

Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF Project
“Continuing Regional Support for the POPs Global
Monitoring Plan under the Stockholm Convention in the
Latin American and Caribbean Region”
(GEF ID 4881)
(2015-2023)



Evaluation Office of the United Nations Environment Programme

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Front cover: Air sampling with a passive air sampler and a polyurethane foam disk in Mexico during the first campaign of air monitoring in October 2017, under the UNEP/GEF, 'Continuing Regional Support for the POPs Global Monitoring Plan under the Stockholm Convention in the Latin American and Caribbean Region'

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The evaluation consultant hopes that the findings, conclusions, and recommendations will contribute to the formulation of the next phase and to the continuous improvement of similar projects in other countries and regions.

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About the Evaluation

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ABSTRACT: This report is a Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project, "Continuing Regional Support for the POPs Global Monitoring Plan under the Stockholm Convention in the Latin American and Caribbean Region (GEF ID 4881)", implemented between 2015 and 2023. The project's overall goals were to strengthen the capacity for implementation of the updated Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) Global Monitoring Plan (GMP) and to create conditions for sustainable monitoring of POPs in the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) Region. The evaluation sought to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency) and determine the sustainability of its results. The evaluation has two primary purposes: accountability and learning. Data collection methods included: in-person interviews and field observations in Argentina and Brazil, in-depth virtual interviews, and document reviews. Data analysis was based on applying triangulated data to assess performance against a reconstructed Theory of Change and its causal pathways.

With an overall performance rating of Moderately Satisfactory, the 4th point on a six-point scale, the main findings include: i) The project contributed to the continuation of monitoring of ambient air with passive air samplers and continued participation in the WHO breast milk survey, ii) The project demonstrated strong performance in effective delivery of expected Outputs that included collection and analysis of over 160 samples of core abiotic and biotic matrices and matrices of national interest from the 11 participating countries, and iii) Areas for improvement included a missing results framework at the time of project approval and subsequent weaknesses in the definition of the sequence between Intermediate Outcomes and higher-level results. The main recommendations to UNEP includes but are not limited to: i) establish formal and standing knowledge management and communication strategies for national GMP coordinators and experts, anchored by Regional Centres, to institutionalize peer support, technical exchange, and rapid problem-solving beyond the project's lifetime and ii) consider that the project design integrates links between POPs monitoring and policymaking at the national level to support the project's sustainability.

Sources of Funding by Country: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Barbados, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay

Source(s) of Funding by Institution Type:

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

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Field mission dates: 18 - 23 August 2025

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Evaluation Terms of Reference available, with this report, in WeDocs link

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AAS	Active air sampling/sampler
ARCAL	Regional Cooperation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean
BCCC-SCRC	Basel Convention Coordination Centre – Stockholm Convention Regional Centre
BRS	Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm Conventions
CETESB	Companhia Ambiental do Estado Sao Paulo
COP	Conference of Parties
CSIC	Spanish Council for Scientific Research
CVUA	Chemisches und Veterinäruntersuchungsamt (Freiburg)
CWU	GEF Chemicals & Waste Unit (DTIE Chemicals and Health Branch of UNEP)
DDT	Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane
DTIE	Industry and Economy Division of UNEP
EA	Executing Agency
EO	Evaluation Office
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GAPS	Global Atmospheric Passive Sampling Network
GC	Gas Chromatography
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GMP	Global Monitoring Plan
GRULAC	Group of Latin America and the Caribbean
HCH	Hexachlorocyclohexane
HBB	Hexabromobiphenyl
HBCD	Hexabromocyclododecane
HR	High Resolution
IA	Implementing Agency
ICA	Internal Cooperation Agreement
ILC	Inter-Laboratory Comparison
KRU	Knowledge & Risk Unit (DTIE Chemicals and Health Branch of UNEP)
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbeans
LAPAN	Latin American Passive Atmospheric Sampling Network
LATU	Uruguayan Technological Laboratory
LC	Liquid Chromatography
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MS	Mass Spectrometry
MTM	Man-Technology-Environment (Människa-Teknik-Miljö) Research Centre Örebro
MTR	Mid-Term Review
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NIP	National Implementation Plan
PAS	Passive air sampler
PBDE	Polybrominated diphenylether(s)
PCA	Project Cooperation Agreement

PCB	Polychlorinated biphenyl(s)
PCDD	Polychlorinated dibenzodioxins
PCDF	Polychlorinated dibenzofurans
PFAS	Perfluororoalkane substances
PFHxS	Perfluorohexanesulfonic acid
PFOA	Perfluorooctanoic acid
PFOS	Perfluorooctanesulfonic acid
PIF	Project Identification Form
PIR	Project Implementation Report
PMC	Project Management Cost
POPs	Persistent Organic Pollutants
PoW	Programme of Work
PRF	Project Results Framework
PSC	Project Steering Committee
PUF	Polyurethane foam
RECETOX	Research Centre for Toxic Compounds in the Environment
SC	Stockholm Convention
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SPE	Solid Phase Extraction
SSFA	Small Scale Funding Agreement
TE	Terminal Evaluation
ToC	Theory of Change
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UPLC	Ultra-Performance Liquid Chromatography
VU	Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
WHO	World Health Organization

Project Identification Table

Table 1: Project Identification Table

GEF ID/SMA ID:	GEF ID: 4881/ SMA ID: 127612		
Type of GEF Project:	Child: N	Global Coordinating Project:	N
	If yes, provide GEF Programme ID: N/A	Medium-Size Project or Full-Size Project:	FSP
UNEP Management Division/Branch/Unit):	UNEP/Industry and Economy Division (DTIE), Chemicals and Health Branch, GEF Chemicals & Waste Unit	Executing Agency:	Basel Convention Coordinating Centre-Stockholm Convention Regional Centre in Uruguay with support from UNEP/DTIE, Chemicals Branch, Knowledge & Risk Unit
Sources of Funding (Co-finance):	Countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Barbados, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay	Institution Name/Type: UNEP (UN Body), Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions (IGO), World Health Organization (WHO) (UN Body), Chemisches Untersuchungsamt (CVUA Freiburg) (Academic Institution), Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas (CSIC) Barcelona (Academic Institution)	
Relevant SDG(s):	SDG Goals: 3, 6, 12, 17 SDG Targets: 3.9., 6.3., 12.4., 17.6., 17.18		
MTS (at approval):	2014-2017		
POW Output(s) number/reference	POW Output: 522	POW Expected Accomplishment(s) number/reference	POW Expected Accomplishment: 5(b) (Direct Outcomes: 3.5, 3.10, 3.11, 3.13)
Sub-programme:	Chemicals and Pollution Action	Programme Coordination Project:	N/A
UNEP approval date:	27 April 2015	GEF approval date:	17 December 2014
GEF Operational Programme #:	GEF-5	GEF Strategic Priority:	CHEM-1
Focal Area(s):	Chemicals		
Expected start date:	2 June 2015	Actual start date:	2 June 2015
Planned completion date:	30 March 2020	Actual operational completion date:	30 June 2023
Planned project budget at approval:	GEF grant allocation: USD 3,636,000		
	Expected co-financing: USD 13,375,401		
	Cash: USD 2,065,585		
	In-kind: USD 11,309,816		
	Total planned budget: USD 17,011,401		
Actual expenditures reported (cash only):	GEF grant expenditures reported as of 30 June 2024: USD 3,477,636		
	Actual co-financing as of 30 June 2024: USD 253,414 (cash only)		
	Total actual expenditures reported as of 30 June 2024: USD 3,731,050		
No. of formal project revisions:	3 (no-cost extensions)	Date of last approved project revision:	25 May 2022

GEF ID/SMA ID:	GEF ID: 4881/ SMA ID: 127612		
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	4	Date of Last Steering Committee meeting:	4 April 2023
Mid-term Review/ Evaluation ¹ (required or not required):	UNEP requirement:	Y	Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (actual date): 31 December 2018
	GEF requirement:	N	
Terminal Evaluation (planned date):	30 June 2024	Terminal Evaluation (actual start date):	7 February 2025
Coverage - Country(ies):	Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Barbados, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay	Coverage - Region(s):	Latin American and Caribbean
Dates of previous project phases:	Phase I (2009-12): Supporting the Implementation of the GMP of POPs in Latin America and Caribbean States (GRULAC) (GEF ID 3778)	Status of future project phases:	PFD approved in June 2024 Name of Future Project Phase: Global Chemicals Monitoring Programme to support implementation of Stockholm and Minamata Conventions (GCMP) (GEF ID 11534)

¹ UNEP projects of four or more years duration require an MTR unless there is an exceptional circumstance. See the *Evaluation in the Project Cycle* section in the [Evaluation Office's operational manual](#). Donor requirements may vary and should be considered in conjunction with UNEP's requirements.

Executive Summary

Project background

1. The project, "Continuing Regional Support for the POPs Global Monitoring Plan under the Stockholm Convention in the Latin American and Caribbean Region" (GEF ID 4881) was implemented from June 2015 to June 2023 in 11 countries of the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region with USD 3,636,000 funding from Global Environment Facility (GEF) and USD 13,375,401 in planned co-finance from various project stakeholders and partners.

2. The objectives of the project were to strengthen capacity for implementation of the updated Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) Global Monitoring Plan (GMP) and to create the conditions for sustainable monitoring of POPs in Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) Region.

This evaluation

3. The Terminal Evaluation (TE) was undertaken at completion of the project to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP and its project partners.

4. Data collection methods included: field observations, in-depth interviews, and document reviews. Data analysis was based on applying triangulated data to assess performance against a reconstructed Theory of Change and its causal pathways.

Key Findings and Performance Ratings

Table 2: Summary of Project Ratings²³

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

5. The project, namely the 2nd phase of the Global Monitoring Plan (GMP2) LAC project, was formulated based on the results and institutional networks established under the

² The six-point scale is as follows: Highly Satisfactory (HS); Satisfactory (S); Moderately Satisfactory (MS); Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU); Unsatisfactory (U); Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). Sustainability and Likelihood of Impact are rated from Highly Likely (HL) down to Highly Unlikely (HU) and Nature of External Context is rated from Highly Favourable (HF) to Highly Unfavourable (HU). The ratings against each criterion are 'weighted' to derive the Overall Project Performance Rating. The greatest weight is placed on the achievement of outcomes, followed by dimensions of sustainability.

³ Detailed ratings, including ratings of evaluation sub-criteria, are elaborated in Table 25 under the '5.1. Conclusions' section.

previous phase in 2009-2012 (GMP1). The project successfully contributed to the continuation of monitoring of ambient air with passive air samplers and continued participation in the WHO breast milk survey. The main project limitations included a missing results framework at the time of project approval and subsequent weaknesses in the definition of the sequence between Intermediate Outcomes and higher-level results.

6. The project demonstrated strong performance in effective delivery of Outputs that included collection and analysis of over 160 samples of core abiotic and biotic matrices (ambient air, water, human milk) and matrices of national interest from the 11 participating countries, which contributed to about 60 percent of the available data on air and 75 percent of data on water in the LAC region for the Stockholm Convention Global Monitoring Plan from 2016 to 2019.

7. Two rounds of interlaboratory assessments were conducted during the project period, in 2016 - 2017 and 2018-2019, with almost 40 LAC laboratories registered, and 26 laboratories reported results in both rounds. The registered laboratories consisted of some of the project participating laboratories, plus some laboratories outside the GMP2 LAC project.

8. The project generated valuable data on the geographical distribution of POPs that were fed into the Global Data Warehouse, being used for the preparation of national reports to the Stockholm Convention and for compilation of the 3rd POPs Monitoring Report for the LAC region. All these contributed to the assessment of spatio-temporal changes in POPs distribution and thus to the evaluation of the effectiveness of the Stockholm Convention.

9. Despite the above successes, the cooperation with the existing global and regional POPs monitoring networks (GAPS, LAPAN, and ARCAL) was not strong enough and needs to be enhanced for improved collection of samples from the existing and new sampling posts. The communication channels with political decision-makers were also found to be weak. Although this was not the immediate objective of the project, more attention was required to enhance the science-to-policy interface.

10. Strategic Relevance was rated as Highly Satisfactory. The project was strongly aligned with the UNEP Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) (2014-2017) and Programme of Work (POW) (2014-2015) and with the Objectives of the GEF-5 Chemicals Focal Area and several SDG Goals. Quality of Project Design was rated as Moderately Satisfactory because the project was initially approved without a results framework, and the intervention logic lacked a definition of pathways from Outputs and Outcomes to higher-level results, such as Intermediate States and Impact.

11. Effectiveness was rated as Moderately Satisfactory. Despite the strong performance of the project on the development of Outputs and demonstration of improved national capacities for implementation of the updated POPs GMP, some conditions required for sustainability of POPs monitoring, namely sustainable financing, access to technical expertise, and advanced laboratory infrastructure, were not in place due to insufficient co-financing of externally funded POPs monitoring programmes.

12. Financial management was rated as Satisfactory. There were no issues with compliance with UNEP/GEF financial rules and regulations, but the available financial data were not sufficiently detailed in relation to the project Outputs. Efficiency was rated as Moderately Unsatisfactory due to the prolonged implementation period that required approval of three no-cost extensions as a result of delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

13. Sustainability was rated Moderately Unlikely. The main risks to the sustainability of the benefits brought by the project include i) Lack of routine POPs analyses in the project laboratories, ii) insufficient co-financing of the project laboratories to ensure maintenance of analytical equipment and procurement of analytical standards, and iii) limited access to technical capacities for analyses of POPs that are available in the region.

14. Areas that would benefit/would have benefited from further attention include the quality of project design, particularly the development of a robust Theory of Change at project inception, as well as soliciting more in-cash co-financing from the participating countries.

Summary Responses to Key Strategic Questions

15. The TE responds to the set of 6 key strategic questions of interest to UNEP.

16. The TE found ample evidence of positive outcomes, regarding Key Strategic Question one, 'To what extent did the project incorporate lessons learned from the previous phase of the project and any recommendations from its own Mid Term Review into the project design/implementation?', Key Strategic Question two, 'To what extent did the project promote cross learning/knowledge sharing with three other GMP regional projects? How did the project benefit from having three other regional projects?', and Key Strategic Question five, 'To what extent have data from the project been included in the data warehouse and is there evidence of this data being used in subsequent effectiveness evaluation report'.

17. On the other hand, there was limited evidence to substantiate the project's achievements, regarding Key Strategic Question three, 'How did the project link scientific monitoring data with decision making at various levels?' and Key Strategic Question four, 'How were the national-level monitoring mechanisms integrated or coordinated with POPs monitoring under GMP?'. Only in a few project countries were these pilot-tested and/or established. There is still room for improvement to strengthen these areas.

18. The project also yielded mixed results regarding Key Strategic Question six, 'To what extent have inter-lab assessments contributed to laboratories from developing countries improving their quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) practices and ultimately improving the quality of analysis?'. Although there was some improvement in the quality of analysis in the laboratories, gaps were still observed.

Conclusions Summary

19. The strongest aspects of the project were the continuation of the monitoring of ambient air with passive air samplers and continued participation in the WHO breast milk survey. Comparative weaknesses belonged to insufficient formulation of the project results framework and inadequate definition of pathways from the project Outputs and Outcomes to higher-level results (Intermediate States and long-term Impact). Overall rating of project performance is **Moderately Satisfactory**.

Lessons Learned

20. **Lesson 1:** Quality of results from POPs analysis in national laboratories could be enhanced in cases where a routine for analysis of POPs is established through repeated measurements.

21. **Lesson 2:** Guidelines for effective presentation and utilisation of POPs monitoring data are essential for informing policy decisions and evaluating POPs control measures.

22. **Lesson 3:** Smooth operation of equipment, in particular detectors, and availability of analytical standards are necessary conditions for participation of national laboratories in interlaboratory assessments.
23. **Lesson 4:** Participating national laboratories should establish a business plan for routine POPs analyses, including training of their technicians through analyses of internal laboratory standards.
24. **Lesson 5:** Co-financing by the countries should include a sizeable portion of in-cash contributions (ideally 50% or more of total co-financing contributions).
25. **Lesson 6:** For the production of more robust sets of data for the effectiveness evaluation of the Stockholm Convention, it is desirable to establish internally funded national POPs monitoring programmes in line with the approach pilot-tested by the GMP2 LAC project and harmonise them with externally funded POPs monitoring activities, such as the GMP3 project.

Recommendations

26. **Recommendation 1:** Recommendation for the future phase of the project to establish formal and standing knowledge management and communication strategies for national GMP coordinators and experts, anchored by Regional Centres, to institutionalize peer support, technical exchange, and rapid problem-solving beyond the project's lifetime.
27. **Recommendation 2:** Recommendation for the future phase of the project to initiate the formulation of a coherent regional strategy and collaboration, especially on POPs monitoring, which considers the current capacities, networks, and interests of the member countries.
28. **Recommendation 3:** Recommendation for the future phase of the project to consider that the project design integrates links between POPs monitoring and policymaking at the national level to support the project's sustainability.
29. **Recommendation 4:** Recommendation for the future phase of the project to develop a clear communication strategy to strengthen the dissemination of results to a wider audience outside the scientific sphere, and to broaden awareness, visibility, and support for POPs-related policies and monitoring.
30. **Recommendation 5:** Recommendation for the future phase of the project to plan to conduct detailed baseline studies in each participating region, including risk analysis and mitigation strategies, in cooperation with national governments and institutions at the design stage.
31. **Recommendation 6:** Recommendation for the future phase of the project to develop a set of quality indicators for robust results measurement at the design stage (or at the inception stage if the design is not found adequate).
32. **Recommendation 7:** Recommendation for the future phase of the project to provide necessary support to the countries/partners for a better understanding of co-financing and its reporting.
33. **Recommendation 8:** Recommendation for the future phase of the project to develop and promote specific gender mainstreaming project metrics based on analysis of gender equality and women's empowerment issues in the respective regions and countries.

1 THE PROJECT

1.1 Context

1.1.1 Intervention context

34. Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) are a group of chemicals, including those widely used in agricultural and industrial practices and those unintentionally produced and released from many anthropogenic activities around the globe. POPs are characterized by persistence – the ability to resist degradation in various matrices, such as air, water, sediments, and organisms for months and even decades; bio-accumulation - the ability to accumulate in living tissues at levels higher than those in the surrounding environment; harmfulness – the toxicity to human and/or wildlife to bring adverse effects to human health and the environment, and potential for long range transport – the potential to travel long distances from the source of release through various matrices, such as air, water, and migratory species. Specific health effects of POPs include cancer, allergies, and hypersensitivity, damage to the central and peripheral nervous systems, reproductive disorders, and disruption of the immune system. Some POPs are also considered to be endocrine disruptors, which can damage the reproductive and immune systems of the exposed individuals as well as their offspring by altering hormonal systems.

35. Because of the international scope of manufacture, use, and unintentional releases, as well as the long-distance movement, the Stockholm Convention on POPs was established in May 2001 to "protect human health and the environment from persistent organic pollutants by reducing or eliminating releases to the environment".

36. Article 16 of the Stockholm Convention indicates that the effectiveness of the Convention shall be periodically evaluated. The Effectiveness Evaluation includes a Global Monitoring Plan (GMP), which monitors the presence of POPs in the environment and in humans. Such monitoring and subsequent assessment should be undertaken at regional level through the generation of comparable monitoring data on the presence of the chemicals listed in Annexes A, B, and C of the Convention, as well as their regional and global environmental transport.

37. The GMP stands as a vital cornerstone in evaluating the effectiveness of the Stockholm Convention. It establishes a framework to systematically collect comparable monitoring data concerning the presence of POPs across all regions. This concerted effort aims to identify changes in POPs concentrations over time and to elucidate their regional and global environmental transport.

38. A GEF medium-sized project entitled "Supporting the Implementation of the Global Monitoring Plan of POPs in the Latin American and Caribbean Region" (GEF ID 3778) (GMP1) was implemented by UNEP from 2009 to 2012, in parallel to three other regional and sub-regional projects. GMP1 provided support to 9 LAC countries⁴ for the generation of comparable, high-quality monitoring data on the presence of chemicals listed in Annexes A, B and C of the Stockholm Convention, as well as on their regional and global environmental transport.

⁴ Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru, and Uruguay.

1.1.2 Institutional context

39. The GEF GMP phase 2 project (GMP2 LAC), "Continuing Regional Support for the POPs Global Monitoring Plan under the Stockholm Convention in the Latin American and Caribbean Region" (GEF ID 4881), was implemented in 11 countries, namely Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Barbados, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru, and Uruguay. It provided further assistance to the countries covered in the first phase with two additional countries, namely Argentina and Colombia. The project was designed with the objective to strengthen the capacity of beneficiary countries for implementation of the revised POPs GMP, generate sufficient high-quality data on the presence and transport of the legacy as well as newly listed POPs, and create conditions for sustainability of the POPs monitoring networks in the LAC region.

40. The GMP2 LAC project was approved by the GEF CEO on 17 December 2014 for a duration of 48 months with the GEF grant of USD 3,636,000 and co-financing commitments by several national and international partners at the level of USD 13,375,401, making the total project budget at inception USD 17,011,401. The implementation started on 9 September 2015⁵ and the planned completion date was 30 September 2019.

41. The project contributed to Output 522 of the Expected Accomplishment 5(b) of the UNEP POW for 2014-2015 that reads "Thematic Assessments of environmental transport and fate of chemicals, and monitoring of trends in chemicals production, handling, movement, use, release and disposal, catalyse coordinated action on chemicals management in the UN system".

42. The project was subject to the Mid-Term Review (MTR) that was conducted in 2018 to assess progress in the project implementation from the project start until mid-2018.

1.2 Results Framework

43. Annex A of the Project Document presents the results in a tabular form. It consists of five outputs contributing towards the single Project Outcome. The five outputs are listed in Table 3 below.

44. However, the narrative section of the Project Document, 'Expected Scenario and Outcomes', divides the project into five components and presents verbatim the same five Outputs as in the tabular results framework, and defines one Outcome per project component, i.e. total of five outcomes for the project instead of the single outcome in Annex A.

⁵ Date of the first disbursement

Table 3: Summary of Project's latest Approved Results Framework (Project Document - Annex A)

	Results Statement
Project objective	To strengthen the capacity for implementation of the updated POPs Global Monitoring Plan (GMP) and to create the conditions for sustainable monitoring of POPs in the Latin American and Caribbean Region
Impact (defined as 'Overall Goal')	Protect human health and environment from toxic exposure to POPs
Intermediate state(s)	Not listed
Project outcome(s)	National capacities for implementing the updated POPs Global Monitoring Plan (GMP) are strengthened, high quality data on the presence and transport of POPs are generated, and conditions for sustainable monitoring of POPs are in place in the Latin American and Caribbean region
Outputs	•Output 1: Technical and administrative support provided for the implementation of the project and organization of process established in the LAC region; •Output 2: Training reports and sectoral reports on POPs analysis undertaken on two abiotic core matrices (i.e., air and water) in the LAC region; •Output 3: Training reports and sectoral reports on POPs analysis undertaken on one biotic core matrix (6th round of human milk survey) in the LAC region; •Output 4: Assessment report of existing analytical capacities prepared and report on POPs analysis undertaken in samples of national priority (other than core matrices) in the LAC region; •Output 5: Assessment reports contributing to regional report for the GMP undertaken, and a roadmap for sustainable POPs monitoring developed for the LAC region.

1.3 Project Implementation Structure and Partners

45. The project was implemented by the UNEP Industry and Economy Division (DTIE), Chemicals and Health Branch, GEF Chemicals & Waste Unit, with targeted technical assistance from the UNEP Knowledge and Risk Unit (KRU). As the Implementing Agency (IA), UNEP was responsible for the overall project supervision, overseeing the project progress through the monitoring and evaluation of project activities and progress reports. It was also responsible for reporting the project implementation progress to GEF and taking part in the project Steering Committee.

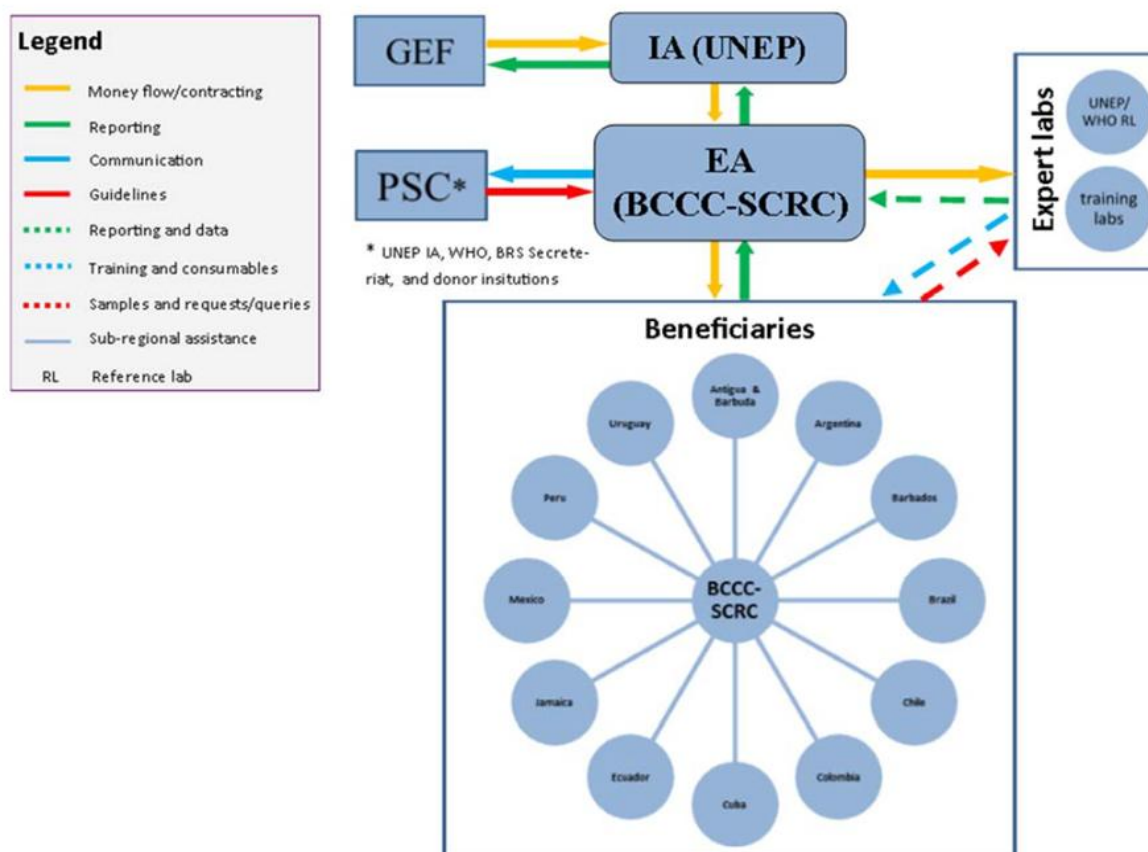
46. The Basel Convention Coordinating Centre and Stockholm Convention Regional Centre (BCCC-SCRC) for the Latin American and the Caribbean Region served as the Executing Agency (EA) with responsibility for day-to-day management of the project, provision of technical support to all participating countries, and for the establishment of the necessary managerial and technical teams, as needed, for execution of the project.

47. Both the IA and EA were expected to closely liaise with the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions (the BRS Secretariat) and other co-financing partners, including the World Health Organization (WHO), which is implementing a global mothers' milk survey. Furthermore, the project design envisaged close cooperation with the Spanish Council for Scientific Research (CSIC-IDAEA) in Barcelona (Spain), the State Institute for Chemical and Veterinary Analysis of Food (CVUA) in Freiburg (Germany), and the MTM Research Centre School of Science and Technology, Örebro University in Örebro (Sweden).

48. The Project Steering Committee (PSC) was established to provide oversight and guidance for the implementation of the project. The PSC was composed of the implementing and executing agencies, the BRS Secretariat, as well as donor institutions such as the WHO and expert laboratories.

49. The implementation structure for the GMp2 LAC project is shown in Figure 1 below. More detailed information on the project partners and their respective roles is provided in 'Section 1.4 Stakeholders'.

Figure 1: Organigram of the project with key project stakeholders⁶



1.4 Stakeholders

50. UNEP/DTIE, as the Implementing Agency, the BCCC-SCRC as the Executing Agency, and the Ministries of Environment (for Output 2) and Ministries of Health (for Output 3) from the participating countries were core project stakeholders. Direct beneficiaries of the project were selected laboratories in the participating countries. These stakeholders typically have both high power and high interest in the project (Type A stakeholders according to UNEP terminology).

51. The Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions (BRS) provided support for training and other capacity-building activities to assist countries in implementing the Global Monitoring Plan. The BRS worked with relevant organizations involved in implementation activities for the compilation of regional data on POPs exposure and

⁶ Request for CEO Endorsement, p.27

accumulation that contributed as inputs to reporting on effectiveness evaluations under Article 16 of the Stockholm Convention (Type B stakeholder).

52. Expert laboratories, namely MTM-Research Centre School of Science and Technology, Örebro University (MTM-Örebro), Department of Environment and Health, Vrije Universiteit (VU Amsterdam), Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Barcelona (CSIC), and Chemisches und Veterinäruntersuchungsamt Freiburg (CVUA), did not have direct roles in the project implementation (low power), but their collaboration was required for the achievement of the planned results and thus have a high interest in the project (Type C stakeholders).

53. Indirect beneficiaries were the general public who received information on their exposure to POPs and on actual contamination of POPs at the top of the food chain. International organizations, including the International Standards Organisation (ISO), the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC), and the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC). These stakeholders were affected by the project but did not have important stakes in it (Type D stakeholders).

54. Classification of the project stakeholders into groups according to relevant common characteristics is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Stakeholder Classification

Stakeholders	Explain the power they hold over the project results/implementation and the level of interest	Did they participate in the project design, and how	Roles and responsibilities in project implementation	Changes in their behaviour expected through implementation of the project
Type A: <i>High power / high interest = Key player</i>				
UNEP – DTIE, Chemicals and Health Branch, GEF Chemicals & Waste Unit	Implementing Agency	Yes, led the project formulation	Described in Section 1.3.	No change
BCCC-SCRC	Executing Agency	Yes, consulted	Described in Section 1.3.	No change
Ministries of Environment	Beneficiaries for Component 2	Yes, consulted	Input to Article 16 of the SC on reporting data	Increased capacity for data sharing
Ministries of Health	Beneficiaries for Component 3	Yes, consulted	Input to Article 16 of the SC on reporting data	Increased capacity for data sharing
Regional Organization Group (ROG)	Users of data generated under the project	Yes, consulted	Input to Article 16 of the SC on reporting data	Increased capacity for data sharing
Type B: <i>High power/ low interest over the project = Meet their needs</i>				
BRS Secretariat	Interest in data collection for GMP reports to COP	No	Advisory role and knowledge sharing	Improved reporting to COP
Type C: <i>Low power/ high interest over the project = Show consideration</i>				
Laboratories in the 11 project countries	Direct beneficiaries	Yes, for countries that participated in previous phase	Maintenance of the air and water sampling networks	Increased capacity for POPs analyses

Reference laboratory (CVUA)	Providers of technical assistance	No	Serve as reference for specific analyses of POPs in human milk	No change
Expert laboratories (MTM-Örebro, VU-Amsterdam CSIC Barcelona)	Providers of laboratory services	No	Organisation of trainings and inter-laboratory assessment; Analysis of samples	No change
Type D: <i>Low power /low interest over the project= Least important</i>				
General public (including vulnerable groups and women)	Indirect beneficiaries	No	Consumers of information on import of and exposure to POPs	Improved knowledge
ISO, ILAC, IUPAC	Not expected to participate in the implementation	No	Advisory role for adherence to international standards	No change

1.5 Changes in Design during Implementation

55. There were no formal revisions of the project scope and technical parameters. In addition to the Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with BCCC-SCRC, an Internal Agreement was signed between two units within the UNEP DTIE Chemicals and Health Branch, namely the GEF Chemicals & Waste Unit (CWU) and the Knowledge & Risk Unit (KRU), in 2019, for which 'Amendment 2' of the PCA (see Table 5) was signed to facilitate the transfer of the budget from BCCC-SCRC to KRU for the implementation of activities under Component 5. This arrangement was required for the purpose of coherent implementation of Component 5 across all four GMP-2 regional projects, which prompted the signature of a new Internal Agreement with KRU. In total, three no-cost extensions of the project's duration were approved, which prolonged the project implementation period until 30 June 2023. There were three no-cost extensions of the PCA with BCCC-SCRC. In parallel with the 3rd no-cost extension of PCA ('PCA - Amendment 3' in Table 5), the Internal Agreement with KRU was also extended up to the same renewed expiry date (30 June 2023). A list of the legal instruments for the project implementation is provided in Table 5.

Table 5: Legal Instruments for Implementation of the Project

Type	UNEP Approval	Expiration	Justification	Remark
Original PCA	2 June 2015	31 March 2020	COVID-19	Original PCA with BCCC-SCRC
PCA - Amendment 1	23 June 2020	30 June 2021	COVID-19	No-cost extension
PCA - Amendment 2	26 July 2021	30 June 2022	COVID-19, transfer of budget for Component 5 to KRU	No-cost extension with budget revision
PCA - Amendment 3	16 May 2022	30 June 2023	COVID-19, completion of national reports and the road map for sustainability	No-cost extension with budget and workplan revision
Original Internal Agreement with KRU	14 May 2019	30 June 2021	COVID-19	Original Internal Agreement with KRU
New Internal Agreement with KRU	29 September 2021	30 June 2022	COVID-19	New Internal Agreement with KRU
KRU Agreement - Amendment 1	25 May 2022	30 June 2023	COVID-19, completion of national reports and the road map for sustainability	No-cost extension (in parallel with 'PCA - Amendment 3' above, with the same renewed expiry date, 30 June 2023)

1.6 Project Financing

56. This project was financed through a GEF grant for USD 3,636,000. Co-financing was anticipated from various stakeholders to the value of USD 2,065,585 (cash) and USD 11,309,816 (in-kind). The actual co-financing mobilized was USD 5,000,844 in total, which consisted of USD 253,414 (cash) and USD 4,747,430 (in-kind). Table 6 shows details.

Table 6: Project Co-finance⁷

Co-financing (Type/Source)	UNEP own Financing (US\$1,000)		Government (US\$1,000)		Other* (US\$1,000)		Total (US\$1,000)		Total Disbursed (US\$1,000)
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	
- Grants	-	-	2,040	253	25	-	2,065	253	253
- Loans	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
- Credits	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
- Equity investments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
- In-kind support	200	-	8,385	4,748	2,725	-	11,310	4,748	4,748
- Other (*)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Totals	200		10,425	5,001	2,750	-	13,375	5,001	5,001

* This refers to contributions mobilized for the project from other multilateral agencies, bilateral development cooperation agencies, NGOs, the private sector, and beneficiaries.

⁷ Co-financing data were reported only by the Executing Agency and the countries. The co-financing data from the IA, the expert laboratories, and other project partners were reported only cumulatively for the 4 regional projects and thus did not specify contributions to the GMP-2 LAC project.

2 EVALUATION METHODS

2.1 UNEP's Evaluation Approach

57. This evaluation adopted a participatory approach, consulting with the project team members, partners, and beneficiaries at several stages throughout the process. The evaluation began with the analysis (and reconstruction) of the project's Theory of Change. Consultations were held during the evaluation inception phase to arrive at a nuanced understanding of how the project intended to drive change and what contributing conditions ('assumptions' and 'drivers') would need to be in place to support such change. The reconstructed Theory of Change, supported by a graphic representation and narrative discussion of the causal pathways, has been used throughout the evaluation process.

58. The evaluation was undertaken at operational completion of the project to assess performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency) and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned. The main target audiences for the evaluation findings are UNEP, the Governments of the 11 beneficiary countries of the project, and GEF.

59. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy and the UNEP Programme and Project Management Manual, the Terminal Evaluation (TE) assessed a set of commonly applied evaluation in nine categories that include: (A) Strategic Relevance; (B) Quality of Project Design; (C) Nature of External Context; (D) Effectiveness, which comprises assessments of the availability of outputs, achievement of outcomes and likelihood of impact; (E) Financial Management; (F) Efficiency; (G) Monitoring and Reporting; (H) Sustainability; and (I) Factors Affecting Project Performance.

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

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

62. In addition to the above criteria, the TE also addressed the following six strategic questions (SQ) that were defined in the TE Terms of Reference:

- SQ1: To what extent did the project incorporate lessons learned from the previous phase of the project and any recommendations from its own Mid Term Review into the project design/implementation?
- SQ2: To what extent did the project promote cross learning/knowledge sharing with three other GMP regional projects? How did the project benefit from having three other regional projects?

- SQ3: How did the project link scientific monitoring data with decision making at various levels?
- SQ4: How were the national-level monitoring mechanisms integrated or coordinated with POPs monitoring under GMP?
- SQ5: To what extent have data from the project been included in the data warehouse and is there evidence of this data being used in subsequent effectiveness evaluation report?
- SQ6: To what extent have inter-lab assessments contributed to laboratories from developing countries improving their quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) practices and ultimately improving the quality of analysis?

63. Evaluation findings related to the 5 topics of interest to the GEF are summarised in **Annex X**. The intended action/results on the 5 topics were described in the GEF CEO Endorsement and Approval documents. The 5 topics are: i) performance against GEF's Core Indicator Targets; ii) engagement of stakeholders; iii) gender-responsive measures and gender result areas; iv) implementation of management measures taken against the Safeguards Plan and v) challenges and outcomes regarding the project's completed Knowledge Management Approach.

2.2 Data Collection

2.2.1 Primary Data Sources

64. As part of the Inception Report, the TE Framework (**Annex II**) was constructed in a matrix format. It listed the key evaluation questions as per the ToR of the TE and identified the main sources of data to address the evaluation questions through selected data collection tools and instruments.

65. Given the highly technical nature of the GMP2 project, the collection of first-hand information about the project implementation was conducted through interviews with a representative selection of project stakeholders who were selected to embrace the regional focus of the project. The interviews were designed to solicit responses to a set of predetermined open-ended questions aiming to obtain in-depth information about the key informants' experiences in the project implementation, their attitudes and preferences, as well as their opinions on the actual achievement of the planned results.

66. The format of the interviews was semi-structured to allow the respondents to express their perception of the main issues related to the project implementation. The Evaluation Framework was used as a checklist to raise additional and/or more specific questions that were tailored to the specific roles of various respondents in the project.

67. In addition to interviews of selected national stakeholders from the participating countries, the Evaluator of the GMP2 LAC project also participated jointly with evaluators of the other three regional GMP2 projects in online interviews with a selection of project partners that were organised by the UNEP Evaluation Manager. These interviews included representatives of expert laboratories, ROG, and partner organizations.

68. Based on the consultation with the UNEP Evaluation Manager, it was decided to conduct a field mission to 2 project participating countries to make a more detailed on-site assessment of the beneficiary laboratories in these selected countries and to conduct face-to-face consultations and individual/group discussions with selected project stakeholders, using semi-structured interviews that allowed respondents to express their perception of the main issues of the project implementation.

69. Based on a thorough assessment of the participation of the LAC countries in this project, Argentina and Brazil were selected for the field visit. The selection was justified on grounds of the reports from the two most recent inter-calibration studies and sectoral monitoring reports that indicated the existence of strong technical capacities for POPs sampling and analyses in the two countries. An additional factor justifying the selection was the fact that Brazil was the only country in the LAC region where the project supported the procurement and installation of an active air sampling device. The purpose of the mission was thus to visit the participating laboratories and interview the relevant officials of the governments of these two countries. The mission itinerary is included in **Annex V**, and the country status reports for Argentina and Brazil are provided as **Annex VI**.

70. No specific sampling strategies were employed in this evaluation. Almost all key stakeholders that were identified during the inception phase were reached by email, and all those who responded to interview requests were interviewed. A few stakeholders did not respond to interview requests, despite continuous follow-up, which made it impossible to conduct interviews with them. The information on the interviewed stakeholders is summarized in Table 7.

Table 7: Evaluation Respondents and Field Visits

Stakeholders - Individuals			A. Total number involved (M/F)	B. Number contacted (M/F)	Sample size (% B/A) ⁸	C. Total number responded Total (M/F)	Response rate (% C/B) ⁹
Project Team	Project Team (with management responsibilities e.g. Project Management Unit)	Implementing agency	6 (6/0)	6 (6/0)	100%	4 (4/0)	67%
		Executing agency(ies)	2 (0/2)	2 (0/2)	100%	2 (0/2)	100%
Beneficiaries	Direct Beneficiaries: (e.g. duty bearers, gatekeepers, training participants, etc.)		32 (11/21)	32 (11/21)	100%	23 (4/19)	72%
	Indirect Beneficiaries: (e.g. household members, civil society representatives, group members, etc.)						
Stakeholders - Entities			A. Total number involved	B. Number contacted	Sample size (% B/A) ¹⁰	C. Total number responded	Response rate (% C/B) ¹¹
Partners	Project implementing/ executing partners (receiving project funds)		N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
	Project collaborating/ contributing partners ¹² (not receiving project fund)		9 (7/2)	6 (4/2)	100%	6 (4/2)	100%
Field Visits		Region / country / locality ¹³	A. Total number sites	B. Number sites visited	Sample Size (%B/A) ¹⁴		
		Latin America and the Caribbean	11	2	18%		

⁸ Percentage of people involved in the project who were contacted.

⁹ Percentage of people contacted who responded.

¹⁰ Percentage of people involved in the project who were contacted.

¹¹ Percentage of people contacted who responded.

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

¹³ In case of a global project, the unit of analysis is 'region'. In case of a regional or multi-country project, the unit of analysis is 'country'. In case of a single country project, the unit of analysis is 'locality', which could refer to a city, town, village, etc.

¹⁴ Percentage of total number project sites in each region, country or locality that were visited.

2.2.2 Strategies for Inclusivity

71. The GMP2 LAC project was of a scientific nature and did not directly impact human rights, gender equality, and inclusion of marginalised/vulnerable groups. Therefore, no special approach for inclusivity was necessary for the TE. Nevertheless, the interviews were conducted, ensuring to obtain views on the project from stakeholders with divergent affiliations, including regional centres of the Basel and Stockholm Conventions, national governments, national academic institutions, accredited expert laboratories, as well as coordinators of regional POPs monitoring networks in the LAC region. As documented in the list of interviewed stakeholders (**Annex III**), about two-thirds of the interviewed persons were females representing across the entire hierarchy of functions and positions, including heads of the regional Basel and Stockholm Convention centres, focal points in national ministries mandated with POPs monitoring, senior managers of participating institutes, heads of laboratory departments, and laboratory technicians. Out of the total 35 people who were interviewed for the TE, there were 23 women, which was 65.7%.

2.2.3 Secondary Data Sources

72. Secondary data sources included reports from trainings organised in the project countries, annual Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) for GEF Fiscal Years 2018-2023, the 3rd Regional Monitoring Report for LAC region (2021), national reports submitted by the project countries to the final project workshop in June 2023, and the Regional Report for the GMP2 LAC project (2024). Additionally, a series of reports was produced across all 4 regional GMP projects, including reports from the 3rd and 4th round of UNEP/GEF interlaboratory assessments, sectoral reports on results of analyses of the core abiotic and biotic matrices, a report on capacity building for POPs monitoring, a fact review report from the GMP2 projects, and a synthesis report on road to sustainable POPs monitoring.

73. As an initial step and basis for preparation of the TE Inception Report, the Evaluation Consultant conducted a desk review of essential documents, especially those covering the project design and implementation progress. The Project Identification Form (PIF) and the approved Project Document (ProDoc) represented core documents in terms of understanding the basics, based on which the project was designed and approved for GEF funding. This work was complemented by the review of other essential information sources, such as the Report of the Inception Workshop and the annual GEF Project Implementation Reports (PIRs). Further document review included minutes of the Project Steering Committee meetings, technical documentation related to project outputs (e.g. reports of the inter-calibration studies, reports on analyses of various sample matrices, and experts' reports on training and capacity building activities), the Mid-Term Review Report (2018), sectoral reports on results POPs monitoring in abiotic and biotic core and non-core matrices in the LAC region, the summary LAC regional POPs monitoring report (2023). On the financial side, the reviewed documentation included the initial budget at project approval, budget revision documents, initial co-financing letters, and a final co-financing report. **Annex IV** lists all documents that were reviewed.

2.3 Data Analysis

74. The TE used a mixed-method approach to compile quantitative and qualitative data through various data collection methods, ensure triangulation and validation of the data collected from different sources for credibility of findings, and produce evidence-based conclusions and actionable recommendations. Data analysis covered the information gathered from both primary sources (stakeholder interviews, project document outputs,

project progress reports, etc.) and secondary sources (literature review, nationally published data, relevant evaluation reports, etc.).

75. Triangulation of the collected data, i.e., comparison of information from different sources, such as documentation and interviews, or interviews on the same subject with different stakeholders, was used to substantiate the collected data and check the reliability of evidence. This approach served to verify the information obtained in the document review phase and to get some missing data and information on the opinions of project stakeholders and beneficiaries for the correct interpretation.

2.4 Limitations and Mitigation Strategies

76. One of the planned data collection tools was an online survey questionnaire for the national coordinators from the 11 participating countries. As online surveys usually provide a low participation rate, it was decided, in consultation with the UNEP Evaluation Office, to replace the survey with online interviews of the national coordinators from the nine countries that could not be visited.

77. Since the GMP2 LAC project was operationally completed in 2023, it was not certain whether all national coordinators would be reachable through their contact addresses provided by the Implementing Agency. In consultation with the project team at the BCCC-SCRC, the Evaluator verified the list of national coordinators and their contact addresses. Despite this effort, responses from a few countries were not received.

78. In cases of no response, the Evaluator contacted the respective Stockholm Convention Operational Focal Points through their e-mail addresses listed on the SC website with a request for assistance. This approach was successful for almost all participating countries in Latin America, but did not yield any tangible results for the three countries in the Caribbean. In order to mitigate this situation, secondary data for the three countries were collected from the available documentation, including sectoral reports on results from abiotic and biotic sample matrices and the LAC regional POPs monitoring report.

79. For the few national coordinators who did not speak English, it was difficult to arrange simultaneous translation for the online meetings. To mitigate this, the evaluator sent the interview questions to them in Spanish and collected their responses using web translators.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

80. The TE was conducted in line with the principles outlined in the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations¹⁵. In particular, the TE ensured i) informed consent and voluntary participation in the interviews, ii) confidentiality of the collected responses, and iii) cultural sensitivity and non-discrimination.

81. The evaluator declared no prior involvement in the GMP2 LAC project design or in its implementation and asserted full adherence to the professional standards of independence and impartiality.

¹⁵ UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, 2020

3 THEORY OF CHANGE AT EVALUATION

82. At the time of the GMP2 LAC project design, preparation of the Theory of Change (ToC) was not common in the formulation of GEF projects. Therefore, the Project Document does not include a Theory of Change (ToC)¹⁶. The logic of the project intervention is based on the Project Results Framework and two related diagrams, namely the Problem Tree and the Objective Tree, respectively, contained in Annex B: Situation Analysis.

83. The project ToC was reconstructed at the inception phase of the TE for ensuring compliance with UNEP's requirements for preparatory work for Terminal Evaluations. The reconstructed ToC consists of the following:

- Revised and reformulated Outputs and Outcomes to ensure consistency with the UNEP terminology and use of ToC;
- Formulated Intermediate States as changes beyond the Outcomes that are required to contribute towards the achievement of the intended project Impact;
- Established causal pathways that capture the logic of the intervention and explain the contribution of various elements of the results chain to achievement of the project goal;

84. The project results framework (PRF), in its tabular form, presented in Annex A of the Project Document, contains five Outputs that are expected to lead to one Outcome. At the Output and Outcome level, the PRF includes a description of the baseline, definition of performance indicators and their related end-of-project targets, suggested sources of performance verification, as well as assumptions and risks.

85. Although the original PRF structure appears to be relatively simple, it is based on a single Outcome that is relatively long in definition. Apart from the congregation of various levels of results, it creates ambiguity as to which Outputs contribute to which part of the Outcome. Therefore, the reconstructed ToC includes a split of the original single composite Outcome into two separate Outcomes as indicated in Table 6 above.

86. Delivery of Output 1 enhances the knowledge base of the participating laboratories on the laboratory analytical methods and practices and contributes thus to improved national capacities required for effective implementation of national, sub-regional, and regional POPs monitoring programmes in the LAC region (Outcome 1). National implementation agreements are important parts of the technical and administrative support and a key assumption for the delivery of Output 1 (Assumption 1). Without them being endorsed and signed by the participating countries, the achievement of Outcome 1 would not be possible.

87. Outputs 2 - 4, when delivered, produce new data and information for the national POPs inventories and facilitate that improve understanding of relevant national decision-makers about the presence of the 23 mandatory and some new POPs in common abiotic and biotic matrices (water, air, mother milk) as well as matrices of national interest to the countries in the region. Collectively, the three Outputs contribute to the achievement of Outcome 1 in terms of strengthened national capacities for implementing the updated POPs Global Monitoring Plan (GMP). Such data also creates the basis for future updates of the relevant part of the National Implementing Plans (NIP) under the Stockholm Convention. Key assumptions for the achievement of Outcome 2 are effective provision of technical and administrative support by

¹⁶ Guidance on ToC was provided in Theory of Change Primer, cdc GEF/STAP/C.57/Inf.04 in 2019, and since then, inclusion of ToC has become common for projects from GEF-6 onwards.

the national project stakeholders (Assumption 2), as well as mobilisation of financial support from national budgets for co-financing of the project activities (Assumption 3).

88. Delivery of Output 5 helps to identify the necessary conditions for the sustainability of national POPs monitoring networks (Outcome 2) and contributes to establishing procedures and mechanisms for compliance with Article 16 of the Convention through continued generation of information for the effectiveness evaluation that benefits the Parties and the Convention. Key assumptions in this regard are commitment and readiness of the participating laboratories for participation in interlaboratory assessments (Assumption 4) and retention of the laboratory staff trained under the project (Assumption 5), including attention to gender balance (Assumption 7). The Intermediate States are achieved on the assumption that decision-makers understand the POPs monitoring data and use it for the development of policies and legislative frameworks on POPs management (Assumption 6). Achievement of impact is enhanced through effective implementation and enforcement of adopted policies and legislative frameworks with concurrent promotion of human rights and equality (Assumptions 7 and 8).

89. Several drivers/enablers to this causal pathway have been identified. The feasibility of this approach relies on the ownership of the project by the project stakeholders. The ownership is achieved by the advocacy work of the implementing partners and a sufficient level of information of national decision-makers on the benefits of POPs monitoring (Driver 1 and Driver 2, respectively). Moreover, the positive early results of interlaboratory assessments foster commitment of the participating laboratories to further capacity building for the production of quality results from POPs monitoring campaigns (Driver 3).

90. Combined together, the strengthened national capacities for POPs monitoring (Outcome 1) and effective sustainable monitoring of POPs in the Latin American region (Outcome 2) lead to Intermediate State 1 in terms of enhanced decision-making and policy development regarding POPs at the regional and country levels. This pathway is enabled by effective POPs monitoring and the prospect of timely reporting to the Stockholm Convention (Driver 4).

91. The Project Document does not explicitly define the expected Impact of the project either. In terms of the UNEP terminology, impacts are long-lasting results arising, directly or indirectly, from a project. As the PRF in Annex A of the Project Document stipulates the Overall Goal of the project "Protect human health and environment from toxic exposure to POPs", it can be considered as an Impact statement for the project. However, the formulation using the word "protect" is not realistic, as even the successful delivery of all results along the project results chain would not fully protect human health and the environment. The TE has therefore reformulated the Impact statement as reduced risks to human health and the environment (Table 8).

92. There was no need for further revision of the ToC during the data collection phase of the TE. Table 8 summarises the elements of the reconstructed ToC and the entire reconstructed ToC is shown in Figure 2.

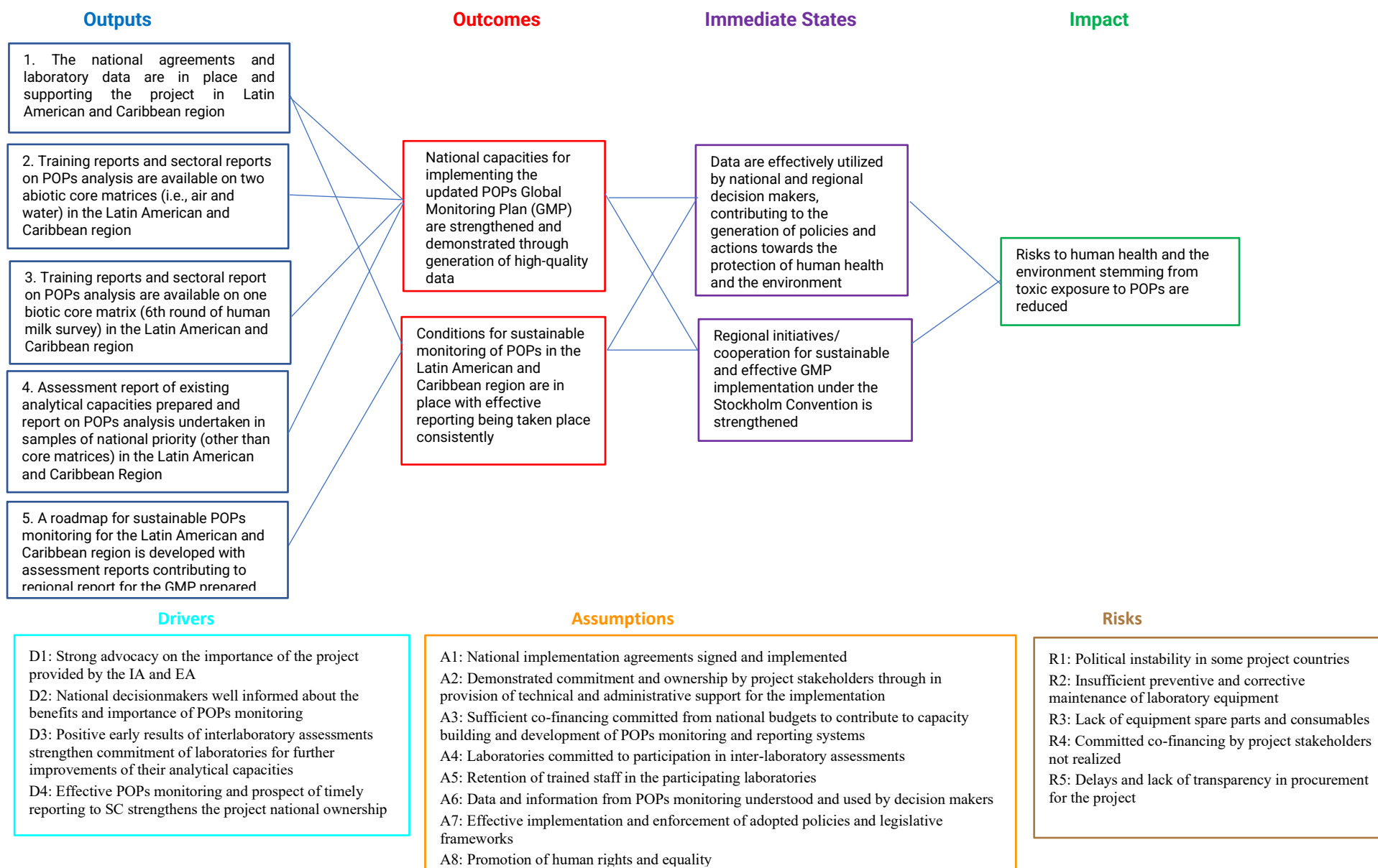
Table 8: Justification for Reformulation of Results Statements

Formulation in original project document(s)	Formulation for Reconstructed ToC at Evaluation Inception (RTOC)	Justification for Reformulation
(LONG LASTING) IMPACT		
<i>(Overall Goal)</i> Protect human health and environment from toxic exposure to POPs	Risks to human health and the environment stemming from toxic exposure to POPs are reduced	'Protect' in the original Impact statement sounds like a little strong word that may not be realistic in terms of the linkage between the Impact and the project. 'Risks...reduced' would be more realistic and clearer about the project's long-term contribution to human health and environmental protection (as well as a causal pathway from the Intermediate States to Impact).
INTERMEDIATE STATES		
N/A (not explicitly defined in the ProDoc)	1. Data are effectively utilized by national and regional decision makers, contributing to the generation of policies and actions towards the protection of human health and the environment. 2. Regional initiatives/ cooperation for sustainable and effective GMP implementation under the Stockholm Convention is strengthened	These two Intermediate States would be helpful to clarify the causal pathway from Outcomes to Impact. The achievement of reformulated Outcome 1 leads to Intermediate State 1. The fulfilment of reformulated Outcome 2 leads to Intermediate State 2.
PROJECT OUTCOMES		
National capacities for implementing the updated POPs Global Monitoring Plan (GMP) are strengthened, high quality data on the presence and transport of POPs are generated, and conditions for sustainable monitoring of POPs are in place in the Latin American and Caribbean Region	1. National capacities for implementing the updated POPs Global Monitoring Plan (GMP) are strengthened and demonstrated 2. Conditions for sustainable monitoring of POPs in the Latin American and Caribbean region are in place with effective reporting being taken place consistently	The original Outcome covers 3 different elements that cannot be easily merged. Splitting this Outcome statement into three separate parts clarifies the respective causal pathways. The 1st and 3rd parts of the original Outcome statement are more at the Output level (i.e., governed by phrases like 'in place'). Hence, these are reframed as Outcome statements (and referred to as Outcome 1 and Outcome 2, respectively). The 2nd part of the original Outcome ('high quality data on the presence and transport of POPs are generated') is removed because this is Output rather than Outcome. This 2nd part of the original Outcome is represented by the reformulated Output 2&3 (see Output 2 and 3 below). The achievement of reformulated Output 1&2&3&4 leads to the reformulated Outcome 1. The fulfilment of the reformulated Output 1&5 (mainly 5) leads to the reformulated Outcome 2.
<i>(Outcome Indicators)</i> 1. # of countries capable to undertake sampling in the core and other matrices for POPs analysis 2. # of countries with reported data on up to 23 POPs 3. # of regional roadmap for sustainable POPs monitoring published.	No change	N/A NOTE: These 3 Outcome indicators will need to be supported by other triangulated data sources. These 3 indicators are not sufficient conditions for the achievement of the reformulated Outcomes, but are necessary conditions for it.

Formulation in original project document(s)	Formulation for Reconstructed ToC at Evaluation Inception (RTOC)	Justification for Reformulation
OUTPUTS		
1. Technical and administrative support provided for the implementation of the project and organization of process established in the Latin American and Caribbean Region	1. The national agreements and laboratory data are in place and supporting the project in the Latin American and Caribbean region	The original Output 1 statement is more at the activity level. Hence, it is reframed as an Output statement, clarifying its linkage with two Output indicators below.
(Output 1 Indicators) • # of national project implementation agreements signed • # of laboratories submitted information to UNEP for updating information in the databank	No change	N/A
2. Training reports and sectoral reports on POPs analysis undertaken on two abiotic core matrices (i.e., air and water) in the Latin American and Caribbean Region	2. Training reports and sectoral reports on POPs analysis are available on two abiotic core matrices (i.e., air and water) in the Latin American and Caribbean region	The original Output 2 statement is more at the activity level. Hence, it is reframed as an Output statement, using the word 'available'. Please note that this reformulated Output 2 represents a part of the original Outcome statement (i.e., 'high quality data on the presence and transport of POPs are generated'). Outputs 2 & 3 are quite similar but might have performed differently. Hence, we keep Outputs 2 & 3 as they are.
(Output 2 Indicators) • # of countries that carried out sampling in abiotic matrices • # of training reports for analysis of abiotic matrices • # of sectoral reports developed in abiotic matrices	No change	N/A
3. Training reports and sectoral report on POPs analysis undertaken on one biotic core matrix (6th round of human milk survey) in the Latin American and Caribbean Region	3. Training reports and sectoral report on POPs analysis are available on one biotic core matrix (6th round of human milk survey) in the Latin American and Caribbean region	The original Output 3 statement is more at the activity level. Hence, it is reframed as an Output statement, using the word 'available'. Please note that this reformulated Output 3 represents a part of the original Outcome statement (i.e., 'high quality data on the presence and transport of POPs are generated'). Outputs 2 & 3 are quite similar but might have performed differently. Hence, we keep Outputs 2 & 3 as they are.
(Output 3 Indicators) • # of countries that carried out sampling in biotic matrices • # of training report for analysis of biotic matrices	No change	N/A

Formulation in original project document(s)	Formulation for Reconstructed ToC at Evaluation Inception (RTOC)	Justification for Reformulation
# of sectoral reports developed in biotic matrices		
4. Assessment report of existing analytical capacities prepared and report on POPs analysis undertaken in samples of national priority (other than core matrices) in the Latin American and Caribbean Region	No change	N/A
<i>(Output 4 Indicators)</i> # of rounds for interlaboratory assessments held # of countries having high quality data reported for samples of major national interest	No change	N/A
5. Assessment reports contributing to regional report for the GMP undertaken, and a roadmap for sustainable POPs monitoring developed for the Latin American and Caribbean Region	5. A roadmap for sustainable POPs monitoring for the Latin American and Caribbean region is developed with assessment reports contributing to regional report for the GMP prepared	The original Output 5 statement is rephrased as the Output statement, allowing for better alignment with the reformulated Outcome 2 (<i>'Conditions for sustainable monitoring of POPs in the GRULAC region are in place with effective monitoring being taken place consistently'</i>).
<i>(Output 5 Indicators)</i> # of assessments on POPs presence in the region and its capacity to analyse them # of regional roadmap for sustainable POPs monitoring in the region, with strategy for implementation, milestones and timetable in a regional roadmap # of countries providing inputs to develop conclusions and lessons learned on GMP phase 2, as well as recommendations and future plans	No change	N/A
GEF CORE INDICATOR		
N/A (not explicitly defined in the ProDoc)	GEF Core Indicator 11: People benefiting from GEF-financed investments (disaggregated by sex)	The GEF Core Indicator 11 has been added following the GEF requirement. However, the assessment of progress towards this GEF Core Indicator will not be factored into the rating for the 'Effectiveness' criteria. Definition: This indicator captures the total number of direct beneficiaries, disaggregated by sex.

Figure 2: Theory of Change at Evaluation



4 EVALUATION FINDINGS

4.1 Strategic Relevance

4.1.1 Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities

Table 9: Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW), and Strategic Priorities

UNEP strategic document	Alignment with UNEP's mandate and thematic priorities	Level of alignment
MTS (2014-2017)	EA2: Countries, including major groups and stakeholders, make increasing use of the scientific and technical knowledge and tools needed to implement sound chemicals management and the related multilateral environmental agreements; EA3: Countries, including major groups and stakeholders, make increasing use of the scientific and technical knowledge and tools needed to implement sound waste management and the related multilateral environmental agreements.	Full
POW (2014-2015)	EA5(b): Countries, including Major Groups and stakeholders, increasingly use the scientific and technical knowledge and tools needed to implement sound chemicals management and the related MEAs Output 522: Thematic Assessments of environmental transport and fate of chemicals, and monitoring of trends in chemicals production, handling, movement, use, release and disposal, catalyse coordinated action on chemicals management in the UN system	Full

93. The project was directly linked to the UNEP MTS (2014-2017) and POW (2014-2015) in terms of addressing challenges related to air, soil, and water pollution, as well as exposure to harmful chemicals controlled by the Stockholm Convention. Specifically, the project contributed to the capacity building of POPs laboratories and the generation of measured concentrations of POPs in the environment and humans through systematic monitoring and reporting under Article 15 of the Convention.

94. The GMP2 LAC project was designed to contribute to the implementation of the UNEP MTS for the years 2014-2017 and its Subprogramme on Chemicals and Pollution Action, which had the Objective to promote a transition among countries to the sound management of chemicals and waste, with a view to minimizing impacts on the environment and human health.

95. The project was placed under the UNEP's POW for 2014-2015 under Expected Accomplishment 5B of the Subprogramme on Chemicals and Pollution Action. It was built on the main activities of the UNEP Chemicals and Health Branch, directed at the development and testing of global guidelines for the development of POPs inventories, capacity building of POPs laboratories, and POPs monitoring.

4.1.2 Alignment to GEF/Donor Strategic Priorities

Table 10: Alignment to GEF/Donor Strategic Priorities

Donor or partner strategic document	Alignment with donor or partner strategic priorities	Level of alignment
GEF-5 Programming Document GEF/R.5/31/CRP.1	Objective 1: Phase out POPs and reduce POPs releases Outcome 1.5 Country capacity built to effectively phase out and reduce releases of POPs.	Full

96. The project was directly linked to the strategic priorities of the GEF, which was the principal financial mechanism for implementation of the Stockholm Convention. In its decision SC-4/31, the SC Conference of Parties (CoP) requested the financial mechanism of the Convention to provide sufficient financial support for capacity building to sustain the POPs monitoring initiatives that provided data for the 1st Global Monitoring Report¹⁷. COP decision SC-5/23 repeated this request. The project was therefore relevant to the GEF strategic priorities, as it supported capacity enhancement for the collection of data on the indicators stipulated in the SC effectiveness evaluation framework.

97. The project was aligned with Objective 1 of the GEF-5 Focal Area Chemicals, namely with Objective 1.5 aimed at capacity building for the reduction of POPs releases.

98. The project also contributed to the GEF Core Indicator, 'People benefiting from GEF-financed investments (disaggregated by sex)'.

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

Table 11: Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities

Strategic document or agreement	Alignment with global, regional, sub-regional, national environmental priorities	Level of Alignment
National Implementation Plans (NIP) Regional cooperation	All participating countries have submitted their NIPs and identified regional cooperation as a mechanism for addressing the existing capacity gaps	Full
UN SDGs	SDG #3: Good health and well-being; SDG #5: Gender equality; SDG #8: Decent work and economic growth; SDG #9: Industry, innovation, and infrastructure; SDG #11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, and SDG #12: Responsible consumption and production.	Full

99. The countries participating in this project are all Parties to the Stockholm Convention and have developed and submitted their National Implementation Plans (NIPs) and have indicated development of POPs monitoring capacity as a component of their NIPs on capacity building, reporting, and effectiveness evaluation. At the same time, all participating countries indicated difficulties for setting up a national POPs monitoring programme due to a lack of trained personnel, insufficient laboratory infrastructure, and a shortage of funds for POPs sampling and analyses.

100. Regional cooperation was considered a suitable approach for addressing the above capacity gaps. The regional report from the GMP phase 1 highlighted the importance of the GMP1 for the LAC region and provided recommendations for further improvements. Specifically, the participating countries of the GMP1 final workshop in Barcelona (in March 2012) expressed the strong demand for further improvement of the capacities in the region through the implementation of a new project. Therefore, the project was relevant to the regional and national priorities of the participating countries as it helped them overcome these difficulties and participate fully in the current GMP programme, including the development of capacities for monitoring of the newly added POPs.

¹⁷ UNEP/POPS/COP.4/33

101. The project also contributed directly or indirectly to several UN Sustainable Development Goals listed in Table 11.

4.1.4 Complementarity with Existing Interventions/ Coherence

Table 12: Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence

Other initiatives by UNEP or other organisations	Complementarity (including collaboration, coordination and overlap or duplication)	Level of Alignment
Global Atmospheric Passive Sampling network (GAPS)	Production of data from monitoring Pops in ambient air	Full
Latin American Passive Atmospheric Sampling Network (LAPAN)	Production of data from monitoring Pops in ambient air	Full

102. The project was also associated with two existing programmes at the regional level. With support of UNEP, the Global Atmospheric Passive Sampling network (GAPS) implemented a special initiative, and in 2014-2016 it produced data on emerging pollutants, candidate and new POPs in eight countries of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC) region. The Latin American Passive Atmospheric Sampling Network (LAPAN) aimed to collect air samples for assessment of local and global sources of these pollutants. The data collected from LAPAN in 2010 - 2013 and 2015-2017 were included in the Second and Third Monitoring Reports of the GRULAC Region, respectively. However, the TE observed insufficient cooperation of the project with the GAPS and LAPAN networks.

Findings Statements on Strategic Relevance and Complementarity

103. The project played a key role in the generation of monitoring data for 23 mandatory POPs and newly added POPs. Its relevance to the national and regional priorities of the LAC was reflected in the recommendations from the evaluation of the previous phase project (GMP1) and provisions of NIPs that identified the need for continued support for the evaluation of the effectiveness of the Stockholm Convention.

104. The relevance of the project to GEF was confirmed through decisions of the SC COP, requesting continued support for gathering POPs monitoring data. Relevance to UNEP was reflected through the project's linkages to the relevant MTS and POW that called for the use of scientific and technical knowledge for assessments of environmental transport and fate of chemicals, and implementation of sound chemicals management, according to obligations under the Stockholm Convention.

Rating for Strategic Relevance: Highly Satisfactory

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

Rating for Alignment to GEF Strategic Priorities: Highly Satisfactory

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

Rating for Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence: Satisfactory

4.2 Quality of Project Design

Table 13: Summary of Quality of Project Design Assessment Ratings

	SECTION	SELECT RATING*	SCORE (1-6)	WEIGHTING	TOTAL (Rating x Weighting/10)
A	Operating Context	Moderately Satisfactory	4	0.4	0.16
B	Project Preparation	Moderately Unsatisfactory	3	1.2	0.36
C	Strategic Relevance	Highly Satisfactory	6	0.8	0.48
D	Intended Results and Causality	Moderately Unsatisfactory	3	1.6	0.48
E	Logical Framework and Monitoring	Moderately Satisfactory	4.5	0.8	0.36
F	Governance and Supervision Arrangements	Satisfactory	5	0.4	0.2
G	Partnerships	Satisfactory	5	0.8	0.4
H	Learning, Communication and Outreach	Moderately Satisfactory	4.5	0.4	0.18
I	Financial Planning / Budgeting	Satisfactory	4.5	0.4	0.18
J	Efficiency	Moderately Unsatisfactory	4	0.8	0.32
K	Risk identification and Social Safeguards	Moderately Satisfactory	4.5	0.8	0.36
L	Sustainability / Replication and Catalytic Effects	Moderately Satisfactory	4	1.2	0.48
M	Identified Project Design Weaknesses/Gaps	Satisfactory	5	0.4	0.2
			TOTAL SCORE (Sum Totals)		4.16

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

105. The main strength of the project design comes from the fact that this is a follow-up project that was built on use of the institutions and networks established in the previous phases of the project. Selection of the BCCC-SCRC hosted by the Uruguayan Technological Laboratory (LATU) as the Executing Agency is another project asset. Since LATU is one of the beneficiary laboratories of the project, it has detailed information on issues and challenges for monitoring of POPs in the LAC region.

106. The principal weakness affecting the overall rating for project design quality is related to the fact that the project results framework was developed after the project approval and the Project Document has insufficient description of causal pathways between the project Outputs and higher order results and does not define Intermediate States and Impact.

107. Scores of several sub-criteria in Table 13, including *Project Preparation*, *Intended Results and Causality*, *Learning, Communication and Outreach*, *Efficiency*, *Risk identification and Social Safeguards*, *Sustainability / Replication and Catalytic Effects*, and *Identified Project Design Weaknesses/Gaps* have been changed from the inception report. This is because a set of additional evidence was collected during the data collection phase of the evaluation and triangulated with other evidence that was initially gathered through document review during the inception phase. Some additional evidence was specific to the LAC region and countries.

As a result of this comprehensive analysis, a few sub-scores mentioned above have moved either upward or downward from the inception phase.

Rating for Project Design: Moderately Satisfactory

4.3 Nature of the External Context

108. The COVID-19 pandemic was undoubtedly the biggest challenge to the project implementation. It caused lockdown in all project countries and complicated shipment of samples to expert laboratories, due to cancellation of flights, delays in analyses conducted in national and expert laboratories, and shifting of laboratories' training in three countries (Chile, Ecuador and Peru) into an online modality. The composite effect on the time lost due to the pandemic necessitated three projects' no-cost extensions that prolonged the project implementation period to almost double the planned period.

109. There were no other major external conditions, such as natural disasters, political turbulence, or economic factors, that affected the project implementation.

Rating for Nature of the External Context: Favourable

4.4 Effectiveness

4.4.1 Availability of Outputs

Table 14: Availability of Outputs

Outputs	Output Indicators (Baseline)	EOP target ¹⁸	Status of delivery at TE	Sources of Information/Evidence
Output 1: The national agreements and laboratory data are in place and supporting the project in the Latin American and Caribbean region Fully delivered	# of national project implementation agreements signed (Baseline: 0)	12	All 11 countries signed national project implementation agreements (Brazil and Chile signed the agreement but without the inclusion of breast milk sampling)	Project reports/PIRs Interviews with BCCC-SCRC project team
	# of laboratories submitted information to UNEP for updating information in the databank (Baseline: 0)	8	All 11 participating laboratories submitted the required information by answering a survey on training needs	Field visit and interviews with stakeholders
Output 2: Training reports and sectoral reports on POPs analysis are available on two abiotic core matrices (i.e., air and water) in the Latin American and Caribbean region Fully delivered	# of countries that carried out sampling in abiotic matrices (Baseline: 0)	10	11 countries completed sampling for POPs in ambient air 5 countries completed sampling for POPs in water	Project reports/PIRs Training reports Interviews with BCCC-SCRC project team
	# of training reports for analysis of abiotic matrices (Baseline: 0)	8	Training for sampling and analysis of abiotic matrices (air and water) was conducted in 10 participating laboratories	Field visit and interviews with stakeholders
	# of sectoral reports developed in abiotic matrices (Baseline: 0)	2	Sectoral report: Results of Air Monitoring on POPs Sectoral report: Results of Water Monitoring on POPs	Sectoral reports on results of monitoring in air and water
Output 3: Training reports and sectoral reports on POPs analysis are available on one biotic core matrix (6th round of human milk survey) in the Latin American and Caribbean region Fully delivered	# of countries that carried out sampling in biotic matrices (Baseline: 0)	10	9 countries that included completed sampling for POPs on breast milk. 2 countries did not include breast milk sampling in the signed implementation agreements.	Project reports/PIRs Training reports Interviews with BCCC-SCRC project team
	# of training report for analysis of biotic matrices (Baseline: 0)	8	Training for sampling and analysis of abiotic matrices (air and water) was conducted in 10 participating laboratories	Field visit and interviews with stakeholders
	# of sectoral reports developed in biotic matrices (Baseline: 0)	1	Sectoral report: Results of the 2016-2019 Human Milk Survey	Sectoral report on results of monitoring in human milk

¹⁸ End of Project Target

Outputs	Output Indicators (Baseline)	EOP target ¹⁸	Status of delivery at TE	Sources of Information/Evidence
Output 4: Assessment report of existing analytical capacities prepared and report on POPs analysis undertaken in samples of national priority (other than core matrices) in the Latin American and Caribbean region Fully delivered	# of rounds for interlaboratory assessments held (Baseline: 0)	2	2 interlaboratory assessments were organized (3 rd round in 2016-2017 and 4 th round in 2018-2019)	Project reports/PIRs Interviews with BCCC-SCRC project team
	# of countries having high quality data reported for samples of major national interest (Baseline: 0)	8	10 countries collected and submitted samples of national interest, including dairy, egg, fish, meat, sediment, soil, and others.	Field visit and interviews with stakeholders Reports from 3 rd and 4 th Interlaboratory assessments
Output 5: A roadmap for sustainable POPs monitoring for the Latin American and Caribbean region is developed with assessment reports contributing to regional report for the GMP prepared Fully delivered	# of assessments on POPs presence in the region and its capacity to analyse them (Baseline: 0)	2	Regional report on POPs monitoring and capacity assessment in LAC region (2 assessments of i) POPs presence and of ii) capacity for monitoring integrated into a single report	Project reports/PIRs Interviews with BCCC-SCRC project team Regional report on POPs monitoring and capacity assessment
	# of regional roadmap for sustainable POPs monitoring in the region, with strategy for implementation, milestones and timetable in a regional roadmap (Baseline: 0)	1	Synthesis report on Road Map for Securing Conditions for Sustainable POPs Monitoring	Synthesis report on road map for sustainable POPs monitoring
	# of countries providing inputs to develop conclusions and lessons learned on GMP phase 2, as well as recommendations and future plans (Baseline: 0)	11	All 11 countries provided inputs to the regional and global roadmap to sustainable POPs monitoring.	Project reports/PIRs Interviews with BCCC-SCRC project team Country reports

Output 1

110. All 11 countries signed national project implementation agreements with the BCCC-SCRC. Sampling for biotic matrices (breast milk analysis) was part of the national implementation agreements in 9 countries but was not included in the respective national implementation agreements in Brazil and Chile. At the project inception, a survey was sent to the participating laboratories to indicate training needs. All 11 laboratories submitted the required information.

Output 2

111. A one-week training on the analysis of core matrices (air, water, and breast milk) was planned for all 11 participating national laboratories. Physical (face-to-face) training was organized in 7 countries in 2017-2019. In 3 countries, the training was virtual due to COVID-19 travel restrictions. The training for Mexico could not be organised as the laboratory was being relocated.

112. The data on training is summarized in Table 15.

Table 15: Summary of Trainings in the LAC region

Country	Date of training
Antigua and Barbuda	March 2019
Argentina	October 2019
Barbados	May 2018
Brazil	February 2018
Chile	January 2021
Colombia	December 2017
Ecuador	January 2021
Jamaica	January 2018
Mexico	N.A.
Peru	November 2020
Uruguay	April 2018

113. In addition to the above planned training, the participating countries requested a training on techniques for the analysis of complex POPs in plastic matrices. The face-to-face training for 11 project participants (one trainee per country) was organized at the CSIC-Barcelona on May 15-19, 2023.

114. Sampling for abiotic matrices (air and water) was conducted using standard operational procedures (SOP) developed by UNEP that were made available in English and Spanish language versions¹⁹. For the sampling of ambient air, two SOP documents were developed, namely for the use of both passive samplers (PAS)²⁰ and active samplers²¹.

115. All 11 GMP2 LAC project beneficiary countries participated in the air monitoring with passive air samplers. The sampling campaigns were organized in 10 countries in 2017-2018,

¹⁹ <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/27637>

²⁰ <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/21742>

²¹ <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/27634>

except Peru, which started in May 2018 and continued until May 2020. Location of the air-sampling sites is summarized in Table 16.

Table 16: Location of Air Monitoring Sites

Country	Location	Altitude (m)	Latitude (decimal)	Longitude (decimal)
Antigua and Barbuda	Parroquia de Saint Peter, Antigua y Barbuda	43	17.0770	-61.7602
Argentina	INTI. Colectora Norte de, Av. Gral. Paz 5445, B1650 San Martín, Buenos Aires, Argentina	24	-34.5075	-58.5149
Barbados	Caribbean Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology, Barbados	153	13.1489	-59.6247
Brazil	CETESB. Av. Prof. Frederico Hermann Jr., 345 - São Paulo - SP	820	-23.5535	-46.67275
Chile	Tomé, Región Bío, Chile (Tome pueblo costero a 23km de distancia de Concepción)	171	-36.6633	-72.9636
Colombia	Universidad de Antioquia. Cl. 62 #52-59, Medellín, Antioquia, Colombia	1479	6.26	-75.5677
Ecuador	José Joaquín Olmedo & Juan José Flores, Quito 170401, Ecuador	2742	-0.419	-78.5423
Jamaica	25 Dominica Dr, Kingston, Jamaica	89	18.007	-76.7913
Mexico	Loma Dorada, 81217 Los Mochis, México (proximo a la Uniiversidad de Occidente)	19	25.8144	-108.962
Peru	R1, Comas 15316, Lima, Perú	149	-11.9124	-77.0553
Uruguay	Facultad de Agronomía, Av. Garzon 780, Montevideo, Uruguay	43	-34.837	-56.2224

116. Sampling for air monitoring was performed using passive air samplers that were equipped with polyurethane foam (PUF) disks as simple and cost-effective tools for the measurement of atmospheric concentrations of POPs. The sampling strategy was based on pairs of PAS exposed at each sampling site, each of which was equipped with one pre-cleaned PUF disk to capture a specified group of POPs. Per site, a maximum of 12 PAS were set up. PUF disks from odd-numbered PAS were shipped for analysis at the expert laboratories, while PUF disks from even-numbered PAS were saved for analysis in national laboratories, if such capacity existed.

117. National coordinators from the participating countries sent the PUFs for analysis to expert laboratories assigned for specific POPs groups, as shown in Table 17.

Table 17: Assignment of Expert Laboratories for Analysis of Air Samples

Laboratory	POPs group
E&H Vrije Universiteit (VU) Amsterdam	HBCD isomers
Man-Technology-Environment (MTM) Örebro University	PFOS, PFOA, PFHxS
Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC) Barcelona	Organochlorine pesticides (OCPs), indicator PCB (PCB6), HCB, PeCBz, PBDE, PCDD/PCDF, dl-PCB (dl-POPs)

118. For the presentation of results of the analyses, POPs were combined into the groups as shown in Table 18.

Table 18: List of POPs analysed in Air-monitoring Samples

POPs Group	POP Name	Compounds Analysed
Chlorinated POPs (Cl-POPs)	Drins*	aldrin, dieldrin, endrin
	DDT	o,p'-DDT; p,p'-DDT; o,p'-DDD; p,p'-DDD; o,p'
	chlordane	cis-, trans-chlordane; cis, trans-nonachlor, oxychlordane
	heptachlor	heptachlor, heptachlorepoxi
	endosulfan	α-, β-endosulfan; and endosulfan sulphate
	toxaphene	P26, P50, P62
	HCHs*	a-HCH, b-HCH, lindane (g-HCH)
	PCB6	PCB 28, PCB 52, PCB 101, PCB 138, PCB 153, PCB 180
	Short-chain chlorinated paraffins (SCCPs)	
	mirex, chlordecone, HCB, PeCBz, HCBd	single compounds
Brominated POPs (Br-POPs)	PBDE**	PBDE 47, PBDE 99, PBDE 153, PBDE 154, PBDE 175; Optional: PBDE 17, PBDE 28, PBDE 100
	HBCD	a-HBCD, b-HBCD, g-HBCD
	HBB	PBB 153
	deca-BDE	PBDE 209
Dioxin-like POPs (dl-POPs)	PCDD/PCDF***	7 PCDD and 10 PCDF congeners
	PCB****	4 non-ortho- and 8 mono-ortho-chlorinated PCB
Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFASs)	Perfluorooctane sulfonic acid and its derivatives (PFOS)	L- and br-PFOS precursor compounds: FOSA, NMeFOSA, NEtFOSA, NMeFOSE, NEtFOSE
	Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), Perfluorohexanesulfonic acid (PFHxS)	L-PFOA, L-PFHxS

119. Analysis of air samples adopted generic protocols for the analysis of POPs that had been developed in the previous GEF project. Chlorinated and brominated POPs were analysed, using GC/MS instrumentation whereby dl-POPs were determined with high resolution mass spectrometers (HRMS). PFAS were analysed using liquid chromatographs (LC) equipped with ultra-performance LC columns (UPLC) coupled to tandem mass spectrometers (MS) referred to as UPLC/MSMS.

120. The total number of samples analysed was 104 for chlorinated POPs, 82 for brominated POPs, 101 for fluorinated POPs, and 53 for dioxin-like POPs. The results were discussed in the LAC regional assessment report²².

121. Following the recommendation in the GMP guideline, one site in Brazil was selected to host an active air sampler (AAS). The latter was installed in February 2018 at Companhia Ambiental do Estado São Paulo (CETESB), in São Paulo.

²² [Continuing Regional Support for the POPs Global Monitoring Plan under the Stockholm Convention in the Latin American and Caribbean Region](#)

122. The CSIC, in collaboration with the BCCC-SCRC, developed a video that summarized the standard operating procedure (SOP) on the management of the AAS. As the procurement of the AAS was initially not included in the project, the procurement decision was taken at the end of the 2nd passive air sampling campaign. The analysis could not be performed by the national laboratory as the head of the procured AAS was designed for PUFs too big to fit the size of the Soxhlet extractor used in the CETESB laboratory. Therefore, CETESB could not analyse the samples from exposures in October 2018 – February 2019 and sent them to the reference laboratory. However, the latter produced only very few results due to deterioration of PUFs or loss of sample extracts during clean-up.

123. Five countries from the LAC region participated in the sampling of surface water for analysis of PFAS. A guidance document was developed on the analysis of PFAS, recommending active sampling, i.e., punctual at a defined integrative location, often at the mouth of large rivers or at estuaries. Time-integrative sampling, i.e., using passive samplers, was not recommended.

124. Details of the sampling locations are listed in Table 19.

Table 19: Geographical Location for Samples of Water

Country	Location	Latitude (decimal)	Longitude (decimal)
Argentina	Rio de la Plata	-34.705	-58.21433
Brazil	Amazon River (Location 1, year 2017)	-3.15008333	-58.487111
	São Vicente channel (Location 2, year 2018)	-23.9356666	-46.3911667
Ecuador	Babahoyo River	-2.185972	-79.867778
Jamaica	Hunts Bay River, Causeway Bridge	17.983439	-76.828574
Mexico	Ohuira Bay	25.6569333	-109.035725

125. Surface water samples were collected by participating local laboratories or institutions. To ensure the integrity of the samples and to minimize contamination, each country received nine 1-L high-density polyethylene (HDPE) bottles to have eight samples from each participating country, plus one blank. According to the sampling protocol, sampling occurred four times per year. Samples were taken at a depth of about 1 m from either the mouth of a large river, an estuary, or bay in each country.

126. Each of the five countries listed in Table 19 provided eight samples over two years (2017-2018). In addition, Antigua & Barbuda, Jamaica, and Uruguay submitted two samples per each as part of their national sampling efforts. Therefore, a total of 46 water samples were collected from the LAC region and shipped to Örebro University in Sweden for analysis for PFAS.

127. The analysis was conducted following a generic protocol for the analysis of PFAS developed by UNEP. The Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) used in the GMP2 project recommended PFAS to be analysed using the ultra-performance liquid chromatography with tandem mass spectrometry (UPLC/MSMS) after solid-phase extraction (SPE). The UPLC part provided high-resolution separation with speed and efficiency, while the tandem MS (MS/MS) part offers specific, sensitive detection and confirmation of the targeted compounds.

128. The results were discussed in detail in the LAC regional assessment report ²³.

Output 3

129. Human milk samples were collected in the form of national pooled samples. The sampling followed the protocol that was originally developed by WHO in 2007, which was adjusted by UNEP as the SOP for use in the GMP2 regional projects.

130. The samples from individual mothers were collected into 100 mL pre-cleaned glass bottles. The national pool sample was composed of 25 ml sample portions from individual mothers into a 2-liter pre-cleaned glass bottle. The samples were kept in a fridge or freezer by the time of shipment to the designated expert laboratory that met rigorous quality criteria for analysis of human milk samples and assured thus reliability and comparability of results.

131. The 2016-2019 human milk survey under the GMP2 analysed the samples for 30 POPs listed in Stockholm Convention COPs 4-9 and two additional chemicals that were proposed for listing, namely medium-chained chlorinated paraffins (MCCPs) and perfluorohexane sulfonic acid (PFHxS).

132. Chlorinated and brominated POPs in human milk samples were determined by Chemischen und Veterinäruntersuchungsamt (CVUA) Freiburg, which was designated as the expert laboratory for these analyses under WHO/UNEP-coordinated exposure studies. CVUA subsequently sent an aliquot of 10 mL of the sample to MTM for analysis of PFAS. The results of the human milk survey were discussed in detail in the LAC regional assessment report²⁴.

133. The countries have identified various matrices of national interest (fish, butter, sediment, etc.) and sent them to the expert laboratory (MTM). The results of the analyses were delivered to countries in November 2021. Mirror analyses of the national samples were conducted in national laboratories with required capacity in 7 countries that reported data on some POPs. The results generated by national laboratories were included in the national reports.

134. Sampling of human milk and of matrices of national interest faced unexpected challenges. In some countries, ethical protocol considerations caused delays in the collection of samples for the human milk survey. Strict requirements for customs clearance of biological samples negatively affected the shipment of samples to expert laboratories.

135. The TE did not find direct or indirect effects of the project on disadvantaged groups, including women.

Output 4

136. Inter-laboratory Comparison (ILC) constituted an important part of the UNEP capacity building programme for laboratories analysing POPs under the GMP2 projects. The purpose of the ILCs was to demonstrate proficiency in the analysis of a range of POPs in core matrices of the Stockholm Convention, namely in ambient air, human milk, and water (for perfluorinated

²³ <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/27639>

compounds only). Two rounds of ILC were conducted during the GMP2 projects. They were open to any laboratory interested in participation; however, financial support from the GMP2 regional projects was available to the GMP2 beneficiary laboratories.

137. The 3rd round of the ILC was launched in July 2016 and completed in early 2017. All POPs listed in the SC annexes until 2013 were included in the assessment and hexachlorobutadiene (listed in 2015). The results were discussed in a workshop in China on 5-7 April 2017, which was jointly organised by the BCCC-SCRC Uruguay and the BCRC-SCRC China. The participating countries were Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Uruguay.

138. The 4th round of the ILC was launched in April 2018. Samples were sent to the participating laboratories in September 2018, and the results were collected in January 2019. The final result workshop of the 4th ILC was held on 21-22 July 2021 (online).

139. The reports for the ILCs²⁵²⁶ show that the number of registered laboratories in the LAC region for the 3rd and 4th ILC rounds remained stable (39 and 37, respectively). However, only 26 provided the results in each of the two most recent rounds of ILC. The distribution of results with regard to various POPs groups and test matrices is summarized in Table 20.

Table 20: Distribution of Results in the 3rd and 4th Rounds of ILC from the LAC Region Laboratories

POPs	Total		Test solution		Sediment		Fish		Human milk		Air extract		Water	
	3rd	4th	3rd	4th	3rd	4th	3rd	4th	3rd	4th	3rd	4th	3rd	4th
OCP	17	26	17	21	14	11	8	9	9	9	4	5	-	-
PCB	15	17	12	16	13	10	7	0	7	10	5	5	-	-
PCDD/PCDF	6	-	3	-	3	-	4	-	0	-	2	-	-	-
dl-PCB	4	8	2	6	2	3	3	4	0	1	2	1	-	-
PBDE	3	5	3	4	3	3	1	3	1	1	1	2	-	-
HxBB	0		0		0		0		0		0		-	-
Toxaphenes	3	3	3	3	3	0	0	3	1	0	2	0	-	-
HBCDs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-
PFAS	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1

140. Laboratories in 15 GRULAC countries registered for the two most recent rounds of the ILC, including all 11 countries participating in the GMP2 LAC project. However, only a few of the registered laboratories were the direct beneficiaries of the project. All participating laboratories were recorded under coded names in the laboratory database maintained by the ILC coordinators, and their identities in relation to the provision of results and analytical performance were not disclosed by the database owners.

141. Lack of analytical standards for identification and quantification of analyses, as well as breakdown of analytical equipment, in particular detectors, affected to some extent the rate of participation of national laboratories from the region in the two rounds of interlaboratory assessments and reduced the ability of the participating laboratories to return analytical results for a wider selection of POPs groups.

142. Findings and key messages from the project, lessons learned, and recommendations for future monitoring of POPs were discussed in the Steering Committee meetings and technical meetings of experts. All 11 participating countries submitted their national reports with conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations for adjustments of the monitoring plan in the future.

²⁵ Biennial Global Interlaboratory Assessment on Persistent Organic Pollutants – Third Round 2016/2017

²⁶ Biennial Global Interlaboratory Assessment on Persistent Organic Pollutants – Fourth Round 2018/2019

143. These issues were presented and discussed at the final regional meeting that was organized in Mexico on 8-9 June 2023 with participation of almost 40 participants from 12 countries of the region. RECETOX, as one of the project partners, presented a future vision for data management and upcoming challenges for the next cycle with regard to the GMP Data Warehouse and the next cycle of the GMP implementation. Input from the final meeting was provided for the compilation of the global synthesis report²⁷.

Output 5

144. In June 2023, the BCCC-SCRC produced a report titled "Roadmap for Design of National Monitoring Programmes". The document provides countries with steps to follow to design programmes that address national information needs to implement public policies for the protection of public and environmental health. It is based on the strategic planning approach that guides countries to produce reliable data to support public policy actions.

145. The above approach was pilot tested in Ecuador and Mexico. Both countries produced a document with concrete proposals for the development of their respective national POPs monitoring programmes, including a description of the relevant regulatory frameworks, results of the POPs inventories, available national capacity for POPs analyses, and elements for the design of a POPs monitoring plan.

GEF Core Indicator

146. The TE assessed the contribution to GEF Core Indicator 11, 'People benefiting from GEF-financed investments (disaggregated by sex)'. The project was relevant for a total of 87 direct beneficiaries, including 47 women. However, as the project's alignment to the GEF Core Indicator 11 was retrospectively identified, the assessment of the progress of this indicator is not factored into the ratings of the evaluation criteria.

Unintended Effects

147. The TE did not find any positive or negative (indirect or direct) effects of the output delivery on disadvantaged groups, including women and vulnerable people.

4.4.2 Achievement of Project Outcomes

Table 21: Achievement of Project Outcomes

Outcome 1:	National capacities for implementing the updated POPs Global Monitoring Plan (GMP) are strengthened and demonstrated
Performance against Indicator(s) and Target(s):	# of countries capable to undertake sampling in the core and other matrices for POPs analysis (Baseline: 0, Target 11) 11 countries – air samples 5 countries – water samples 9 countries - human milk 11 countries – various other matrices
Sources of Information /Evidence:	Interviews/FGDs with beneficiaries during field visit Project implementation reports/PIRs

²⁷ [Synthesis report on the Road map for securing conditions for Sustainable Monitoring of POPs](#)

	Regional project completion report Reports from interlaboratory assessments
Narrative Assessment:	11 laboratories demonstrated capability for sampling ambient air for POPs monitoring 5 laboratories demonstrated capability for sampling of water for POPs monitoring 9 laboratories demonstrated capability for sampling of breast milk for POPs monitoring 11 laboratories demonstrated capability for sampling of other (non-core) matrices
Level of Achievement:	Fully achieved

Outcome 2:	Conditions for sustainable monitoring of POPs in the Latin American and Caribbean region are in place with effective reporting taking place consistently
Performance against Indicator(s) and Target(s):	# of countries with reported data on up to 23 POPs (Baseline: 0, Target: 11) 11 countries reported data on the 23 mandatory POPs # of regional roadmap for sustainable POPs monitoring published (Baseline: 0, Target: 1) 1 regional LAC roadmap report was prepared
Sources of Information /Evidence:	Interviews/FGDs with beneficiaries during field visit Project implementation reports/PIRs Regional project completion report Reports from interlaboratory assessments
Narrative Assessment:	Improved level of instrumentation for POPs analyses (availability of HRGC-HRMS) Lack of routine for POPs analysis in many laboratories – Laboratories report results for only 1-2 POP groups and/or 1-2 matrices A persistent need for training on reporting and interpretation of results at the laboratory level Lack of national POPs monitoring programmes in the countries of the LAC region
Level of Achievement:	Partially achieved

148. Regarding ambient air sampling, the countries in the LAC region collectively meet the criteria established in the Guidance for the Global Monitoring Plan on the required number of both passive and active air sampling sites (10-15 passive and at least 1 active sampling sites). Data from the passive sampling sites were incorporated in the 3rd regional monitoring report for the LAC region, which was produced in 2021. The ambient air sampling network established under the GMP2 LAC projects, together with other networks with results in the LAC region (GAPS, LAPAN), can obtain representative data to assess baselines and changes in time and space and regional transport of POPs.

149. Regarding the water matrix, the project contributed to monitoring of water through direct (active sampling) as recommended by the GMP Guidance for water monitoring. Sampling of water was conducted for the first time in the LAC region, as these samples were not taken during the GMP1 phase. The sampling frequency was 4 samples taken per year at each selected site, to determine temporal and regional variations and filter out short-term variability due to e.g., precipitation events.

150. For monitoring of human milk, samples from the GMP2 LAC project were provided only from nine countries, as two countries were unable to participate due to local problems. Nevertheless, the participating countries demonstrated the capability for participation in the UNEP/WHO surveys on human milk. Data from the surveys represent the only consistent set of human tissue data reported and provide background information on spatial as well as temporal variability of POPs in human tissues. Quantitative occurrence of POPs in the samples derived from the results contributes to setting national priorities on mitigation actions.

151. Despite stable participation in the ILCs, some laboratories lack routine analyses as they conduct POP analyses mainly for interlaboratory studies without further regular analyses outside these externally funded campaigns. More frequent (weekly or at least monthly) engagement in the analysis of POPs is essential to produce reliable results. Also, the ILCs prove the capacities of laboratories to provide results for only 1-2 POPs groups and/or 1-2 matrices.

152. While the LAC region has demonstrated sufficient capacity for sustainable monitoring and analysis of legacy POPs, there are gaps in capacities for monitoring and analysis of some newly listed POPs. While the number of dioxin laboratories in the LAC region has increased, there is no analytical capacity for the analysis of brominated flame retardants (particularly HBCDs).

153. There is a lack of sustained regional and national monitoring programmes in the LAC region, which poses challenges to identifying temporal trends in POPs concentrations. While regional initiatives like GAPS and LAPAN collect some data, these are not a suitable substitute for the establishment of long-term trends in POPs concentration. This is mainly due to the fact that POPs monitoring data is not easily understood by the decision-makers, and consequently POPs monitoring has a low priority on the agendas of the national governments. Currently, insufficient political commitment does not secure financial resources to develop and implement national POPs monitoring programmes.

4.4.3. Likelihood of Impact

Table 22: Likelihood of Impact

Factors influencing likelihood of impact	Assessment	Justification
Drivers to support transition from Outputs to the Project Outcomes Strong advocacy on the importance of the project provided by the IA and EA	In place	Ownership of the project in all 11 beneficiary countries
Assumptions for the change process from Outputs to Project Outcomes National implementation agreements signed and implemented Laboratories committed to participation in inter-laboratory assessments	Hold Partially hold	In two countries, human milk sampling was not conducted. About one-third of registered laboratories did not provide results in interlaboratory assessments.
Proportion of Project Outcomes fully or partially achieved	Some	Outcome 1 achieved fully Outcome 2 achieved partially
Drivers to support transition from Project Outcomes to Intermediate States Positive early results of interlaboratory assessments strengthen commitment of	Partially in place	Despite positive results from interlaboratory assessments, laboratories do not have sufficient engagement in POPs analyses.

Factors influencing likelihood of impact	Assessment	Justification
laboratories for further improvements of their analytical capacities		
Assumptions for the change process from the Project Outcomes to Intermediate States Sufficient co-financing committed from national budgets to contribute to capacity building and development of POPs monitoring and reporting systems	Not hold	Lack of national co-financing for the project underscored insufficient support from national budgets to POPs monitoring.
Proportion of Intermediate States achieved	Some	Intermediate State 1 was not achieved (weak links of the monitoring data to decision-making)
Drivers to support transition from Intermediate States to Impact National decision-makers are well-informed about the benefits and importance of POPs monitoring	Partially in place	Weak science (monitoring) – politics (decision-making) links
Assumptions for the change process from Intermediate States to Impact Sufficient co-financing committed from national budgets to contribute to capacity building and development of POPs monitoring and reporting systems	Not in place	Lack of national co-financing for the project underscored insufficient support from national budgets to POPs monitoring.
Data and information from POPs monitoring understood and used by the decision makers	Not in place	Insufficient understanding of the scientific data by political decision-makers precluded translation of the scientific knowledge into political actions.

154. The driver facilitating the transition from Outputs to Outcomes, *"Strong advocacy on the importance of the project provided by the IA and EA"*, was found to be in place across all project countries. The driver for transition from Outcomes to Intermediate States, *"Positive early results of interlaboratory assessments strengthen commitment of laboratories for further improvements of their analytical capacities"* was found only partially in place, as not all GMP2 project beneficiary laboratories were able to fully participate in the two most recent interlaboratory assessments.

155. While the assumptions for Outputs-Outcomes change were generally upheld, the assumption facilitating transition from Outcomes to Intermediate States, *"Sufficient co-financing committed from national budgets to contribute to capacity building and development of POPs monitoring and reporting systems"* was not fully upheld, as documented by co-financing that was actually realized at TE (details on co-financing in Section 4.5). Lack of funding generally precluded the initiation of national POPs monitoring programmes and restrained the amount and quality of POPs monitoring data generated for the LAC region.

156. Strengthened technical capacities for POPs monitoring in the project beneficiary countries were regarded as the most significant achievement of the project. Through capacity building together with laboratory proficiency and performance assessments, the project led to improvements in regional capabilities for POPs monitoring data generation and reporting, and ultimately made a tangible contribution to the evaluation of the effectiveness of the Stockholm Convention.

Findings Statements on Effectiveness

157. The project delivered all planned Outputs and strengthened national capacities for implementation of the updated GMP (Outcome 1). The GMP2 LAC project monitoring activities were aligned with the objectives of the GMP, especially the selection of target matrices (air, water, and breast milk) and monitoring of substances (legacy POPs as well as newly listed POPs), as well as the selection of monitoring sites, sampling frequency, sampling procedures, and analytical methods.

158. Outcome 2 in terms of conditions for sustainable and effective monitoring of POPs in the LAC region was achieved only partially due to the lack of national POPs monitoring programmes in the LAC countries and insufficient co-financing of externally funded POPs monitoring activities. Despite the availability of modern analytical equipment (such as HRGC-HRMS) in national laboratories, several laboratories did not conduct routine POPs monitoring activities, which was a condition for the generation of high-quality monitoring data.

159. In summary, key drivers for progress to Outcomes were largely in place, and the relevant assumptions were upheld. While there was no doubt that the GMP2 LAC project contributed to strengthened regional cooperation for POPs monitoring (Intermediate State 2) and therefore also for the evaluation of the effectiveness of the Stockholm Convention in the LAC region, there was a persisting weak link between the monitoring data and decision-making that constrained the likelihood of Impact.

Rating for Effectiveness: Moderately Satisfactory

Rating for Availability of Outputs: Satisfactory

Rating for Achievement of Project Outcomes: Moderately Satisfactory

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

4.5 Financial Management

4.5.1 Adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures

160. The information that was collected on the project cash flow mechanisms and procedures was limited, but did not show signs of any deviation from the provisions of the UNEP Programme and Project Management Manual.

161. Conclusions of the available audit reports of the Executing Agency (BCCC-SCRC) stipulate that the project was executed in line with the Project Cooperation Agreement signed between UNEP and BCCC-SCRC, and there were no financial issues identified. Based on these statements, it can be concluded that the Executing Agency fully adhered to UNEP financial policies and procedures and that the project execution did not experience any serious budgetary issues.

4.5.2 Completeness of Financial Information

162. An extensive package of documents related to financial management was made available to the Evaluator, including two sets of quarterly financial reports for the entire duration of the project (Q4 of 2015 to Q2 of 2023) prepared by the BCCC-SCRC and the UNEP Knowledge and Risk Unit (KRU) of the of the Chemicals and Health Branch, respectively, final financial reports prepared by eight countries, reports on co-financing from all project countries, a final co-financing report prepared by the BCCC-SCRC, as well sets of audit reports for the Implementing and Executing Agencies.

163. Appendix 2 to the Project Document presents the overall budget of the project broken down by components (for the GEF grant as well as for co-financing contributions). Appendices 3 and 4 present a more detailed budget breakdown by components and UNEP budget lines. However, the financial reports available for the TE did not use the same template. The financial reports produced by the implementing and executing agencies used only the UNEP budget lines. The purpose of these reports was strictly financial, as they could not be related to the programmatic components of the project. The financial reports provided by the project countries clustered the expenditures into five groups related to activities. Financial reports from the project partners (expert laboratories) were provided without specific financial data for each of the four regional projects; therefore, they did not allow for comparison of planned and actual expenditures on the LAC project by the project partners. The planned Project Management Costs (PMC) was 7.1% of the GEF grant, which was reasonable given the size and complexity of the project. However, the financial reports did not indicate the actual PMC.

164. It is noted that national final financial reports were prepared by eight countries that received funds from BCCC-SCRC. The final reports for the other three countries (Ecuador, Peru, and Chile) were prepared by BCCC-SCRC as it administered the funds in accordance with the respective agreements with these three countries. The overall co-financing report was compiled from the 11 national co-financing reports provided by the beneficiary institutions (university or ministry) that received the highest share of project funds in each country. This indicates that the actual co-financing at the country level could be higher than the reported co-financing values. Details are listed in Table 23.

Table 23: Financial Management

Financial management components:		Rating	Evidence/ Comments
1. Adherence to UNEP's/GEF's policies and procedures:		S	
Any evidence that indicates shortcomings in the project's adherence to UNEP or donor policies, procedures or rules		No	No evidence of deviations from the UNEP or GEF financial policies and procedures.
Was first disbursement carried out within 9 months of UNEP's project approval date.		Yes	
Were the procurement policies of UNEP and the donor(s) followed? <i>(where applicable)</i>		Yes	
2. Completeness of project financial information:			
Provision of key documents to the evaluator (based on the responses to A-H below)		MS	
A.	Co-financing and Project Cost's tables at design (by budget lines)	Yes	
B.	Revisions to the budget	Yes	
C.	All relevant project legal agreements (e.g. SSFA, PCA, ICA)	No	
D.	Proof of fund transfers	No	
E.	Proof of co-financing (cash and in-kind)	Yes	Actual co-financing data were provided only for the countries
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	Only by budget lines, not by project components. Only quarterly reports, but not annual reports.
G.	Copies of any completed audits and management responses <i>(where applicable)</i>	Yes	Audit reports were provided for BCCC-SCRC, MTM Orebro, and VU Amsterdam.
H.	Procure documents ²⁸ , including the approved requisition document and Source Selection Plan	No	

²⁸ Relevant for procurement action over USD 10,000 in value.

I.	Any other financial information that was required for this project (list):	N/A	
Overall rating		S	

Findings Statements on Financial Management

165. The TE did not find any direct evidence of deficiencies in the project's adherence to UNEP and GEF policies, procedures, and rules. However, this finding was based mainly on interviews with UNEP finance staff and stakeholders in the project countries. The documentation made available for the TE limits the ability of the TE to triangulate this finding and draw a more convincing conclusion on the compliance.

166. Interviews with the UNEP staff associated with the GMP2 LAC project did not reveal any serious issues that were related to the execution of financial transfers by the UNEP finance and administration staff. The BCCC-SCRC project team and national coordinators in the countries assessed the communication and coordination of financial management and funds transfers as effective and timely.

167. While the budget at the project inception was sufficiently detailed, financial reports did not have the same level of detail. The above-described deficiencies in the financial reporting neither allow for comparison of planned expenditures under the five project components with actual costs nor establish the actual level of implementation under the individual project components.

Rating for Financial Management: Satisfactory

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

Rating for Completeness of Financial Information: Moderately Satisfactory

4.6 Efficiency

168. As recommended by the terminal evaluation of the previous phase (GMP1), the GMP2 LAC project adopted a project scheme based on i) partnerships with expert laboratories, (ii) building on existing programmes (e.g. WHO milk survey), (iii) adoption of existing procedures (SOPs developed under GMP1 and WHO guidelines for human milk sampling), and (iv) engagement only with laboratories in the participating countries that fulfil minimum requirements for POPs analysis.

169. Apart from the GMP2 LAC project, there were two other initiatives that aimed at generating POPs monitoring data in ambient air for the LAC region, namely GAPs and LAPAN. However, there was no evidence of cooperation with the above initiatives, e.g., for the selection of sampling sites for passive air samplers or for the analysis of samples.

170. The training activities on sampling of core matrices were organized in the countries in order to consider the existing equipment in the participating laboratories. However, in two countries, analytical equipment and/or detectors were not operational, which limited the effect of the training. Also, the organisation of the training did not include participants' assessments of the content and conduct of the training. Such direct feedback from the participants would have been useful in receiving their direct suggestions for improvements of future sessions.

171. The main reason for the prolonged project implementation period was the delay caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Three no-cost extensions of the project duration were approved to secure adequate time for the completion of all planned activities, including finalization of national, regional, and sectoral reports. The last extension was also requested to facilitate the collection of the facts that were generated by the project activities for strengthening the conditions for sustainable monitoring of POPs and provide input to the regional report on the roadmap for sustainable monitoring.

172. There were three no-cost extensions of the original Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) signed on 2 June 2015 between the UNEP DTIE and the BCCC-SCRC for execution of the GMP2 LAC project. A documentation package related to the PCA amendments was prepared by the BCCC-SCRC, including revised workplans and project budget revisions, and was submitted to UNEP for approval. In addition to the above, in parallel with the 3rd no-cost extension of PCA, the newly-signed Internal Agreement between CWU and KRU under the Chemicals and Health Branch, UNEP DTIE, was also extended up to the same renewed expiry date (30 June 2023). Hence, there were three no-cost extensions of the project's duration in total. The chronology of extensions is shown in Table 24 below.

Table 24: List of Legal Instruments for Implementation of the Project

Type	UNEP Approval	Expiration	Justification	Remark
Original PCA	2 June 2015	31 March 2020	COVID-19	Original PCA with BCCC-SCRC
PCA - Amendment 1	23 June 2020	30 June 2021	COVID-19	No-cost extension
PCA - Amendment 2	26 July 2021	30 June 2022	COVID-19, transfer of budget for Component 5 to KRU	No-cost extension with budget revision
PCA - Amendment 3	16 May 2022	30 June 2023	COVID-19, completion of national reports and the road map for sustainability	No-cost extension with budget and workplan revision
Original Internal Agreement with KRU	14 May 2019	30 June 2021	COVID-19	Original Internal Agreement with KRU
New Internal Agreement with KRU	29 September 2021	30 June 2022	COVID-19	New Internal Agreement with KRU
KRU Agreement - Amendment 1	25 May 2022	30 June 2023	COVID-19, completion of national reports and the road map for sustainability	No-cost extension (in parallel with 'PCA - Amendment 3' above, with the same renewed expiry date, 30 June 2023)

173. Adherence to provisions of good laboratory practice for the management of laboratory wastes from analyses of POPs contributed to the minimization of the UNEP environmental footprint.

Findings Statements on Efficiency

174. The bulk of activities on sampling of core matrices and interlaboratory assessments were completed in 2017-2019, i.e., before the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020. The pandemic affected training in 3 countries that had to be conducted online. The delivery of Outputs 1-4 was completed in January 2021 (the last online training). The prolonged completion of training delayed laboratory analyses and ultimately resulted in the postponed submission of the data for evaluation of the effectiveness of the Stockholm Convention to the Global Data Warehouse.

175. The activities conducted under the last two extensions of the GMP2 LAC project included preparation of the regional assessment report on POPs monitoring, sampling of matrices of national interest (analysed in expert laboratories, preparation of national reports, training on POPs analysis in plastic matrices (not planned in the Project Document), preparation of national reports, and organization of the final project workshop in June 2023.

176. Efficiency in terms of the prolonged project implementation period was affected by the long time that was needed for preparation of national reports with a summary of facts and lessons learned from the project, sectoral reports on the 3 core matrices (air, water, and human milk), and the report on the roadmap for sustainable POPs monitoring. Although the latter report was prepared for the LAC region and discussed in the final project workshop in June 2023, it was not separately published due to the decision that was made to consolidate it into the global Synthesis Report on the Road Map for Securing Conditions for Sustainable Monitoring of POPs, which contained input from all 4 regional projects.

Rating for Efficiency: Moderately Unsatisfactory

4.7 Monitoring and Reporting

4.7.1 Monitoring of Project Implementation

177. The project followed standard UNEP monitoring and evaluation (M&E) processes and procedures. The project M&E plan was consistent with the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation policy. Monitoring of the project activities was conducted by the UNEP/DTIE Chemicals and Health Branch with the assistance of the BCCC-SCRC, which supported the monitoring efforts in the region through contacts with the participating countries.

178. The BCCC-SCRC was assisted by national coordinators who were nominated by each participating country for oversight of national activities. The BCCC-SCRC produced bi-annual progress reports that contained a summary of progress in project implementation and a financial report for the current reporting period, as well as a work plan and expected expenditures for the next reporting period.

179. Section C of the Project Document contains an itemised M&E plan for the project that includes Inception Workshop, meetings of the Project Steering Committee, preparation of periodic project reports, conduct of independent Mid-Term Review and Terminal Evaluation, as well as conduct of annual financial audits, and lists responsible actors, allocated budget, and a proposed time frame for each M&E activity. The budget allocation to the M&E Plan is specified only for the MTR, TE, and financial audits, while all other activities do not require financial allocation.

180. Inception Workshop (IW) for the GMP2 LAC project was held on December 1-4, 2015, in Montevideo, Uruguay, with a total of 36 participants, including 34 representatives of the 11 project countries and 4 representatives of the project partners (CSIC Barcelona, Orebro University, BRS Secretariat, and UNITAR). The workshop was attended by national coordinators and representatives of the national institutions, who were responsible for sampling and analysing POPs in air, water, and breast milk in the 11 participating countries. The purpose of the IW was to officially launch the project and inform governments of the participating countries and other stakeholders about the project objectives and responsibilities, to present the project workplan and budget, and to discuss responsibilities of relevant stakeholders for implementation.

181. The Project Steering Committee (PSC) was composed of representatives of the IA and EA (UNEP, DTIE Chemicals Branch and BCCC-SCRC), BRS Secretariat, and expert laboratories (CSIC Barcelona and MTM Orebro University). The first meeting of the Project Steering Committee was held back-to-back with the Inception Workshop on 2 December 2015.

182. In line with the provisions in the Project Document, two more meetings of the PSC were planned; one was to be organized around the Mid-Term Review, and the last one was to be held near the completion of the project. The 2nd PSC meeting was held on 12 June 2018 in Medellin, Colombia. As the composition of the PSC for all four regional GMP2 projects was the same, it was decided to hold the PSC meetings for all four regional projects together. The 3rd PSC meeting was held as a virtual (online) meeting on 26 October 2021, and the final PSC meeting was held on 3 April 2023 in Bangkok, Thailand.

183. According to the minutes from the first two meetings, the PSC of the LAC project fulfilled a dual function, namely the provision of strategic direction to the project in line with national and regional priorities, and an oversight function for tracking project progress against the set of planned results. While the arrangement for joint PSC meetings strengthened the coordination with international stakeholders (e.g., expert laboratories) and exchange of experience with three parallel GMP regional projects implemented in the other three regions, the oversight function was somewhat diminished as there was less time during the joint PSC meetings devoted to the discussion of progress and addressing specific implementation issues of the LAC project.

184. Representatives of the expert laboratories participated as members of the PSC while they were part of service contracts awarded by the project to their respective institutions. Although such arrangements were not inherently illegal, they created ethical concerns for a conflict of interest that should have been addressed in the Terms of Reference for the membership of the PSC.

185. Data on project progress was regularly collected by the BCCC-SCRC and reported through progress reports and a final report. The monitoring reports were available to the Evaluator as well as minutes of the Inception Workshop, the Mid-Term Workshop, and the Final Workshop. The Mid-Term Review was conducted in mid-2018, and the MTR report was also available for the TE.

186. The available documentation indicates that the Project Steering Committee meetings for the GMP2 LAC project were initially held separately until 2018, and later the PSC was merged with other regional projects until the end of the implementation period. While such harmonization could have provided benefits for cross-learning and information sharing between the parallel projects, it certainly diminished the oversight function of the GMP2 LAC PSC.

187. Following the conclusions of the Midterm Workshop and stakeholder consultations, the participating countries expressed interest in using unutilized funds to facilitate consideration of the POPs monitoring results for informing national policy-making efforts on priority actions for sound management of POPs. Reallocation of budget and amendment of the PCA were granted to facilitate these activities and to allow further strengthening of national capacities.

4.7.2 Project Reporting

188. Project reporting consisted of the compilation of quarterly progress and financial reports, as well as annual Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) prepared according to the UNEP and GEF reporting formats. Progress reports were also prepared for presentation in the meetings of the PSC. There was also a final narrative report of the project.

189. The annual GEF (PIRs) available for the TE covered the GEF fiscal years 2018-2023. PIRs for the initial project period (GEF FYs 216-2017) were not available. The TE found the available PIRs were sufficiently detailed and the reporting formats were aligned with the UNEP and GEF reporting standards.

190. The PIRs do not contain gender disaggregated data due to the fact that the project focuses on the generation of scientific information. However, gender disaggregated data were not collected in the training reports that list only the names of the training participants without specification of gender²⁹. The indicators and targets in the project results framework were sufficient for the demonstration of the project performance.

Findings Statements on Monitoring and Reporting:

191. The various monitoring documents provide sufficient evidence of systematic progress tracking based on the project results framework and that of relevant internal information sharing mechanisms. However, the documentation does not provide information about adaptive management decisions and mechanisms for formal project adjustments. Specifically, there is no conclusive evidence about the mechanism of approval of the project extensions.

192. The TE observation is that while the reporting in the PIRs at the Outcome level (Section 3.1 of the PIR) was based on the project results framework, reporting at the output level (Section 3.2 of the PIRs) was in fact tracking implementation of activities. Overall, the project reporting ensured transparent information flow across the IA, EA, and key project stakeholders.

Rating for Monitoring and Reporting: Satisfactory

Rating for Monitoring of Project Implementation: Satisfactory

Rating for Project Reporting: Satisfactory

4.8 Sustainability

4.8.1 Socio-political Sustainability

193. The fact that all participating countries are Parties to the Stockholm Convention ensured some level of national ownership and commitment to the project due to its focus on the generation of data for evaluation of effectiveness according to Article 16 of the Convention.

194. Production of the guidance document on the establishment of national POPs monitoring programmes and pilot testing of the approach in two countries were important steps that the project made towards enhanced socio-political sustainability. However, a stronger commitment of the national governments would be required for the establishment of concrete national POPs monitoring programmes. The Regional Organization Group (ROG) could play an important role in this process to ensure the national monitoring programmes are cost-effective and contribute to the regional POPs monitoring networks.

4.8.2 Financial Sustainability

²⁹ The topic of gender was initially not included in the project design because, at the time of the design, it was not required as part of the GEF requirement. It was added later and addressed by the EA to the extent possible.

195. The project was designed on the assumption of attracting considerable co-financing contributions from the participating countries, as indicated by the co-financing letters at the project inception. The data on co-financing that was actually realized show that the initial commitments did not fully materialise.

196. About 90% of the initial co-financing pledges were in-kind form, i.e., as recurrent expenditures of the participating institutions (e.g. pro-rated staff time, utility bills, building maintenance, etc.). However, the establishment of cost-effective national monitoring programmes would require in-cash support from the national governments. Such funds would be needed for the maintenance of analytical equipment, the procurement of analytical standards, and participation in periodic interlaboratory assessments.

197. Despite the elaboration of the roadmap for sustainable monitoring of POPs under Outcome 5 of the LAC project, the latter was completed without an explicit exit strategy that would ensure sustained POPs monitoring in the LAC region. The Synthesis Report on the Road Map for Securing Conditions for Sustainable Monitoring of POPs, produced as a single report for all four regional projects, contains some elements of an exit strategy but does not mention specificities for the regions. The latter report is a compilation of general conditions and issues for retention and advancement of capacities developed at the national and regional levels. Although it acknowledges the continued dependence of the POPs monitoring programme on external funding, it does not contain elements of an exit strategy specifically for the LAC region based on a wider alliance of institutional partners and suggestions for financial sustainability.

4.8.3 Institutional Sustainability

198. Development of the roadmap towards sustainable POPs monitoring under the project adopted a bottom-up approach, i.e., the global/regional road map was compiled from the national roadmaps that were developed, using the practical experience of the participating countries in the GMP2 project. The project built national capacities for sampling of core matrices, but further capacity building of national laboratories would be required for analysis of POPs and interpretation of results.

199. Access to technical expertise is a key factor for institutional sustainability, mentioned in the national roadmaps. The results of interlaboratory assessments as well as various studies indicate the availability of significant technical capacities and expertise for POPs monitoring in the LAC region. Access to such expertise could be ensured through extensive collaboration of future national monitoring programmes with existing regional POP monitoring networks and initiatives.

200. Most of the countries managed to keep the laboratory personnel trained under the project to avoid losses of the acquired knowledge. However, staff retention is a necessary but not sufficient condition for institutional sustainability. The interlaboratory assessments identified insufficient laboratory infrastructures as a main stumbling block of POPs monitoring programmes because of insufficient support from national budgets. This is related to financial sustainability, as it requires sustained support from national budgets.

201. However, few laboratories reported that despite successful retention of trained technicians and recent acquisition of more sophisticated analytical equipment, they do not have sufficient personnel to operate new instruments due to government-imposed restrictions on staff recruitment. In any case, continued capacity building for POPs sampling and analysis is a key element for institutional sustainability, but will need to be complemented in other areas, such as data management and interpretation, as well as collaboration among individual national and regional laboratories and participation in regional/global POPs monitoring networks.

Findings Statements on Sustainability

202. The main risks to the sustainability of the benefits brought by the project are:

- Lack of routine POPs analyses in the project laboratories
- Insufficient co-financing of the project laboratories to ensure maintenance of analytical equipment and procurement of analytical standards
- Limited access to technical capacities for analyses of POPs that are available in the region

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

Rating for Socio-political Sustainability: Moderately Likely

Rating for Financial Sustainability: Moderately Unlikely

Rating for Institutional Sustainability: Moderately Likely

4.9 Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

4.9.1 Quality of Project Management and Supervision

4.9.1.1 UNEP/Implementing Agency:

203. The IA for the project was the UNEP DTIE, Chemicals and Health Branch, GEF Chemicals and Waste Unit, which was responsible for the overall project supervision and oversight, and reporting of the project progress to GEF. A PCA was signed between the DTIE and the Executing Agency (BCCC-SCRC) in June 2015 that stipulated UNEP DTIE's responsibility for the overall project supervision, overseeing the project progress through the monitoring and evaluation of project activities and progress reports to GEF, and provision of administrative support to the BCCC-SCRC. The obligations of both partners, based on the provisions of the approved Project Document, were clearly spelled out in the PCA.

204. On 14 May 2019, an Internal Agreement was signed between two units within the DTIE Chemicals and Health Branch, namely the Chemicals & Waste Unit (CWU) and the Knowledge & Risk Unit (KRU), for the provision of technical assistance to the execution of the project. The duties of the KRU comprised complex assistance in the delivery of project outputs, including technical advisory on training, quality assurance, and production of publications, documents, and other information related to the project. Due to the approved project extensions, an Amendment for the extension of the Internal Agreement was signed on 25 May 2022.

205. The KRU liaised with the expert laboratories and other partners and signed PCAs on behalf of UNEP with the CSIC Barcelona, CVUA Freiburg, IVM VU Amsterdam, MTM Orebro, and RECETOX Brno for overall project implementation and later Small-Scale Funding Agreements (SSFA) with the same for specific activities (preparation of sectoral reports, organisation of inter-laboratory assessments, etc.). The evaluator reviewed the above documents and found them well articulated with clearly defined roles and obligations of the parties.

206. Supervision of the project was done through progress reports submitted by the Task Manager from DTIE-CWU and regular communication with the BCCC-SCRC. There was a change of the Task Manager (of all four regional GMP projects) during the final year of this project's implementation when the original Task Manager assumed the position of the Head of the KRU. The new Task Manager supervised the final activities of the project and participated in the closing PSC meeting in Mexico City in June 2023.

207. The TE observed that all relevant staff of the UNEP implementing units were located appropriately for efficient project implementation. According to the stakeholder interviews, there was a regular and effective communication between the Task Manager and the BCCC-SCRC. There were no disruptions in communication and information exchange as a result of the change in the person holding the Task Manager position.

208. UNEP was responsible for the overall process of the project design, starting from the submission of the PIF and subsequent conversion of the project concept into a fully-fledged Project Document. According to the information collected through stakeholder interviews, the project's initial approval did not contain a results framework matrix, but it was developed later. The fact that the project design did not fully adhere to the relevant guidelines of GEF project design caused insufficiencies in the project results framework that are discussed in the section of Theory of Change.

4.9.1.2 Partners/Executing Agency:

209. The EA for the project was the Stockholm Convention Regional Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean Region (BCCC-SCRC), hosted by the Uruguayan Technological Laboratory (LATU) in Montevideo. To kick-off the project implementation, the BCCC-SCRC signed Implementation Agreements with the governments of the participating countries, with the exception of Colombia, Mexico, and Jamaica, where this was not possible, hence agreements were signed with universities that housed POPs laboratories. It distributed the funds to most countries and directly managed project funds allocated for Ecuador, Peru and Uruguay. Upon signature of the agreements, BCCC-SCRC transferred 50% of the total country allocations to the participating laboratories to provide the laboratories with all necessary materials, solvents, standards, and consumables for initiation of the implementation at the country level. Further tranches of 30 - 35% were transferred after the first 3 activity reports, and the remaining balance was transferred after presentation of the country final reports at the end of the project.

210. The BCCC-SCRC was responsible for day-to-day management of the project and for preparation of bi-annual narrative progress and financial reports to the DTIE. It also provided technical advisory and support to the national laboratories participating in the project and prepared three requests for the project's no-cost extension and submitted them for UNEP approval.

211. There were only minor issues reported by the national laboratories that were related to the procurement of materials, chemicals, standards, and consumables at the beginning of the implementation. Bigger challenges were experienced with shipment of samples to expert laboratories in Europe, either due to incorrect translation in the accompanying documentation of the nature of the PUF samples or missing veterinary certificates for biotic samples and phytosanitary certificates for plant samples, which caused rejection of the shipments by the Spanish customs because they came from outside the EU. The latter problem was solved with the collaboration of the Orebro Institute, which accepted the samples from LAC countries and forwarded them to CSIC as a shipment within the EU.

212. The TE observed strong and stable staffing in the BCCC-SCRC-LATU and strong competencies of the BCCC-SCRC Head that were relevant to the project objectives. According to interviews with national coordinators, the BCCC-SCRS engaged in frequent communication with all national participating laboratories, contributed to timely adaptive management and solution of various implementation issues, and coordinated the provision of country inputs into sectoral reports and the regional report on the sustainability of POPs monitoring. It also provided leadership towards the achievement of the planned results and the preparation of the 3rd POPs Monitoring Report for the LAC region.

4.9.2 Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation

213. The project was organized around national and expert stakeholders who participated in the previous GMP1 phase. Since the beginning of implementation, the BCCC-SCRC and UNEP-KRU ensured active participation of country-level stakeholders and expert laboratories, respectively. According to the stakeholder interviews, no complaints were made as to the effectiveness of communication with and engagement of the stakeholders.

214. The efforts of the BCCC-SCRC and DTIE-KRU led to strong ownership of the project implementation process by national and expert stakeholders. However, the TE observed somewhat weaker ownership of the project outcomes by national stakeholders, as documented by delayed or no responses of country-level stakeholders to requests for interviews for the TE.

215. The TE did not observe any constraints regarding the cooperation of the national institutions and the BCCC-SCRC, and political situations in all project countries were relatively stable for the entire duration of the project implementation.

4.9.3 Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality

216. Due to the scientific nature focusing on the generation of data on POPs spatial and temporary trends, the project did not have a direct impact on human rights and gender equality. However, gender aspects were embedded through the inclusion of breast milk as one of the core matrices for monitoring of POPs. Exposure of women in childbearing age to POPs was thus considered in the design of the monitoring activities. The collection of breast milk samples was conducted on the basis of the ethical clearance as required by WHO, and after the signature of the statement of interest by both the health and environment sector ministries.

217. Information collected through stakeholder interviews and analysis of available project reports shows that women were fairly represented in the project coordination and capacity-building activities organized by the project.

218. In the 11 participating countries, there were 6 female national coordinators, which consisted of 54.5% of the total. According to reports from training on sampling of abiotic and biotic matrices, a total of 87 laboratory personnel were trained, including 47 women, which accounted for 54.0%. Women prevailed in trainings in 6 out of 10 project countries.

4.9.4 Environmental and Social Safeguards

219. The project followed internationally agreed standards in sampling and analysis of biotic and abiotic matrices for POPs, as well as the principles of good laboratory practice (GLP) defined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)³⁰, under which non-clinical health and environmental safety studies are planned, performed, monitored, recorded, archived, and reported.

220. Analyses of samples for POPs and chemicals used produced wastes after analysis. During the implementation of the project, special attention was paid to the management of wastes from the laboratories as they might contain harmful substances, such as POPs, solvents, adsorbents, etc. As all participating laboratories established waste management standard operation procedures and routines, the project ensured that appropriate waste treatment systems were in place at the laboratories to avoid unintentional contamination of

³⁰ <http://www.oecd.org/env/ehs/testing/goodlaboratorypracticeglp.htm>

the environment. **Annex VII** includes details of the environmental and social safeguards assessment.

4.9.5 Country Ownership and Drivenness

221. Ownership of the project by the participating countries was ensured at the design phase through consultations with the national stakeholders in the participating countries that were involved in the previous phase of the project (GMP1 LAC).

222. Support for the project execution was provided by two key ministries in the participating countries. In most countries, the air and water sampling activities were under the responsibility of the Ministry of Environment, whilst the breast milk sampling was implemented under the auspices of the Ministry of Health. Ownership of the project by the participating countries ensured the establishment and maintenance of the air and water networks as well as the organization of the collection of human milk samples.

223. The interviewed national coordinators mostly expressed their satisfaction with the project's performance. However, the TE observed differences in the level of knowledge about the project by different types of country representatives in the project. National coordinators from the regional centres under the Basel and Stockholm Conventions, as well as those from laboratories belonging to academic institutions, showed a higher level of awareness about the project implementation because they were directly involved in various project activities as recipients of training courses and actors of the sampling and analytical campaigns. This constituted strong ownership of the project in these countries. National coordinators from the ministries had somewhat weaker ownership of the project, as, apart from the project coordination role, they did not have any direct participatory role in the project activities.

224. Given the very high technical nature of the project, no NGOs were invited to participate in the project.

4.9.6 Communication and Public Awareness

225. According to the stakeholder interviews, internal communication between the IA and EA worked well. There were also no issues reported on communication between the EA and national coordinators, which was described as smooth and effective.

226. External communication and public awareness efforts were coordinated across all 4 regional GMP2 projects. In addition to the sectoral and regional reports that were developed as deliverables of the projects, stakeholders and partners also developed other publications to widen the impacts of the projects. Four documents in video format were produced for the presentation of the standardized processing for the analysis of POPs (one video for each of the following POPs: dioxins, OCPs, PBDEs, and PCBs). The videos were recorded in Spanish, English and French versions. To strengthen local capacity in the management and interpretation of POPs data, a theoretical-practical course was organized by Zoom in August and September 2021 (Spanish and English). POPs Data Handling Guidance for Latin America and the Caribbean (in Spanish and English versions) was also developed. A special issue in a scientific journal on analytical chemistry, *Chemosphere*, was prepared with articles from the project countries and partner institutes.

227. A dedicated GMP2 projects' webpage³¹ was developed, including a dashboard to share results that were generated in an interactive manner, which allowed for data visualization, retrieval, and spatial-temporal comparison. Given that POPs are a group of 31 chemicals with

³¹ <https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/chemicals-waste/what-we-do/persistent-organic-pollutants/global-monitoring>.

many associated chemical precursors, isomers, congeners, and degradation products of POPs properties, the dashboard was designed in a user-friendly manner, taking into consideration the need for consistent and complete information to support various uses of data by national stakeholders. It also embedded anchors for broader connections to relevant databases, such as the Stockholm Convention data warehouse and the POPs laboratory databank.

228. The project prepared a variety of communication materials for outreach to the general public to raise awareness of POPs monitoring and management. A communication strategy was developed to convey coordinated messages with the use of diverse communication materials in close collaboration with the UNEP Communication Division, BCCC-SCRC, and the GEF communication coordinators in UNEP. The communication products and activities included organization of a campaign on "POPs-your worst friends forever" targeting the general public, which contained a series of videos and supporting factsheets and infographics, a social media posting strategy, a press releases, an interactive website, as well as an exhibition booth at the Conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions (BRS) in May 2023. According to the project final PIR, the campaign and relevant communication materials based on the POPs monitoring results were also shared during the regional final meetings of the four UNEP/GEF GMP2 projects in Bangkok Thailand, in April 2023, and in Mexico City, Mexico, in June 2023.

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

Rating for Quality of Project Management and Supervision: Satisfactory [UNEP/Implementing Agency] Moderately Satisfactory [Partners/Executing Agency] Satisfactory

Rating for Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation: Satisfactory

Rating for Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality: Satisfactory

Rating for Environmental and Social Safeguards: Satisfactory

Rating for Country Ownership and Drivenness: Moderately Satisfactory

Rating for Communication and Public Awareness: Satisfactory

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

229. The formulation of the GMP2 LAC project was based on the results and institutional networks that were established under the previous phase in 2009-2012 (GMP1). Overall, the project performed at the Moderately Satisfactory level. The strongest aspects of the project were the continuation of monitoring of ambient air with passive air samplers and continued participation in the WHO breast milk survey. Comparative weaknesses included inadequate formulation of the project results framework and insufficient definition of pathways from the project Outputs and Outcomes to higher-level results (Intermediate States and long-term Impact).

230. The project was of strategic relevance to the priorities of the participating countries and their obligations under the Stockholm Convention. It contributed to strengthening the POPs, evidenced by the fact that over 160 samples of air, water, human milk, and matrices of national interest collected in the 11 participating countries contributed to about 60 percent of the available data on air and 75 percent of the data on water in the LAC region for the Stockholm Convention GMP from 2016 to 2019.

231. The project also contributed to the routine use of passive air samplers (PAS), documented by a total of 104 samples collected and analysed. The successful implementation of the air monitoring component relied on the use of passive air samplers equipped with polyurethane foam (PUF) disks that were considered simple and cost-effective tools for measurement of atmospheric concentrations of POPs, due to their capacity to retain POPs at low cost and relatively simple handling. There was less success with one active air sampler that was pilot tested in Brazil due to procurement issues and loss of samples in the expert laboratory.

232. The project enabled analysis of POPs in water in five project countries in the LAC region and collected a total of 46 seasonal active samples of water for analysis of PFOS, PFOA and PFHxS content. However, results of the mirror analyses by national laboratories with existing capacity and information from the interlaboratory assessments indicated that the capacity for PFAS analysis was just emerging in the LAC region.

233. The project facilitated continued participation of the LAC region and supported the UNEP/WHO human milk documented by the collection and processing of pooling samples from 9 project countries for analysis of 30 POPs, including 23 compounds listed in the Stockholm Convention at the time of the GMP2 project approval, as well as 7 newly listed POPs and candidate POPs under review. The results added to previously conducted human milk assessments and enabled the establishment of POPs temporal and spatial variations for assessment of the effectiveness of the Stockholm Convention.

234. To support enhanced national capacities on POPs monitoring and address national priorities, the collection and analysis of matrices of national interest were performed in 7 project countries. These efforts provided additional information on the presence of POPs in each country, contributed to strengthening national analytical capacity through mirror analysis in national and expert laboratories, and provided an opportunity for countries to use POPs monitoring to address national priorities.

235. The project supported the participation of some project laboratories in two rounds of interlaboratory assessments that were organized by the project, where almost 40 LAC laboratories registered, and 26 reported results in both rounds. Due to the confidentiality of

results, it is not possible to make concrete conclusions on the ability of the participating laboratories to produce quality data from POPs monitoring. Overall, it can be concluded that while the project fulfilled its purpose to generate regional POPs monitoring data, due to the reliance on expert laboratories in Europe, it made only a limited contribution to the development of capacities for POPs analysis in the LAC region.

236. While the project in its design did not intend to address women on the ground directly, gender aspects were embedded through the inclusion of breast milk as one of the core matrices for monitoring of POPs. Women's representation was also ensured in some project's activities, such as training on sampling of abiotic and biotic matrices, where 54.0% (47 out of 87 in total) of participants were women.

237. No unintended negative effects of the project were observed.

Responses to Key Strategic Questions

238. The evaluation Terms of Reference included a set of 6 key strategic questions of interest to UNEP. This report responds to the set of key strategic questions as follows.

239. Regarding strategic question one, *'To what extent did the project incorporate lessons learned from the previous phase of the project and any recommendations from its own Mid Term Review into the project design/implementation?'*, the GMP2 LAC project incorporated lessons learned from the previous phase and recommendations from its own Mid-Term Review into the project design/implementation in terms of the consistency of the planned activities with the existing national capacities in the partner countries and mixed form of agency and counterpart execution (through sub-contracts to counterparts in case the capacities are sufficient and exist at counterparts level).

240. Regarding strategic question two, *'To what extent did the project promote cross learning/knowledge sharing with three other GMP regional projects? How did the project benefit from having three other regional projects?'*, cross learning and knowledge sharing with the other three GMP2 regional projects were promoted through the organization of joint workshops on assessment of results from analyses of biotic and abiotic matrices, with participation of selected countries from all four regional projects.

241. Regarding strategic question three, *'How did the project link scientific monitoring data with decision making at various levels?'*, the TE found that links between scientific monitoring data and political decision-making at various levels in the LAC region are currently not at the desired level. To address this aspect, the project developed a "Roadmap for Design of National Monitoring Programmes" that would provide countries with the steps to follow to design programmes that address national information needs to implement public policies for the protection of public and environmental health. This approach was pilot tested in two countries of the region, namely Ecuador and Mexico.

242. Regarding strategic question four, *'How were the national-level monitoring mechanisms integrated or coordinated with POPs monitoring under GMP?'*, the TE found that systematic national-level POPs monitoring mechanisms do not exist in the project countries. The only exception is Colombia, with an established national monitoring programme for POPs in the ambient air that was coordinated with the respective monitoring activities under GMP2.

243. Regarding strategic question five, *'To what extent have data from the project been included in the data warehouse and is there evidence of this data being used in subsequent effectiveness evaluation report?'*, the TE found ample evidence of inclusion of the data from

POPs monitoring generated by the project in the Global Data Warehouse (GDW) that are maintained by RECETOX as well as in the 3rd Regional Monitoring Report for LAC prepared by the GRULAC ROG. The above two sources serve as a reference for the evaluation of the effectiveness of the Stockholm Convention.

244. Regarding strategic question six, 'To what extent have inter-lab assessments contributed to laboratories from developing countries improving their quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) practices and ultimately improving the quality of analysis?', the TE found that participation in the interlaboratory assessments in general contributed to improvement of quality of analysis in the laboratories from the LAC region, in particular concerning analysis of legacy POPs. However, there are gaps in the analysis of some newly listed POPs, especially PFAS and brominated flame retardants, such as HBCDs.

245. Table 25 below provides a summary of the ratings and findings discussed in Chapter 4. Overall, the project demonstrates a rating of **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**.

Table 25: Summary of Project Findings and Ratings³²

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
Strategic Relevance		Highly Satisfactory (HS)
1. Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities	The project was aligned with the strategic planning documents of UNEP, which were relevant to the project formulation, namely MTS 2014-2017 (EA 2 and EA3) and UNEP POW 2014-2015 (EA 5B).	Satisfactory (S)
2. Alignment to UNEP Donor/GEF/Partner strategic priorities	The project was in line with the GEF-5 Focal Area Chemicals, Objective 1, Outcome 11.5.	Highly Satisfactory (HS)
3. Relevance to global, regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities	The project was relevant to UN SDGs # 3, 5, 8, 9, 11, and 12.	Highly Satisfactory (HS)
4. Complementarity with existing interventions/ Coherence	The project was complementary to other POPs monitoring programmes in the region, such as GAPS and LAPAN, but more cooperation would be required in the future.	Satisfactory (S)
Quality of Project Design	The project was initially approved without the results framework, but it was developed later. It did not contain a definition of pathways from outputs to higher-level results (Intermediate States, Impact).	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)
Nature of External Context	The COVID-19 pandemic and ethical clearances for breast milk samples caused delays and forced adaptive management decisions.	Favourable (F)
Effectiveness		Moderately Satisfactory (MS)

³² 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
1. Availability of outputs	Despite several implementation challenges, the project delivered all Outputs, including sampling and analysis of abiotic and biotic matrices. It also produced a regional assessment report and provided input into the synthesis report on the roadmap to sustainable POPs monitoring.	Satisfactory (S)
2. Achievement of project outcomes	Improved national capacities for the updated POPs GMP were demonstrated, but not all conditions for sustainable and effective POPs monitoring were in place	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)
3. Likelihood of impact (use 'likely' scale)	Sufficient co-financing and linkages between the scientific monitoring data and decision-making, as assumptions for Impact, did not hold.	Moderately Unlikely (MU)
Financial Management		Satisfactory (S)
1. Adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures	No evidence was found in relation to non-compliance with the UNEP financial policies and procedures.	Satisfactory (S)
2. Completeness of project financial information	Financial data were itemised by budget codes but not by project outputs. Data on project management costs was not provided. Co-financing data were provided only for project countries.	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)
Efficiency	Project duration was almost doubled, compared with the initially approved period, due to three no-cost extensions that were not sufficiently justified.	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)
Monitoring and Reporting		Satisfactory (S)
1. Monitoring of project implementation	M&E was conducted in line with the M&E Plan defined in the Project Document.	Satisfactory (S)
2. Project reporting	Available project reports were sufficiently detailed, and the reporting formats were aligned with the UNEP and GEF reporting standards.	Satisfactory (S)
Sustainability (use 'likely' scale)		Moderately Unlikely (MU)
1. Socio-political sustainability	The project produced guidelines for the establishment of national POPs monitoring programmes and piloted them in two project countries. However, a commitment of the national governments to the establishment of concrete national POPs monitoring programmes with involvement of the Regional Organization Group (ROG) was insufficient.	Moderately Likely (ML)
2. Financial sustainability	Co-financing for the project did not materialise, and POPs monitoring remains heavily dependent on donor funding	Moderately Unlikely (MU)
3. Institutional sustainability	Many trained staff were retained by the project laboratories. Strengthened capacities for sampling of core matrices were demonstrated, but more effort would be needed for improvement of laboratory infrastructure and capacity building for POPs analyses.	Moderately Likely (ML)
Factors Affecting Performance		Satisfactory (S)
1. Quality of project management and supervision	Overall, cooperation between the IA and EA was satisfactory.	Satisfactory (S)

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
2.1 UNEP/Implementing Agency:	A moderate level of required support was provided by UNEP to the BCCC-SCRC.	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)
2.2 Partners/Executing Agency:	No constraints were found on cooperation between the IA and EA, and between the EA and the project countries.	Satisfactory (S)
2. Stakeholders' participation and cooperation	No complaints were made as to the effectiveness of communication with and engagement of the stakeholders, although participation was limited to a narrow group of stakeholders from the project and expert laboratories.	Satisfactory (S)
3. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality	While the project had no direct focus on human rights and gender equality, gender dimensions were indirectly covered in the monitoring of exposure of women at childbearing age to POPs through sampling of breast milk.	Satisfactory (S)
4. Environmental and social safeguards	The project adhered to good laboratory practice for the management of laboratory wastes and ethical clearance protocols for sampling of breast milk	Satisfactory (S)
5. Country ownership and drivenness	Project ownership was strong for national coordinators from SC centres and project laboratories, but it was weaker for coordinators from government ministries.	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)
6. Communication and public awareness	Being implemented across all 4 regional projects, a communication strategy was developed, and many communication products were prepared and used in communication and public awareness.	Satisfactory (S)
Overall Project Performance Rating		Moderately Satisfactory (MS)

5.2 Lessons Learned

Lesson Learned #1:	The quality of results from POPs analysis in national laboratories could be enhanced in cases where a routine for analysis of POPs is established through repeated measurements.
Context/comment:	Experience from the project highlighted the importance of national POPs monitoring programmes for the sustainability of technical capacities for POPs monitoring. For similar future projects, national POPs monitoring programmes should define monitoring purposes and parameters and link them to specific national goals for the sake of cost-effectiveness.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	Table 21 (Outcome 2), Paragraphs 151, 153, 202

Lesson Learned #2:	Guidelines for effective presentation and utilisation of POPs monitoring data are essential for informing policy decisions and evaluating POPs control measures.
Context/comment:	There is a persisting lack of systematic national POPs monitoring programmes in the National Implementation Plans for the Stockholm Convention. The project piloted the procedure for development of national POPs monitoring programmes in two countries, which highlights the importance of linking the national POPs monitoring programmes and

	resulting data to the National Implementation Plans (NIP) that constitute a policy framework for management and control of POPs. For similar projects, there is a need to provide support and guidelines for effective presentation and utilisation of POPs monitoring data to inform policy decisions and evaluate control measures.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	153, 155, 158

Lesson Learned #3:	Smooth operation of equipment, in particular detectors, and availability of analytical standards, are necessary conditions for participation of national laboratories in interlaboratory assessments.
Context/comment:	Results from the interlaboratory comparisons showed that, despite almost 40 laboratories registered, about one-third of laboratories could not conduct analyses of ILC samples due to a lack of functional equipment and/or absence of analytical standards. For future similar projects, priority areas for further strengthening of the existing laboratory capacities include improvement of preventive and corrective maintenance of analytical equipment, ensuring availability of analytical standards, rationalization of logistics of sample shipment to expert laboratories, and optimized use of existing technical expertise in the region.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	7, 13, 139, 140, 141

Lesson Learned #4:	Participating national laboratories should establish a business plan for routine POPs analyses, including training of their technicians through analyses of internal laboratory standards.
Context/comment:	The project provided a few lessons that were related to the quality of analytical results of laboratories that participated in the interlaboratory assessments. One of the lessons was that the lack of routine POPs analyses negatively affected the accuracy of results. For similar projects, setting a robust business plan for national laboratories in the early stage of the project would enhance the quality of POPs analyses and the accuracy of results.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	Table 21 (Outcome 2), Paragraphs 151, 153, 202

Lesson Learned #5:	Co-financing by the countries should include a sizeable portion of in-cash contributions (ideally 50% or more of total co-financing contributions).
Context/comment:	Co-financing for the project was predominantly composed of in-kind contributions, which posed a challenge to the project's implementation. For similar projects, in-cash co-financing could potentially address the two main deficiencies that lead to the inability to return results, for which many laboratories were registered in interlaboratory assessments, namely, insufficient preventive and corrective maintenance of analytical equipment, and lack of analytical standards.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	13, 14, 56, 87, 155, 158, 196, 202

Lesson Learned #6:	For the production of more robust sets of data for the effectiveness evaluation of the Stockholm Convention, it is desirable to establish internally funded national POPs monitoring programmes in line with the
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	approach pilot-tested by the GMP2 LAC project and harmonise them with externally funded POPs monitoring activities, such as the GMP3 project.
Context/comment:	The project showed that it is important for similar projects not only to ensure more routine POPs analytical work for national laboratories but also to strengthen linkages between the scientific monitoring data and national policies for enhanced usage of the monitoring data to inform policy decisions on POPs management and control.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	144, 145, 153, 155, 158, 194, 196, 199, 200, 241

5.3 Recommendations³³

Recommendation #1:	Recommendation for the future phase of the project to establish formal and standing knowledge management and communication strategies for national GMP coordinators and experts, anchored by Regional Centres, to institutionalize peer support, technical exchange, and rapid problem-solving beyond the project's lifetime. The above strategies include Community of Practice (CoP) activities, such as having regular online sessions on a rotational basis, organizing peer support sessions, and sharing experiences, best practices, and lessons on selected topics in order to enhance communications and coordination among the respective regions. CoP should also cover key stakeholders who are involved in the implementation of the National Implementation Plans under the Stockholm Convention in participating countries, to broaden stakeholder engagement, facilitate policy reform, and enhance sustainability.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	While the objectives of the project (i.e., to strengthen capacity for implementation of the updated POPs GMP and to create the conditions for sustainable monitoring of POPs) were clear, the number of people engaged in the projects was limited in many participating countries. The continuity of project implementation was affected by the engagement of a small number of people, e.g., through the turnover of key staff. Furthermore, cooperation and knowledge sharing were not strong enough due to a lack of sustained interest from the people involved, staff turnover, and a lack of institutional structures that facilitate inter-country cooperation. Involvement of a broader number and type of stakeholders, coupled with enhanced cooperation/ knowledge sharing among them, would help mitigate the risk of discontinuity and facilitate communication across sectors and stakeholder groups.

³³ 8 recommendations were identified through the synthesis of terminal evaluations of all 4 regional projects, namely "Continuing Regional Support for the POPs Global Monitoring Plan under the Stockholm Convention in the Latin American and Caribbean Region (GEF ID 4881)", "Continuing Regional Support for the POPs Global Monitoring Plan under the Stockholm Convention in the Africa Region (GEF ID 4886)", "Implementation of the POPs Monitoring Plan in the Asian Region (GEF ID 4894)", and "Continuing Regional Support for the POPs Global Monitoring Plan under the Stockholm Convention in the Pacific Region (GEF ID 6978)". Each recommendation is broadly cross-referenced to findings of the respective evaluations, but is not necessarily perfectly linked to specific paragraphs of each evaluation report.

Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	9, 153, 169, 240
Priority Level:	High level
Type of Recommendation	Project level
Responsibility:	UNEP Task/ Project Manager
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Within one year, during the inception stage of the next phase of the project

Recommendation #2:	Recommendation for the future phase of the project to initiate the formulation of a coherent regional strategy and collaboration, especially on POPs monitoring, which considers the current capacities, networks, and interests of the member countries.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The third round of interlaboratory assessments concluded that none of the participating countries was able to carry out all analyses set out, as full-spectrum analysis of POPs requires advanced laboratory performance, and as laboratories are often specialized in matrix or compound types. This could also relate to the unavailability of the equipment and laboratory infrastructure to undergo the specified analysis. As more POPs are revised and annexed by the Stockholm Convention, it is unrealistic, according to experts and through experience gained in the project, that laboratories, especially in low-and middle-income countries, can monitor all listed POPs and produce high-quality data. Instead, a regional strategy that considers current capacities and interests, enabling countries to contribute and rectify their commitments as members of the Stockholm Convention, needs to be established in the future. Further collaborations in the region are also vital for an efficient and coherent regional strategy.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	9, 100, 159, 169, 198
Priority Level:	High level
Type of Recommendation	Project level
Responsibility:	UNEP Task Manager, UNEP Senior Management at the Branch/Unit level
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Within one year, during the inception stage of the next phase of the project

Recommendation #3:	Recommendation for the future phase of the project to consider that the project design integrates links between POPs monitoring and policymaking at the national level to support the project's sustainability. Plan and prepare to conduct a training needs assessment that covers the entire decision-making process from POP monitoring to policy decisions. Prepare training to meet national/local needs and requirements.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The project faced insufficient national funding during and after the project and a lack of mechanisms to sustain enhanced national capacities over the long term. As a result, there was limited evidence to substantiate a connection between POP monitoring and national decision-making.

	Furthermore, reflecting on a lesson learned from the project, it is important not only to ensure more routine POPs analytical work for national laboratories but also to strengthen links between the scientific monitoring data and national policies for enhanced usage of the monitoring data for informing policy decisions on POPs management and control. In addition, especially in relation to the linkage between POPs monitoring and national decision-making, the screening of capacity at the beginning of the project based on self-reporting provided only a rough understanding of training needs. More efforts in detailing a capacity baseline would support targeted training and create a foundation for future capacity-building efforts.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	9, 144, 145, 153, 155, 158, 159, 194, 196, 199, 200, 241
Priority Level:	High level
Type of Recommendation	Project level
Responsibility:	UNEP Task/ Project Manager
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Within one year, during the inception stage of the next phase of the project

Recommendation #4:	Recommendation for the future phase of the project to develop a clear communication strategy to strengthen the dissemination of results to a wider audience outside the scientific sphere, and to broaden awareness, visibility, and support for POPs-related policies and monitoring.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The project did not necessarily utilize communication tools effectively to promote advocacy for a wider audience, which resulted in low prioritization and buy-in at the governmental level. This partly affected a weak linkage between POPs monitoring and national decision-making. Public dissemination and campaigning could have been designed and implemented more effectively to increase awareness among various stakeholders, including government officials, on the POPs monitoring. It would help strengthen the connection between POPs monitoring and decision-making at the national level.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	226, 227, 228
Priority Level:	Medium level
Type of Recommendation	Project level
Responsibility:	UNEP Task/ Project Manager
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Within one year, during the inception stage of the next phase of the project

Recommendation #5:	Recommendation for the future phase of the project to plan to conduct detailed baseline studies in each participating region, including risk analysis and mitigation strategies, in cooperation with national governments and institutions at the design stage. This also includes ensuring the involvement of more than one laboratory per participating region.
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Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Due to the project design, the project delivered limited support to the establishment of conducive local conditions for POP monitoring and related decision-making, resulting in a project with limited impact on the national POP monitoring efforts and low likelihood of sustainability. Furthermore, the sustainability of capacities generated by the project and cooperation between POPs laboratories at the regional/national level could be further improved.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	141, 148, 158, 198, 211, 232
Priority Level:	Medium level
Type of Recommendation	Project level
Responsibility:	UNEP Task/ Project Manager
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Within one year, during the inception stage of the next phase of the project

Recommendation #6:	Recommendation for the future phase of the project to develop a set of quality indicators for robust results measurement at the design stage (or at the inception stage if the design is not found adequate). In particular, desired outcomes should be properly explored and spelled out with meaningful indicators. To enhance timely adaptive management, utilize a monitoring system to include monthly traffic-light dashboards and time-bound reviews that trigger automatic management responses and help avoid delays.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The formulation of project outcomes was not necessarily perfect, leaving room for interpretation. Outcome 1 'National capacities for implementing the updated POPs Global Monitoring Plan (GMP) are strengthened' should have been followed up with an explanation of the desired capacities and tangible targets for strengthening, and Outcome 2 'Conditions for sustainable monitoring of POPs in the Asian region are in place' lacks substance if the term, 'Conditions', was not investigated and detailed. Designing relevant indicators would lead to a better understanding of the direction of the project. During the project implementation, monitoring did not consistently prompt preventive action. Indicators lacked milestone specificity in parts. Furthermore, excessive implementation delays were driven by SSFA/legal bottlenecks, ethics approvals, and late-cycle publication processes. To address these issues, monitoring should be done reactively rather than preventively.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	6, 10, 14, 183, 191, 229
Priority Level:	High level
Type of Recommendation	Project level
Responsibility:	UNEP Task/ Project Manager
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Within one year, during the inception stage of the next phase of the project

Recommendation #7:	Recommendation for the future phase of the project to provide necessary support to the countries/partners for a better understanding of co-financing and its reporting.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The evaluation reveals that co-financing reporting among the project's co-financing partners was inconsistent and incomplete. This might potentially prevent effective financial tracking and financial management as a whole. Furthermore, particularly as most of the co-financing was provided in kind rather than in cash for this project, the lack of understanding of co-financing reporting also adversely affected financial management.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	163, 164
Priority Level:	Medium level
Type of Recommendation	Project level
Responsibility:	UNEP Task / Project Manager
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Within one year, during the inception stage of the next phase of the project

Recommendation #8:	Recommendation for the future phase of the project to develop and promote specific gender mainstreaming project metrics based on analysis of gender equality and women's empowerment issues in the respective regions and countries.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The project was developed at a time when gender action plans were not required, and, hence, the project results framework did not include gender-responsive indicators and targets. However, through a focused gender analysis, gender-specific issues associated with differences in exposure, health impacts, and participation related to POPs monitoring would help inform a gender-responsive action plan for future projects.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	88, 190, 216
Priority Level:	Medium level
Type of Recommendation	Project level
Responsibility:	UNEP Task/ Project Manager
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Within one year, during the inception stage of the next phase of the project

ANNEX I. RESPONSE TO STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

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

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator(s) Response	UNEP Evaluation Office Response
Entire Report	The language used is sometimes rather indirect, which makes it hard to find the real meaning of the words. Therefore, the weaker parts of the project are a bit hidden.	No action taken. The comment is too general and does not specify what should be changed.	Agreed with the evaluator. Unless specific paragraphs/sentences/phrases are clearly mentioned, it is challenging for the evaluator to change the language used. The tone of the language is generally appropriate throughout the report.
Executive Summary	The summary includes too many words, which makes it difficult to find the real conclusions. Table 2 tends to lean to a more positive side than was the case in reality.	Same as above. The comment does not specify any factual incorrectness.	Agreed with the evaluator. It is tough for the evaluator to address this comment unless more details are specified in the comment. In general, the Executive Summary is not verbose – the total length of the summary is 4 pages, following the UNEP evaluation guidelines and template, and no lengthy or redundant paragraphs are inserted.
Conclusions	The following conclusions should be inserted: - Lack of ownership by the participating countries; - main instrumental lack of mass spectrometers; - Management and guidance by the UNEP office was continuously hampered by understaffing	No action taken. Weak ownership of the countries is mentioned in sections 4.9.2 and 4.9.5, and lack of instrumentation in paragraphs 11, 96, 199, Table 23, and the text describing the problem under Recommendation 2. The comment on UNEP management does not appear to be valid for the LAC project, as it was managed by the BCCC-SCRC from the beginning to the end.	Agreed with the evaluator. The relevant analyses and information are mentioned in the existing sections and paragraphs specified by the evaluator. The comment itself addresses evaluative judgment rather than factual correction, which is normally beyond the scope of the evaluator's revision.
Page 2 Paragraph 12	Questions about the cause of the lack of detailed financial data (whether IA/countries were responsible for lack of financial data)	No action taken. The statements on lack of details relate to the fact that recording and reporting of financial data do not allow for comparison of budget allocations with actual expenditures under individual project components 1-5. This is not an issue for the EA or the countries, but primarily for the IA (UNEP).	Agreed with the evaluator. In general, responsibility for the financial management that is described in the comment lies with the IA rather than the EA/project countries.
Page 2 Paragraph 12, Page 43	One of the major reason for no cost extension was COVID-19 pandemic. And as mentioned above, the lack of detailed financial data may not be the limiting factor for the assessment as	I concur with the explanation made by the Evaluation Office.	As per the UNEP evaluation requirements, any project that underwent 3 or more no-cost extensions will receive the 'Moderately Unsatisfactory' rating for the 'Efficiency' criterion,

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator(s) Response	UNEP Evaluation Office Response
	the project used standard template. This should be taken into account the rating of Efficiency.		even if the delay is justified, and other criteria are met. This time, the project underwent 3 no-cost extensions, and it was delayed by almost 3 to 4 years from the initially expected completion date. Therefore, the rating stands at 'Moderately Unsatisfactory'.
Page 2 Paragraph 9, Page 25 Paragraph 102	The cooperation with the existing global and regional monitoring networks was facilitated by the Stockholm Convention Global Coordination Group and Regional Organizational Groups, not under the scope of the project.	No action taken. The report does not say that there was no cooperation, but that the cooperation was weak and should be improved. Specifically, the LAPAN network collected a number of samples during the GMP-2 project, but could not analyse them due to a lack of access to laboratory infrastructures.	Agreed with the evaluator. The evaluation aimed to assess how proactively the project tried to coordinate with other ongoing, similar initiatives to bring complementary effects rather than the project's obligation.
Page 2 Paragraph 11	Several conditions have been established to ensure the sustainability of POP monitoring, including training videos, a roadmap, and communication and awareness campaigns. These measures facilitated access to technical expertise. Other conditions, such as sustainable funding and advanced laboratory infrastructure, are independent of the project's scope	Noted, but no action taken. The comment mentions project outputs, in line with the standard methodology. TE is required to assess the sustainability of project outcomes, i.e., factors and conditions (such as funding and laboratory infrastructure) that are outcomes of the project and are under the scope of action of the participating governments.	Agreed with evaluator. The rating is properly given, following the UNEP Evaluation Criteria Ratings Matrix.
Page 3 Paragraph 13	Challenges that have been faced by GRULAC laboratories are globally common. Universities and laboratories in the LAC region are rather advanced compared to those in other developing countries.	No action taken. The TE of the GRULAC project does not make a comparison with other developing countries but assesses the situation in the GRULAC region only. The findings listed in the report are based on the interviews with laboratory personnel in the GRULAC participating countries, GMP-2 sectoral reports, and the report on the road to sustainable POPs monitoring in the GRULAC region.	Agreed with the evaluator. A comparative assessment with countries in other regions is not intended for this evaluation. Rather, the Latin America-specific issue has been elaborated in the narrative.
Page 3 Paragraph 14, Page 4 Paragraph 24	The project cannot impose a type of co-financing on the project partners.	No action taken. More than 2 million USD was initially planned as in-cash co-financing in the Project Document, but the countries reported only a fraction of it as co-financing that was actually realized. In-kind co-financing included mostly recurring expenditures (premises,	Agreed with the evaluator. The analysis does not imply that the project needs to impose a specific type of co-financing on the project's partners. The problem was that the amount of materialized in-cash co-financing was much lower than initially anticipated during the project design phase.

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator(s) Response	UNEP Evaluation Office Response
		electricity, salaries) and thus did not contribute to addressing the insufficiencies.	
Page 4 Paragraph 24	While we agree that the projects should aim for more in cash co-finance, it was not a requirement of the project. However, it is also noted that the project did not achieve the anticipated co-finance.	No action taken. The lesson learned is that the in-kind co-financing does not help address the two main deficiencies of the participating laboratories, namely, insufficient preventive and corrective maintenance of analytical equipment, and a lack of analytical standards. For this reason, in-cash co-financing is needed, as explained in the context/comment under Lesson #5 on Page 58.	Agreed with the Evaluator. The lesson learned is generally intended for similar projects and/or portfolios. It is not necessarily about the project that is subject to this evaluation. Therefore, the lesson learned may include learning that comes from a certain aspect, which was not a requirement of the project.
Page 4 Paragraph 25	A text to Lesson Learned #6 should be revised to "it is desirable to establish internally funded national POPs monitoring programmes in line with the approach pilot-tested by the GMP2 LAC project and harmonise them with externally funded POPs monitoring activities such as the GMP3 projects. but while is desirable, it has been shown that countries face problems with internal budgets and analytical capabilities to be able to carry it out without external help, and even more when more sophisticated POPs are listed COP after COP".	No action taken. The text has already included points on the need to establish national POPs monitoring programmes, and their harmonization with externally-funded monitoring activities is also suggested to ensure that future externally-funded POPs monitoring activities will not take place in isolation and will not be seen as being imposed on the countries by external entities, but owned by the countries. The increased national ownership and harmonization with external funding will help mobilize additional funding from national budgets for national laboratory infrastructures and ensure the continued development of analytical capabilities that are required for sampling and analysis of the POPs controlled by the Stockholm Convention.	Agreed with the evaluator. The suggested elements have been covered in the existing narrative.
Page 34 Output 3	An additional table should be inserted with the names of the 30 POPs analysed in human milk samples.	No action taken. The text of paragraph 131 specifies the 30 POPs as those listed under the Stockholm Convention COPs 4-9.	Agreed with the evaluator. The information is listed in the existing document.
Page 37 Table 21 Narrative Assessment	Provision of instruments, establishment of routine analysis, and the establishment of national monitoring networks are all not part of the project deliverables.	No action taken. The first point (availability of HRGC-HRMS) and text of paragraph 152 (sufficient capacity for monitoring and analysis of legacy POPs) summarize the achievements in the GRULAC region. Further text on the availability of instrumentation is not a criticism of the project achievements, but hints at the necessary future actions by the countries.	Agreed with the evaluator. The existing narrative does not claim/imply that the project needs to take responsibility for this.

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator(s) Response	UNEP Evaluation Office Response
Page 39 Paragraph 155	Lack of funding precluding initiation of national POPs monitoring programmes and restraining the amount and quality of POPs monitoring data generated for the LAC region are beyond the scope of the project.	No action taken. The likelihood of Impact does not solely depend on the activities under the evaluated project but is influenced by parallel initiatives, government policies, and financing. Identifying lack of funding as a factor affecting the likelihood of impact is intended to help mitigate future risks and leverage future support to increase the impact of the project.	Agreed with the evaluator. The comment addresses the assumption for the change process from Outcomes to Intermediate States. Assumptions are often beyond the control of the project. The existing narrative is aligned with this principle.
Page 40 Paragraph 158	Establishing national monitoring programmes is beyond the scope of the project and so is not supported by the GEF.	No action taken. Outcome 2 is defined in terms of conditions in place for sustainable and effective monitoring of POPs. Unlike the project Outputs, the project Outcomes are to be achieved through the contribution of the project Outputs and other contributions of the project stakeholders that were not included in the scope of the project. Lack of national POPs monitoring programmes was identified as one of the main obstacles on the road to sustainable POPs monitoring.	Agreed with the evaluator. Not all factors contributing to the achievement of the Outcome are attributable to the project; some are, while others are not.
Page 42 Paragraph 167	This project was executed by two partners (BCRC and KRU) at one point in parallel and subsequently in the last phase by KRU with transfer of funds between the partners. In between the were approved budget which still respected and in compliance with initially approved budget at inception stage which restricted/ don't allow the movements of budget across components, comparison of planned and actual during implementation may be difficult. Equally there were approved budget revisions during implementation. However, final financial report in relation to final substantive report and in comparison, planned initial budget may give indicative information to compare in this regard though it's not easy or straight forward. We take note off this and highlight that reporting deficiency when one	Noted but no action taken. The financial reports do not enable straightforward contribution of the planned and actual expenditures for each Outcome. This has nothing to do with the implementation modality but with the use of the same format for reporting as was used for the approved budget in the ProDoc.	Agreed with the evaluator. The narrative in Paragraph 167 is not related to the implementation modality of the project.

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator(s) Response	UNEP Evaluation Office Response
	project is executed by both external partner (PCA) and Internal partner (IA)		
Page 42 Paragraph 169	Collaboration with other POPs monitoring networks was coordinated by the Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention.	No action taken. No concrete examples of coordination are mentioned in the 2nd POPs monitoring report in GRULAC, and insufficient coordination was also mentioned by relevant stakeholders interviewed by the Evaluator.	Agreed with the evaluator. The evaluation aims to assess how proactively the project tried to coordinate with other similar initiatives to enhance the project's efficiency rather than the project's obligation.
Page 45-46 Paragraph 190	There are training reports' annexes, which contain the gender-disaggregated data. It is also included in the final workshop. The topic of gender was not included in the original project because at that time it was not a requirement. When it began to gain relevance, we incorporated it where it could be. Gender disaggregated data have been reported in the consolidated training report (for all regional projects).	Partially accepted. The training reports contain statements on the number of participants and their names. The gender information should be included in the body of the training report. Non-existence of the gender-related requirement at the time of the project design was inserted as a footnote to the commented paragraph.	Agreed with the evaluator. The evaluator's response to the stakeholder's comment is valid in general.
Page 48	Could you please clarify how the weightage of ratings is determined across the three sustainability aspects? I notice that two aspects are rated as "Moderately Likely" and one as "Moderately Unlikely" (MU). Does having one MU among the three aspects result in the overall sustainability being classified as MU? Kindly confirm.	Methodological explanation is given by the Evaluation Office.	As per the UNEP evaluation policy, a unique rating calculation method is employed for the overall rating of Sustainability (unlike other evaluation criteria). The overall rating of Sustainability is taken as the lowest of the three sub-categories. In this evaluation, Financial Sustainability is rated as Moderately Unlikely (MU); hence, the overall rating of Sustainability stands at MU.
Page 49 Paragraph 208	The project followed the available GEF guidelines at the time of submission. However, the gaps have been recognized and addressed during implementation as much as possible. We will be happy to receive the information on guidelines that were not fully followed at the time of submission.	Noted, but no action taken. According to the information from the interviews, the project was initially approved without the results framework, which was not in line with the GEF guideline on project preparation.	Agreed with the evaluator. The evaluator provided a convincing response to the stakeholder's comment.
Page 54 Paragraph 241	To strengthen local capacity in the management and interpretation of data POPs at the different countries, a theoretical-practical course will be given via Zoom in	Partially accepted. The first part of the comment was inserted into Paragraph 226 under Section 4.9.6, which already included the second part of the comment.	Agreed with the evaluator. The evaluator generally took a reasonable action in response to the stakeholder's comment.

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator(s) Response	UNEP Evaluation Office Response
	August and September 2021 (Spanish and English). Additionally, a POPs Data Handling Guidance Latin America and the Caribbean (Spanish and English) was developed		
Page 57-58 Lesson Learned #2	A POPs Data Management Guide for Latin America and the Caribbean (in Spanish and English) was developed to support decision-makers in the use of monitoring data.	Noted, but no action taken. The text in context/comment is not for the current project under TE, but for future (follow-up) projects.	Agreed with the evaluator. This lesson learned is intended for future projects to inform policy decisions in a better way.

ANNEX II. EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Evaluation Questions	Data Collection Methods	Sources of information
Strategic questions		
To what extent did the project incorporate lessons learned from the previous phase of the project and any recommendations from its own Mid Term Review into the project design/implementation? To what extent did the project promote cross learning/knowledge sharing with three other GMP regional projects? How did the project benefit from having three other regional projects? How did the project link scientific monitoring data with decision making at various levels? How were the national-level monitoring mechanisms integrated or coordinated with POPs monitoring under GMP? To what extent have data from the project been included in the data warehouse and is there evidence of this data being used in subsequent effectiveness evaluation report? To what extent have inter-lab assessments contributed to laboratories from developing countries improving their quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) practices and ultimately improving the quality of analysis?	Online interviews and field visits Survey questionnaire Review of primary project documentation Interviews with stakeholders: Desk reviews of secondary data (evaluation reports, studies, etc.)	Interviews with the IA and EA Project Documents Reports on interlaboratory assessments National and regional monitoring reports Opinions of implementing partners, government officials and participating laboratories Mid-Term Review report Terminal Evaluation report of the previous phase
Strategic relevance		
How relevant is the project to regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities? How is the project responding to UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities? How is the project aligned with the GEF-5 Focal Area Strategy? What is the relation of the project with existing interventions in the given technical area?	Review of primary project documentation Participant observations and field inspections Interviews with stakeholders: Desk reviews of secondary data (evaluation reports, studies, etc.)	Governments' National Implementation Plans for the Stockholm Conventions Governments obligations under the Stockholm Convention UNEP MTS and POW programme documents GEF-5 Focal Area Strategy
Quality of project design		
How adequate was the project design for achievement of the outputs and outcomes?	Review of primary project documentation Assessment of project elements according to the Project Quality Design template (see Annex III)	PIF, Project Document, Inception Workshop report
Nature of external context		
Where there any unforeseen developments that impacted the project success?	Interviews with stakeholders and review of relevant documentation.	Project reports, Interviews with project team, Stakeholder consultations
Effectiveness		
Were the project outputs delivered in the planned quantities, required quality and timeframe? Which project outcomes have been achieved? To what extent contributed the outputs to achievement of the planned outcomes? Which are the aspects of the project that have been successful and how the project can further expand these benefits?	Review of primary project documentation Analysis of survey questionnaire results Analysis of interview records with implanting partners and national project beneficiaries	Annual workplans Annual narrative progress reports and GEF PIRs Output documentation (technical studies, training reports, meeting minutes and decisions) Records of interviews with implementing partners and project beneficiaries

Evaluation Questions	Data Collection Methods	Sources of information
What are the factors that facilitated effective implementation of the project components in the countries and regionally? To what extent were the work-planning processes results-based? Is there any prospect of positive impacts of the intervention?		Final narrative report Programme/thematic areas evaluation reports
Financial management		
Did the project adhere to UNEP's financial policies and procedures? To what extent financial controls have been established that allow the project management to make informed decisions regarding the budget at any time and allow for the timely flow of funds? To which extent the project management ensured completeness of financial information? What was the quality of the communication between financial and project management staff?	Review of primary project documentation Review and analysis of financial reports Review and analysis of audit reports	Annual budget plans Annual financial reports Interview records with implementing partners Audit reports
Efficiency		
Are the regional and national project management, governance and advisory support structures in place? Have there been any delays in project start-up and implementation and if so what were the reasons? Have the implementing partners taken timely actions to solve implementation issues? Which mechanisms does UNEP have in place to monitor implementation? Are these effective? Has there been over-expenditure or under-expenditure on the project? To what extent was decision-making in the project implementation transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? Have there been any issues with procurement of goods and services for the project?	Review of primary project documentation Analysis of interview records with Implementing Partners Review of implementation documents Review and analysis of the MTR report	Annual budget plans Interview records with implementing partners Implementation documents (Partnership MOAs, PIRs, Minutes of Meetings, documents communicating decisions, SSAs) GEF PIRs and Annual Progress Reports MTR report
Monitoring and reporting		
To what extent did the project monitoring facilitate the timely tracking of progress towards the planned outputs and outcomes? Has the project results framework/logframe been used as a management tool? Were there any hindering factors that affected implementation and if so how were they addressed? How well was project reporting done?	Review of primary project documentation Analysis of interview records with: Implementing Partners	Annual project narrative and financial reports GEF PIRs Interview records with implementing partners
Sustainability		
To what extent have institutional frameworks, policies, and legal and accountability frameworks been improved? To what extent has the project developed institutional capacity (systems, structures, staff, expertise, etc.) that will be self-sufficient after the project closure date? Has the project put in place frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes that will create mechanisms for institutional and technical knowledge transfer after the project's closure? Are there sufficient financial and human resources available to sustain the project results? What additional factors are needed to create an enabling environment for continued flow of financing? Has the project achieved stakeholders' consensus regarding courses of action after the project's closure? Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outcomes?	Analysis of interview records with implementing partners Analysis of survey results Analysis of synergies with parallel and complementary initiatives Desk review and analysis of secondary data	Records of interviews with the implementing partners and national project stakeholders Results of survey questionnaire Validated reformulated ToC Narrative reports from parallel and complementary initiatives Evaluation reports from parallel and complementary initiatives

Evaluation Questions	Data Collection Methods	Sources of information
Are there any environmental factors that could undermine and reverse the project's outcomes, including factors that have been identified by project stakeholders? What is the risk that the level of stakeholder ownership will be insufficient to allow for the project outcomes/benefits to be sustained? Is there sufficient public awareness in support of the sustainability of the project results?		
Factors affecting project performance and cross cutting issues		
Has the project developed and leveraged partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders? Did the stakeholders have roles in project decision-making that support efficient and effective project implementation? To which extent has stakeholder involvement and public awareness contributed to the progress towards achievement of project objectives and are there any limitations to stakeholder awareness of project outcomes/ participation in project activities? How regular and effective was the internal project communication with project stakeholders and the public at large? Are there any aspects of the project that might yield excellent communications material as additional project output? Did the Project Team and partners fulfil the GEF reporting requirements in an effective and timely manner? To what extent have lessons derived from the adaptive management process been documented, shared with and internalized by key partners and incorporated into project implementation? Have the PIRs been shared with the Project Board and other key stakeholders? Has the project facilitated links, mutual access, cooperation and learning exchanges between the relevant national and international agencies? Was there any partnership strategy in place for implementation of the project and if so how effective was it? Did the project define and implement an adequate upscaling or replication strategy?	Review of primary project documentation Partnership agreements Feedback from direct stakeholders and implementing partners Interviews with: -Officials and key staff from National Implementing Partners Review and analysis of secondary data	Project Document Annual financial reports Annual Progress Reports Government partners' reports Feedback from direct stakeholders and implementing partners Lessons learned Communications between project stakeholders Meeting records
Gender and human rights aspects		
To what extent was the UNDP initiative designed to appropriately incorporate in each outcome area contributions to attainment of gender equality? To what extent did UNDP support positive changes in terms of gender equality and were there any unintended effects? Provide example(s) of how the initiative contributes to gender equality. Can results of the programme be disaggregated by sex?	Interviews with stakeholders and review of project documentation	Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) Government partner reports Feedback from interviews and on-line survey
To what extent does the project take into account the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged to promote social equity? How has UNDP programmed social inclusion into the initiative?	Interviews with stakeholders and review of project documentation	Feed Government partner reports back from interviews and on-line survey

ANNEX III. STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED DURING THE EVALUATION

Stakeholders consulted during the evaluation

Organisation	Position	Role in the project	Gender
UNEP GEF Chemicals and Waste Unit, Chemicals and Health Branch, Industry and Economy Division	Programme Management Officer	Task Manager of GMP2 Projects	M
	Associate Programme Management Officer	Assisting Task Manager	M
	Fund Management Officer	Fund Management Officer	M
	Head of Knowledge and Risk Unit	Former Task Manager of GMP2 Projects	M
BCCC-SCRC	Head of laboratory – co-Director	Project Manager, ROG Member	F
	Assistant to Head of Lab	Project Support	F
INTI Argentina	Head of laboratory	Head of Laboratory	F
	Director of the BRCC	National Coordinator	M
	Organic Laboratory	Head of Laboratory	M
	Dairy Products: Chromatography Laboratory	Head of Laboratory	F
	Biology Laboratory	Laboratory Chemist	F
Ministry of Environment, Argentina	Head of Chemicals Dept.	National Coordinator	F
	Consultant	Assistant to NC	F
CETESB Brazil	Physical Chemical Analysis Division	Division Manager National Coordinator	F
	Environmental Quality Directorate	Director	F
	Environmental Analysis Department	Department Manager	F
	Stockholm Convention Regional Centre	Technical Coordinator	F
	Organic Chemistry Laboratory	Laboratory Manager	F
		Laboratory Chemist	F
	Air Sampling and Analysis Laboratory	Laboratory Chemist	F
	Telemetry Laboratory – Air Quality	Laboratory Chemist	M
Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change	Department of Environmental Quality	Director Stockholm and Minamata Convention Focal Point	F
		General Coordinator of Chemical Substances Quality	F
Federal University of Rio Grande Brazil	Head of Laboratory	Head of LAPAN	M
Escola Nacional de Saúde Pública - FIOCRUZ (Oswaldo Cruz Foundation)	ROG Member	ROG Member	F
Universidad de Antioquia, Colombia	Head of Diagnostic and Control Group for Contamination	Monitoring Coordinator	M
	Department Head	National Coordinator	F

Organisation	Position	Role in the project	Gender
Ministry of Environment, Water and Ecologic Transition, Ecuador	Consultant	Advisor to NC	F
Ministry of Environment, Chile	Head of Environmental Resources Department	National Coordinator	F
Universidad de Concepción Chile	Supervisor of Chemical Laboratory	Head of laboratory	F
Universidad Autónoma De Occidente, Mexico	Head of laboratory	Head of laboratory	F
RECETOX	Director	Expert Laboratory	F
CVUA Freiburg	Director	Expert Laboratory	M
VU Netherlands	Professor	Expert Laboratory	M
Environment and Climate Change Canada	Group Leader HAPS Laboratory	GCG Coordinator	M

ANNEX IV. KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

Project planning and reporting documents

- GMP2 LAC: Project Identification Form (PIF)
- GMP2 LAC: Request or CEO Endorsement with annexes
- Project Implementation Reports (PIR) 2018-2023
- Financial Reports
- Final Co-financing Report
- Minutes of the Mid-Term Workshop and of the Final Workshop

Project outputs – Overall

- Review of Facts, Experiences, Achievements, and Challenges in Relation to POPs Monitoring (UNEP 2023)
- Training Report: Capacity building on POPs monitoring in biota and abiotic matrices in the Africa, Asia, Pacific and GRULAC regions (UNEP 2024)
-

Project outputs work package 1:

- Minutes of the Inception Workshop

Project outputs work package 2:

- Training Reports for 10 LAC countries (except Mexico)
- Sectoral Report on air monitoring
- Sectoral Report on water monitoring

Project outputs work package 3:

- Sectoral Report on human milk

Project outputs work package 4:

- Biennial Global Interlaboratory Assessment on Persistent Organic Pollutants – Third Round 2016/2017
- Biennial Global Interlaboratory Assessment on Persistent Organic Pollutants – Fourth Round 2018/2019
- Organisation and Outcomes of Four Rounds of Interlaboratory Assessments on POPs
- LAC Regional Assessment Report on POPs monitoring

Project outputs work package 5:

- Synthesis Report on GMP2 Sustainability Analysis

Previous evaluations

- Mid-Term Review of the GMP2 LAC Project (2018)
- Terminal Evaluation of the Four UNEP/GEF GMP1 Projects (2015)

Reference documents

- Third Regional Monitoring Report Region of Latin America and the Caribbean (Stockholm Convention, 2021)
- National Implementation Plans for Stockholm Conventions for 11 LAC countries
- National Reports to Stockholm Convention from 11 LAC countries

ANNEX V. EVALUATION ITINERARY

Evaluation Mission to Argentina and Brazil 18-23 August 2025

18 August 2025	Departure from Vienna
19 August 2025	Arrival to Sao Paulo (early morning)
CETESB Sao Paulo	Director of Environmental Quality Directorate
	Manager of Environmental Analysis Department
	Manager of Physical Chemical Analysis Division /National Coordinator
	Manager of Organic Chemistry Laboratory
	Laboratory Chemist from Air Sampling and Analysis Laboratory
	Laboratory Chemist from the Telemetry Laboratory
	Tour of the CETESB laboratory facilities
	Coordinator of the Stockholm Convention Regional Centre
20 August 2025	
Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (on-line meeting)	Director of Department of Environmental Quality – Stockholm Convention Focal Point
	General Coordinator of Chemical Substances Management
FIOCRUZ (Oswaldo Cruz Foundation) (on-line meeting)	National member of the Regional Organization Group
	Departure to Buenos Aires
21 August 2025	
INTI/BCRC	Director and GMP2 National Coordinator
INTI/Laboratories	Head of Chemistry and Environmental Department
	Head of Organic Laboratory
	Head of Dairy Products: Chromatography Laboratory
	Head of Biology Laboratory
	Tour of INTI laboratories
22 August 2025	
Ministry of Environment	Head of Chemicals Department
	Consultant on Waste Management
23 August 2025	Departure from Buenos Aires (early morning)

ANNEX VI. COUNTRY STATUS REPORTS (BRAZIL AND ARGENTINA)

Mission Report Summary

Mission to Argentina under the Terminal Evaluation of the GMP2 project 21-22 August 2025

Country:	Argentina
Key country partner/focal point	National Coordinator: Alberto Capra, Co-Director of the Basel Convention Regional Centre for South America The National Coordinator was interviewed, and a tour of the laboratory facilities of the National Institute of Industrial Technology (INTI) was organised on 21 August 2025.
Date of joining Stockholm Convention and signing any amendments:	Argentina signed the Stockholm Convention in 2001 and ratified it on 25 January 2005.
Status of the National Implementation Plan:	The first NIP was submitted in 2007 and was updated in 2014 and 2018. The most recent update was transmitted in June 2018 and addresses the SC amendments up to COP5.
Status of the project in the country:	
Component 1: GMP2 project implementation agreement was signed at the project inception, and a response to the survey of training needs was submitted. Component 2: Training Course on POPs was carried out at INTI on 30 September - 4th October 2019 with 12 participants from INTI. The training was focused on the analysis of PFAS in water, mother milk, and serum. As for the purposes of the training, a LC-MS instrument placed in the laboratory was available: HPLC-MS/MS (QqQ). In 2017-2018, a total of 10 samples from a passive air sampler installed at INTI were collected and sent for analysis to expert laboratories. In 2017-2018, a total of 8 seasonal samples of water from Rio de la Plata were collected and sent for analysis on PFAS to the expert laboratory at the MTM Orebro University. INTI laboratory analysed Component 3: In addition to sending the breast milk samples to the expert laboratory, some analyses for some POPs were performed at the Chromatography and Special Tests Laboratory of the INTI Dairy Laboratory Department, using GC-μECD analytical method. The sample processing method applied for POPs analysis was QuEChERS, adapted by the laboratory to the human milk matrix. Component 4: INTI registered for participation in the 3rd and 4th interlaboratory assessments organized under the GMP2 project. INTI participated in the workshop on the assessment of results of air and water samples from the 3rd assessment on 5-7 April 2017. Results from analysis of all samples were sent to the Global Data Warehouse maintained by RECETOX and were included in the 3rd Regional Monitoring Report for LAC produced in 2021. Component 5: Argentina submitted a comprehensive national implementation report and provided input into the global synthesis report on the road to sustainable POPs monitoring. Summary: The project helped establish essential capabilities for environmental monitoring of POPs in Argentina. Regarding measurement capabilities, both the training received and participation in interlaboratory exercises helped consolidate and strengthen the capacities to apply the testing	

methodologies. Several POPs determinations have already been mastered, while work continues on advancing new analytes and matrices.	
Significant changes in plans/personnel:	No major changes in personnel
Key challenges/negative effects:	As the sample matrix and the analytical technique become more complex, existing equipment at INTI does not allow for reaching the sensitivity and selectivity limits. In some cases, these limitations were addressed by a more exhaustive sample clean-up, but this approach did not work in all cases.
Key positive lessons/unexpected achievements:	In October 2020, INTI made a presentation to the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development on the progress in the GMP2. The results obtained for PFAS determinations in water were presented at the TecnoINTI 2022 conferences. The TecnoINTI conferences were open to the industrial and productive sectors, the academic sector, various government institutions, and society as a whole. Argentina plans to use the data generated by the GMP2 project and the capacities developed through the various activities to: • Update national policies, legal provisions, and regulatory mechanisms related to the sound management of POPs; • Establish national POPs monitoring programs; • In future related projects, identify priorities for National Implementation Plans and initiative reporting; • Develop communication materials for policymakers and other key stakeholders such as industry, NGOs, and healthcare workers; INTI participates in international projects of the IAEA-ARCAL (International Atomic Energy Agency - Regional Cooperation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean) that pursue the objective of studying the level of exposure to POPs among the Latin American population, using the presence of these contaminants in human milk, soil, and water as an indicator.

Mission Report Summary
Mission to Brazil under the Terminal Evaluation of the GMP2 project
18-19 August 2025

Country:	Brazil
Key country partner/focal point	National Coordinator: Maria Yumiko Tominaga, Manager of the Physical and Chemical Analysis Division, Companhia Ambiental do Estado de São Paulo (CETESB) The National Coordinator was interviewed, and a tour of CETESB laboratory facilities was arranged on 19 August 2025.
Date of joining Stockholm Convention and signing any amendments:	Brazil signed the Stockholm Convention in 2001 and ratified it on 16 June 2005.
Status of the National Implementation Plan:	The first NIP was submitted in 2012 and was updated in 2015 and 2023. The most recent update was transmitted in December 2023, addressing the SC amendments up to COP10.
Status of the project in the country:	
Component 1: GMP2 project implementation agreement was signed at the project inception but did not include participation in the human milk survey. An amendment to the project implementation agreement was signed in January 2018 to include active air sampling and water sampling/analysis (not originally included in the project). Component 2: Training Course on POPs was carried out at CETESB, Sao Paolo on 19- 23rd February 2018 for 12 participants from CETESB (2 from CETESB's Air Sampling and Analysis Lab, 6 from CETESB's Organic Chemistry Lab, 2 from CETESB's Toxicological Analysis Lab and 1 from CETESB's Physical Chemical Analysis Division), and 1 participant from Foundation of Oswaldo Cruz. The training was focused on the analysis of PBDEs and PFAS in ambient air and water. The available instruments at the laboratory included: GC-ECD, GC-MS (CI), GC-MS/MS (QqQ), HRGC-HRMS, HPLCMS/MS(Q-TOF). For the purpose of the training, only GC-MS, GC-MS/MS and HPLC-MS/MS (Q-TOF) were used. The training also included the use of an active air sampler (AAS) that had been procured by the project. In 2017-2018, a total of 96 samples from 12 passive air samplers installed at CETESB were collected and 48 samples were sent to expert laboratories, while other 48 samples were analysed at CETESB laboratory (8 samples for OCPs, 8 samples for PCB6, 16 samples for dl-POPs, 8 samples for PBDE/PBB, 8 samples for PFAS). Furthermore, a total of 10 active air samples were collected and sent to an expert laboratory (3 samples for basic POPs, 3 samples for dl-POPs, 2 samples for PBDEs and 2 samples for PFAS). The active sampler was installed at CETESB, and active samples were collected from exposures in October 2018–February 2019. More samples could not be taken as CETESB did not receive additional PUFs for the AAS. However, only a few data were generated due to deterioration of the PUF disks or loss of sample extracts during clean-up in the expert laboratory. In 2017, 4 seasonal samples of water were collected from the Amazon River in Itacoatiara County. In 2018, the sampling location was changed, and 4 seasonal samples of water were collected from São Vicente channel in São Paulo. A total of 8 samples of water were sent for analysis to the expert laboratory at the MTM Orebro University, and another 8 water samples were collected and analysed by the national laboratory (CETESB). Component 3: Brazil did not participate in sampling for human milk.	

In 2017, samples of national interest included 3 sediment samples, 2 total suspended particulate (TSP) samples, 2 transformer oil samples for PCB analysis, and one solid waste sample for chlordecone analysis. In 2018, fish and sediment samples were collected from the same site of water sampling for PFAS (2018) in São Paulo. All national samples were sent to the expert laboratories. Component 4: CETESB registered for participation in the 3rd and 4th interlaboratory assessments organized under the GMP2 project. CETESB participated in the workshop on the assessment of results of air and water samples from the 3rd assessment on 5-7 April 2017. Results from analysis of all samples were sent to the Global Data Warehouse maintained by RECETOX and were included in the 3rd Regional Monitoring Report for LAC produced in 2021. Component 5: Brazil submitted a comprehensive national implementation report and provided input into the global synthesis report on the road to sustainable POPs monitoring. Summary: The project strengthened the capacity building for PBDE/PBB and PFAS analysis in Brazil, and all the passive air and water samples collected were analysed. The PBDEs/PBB analysis methodology was implemented, and passive air samples and some national sediment samples were analysed. The PFAS analysis methodology was implemented, and passive air and water samples were analysed.	
Significant changes in plans/personnel:	No major changes in personnel
Key challenges/negative effects:	The main challenge included the need for sophisticated laboratory infrastructure with high-cost/quality equipment, highly qualified technical staff, as well as preventive and corrective maintenance and equipment maintenance. The financial support was mainly from the State Government of Sao Paulo. The quality of maintenance was not good due to long periods required for delivery of spare parts (typically 2-3 months). Also, the project laboratory experienced issues with the quality of solvents – imported solvents had to be used that incurred high cost of import. Sampling with use of the Active Air Sampler (AAS) was negatively affected by procurement issues – too big PU foam was supplied with the analyser that did not fit the size of the existing Soxhlet extractor in the CETESB laboratory. For continued active post-project air sampling, CETESB needs to resolve the disproportion between the size of the AAS head and that of the existing Soxhlet extractor in the laboratory. The laboratory inquired about the possibility to use smaller PUFs, for which they would need to adjust the AAS head to accommodate smaller PUFs. In case the future GMP project insists on using bigger PUFs, CETESB would need to find an international supplier of bigger PUFs and obtain a new extractor capable of handling bigger PUF samples. This option would also increase the cost of the sample preparation as it would require 1 litre of imported high-quality solvent per sample.
Key positive lessons/unexpected achievements:	Most of the POPs monitoring studies and programs developed in Brazil are funded by the Federal and State Government through its research and teaching funding agencies and are carried out mainly by public universities within their postgraduate programs. Some monitoring activities have been carried out by specific public institutions, such as CETESB, and FIOCRUZ. Currently, the Ministry of

	Health is trying to develop and implement a national biomonitoring program that also covers many POPs. The GMP2 project built analytical capacities at CETESB POPs monitoring in abiotic samples, including new POPs (PFAS and PBDEs/PBB), and provided training for CETESB and FIOCRUZ for the POPs sampling and analysis in the abiotic and biotic samples. The main limitations include only one sampling site for air monitoring at CETESB and the need for more trained personnel for increased the number of monitoring sites and POPs analytical capacities.
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ANNEX VII. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS ASSESSMENT

ESS PLANNING AT PROJECT DESIGN	
List any ESS issues identified at project design (e.g. SS 1.7, SS 2.3, etc.) ³⁴	Management of wastes from the laboratories (as they may contain harmful substances (such as POPs) or solvents and adsorbents) Local ethical considerations in the application of the WHO protocol for sampling and sample preparation methodology for POPs exposure studies
For any ESS issues identified at project design, were <u>mitigation strategies</u> developed (Y/N)? (If yes, briefly describe)	Application of Good Laboratory Practice Cooperation with Ministries of Health
Were any <u>gaps</u> in ESS issues identified at the evaluation inception phase (Y/N)? (If yes, briefly describe)	N

ESS MONITORING AT PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	
Is there evidence that the potential emergence of ESS issues was actively <u>monitored</u> during project implementation (Y/N)? ³⁵ (If yes, briefly describe)	Y – The project demonstrated an ESS management approach in the PIRs that contained sections on ESS monitoring with no environmental and social impacts.
Is there a justification for the absence of ESS monitoring (Y/N)? (If yes, briefly describe) ³⁶	N.A.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSIVENESS DURING PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	
Identify the ESS issues/events <u>triggered</u> ³⁷ by the project. ³⁸	The participating laboratories strictly followed Good Laboratory Practice for sampling and analysis of biotic and abiotic matrices for POPs Minor issues occurred in relation to obtaining local ethical clearance for taking human milk samples in a few countries
Describe <u>consequences</u> of ESS issues/events <u>during</u> <u>implementation</u> .	There were no negative consequences as the issues were resolved in a timely manner.

³⁴ Select from the list of Environmental and Social Safeguards Risks in Table 1 of the template (tool 14, Safeguards Assessment Template).

³⁵ **Low risk:** Negative impacts minimal or negligible: no further study or impact management required.

Moderate risk: Potential negative impacts, but limited in scale, not unprecedented or irreversible and generally limited to programme/project area; impacts amenable to management using standard mitigation measures; limited environmental or social analysis may be required to develop an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP). Straightforward application of good practice may be sufficient without additional study.

High risk: Potential for significant negative impacts (e.g. irreversible, unprecedented, cumulative, significant stakeholder concerns); Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) (or Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA)) including a full impact assessment may be required, followed by an effective comprehensive safeguard management plan.

³⁶ For instance, during COVID, access to the field may have been restricted

³⁷ 'Triggered' refers to environmental or social issues/events that are caused or exacerbated—directly or indirectly—as a result of the project's activities, interventions, or presence.

³⁸ Select from the list of Environmental and Social Safeguards Risks in Table 1 of the template (tool 14, Safeguards Assessment Template).

Describe the management response and identify supporting documentation. ^{39, 40}	These issues were addressed and successfully resolved through close cooperation with the Ministries of Health.
Were negative ESS effects offset by management response (Y/N)? (If yes, briefly describe)	N.A.

³⁹ For most low-moderate risk projects, good practice approach may be sufficient. Project should demonstrate safeguard management approach in the project activities, budget, risks management, stakeholder engagement or/and monitoring segments of the project document to avoid or minimize the identified potential risks without preparing a separate safeguard management plan.

⁴⁰ E.g., GEF Project Implementation Report (PIR), Progress Report, Minutes, etc.

ANNEX VIII. COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH TOOLS

The GMP2 LAC project provided input into the compilation of a series of thematic and sectoral reports summarizing results and achievements of the project. These products are accessible at the UNEP web page dedicated to the GMP2 projects.

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

ANNEX IX. BRIEF CV OF THE EVALUATOR

Name	Dalibor Kysela
Profession	Independent Consultant to UN organisations, former staff member of UNIDO, IAEA and UNDP
Nationality	Czech Republic/Slovak Republic
Country experience	- Europe: Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Serbia, Russian Federation, Ukraine - Africa: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Comoros, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Madagascar, Maldives, Mauritius, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia - Americas: Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru - Central Asia and Caucasus: Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan - South and East Asia: Bangladesh, China, DPR Korea, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Viet Nam - West Asia: Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Yemen
Education	- MSc. – Pollution and Environmental Control - Dipl. Ing. – Analytical Chemistry

Dalibor Kysela graduated in Analytical Chemistry at the Bratislava Technical University and in Pollution and Environmental Control at the Victoria University of Manchester. After serving as a Head of Environmental Laboratory of the Public Health Institute in Slovakia, he joined the international development community and served as Project Officer in the UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and CIS, as Evaluation Officer in the IAEA, and Project Management Officer in UNIDO. In retirement, he acts as an independent Evaluation Consultant to UN agencies.

Key specialties and capabilities cover:

- Chemicals and waste management
- Renewable energy and energy efficiency
- River basin and coastal management

Selected assignments and experiences

Independent reviews/evaluations:

- Islands Indian Ocean – Implementing Sustainable Low and Non-Chemical Development in SIDS (UNDP/GEF) - Mid-Term Review
- Reduction and elimination of POPs and other chemical releases through implementation of environmentally sound management of E-Waste, medical waste and priority U-POPs release sources associated with general waste management activities in Jordan (UNDP/GEF) – TE
- Reducing Pollution from Harmful Chemicals and Wastes in Mediterranean Hot Spots and Measuring Progress to Impacts (UNEP/GEF) – Mid-Term Review
- Reducing UPOPs and Mercury Releases from the Health Sector in Africa (UNDP/GEF) – TE
- Eliminating POPs through Sound Management of Chemicals in the Maldives (UNDP/GEF) - Mid-Term Review
- PCB Management in Ethiopia to meet the 2025 Stockholm Convention deadline - Phase 1 (UNDP/GEF) - Mid-Term Review
- Integrated Sound Management of Mercury in Indonesia's Artisanal and Small-scale Gold Mining (ISMIA) - (UNDP/ GEF) Mid-term Review.
- Sound Chemicals Management Mainstreaming and UPOPs reduction in Kenya (UNDP/GEF) - Terminal Evaluation
- Belarus POPs Legacy and Sustainable Chemicals Management (UNDP/GEF) - MTR
- Comprehensive Environmentally Sound Management of PCBs in Montenegro (UNDP/GEF) - Mid-Term Review

- Rwanda Management of PCB Stockpiles and Equipment Containing PCBs (UNDP/GEF) - Terminal Evaluation 30
- Vietnam POPs and Sound Harmful Chemicals Management Project - Mid-term review
- Regional Demonstration Project for Coordinated Management of ODS and POPs Disposal in Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Armenia (UNIDO/GEF) – Mid-Term Review
- Initial Implementation of Accelerated HCFC Phase Out in the CEIT Region (UNDP/GEF) – TE
- Advancing Integrated Water Resource Management Across the Kura River Basin (UNDP/GEF) - Mid-term Review
- Implementation of the Arafura and Timor Seas Regional and National Strategic Action Programs (ATSEA-2); Second Phase of the Arafura Timor Seas Ecosystem Action (ATSEA) Programme, (UNDP/GEF), Mid-Term review

ANNEX X. GEF PORTAL INPUTS

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

Table 26: GEF Portal Inputs

Question: What was the performance at the project's completion against Core Indicator Targets? (For projects approved prior to GEF-7⁴¹, these indicators will be identified retrospectively and comments on performance provided⁴²).
Response: The TE assessed the contribution to GEF Core Indicator 11, 'People benefiting from GEF-financed investments (disaggregated by sex)'. The project was relevant for a total of 87 direct beneficiaries, including 47 women. However, as the project's alignment to the GEF Core Indicator 11 was retrospectively identified, the assessment of the progress of this indicator is not factored into the ratings of the evaluation criteria.
Question: What were the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program as evolved from the time of the MTR? <i>(This should be based on the description included in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan or equivalent documentation submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval)</i>
Response: The project was organized around national and expert stakeholders who participated in the previous GMP1 phase. Since the beginning of implementation, the efforts of the Implementing Agency and Executing Agency (UNEP-DTIE and BCCC-SCRC) have led to strong ownership of the project by national and expert stakeholders. The BCCC-SCRS engaged in frequent communication with all national participating laboratories, contributed to timely adaptive management and solution of various implementation issues, and coordinated provision of country inputs into sectoral reports and the regional report on sustainability of POPs monitoring. However, the TE observed somewhat weaker ownership of the project outcomes by national stakeholders, as documented by delayed or no responses of country-level stakeholders for interviews during the TE. The TE observed differences in the level of knowledge about the project by different types of country representatives in the project. National coordinators from the regional centres under the Basel and Stockholm Conventions, as well as those from laboratories belonging to academic institutions, showed a higher level of awareness about the project implementation because they were directly involved in various project activities as recipients of training courses and actors of the sampling and analytical campaigns. This constituted strong ownership of the project in these countries. National coordinators from the ministries had somewhat weaker ownership of the project, as, apart from the project coordination role, they did not have any direct participatory role in the project activities.
Question: What were the completed gender-responsive measures and, if applicable, actual gender result areas? <i>(This should be based on the documentation at CEO Endorsement/Approval, including gender-sensitive indicators contained in the project results framework or gender action plan or equivalent)</i>
Response: Due to the scientific nature of the project, focusing on the generation of data on POPs spatial and temporary trends, the project did not have a direct impact on gender equality. However, gender aspects were embedded through the inclusion of breast milk for the measurement of

⁴¹ The GEF is currently operating under the seventh replenishment period of the GEF Trust Fund covering the period July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2022. The GEF Portal Reporting Guide for FY20 Reporting Process indicates that GEF-6 projects that have yet to map existing indicators to GEF-7 Core Indicators need to do so at MTR stage or (if already there) at the time of the TE. (i.e. not GEF projects approved before GEF-6)

⁴² This is not applicable for Enabling Activities.

exposure of women of childbearing age to POPs. In the 11 participating countries, there were 6 female national coordinators, that is 54.5% of the total. 87 laboratory personnel were trained, including 47 women, which is 54.0% of the total. Women prevailed in training in 6 out of 10 project countries.

Women were fairly represented in the project coordination and the capacity-building activities organized by the project.

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

Response: Management of wastes from the laboratories and local ethical considerations in the application of the WHO protocol for sampling and sample preparation methodology for POPs exposure studies were identified through the initial Environmental and Social Safeguards Assessment as the main risks for the project implementation.

The laboratory waste risk was minimized through strict adherence by the participating laboratories to Good Laboratory Practice for sampling and analysis of biotic and abiotic matrices for POPs.

The ethical considerations for sampling of breast milk were managed through close cooperation of the Environmental and Health Ministries in the countries participating in the human milk survey.

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

Response: Internal communication between the Implementing Agency and Executing Agency worked well. The TE did not find any issues with communication between the Executing Agency and the national coordinators, which was described as smooth and effective.

The project prepared a variety of communication materials for outreach to the general public to raise awareness of POPs monitoring and management. A communication strategy was developed to convey coordinated messages with the use of diverse communication materials in close collaboration with the UNEP Communication Division, BCCC-SCRC, and the GEF communication coordinators in UNEP. The communication products and activities included organization of a campaign on "POPs-your worst friends forever", targeting the general public with a series of videos and supporting factsheets and infographics, a social media posting strategy, press releases, and an interactive website, as well as an exhibition booth at the Conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions (BRS) in May 2023. Relevant communication materials based on the POPs monitoring results were also shared during the regional final meetings of the four UNEP/GEF GMP2 projects in Bangkok, Thailand, in April 2023, and in Mexico City, Mexico, in June 2023.

Question: What are the main findings of the evaluation?

Response: The project formulation was based on the results and institutional networks that were established under the previous phase in 2009-2012 (GMP1). The strongest aspects of the project were the continuation of the monitoring of ambient air with passive air samplers and continued participation in the WHO breast milk survey. Comparative weaknesses included inadequate

formulation of the project results framework and insufficient definition of pathways from the project Outputs and Outcomes to higher-level results.

The project demonstrated strong performance in effective delivery of Outputs that included collection and analysis of over 160 samples of core abiotic and biotic matrices (ambient air, water, and human milk) and matrices of national interest from the 11 participating countries that contributed to about 60 percent of the available data on air and 75 percent of data on water in the LAC region for the Stockholm Convention Global Monitoring Plan from 2016 to 2019.

The project generated valuable data on the geographical distribution of POPs that were fed into the Global Data Warehouse and used for preparation of national reports to the Stockholm Convention and for compilation of the 3rd POPs Monitoring Report for the LAC region, contributing thus to the evaluation of the effectiveness of the Stockholm Convention. Because of reliance on expert laboratories in Europe, the project made only a marginal contribution to the development of capacities for analysis of POPs in the LAC region.

The TE rated Strategic Relevance as Highly Satisfactory. The project was strongly aligned with the UNEP MTS (2014-2017) and POW (2014-2015) and with the Objectives of the GEF-5 Chemicals Focal Area. It was consistent with a number of UN SDG Goals and complementary to previous interventions implemented by UNEP.

Effectiveness was rated as Moderately Satisfactory. Despite the strong performance of the project on the development of Outputs and demonstration of improved national capacities for implementation of the updated POPs GMP, some conditions required for sustainability of POPs monitoring, namely sustainable financing, access to technical expertise, and advanced laboratory infrastructure, were not in place due to insufficient co-financing of externally funded POPs monitoring programmes.

Financial management was rated as Satisfactory. There were no issues with compliance with UNEP/GEF financial rules and regulations, but the available financial data were not adequately detailed in relation to the project outputs.

Efficiency was rated Moderately Unsatisfactory due to the prolonged implementation period that required 3 no-cost extensions. Further assessment of cost-efficiency was not possible due to a lack of detailed financial data.

Sustainability was rated Moderately Unlikely. The main risks to the sustainability of the benefits brought by the project are:

- Lack of routine POPs analyses in the project laboratories
- Insufficient co-financing of the project laboratories to ensure maintenance of analytical equipment and procurement of analytical standards
- Limited access to technical capacities for analyses of POPs that are available in the region

Areas that would benefit/would have benefited from further attention include the quality of project design, especially the development of a robust Theory of Change at project inception, as well as soliciting more in-cash co-financing from the participating countries.

ANNEX XI. QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF THE EVALUATION REPORT

Evaluand Title:

Terminal Evaluation: UNEP/GEF Project, "Continuing Regional Support for the POPs Global Monitoring Plan under the Stockholm Convention in the Latin American and Caribbean Region (GEF ID 4881)"

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

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
Section A: Executive Summary	Assessment	
1. Does the <i>Executive Summary</i> act as a concise, accurate standalone section, especially to inform decision-making? Consider how clearly and concisely the report presents: - a clear summary of the evaluation object - evaluation objectives, scope and methodology - the overall project evaluation rating - a summary of main evaluation findings, including key features of performance (strengths and weaknesses) - summary responses to key strategic evaluation questions - summary of main conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> All required elements are covered. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The Executive Summary serves as a concise presentation of evaluation analyses, highlighting the project's performance from various perspectives. Both achievements and drawbacks of the project are presented in a well-balanced manner, which enables readers to understand the gist of the evaluation report. Key findings on the critical evaluation criteria are well elaborated within the page limit of the Executive Summary. Responses to key strategic evaluation questions are also well summarized. While gender and human rights dimensions of the project are elaborated in the main part of the report and Conclusions, these could have been described in the Executive Summary more explicitly and extensively.	5
Section B: The Project	Assessment	
2. Does the report clearly describe the <i>key parameters, scale and complexity of the evaluand</i>? Consider how well the report presents: - an overview of the main issue that the project is trying to address - timeline, including dates of project approval, duration and number of phases (where appropriate) - geographic coverage (regions/countries) - total secured budget and project financing, including a table with funding sources - implementing and funding partners - institutional context (i.e. UNEP sub-programme, Division, Branch etc.) - implementation structure with diagram - UNEP results frameworks to which it contributes (e.g. PoW Direct Outcome) - summary of results framework as stated in the ProDoc (or as officially revised) - stakeholder groups organised according to relevant common characteristics	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> All the required information on the project is covered in the section. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> Various project information is well presented in this section, enabling readers to verify key dimensions of the evaluand. Furthermore, stakeholders and project implementation structures are well elaborated. Especially, stakeholder analysis and changes in design during project implementation, especially no-cost extensions, are well elaborated. The project financing, including co-finance, is generally well described, but a more elaboration on the financial aspects of the project could have benefited the section.	5

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
- whether the project has been evaluated in the past (e.g. mid-term, by an external agency, etc.) - substantive or significant changes in design during implementation		
Section C: Evaluation Methods and Theory of Change	Assessment	
3. Does the report present a clear, comprehensive and adequate description of the <i>evaluation methodology</i>? Consider how well it presents the following elements, and their adequacy based on the scope of the evaluation: - statement of the purpose of the evaluation and the key intended audience for the evaluation findings - data collection methods and information sources - justification for methods used (e.g. electronic/face-to-face interviews, qualitative/quantitative analysis) - criteria and sampling strategies used to select stakeholders for consultations, and for sites/countries visited - number and types of respondents (<i>including in a table broken down by gender</i>) - strategies used to increase stakeholder engagement and response rate - methods used to include the voices/experiences of different and potentially excluded groups (e.g. women, marginalised) - data verification methods (e.g. triangulation) - data analysis methods (e.g. scoring, thematic analysis) - evaluation limitations and mitigation measures (e.g. how these were addressed by the evaluator) - consideration for ethics and human rights issues, including how anonymity and confidentiality were protected	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The section includes all required elements. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The section is well elaborated with all the required information, which enables readers to easily understand the details of evaluation methodologies. There is no major weakness in the section. All required aspects of the evaluation methodologies are generally elaborated in a well-balanced manner. Especially, justifications for the selection of countries for field visits, strategies for inclusivity, and evaluation limitations, especially a low response rate/non-response of stakeholders, are well elaborated to ensure clarity of the evaluation methodologies. Ethical consideration could have been further elaborated.	5
4. Does the report describe an assessment and reformulation of the <i>Theory of Change</i>, and present an adequate articulation of the TOC causal pathways that were used to assess project performance (<i>narratively and diagrammatically</i>)? Consider how well the report presents: - whether the project design included a TOC - how the <i>TOC at Evaluation</i> ⁴³ was designed (e.g. who was involved, etc)	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The section covers almost all the required elements. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> Reconstruction of the TOC is well described in the section. Along with the reformulation table, causal pathways of the reconstructed TOC, especially pathways from Outputs to Outcomes, are well	5

⁴³ During the Inception Phase of the evaluation process a *TOC at Evaluation Inception* is created based on the information contained in the approved project documents (these may include either logical framework or a TOC or narrative descriptions), formal revisions and annual reports etc. During the evaluation process this TOC is revised based on changes made during project intervention and becomes the *TOC at Evaluation*.

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
- 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 Evaluation report.</i>) - articulation of causal pathways - identification of drivers and assumptions - identification of key actors in the change process	analysed and articulated in narrative form, which serves as a core part of this section. The articulation of the respective causal pathways from Outputs to Outcomes covers all assumptions and drivers, clarifying the linkages between different levels of the results. Causal pathways from Outcomes to Intermediate States and from Intermediate States to Impact, respectively, could have been described more explicitly and extensively in narrative form. Key actors in the change process could have been further analysed and described as well.	
Section D: Evidence and Analysis	Assessment	
5. Is the report based on <i>sufficient and adequate data</i> and <i>clear and credible evidence</i>? Consider how well the report presents: - sufficient evidence that is consistent throughout the report - evidence that is supported by data sources (e.g. quotes, reports, etc) - evidence that is explicitly triangulated, unless noted as having a single source - gaps in data are explained and justified - data sources that are reliable, adequate, sufficient for the scope of the evaluation	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> Sufficient data and credible evidence are covered in the TE report. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> In general, evidence, including interviews and documents, is well presented to support findings, although these are not necessarily cited in the main text specifically. Annexes include lists of interviewees and documents consulted, respectively. Triangulation is implicitly done in some parts of the report. Although not all evidence is presented in narrative form, readers can generally see that many findings are supported by evidence rather than by the evaluator's predetermined ideas. A minor caveat is that some anonymous evidence could have been referred to the findings more directly. Virtual interviews and field visits to Brazil and Argentina are well utilized to expand the scope of data collected and do proper triangulation. Especially, this allows for the extensive analysis of the project's Effectiveness. A few national coordinators were not available, potentially due to staff turnover within the governments that often resulted from a prolonged project. However, the evaluator mitigated this challenge through triangulation (by using secondary data effectively). As a result, data sources are generally sufficient to support findings and ratings as credible evidence.	5

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
6. Does the report include rigorous analysis and logical findings? Consider the extent to which the findings are: - supported by clear analysis that is consistent with the evidence presented - logical, clear and coherent - aligned with UNEP's Criteria Ratings Matrix - aligned with the evaluation framework - more than descriptions and provide insights into 'how' and/or 'why' the project performed a certain way - balanced, presenting both successes and weaknesses	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> Rigorous analysis and logical findings are generally covered in the report. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> Most findings are generally well supported by clear analysis that is consistent with evidence, which makes the evaluator's argument logical, clear, and coherent. Consistent support for findings and performance ratings is ensured in line with UNEP's Criteria Ratings Matrix. Findings and analyses are basically aligned with the evaluation framework described in Annex II. The report is generally well-balanced, demonstrating both the project's successes and weaknesses, from which lessons learned and recommendations are derived. The robustness of the analyses varies by evaluation criteria to some extent. For example, the analysis of the project's Effectiveness is robust and extensive, while the analyses of strategic relevance and the factors affecting performance and cross-cutting issues are not. The same level of analytical rigor could have enhanced the quality of the analyses of evaluation criteria other than Effectiveness.	4.5
Section E: Evaluation Findings	Assessment	
7. Does the report present evidence and analysis of project Strategic Relevance with respect to UNEP, partner and geographic policies and strategies at the time of project approval? Consider how well the report addresses: - Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities - Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partners Strategic Priorities - Relevance to Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities - Complementarity with Existing Interventions: complementarity of the project at design (or during inception/mobilisation ⁴⁴), with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups.	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The section covers all necessary elements. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The project's strategic relevance is generally well analysed. Alignments with various strategies, policies, and priorities are well elaborated with proper categorization. The project's alignment with relevant indicators, including the GEF Core Indicator, is also mentioned. Relevance to regional and national environmental priorities could have been analysed more extensively. Coherence analysis, covering both external coherence and internal coherence, is briefly described, but the analysis could have covered existing interventions more extensively. Similarly, complementarities and their effects brought from the project to other interventions (and vice versa)	4.5

⁴⁴ A project's inception or mobilization period is understood as the time between project approval and first disbursement. Complementarity during project implementation is considered under Efficiency, see below.

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
	are mentioned, but they could have been further analysed and expanded. Robust analyses from more diverse perspectives could have further enriched the analysis of the project's Strategic Relevance.	
Does the report present a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the Quality of Project Design , based on the detailed assessment presented in the Inception Report?	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The section presents a summary of the project design, covering both strengths and weaknesses, assuming that details are covered in the inception report in a table format. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> Both strengths and weaknesses of the project design are briefly described in a well-balanced manner, which serves as a good summary of the quality of the project design. The section consists of only three paragraphs, one of which justifies the changes in the ratings from the inception phase. A little more detailed description could have enhanced the clarity of the section.	*NOT RATED
Does the report recognise and describe, when appropriate, key features of the Nature of the External Context under which the project was implemented that limited the project's performance (e.g. conflict, natural disaster, political upheaval ⁴⁵), and how they affected performance?	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> A description and analysis of key external features of the project's implementing contexts is covered in this section. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The analysis is briefly done, especially from the perspectives of the COVID-19 pandemic, covering a description of how the pandemic affected the project's implementation. More diverse perspectives could have supported a rigorous analysis of the nature of the external context, as the project covers 11 countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region. There should have been a variance among the countries in terms of the external contexts.	*NOT RATED
8. Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the Availability of Outputs to the intended beneficiaries? Consider how well the report presents: - a convincing, evidence-supported and clear presentation of the outputs made available by the project compared to its approved plans and budget - assessment of the nature and scale of outputs versus the project indicators and targets - assessment of the timeliness, quality	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The section covers almost all the required elements, especially the assessments of outputs versus the project output statements, indicators, and targets. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> Extensive analysis is done to assess the project's performance at the output level, especially Outputs 2 and 4. The analysis is very thematic and technically oriented from various perspectives. Technical data collected from the field are well utilized to substantiate the findings.	5.5

⁴⁵ Note that 'political upheaval' does not include regular national election cycles, but unanticipated unrest or prolonged disruption. The potential delays or changes in political support that are often associated with the regular national election cycle should be part of the project's design and addressed through adaptive management of the project team.

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
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).	Indicator-wise analysis is also well done, referring to the baseline and targets that were set during the project design phase. Details of evidence are also highlighted for each indicator. Non-existence of the direct/indirect effects of the project on disadvantaged groups, including women, is also mentioned. The assessment of the quality of outputs is generally well analysed, while their timeliness could have been more explicitly mentioned for a few Outputs.	
9. Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the Achievement of Outcomes, as a result of the uptake, adoption and/or implementation of outputs by the intended beneficiaries? This may include behaviour changes at an individual or collective level. Consider how well the report presents: - a convincing and evidence-supported analysis of the uptake of outputs by intended beneficiaries - assessment of the nature, depth and scale of outcomes versus the project indicators and targets - discussion of the contribution, credible association and/or attribution of outcome level changes to the work of the project itself - any constraints to attributing effects to the projects' work - identification of positive or negative effects of the project on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> Most required information is included with evidence. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The outcome analyses are generally well done, covering indicator-wise outcome results and the assessment of the nature, depth, and scale of the project outcomes relative to the project indicators and targets. Analysis is generally robust, with many thematic analyses. The uptake of outputs by intended beneficiaries is also briefly described. The identification of the project's positive or negative effects on disadvantaged groups could have been made more explicit.	5
10. Does the report present an integrated analysis, guided by the causal pathways represented by the TOC, of all evidence relating to Likelihood of Impact? Consider how well the report presents: - an explanation of how causal pathways emerged and the resulting change processes - an explicit discussion of how drivers and assumptions played out - an explanation of roles played by key actors and change agents - identification of any unintended negative effects of the project, especially on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The section addresses the likelihood of impact with almost all the required information, including a discussion of drivers and assumptions. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> While not in very detail, the likelihood of impact is generally well analysed with evidence. Causal pathways leading to the impact are examined in a table format, where the roles of drivers and assumptions in the causal pathways are assessed. The roles of key actors and change agents are briefly mentioned throughout the section, but could have been more explicit. The unintended negative effects of the project on disadvantaged groups, including women, could have been described more explicitly.	5

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
11. Does the report present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under Financial Management and include a completed 'financial management' table? Consider how well the report addresses the following: • <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> Almost all the required information is included in the section. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The analysis generally covers various dimensions of financial management, which provides insights into the project's financial management. 'Completeness of Financial Information' is well analysed with evidence. Especially, deficiencies in financial reporting are well described with detailed analyses, which gives an added value to the Financial Management assessment. A little more elaboration on 'Adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures' could have benefited the section.	5
12. Does the report present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under Efficiency? Consider how well the report presents: • cost-effective or time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe • implications of any delays and no cost extensions • discussion of making use, during project implementation, of/building on pre-existing institutions, partnerships and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. • the extent to which the management of the project minimised UNEP's environmental footprint.	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The section covers all the required information. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> An analysis of the project's Efficiency is generally well done. In-depth analyses are conducted, especially from the perspective of timeliness and cost-effectiveness. Especially, no-cost extension-related issues are analysed and described in detail. The project's use of pre-existing institutions and partnerships, and management's efforts to minimize UNEP's environmental footprint, are also briefly described.	5
13. Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the project's Monitoring and Reporting? Consider how well the report addresses the following: • the quality of <i>monitoring of project implementation</i> (including use of monitoring data for adaptive management) • the quality of <i>project reporting</i> (e.g. PIMS and donor reports)	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> A summary of the Monitoring and Reporting aspect of the project is presented with most required information. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The project's monitoring and reporting functions are well assessed in detail. Various dimensions of the project's monitoring and reporting performance are well elaborated with concrete examples. The detailed analyses cover the project's M&E plan, M&E budget, the Project Steering Committees, and reporting. The gender/human rights dimensions of monitoring and reporting are also analysed and described. Some analyses are neither directly linked to the project's monitoring and reporting function nor aligned with the parameters required to determine the ratings.	5

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
14. Does the report present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under Sustainability (i.e. the endurance of benefits achieved at outcome level)? Consider how well the report addresses the following: - socio-political sustainability - financial sustainability - institutional sustainability	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The section includes most of the required elements. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> All three dimensions of sustainability are well analysed to substantiate findings and ratings. Various aspects are well addressed, including political commitments, an exit strategy, and retention of capacities, which affect the likelihood of sustainability. Especially, financial sustainability and institutional sustainability are well analysed with concrete examples, while socio-political sustainability could have been further analysed.	5
15. Does the report present a well-evidence analysis of the Factors Affecting Performance, either in this section or in cross-referenced sections? <i>These factors are not always discussed in stand-alone sections and may be integrated in the other performance criteria as appropriate. However, if not addressed substantively in this section, a cross reference must be given to where the topic is addressed, and that entry must be sufficient to justify the performance rating for these factors.</i> Consider how well the report addresses the following cross-cutting issues: - quality of project management and supervision⁴⁶ - 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> The section includes many elements that are required for each sub-section. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> All sub-criteria are well analysed with the required information. Many necessary parameters that are required to determine the respective ratings are generally well described, while some are missing in the section. 'Quality of Project Management and Supervision' and 'Communication and Public Awareness' sub-sections are well described with detailed analyses, while 'Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality' sub-section could have been further improved.	4.5
Section F: Conclusions, Lessons Learned and Recommendations	Assessment	
16. Do the Conclusions present a summative assessment of the evaluand as a whole, reflecting on prominent aspects of the project's performance? Consider how well the conclusions: provide a compelling narrative and integrated assessment of project's performance (i.e. achievements and limitations)	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The section covers all required element. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The section serves as a series of summative statements, covering major findings of the project's performance, which enables readers to understand the overview of the performance. It includes both achievements and limitations of the project in a well-balanced manner.	5

⁴⁶ 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
- add deeper insights and analysis beyond the findings under each individual criterion - are derived from the synthesized analysis of evidence gathered during the evaluation process - provide clear and succinct response to the key strategic questions - address the human rights and gender dimensions of the intervention explicitly (e.g. how these dimensions were considered, addressed or impacted on) - provide lessons that are rooted in real project experiences, describe the context from which they are derived, and do not duplicate recommendations	Responses to the key strategic questions are well elaborated with sound analyses. Gender and human rights dimensions of the project are briefly described in a separate paragraph. Some narratives in Conclusions section are very similar to or duplicated with the Executive Summary. The quality of lessons learned varies. Some lessons cover 1) identification of the problem (based on evaluation analysis/findings), 2) the root cause of the problem, 3) proposed course correction, and 4) potential benefits and applicability to other projects/similar contexts, while other lessons learned (#1, 4, 5, and 6) lack an in-depth analysis of the root cause of the respective problems.	
17. 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: - 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.	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The section covers all required elements. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The section presents eight common recommendations in a table format, covering all required information. All these recommendations are the same across the four regional projects. Each recommendation entails sufficient detail with in-depth analyses. All are derived from the findings of the evaluation, which makes them realistic. All recommendations are also feasible, concrete, and measurable, which enables UNEP to make a detailed action plan to address these recommendations. These are intended for practical application. All recommendations can be addressed within the timeframe. Recommendation #8 directly addresses the strengthening of the gender dimensions of UNEP interventions.	5.5
Section G: Report Structure and Presentation	Assessment	
18. Is the report <i>well-structured and complete</i>? Does it: follow the Evaluation Office structure and	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The report contains all necessary sections, mostly following the UNEP guidelines.	4.5

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
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	All required Annexes are included. Strengths/weaknesses: The report is well-structured. The report follows the reporting structure and formatting guidelines in principle. It is well-formatted in general. Visual aids, especially tables, are generally well used where needed. The report initially included many grammatical errors and typos that might potentially compromise the clarity of the report. EOU corrected as many of them as possible before finalization, but a well-written English report could have been produced by the evaluator (as part of his responsibility), which would have enhanced the readability of the report. The tone of the language used is appropriate.	
OVERALL REPORT QUALITY RATING		5

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

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

Rating the Report Quality Criteria

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

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

Evaluation Process Quality Criteria	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Consultant's independence:		
1. Were possible conflicts of interest of proposed Evaluation Consultant(s) appraised and addressed in the final selection?	✓	
2. Was the Evaluation Consultant given direct access to identified external stakeholders?	✓	
3. Did the Evaluation Consultant raise any concerns about being unable to work freely and without interference or undue pressure from project staff or the Evaluation Office?		✓

4. If Yes to Q3: Were these concerns resolved to the mutual satisfaction of both the Evaluation Consultant and the Evaluation Manager?	N/A	
Project's engagement and support:		
5. Did the project make available all required/requested documents?	✓	
6. Did the project make all financial information (and audit reports if applicable) available in a timely manner and to an acceptable level of completeness?	✓	
7. Was adequate support provided by the project to the evaluator(s) in planning and conducting evaluation missions?	✓	
8. Were the project team, relevant UNEP senior staff, partners and interviewed stakeholders given an opportunity to provide comments on key deliverables, as appropriate (e.g. Terms of Reference, Inception Report and Draft Evaluation Report)?	✓	
Quality assurance of key deliverables:		
9. Were the Terms of Reference peer-reviewed?	✓	
10. Was the inception report peer-reviewed, including the Theory of Change?	✓	
11. Were evaluation preliminary findings presented to the project team in a format allowing discussion, before drafting the report?	✓	
12. Was the draft report peer-reviewed?	✓	
Transparency and commenting:		
13. Was the inception report, including the (reconstructed) TOC, sent to the project team, relevant UNEP senior staff and partners, with a minimum of eight working days to comment?	✓	
14. Was the draft evaluation report sent directly by the Evaluation Consultant to the Evaluation Office?	✓	
15. Were all stakeholder comments to the draft evaluation report sent directly to the Evaluation Office?	✓	
16. Did the Evaluation Consultant(s) respond adequately to all factual corrections and comments?	✓	
17. Did the Evaluation Office share substantive comments and Evaluation Consultant responses with those who commented, as appropriate?	✓	
Financial Resources:		
18. Was the evaluation budget approved at project design available for the evaluation? If not, comment in the table below on the sufficiency of the funds made available.	✓	
19. Were the agreed evaluation funds readily available to support the payment of the evaluation contract throughout the payment process? If not, comment in the table below.	✓	
Timeliness:		
20. If a Terminal Evaluation: Was the evaluation initiated within six months after project operational completion and not more than three months prior? (Or, if a Mid Term Evaluation: Was the evaluation initiated within a six-month period prior to the project's mid-point?)		✓
21. Was the inception report delivered and reviewed/approved prior to commencing any travel?	✓	
22. Were all submission and commenting deadlines met as set by the Evaluation Manager and as far as unforeseen circumstances allowed? If not, comment in the table below on exceptional delays.	✓	

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

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