflict in Myanmar prevented UNEP as well as other UN agencies from inviting Myanmar government officials to project related activities. Moreover, the sudden border conflict between Cambodia and Thailand in the middle and end of 2025 constrained grant implementation as it became difficult for Cambodians to participate in regional events organized in Bangkok.
79. The ONE UNEP Plastic Project Document did identify some political risks, including delays in country implementation due to political and administrative processes; lacking of sufficient Governments' willingness to follow through on global resolve and obligations under global agreements, which would undermine the political will to combat plastic pollution individually and collectively; and low level of participation and commitment from industry stakeholders. As part of risk management, strategies and actions to address such risks were included in the global project design document.⁴⁶

Rating for Nature of the external context: Moderately Unfavourable

D. Effectiveness

Availability of Outputs

OUTPUT 1

80. Output 1 focused on the compilation of best practice cases on circular economy of plastics in the region. While the output 1 statement, with a focus on "regional, and national experiences, including the ones from China", appeared at first sight to focus on the region and more in particular on ASEAN countries and China, this was broadened towards the global level in some of the three studies. These include:⁴⁷
1. Global best practices on circular economy of plastics: compilation for the China project
 2. Case study of plastic circular economy practices in China
 3. Best practices and examples on policy and financial instruments towards a plastic circular economy at city level
81. The title of Study 1 refers to 'global best practices' and both studies 1 and 3 include examples from within as well as outside ASEAN / China region, including cases from

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ UNEP SSC grant, Global best practices on circular economy of plastics: compilation for the China grant (draft, referred to as Study 1); UNEP, FECO, Case study of Plastic Circular Economy Practices in China, South-South Cooperation to Build Capacity on Reducing Plastics Pollution in ASEAN countries, UNEP China Trust Fund (draft, referred to as Study 2); UNEP SSC grant, Best practices and examples on policy and financial instruments towards a plastic circular economy (draft, referred to as Study 3); Key informant interviews.

developing ('Global South') and developed ('Global North') countries. Study 2 focuses on cases from China.

82. The first study makes use of 9 typologies which were included in the Project Document and presents a total of 21 cases with several of the cases representing multiple typologies. The second study details a total of 12 cases from China, with a focus on aspects of reduce, reuse and recycle (3Rs). The third study aims to provide an overview of the policy frameworks for circular economy for plastics and show related best practices at city level making use of 27 typologies of best practices organized in 7 clusters with a total of 68 cases included. In addition to cities, the study includes practices from islands (Bali in Indonesia and Antigua and Barbuda), a region (Flanders in Belgium), a council (in the United Kingdom) and entire countries (in the case of plastic credits as part of the typology of Financial and fiscal measures). The focus on cities was considered useful as these concerned initiatives at the level of city governments, with a focus on implementation and high levels of tangible results.⁴⁸
83. Study 1 makes use of a standard approach concerning details for each of the cases presented in one pagers, including details on country, objectives, description, impact, key takeaways and provides links to relevant websites for the practices presented. Study 2 provides the details of the 12 cases from China, with different levels of details for each of these. Details in study 3, for each of the practices concerned, are provided in a qualitative descriptive way for each of the cities and other geographical areas concerned, with varying levels of details across the cases which cover different timeframes.
84. In terms of focus of the cases presented, Study 1 focuses more directly on practices, which are classified under different categories including ban and phase out, reuse and refill and eco-design. Study 2 presents the 12 cases without an overview of them, with most cases related to 3Rs, which is in the Chinese context expanded to 4R1D: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Renew and Degradable. Study 3 uses broad approaches to present related practices of reducing plastic pollution, like roadmaps and strategies and circular public procurement, with examples provided in cases for each of these.
85. When looking at the details of each of the foci of these three studies, there appears to be a considerable overlap between them in terms of topics. This is shown by presenting details of categories used for the presentation of cases for studies 1 and 3 in Tables 8 and 9 below. This overlap also has resulted in the identification of the some of the same practice in both studies, including ban on single use plastics (SUPs) in Bali, Indonesia. What is different across the two studies concerns the inclusion of a global movement to tackle plastic in cities and of raising consumer awareness in study 3 which is not explicitly referred to in the categories used in study 1.

Table 8: Focus areas of Study 1 Global best practices on circular economy of plastics

1. Ban and phase out unnecessary plastic products	6. Alternatives
2. Reuse and refill	7. Trade Policies
3. Standards	8. Eco-design
4. Eco-labels, green procurement	9. Extended Producer Responsibility

⁴⁸ Study 3 was originally developed for a GEF project in Latin America and the Caribbean with cases from across the world but meant to inform developments in Panama, Colombia and Jamaica; Key Informant Interviews.

Table 9: Focus areas of Study 3 Best practices and examples on policy and financial instruments towards a plastic circular economy

1. Developing road maps and strategies, legislation, and regulations
In particular restrictions and bans on SUPs
2. Circular public procurement
in particular plastic-free events, drinkable water in public schools and offices and Green Deal for Circular Procurement
3. Eco- Innovation and business models in a circular economy for cities
Including pilot projects, in particular; living labs for innovation and circular economy; recycled plastic in construction material for sustainable housing; reverse vending machines for PET bottles; reusable and refillable systems
4. Convening and partnering
In particular: Just transition for waste pickers and inclusion in the waste management system; Plastic-Free shops and markets; Reuse and second-hand platforms and networks; Join the global movement on plastic in cities
5. Urban planning and asset management , in particular Water refill stations; AI to optimize waste sorting and recycling; Regular cleanup of waterways
6. Financial and fiscal measures
In particular Fees on consumers on SUPs; Plastic Bottle Deposit Schemes; Plastic credits; Bankable nature solutions; Plastic Recycling Rewards Program
7. Raising awareness and capacity-building
In particular: Awareness campaigns on plastic and waste; Plastic initiatives in schools; Clean-up initiatives

86. The category of Business cases for implementing upstream solutions in the plastic value chain of Study 3 has a focus on the upstream part of the plastic value chain with the actual practices presented concerning restrictions and bans of SUPs, alternatives to plastic and aspects of reuse.

87. In study 2, there is no overview of the cases included as part of the report, nor is there a classification presented of the cases concerned. When looking at the details of each of the cases, it can be observed that most of these focus on Eco-design / Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Renew. As mentioned in some of the cases, the focus is on piloting of technically and economically viable “Chinese solutions” for plastic pollution control (quotation marks in original text). Cases 5 and 9 stand out through their focus on feedback mechanisms regarding recycling through observation and monitoring. For an overview of the focus of the cases in Study 2, see Table 10 below.

88. An example of the more technical focus of the cases of study 2 concerns the RPP food boxes, which used to be low value plastic till 4 years ago, when scientists developed the technology to transform RPP into high performance fibres. Based on this technology, RPP recycling increased, as it could no longer be regarded as a low value plastic, with the fibres used especially in sportswear.

Table 10: Focus of the best practices presented in Study 2

Case heading	Focus
1. Recyclable Packaging Design, China Mengniu Dairy Co., Ltd.	Eco-design / Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Renew for dairy products
2. Promoting Green and Low-carbon Development Practices in Food Take-out Industry, Meituan's Qingshan Plan	Eco-design / Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Renew for the food delivery industry
3. Blue Circle, Marine waste management in Zhejiang Province	Recyclable market-oriented value chain for marine waste
4. High-value Full-life-cycle Utilization of WEEE Plastics, Jiangxi GER Recycling	Recycling of waste from electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE)
5. Plastic Circular Economy- Reversed Supply Chain Solution, Hangzhou Wuhuan	Connecting all participants in the various parts of the value chain in the recycling industry with digital feedback mechanisms
6. Innovation and Practices in Low-value Plastic Waste Recycling, Xiamen LUHAI	Recycling of low value plastic waste
7. Waste Plastic Fishing Net Utilization in Textile Industry, Zhejiang Yingruite	Recycling of plastic fishing gear into high quality textiles
8. Integrated "Gaobao Film" Production, Recovery and Processing Project, Guangdong Xinglian	Eco-designing, recovery and high value recycling of mulching film
9. Blue Map Plastic Reduction Observation, Institute of Public and Environmental Affairs	Citizen based observation of the implementation of a ban on the distribution of disposable bags in supermarkets, farmers' markets, restaurants and hotels and supporting recycling efforts
10. SF EXPRESS "Feng BOX", Plastic Recycling Express Packaging Practice	Development and distribution of reusable and recyclable courier boxes for standardized commodities
11. Liby Green Design Package in Daily Chemical Product, A closed-loop plastic management project starting from the design of material structure	Eco-design of composite plastic film as packaging material which can be recycled
12. Pioneering the Closed-Loop Value of Food Packaging Waste	Recycling system for low value food packaging waste into premium recycled materials
13. Food Containers Recycling Project in Shenzhen (not included in the final version of the report)	Recycling of food boxes and takeout containers and packaging

89. In addition, study 2 includes rural based cases, with case 7 focused on fishermen and the disposal of plastic fishing gear with the economic value of used fishing nets heightened through recycling opportunities. The local authorities and MEE have been working together to educate fishermen to bring their fishnets to fixed spots for recycling. A similar approach has been applied to plastic film waste in agriculture, used across the country in China, and it was made compulsory to collect used plastic films for recycling.

90. The attention to results in each of the cases studies differs. In Study 1, each of the 21 cases include information on results achieved through inclusion of details under the heading 'impact' in the one pager specifying information on each of the cases included in the study. While this at times concerns effects realized, in other cases this concerns expected results. In study 2, details on results are included in most of the

cases beside numbers 5 and 9, oriented towards feedback loops. In Study 3 there is mostly a lack of focus on results achieved through the initiatives.⁴⁹

91. Initiatives presented in studies 1 and 3 are presented as “best practices” while in Study 2 these are presented as cases. The presentation as best practices assumes that they are good for replication but evidence of their results in the descriptions concerned is limited with regard to Study 1 and mostly absent in Study 3. Moreover, in most cases there is no reference to tools for implementation of the practices included. An exemption concerns one case of Study 3 in which the non-profit organization, Re-use Austria, focused on reuse and repair platforms and networks with indication of the availability of a toolbox that could be used to replicate the initiative.
92. In addition to policy and technical aspects presented in the cases, there are usually a lot of other intervening factors that could affect the realization of results. In the downstream of the plastic life cycle, these are often related to aspects of consumers, including different lifestyles and social backgrounds as well as economic situations which matter in terms of people’s willingness to adapt their behaviour in terms of purchase and use of plastic products as part of their larger consumption patterns.⁵⁰
93. There is no explicit attention paid to the rationale for each of the studies, nor how they complement one another beyond their global, China and urban related focus. Moreover, there is no attention to methodological issues in any of the studies regarding the selection of the cases,⁵¹ the primary and secondary data and information on which they are based and methods used in data gathering and analysis. Therefore, it is also not clear what the cases included in each of the selected studies represent as these have supposedly been selected across a much wider range of global, regional and country level examples available in this respect.
94. The three studies differ in the level of analysis they provide and the way in which they present this. Study 1 provides an analytical overview for each of the 9 categories that it applies to classify the initiatives concerned. A table identifies the various categories that apply for each of the 21 initiatives included in the study. There is no overall analysis provided. Study 2 is limited to the details of each of the 12 cases included and does not provide any analysis above the level of these individual cases. Study 3 provides key issues regarding 27 types of initiatives, with examples for multiple cities under each of these. Moreover, the study provides an overview of these 27 initiatives grouped by broader categories and identifies the objectives of each of these. There is no more generic analytical approach applied.
95. Timeframes of the various cases presented in the three studies differ considerably and with the wide-ranging geographical coverage of cases, so does the context in which these have been developed and implemented. There is, however, not much of attention to these contextual aspects in terms of enabling and constraining factors for the initiatives to be launched and the ways in which they were implemented and reached their results. Though several of the initiatives started over a decade ago, only

⁴⁹ In Study 3 for example, of the five initiatives included under the typology of Ban on SUPs, only for Antigua and Barbuda details on results are included.

⁵⁰ Key informant interviews.

⁵¹ Regarding the selection of cases of Study 2 on China, one of the reports developed as part of output 3 of the grant, provides details concerned, as it identifies specialized policies for priority sectors including agricultural mulch films, express-delivery and takeaway packaging, retail and supermarket plastic bags and tourism-area plastic use. These sectors are prioritized given their high consumption volumes, low recovery rates and elevated risk of leakage into the environment. Source: UNEP, China Trust Fund, Research on China’s Plastic Pollution Governance Policies, South-South Cooperation to Build Capacity on Reducing Plastics Pollution in ASEAN Countries, 2025.

in few cases there is attention to actual updating of the initiatives with more recent information.

96. Studies differ in their focus on stakeholders in the plastic value chain. The presentations of cases in Study 1 focus on a variety of stakeholders, with the role of government included in case government is the lead agency of an initiative. However, this is usually not included in terms of the government role in private sector initiatives, as a provider of an enabling policy environment for the initiatives concerned or otherwise. For an overview of the key stakeholders in the initiatives included in Study 1, see Table 11 below.

Table 11: Details of Initiatives included in Study 1

Initiative	Geography	Main Actor(s)	Main Issue
ASEAN Countries			
Technology for reusable packaging	Indonesia	Private sector	Reuse packaging
Ban on plastic in Bali		Provincial Government	Ban and phase out / Alternatives
Drinking water system with zero plastic packaging		Private sector	Refill
Plastic reduction in food delivery services		Private sector	Reduce/Alternatives
Turning plastic trash into construction materials	Philippines	Social enterprise	Recycling
Envirotech: Upcycling and Circularity		Private sector / local government	Recycling
Extended Producer Responsibility		National Gov. / Private sector	Extended Producer Responsibility
EPR for packaging, including plastic packaging	Singapore	National Gov. / Private sector	Extended Producer Responsibility
Nature-Based Food Packaging	Thailand	Private sector	Eco-design / Alternatives
Enabling hotels to become more sustainable		Private sector Association	Ban and phase out / Alternatives
Policies to boost Thailand’s biodegradable plastic market		National Gov. / Research Institutes/ Private sector	Alternatives
Influencing the hotels to reduce plastic use	SE Asia	Private sector	Ban and phase out / Alternatives
Experiences in plastic offsetting for consumer products		Private sector	Ban and phase out / Alternatives
China			
Reusable containers rental for food delivery, Hong Kong	China	Private sector/CSO	Reuse
Countries in the Global South			
Eco-labelling program by Environmental Alliance of America	5 Countries in Latin America	Environmental Alliance of America/ UNEP	Eco-labelling
Trade policies to facilitate plastic waste imports and export, and recycling	Mexico	National Gov. / Private sector	Trade policies
Standards and labeling for renewable and compostable materials	Costa Rica	National Gov. / Consumers	Eco-labelling / Standards

Initiative	Geography	Main Actor(s)	Main Issue
Other Countries			
Policies and interventions for biodegradables	Japan	National Gov. / Research Institutes/ Private sector	Ban and phase out / Alternatives
Minimum recycling content targets in PET bottles	European Union	EC / Parliament	Eco-design
Eco-labels for Green Public Procurement for biodegradable and compostable alternatives to plastic		EC / Parliament	Eco-labelling / Alternatives / Procurement
Standards on biodegradable and compostable products	Belgium	National Gov. / Consumers	Eco-labelling/ Standards

97. Study 2 focuses in particular on private sector stakeholders, with some of the initiatives being local government oriented. Also here, there is little attention to the Government policies and plans that could act as enabling or constraining factors for the implementation of initiatives concerned. However, for the cases from China, an overview of policies regarding plastic pollution was developed as part of grant output 3 (see below).⁵² With study 3 focused on city-based initiatives, it highlights in particular the role of local government, with at times indication of the roles of other stakeholders.
98. While most studies concern cases from both upstream as well as downstream phases of the plastic life cycle, an interesting case is presented in Study 3, focused on regular clean-up of waterways with litter traps in Bali, Indonesia. The River Watch initiative makes use of trash barriers to clean up waterways and recycle waste gathered. At the same time, they assess waste streams, including volumes, types, brands and likely sources and make use of this information to develop upstream prevention policies. As such an initiative in the downstream part of the plastic value chain is used to inform policy making in the upstream part of the value chain.
99. Summarizing, while the three studies provide a lot of detailed information on possible approaches and actions to reduce plastic pollution, they vary in the level to which they presently can be used in terms of 'good practices', providing evidence of their ability to reach results and detailing the ways in which they were implemented.

OUTPUT 2

100. Under Output 2, five events were organized with the overall objective of knowledge sharing and capacity development of the participants, including mutual exchanges across participants. Grant support was provided as part of broader forums and meetings across ASEAN countries in the region while some of the grant supported events were organized back-to-back with other related events. A total of 493 participants took part in the various events. Details on each of the five events concerned are provided below (for an overview of the five events, see Table 12 below).

The ASEAN Regional Forum

101. The 16th ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security was held virtually and co-chaired by Cambodia and China. The meeting focused on strengthening cooperation against maritime threats and promoting adherence to

⁵² UNEP, China Trust Fund, Research on China's Plastic Pollution Governance Policies, South-South Cooperation to Build Capacity on Reducing Plastics Pollution in ASEAN Countries, 2025.

international law. As part of the meeting, a presentation was made by FECO on the Chinese regulatory framework for marine plastic pollution control and governance making use of China's whole-chain management of plastic leakage pollution approach. Innovations and achievements were introduced to ASEAN government officials. An associated regional policy information exchange session was organised as part of the forum for experience sharing across participating countries.⁵³

Table 12: Details on events organized by (or with support of) the grant

Event	Description	Participation	Number of participants
1. 16 th ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security, 25 th April 2025.	As part of the recurring ASEAN Regional Forum event, China's approach to marine litter pollution was presented to participants, including the legal and policy framework and governance aspects, with opportunities for experience sharing across participating countries.	Philippines, Singapore, Vietnam, Indonesia, Cambodia, as well as India, Russia, United States, Australia and Canada	70
2. A Roundtable Dialogue featuring policies and practices on regional green, low-carbon, and circular industry.	The event was organised as part of the 2025 Lancang-Mekong ⁵⁴ Cooperation week which was convened from 11 to 15 June in Shanghai, China. The roundtable was co-hosted by the Lancang-Mekong Environment Cooperation Center, FECO and the Shanghai Municipal Ecology and Environment Bureau, with support from Shanghai Urban Construction Investment Group Co., Ltd.	Representatives from environmental authorities of Lancang-Mekong countries, international organizations, and think tanks of Lancang-Mekong countries	122
3. Workshop for staff of the World Trade Organization (WTO), 22-24 September 2025, Beijing, China.	Workshop on aspects of Plastic Pollution Prevention and Control with a focus on policies and practices in China.	Diplomats from 22 countries joined the workshop, including Cambodia, Lao PDR, Philippines Thailand, as well as Fiji and Samoa	24
4. Parallel forum during the 2025 China-ASEAN Environment Cooperation Forum, 22 October 2025, in Beihai, Guangxi, China.	Forum on "China-ASEAN Roundtable Dialogue on Circular Economy and Green Finance". The event was co-organized with the China-ASEAN Environmental Protection Cooperation Center of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment and the Department of Ecology and Environment of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, with support from the ASEAN Secretariat.	Participants included representatives from the MEE of China, from environmental and climate departments of ASEAN countries, and from relevant Chinese local governments, international NGOs, financial institutions, research institutions, and industry enterprises	245
5. Regional experience sharing event in Bangkok on 15 December 2025.	Towards a Circular Economy of Plastics in the Asia-Pacific Region: Experience and Knowledge Sharing on Country Actions, organized 15 December 2025 in Bangkok, Thailand in partnership between UNEP and FECO, with	China, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Thailand, Viet Nam, Singapore and Fiji	32

⁵³ UNEP, China Trust Fund Progress Report, March 2024-December 2025, 2025; UNEP, China Trust Fund Progress Report, March 2024-August 2025, 2025; Zheng, Peng, The 16th ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security, China's Efforts in Tackling Marine Plastic Waste: Policy and Practices, PowerPoint Presentation, 2025.

⁵⁴ Lancang Mekong countries include six countries along the Mekong River: Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam, with China's upper stretch of the Mekong known as the Lancang River.

Event	Description	Participation	Number of participants
	financial support from UN Peace and Development Trust Fund.		
Total number of participants to grant supported events			493

The Roundtable Dialogue as part of the Lancang-Mekong⁵⁵ week

102. The Green Lancang-Mekong Initiative concerned a weeklong event focused on Regional Roundtable Dialogue on Green Low-Carbon Circular Policies and Practices aiming to provide valuable insights for regional green transformation, guiding the region towards a green, low-carbon, and circular future. Attention was turned on plastic pollution in several sessions with FECO providing a presentation on Chinese policies addressing plastic pollution, including national guidelines, legislation and policies in place and case studies concerned. Three viewpoints were highlighted: building waste recycling systems for renewable resources, promoting full life-cycle management in combating plastic pollution and advocating for green and low-carbon lifestyles. Participants exchanged views on the progress of regional green, low-carbon and circular policies and explored cooperation potentials in this field.⁵⁶

The World Trade Organization (WTO) Plastic Pollution Prevention and Control Initiative Workshop

103. FECO facilitated a workshop for WTO staff at the request of the Chinese Ministry of Commerce and WTO in Geneva, which was focused on Plastic pollution prevention and control, policies and practices in China, including a focus on the following aspects: China's plastic pollution control policy, Effectiveness of China's plastic pollution management and Cases of China's plastic pollution management. Participants consisted of WTO diplomats from Asia Pacific countries based in Geneva. They proved enthusiastic regarding their learnings, based on written feedback provided to FECO.⁵⁷

Parallel Forum on "China-ASEAN Roundtable Dialogue on Circular Economy and Green Finance"

104. This event was part of the ASEAN-China Environmental Cooperation Forum, conducted 22 October 2025 in Beihai, Guangxi, China. The event focused on two major topics: "Policy Outlook on Green Finance Supporting the Development of a Circular Economy" and "China-ASEAN Practices in Circular Economy and Green Finance". At the event, FECO shared practices from China to reduce plastic pollution from a full life cycle management perspective and the way in which plastic pollution control has become a key link in China's efforts to promote the development of a circular economy and contribute to global environmental governance. Participants to the forum underscored the importance of strengthening the cooperation and exchanges on circular economy and green finance between China and ASEAN.⁵⁸

Regional experience sharing event in Bangkok on 15 December 2025

105. The event "Toward a Circular Economy of Plastics in the Asia-Pacific Region: Experience and Knowledge Sharing on Country Actions" was organized by UNEP in partnership with FECO, and focused on sharing of experience between participants.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ 2025 Lancang-Mekong Week (Overview of discussions, Internal document); UNEP, China Trust Fund Progress Report, March 2024-December 2025, 2025; UNEP, China Trust Fund Progress Report, March 2024-August 2025, 2025; Zheng, Peng, China Policy Addressing Plastic Pollution, PowerPoint Presentation, 2025; Key Informant Interviews.

⁵⁷ UNEP, China Trust Fund Progress Report, March 2024-December 2025, 2025; UNEP, China Trust Fund Progress Report, March 2024-August 2025, 2025; Guanglong, Wu, Foreign Environmental Cooperation Center, Ministry of Ecology and Environment, Plastic Pollution Prevention and Control, Policies and Practices in China, September 2025; Feedback received from WTO participants to the workshop (Internal document); Key Informant Interviews.

⁵⁸ Center for International Cooperation and Exchange, Ministry of Ecology and Environment, The 2025 China-ASEAN Environmental Cooperation Forum parallel session: China ASEAN Roundtable Dialogue on Circular Economy and Green Finance, Beijing, October 2025; Key Informant Interviews.

The event focused on four topics, with presentations and panel discussions regarding each of these:

- i. Actions towards a circular economy of plastics with presentations on UNEP's support to countries in reducing plastic pollution and work in the region by UNEP's Plastics Initiative and on China's action to reduce plastic pollution and existing collaboration with ASEAN countries by FECO;
- ii. National legal frameworks and policy instruments, with a presentation on UNEP's Policy Toolbox to reduce plastic pollution;
- iii. Sustainable alternatives to problematic and unnecessary plastics; with a presentation on China's experience on sustainable alternatives by FECO; and
- iv. Finance to scale up solutions with a presentation on the financing landscape for reducing plastic pollution in the Asia Pacific region.

106. For each of these topics, gaps identified, solutions proposed and desired issues for UNEP's future support were identified, including through panel discussions. Moreover, in one-on-one bilateral country meetings with staff of the UNEP Plastics Unit, specific country needs were identified and discussed in order to enhance UNEP's understanding on country priorities and expectations of future support.⁵⁹

107. The UNEP Policy toolbox was presented, which depicts the global policy landscape in relation to reducing plastic pollution and contains a set of national policy instruments, including the following topics:

- Managing unnecessary and problematic plastic (including bans and restrictions on plastic and plastic products);
- Plastic product design and requirements concerned (including reuse and recyclability, durability, chemicals and labelling);
- Post-consumer use and waste management;
- Placing responsibility for management of plastic products throughout their life-cycle on producers through Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and other economic policies;
- Adopting a harmonised approach;
- Tackling plastic pollution across the life cycle.⁶⁰

108. The results of the event were assessed through a survey sent to participants shortly after the meeting with 12 responses from the 25 country and expert participants. The event was seen by participants as a good opportunity to learn from China and ASEAN countries, as well as from UNEP, FECO and ADB presentations, including on policy formulation and implementation. Sharing amongst countries was considered very useful with countries across SE Asia and China seen as sharing similarities in location and context. The geographical setup of the grant in terms of ASEAN countries sharing with China was seen as useful. China is considered an important country to learn from in terms of plastic pollution as it is a large plastic producer and consumer. There was considered to have been a good use of the experiences from developing countries in the forums as part of the workshop. SSC was regarded as a

⁵⁹ UNEP, FECO, Towards a Circular Economy of Plastics in the Asia-Pacific Region: Experience and Knowledge Sharing on Country Actions, 15 December 2025, Background, Objective and Agenda, December 2025; UNEP, FECO, Towards a Circular Economy of Plastics in the Asia-Pacific Region: Experience and Knowledge Sharing on Country Actions, 15 December 2025, Master Slide deck, December 2025; UNEP, FECO, Towards a Circular Economy of Plastics in the Asia-Pacific Region: Experience and Knowledge Sharing on Country Actions, 15 December 2025, Event Summary Note, December 2025; Key Informant Interviews.

⁶⁰ UNEP, FECO, UNPDFTF, Towards a Circular Economy of Plastics in the Asia-Pacific Region: Experience and Knowledge Sharing on Country Actions, 15 December 2025, Bangkok, Thailand (PowerPoint Presentation).

good initiative with the support from China recognized as important in this respect in terms of both financial and substantial inputs. In-person meetings were considered useful, allowing for more interactive discussions and more direct engagement with speakers, panellists and participants and providing opportunities for networking across participants.⁶¹

109. Regarding the usefulness of the Policy toolbox and the presentation concerned, included as part of the survey conducted, most participants considered this to be very useful or somewhat useful, while one participant responded to be neutral in this respect. Regarding the aspects most relevant to the country context, different elements of the toolbox were mentioned by many of the participants.⁶²

OUTPUT 3

110. Output 3 of the grant focused on studies on the status of plastic production, consumption and pollution in the food and beverage sector in China, mapping of various aspects regarding plastic pollution in China, identification of gaps and assessment of needs in ASEAN countries regarding reducing plastic pollution and the development of concept notes for future projects. Details regarding each of these are presented below.

China's Plastic Pollution Governance Policies⁶³

111. The study on governance policies in relation to plastic production, use and pollution in China included an overview of China's plastic pollution governance policy framework, detailing policy arrangements along the life-cycle stage of plastic products (design, production, distribution, consumption, collection, recycling and final disposal). The study paid attention to specialized policies for priority sectors, including agricultural mulch films, express-delivery and takeaway packaging, retail and supermarket plastic bags, and tourism-area plastic use. These sectors were prioritized due to their high consumption volumes, low recovery rates and elevated risk of leakage into the environment. Institutional responsibilities and policy coordination mechanisms were identified. In an annex of the study, an analytical approach to the upstream, midstream and downstream stages of plastic pollution policies and initiatives was provided, identifying coverage as well as gaps in the frameworks concerned in each of these three stages.

112. The study concluded that:

"From a life-cycle perspective, the overall policy is somehow unbalanced, which highlights on downstream and disposal stage with powerful and specific control measures put in place, but shows relatively weak and hesitating determination to actually restrict the overproduction of low-end plastic products in the upstream stage, and soft or voluntary approaches applied in the midstream with a lot of market support works including the infrastructure, standards, technologies, market-based measures need further development. EPR system and traceability of plastic products have been practiced in certain sectors or local areas but remain a long way for improvement."

⁶¹ Key informant Interviews and results of the survey that was conducted across participants of the workshop. For details on results of the entire survey, see Annex V.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ UNEP, China Trust Fund, Research on China's Plastic Pollution Governance Policies, South-South Cooperation to Build Capacity on Reducing Plastics Pollution in ASEAN Countries, 2025.

113. The report provides recommendations for the upstream, midstream and downstream stages of the plastics lifecycle. Additional annexes include an overview of Government departments, laws, regulations, standards, and guidelines related to China's plastic industry.⁶⁴

Gap analysis for plastic waste management in China's Food and Beverage Sector⁶⁵

114. A gap analysis was conducted concerning plastic waste management in China's food and beverage sector. This study identified China as the largest plastic producer globally since 2010. Moreover, with a large population, China was also identified as a large consumer of plastic. In this context, the Government of China has put significant emphasis on reducing plastic pollution. The "Opinions on Further Strengthening the Control of Plastic Pollution" of January 2020 outlined the control of disposable plastic products and aimed to establish a management system for the entire lifecycle of plastic products. In this context, the study focused on the status of plastic packaging of the food and beverage sector in China and its geographical distribution. This was underpinned by the plastic packaging industry accounting for over 30 percent of plastic pollution with a dominant role of the food and beverage industry in plastic packaging consumption. In particular take-away packaging in the food and beverage sector has increased. It is estimated that a surge between 2010 and 2020 resulted in a 30-fold increase in its contribution to plastic pollution. Plastic packaging has a significant carbon footprint and poses challenges for recycling and waste management. On the other hand, recycling rate of takeaway plastic containers has remained extremely low at about five percent.
115. Plastic leakage from the food and beverage industry is concentrated in hotspots, which are characterized by dense population, active economic activities, high plastic consumption and imperfect waste management systems. In particular, large river systems are identified as pathways for plastics entering the ocean while being hotspots for plastic leakage. Details are provided on the Pearl River Delta region, the Yangtze River Delta, the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region and the Chengdu-Chongqing region as hotspots for plastic leakage. Environmental impact includes the aquatic environment, soil environment, biodiversity and human health. While government policies have been promoted to reduce plastic pollution and progress has been made, significant challenges persist, including high costs of substitution of plastic materials and the incompleteness of the recycling infrastructure.
116. The study ended with recommendations, including:
- i. Strengthening of source control measures through policies that reduce the volume of plastic packaging and promote eco-friendly packaging while establishing a monitoring and reporting mechanism
 - ii. Improving the recycling system, establishing a comprehensive plastic packaging classification and recycling system tailored for the food and beverage sector
 - iii. Strengthening governance in hotspot areas, curbing plastic pollution through stricter measures and put in place plastic waste interception facilities while enhancing plastic waste management in rural areas

⁶⁴ This includes tables on the law/regulation/standards/guidelines related to the overall management of the plastic industry in China; related to the chemicals of concern in plastics in China; related to the plastic production, consumption and usage in China; related to the plastic collection, recycling, utilization and disposal in China; Ibid.

⁶⁵ Focus on the food and beverage sector in the case study on China was considered the right approach by interviewees consulted with the realization that e-commerce has been growing rapidly in China with an important focus on the food and beverage sector. Plastic Waste Management in China's Food and Beverage Sector: Gap Analysis and Policy Recommendations, (Draft Study Report); Key Informant Interviews.

- iv. Promoting industrial transformation, lowering the cost of green packaging and establishing an EPR system for plastic packaging
- v. Raising public awareness, through environmental outreach and education, fostering green consumption habits and elevating environmental consciousness of consumers and businesses.

117. The study included a proposal for industrial guidance for the food and beverage sector to reduce plastic pollution and move towards circular development.

Identification of gaps and assessment of needs in ASEAN countries

118. As mentioned above, during the event in December 2025, bilateral country meetings were conducted by staff of the UNEP Plastics Unit, to identify gaps and discuss country specific needs with participants concerned. In addition, a desk review was conducted on country plastic profiles of ASEAN countries with so far five country details available. Profiles include details on Stage of play, legislation in place, job and investment related issues and UNEP support across a range of issues in relation to reducing plastic pollution, including Production, import and export of polymers and resins; Single use plastics and problematic plastic products; addition of chemicals of concern; alternatives to plastic; plastic product design, reuse and refill, extended producer responsibility; waste collection and recycling; and public and private partnerships.⁶⁶

Concept Notes

119. The output was aimed to result in a concept note for future projects. In this respect, a total of four short concept notes and one more extensive proposal were produced (the latter in Chinese only) focusing on the following aspects:

1. Establish a Plastic Pollution Control Collaborative Network⁶⁷
 - Collaboration with Ellen MacArthur Foundation China through the Global Action Dialogue Project on Plastic Pollution Control
 - Focused on support to China's plastic pollution governance, including promotion of corporate practices, policy research, market related development and industry and public awareness raising
2. Cooperation concept with INBAR on plastic substitute and alternatives⁶⁸
 - Providing a nature-based alternative to plastics in tropical and subtropical areas with abundant bamboo and rattan resources
 - Through carbon sequestration, bamboo also contributes to global carbon reduction
 - The need for coordinated efforts in technology development, standardization and industrial cultivation, create opportunities for technology transfer and financial support
 - International cooperation can include joint research, pilot demonstrations, policy exchange, capacity development, awareness raising and publicity campaigns
3. Concept note to reduce single-use plastics pollution⁶⁹
 - Based on consultations with five NGOs (Client Earth, PERC, EMF, WWF and SEE Foundation)

⁶⁶ UNEP, China Trust Fund Progress Report, March 2024-December 2025, 2025; UNEP, China Trust Fund Progress Report, March 2024-August 2025, 2025; UNEP Plastics Country Profiles, ASEAN countries, draft report, 2025.

⁶⁷ Concept Note to Establish Plastic Pollution Control Collaborative Network, 2025, (Internal Concept Note).

⁶⁸ Future cooperation concept with INBAR on plastic substitute and alternatives, 2025, (Internal Concept Note).

⁶⁹ Suggested cooperation fields in addressing plastic pollution, 2025, (Internal Concept Note).

- Strengthening industrial and policy research, green case studies and related capacity building
- Develop innovative solutions informed by current status and problems of China's disposable plastic products industry
- Research sustainable alternatives and substitution strategies, including policy recommendations for their promotion, implement demonstration projects and compile domestic and international cases
- Conduct research on green finance models through review of international fiscal, tax, financial and industrial incentive policies, including EPR and Deposit Refund Systems
- Propose a Chinese solution for the sustainable governance of single-use plastic pollution

4. Cooperation in Food and Beverage Delivery Sector⁷⁰

- The note concerns future cooperation between FECO and MEITUAN company with a focus on three objectives:
 - Enhance packaging eco-design and recycling standards
 - Build an "Everyone's Contribution" Green consumption ecosystem, including merchants and consumers, focused on low carbon consumption scenarios
 - Expand the Green mountain Public Welfare Network to collaborate with millions of businesses and conduct "zero waste" concept promotion

5. Proposal: Cooperation of FECO and UNEP with Donghua University

- (in Chinese only)

120. Of the first four concept notes developed and available in English, the second and the third are most explicit in terms of the use of SSC with the second example aimed at informing other countries in the global South, while the third example aims to be informed by experiences and practices of other countries. The reference to SSC in the first example is focused on the Global Action Dialogue Project on Plastic Pollution Control, though no further details are provided. The fourth example does not refer to SSC and appears focused on the national context in China. Thus, the explicit use of SSC varies across the concept notes.

Summarizing regarding output level results

121. As shown in Table 13 below, all of the outputs had been achieved at the end of December 2025, the end of grant implementation while some overperformed. Many of the outputs have been of high quality and appreciated by participants with some observations made regarding the quality aspects of case study reports under output 1.

122. Results of the case studies under output 1 and one of the reports under output 3 have not yet been published and made available to participating countries and other stakeholders. This is due to a constraint outside of the control of the grant and relates to the ongoing INC process. As the host of the negotiations, UNEP needs to remain an independent party to the process, which has led UNEP senior management to postpone any policy related publications (see additional details under the evaluation criterion of Efficiency below). Nevertheless, all other outputs have been available to grant stakeholders including more technically oriented reports.

Rating for Availability of Outputs: Satisfactory

⁷⁰ Proposal for Future Cooperation in Food and Beverage Delivery Sector Based on Consultation Meetings with MEITUAN Company, 2025, (Internal Concept Note).

Table 13: Grant achievement of output level results⁷¹

OUTPUT DETAILS	Progress by Nov 2024	Progress by Aug 2025	Output Indicators	Results achieved on indicators by Aug 2025	Results by Dec 2025
Output 1: Compilation of best practices and case studies on circular economy of plastics based on the regional, and national experiences, including the ones from China					
1.1 Best policies to reduce plastic pollution through life cycle (Lead by UNEP)	Completed: A compilation of global best practices and case studies on circular economy of plastics has been developed.	Completed: A compilation of global best practices and case studies on circular economy of plastics has been developed. A compilation of case studies in ASEAN region and a compilation of policy and financial instruments to address plastic pollution at city level were also developed by jointly working with other UNEP plastic projects.	Document compiling global best policies to reduce plastic pollution through life cycle Baseline 0; Target 1	Two documents for global best practices and case studies on circular economy of plastics developed. These reports focus on global level, ASEAN level and city level respectively	Two reports compiling of best practices and case studies on circular economy of plastics have been developed. The reports focus on global level and city level respectively.
1.2 Best practices from China and business cases for implementing upstream solution in plastic value chain, with an overview to prepare for the development of the industrial guidance for the food and beverage sector (Lead by FECO; Technical Assistance by UNEP)	Thoroughly discussed with FECO and included in the draft agreement to be signed	Completed: Based upon desk research and literature review, a compilation report of China's best practices was developed, which includes cases on plastic packaging and products reduction, design, reuse and recycling.	Document compiling best practices and business cases from China, for implementing upstream solution in plastic value chain Baseline 0; Target 1	One compilation report of best practices in China developed based on desk research including cases on plastic packaging and product reduction, design, reuse and recycling	Based upon desk research and literature review, a compilation report of China's best practices was developed, which includes cases on plastic packaging and products reduction, design, reuse and recycling.

⁷¹ Progress by Nov 2024: UNEP, China Trust Fund Progress Report, March – October 2024; Progress by Aug 2025 / Output indicators / Results achieved by Aug 2025: UNEP, China Trust Fund Progress Report, March 2024 – August 2025; Progress by Dec 2025: UNEP, China Trust Fund Progress Report, March 2024-December 2025, 2025, Key informant interviews.

OUTPUT DETAILS	Progress by Nov 2024	Progress by Aug 2025	Output Indicators	Results achieved on indicators by Aug 2025	Results by Dec 2025
Output 2: Capacity development and knowledge sharing events on South-South Cooperation					
2.1 One regional capacity building event targeting countries in the ASEAN countries, to identify potential areas for South-South cooperation on plastic pollution reduction in the region (Co-lead by UNEP and FECO)	Thoroughly discussed with FECO and included in the draft agreement to be signed	Partially Completed: During the 16th ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security on 25th April, Beijing China A Roundtable Dialogue featuring policies and practices on regional green, low-carbon, and circular industry was organized as part of the 2025 Lancang-Mekong Cooperation week	Regional capacity building event targeting countries in the ASEAN countries, to identify potential areas for South-South cooperation on plastic pollution reduction in the region Baseline 0; Target 1	Two regional capacity building events organized on plastic pollution, - During the 16th ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security - During the 2025 Lancang-Mekong Cooperation week.	Five regional capacity building / knowledge sharing events organized 1 During the 16th ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security 2 During the 2025 Lancang-Mekong Cooperation week. 3 Training for staff of the World Trade Organization (WTO) 4 Parallel Forum "China-ASEAN Roundtable Dialogue on Circular Economy and Green Finance" during the 2025 China-ASEAN Environment Cooperation Forum. 5 Regional experience sharing event in Bangkok on 15 December 2025 organized by UNEP in partnership with FECO.
		Another capacity building event targeting the grant countries is planned to be organized in Q3 2025 upon the INS.2 outcomes			

OUTPUT DETAILS	Progress by Nov 2024	Progress by Aug 2025	Output Indicators	Results achieved on indicators by Aug 2025	Results by Dec 2025
Output 3: Study on the status of plastics production, consumption and pollution in the food and beverage sector in China, and preparation of potential project concepts for implementation					
3.1 A summary on the national status of plastic production, consumption, and pollution in the food and beverage sector, including: hotspots and geographical location for plastic leakage, including a mapping of existing regional convention, national regulation and policies related to plastic pollution control; a mapping of existing commitments, mechanism, cooperation, initiatives, networks, platforms, fora and stakeholders related to plastic pollution where China is involved; a mapping of existing major projects on reducing plastic pollution, with information of donor, activities, outcomes and locations. (Lead by FECO; Technical Assistance by UNEP)	Thoroughly discussed with FECO and included in the draft agreement to be signed	Partially completed: Existing regional conventions, national regulations and policies related to plastic pollution control in which China is involved have been mapped out, as well as existing commitments, cooperation initiatives, and projects related to plastic pollution in which China is involved. A summary on the national status of plastic production, consumption, and pollution in the food and beverage sector is being developed	Summary on China's national status of plastic production, consumption, and pollution in the food and beverage sector Baseline 0; Target 1	One summary developed to map existing regional conventions, national regulations and policies related to plastic pollution control in which China is involved as well as existing commitments, cooperation initiatives, and projects related to plastic pollution in which China is involved	One summary developed to map existing regional conventions, national regulations and policies related to plastic pollution control in which China is involved as well as existing commitments, cooperation initiatives, and projects related to plastic pollution in which China is involved. Report: <i>Research on China's Plastic Pollution Governance Policies</i> . Study report: <i>Plastic Waste Management in China's Food and Beverage Sector: Gap Analysis and Policy Recommendations</i>
				A summary on the national status of plastic production, consumption, and pollution in the food and beverage sector is being developed	A summary on the national status of plastic production, consumption, and pollution in the food and beverage sector is developed (draft document)
3.2 One national consultation meeting on the study and preparation of potential project concepts for implementation, to identify gaps to	Thoroughly discussed with FECO and included in the draft	To be completed upon the INS.2 outcomes	National consultation meeting on the study and preparation of potential project	National consultation meeting to be organized by Q3 2025 after INC 5.2	As part of the UNEP/FECO event in December 2025 bilateral country meetings were conducted by staff of the UNEP Plastics Unit, to identify and discuss country specific needs

address plastic pollution: regulation and policies, business innovation and action, information and data, fiscal policies and investment, awareness and campaigns etc. (by Q3 of 2025) (Lead by FECO; Technical Assistance by UNEP)	agreement to be signed		concepts for implementation, to identify gaps to address plastic pollution Baseline 0; Target 1	Several meetings have been organized under the lead of the MEE to identify China's gaps to address plastic pollution	Overview of Plastics Country Profile developed for China, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand
3.3 Concept note for future projects (by Q3 of 2025) (Co-lead by UNEP and FECO)	Thoroughly discussed with FECO and included in the draft agreement to be signed	To be completed upon the INC5.2 outcomes	Concept note for future projects Baseline 0; Target 1	Concept note to be developed by Q3 2025, upon the INC5.2 outcomes, to better meet the needs in the post-INC contexts	Multiple concept notes developed

Legend: DARK GREEN=Over Performed; GREEN=Completed; YELLOW=Partially completed; RED=No progress so far

Achievement of Grant Outcomes

123. When looking at outcome level results, comparing these to the outcome level indicators added in the progress reporting of 2025, the first thing to observe is that while baselines were all set at zero, no targets were set for any of these indicators.
124. Regarding Outcome 1, the indicator focuses on the number of best practices in terms of the case studies developed as part of output 1. When counting each of the geographical examples included in the three case studies, the total number would amount to 101 (including study 1 at 21; study 2 concerning cases in China at 12 and study 3 (at city level) at 68). The indicator though goes beyond the number of cases identified and includes the aspect of dissemination. In this regard, the cases from studies 1 and 3 have so far not been published. This is due to the on-going INC process, in which UNEP is playing a host role of the discussions and therefore has seen itself limited in its ability to publish anything that could create the impression of the organization trying to influence the political aspect of the process. With study 2 regarding the China case studies being technically oriented, these have actually been published. Therefore, the number of documented and published practice cases stands at 12 at the end of the grant. The qualitative aspects including length and details presented of the cases varies considerably in each of the studies with studies 1 and 2 providing considerably more details compared to study 3. This means that the grant's contribution to the outcome of increased knowledge on best practices through case studies was partial.
125. Regarding Outcome 2, the indicator assessed the number of countries that participated in capacity building events that were organized as part of the grant. Also here, while the baseline was set at zero, there was no target identified for the indicator in terms of expected achievement at the end of the grant. In total, reports identified 12 participating countries, which number includes Fiji and Samoa, which are outside of ASEAN. In terms of participants, the total number has amounted to 493 for all five events, which may include double counts for people who participated in multiple events.
126. The mini survey conducted after the last event of the grant, i.e. the workshop in Bangkok, reported the event to be very useful or useful in particular in terms of learning from experiences of other countries through peer-to-peer sharing as well in providing opportunities for networking and connecting with other organisations and stakeholders working on plastic pollution. Moreover, the high level of relevance of the information provided during the workshop and the practicality and applicability of the knowledge gained was appreciated. In particular, knowledge on the design and implementation of policy measures appeared strengthened through the workshop as well as knowledge on legal frameworks and policy instruments and application of UNEP's policy toolbox. Participants were confident to be able to apply learnings in their own country contexts.⁷²
127. The workshop in Bangkok also resulted in country level follow up in terms of technical assistance on a bilateral basis between FECO and one of the participating countries. Positive results in terms of learnings and their applicability to participants' working practices from the December event were also reported in the key informant interviews conducted.
128. With the grant being a part of the larger ONE UNEP Plastic project, results of the December workshop in terms of the discussions and the bilateral meetings on country

⁷² For the full results of the survey conducted after the December 2025 workshop in Bangkok, see Annex V.

needs could inform the development of guidelines for National action planning for plastic pollution, presently under development as part of the global project as well as informing other parts of the ONE UNEP Plastic project.⁷³

129. Regarding Outcome 3, the indicator focused on the number of stakeholders in capacity building events, which amounted to 493 across five events organized. However, the indicator specifies demonstration of improved understanding of the plastic value chain in China. This is likely to be the case in terms of the events organized, as in all of these, there was specific attention to the plastic value chain in China, including a detailed presentations on this topic in three of five events. This could be further enhanced through the release of two of the China related studies, including the 12 cases under output 1 and the case study, focused on plastic pollution governance policies under output 3.⁷⁴
130. In terms of contribution to the outcome, focus is more in particular on understanding of the plastic value chain in the food and beverage sector in China. While a relevant and interesting case study⁷⁵ was developed in this respect, the study has not yet been published, so its contents has not yet informed stakeholders concerned. For details, see table 14 below.
131. Higher level results across the outcome areas, that are not necessarily captured in the results framework include the enhanced capacities of the two implementing agencies, the ONE UNEP Plastic project on the one hand and the implementing partner FECO on the other hand, with both enhancing their own capacities. For FECO this has resulted in follow up activities with one of the participating countries to the Dec 2025 workshop in Bangkok, providing specific focused bilateral technical support. For UNEP, the grant has contributed to stronger relations with FECO as an important government partners in China, which is valuable beyond the SSC grant and of importance to the wider ONE UNEP Plastic Project. Plastic pollution is an important issue in the region and the role of China as the largest plastic producer as well as a large plastic consumer, is important in this respect. The details gathered through the SSC grant on country needs can further inform the future direction of the ONE UNEP Plastic project.
132. The rating of outcome level achievements has been informed by the fact that most important aspects to attain intermediate state result i.e. the outcome level achievements mentioned above, were partially achieved, while assumptions hold and drivers appear to be partially in place, with in particular the INC process unfinished.

Rating for Achievement of Project Outcomes: Moderately Satisfactory

Likelihood of Impact

133. The likelihood of impact assesses the grant's likelihood to contribute to higher level results as identified in the reconstructed theory of change. For the assessment, use was made of the excel-based flow chart, 'Likelihood of Impact Assessment Decision Tree', as part of the UNEP Management-led Terminal Review Tools. With drivers to support transitions to higher level results partially in place and the assumptions

⁷³ Key Informant Interviews.

⁷⁴ UNEP, FECO, Case study of Plastic Circular Economy Practices in China, South-South Cooperation to Build Capacity on Reducing Plastics Pollution in ASEAN countries, UNEP China Trust Fund; UNEP, China Trust Fund, Research on China's Plastic Pollution Governance Policies. South-South Cooperation to Build Capacity on Reducing Plastics Pollution in ASEAN Countries 2025.

⁷⁵ Plastic Waste Management in China's Food and Beverage Sector: Gap Analysis and Policy Recommendations, (Draft Study Report).

concerned mostly holding and with some of the grant outcomes achieved, in particular those most relevant to reaching higher level results, the overall likelihood of the grant ability to contribute to higher level results is rated as moderately likely. It needs to be taken into consideration that one of the assumptions in the reconstructed theory of change, concerned that support to industry and consumers as well as relevant finance issues were addressed through other initiatives, which are part of the wider ONE UNEP Plastic Project, of which the grant under review is a part and are thus considered in place.

Rating for Achievement of Likelihood of Impact: Moderately Likely

Table 14: Project achievement of outcome level results⁷⁶

OUTCOME DETAILS	Progress by Aug 2025	Progress by Dec 2025
Outcome 1: Increased knowledge on the best practices and lessons learnt on reducing plastic pollution through life cycle, built upon existing policy and business practices at global level		
1.1 Number of best practice cases documented and disseminated Baseline 0; outcome target not requested in the project design phase	Around 80 best practice cases were compiled and summarized to inform solutions on circular economy for plastics, covering global, regional, national and city levels and various technical topics including upstream and downstream interventions.	Same as Aug 2025
Outcome 2: Increased capacity of the countries in the ASEAN countries in applying circular economy approach for plastics		
2.1 Number of countries participated in capacity building events organized under the grant Baseline 0; outcome target not requested in the project design phase	10 countries in the region participated in the 2 capacity building events organised under the grant (plastics session under the 16th ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security; Roundtable dialogue during the Lancang-Mekong week 2025): Philippines, Singapore, Vietnam, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia as well as China, India	Same as Aug 2025 The World Trade Organization (WTO) Plastic Pollution Prevention and Control Initiative Workshop also involved participants from Fiji and Samoa, as well from other regions. Parallel forum during the 2025 China-ASEAN Environment Cooperation Forum, 22 October 2025, in Beihai, Guangxi, China. Regional experience sharing event in Bangkok on 15 December 2025 with 8 countries participating.
Outcome 3: Increased understanding on the plastic value chain in the food and beverage sector in China		
3.1 Number of stakeholders who participated in capacity building events and demonstrated improved understanding of the plastic value chain in China Baseline 0; outcome target not requested in the project design phase	In total 200 participants joined the 2 capacity building events organized under the grant and exchanged experience on plastic value chain (70 participants for the ASEAN regional forum and 130 participants for the Lancang-Mekong week)	In total close to 500 participants joined the capacity building events organized under the grant and exchanged experience on plastic value chain.

⁷⁶ Progress by Aug 2025: UNEP, China Trust Fund Progress Report, March 2024 – August 2025; Progress by Dec 2025: UNEP, China Trust Fund Progress Report, March 2024-December 2025, 2025, Key informant interviews.

Legend: **GREEN=Achieved**; **YELLOW=Partially achieved**; **RED=No progress so far**

Rating for Effectiveness: Moderately Satisfactory

E. Financial Management

Adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures

134. The grant budget amounted to USD 540,000 provided by the China Trust Fund of which USD 249,940 was transferred in 2 batches to FECO for its implementation of activities as outlined in the Project document and in line with the Project cooperation agreement between UNEP and FECO. With the remainder spent on grant activities by UNEP. By 9 February 2026, total expenditure amounted to 98 percent of the funds.⁷⁷

135. In addition to the grant budget furnished by the China Trust Fund, the grant benefitted from two different means of in-kind contributions. One concerned the inputs from UNEP staff to the grant. As the agreement with the donor included that the funding provided was to be used for programme activities only, and not for UNEP staffing, UNEP provided in-kind contributions for the inputs of UNEP staff to grant implementation. Moreover, the event organized by UNEP in partnership with FECO in December 2025 as part of Output 2 was financially supported by the United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund. For details regarding in-kind contributions, which amounted to USD 217,649, see Table 15 below.

Table 15: Details on In-kind Contributions

Co-finance item	Details	Amount (USD)
IEP staff time	P4 level, Paris	39,815
IEP staff time	level, Paris	70,026
IEP staff time	level, Geneva	78,965
IEP admin staff time	G7 level, Paris	16,351
Subtotal UNEP		205,157
IPDF support to travel expenses	International travel to the UNEP/FECO event of 15 December 2025 in Bangkok	12,492
Total		217,649

Source: grant provided information.

136. UNEP and its implementing partner have adhered to UNEP's financial policies and procedures throughout the lifetime of the grant and the winding up of the financial aspects of the grant. This has included travel arrangements, in particular in relation to the event organized in Dec 2025 in Bangkok, which could be arranged 22 days in advance, as required in the UNEP financial system.

137. The grant has been supported by a Project assistant who was supported by a Financial Management Officer who oversaw the financial management of the grant. An agreement had been signed with the single implementing partner of the grant,

⁷⁷ UNEP, South-South Cooperation to Build Capacity on Reducing Plastics Pollution in ASEAN Countries (Internal project document); UNEP Industry and Economy Division, Project Cooperation Agreement between United Nations Environment programme and Foreign Environmental cooperation Center, Ministry of Ecology and Environment of P.R. China of December 2024.

FECO, which detailed allocation of resources for the implementation of grant activities by FECO.⁷⁸

138. While the Progress Report covering the period March 2024 - August 2025 did include financial details on budgets and expenditures, Progress Reports covering the periods March – October 2024 and March 2024 – December 2025 (the Final Progress Report) did not contain financial details and analysis of actual expenditure against budget and workplan.
139. While most of the requirements regarding financial policies and procedures were in place, limitations in grant financial reporting in some of the progress reports, resulted in a rating of Satisfactory.

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

Completeness of Financial Information

140. All required financial information has been in place, which has been confirmed as part of the review process with details provided in the Financial Management Table in Annex VI, this included Final Expenditure report by FECO.⁷⁹ Below the financial Tables 16 and 17 are provided, regarding funding (Table 16) and expenditures (Table 17) updated in line with the status on 9 February 2026.

Table 16: Project Funding Sources

Funding source	Planned funding	% of planned funding	Secured funding ⁸⁰	% of secured funding
<i>All figures as USD</i>				
Cash				
Funds from the Environment Fund				
Funds from the Regular Budget				
Extra-budgetary funding (listed per donor):			540,000	100
China Trust Fund			540,000	
<i>Sub-total: Cash contributions</i>			<i>540,000</i>	<i>100</i>
In-kind				
Environment Fund staff-post costs			39,815	
Regular Budget staff-post costs				
Extra-budgetary funding for staff-posts (listed per donor)				
UNPDF (event Bangkok – December 2025)			12,492	
UNPDF & Japan supplementary budget			165,342	
<i>Sub-total: In-kind contributions</i>			<i>217,649</i>	
Co-financing*				
Co-financing cash contribution				
Co-financing in-kind contribution				
<i>Sub-total: Co-financing contributions</i>				
Total			757,649	

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ FECO, Final Expenditure Report, Foreign Environmental Cooperation Center, Ministry of Ecology and Environment of P.R. China (P1863).

⁸⁰ Secured funding refers to received funds and does not include funding commitments not yet realised.

**Funding from a donor to a partner which is not received into UNEP accounts but is used by a UNEP partner or collaborating centre to deliver the results in a UNEP – approved project.*

Table 17: Grant Expenditure by Outcome⁸¹

Component/s ub- component /output <i>All figures as USD</i>		Actual Cost/ expenditure	Expenditure ratio (actual/planned) as percentage
Component 1 / Output 1 Compilation of best practices and case studies		1	105
Component 2 / Output 2 Capacity development and knowledge sharing events on SSC		1	83
Component 3 / Output 3 Study on the status of plastics in the food and beverage sector in China, and preparation project concepts		1	108
Evaluation, Project support		8	97

⁸¹ Figures concern the status at 9 February 2026 with final figures to be provided at full financial closure of the grant.

costs and 1% Levy			
TOTAL		5	98

Rating for Completeness of Financial Information: Highly Satisfactory

Communication Between Finance and Project Management Staff

141. Communications between the project manager and the financial assistant were conducted through two-weekly regular meetings, with email communications or calls as needed in between these regular meetings. When needed, the financial assistant communicated with the ONE UNEP Project manager, when the project manager was not available. Details on expenses and the remaining budget were shared regularly amongst these staff members. Moreover, the financial assistant communicated when needed with the FMO, who is her supervisor. This meant that the project manager was aware of the financial details and remaining budget and the finance assistant was aware of upcoming programmatic events and the financial support requirements concerned at all times.

Rating for Communication Between Finance and Project Management Staff: HS

Rating for Financial Management: Highly Satisfactory

F. Efficiency

142. Though the grant started in March 2024, a few months later than originally planned (January 2024), the grant was implemented within the originally intended timeframe, with all planned activities finalized before the end of December 2025, except for the present grant Terminal Review which ended in February 2026 and the Financial Closure to the grant, which was expected to finalize before 31 March 2026, in line with the Framework Agreement concerned.⁸²

143. Meetings as part of output 2 were organized usually piggy backing on other meetings. The Parallel Forum "China-ASEAN Roundtable Dialogue on Circular Economy and Green Finance" was conducted as part of the 2025 China-ASEAN Environment Cooperation Forum, 22 October 2025, in Beihai, Guangxi, China. The last meeting of the grant organized by UNEP in Bangkok on 15 December 2025 was organized back-to-back with the annual event of the SEA of Solutions, which was also focused on plastic pollution in countries in Southeast Asia and with an overlap in

⁸² UNEP, Ministry of Ecology and Environment of the People's Republic of China, Framework Agreement on Strategic Cooperation between The Ministry of Ecology and Environment of the People's Republic of China and The United Nations Environment Programme, February 2024.

terms of participation. This meeting was, moreover, provided with in-kind support by a sister project, which was a part of the ONE UNEP Plastic project.

144. These arrangements resulted in an efficient approach to organizing these meetings, both from the perspective of the grant, in terms of reducing costs, as well as in terms of the participants, who could combine meetings and reduce travel time as well as costs. The inclusion of the grant under the ONE UNEP Plastic project, moreover, facilitated benefitting from in-kind support of a sister project.
145. UNEP's hosting the INC process regarding plastic pollution,⁸³ has had consequences for the implementation of the grant as well as for the broader ONE UNEP Plastic project. As host to the INC process, UNEP was to abstain from influencing the contents of the political process. Therefore, UNEP projects were required to refrain from political activities, including related publications and their dissemination for the duration of the INC process, as determined by Senior Management. This has affected the grant, in terms of Output 1 and 3, in which some of the studies have not yet been able to be published. This with the exception of the case study on China,⁸⁴ which focused on circular economy technical practices, rather than plastic pollution related policy issues. Also in output 2, the INC process resulted in delay, with the regional meeting led by UNEP postponed till December 2025, just before the termination of the grant.
146. The grant was implemented within the originally intended timeframe without any extension. While UNEP's role as host to the INC process has affected timing of capacity development activities, all events were implemented within the timeframe of the grant, without jeopardizing results and clearly overperforming in terms of number of capacity building events organized. Planning of these events back-to-back with other activities or integrated in larger events enhanced efficiency.

Rating for Efficiency: Highly Satisfactory

G. Monitoring and Reporting

Monitoring Design and Budgeting

147. For monitoring of the grant and its results, the project design document included three outputs and three outcomes. Under each of the outputs, sets of activities were included, which were to be monitored in terms of the output level results achieved. In the second grant progress report of August 2025, covering the period of March 2024 to August 2025, an Output Performance Table as well as an Outcome Summary Table was included in the report, with both comprising indicators. In terms of the output level, these indicators reflected the output level results of the activities identified in the project design document, with for output 3, the eight activities from the Project document clubbed together under three output level results. Indicators for outcome

⁸³ UNEP hosts the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) for development of an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution. The INC process started in March 2022, when the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-5.2) adopted a resolution to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment. This "instrument" was to address the full life cycle of plastic, including its production, design, and disposal. Negotiations were conducted in five rounds so far with multiple extensions of the fifth round and with an administrative third part of the fifth round scheduled for February 2026 in Geneva, Switzerland, with substantive negotiations to proceed afterwards. This means that the process went far beyond the original expectation to be able to get to an agreement towards the end of 2024. Source: <https://www.unep.org/inc-plastic-pollution>.

⁸⁴ UNEP, FECO, Case Study of Plastic Circular Economy Practices in China, South-South Cooperation to build Capacity on reducing Plastics Pollution in ASEAN Countries, UNEP China Trust Fund, Beijing 2025.

level change were newly added pointers to change concerned. While baselines of all output and outcome indicators were set at zero, the targets in terms of output indicators were in line with the activities outlined in the Project document, while targets for outcome level indicators were not included, with the remark that outcome targets 'were not requested in the project design phase'.

148. Monitoring of grant progress was the shared responsibility of UNEP and FECO with the report finalized by the UNEP Project Manager. As the funding of the grant could only be used for activities and not for UNEP staff time devoted to the grant, monitoring of results was conducted without a grant budget concerned. What was included in the grant budget was a separate budget line with adequate resources for evaluation of the grant towards the end of the grant period. This was a requirement of the grant donor as the grant budget was below the minimum level at which a Terminal grant Review would be required from UNEP side.
149. Given the size of the grant and its limited duration, the monitoring framework can be deemed sufficient for what the grant wanted to achieved after the additions made in the second progress report, with the original design lacking some of the aspects required. Budgeting for monitoring was left out in line with the requirements of the grant, while evaluation was included beyond UNEP requirements.

Rating for Monitoring Design and Budgeting: Moderately Satisfactory

Monitoring of Project Implementation

150. Monitoring was conducted at the stages of the development of the progress reports, respectively in November 2024 (eight months into the grant), September 2025 (18 months into the grant) and in December 2025 (at the end of the grant phase). The initial monitoring focused on output level changes as not much could be expected yet at the level of outcomes, with outcome level data included in the following two monitoring phases, informed by the indicators added in the August 2025 report. This enabled timely tracking of activities and their results. Workplans were included in the progress reports.⁸⁵
151. Usage of tracking of sex disaggregated data for workshop and meeting participants was limited, with data only available for the workshop in December 2025 while for the other events, only data on presenters were available (see details below under Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality).
152. While the monitoring plan was relatively basic, this relates in particular to the limitations of the grant in terms of size and timeframe. The implementation of monitoring was overall satisfactory in the context of the project design. An evaluation of the learnings and their expected use by participants was conducted for the workshop in 2025, which moreover, provided useful insights in their future needs, which can inform follow up to the grant through other activities of the ONE UNEP Plastic project. Such event evaluations were however not conducted in any of the other meetings supported by the grant.

Rating for Monitoring of Project Implementation: Moderately Satisfactory

⁸⁵ UNEP, China Trust Fund Progress Report, Reporting Period March – October 2024; UNEP, China Trust Fund Progress Report, Reporting Period March 2024 – August 2025; UNEP, China Trust Fund Progress Report, Reporting Period March 2024 – December 2025.

Project Reporting

153. Project specific progress reports were developed as indicated above, with the second report paying attention to outcome level changes, which was reasonable at this stage of the grant. Documentation on output level results achieved was provided to the evaluator as part of the desk review. grant reporting usefully combined the results of the activities implemented by FECO and those directly implemented by UNEP. For reporting FECO and UNEP conducted regularly online meetings and discussed what had been achieved, with clear communication amongst partners.
154. Moreover, the grant linked with the internal reporting of the ONE UNEP Plastics project through the IPMR reporting system of UNEP, with details added to the IPMR report of January 2026, on results contributed by the grant to the wider ONE UNEP Plastic project.

Rating for Project Reporting: Satisfactory

Rating for Monitoring and Reporting:	Satisfactory
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H. Sustainability

Socio-political Sustainability

155. The sustainability of grant results had a relatively high dependency on political and social factors. This concerned the policy arena at the national level as well as the political and social factors, including consumer behaviour, at the sub-national level. Ownership, interest and commitment of countries in the region appeared to indicate a strong level of ownership, which could be further enhanced if the INC would result in a strong instrument to reduce plastic pollution worldwide or could be undercut if such a strong instrument would not materialize.

Rating for Socio-political Sustainability: Moderately Likely

Financial Sustainability

156. As the grant was part of the ONE UNEP Plastic Project, results could be partly sustained through this larger project of which it was a part and which has resources till the end of 2027. Moreover, the ONE UNEP Plastic project document does in particular pay attention to financial aspects of sustainability, including funding and investment from development banks, national governments, the private sector and international funding to support the long-term implementation to reduce plastic pollution and ensure the sustainability of grant results. Such resources are expected in particular to be available once the INC process would have resulted an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution.

Rating for Financial Sustainability: Likely

Institutional Sustainability

157. The grant was not implemented in isolation but was embedded in ongoing work, in particular the ONE UNEP Plastic project. The grant was well integrated within the global Project which will continue implementation until the end of 2027. The ONE UNEP Plastic project document pays attention to institutional and organizational

aspects of sustainability, including through partnerships with national and regional entities, replication of learnings in similar economies and scaling up of project results globally, including through sharing of knowledge and lessons learnt. The use of the learnings from the project in the larger ONE UNEP Plastic project is facilitated through the use of the same staff members involved in the SSC grant, which will remain project staff under the ONE UNEP Plastic project.

158. Capacities have been developed through the grant. This includes FECO as an organization, with concept notes developed in which FECO would collaborate in future projects on reducing plastic pollution in the food and beverage sector, working with companies and NGOs in China. FECO, moreover, will remain working in the international context on plastic pollution as an important issue in the region, including in terms of strategy and action plans.
159. There was relatively little information and knowledge on what has been done in China on reducing plastic pollution both in terms of the production / manufacturing side as well as on the consumption side. The information developed in this respect under the SSC grant can be used in future South-South and Triangular Cooperation efforts.
160. With the grant results having a high dependency on institutional support and with a robust mechanism in place to sustain the ongoing institutionalisation around reducing plastic pollution in the region and capacities of organizations and individual enhanced and with aspect of an exit strategy included in the ONE UNEP Project, the rating for Institutional sustainability is at Moderately likely.

Rating for Institutional Sustainability: Moderately Likely

Rating for Sustainability (Likelihood):	Moderately Likely
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I. Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

Preparation and Readiness

161. Aspects of preparation and readiness of the grant for a considerable part relied on the larger ONE UNEP Plastic project, of which the grant was a part. This included staffing setup, stakeholder analysis and governance arrangements. The period between grant approval and first disbursement was less than 6 months. A basic workplan was included in the ProDoc of the grant with a more detailed workplan developed, which was included in the first Interim Progress Report of November 2024. Aspects of partner capacities were confirmed with FECO as the main implementing partner. A Project Cooperation Agreement between UNEP and FECO was agreed and signed in December 2024 with the Framework Agreement on Strategic Cooperation between the Ministry of Ecology and Environment of the People's Republic of China and UNEP signed on 28 February 2024.

Rating for Preparation and Readiness: Satisfactory

Quality of Project Management and Supervision

162. Project management was satisfactory throughout the implementation period, both in terms of the implementing partner as well as in terms of the management arrangements of UNEP support to the grant. The working relationship between the project manager and the implementing partner team has been constructive and effective. There was no turnover of staff in the implementing partner nor was there any change in UNEP staffing during the implementation of the grant. At UNEP side, there was regular communication between the project manager and her supervisor.
163. Adaptive management was applied, in particular regarding the delays in the INC process and the consequences this had in terms of planning of grant activities, which was reported in interim reports, resulting in all expected deliverables finalized before the end of the grant period.

Rating for Quality of Project Management and Supervision: Satisfactory

Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation

164. The grant was able to make use of the stakeholder analysis that was conducted as part of the ONE UNEP Plastic project, as the grant was part of this larger project. There was a strong level of ownership by the implementing partner of the grant regarding the objectives concerned and the process of implementation benefitted from regular consultations between FECO and the UNEP project management during the life of the grant.
165. FECO proved to be the right partner, with the center established in 2022 in order to support all international cooperation at regional and global levels, including with ASEAN and Lancan/Mekong countries. Given FECOs affiliation with the MEE of China they are considered a part of government which means that they are regarded as a low risk partner. On the other hand, they also have access to companies in China, including plastic producers.
166. In addition, other stakeholders were involved in grant implementation, including Civil Society organizations, and with the private sector through partnering with the China Petroleum and Chemical Industry Federation and its International Exchange Department. However, opportunities in this respect were constrained by the inability to publish a considerable part of the studies developed due to UNEP's hosting of the INC process and the limitations that this meant concerning publishing policy related documents. Nevertheless, relations with other stakeholders were maintained, so that these could be beneficial once publication will be possible and stakeholders can play a role in the dissemination and use of this information.

Rating for Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation: Satisfactory

Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality

167. Though the SSC grant document did not provide details on gender and human rights, the ONE UNEP Plastic project document identified a gender score of 2a, meaning that gender was well mainstreamed throughout the grant and reflected in the context, implementation, logframe and budget of the global project.
168. The grant aimed to have a gender balance in terms of participants to events organized as well as in terms of consultants that provided technical support under the grant. For the gender balance in meetings, details of the Dec 2025 meeting show a

percentage of women at 52 percent. In this case the invitation letter to the event requested countries to nominate three participants with at least one female candidate included. For the other meetings, only the gender balance of presenters could be confirmed, which was at 60 percent men and 40 percent women.

169. The use of a human rights-based approach has been reflected in the grant in terms of development of the capacities of duty bearers, including national and sub-national level government officials. This approach was also reflected in terms of emphasizing responsibilities of plastic producers for the entire life cycle of their products, including product design, aspects of their use and opportunities for re-use and recycling as well as disposal after use through Extended Producer Responsibility schemes, enhancing aspects of accountability.
170. Human rights were included in the reconstructed TOC of the grant based on the details provided in the project document, with UNEP and partners aiming to enhance the environment through the reduction of global plastic pollution and reduction of pollutants to soil, air, water and the ocean and optimize nature conservation and restoration and improve human health conditions, with reference to these aspects as human rights, to live in health and in a healthy environment.
171. In the attention to Extended Producer Responsibility schemes, there was a specific focus on inclusion of waste pickers who are usually part of the informal economy and who would need to be involved in the setup of any scheme. This, in order to ensure that the groups that have been dealing with large part of the management of plastic pollution and its disposal are not the ones left behind in the process and ending up without the means to sustain their livelihoods. In the case studies there has been attention to the just transition for waste pickers and their inclusion in the waste management system in the cities-based case studies with examples from Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, Bogota in Colombia and Bengaluru, in India.⁸⁶
172. Attention to other vulnerable groups in the case studies included fisherfolk in terms of aspects of marine litter in Split in Croatia. In the city of Varna, Bulgaria, mention was made of plastic clean up activities with the proceeds of the recyclable plastics donated to maternity and neonatal wards in two of the city hospitals. The global study (identified as Study 1 above) included attention to the involvement of micro, small and medium sized enterprises and the benefits for local communities with limited attention to gender aspects.

Rating for Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality: Moderately Satisfactory

Environmental and Social Safeguards

173. The design of the ONE UNEP Plastic project included a detailed safeguard risk checklist, which also applied to the grant presently under review, including the ways in which any of the risks were addressed as part of the global project.
174. The grant actively aimed at reducing the grant plastic and CO₂ footprints. In all events organized with support of the grant, there were no single use plastic bottles provided as use was made of refillable glass bottles for drinking water. All secondary materials were provided to participants online through the use of a QR code, to avoid

⁸⁶ The position of informal waste pickers was assessed in the SEA circular project, which was part of the ONE UNEP Plastic project. United Nations Environment Programme, Facilitating a Human Rights-Based Approach to Address Plastic Pollution: Extended Producer Responsibility and the Informal Waste Sector in ASEAN, 2024 (draft version).

the use of printed materials. Workshops applied a zero plastic and zero waste approach, exemplifying good practice.

175. Social impacts to key stakeholders and, in particular, to the most vulnerable groups were considered in several case studies and referred to in meetings and workshops, in particular in relation to the development of Extended Producer Responsibility schemes.
176. CO₂ footprint was reduced by having consultants working from home with communication provided through online means. Workshops and meetings were organized back-to-back with other relevant events with overlap in participation, reducing travel and subsequently CO₂ footprints. A limited number of events was conducted in person, notably the December 2025 meeting.
177. With safeguarding issues identified and managed through the ONE UNEP Plastic project to which the present grant was a part, no issues encountered in project reporting and key informant interviews conducted, and given efforts of the grant to reduce its environmental footprint in terms of CO₂, plastic and other waste, the rating for this aspect amounts to Satisfactory.

Rating for Environmental and Social Safeguards: Satisfactory

Country Ownership and Driven-ness

178. Country level ownership of the grant has been relatively high. This goes for the donor to the grant, the Government of the People's Republic of China, and its implementing partner, FECO as part of the MEE. FECO has been very engaged in the grant with support from the MEE.
179. The grant and its objectives have also been very much owned by the participating ASEAN countries who were adamant about the opportunities for learning across the countries in the region and in particular in learning from the ways in which plastic pollution has been addressed in China. With China being a large plastic producer as well as consumer, this provided opportunities for learning and exchange in all the stages of the plastic life cycle, including the upstream, midstream and downstream parts.
180. The survey conducted shortly after finalization of the meeting organized in December 2025 showed a high level of interest in sharing learnings and experiences from within the region, including ASEAN countries and China. Participants in both survey and interviews confirmed the applicability of these learnings to their own country contexts. They showed readiness to apply learnings in the ongoing activities and interventions in their own countries. The regional approach that was applied in most of the grant, did not mean that sharing with other countries beyond the region was not considered useful. Two of the three case studies developed under output 1 included examples from beyond the region. However, it was realized that such examples concern countries that may have quite different economic, social and environmental contexts.

Rating for Country Ownership and Driven-ness: Satisfactory

Communication and Public Awareness

181. While the grant did not have a specific communication strategy, the ONE UNEP Plastic project, of which it was a part, did have such a strategy, which aimed to raise

awareness about the impacts of plastic pollution and the benefits of applying a systemic approach to reduce plastic pollution; Inform sustainable and innovative solutions and trigger behaviour change; and to promote harmonized ways to access knowledge, methodologies, and data. The global project used a website, data and knowledge sharing platforms, social media, trainings/workshops, publications and coordination meetings as communication channels to which the grant had access. The grant added to this through its own events organized, which amounted to five in total and with the production of knowledge products.

182. Limitation concerned that the dissemination of several of the studies developed under Output 1 and Output 3 were not yet officially published and distributed due to UNEP's role in the ongoing INC process (see details above under the evaluation criterion of efficiency). This has hampered the dissemination of these results to the participating countries and beyond.
183. While the ONE UNEP Plastic Project does have a website with a link to ongoing projects, this leads to a global overview of initiatives on a map but does not provide any details on any of the 12 ongoing projects, of which one is the present grant under review.⁸⁷

Rating for Communication and Public Awareness: Moderately Satisfactory

Rating for Factors Affecting Performance: Satisfactory

⁸⁷ <https://www.unep.org/topics/plastic-pollution/one-plastics-initiative/ongoing-projects>.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions

184. The SSC grant was developed as part of the broader global ONE UNEP Plastic project with a focus on capacity development and learning across ASEAN countries and China on ways to reduce plastic pollution. The quality of the design of the project, during the inception phase of the present review, was rated as satisfactory, with at times the project design depending on the details provided in the design of the ONE UNEP Plastic project. The grant proved relevant in terms of UNEP's MTS and POW as well as donor and implementing partner's strategies and priorities. Moreover, the contents of the grant aligned with the needs of the participating countries, who proved keen to share and learn from experiences across countries in the Asia Pacific region. The use of South-South and Triangular Cooperation was appreciated as approach by participating countries. With the grant being a part of the ONE UNEP Plastic project, activities were coordinated with other UNEP initiatives as part of the global project.
185. The grant was successful in producing the expected outputs with case studies developed under output 1, five events of capacity development and knowledge sharing organized under output 2, studies on plastic pollution developed regarding the food and beverage sector in China, which is regarded the single most plastic polluting sector in the country, and concepts for future plastic related initiatives developed. In particular in terms of events organized and concept notes developed, the grant outperformed the original targets from its design.
186. Limitations of the output level achievements included the relative lack of attention to effects of interventions and results achieved as well as reference to the evidence concerned in some of the case studies, which limited the confidence provided for their use in other contexts. Meetings and workshops organized were considered effective in developing capacities and sharing knowledge on plastic pollution and ways to reduce it from a variety of perspectives. This, however, left untouched the country specific technical support required to implement some of the approaches at the country level, something for which there remains a substantial demand. This included the UNEP Policy Toolbox, which was presented during one of the events, and which use at the country level may require some additional support. While the number of concept notes outnumbered the target, these did not include a shared approach to the use of SSC and SSTC as means to enhance country level capacities to reduce plastic pollution.
187. At the outcome level, the grant was most successful in terms of capacity development and knowledge sharing through organization of several events, where it reached a total of almost 500 participants. It was less effective in terms of sharing the results of case studies developed, where UNEP's role in the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) process for development of an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, prevented it from publishing and disseminating several of the studies developed, limiting results achieved. While most of the events were organized at national level, for national level stakeholders, participants of one of the meetings identified the need for future support to develop capacities at the sub-national level, where many responsibilities in terms of waste management are located.
188. As the grant was a part of the ONE UNEP Plastic project, which will continue until the end of 2027, some of these shortcomings may be addressed by the global project. This includes the results of the case studies, which could still be used and disseminated once the status of the INC process would no longer prohibit UNEP from releasing the studies in the public domain and advocating for their use. Also, follow up

on the concept notes developed would need further support through the global project. It is this linkage of the grant and its achievements with the global project that, if further followed up, can contribute to the likeliness of higher-level results materializing.

189. The grant results framework guided monitoring and reporting with three progress reports developed over the time of the grant implementation period. While at the output level, the indicators did have baselines and targets, this was not the case for the outcome level indicators, which were added at the stage of the second progress report, which limited their use. Tracking of sex disaggregated data in terms of participation in events was limited. Only in one of the events organized as part of the grant, a survey was conducted shortly after the event with a relatively high response rate. The results of this survey, together with the data from bilateral meetings between UNEP and country level participants as part of one of the grant events, can be used to inform future programming in the region on reducing plastic pollution, including through the use of South-South and Triangular cooperation.
190. Sustainability of results achieved by the grant proved moderately likely, with presently relatively high levels of ownership, which though may depend in the future on positive results of the INC negotiations and the agreement on a strong legally binding instrument regarding plastic pollution worldwide. While finances are likely to be in place, directly through the ONE UNEP Plastic project as well as through both the grant's and the global project's inclusion of support to development of financial mechanisms in their approach to reducing plastic pollution. With the high level of dependency on both political and social factors and institutional support, a continued focus on these issues remains important to enhance sustainability of results.
191. The grant, though starting few months later than originally planned, finalized in time with all expected output level results achieved, while some of these overperformed. The grant benefitted from the provision of UNEP staff time, which was a form of co-financing with the support from the China Trust Fund to be used for activities only. The grant made use of efficient means, like organization of meetings back-to-back with other relevant events, reducing travel and related costs as well as reducing carbon footprints at the same time and applying a zero-waste approach during meetings. Most important constraining factor for reaching results concerned UNEP's role in the INC process, which prevented the organization from playing an outspoken role in terms of policy advocacy in order to maintain an independent position as the host to the on-going negotiations. This negatively affected some of the results at the outcome level of the grant in particular given the fixed termination date of the grant.
192. While project preparation, project management and supervision and country ownership were satisfactory in term of affecting grant performance, attention to human rights and gender equality as cross-cutting issue was limited. This also went for communication and public awareness, where UNEP's hosting of the INC process constrained its ability in terms of advocacy related support, as mentioned above.
193. South-South and Triangular Cooperation were seen by grant stakeholders as a useful means of building capacities and sharing knowledge and experiences on reducing plastic pollution across countries in the region and beyond, with useful learnings for all concerned. Given the limitations of the grant in terms of its coverage and timeframe, several of the issues will need to be followed up in order to maximize the higher level results that the grant will be able to achieve or contribute towards.

B. Summary of grant findings and ratings

194. The table below provides a summary of the ratings and finding discussed in Chapter V. Overall, the grant demonstrates a rating of '**Satisfactory**'.

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 Report satisfactory and validates the overall project performance rating at the '**Satisfactory**' level.

Table 16: Summary of project findings and ratings⁸⁸

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		S	Rating Validated	S
1. Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and strategic priorities	While there was full alignment with UNEP's mandate and thematic priorities and policies, but no anticipated identifiable contribution(s) to Direct Outcomes indicator(s) in the POW with indicators too far removed from these.	S	Rating Validated	S
2. Alignment to Donor/Partner strategic priorities	Full alignment with priorities concerned but no anticipated identifiable contribution to donor/partner reported result indicators	S	Rating Validated	S
3. Relevance to global, regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities	Full alignment with priorities concerned but no anticipated identifiable contribution to global, regional national result indicators	S	Rating Validated	S
4. Complementarity with relevant existing interventions/coherence	Full complementarity of results with other interventions and active knowledge of other interventions but no anticipated identified benefits from collaboration with other interventions	S	Rating Validated	S
Quality of Project Design	Based on the assessment conducted as part of the Inception phase of the review	S	Rating Validated	S
Nature of External Context	Some political risks identified as well as ongoing conflict in Myanmar and recent conflict between Cambodia and Thailand	MU	Rating Validated	MU
Effectiveness		MS	Rating Validated	MS
1. Availability of outputs	Most of the outputs have been achieved, including those most important to achieve higher level results, while some of them overperformed	S	Rating Validated	S

⁸⁸ Most criteria will be rated on a six-point scale as follows: Highly Satisfactory (HS); Satisfactory (S); Moderately Satisfactory (MS); Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU); Unsatisfactory (U); Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). Sustainability and Likelihood of Impact are rated, also on a six-point scale, from Highly Likely (HL) down to Highly Unlikely (HU) and Nature of External Context is rated from Highly Favourable (HF) to Highly Unfavourable (HU).

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
2. Achievement of grant outcomes	The outcome level achievements most important to attain intermediate state result were partially achieved, while assumptions hold and drivers appear to be partially in place, with so far, the INC process unfinished	MS	Rating Validated	MS
3. Likelihood of impact	Rating informed by use of the Likelihood of Impact Assessment Decision Tree as part of the UNEP Management-led Terminal Review Tools	ML	Rating Validated	ML
Financial Management		HS	Rating Validated	HS
1. Adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures	While most of the requirements regarding financial policies and procedures were in place, limitation was observed in grant financial reporting in some progress reports	S	Rating Validated	S
2. Completeness of project financial information	All required financial information has been in place, confirmed through use of the Financial Management Table (see Annex VI)	HS	Rating Validated	HS
3. Communication between finance and project management staff	Strong communication resulting in awareness on issues concerned by both project manager and financial assistant, which positively affected implementation	HS	Rating Validated	HS
Efficiency	The grant was implemented within the originally intended timeframe without any extension with all activities were implemented before grant end, overperforming in some respects with efficient implementation means applied	HS	Rating Validated	HS
Monitoring and Reporting		S	Rating Validated	S
1. Monitoring design and budgeting	Limitations of the monitoring framework addressed at the stage of the 2 nd progress report, monitoring budget excluded in line with donor requirements, budget for evaluation included	MS	Rating Validated	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
2. Monitoring of project implementation	The implementation of indicator monitoring was overall satisfactory in the context of the project design while result assessment of events limited to one out of five events	MS	Rating Validated	MS
3. Project reporting	Three project progress reports developed and contribution to the ONE UNEP plastics project IPMR report but limitations in terms of disaggregation of data	S	Rating Validated	S
Sustainability		ML	Rating Validated	ML
1. Socio-political sustainability	High dependency with 80 percent mitigation	ML	Rating Validated	ML
2. Financial sustainability	High dependency with 100 percent mitigation in the short term till end 2027 and other types of mitigation beyond	L	Rating Validated	L
3. Institutional sustainability	High dependency with 80 percent mitigation	ML	Rating Validated	ML
Factors Affecting Performance		S	Rating Validated	S
1. Preparation and readiness	The grant relied for a considerable part on the global ONE UNEP Plastic project, with additional measures taken including in terms of implementing partner and cooperation agreement concerned	S	Rating Validated	S
2. Quality of project management and supervision	Strong management and supervision, making use of the ONE UNEP Plastic project systems in place, with strong adaptive management applied responding to the ongoing INC process	S	Rating Validated	S
2.1 UNEP/Implementing Agency:	Strong leadership from UNEP through the ONE UNEP Plastic Project and the project manager		Rating Validated	S
2.2 Partners/Executing Agency:	Strong leadership by FECO, who are well situated within the Chinese context and pro-active in grant implementation		Rating Validated	S
3. Stakeholders' participation and cooperation	Stakeholder analysis was conducted through the ONE UNEP Plastic project, strong stakeholder ownership in place, strong communication across stakeholder groups and some links with vulnerability made	S	Rating Validated	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
4. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality	While gender and human rights are reflected in all aspects of the grant, this has been relatively weak in terms of implementation	MS	Rating Validated	MS
5. Environmental and social safeguards	Safeguards were in place, with use identified and managed through the ONE UNEP Plastic project of which the grant was a part with frequent efforts to minimize the grant's environmental footprint	S	Rating Validated	S
6. Country ownership and driven-ness	Country ownership was relatively high in terms of strategic guidance, acceptance of grant results but no future budgetary plans made	S	Rating Validated	S
7. Communication and public awareness	Communication through events has been effective with more events organized than planned, dissemination of some of the knowledge products has been hampered by the ongoing INC process which prevented UNEP from publishing some of them	MS	Rating Validated	MS
Overall Grant Performance Rating		S	Rating Validated	S

C. Lessons learned

Lesson Learned #1:	Plastic pollution is a complex issue with detrimental environmental effects and with the initiatives that aim to reduce it requiring attention beyond environmental issues, to include economic, social, political and consumer related aspects of plastics along all phases of its lifecycle, with a need to identify relevant gender and human rights related issues in each of these.
Context/comment:	Reducing plastic pollution requires a holistic perspective across all the stages of the plastic life cycle.

Lesson Learned #2:	The regional approach employed by the grant in terms of reducing plastic pollution is essential from an economic perspective as approaches like Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and restrictions in terms of plastic production can easily be avoided by companies if only applied in few countries in the region. Countries with less regulations in this respect could easily distort the market.
Context/comment:	Regarding reducing plastic pollution, there is a need for a regional approach, across countries in the region. This goes for example for EPR, where policies at national level are needed in all countries to avoid companies moving to those countries without EPR in place.

Lesson Learned #3:	In addition to learning across countries on aspects of reducing plastic pollution at regional or sub-regional levels, there is a need to follow-up with more focused SSC support amongst selected countries or with technical support by UNEP or other parties addressing country level needs identified.
Context/comment:	While the grant has focused on country level support through regional level events, there is a need from a country perspective to follow-up such kind of support with country level technical support and guidance on selected issues through SSC or otherwise. UNEP, as a non-resident agency in most countries, needs to position itself in this respect in line with its capacities and abilities at country level which could include prioritization of countries in this respect in order to pilot approaches.

Lesson Learned #4:	With the UNEP practice of nesting grants in larger initiatives, it is useful for a project design document to include explicitly details concerned, including those aspects of the design that are formulated as part of the larger initiative and not repeated in the project design document in order to ensure a common understanding across stakeholders concerned and to inform accountability.
Context/comment:	While it has been useful for the SSC grant to be part of the wider ONE UNEP Plastics project in various ways, it will be useful to make the details of such linkages explicit in the design document of the project.

D. Recommendations

Recommendation #1:	To further explore the opportunities for South-South and Triangular cooperation between ASEAN countries and China, making use of the concept notes developed as a result of the grant and develop an intermediate term approach to the use of South-South and Triangular Cooperation in support of reducing plastic pollution, including prioritization of countries requiring support within the region.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	While meetings and workshops organized by the grant have enhanced the understanding on plastic pollution and different ways to address this in the life cycle stages of plastic, there is a need of follow up in terms of what countries will be able to learn from one another. This will include an overview of what good practices are already present in the region, informed by the case studies developed by the grant and to combine this information with country needs for learning and support, with attention to the political, technical and financial aspects concerned.
Priority Level:	Strategic recommendation
Type of Recommendation	UNEP Project and Partners
Responsibility:	UNEP, in particular the ONE UNEP Plastic Project and the Plastics Unit as part of the UNEP Industry and Economy Division in close cooperation with FECO and UNCT members and other relevant stakeholders at the country level of prioritized countries
Proposed implementation time-frame:	In the remainder of the ONE UNEP Plastic Project period, till the end of 2027.

195. Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Findings: 80-99, 71-72, 105-110, 118– 120, 131; Conclusions: 186, 193.

Recommendation #2:	Review the case studies developed as part of the grant, ensuring sufficiently comprehensive descriptions, and provide details on results achieved and references to the evidence concerned and disseminate the results as widely as possible in the region and beyond, targeting relevant audiences in line with the communications strategy of the global ONE UNEP Plastic project.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The case studies developed vary much in terms of their details, from a few lines to several pages of details and in the attention paid to results achieved through their application. However, case studies need to be comprehensive enough and to show with some evidence that the practice is working and producing results in real world settings in order to be of use to inform other countries and for them to make use of the case study with confidence that the practice can generate results.
Priority Level:⁸⁹	Important Recommendation

⁸⁹ Priority levels of recommendations in line with UNEP guidelines (UNEP, Template for presenting Recommendations and Lessons Learned within a Main Review Report, July 2021):

Type of Recommendation: ⁹⁰	UNEP / Project
Responsibility:	UNEP, in particular the ONE UNEP Plastic Project and the Plastics Unit as part of the UNEP Industry and Economy Division
Proposed implementation time-frame:	The remainder of 2026

196. Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Findings: 80 – 99; Conclusions: 185-186, 193.

Recommendation #3:	Support monitoring and evaluation of plastic initiatives in order to get sufficient data to inform policy making, including methodologically robust assessments on what works to enhance the availability of data regarding ways to reduce plastic pollution and inform scaling up of approaches concerned.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Monitoring of project results and event related surveys have been limited in their ability to show achievements, in particular at higher levels of change. Moreover, reference to higher level results and the evidence concerned has also been limited in the case studies developed as part of the grant under output 1.
Priority Level:	Important Recommendation
Type of Recommendation	UNEP project
Responsibility:	UNEP, in particular the ONE UNEP Plastic Project and the Plastics Unit as part of the UNEP Industry and Economy Division
Proposed implementation time-frame:	In the remainder of the ONE UNEP Plastic Project period, till the end of 2027.

197. Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Findings: 147–154; Conclusions: 189.

Critical recommendation (High level): Address significant and/or widespread deficiencies in governance, risk management, or internal control processes such that likelihood of achieving the programmed objectives is greatly reduced, or the provisions of relevant principles or policies are compromised.

Important recommendation (Medium level): Address reportable deficiencies or weaknesses in governance, risk management, or internal control processes such that likelihood of achieving the programmed objectives is reduced, or the provisions of relevant principles or policies are threatened.

Opportunity for improvement (Low level): Address distinctive challenges and comprise suggestions to improve performance that do not meet the criteria of either critical or important recommendations.

⁹⁰ Types of recommendations in line with UNEP guidelines:

Project: where the actions of those UNEP staff managing the evaluation can address the recommendation or the underlying problem independently.

Partners: Where the actions to be taken to resolve the problem require approval/leadership from UNEP partners (e.g., Executing Agencies; National Governments/Ministries; Research Organizations; Private Sector; Steering Committees; Academia; UN agencies). In such a case, the Project Manager/Task Manager would need to pass on the recommendation, effectively/substantively, to the Partners (evidence would be an email; PowerPoint; meeting notes, etc.).

Recommendation #4:	In addition to national level assistance, provide focused support to aspects of implementation of policies at sub-national level along relevant phases of the plastic life cycle, with a focus on local government / city level authorities, in close cooperation with UN Country Team members and other relevant stakeholders in prioritized countries in the region.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Much of the support in the grant has focused at the national level, while implementation of approaches to reduce plastic pollution need to take place in particular at the sub-national and local levels, where upscaling of alternatives would need to take place and where responsibilities regarding waste management are usually situated and changes tracked.
Priority Level:	Opportunity for improvement
Type of Recommendation	UNEP Project and Partners
Responsibility:	UNEP, in particular the ONE UNEP Plastic Project and the Plastics Unit as part of the UNEP Industry and Economy Division in close cooperation with UNCT members and other relevant stakeholders at the country level
Proposed implementation time-frame:	In the remainder of the ONE UNEP Plastic Project period, till the end of 2027.

198. Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Findings: 80-99, 114-117, 118, 126-127; Conclusions: 186-187, 193.

Recommendation #5:	Follow up at country level regarding the use of the UNEP policy toolbox, with support adapted to the various needs of countries in the region, dependent on different contexts and current capacities with support organized and provided in close cooperation with UN Country Team members and other relevant stakeholders at country level.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	While the UNEP Policy Toolbox has been developed by the law division in UNEP, the use of this toolbox cannot be taken for granted but will need additional support at country level. This would ideally be part of the country level UN Sustainable Development Framework with support from UNEP combined with those of other UNCT members.
Priority Level:	Opportunity for improvement
Type of Recommendation	UNEP Project and partners
Responsibility:	UNEP, in particular the ONE UNEP Plastic Project and the Plastics Unit as part of the UNEP Industry and Economy Division in close cooperation with UNCT members and other relevant stakeholders at the country level

Proposed implementation time-frame:	In the remainder of the ONE UNEP Plastic Project period, till the end of 2027.
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199. Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Findings: 105 – 109; Conclusions: 186 - 187, 193.

ANNEX I. RESPONSE TO STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

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

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Reviewer Response
34/par 86	<i>We do not usually consider ban as a downstream measure. It will eliminate completely the product so could be seen as upstream</i>	<i>Text of the paragraph adapted to read: The category of Business cases for implementing upstream solutions in the plastic value chain of Study 3 has a focus on the upstream part of the plastic value chain with the actual practices presented concerning restrictions and bans of SUPs, alternatives to plastic and aspects of reuse.</i>

ANNEX II. REVIEW FRAMEWORK/MATRIX

Review criteria	Review questions	Assumptions / issues for probing	Methods of data gathering
1. Strategic Relevance	To what extent was the grant suited to the priorities and policies of UNEP, ASEAN countries, the donor and other stakeholders?	- Alignment with needs of stakeholders at country and regional levels - Complementarity with existing interventions (at design and inception phase) - Relevance to environmental and social development related objectives	- Desk review - Semi-structured interviews - UNEP project / programme staff - GoPRC / FECO staff - ASEAN Secretariat - Government staff of participating countries - UN RCO / UN agencies participating countries - Participating CSOs - Mini survey - E-communications
2. Quality of Project Design	What was the design quality and what were the grant's strengths and weaknesses at design stage?	- Quality of project preparation - Intended results and causality - Logical framework and monitoring - Governance and supervision arrangements - Partnerships - Learning, communication and outreach - Financial planning / budgeting - Efficiency - Risk identification and social safeguards - Sustainability / replication and catalytic effects - Identified project design weaknesses / gaps - Gender marker score	- Desk review - Semi-structured interviews - UNEP project / programme staff - GoPRC / FECO staff - E-communications
3. Nature of External Context	What was the grant's external operating context (considering the prevalence of conflict, natural disasters and unanticipated political upheaval)?	- Enabling factors of the grant's external operating context - Constraining factors of the grant's external operating context - Aspects of conflict, natural disasters and unanticipated political upheaval in the region / participating countries	- Desk review - Semi-structured interviews - UNEP project / programme staff - GoPRC / FECO staff - Mini survey - E-communications
4. Effectiveness	To what extent were results realized at output and outcome levels?	- Output level results realized - Outcome level results contributed towards - Likelihood of impact	- Desk review - Review of project monitoring data - Semi-structured interviews

Review criteria	Review questions	Assumptions / issues for probing	Methods of data gathering
		- Results related to the application of a human rights-based and gender equity approach - Coherence with other UNEP initiatives and those of other stakeholders	- UNEP project / programme staff - GoPRC / FECO staff - Government staff of participating countries - ASEAN Secretariat - UN RCO / UN agencies participating countries - Participating CSOs - Mini survey - E-communications
5. Financial Management	What was the quality of the financial management system in place and its implementation?	- Adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures - Completeness of financial information - Communication between financial and project management staff	- Desk review - Review of project monitoring data - Semi-structured interviews - UNEP project / programme staff - UNEP Financial management staff - GoPRC / FECO staff - Mini survey - E-communications
6. Efficiency	To what extent were grant activities efficient in reaching of output level results?	- Cost effectiveness of grant implementation - Use of the 6 Principles and 8 Elements to inform SSC practices (as presented in Box 1, p 2) - Timeliness of grant implementation and efficient sequencing of activities - Quality of project management and supervision - Implications of delays / time saving measures put in place - Project's environmental footprint	
7. Monitoring and reporting	What was the quality of project monitoring and reporting?	- Quality of monitoring design and budgeting - Quality of monitoring of project implementation - Quality of project reporting	
8. Sustainability	To what extent are the results achieved by the grant likely to be maintained without additional support?	- Socio-political sustainability - Institutional sustainability - Financial sustainability - Leveraging of regional ASEAN mechanisms	- Desk review - Review of project monitoring data - Semi-structured interviews - UNEP project / programme staff - GoPRC / FECO staff - Government staff of participating countries - ASEAN Secretariat - UN RCO / UN agencies participating countries - Participating CSOs - Mini survey

Review criteria	Review questions	Assumptions / issues for probing	Methods of data gathering
			○ E-communications
9. Factors and Processes Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues	Preparation and Readiness (part of assessment of Project Design Quality) Quality of Project Management and Supervision Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equity Environmental and Social Safeguards Country Ownership and Driven-ness Communication and Public Awareness	● Grant implementation was well prepared before actual start of activities ● Functioning of the project management and supervision system in place ● Participation and cooperation of stakeholders in the various types of activities supported by the grant ● Inclusion of human rights and gender equity issues across grant initiatives ● Levels of ownership by participating countries and ASEAN Secretariat ● Focus on vulnerable groups and avoidance of negative effects of grant implementation ● Communication of the grant with stakeholders within and outside of the grant	○ Desk review ○ Review of project monitoring data ○ Semi-structured interviews ▪ UNEP project / programme staff ▪ GoPRC / FECO staff ▪ Government staff of participating countries ▪ ASEAN Secretariat ▪ UN RCO / UN agencies participating countries ▪ Participating CSOs ○ Mini survey ○ E-communications

ANNEX III. PEOPLE CONSULTED DURING THE REVIEW

People consulted during the Review

Organisation	Name	Position	Role in the grant	Gender
UNEP	Feng Wang	ONE UNEP Plastic Project manager	Supervision of the Project Manager	Man
UNEP	Ran Xie	Project Manager	Management of the Project	Woman
UNEP	Hyejin Seo	Associate Programme Management Officer	Support to Project implementation	Woman
UNEP	Ligia Simoni Ikeda	Project Assistant	Project Financial Management	Woman
UNEP ROAP	Hiroko Matsuo	Programme Officer	Support to Project implementation	Woman
FECO	Guanglong Wu	FECO Focal point, Secretary of FECO	Implementing partner	Man
FECO	Dijin Lu,	FECO Focal point, Project Manager	Management of the Project	Woman
Ministry of Environment, Indonesia	Ana Suryana	Environmental Advisor/Educator, Directorate of Waste Reduction and Circular Economy	Participant UNEP Workshop Dec 2025	Woman
Institute of Strategy and Policy on Agriculture and Environment, Vietnam	Nguyen Sy Linh	Head of Division of Climate Change	Participant UNEP Workshop Dec 2025	Man
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability, Malaysia	Nor Effahazira Binti Mohamad Khairudin	Assistant Secretary, Environmental Management Division	Participant UNEP Workshop Dec 2025	Woman
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability	Mohd Redzuan bin Ramli	Assistant Secretary, Environmental Management Division	Participant UNEP Workshop Dec 2025	Man
GRID Arendal	Swati Singh Sambyal	Specialist Plastic Pollution	Co-facilitator workshop UNEP Dec 2025	Woman
China Petroleum and Chemical Industry Federation	Nie Ziwei	Sustainable development commissioner, International Exchange Department	Project partner	Woman
WWF China	Jin Chengcheng	China Programme Manager	Civil society partner	Woman
Ellen MacArthur Foundation	Xiaoting (Tina) Chen	China Programme Specialist	Civil society partner	
Independent Consultant	Francesca Montevicchi	Consultant	Technical support	Woman
Independent Consultant	Vu Hoai Nam Dang	Consultant	Technical support	Man

ANNEX IV. KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

Grant planning and reporting documents

- UN Environment Programme, UNEP Senior Management Team Memorandum on the 2024 China MEE – UNEP agreement allocation, 26 March 2024.
- UNEP, Ministry of Ecology and Environment of the People's Republic of China, Framework Agreement on Strategic Cooperation between The Ministry of Ecology and Environment of the People's Republic of China and The United Nations Environment Programme, February 2024.
- UNEP Industry and Economy Division, Project Cooperation Agreement between United Nations Environment programme and Foreign Environmental cooperation Center, Ministry of Ecology and Environment of P.R. China of December 2024.
- United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme Fifth session, For people and planet: the United Nations Environment Programme strategy for 2022–2025 to tackle climate change, loss of nature and pollution, Nairobi, 17 February 2021.
- UN Environment Programme, ONE UNEP Plastic Project on Accelerating a Global Circular Plastic Economy to Reduce Plastic Pollution and its Impacts, Project Document, July 2021.
- UNEP Management led terminal review criteria ratings matrix.
- FECO, Final Expenditure Report, Foreign Environmental Cooperation Center, Ministry of Ecology and Environment of P.R. China (P1863).

Grant outputs – Overall

- UNEP, South-South Cooperation to Build Capacity on Reducing Plastics Pollution in ASEAN Countries (Internal Project document).
- UNEP, Terms of Reference, Management-Led Terminal Review, template.
- UN Environment Programme, China Trust Fund Progress Report, Project South-South Cooperation to Build Capacity on Reducing Plastics Pollution in ASEAN Countries, March 2024 – August 2025.
- UN Environment Programme, UNEP Senior Management Team Memorandum on the 2024 China MEE – UNEP agreement allocation, 26 March 2024.
- UNEP, China Trust Fund Progress Report, March – October 2024, 2024.
- UNEP, China Trust Fund Progress Report, March 2024-August 2025, 2025.
- UNEP, China Trust Fund Progress Report, March 2024-December 2025, 2025.

Grant outputs work package 1: Compilation of best practices and case studies

- UNEP SSC grant, Global best practices on circular economy of plastics: compilation for the China project (draft).
- UNEP, FECO, Case study of Plastic Circular Economy Practices in China, South-South Cooperation to Build Capacity on Reducing Plastics Pollution in ASEAN countries, UNEP China Trust Fund (draft).
- UNEP SSC grant, Best practices and examples on policy and financial instruments towards a plastic circular economy (draft).

Grant outputs work package 2: Capacity development and knowledge sharing events on SSC

- Guanglong, Wu, Foreign Environmental Cooperation Center, Ministry of Ecology and Environment, Plastic Pollution Prevention and Control, Policies and Practices in China, September 2025.
- Zheng, Peng, The 16th ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security, China's Efforts in Tackling Marine Plastic Waste: Policy and Practices, PowerPoint Presentation, 2025.
- Zheng, Peng, China Policy Addressing Plastic Pollution, PowerPoint Presentation, 2025.
- Feedback received from WTO participants to the workshop (Internal document).
- 2025 Lancang-Mekong Week (Overview of discussions, Internal document).
- Center for International Cooperation and Exchange, Ministry of Ecology and Environment, The 2025 China-ASEAN Environmental Cooperation Forum parallel session: China ASEAN Roundtable Dialogue on Circular Economy and Green Finance, Beijing, October 2025.
- UNEP, FECO, Towards a Circular Economy of Plastics in the Asia-Pacific Region: Experience and Knowledge Sharing on Country Actions, 15 December 2025, Background, Objective and Agenda, December 2025.
- UNEP, FECO, Towards a Circular Economy of Plastics in the Asia-Pacific Region: Experience and Knowledge Sharing on Country Actions, 15 December 2025, Master Slide deck, December 2025.
- UNEP, FECO, Towards a Circular Economy of Plastics in the Asia-Pacific Region: Experience and Knowledge Sharing on Country Actions, 15 December 2025, Event Summary Note, December 2025.
- UNEP, FECO, UNPDFT, Towards a Circular Economy of Plastics in the Asia-Pacific Region: Experience and Knowledge Sharing on Country Actions, 15 December 2025, Bangkok, Thailand (PowerPoint Presentation).

grant outputs work package 3: Study on the status of plastics in the food and beverage sector in China, and preparation project concepts

- UNEP, China Trust Fund, Research on China's Plastic Pollution Governance Policies, South-South Cooperation to Build Capacity on Reducing Plastics Pollution in ASEAN Countries, 2025.
- UNEP, UNEP Plastics Country Profiles, 2025. Draft document.
- Plastic Waste Management in China's Food and Beverage Sector: Gap Analysis and Policy Recommendations, (Draft Study Report).
- Concept Note to Establish Plastic Pollution Control Collaborative Network, 2025, (Internal Concept Note).
- Future cooperation concept with INBAR on plastic substitute and alternatives, 2025, (Internal Concept Note).
- Suggested cooperation fields in addressing plastic pollution, 2025, (Internal Concept Note).
- Proposal for Future Cooperation in Food and Beverage Delivery Sector Based on Consultation Meetings with MEITUAN Company, 2025, (Internal Concept Note).

- UNEP, FECO, Case study of Plastic Circular Economy Practices in China, South-South Cooperation to Build Capacity on Reducing Plastics Pollution in ASEAN countries, UNEP China Trust Fund.

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- UNEG, Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, March 2008.
- UNEG, UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System, March 2008.
- UN Environment Programme, Evaluation Policy, revised, October 2022.
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- Jambeck, J.R., et al., Plastic waste inputs from land into the ocean. *Science*, 2015. 347(6223): p. 768-771, cited in Moss, E., Eidson, A., and Jambeck J., 2017; Sea of Opportunity: Supply Chain Investment Opportunities to Address Marine Plastic Pollution, Encourage Capital on behalf of Vulcan, Inc., New York, February 2017.
- Villarrubia-Gomez, P., B. Carney Almoth, M. Eriksen, M. Ryberg & S.E. Cornell, Plastics pollution exacerbates the impacts of all planetary boundaries, *One Earth*, 2024.
- United Nations, the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries, 1978. Referenced in: BRICS Policy Center and South-South Cooperation Research and Policy Centre, Paths for Developing South-South Cooperation Monitoring and Evaluation Systems, Rio de Janeiro/São Paulo, July 2017.
- United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, bridging horizons and continents: Forging Transformative Pathways in South-South and Triangular Cooperation, 2025 global Report on South-South and Triangular Cooperation, New York, 2025.
- UN Environment Programme, UNEP Delivery Model, Policy for One UNEP Delivery for Better Collaboration and Country Support, 26 September 2022.
- United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme Fifth session, For people and planet: the United Nations Environment Programme strategy for 2022–2025 to tackle climate change, loss of nature and pollution, Nairobi, 17 February 2021.
- UN environment programme, For People and Planet, Annex I: UNEP Programme of Work and Budget for 2022-2023, Nairobi (with the POW extended to cover the period 2024-2025 with budgets and targets pro-rated accordingly).
- UNEP, “Circularity in Sectors”, Coordination Project, Internal document.
- China-ASEAN Environmental Cooperation Center, Framework of ASEAN-China Environmental Cooperation Strategy and Action Plan (2021-2025), Beijing, China.
- The ASEAN Secretariat, ASEAN Regional Action Plan for Combating Marine Debris in the ASEAN Member States (2021-2025), Jakarta, 2021

- United Nations Environment Programme, Facilitating a Human Rights-Based Approach to Address Plastic Pollution: Extended Producer Responsibility and the Informal Waste Sector in ASEAN, 2024 (draft version).

Website References

- <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>.
- <https://www.unep.org/inc-plastic-pollution/>.
- <https://www.unep.org/topics/plastic-pollution/one-plastics-initiative/ongoing-projects>

ANNEX V. DETAILS OF SURVEY RESULTS DECEMBER 2025 EVENT

Mini-Survey conducted shortly after the UNEP/FECO event December 2025 in Bangkok, Thailand

Roles related to addressing plastic pollution

Nine of the 12 respondents identified policy, while 6 identify a role in terms of research often in combination with a role in policy related issues. Four participants worked on regulation while 3 indicated a role in data often combined with policy work and research. Only one participant indicated a role in finance of plastic related issues.

Usefulness of the event⁹¹

Seven out of 12 (or 58 percent) considered the event very useful, while 5 out of 12 (or 42 percent) rated the event as useful.

Explanations provided by participants for their ratings⁹²

When explaining the usefulness of the workshop, 7 out of 11 answers focused on learning from the experiences of other countries through peer-to-peer sharing, including similarities in challenges as well as differences in terms of country contexts. Three participants referred to the opportunities for networking and connecting with other organizations. Two of the participants referred to the high level of relevance to the information provided during the workshop and the practicality and applicability of their gained knowledge

Knowledge strengthened as a result of the event⁹³

Most (10 out of 12) participants mention the design and implementation of policy measures as knowledge strengthened, followed by eight, who identify enhanced knowledge on legal frameworks and policy instruments. Five out of 12 mention application of the policy toolbox as key learning. Four out of 12 refer to sustainable alternatives, to regional trends/best practices and to financing mechanisms.

Key insights or takeaways for you to apply in your country context

Also, when asked about the insights participants expect to be able to apply in their country context, 5 out of 9 refer to Design and implementation of policy measures, while three participants mention the application of the policy toolbox. Two participants refer to policy development while another two refer to financing mechanisms.

Areas the require future support⁹⁴

⁹¹ Response options included: Very useful, Useful, Somewhat useful and Not useful

⁹² This concerned an open-ended question.

⁹³ Legal frameworks & policy instruments; Policy Toolbox application; Design and implementation of policy measures (e.g. single-use ban, EPR, and product design); Sustainable alternatives; Regional trends & best practices; Financing mechanisms

⁹⁴ Response options included: Drafting or updating national plastics action plans; Eco-design support; EPR operationalization; Reuse/refill solutions; Monitoring and data reporting systems; Stakeholder engagement; Regional technical working groups; Capacity-building for subnational governments. Respondents were requested to indicate up to 3 options.

Respondents prioritized Monitoring and data reporting systems, Eco-design support, Capacity building for sub-national government and EPR operationalization, which issues were referred to by respectively eight, seven, seven and six participants. Three participants identified the importance of Drafting or updating national plastics action plans while attention to Stakeholder engagement, Reuse/refill solutions and Regional technical working groups were identified by only one participant each.

Preferred modality of capacity support⁹⁵

In terms of modalities for capacity development, in-depth technical training, country level diagnostics/assessments and On-the-ground pilots were most frequently mentioned with 9, 8 and 7 participants referencing these respectively. Advisor support for regulatory drafting, peer-to-peer exchanges and Financial matchmaking workshops were less referred to (by 4, 3 and 3 participants respectively).

UNEP Policy Toolbox

In addition, some questions were included on the UNEP Policy Toolbox, which was presented during the first session. One question concerned the usefulness of the toolbox, while a second question concerned what elements of the toolbox were considered most relevant to participants' national policy priorities and challenges. See details of responses below.

Regarding the usefulness of the Policy toolbox and the presentation concerned, 7 out of 12 participants considered this to be very useful, 4 out of 12 considered is somewhat useful while one participant responded to be neutral in this respect.

Regarding the aspects most relevant to the country context, different elements of the toolbox were mentioned by different participants, with only the issue of EPR and finance mechanism referred to by two participants.

Suggestions for improving future UNEP events

Asked to provide suggestions for improving future UNEP events, participants included a range of issues, including:

- Focus on Practical Implementation, Not Just Frameworks
- Highlight Successful National & Local Case Studies
- Engage Multi-Stakeholder Voices Practically
- Design Interactive & Problem-Solving Formats, like Policy Simulation Exercises and “Clinic Sessions”
- Emphasize Upstream Solutions & Just Transition
- Communicate Clearly & Inclusively, providing real time translation and visual policy tools
- Provide in-depth training / workshops on specific plastics issues
- Adapt question posed through the interactive MENTI application to inform discussions
- Specific case studies on plastic reduction
- TA and funding for pilot projects
- Inform participants on future events

⁹⁵ Response options included: In-depth technical training; Peer-to-peer exchanges; Country-level diagnostics / assessments; On-the-ground pilots; Advisory support for regulatory drafting; Financial matchmaking workshops.

ANNEX VI. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Financial Management Table

Financial management components:		Rating	Evidence/ Comments
1. Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures:		S	
Any evidence that indicates shortcomings in the project's adherence ⁹⁶ to UNEP or donor policies, procedures or rules			All UNEP procedures adhered to but limitation was observed in project financial reporting in some progress reports
2. Completeness of project financial information⁹⁷:			
Provision of key documents to the reviewer (based on the responses to A-H below)		HS	
A.	Co-financing and Project Cost's tables at design (by budget lines)	Yes	Details shared and included in the report
B.	Revisions to the budget	No	No revisions were made to the budget
C.	All relevant project legal agreements (e.g. SSFA, PCA, ICA)	Yes	Yes, all in place
D.	Proof of fund transfers	Yes	
E.	Proof of co-financing (cash and in-kind)	Yes	Co-financing through UNEP and the UNPDF project
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	Final financial report sent to donor with no intermediate requirements concerned
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 (list):	N/A	Authorization received to conduct review from Dec 2025 to Feb 2026
3. Communication between finance and project management staff		HS	
Project Manager and/or Task Manager's level of awareness of the project's financial status.		HS	Project manager and project assistant met on 2 weekly basis to discuss and exchange information
Fund Management Officer's knowledge of grant progress/status when disbursements are done.		HS	Project manager and project assistant met on 2 weekly basis to discuss and exchange information
Level of addressing and resolving financial management issues among Fund Management Officer and Project Manager/Task Manager.		HS	No issues reported, manager informed project assistant in time, no issues on deadlines
Contact/communication between by Fund Management Officer, Project Manager/Task Manager during the preparation of financial and progress reports.		HS	Relevant communication on on final financial and progress reports between project manager, assistant and FMO, no intermittent financial reports required by the donor
Project Manager, Task Manager and Fund Management Officer responsiveness to financial requests during the review process		HS	No problems encountered
Overall rating		HS	

⁹⁶ If the review raises concerns over adherence with policies or standard procedures, a recommendation maybe given to cover the topic in an upcoming audit, or similar financial oversight exercise.

⁹⁷ See also document 'Criterion Rating Description' for reference

ANNEX VII. COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH TOOLS⁹⁸

Compilation of best practices and case studies

- UNEP SSC grant, Global best practices on circular economy of plastics: compilation for the China project (draft).
- UNEP, FECO, Case study of Plastic Circular Economy Practices in China, South-South Cooperation to Build Capacity on Reducing Plastics Pollution in ASEAN countries, UNEP China Trust Fund (draft).
- UNEP SSC grant, Best practices and examples on policy and financial instruments towards a plastic circular economy (draft).

Capacity development and knowledge sharing events on SSC

- Guanglong, Wu, Foreign Environmental Cooperation Center, Ministry of Ecology and Environment, Plastic Pollution Prevention and Control, Policies and Practices in China, September 2025.
- Zheng, Peng, The 16th ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security, China's Efforts in Tackling Marine Plastic Waste: Policy and Practices, PowerPoint Presentation, 2025.
- Zheng, Peng, China Policy Addressing Plastic Pollution, PowerPoint Presentation, 2025.
- UNEP, FECO, Towards a Circular Economy of Plastics in the Asia-Pacific Region: Experience and Knowledge Sharing on Country Actions, 15 December 2025, Master Slide deck, December 2025.
- UNEP, FECO, UNPDTF, Towards a Circular Economy of Plastics in the Asia-Pacific Region: Experience and Knowledge Sharing on Country Actions, 15 December 2025, Bangkok, Thailand (PowerPoint Presentation).

Studies on the status of plastics in the food and beverage sector in China

- UNEP, China Trust Fund, Research on China's Plastic Pollution Governance Policies, South-South Cooperation to Build Capacity on Reducing Plastics Pollution in ASEAN Countries, 2025.
- UNEP, UNEP Plastics Country Profiles, 2025. Draft document.
- Plastic Waste Management in China's Food and Beverage Sector: Gap Analysis and Policy Recommendations, (Draft Study Report).

⁹⁸ UNEP's role in the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) process for development of an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution has prevented the organization from publishing and disseminating several of the studies developed while the INC process is ongoing.

ANNEX VIII. BRIEF CV OF THE REVIEWER

Name: Frank Noij

Profession	Specialist in Complex Evaluation and Review
Nationality	Dutch
Country experience	• Africa: Cameroon, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Senegal, Tanzania, Tunisia • Americas: Argentina • Asia: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR), Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, The Philippines, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Vietnam • Oceania: Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu
Education	• MSc, Social and Cultural Anthropology, Development Economics

Short biography

Frank is an evaluator with 30 years of experience in the evaluation and review of international development programming, primarily in the Asia and Pacific region. His expertise includes the conduct of complex evaluations and reviews, development and implementation of evaluation quality assurance systems and country level support to capacity development on evaluation and its use in results-based management. His approach to evaluation is informed by his experience in project and programme design and management. He has worked with UNEP as well as multiple other UN Agencies on the evaluation of projects and programmes with a focus on sustainable development. Earlier, he served as Regional Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor for CARE in its Asia Regional Management Unit and worked on international development projects and programmes for Wageningen Agricultural and Leiden Universities, the Netherlands.

Key specialties and capabilities cover:

- Complex evaluations and reviews
- Development and implementation of evaluation quality assurance systems
- Country level support to capacity development on evaluation and its use in results-based management

Independent reviews/evaluations for UNEP:

- Project Terminal Review of the UNEP project "Reducing marine litter by addressing the management of the plastic value chain in South-East Asia (SEA circular)", UN Environment Programme, UNEP Industry and Economy Division. June 2025
- Formative Review of UNEP's Delivery Model and Programme Approach (introduced in the 2022-2025 Medium Term Strategy), UNEP Evaluation Office. November 2024
- Mid-Term Review of the Medium-Term Plan Implementation, 2021-2025 of the Acid Deposition Monitoring Network East Asia (EANET), UNEP Regional Office Asia and Pacific. November 2023
- Mid-Term Review of the UNEP project "Reducing marine litter by addressing the management of the plastic value chain in South-East Asia (SEA circular)", UN Environment Programme, Regional Office Asia and Pacific. November 2021
- Independent Review of UN Environment Programme's Contribution to Poverty Reduction, on behalf of Sida, UNEP Evaluation Office. October 2020

ANNEX IX. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN OF RECOMMENDATIONS

grant Title and Reference No.: South-South Cooperation to Build Capacity on Reducing Plastics Pollution in ASEAN Countries, IPMR SB-012354

Contact Person (TM/PM): Ran Xie, ran.xie@un.org

RECOMMENDATIONS	PLANS			
	ACCEPTED (YES/NO/PARTIALLY)	WHAT WILL BE DONE?	EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE	REPOSIBLE OFFICER/ UNIT/ DIVISION/ AGENCY
To further explore the opportunities for South-South and Triangular cooperation between ASEAN countries and China, making use of the concept notes developed as a result of the grant and develop an intermediate term approach to the use of South-South and Triangular Cooperation in support of reducing plastic pollution, including prioritization of countries requiring support within the region.	YES	UNEP and FECO are exploring potential funding opportunities to turn the concept notes developed under the grant into actions. Potential donors identified include the China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA) and GEF. The plan is to have draft proposals based on these concept notes in 2026-2027.	End of 2027	Feng Wang and Ran Xie, UNEP plastics unit

	PLANS			
RECOMMENDATIONS	ACCEPTED (YES/NO/PARTIALLY)	WHAT WILL BE DONE?	EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE	REPOSIBLE OFFICER/ UNIT/ DIVISION/ AGENCY
Review the case studies developed as part of the grant, ensuring sufficiently comprehensive descriptions, and provide details on results achieved and references to the evidence concerned and disseminate the results as widely as possible in the region and beyond, targeting relevant audiences in line with the communications strategy of the global ONE UNEP Plastic project.	Partially	Due to the limitation on resources and lack of data for the time being, the grant plans to further improve the case studies and complement results achieved from these cases in new projects to be developed with potential donors. The improvement of the case studies will also rely on the future availability of resources. However, UNEP will proactively mobilise resources for this type of work, in particular when we see higher possibility to publish these cases as the INC process develops.	End pf 2027/early 2028	Feng Wang and Ran Xie, UNEP plastics unit
Support monitoring and evaluation of plastic initiatives in order to get sufficient data to inform policy making, including methodologically robust assessments on what works to enhance the availability of data regarding ways to reduce plastic pollution and inform scaling up of approaches concerned.	Yes	The ONE UNEP plastic project will keep monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of activities/initiatives on plastics to inform policy making. The work from UNEP Ecosystems Division on data and assessment will help facilitate evidence-based decision making at national level. The Plastics Unit is in close coordination with the Ecosystems Division in this regard.	End of 2027	Feng Wang and Ran Xie, UNEP plastics unit

	PLANS			
RECOMMENDATIONS	ACCEPTED (YES/NO/PARTIALLY)	WHAT WILL BE DONE?	EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE	REPOSIBLE OFFICER/ UNIT/ DIVISION/ AGENCY
In addition to national level assistance, provide focused support to aspects of implementation of policies at sub-national level along relevant phases of the plastic life cycle, with a focus on local government / city level authorities, in close cooperation with UN Country Team members and other relevant stakeholders in prioritized countries in the region.	YES	The UNEP Plastics Initiative will work more closely with UNCT for project implementation and policy support. It is initially planned to support city authorities under the second phase of the Global Commitment Initiative led by EMF in collaboration with UNEP. Under the GEF-funded city project in the Latin American and Caribbean region , technical support to the city-level governments and stakeholders have been provided by UNEP.	End of 2027	Feng Wang and Ran Xie, UNEP plastics unit
Follow up at country level regarding the use of the UNEP policy toolbox, with support adapted to the various needs of countries in the region, dependent on different contexts and current capacities with support organized and provided in close cooperation with UN Country Team members and	Partially	UNEP Plastics Unit will keep implementing projects based on the knowledge compiled in the Policy toolbox, but its full application at national level will also be depending on the availability of future resources for specific country projects. The coordination with UNCT and other stakeholders at country level will be strengthened for future project implementation, through increasing the frequency of the coordination with UNEP regional offices and systematically	End of 2027	Feng Wang and Ran Xie, UNEP plastics unit

	PLANS			
RECOMMENDATIONS	ACCEPTED (YES/NO/PARTIALLY)	WHAT WILL BE DONE?	EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE	REPOSIBLE OFFICER/ UNIT/ DIVISION/ AGENCY
other relevant stakeholders at country level.		integrating the engagement with UNCTs in future project design where applicable.		

For lessons learned from the project's experiences please refer to page 70 of the report.

ANNEX X. QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF THE REVIEW REPORT

Review Title: Terminal Review of the UNEP South-South Cooperation to Build Capacity on Reducing Plastics Pollution in ASEAN Countries IPMR SB-012354

Consultant: Frank Noij

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).

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
Section A: Executive Summary	Assessment	
1. Does the Executive Summary act as a concise, accurate standalone section, especially to inform decision-making? Consider how clearly and concisely the report presents: - a clear summary of the review object - review objectives, scope and methodology - the overall project review rating - a summary of main review findings, including key features of performance (strengths and weaknesses) - summary responses to key strategic review questions - summary of main conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> Most required elements have been addressed. There is no mention of key strategic questions nor a summary of responses to them. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The executive summary has been well written. Most acronyms have been introduced making this section easier to read (more legible?)	5.5
Section B: The Project	Assessment	
2. Does the report clearly describe the key parameters, scale and complexity of the evaluand? Consider how well the report presents: - an overview of the main issue that the project is trying to address - timeline, including dates of project approval, duration and number of phases (where appropriate) - geographic coverage (regions/countries) - total secured budget and project financing, including a table with funding sources - implementing and funding partners - institutional context (i.e. UNEP sub-programme, Division, Branch etc) - implementation structure with diagram - UNEP results frameworks to which it contributes (e.g. PoW Direct Outcome) - summary of results framework as stated in the ProDoc (or as officially revised) - stakeholder groups organised according to relevant common characteristics - whether the project has been evaluated in the past (e.g. mid-term, by an external agency, etc.) - substantive or significant changes in design during implementation	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The narrative of the timeline, secured budgets, implementing and funding partners, institutional context, UNEP results framework to which the grant contributes to was provided in the introduction section (not part of the UNEP Terminal Review Report Structure). The remaining elements have been satisfactorily covered in this section, including the use of diagrams and tables where relevant. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> There is less coherence in the information shared as various elements are covered in 3 different sections (2 of which are not part of the UNEP Evaluation Office guidelines)	5
Section C: Review Methods and Theory of Change	Assessment	

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
3. Does the report present a clear, comprehensive and adequate description of the review methodology? Consider how well it presents the following elements, and their adequacy based on the scope of the review: • statement of the purpose of the review and the key intended audience for the review findings • data collection methods and information sources • justification for methods used (e.g. electronic/face-to-face interviews, qualitative/quantitative analysis) • criteria and sampling strategies used to select stakeholders for consultations, and for sites/countries visited • number and types of respondents (<i>including in a table broken down by gender</i>) • strategies used to increase stakeholder engagement and response rate • methods used to include the voices/experiences of different and potentially excluded groups (e.g. women, marginalised) • data verification methods (e.g. triangulation) • data analysis methods (e.g. scoring, thematic analysis) • review limitations and mitigation measures (e.g. how these were addressed by the evaluator) • consideration for ethics and human rights issues, including how anonymity and confidentiality were protected	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> All aspects of the review methodology were covered under Section II Review Methods. The table that includes the number and type of respondents did not include the breakdown by gender. The statement of the purpose of the review and key intended audience was covered in a different section (Introduction) <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The use of appreciative inquiry as a strategy to increase stakeholder engagement and response rate is well noted.	5
4. Does the report describe an assessment and reformulation of the Theory of Change, and present an adequate articulation of the TOC causal pathways that were used to assess project performance (<i>narratively and diagrammatically</i>)? Consider how well the report presents: • whether the project design included a TOC • how the <i>TOC at review</i>⁹⁹ was designed (e.g. who was involved, etc) • confirmation/reconstruction of results in accordance with UNEP definitions (<i>including reformulation table, which may have initially been presented in the Inception Report and should appear in the Main Review report.</i>) • articulation of causal pathways • identification of drivers and assumptions • identification of key actors in the change process	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The reformulated TOC at review is presented without justifications. It is not clear who was involved when the TOC at review was reformulated, only the documents consulted. While the project design included outputs and outcomes but no TOC, the reconstructed TOC at Terminal Review Outputs and Outcome statements do not match the UNEP definitions as indicated in the in the following instances: Output 1 is deemed an activity (Capacity development and knowledge sharing events), while the 01 UNEP Glossary of results definitions, December 2023.pdf first half of the outcome - Increased capacity of the countries in the ASEAN countries - is an output as knowledge is gained within	3

⁹⁹ 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*.

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
	institutions in the ASEAN countries. The outcome is that ASEAN countries would apply this new knowledge and adopt new systems in promoting the circular economy approach for plastic production and consumption. Output 2 (Compilation of best practices and case studies on circular economy of plastics) is also deemed an activity. The output should be that 'Access to best practices and experiences strengthens the capacity and increases the knowledge of national governments. The associated outcome would then be that national governments enable economic frameworks that support the initiatives on plastic through the collaboration with multilateral, regional and national platforms Output 3 (Study on the status of plastics production, consumption and pollution in the food and beverage sector in China) is deemed an activity. It should be worded as 'Increased knowledge on the best practices and lessons learnt on reducing plastic pollution through life cycle;' and 'Increased understanding on the plastic value chain in the food and beverage sector in China' and the resulting outcome would be 'Effective new business models and product design identified towards circular economy'. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> Drivers and assumptions that were not part of the project document have been presented. The reformulation of the TOC at review does not explicitly describe the causal pathways from outputs to outcome to intermediate and impact statements. Only a table is presented, which also lacks causal pathways being shown.	

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
Section D: Evidence and Analysis	Assessment	
5. Is the report based on <i>sufficient and adequate data</i> and <i>clear and credible evidence</i>? Consider how well the report presents: • sufficient evidence that is consistent throughout the report • evidence that is supported by data sources (e.g. quotes, reports, etc) • evidence that is explicitly triangulated, unless noted as having a single source • gaps in data are explained and justified • data sources that are reliable, adequate, sufficient for the scope of the review	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> All elements are adequately addressed. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The report makes use of footnotes for easy reference of data sources and triangulation of evidence.	5.5
6. Does the report include <i>rigorous analysis</i> and <i>logical findings</i>? Consider the extent to which the findings are: • supported by clear analysis that is consistent with the evidence presented • logical, clear and coherent • aligned with UNEP's Criteria Ratings Matrix • aligned with the review framework • more than descriptions and provide insights into 'how' and/or 'why' the project performed a certain way • balanced, presenting both successes and weaknesses	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> All elements are adequately addressed. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The presentation of both successes and weaknesses throughout the report and provision of insights is useful	5.5
Section E: Review Findings	Assessment	
7. Does the report present evidence and analysis of project <i>Strategic Relevance</i> with respect to UNEP, partner and geographic policies and strategies at the time of project approval? Consider how well the report addresses: • Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities • Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partners Strategic Priorities • Relevance to Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities • Complementarity with Existing Interventions: complementarity of the project at design (or during inception/mobilisation¹⁰⁰), with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups.	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> All required elements have been addressed. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> A lot of details were given in this section and could have been summarised more succinctly.	5
8. Does the report present a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the <i>Quality of Project Design</i>, based on the detailed assessment presented in the Inception Report?	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> A summary of strengths and weaknesses of the Quality of the Project was not presented - only the methodology that was followed. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> A summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the quality of project design would have	¹⁰¹ NOT RATED

¹⁰⁰ 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.

¹⁰¹ The Quality of Project Design criterion is not rated in this table because the majority of the analysis is presented in the Inception Report and the Final Terminal Review report only contains a summary.

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
	strengthened the findings section of the review.	
9. Does the report recognise and describe, when appropriate, key features of the Nature of the External Context under which the project was implemented that limited the project's performance (e.g. conflict, natural disaster, political upheaval ¹⁰²), and how they affected performance?	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> Required elements are adequately addressed. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> Additional factors and risks were summarised in this section.	¹⁰³ NOT RATED
10. Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the Availability of Outputs to the intended beneficiaries? Consider how well the report presents: • a convincing, evidence-supported and clear presentation of the outputs made available by the project compared to its approved plans and budget • assessment of the nature and scale of outputs versus the project indicators and targets • assessment of the timeliness, quality and utility of outputs to intended beneficiaries • identification of positive or negative effects of the project on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> Most required elements have been adequately addressed. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> Considering the detailed analysis of each output as per the reconstructed TOC, discussion on the elements of the utility of outputs to intended beneficiaries and identification of positive and negative effects of the project in disadvantaged groups was limited.	4.5
11. Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the Achievement of Outcomes, as a result of the uptake, adoption and/or implementation of outputs by the intended beneficiaries? This may include behaviour changes at an individual or collective level. Consider how well the report presents: • a convincing and evidence-supported analysis of the uptake of outputs by intended beneficiaries • assessment of the nature, depth and scale of outcomes versus the project indicators and targets • discussion of the contribution, credible association and/or attribution of outcome level changes to the work of the project itself • any constraints to attributing effects to the projects' work • identification of positive or negative effects of the project on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> Most elements have been adequately covered in this section. The reconstructed TOC at Terminal Review should have been used as the basis for discussion. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> Despite the outcomes not having been reconstructed as per UNEP's glossary of results definition, evidence is presented in both this section and Availability of Outputs above to support the rating given.	4.5
12. Does the report present an integrated analysis, guided by the causal pathways represented by the TOC, of all evidence	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> There was no explicit discussion or evidence	4

¹⁰² 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.

¹⁰³ The Nature of External Context is not rated in this table because it is not consistently applicable across all projects. Some review reports will simply record that there was no unexpected unfavourable external factors, while others may have to describe critical external events.

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
relating to Likelihood of Impact? Consider how well the report presents: - an explanation of how causal pathways emerged and the resulting change processes - an explicit discussion of how drivers and assumptions played out - an explanation of roles played by key actors and change agents - identification of any unintended negative effects of the project, especially on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).	presented on how the causal pathways resulted in the change process, nor how drivers and assumptions played out nor an explanation of roles played by key actors and change agents, in this section. However, some aspects were discussed in Availability of Outputs and Achievement of Outcome sections above. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> To strengthen this section, the reviewer should have made cross references to paragraphs where these elements were covered.	
13. Does the report present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under Financial Management and include a completed 'financial management' table? Consider how well the report addresses the following: <i>adherence</i> to UNEP's financial policies and procedures <i>completeness</i> of financial information, including the actual project costs and actual co-financing used and explanation of any variances between planned and actual expenditures	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> Table 17 seems to be incomplete <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> Although the financial information table is presented as an annex, a summary of the available evidence should have been presented in this section to better support the ratings given.	4
14. Does the report present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under Efficiency? Consider how well the report presents: - cost-effective or time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe - implications of any delays and no cost extensions - discussion of making use, during project implementation, of/building on pre-existing institutions, partnerships and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. - the extent to which the management of the project minimised UNEP's environmental footprint.	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> All required elements have been sufficiently addressed. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> A balanced summary of the strengths and limitations of the implementing partner was presented	6
15. Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the project's Monitoring and Reporting? Consider how well the report addresses the following: - the quality of <i>monitoring of project implementation</i> (including use of monitoring data for adaptive management) - the quality of <i>project reporting</i> (e.g. PIMS and donor reports)	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> All required elements have been sufficiently addressed. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The summary could have been strengthened by discussing the availability of baseline data.	4.5
16. Does the report present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under Sustainability (i.e. the endurance of benefits achieved at outcome level)? Consider how well the report addresses the following: - socio-political sustainability - financial sustainability	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> All required elements have been sufficiently addressed. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u>	4.5

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
institutional sustainability	The summary of each of the aspects of socio-political and financial sustainability could have been improved by providing more insights and tying them in with the lessons learned and recommendations given as in the case of institutional sustainability.	
17. Does the report present a well-evidence analysis of the <i>Factors Affecting Performance</i>, either in this section or in cross-referenced sections? <i>These factors are not always discussed in stand-alone sections and may be integrated in the other performance criteria as appropriate. However, if not addressed substantively in this section, a cross reference must be given to where the topic is addressed, and that entry must be sufficient to justify the performance rating for these factors.</i> Consider how well the report addresses the following cross-cutting issues: - quality of project management and supervision¹⁰⁴ - 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	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> All required elements have been sufficiently addressed. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> A balanced summary of all the factors was presented	5.5
Section F: Conclusions, Lessons Learned and Recommendations	Assessment	
18. Do the <i>Conclusions</i> present a summative assessment of the evaluand as a whole, reflecting on prominent aspects of the project's performance? Consider how well the conclusions: - provide a compelling narrative and integrated assessment of project project's performance (i.e. achievements and limitations) - add deeper insights and analysis beyond the findings under each individual criterion - are derived from the synthesized analysis of evidence gathered during the review process - provide clear and succinct response to the key strategic questions - address the human rights and gender dimensions of the intervention explicitly (e.g. how these dimensions were considered, addressed or impacted on) - provide lessons that are rooted in real project experiences, describe the context from which they are derived, and do not duplicate recommendations	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> Most elements were adequately covered. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> There was no mention of key strategic questions which could have further enhanced the analysis and conclusions section and provided deeper insights and analysis of evidence gathered, including lessons learned and formulation of effective recommendations	5
19. Does the report present <i>Recommendations</i> 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 recommendations:	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> Most elements were adequately covered. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u>	5

¹⁰⁴ In some cases, 'project management and supervision' will refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments while in others, specifically for GEF funded projects, it will refer to the project management performance of the executing agency and the technical backstopping provided by UNEP. This includes providing the answers to the questions on Core Indicator Targets, stakeholder engagement, gender responsiveness, safeguards and knowledge management, required for the GEF portal.

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
- are clearly formulated and logically derived from the findings and/or conclusions - are feasible to implement within the timeframe and resources available (including local capacities) and specific in terms of who would do what and when - include at least one recommendation relating to strengthening the human rights and gender dimensions of UNEP interventions - represent a measurable performance target in order that the Evaluation Office can monitor and assess compliance with the recommendations. NOTES: (i) In cases where the recommendation is addressed to a third party, compliance can only be monitored and assessed where a contractual/legal agreement remains in place. Without such an agreement, the recommendation should be formulated to say that UNEP project staff should pass on the recommendation to the relevant third party in an effective or substantive manner. The effective transmission by UNEP of the recommendation will then be monitored for compliance. (ii) Where a new project phase is already under discussion or in preparation with the same third party, a recommendation can be made to address the issue in the next phase.	No recommendations were given on strengthening the human rights and gender dimensions of the intervention, despite it being discussed as weakness in the findings section.	
Section G: Report Structure and Presentation	Assessment	
20. Is the report <i>well-structured and complete</i>? Does it: - follow the Evaluation Office structure and formatting guidelines - include all required sections and annexes, as applicable - not exceed 50 pages in length from the Executive Summary to the end of the Conclusion Does the report present information clearly and appropriately? Is it written: - in clear and accessible language - largely free from grammar, spelling and punctuation errors - in an adequate and professional tone - with the use of visual aids, such as maps, graphs tables and photos	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The report covers all the necessary sections although there is a slight difference in the order of the structure at the beginning of the report (ie introduction and review methods are discussed before the grant). The report is 69 pages long, exceeding the 50-page recommendation. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The report is written clearly and free from grammar, spelling and punctuation errors. The tone is professional and use of visual aids have been appropriately used to clarify the narrative.	5.5
OVERALL REPORT QUALITY RATING		5

- 1) 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.

Rating the Report Quality Criteria

Rating (1-6)	Description
6	Provides all content with high quality.
5	Provides all content with minor weaknesses.
4	Provides most content with minor weaknesses.

3	Provides most content with significant weaknesses.
2	Omits substantive content with significant weaknesses.
1	Omits almost all content with major weaknesses.