Validated Terminal Review of the UNEP grant

'Strengthening National Capacities of Nine Asia-Pacific Countries to Address Plastic Pollution by Developing, Updating, Monitoring and Reporting on National Action Plans, in the Context of the Negotiation for a Global Agreement' (SB-021354), 2023 –2026, implemented under the ONE UNEP Plastic Project (SMA ID 130677)

United Nations
United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund



UNEP Industry and Economy Division
Validation date: July 2026

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

CHATGPT was used generate images, figures, and some tables based on information provided in the Project Document as well as to summarise documents and check formulations. Zoom was used to transcribe remotely-convened interviews, which were subsequently used by the Evaluator as a resource to correct her verbatim note-taking. The Evaluator has reviewed the AI-generated content and takes full responsibility for its accuracy and application.

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Strengthening National Capacities of Nine Asia-Pacific Countries to Address Plastic Pollution by Developing, Updating, Monitoring and Reporting on National Action Plans, in the Context of the Negotiation for a Global Agreement
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Terminal Review was prepared by Dr. Joyce Miller for UNEP's Industry and Economy Division / Industry Innovation Branch / Plastics Unit.

The Evaluator would like to express her gratitude to all persons who contributed to this review, as listed in **Annex V**.

The Evaluator would also like the Project Manager Ms. Hyejin Seo and other team members – Ms. Ran Xie and Mr. Feng Wang – for their contributions and collaboration throughout the review process. Sincere appreciation is also expressed to those who took time to provide comments to the draft report.

The reviewer hopes that the findings, conclusions, and recommendations will contribute to the successful finalisation of the current project, the sustainability of its results, and to the continuous improvement of similar projects in other countries and regions.

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Joyce Miller is founder and CEO of Capacity-Building Resource Exchange (CAPRESE), a Switzerland-based consultancy, and is an independent evaluation and organisational learning specialist with over 30 years of experience in international development. She advises senior leadership and governing bodies across the United Nations system on the effectiveness, governance, and catalytic role of complex, multi-stakeholder initiatives. She has led strategic and multi-country evaluations for the Swiss government, UNEP, UNIDO, ILO and inter-agency programmes – with expertise on green industry, circular economy, and plastics value chains. Her work applies theory-based and mixed-method approaches, including contribution analysis, to assess policy influence, institutional change, and pathways to impact.

Additionally, she is a founding member of PREMAnet e.V., a global network of practitioners and development professionals competent in applying Profitable Resource Efficient Management approaches (PREMA®), as part of the toolset of German International Cooperation (GIZ). She is on the Executive Board of the Swiss Knowledge Management Forum (SKMF) and is a founding member of the LEGO Serious Play Community of Practice.

ABOUT THE REVIEW

Joint Review: No

Report Language(s): English.

Review Type: Terminal Review

Brief Description: This report is a Terminal Review of the UNEP grant: "*Strengthening National Capacities of Nine Asia-Pacific Countries to Address Plastic Pollution by Developing, Updating, Monitoring and Reporting on National Action Plans, in the Context of the Negotiation for a Global Agreement*", implemented during 2023-2026. The grant's overall goal was to strengthen the capacity of governments and UN country systems in nine Asia-Pacific countries (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Philippines, Samoa, Thailand, Viet Nam) to develop and implement more coherent, evidence-based, and internationally aligned responses to plastic pollution. The review sought to assess performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency) and determine the sustainability of its results. The review had two primary purposes: accountability and learning. Data collection methods included: document review and in-depth stakeholder interviews. Data analysis was based on applying triangulated data to assess performance against a reconstructed Theory of Change and its causal pathways, drivers, and assumptions.

With an **overall performance** rating of **Satisfactory**, the **main findings** include: i) strong strategic relevance and responsiveness to evolving global plastics policy dynamics; ii) effective support to national policy development, EPR readiness, and UN system integration despite a complex operating environment; and iii) sustainability prospects that depend on continued institutional uptake, political commitment, and follow-on support for implementation. The main **recommendations to UNEP** are to strengthen Theory of Change design and more explicitly situate project-level interventions within broader implementation and transition pathways; strengthen programme- and portfolio-level approaches for outcome-oriented monitoring, utilisation tracking, and organisational learning systems across UNEP plastics initiatives; and strengthen shared governance, country ownership, and institutional anchoring in future programming. **Implementing partners** are advised to strengthen institutional embedding, implementation follow-through, and systematic tracking of how project-supported tools, guidance, analyses, and capacity-building efforts are operationalised, institutionalised, and sustained within national systems and broader implementation processes.

Sources of Funding: *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-Fund of the United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund (USD 1,478,599). Co-finance (USD 2,298,372) mobilised through UNEP donors and partners.*

Source of Funding by Institution Type:

UN Body	Yes
Foundation/NGO	Yes

Key words: Plastic pollution, marine litter, circular economy, environmental governance, Asia-Pacific, regional cooperation United Nations Peace and Development Fund (UNPDF), National Action Plan (NAP), Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), Global Plastics Treaty, Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC), UN Common Country Analysis (CCA), United Nations Sustainable Development Country Framework (UNSDCF)

Primary data collection period: April-May 2026

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CCA	Country Common Assessment
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EPR	Extended Producer Responsibility
ESS	Environmental and Social Safeguards
GCF	Global Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GGKP	Green Growth Knowledge Platform
GHG	Greenhouse gas (emissions)
GPAP	(World Economic Forum's) Global Plastic Action Partnership
GPML	Global Partnership on Marine Litter
INC	Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
KEQ	Key Evaluation Question
M	million
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MRV	Measurement, Reporting, and Verification
MTS	(UNEP's) Medium Term Strategy
NAP	National Action Plan
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NEAP	Non-environmentally acceptable product and packaging material
NPAP	National Plastic Action Partnership
NSO	National Statistics Office
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
P	Change Pathway (in Theory of Change)
PRO	Producer Responsibility Organisation
POW	(UNEP's) Programme of Work
ROAP	(UNEP's) Regional Office for Asia-Pacific
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SOP	Standard operating procedure
SSFA	Small-Scale Funding Agreement
TOC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNEA	UNEP Environment Assembly
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNRC	United Nations Resident Coordinator
UNPDF	United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
US(D)	United States (dollar)
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

GRANT IDENTIFICATION TABLE

Table 1 – Grant Identification Table

<table>
<tr><td>UNEP SMA[1] ID:</td><td>130677</td><td>Grant ID[2] (if applicable):</td><td>S1-32CPL-000619</td></tr>
<tr><td>UNEP Management (Division/Branch/Unit):</td><td colspan="3">Industry and Economy Division / Industry Innovation Branch / Plastics Unit</td></tr>
<tr><td>Implementing Partners:</td><td colspan="3">UNEP</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sources of Funding:</td><td colspan="3">UN Body: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-Fund of the United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund (UNPDF)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Relevant SDG(s):</td><td colspan="3">SDG 3, 6, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15</td></tr>
<tr><td>MTS (all that apply):</td><td>Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2022–2025</td><td>UNEP approval date:</td><td>14 March 2023</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">POW Direct Outcome(s) number/reference[3] (applicable for projects approved from 2022):</td><td>POW Direct Outcome:
3.3. Global plastic pollution is reduced;
3.6. Resource efficiency and circularity in key sectors are improved</td><td rowspan="2">MTS 2025 Outcome(s) number/reference[3] (applicable for projects approved from 2022):</td><td rowspan="2">MTS 2025 Outcomes:
Outcome 1A: Decision-makers at all levels adopt decarbonization, dematerialization and resilience pathways; Outcome 3A: Human health and environmental outcomes are optimized through enhanced capacity and leadership in the sound management of chemicals and waste; Outcome 3B: Waste management is improved, including through circular processes, safe recovery of secondary raw materials and progressive reduction of open burning and dump sites; Outcome 2C: Nature conservation and restoration are enhanced; Outcome 3C: Releases of pollutants to air, water, soil and the ocean are reduced.</td></tr>
<tr><td>POW Output:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sub-programme:</td><td>Chemicals and Pollution</td><td>Programme Coordination Project:</td><td>Circularity in Sectors (Plastics)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Expected start date:[4]</td><td>1 May 2023</td><td>Actual start date:[5]</td><td>1 May 2023</td></tr>
<tr><td>Planned completion date:[4]</td><td>30 April 2026</td><td>Actual operational completion date:</td><td>30 April 2026</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="3">Planned Core Funding (regular budget, Environment Fund, etc.):</td></tr>
</table>

[1] SMA refers to the ID provided by the Integrated Planning, Management and Reporting Solution (IPMR) system, which was introduced by UNEP in July 2023. Previously, it was referred to as a PIMS ID number.
[2] For example, ID references from EC, IKI, UNDA, Adaptation Fund, GCF.
[3] For these items do not include full text; only enter the number or reference.
[4] Expected/planned dates are listed in the Project Document.
[5] Actual start date is the date of project approval by the Division Director.

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="2">*Planned* project budget[6] at approval:</td><td colspan="3">*Planned* Extra-budgetary Funds[7]:
Cash: USD 1,478,599
In-kind: USD 1,800,000</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">***Total Planned Budget: USD 3,278,599***</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Secured budget[8]</td><td colspan="3">Secured Core Funding (regular budget, Environment Fund, etc.):</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Secured Extra-budgetary Funds:
Cash: USD 1,478,599
In-kind: USD 2,298,723</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">**Total secured budget as of *25 April 2026: USD 3,777,322***</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Actual expenditures reported (cash only):</td><td colspan="3">Actual Core Funding expenditures reported as of *25 April 2026*</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Actual Extra-budgetary Funds expenditures reported as of *25 April 2026: 1,124,987.81*</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">**Total actual expenditures reported as of** *25 April 2026: 1,124,987.81***:**</td></tr>
<tr><td>First disbursement:</td><td colspan="2">26 July 2023</td><td>*Planned* date of financial closure:</td><td>31 October 2026</td></tr>
<tr><td>No. of formal revisions:</td><td colspan="2">N/A</td><td>Date of last approved revision:</td><td>N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td>No. of Steering Committee meetings:</td><td colspan="2">N/A</td><td>Date of Last Steering Committee meeting:</td><td>N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Mid-term Review/ Evaluation[9] *(required or not required):*</td><td>UNEP requirement:</td><td>No</td><td rowspan="2">Mid-term Review/ Evaluation actual date:</td><td rowspan="2">N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td>Donor requirement:</td><td>No</td></tr>
<tr><td>Terminal Evaluation *(planned date):*</td><td colspan="2">20 March 2026 – 19 June 2026</td><td>Terminal Review actual date:</td><td>20 March 2026 – 19 June 2026</td></tr>
<tr><td>Coverage - Countries:</td><td colspan="2">Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam, Laos, Brunei, Samoa</td><td>Coverage - Region(s):</td><td>Asia Pacific</td></tr>
<tr><td>Dates of previous project phases:</td><td colspan="2">N/A</td><td>Status of future project phases:</td><td>N/A</td></tr>
</table>

[6] Total budget may include: Regular Budget, Environment Fund, Extra-Budgetary, including 'softly-earmarked' etc.
[7] Extra-budgetary funds may include co-finance (cash/in-kind).
[8] From last grant/budget revision.
[9] UNEP projects, includes grants, 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

Background

1. *The UNEP Grant "Strengthening National Capacities of Nine Asia-Pacific Countries to Address Plastic Pollution by Developing, Updating, Monitoring and Reporting on National Action Plans, in the Context of the Negotiation for a Global Agreement"* was implemented in nine Asia-Pacific countries with USD 1,478,599 in funding from the United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund (UNPDF)*'s* 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-Fund and USD 2,298,723 in co-finance mobilised from UNEP donors and partners. It was implemented during 2023-2026.

   The rationale for the grant was the growing urgency of plastic pollution and the need to strengthen national capacities, policy coherence, institutional coordination, and evidence-based planning in the context of the negotiations toward a global plastics agreement. The objective was to strengthen national capacities in beneficiary countries to support national action planning and related enabling frameworks to address plastic pollution, including through support to policy development, Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) approaches, data and monitoring systems, and integration of plastics into broader United Nations (UN) and national planning processes.

This review

2. The review sought to assess performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency) and determine the sustainability of results. It assessed performance against nine review criteria (see Table 2), each assigned a rating using a 6-point scale[10]. The review had two primary purposes: accountability and learning. Data collection methods included document review, semi-structured stakeholder interviews, and triangulation of evidence from multiple sources. Data analysis was based on assessing performance against a reconstructed Theory of Change (TOC), including pathways related to policy integration, EPR readiness, and integration of plastics into UN system planning and coordination frameworks.

Key findings and performance ratings

3. The project demonstrated particularly strong performance in strategic relevance, regional and global policy alignment, stakeholder engagement, technical credibility, and enabling support for plastics governance. The project effectively positioned itself within the evolving international policy landscape surrounding the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) process and contributed to strengthening policy awareness, institutional coordination, and technical preparedness across participating countries. It also demonstrated strong complementarity with UNEP's broader plastics portfolio and with related regional and international initiatives.

4. Areas that would have benefited from further attention included the articulation of outcome-level change pathways within the original grant design, the operationalisation and tracking of longer-term utilisation and implementation outcomes, and the systematic monitoring of institutional, behavioural, and financing changes beyond output delivery. While the grant generated important enabling conditions and momentum, evidence of

[10] The 6-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.

operationalisation remained uneven and highly dependent on broader political, institutional, regulatory, and market conditions outside the grant's direct control.

Table 2 – Summary of Project Ratings

Criterion	Rating
Strategic Relevance	**Satisfactory**
Quality of Project Design	**Satisfactory**
Nature of External Context	**Moderately Favourable**
Effectiveness	**Satisfactory**
Financial Management	**Highly Satisfactory**
Efficiency	**Satisfactory**
Monitoring and Reporting	**Satisfactory**
Sustainability	**Likely**
Factors Affecting Performance	**Satisfactory**
Overall Project Performance Rating	**Satisfactory**

Conclusions summary

5. Overall, the grant performed at a satisfactory level. The grant's main achievements included: strengthening awareness and technical preparedness regarding plastics governance and circular economy approaches; supporting development of relevant national planning approaches and tools; advancing regional dialogue and policy coherence during the INC negotiation period; strengthening understanding and readiness regarding EPR approaches; supporting integration of plastics into UN Common Country Assessments (CCAs) and related planning processes; and reinforcing regional knowledge exchange and coordination mechanisms. The grant also contributed to strengthening UNEP's positioning as a credible normative and technical partner in the plastics policy space within Asia-Pacific.

6. The grant's strongest performing aspects lay in its responsiveness to evolving policy dynamics, contribution to strengthening enabling conditions for action on plastic pollution through convening and regional coordination. Areas where further strengthening could have enhanced the project include the articulation of outcome statements and Theory of Change pathways within the original design, particularly regarding how policy and institutional support were expected to contribute to subsequent implementation and longer-term impact. While the grant succeeded in maintaining attention on plastics governance and generated important momentum in the target region, its relatively short implementation period and orientation towards policy and institutional support limited the extent to which systematic evidence could yet be generated regarding utilisation, institutionalisation, financing, and sustained implementation of supported measures beyond the grant period.

Lessons learned

7. Lesson 1: Co-creation between UNEP technical teams and Regional Offices can significantly strengthen the relevance, usability, and system-level uptake of regional environmental programming.

8. Lesson 2: Strong convening power can accelerate delivery and coordination but may unintentionally centralise ownership and implementation dependency.

Recommendations

9. Recommendation 1: In future policy support initiatives, strengthen Theory of Change design and more explicitly situate grant-level interventions within broader implementation and transition pathways.
10. Recommendation 2: Strengthen programme and portfolio-level approaches for outcome-oriented monitoring, utilisation tracking, and organisational learning across UNEP plastics initiatives.
11. Recommendation 3: Strengthen shared governance, country ownership, and institutional anchoring in future programming.

Validation

The report has been subject to an independent validation exercise performed by UNEP's Evaluation Office. The performance ratings for the UNEP grant 'Strengthening National Capacities of Nine Asia-Pacific Countries to Address Plastic Pollution by Developing, Updating, Monitoring and Reporting on National Action Plans, in the Context of the Negotiation for a Global Agreement', set out in the Conclusions and Recommendations section, have not been adjusted. except for 'Availability of Outputs', which has been adjusted, as a result. The overall performance is validated at the **Satisfactory** level. Moreover, the Evaluation Office has found the overall quality of the report to be Satisfactory (see **Annex IX**).

I. THE PROJECT

A. Context

Intervention context

12. Plastic pollution has emerged as one of the most pressing global environmental challenges, forming a core dimension of the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. Under a business-as-usual scenario, global plastics use is projected to almost triple from 460 million tonnes (Mt) in 2019 to ~1,231 Mt by 2060 (OECD's 2022 *Global Plastic Outlook*). Recycling performance remains structurally low: while around 15% of plastic waste was collected for recycling in 2019, less than 9% was effectively recycled – resulting in significant volumes of mismanaged waste entering terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, generating pervasive environmental and human health risks, including ecosystem degradation, exposure to hazardous chemical additives, and widespread contamination from macro- and microplastics (OECD, 2022). The problem is systemic, rooted in fossil fuel-based production systems, linear consumption patterns, and insufficient lifecycle management of plastics (UNEP's 2023 *Turning off the Tap*).

13. With rapid urbanisation, economic growth, and rising material consumption, the Asia-Pacific region lies at the centre of this challenge, accounting for about half of global plastic production and consumption and over 80% of mismanaged plastic waste (OECD, 2022). Despite this scale, many national policy frameworks emphasize waste management, recycling and reliance on voluntary actions. While regional efforts have addressed marine plastic pollution, a comprehensive, integrated policy framework to guide countries in preventing, reducing, and eliminating plastic pollution across its entire lifecycle has been largely absent, consequently limiting the effectiveness and alignment of national responses.

14. Conceived within the global policy momentum generated by March 2022 adoption of UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) Resolution 5/14 — which established the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) to develop a legally-binding instrument on plastic pollution — this grant was designed to strengthen the capacity of nine Asia-Pacific countries (Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam, Lao PDR, Brunei Darussalam, Samoa – reflecting 8 ASEAN countries and 1 Small Island Developing State participating in the Belt-Road initiative) to engage in the INC process through national capacity development, regional consultations, and advancing National Action Plans (NAPs), a key emerging element of the treaty architecture. The grant spans diverse socio-economic and institutional contexts, where common constraints persist, notably limited institutional capacity for integrated policy development, weak data and monitoring systems, and fragmented coordination across ministries and stakeholders. These factors constrain countries' ability to design, implement, and monitor effective responses to plastic pollution, and engage substantively in global policy processes. At the same time, the INC's evolving process and politically negotiated nature introduced uncertainty regarding the scope, timing, and modalities of instruments like NAPs, requiring adaptive implementation and positioning the project within a dynamic and externally driven governance landscape.

Institutional context

15. Implemented by UNEP's Industry and Economy Division / Industry Innovation Branch / Plastics Unit within the Chemicals and Pollution Sub-Programme, the grant contributes to UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2022-2025 and Programme of Work through **Direct Outcomes 3.3** (global plastic pollution is reduced) and **3.6** (resource efficiency and circularity in key sectors are improved), and aligns with several MTS outcomes: **Outcome**

1A (sustainable pathways), **3A-3C** (chemicals, waste, pollution reduction), and **2C** (nature conservation). Financed through the UN Peace and Development Trust Fund's (UNPDF) Sub-Fund (2030 Agenda window), the grant is implemented directly by UNEP in collaboration with national governments and regional stakeholders across nine Asia-Pacific countries. Its positioning within the "Circularity in Sectors (Plastics)" programme coordination framework reflects its role in advancing lifecycle approaches to plastic pollution. Furthermore, the grant functions as a targeted country-level intervention in UNEP's "One UNEP Plastic" project, contributing to its system-wide transition to a circular plastics economy by strengthening national policy capacities while leveraging and complementing broader programme-level coordination, knowledge, and partnership mechanisms.

16. The grant was approved in March 2023 and commenced on 1 May 2023, with a planned and actual operational completion date of 30 April 2026, followed by financial closure on 31 October 2026. It was not subjected to a mid-term review. It was designed as a single-phase intervention, with no prior or subsequent phases identified. The total secured budget amounts to USD 1,478,599. This was fully financed through extra-budgetary resources, with no core funding component. At grant submission, co-funding was anticipated from Norwegian Retailers' Environmental Funds (USD 200,000), UNEP Environment Fund (USD 400,000) and the Sea Circular Project (USD 1,200,000). During implementation, co-financing and complementary resources were mobilised through UNEP-managed initiatives and partners, totalling USD 2,298,723 (see Table 6).

B. Results Framework

17. The grant was designed as a capacity-development intervention to strengthen national systems for addressing plastic pollution in nine Asia-Pacific countries, centred on the development, monitoring, and reporting of National Action Plans (NAPs) to support their long-term implementation and scalability, as well as contribute to broader regional and global efforts, including alignment with the emerging global plastics agreement. The project's long-term intended impact is to contribute to the reduction of plastic pollution and its associated environmental, social, and economic impacts. The Project Document situates this within broader contributions to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 3, 6, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 – reflecting a systemic ambition to address the triple planetary crisis.

18. As summarized in Table 3, the results hierarchy is structured around three interrelated outcomes: (i) strengthened government capacity for NAP development and monitoring; (ii) enhanced capacity of governments and businesses to design and implement Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) systems; and (iii) improved integration of plastic pollution into UN and national development frameworks (CCA/UNSDCF). The underpinning outputs operationalise this logic through a combination of global public goods (NAP methodologies, indicator frameworks, statistical guidance), country-level technical assistance (notably, EPR in three countries), and system-level integration (embedding plastics within UN planning processes and strengthening UNCT capacities). The structure reflects a catalytic approach: policy tools and knowledge products support national policy processes, which are then reinforced through institutional integration and regional coordination, rather than direct implementation of waste management interventions – with management and coordination functions playing a critical integrative role in facilitating regional knowledge exchange, aligning activities with the global plastics negotiation process, and ensuring coherence across countries and pathways.

Table 3 – Summary of the Grant's Latest Approved Results Framework

	Results Statements
Objective	Strengthen the national capacities of nine Asia-Pacific countries to develop, update, monitor and report on activities and progress under National Action Plans (NAPs) for reducing plastic pollution

	Results Statements
Impact	Contribute to reduction of plastic pollution and its associated impacts on climate, nature, and pollution in Asia-Pacific with environmental, social, and economic benefits.
Intermediate States	Not identified in Project Document
Outcomes	1) Enhanced capacity in governments of nine Asia-Pacific countries for developing and monitoring national action plans to reduce plastic pollution. 2) Enhanced capacity in governments and businesses of three Asia-Pacific countries to design and implement Extended Producer Responsibility scheme to reduce plastic pollution with a focus on high-impact sectors as part of the National Action Plans. 3) Enhanced capacity of UNRCs systems and UNCTs and other key country-level and regional environmental stakeholders in nine Asia-Pacific countries through the integration of actions to address plastic pollution in their respective CCAs and UNSDCFs.
Outputs	Output 1.1: Harmonized methodology and template for national action plans developed
	Output 1.2: Harmonised indicator framework developed for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the progress against plastic pollution
	Output 1.3 Regional consultations for the international legally binding instrument on key topics supported
	Output 1.4 Training provided to national EPAs, NSOs, and other national stakeholders of nine Asia-Pacific countries to monitor progress based on environmental statistics and digital innovation, and to share knowledge and experience on developing national action plans and reporting progress
	Output 2.1 Technical support provided to three countries (Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines) on Extended Producer Responsibility towards sectors on food and beverage, e-commerce, textiles and fishing gears, etc.
	Output 3.1 Plastic agenda integrated into updated national CCAs and UNSDCFs in three countries (Thailand, Malaysia, Viet Nam)
	Output 3.2 Capacity development training provided to UNRCs and UNCTs in nine countries

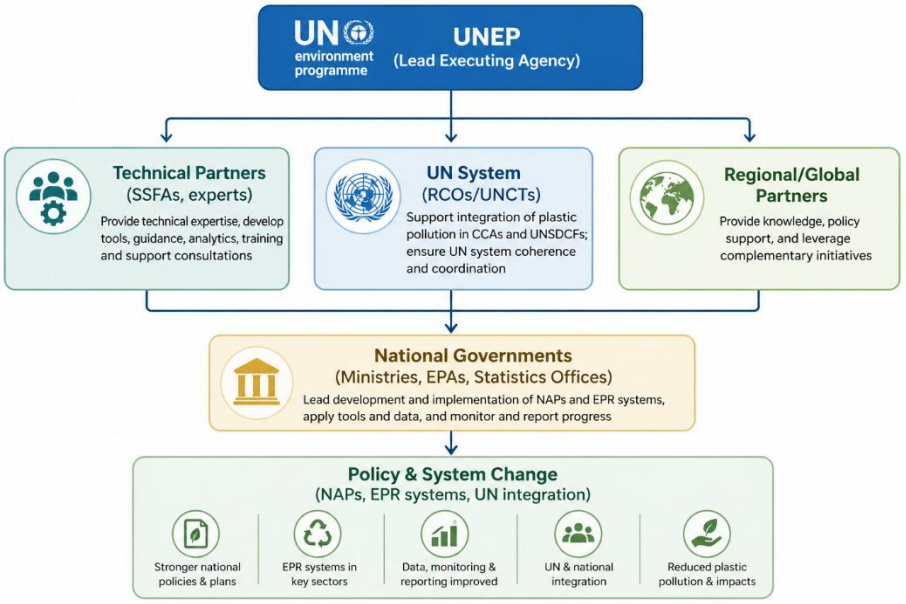
Source: Project Document and Biannual Progress Reports

C. Implementation Structure and Partners

19. As lead executing entity, UNEP, through its Industry and Economy Division (Plastics Unit), has overall responsibility for grant management, technical oversight, coordination, delivery of outputs, and ensuring alignment with the One UNEP Plastics project and the global plastics negotiation process. As shown Figure 1, UNEP retains direct accountability, while delivery is operationalised through a networked implementation model, combining technical partners, national and UN system actors whose roles are outlined in Table 4.

20. At country level, national governments – through their environment ministries, environmental protection agencies (EPAs), national statistical offices (NSOs) – are the primary counterparts, responsible for uptake and application of project outputs, particularly with respect to developing and implementing NAPs and EPR systems under Outcomes 1 and 2. UN Resident Coordinators (RCOs) and UN Country Teams (UNCTs) play a key role under Outcome 3, supporting the integration of plastic pollution into CCAs and UNSDCFs and ensuring system-wide coherence.

Figure 1 – Grant's Implementation Arrangements



21. Technical delivery is supported through Small-Scale Funding Agreements (SSFAs) with specialized partners (e.g., research institutions, consultancies, NGOs), which provide analytical work, guidance materials, and facilitation of consultations. In parallel, regional and global partners (e.g., UNDP, UNESCAP, COBSEA, GPAP, World Bank, WWF, IUCN) contribute to knowledge exchange, policy alignment, and leverage complementary initiatives. The implementation structure is therefore decentralised but coordinated, with UNEP acting as an integrator across countries, pathways, and partners to ensure coherence and catalytic impact. The effectiveness of this structure depends on UNEP's ability to coordinate a diverse partner landscape and translate technical outputs into sustained policy and institutional change at country level.

Table 4 – Key Grant Partners and Roles

Partner	Type	Role in Delivery	Relevance for Assessment
UNEP (Industry and Economy Division)	Lead executing entity	Overall management, coordination, technical oversight, delivery of outputs, partner contracting	Central to efficiency, coherence, and strategic positioning
National Governments (in 9 countries)	Primary beneficiaries / counterparts	Develop, update, and implement NAPs; engage in EPR design; apply tools and guidance	Critical for Outcome 1 effectiveness
EPAs & National Statistics Offices	Technical government actors	Data collection, indicator development, monitoring and reporting	Critical for quality of evidence and monitoring systems
Private sector actors (related to EPR)	Implementation stakeholders	Participate in EPR design and implementation	Critical for Outcome 2 effectiveness
UN Resident Coordinators (RCOs)	UN system coordination	Integrate plastics into CCA/UNSDCF; facilitate UN system alignment	Key for coherence and institutionalisation
UN Country Teams (UNCTs)	UN system delivery partners	Support mainstreaming and cross-sectoral integration	Important for scaling and sustainability
Technical Partners (via SSFAs)	Implementing partners	Develop methodologies, guidance, analytics, and training; support consultations	Key for quality and timeliness of outputs
UNDP, UNESCAP	UN partners	Policy support, regional coordination, complementarities	Contribute to coherence and leverage
Global Plastic Action Partnership (GPAP), World Bank, IUCN, UNITAR, OECD, GIZ and others related to EPR)	External partners	Knowledge sharing, policy dialogue, complementary initiatives	Enhance relevance and catalytic effect

D. Stakeholders

22. Drawing on the Project Document and an Information Note provided by the project team, stakeholders were categorised by their power over and interest in the grant (see **Error! Reference source not found.**).

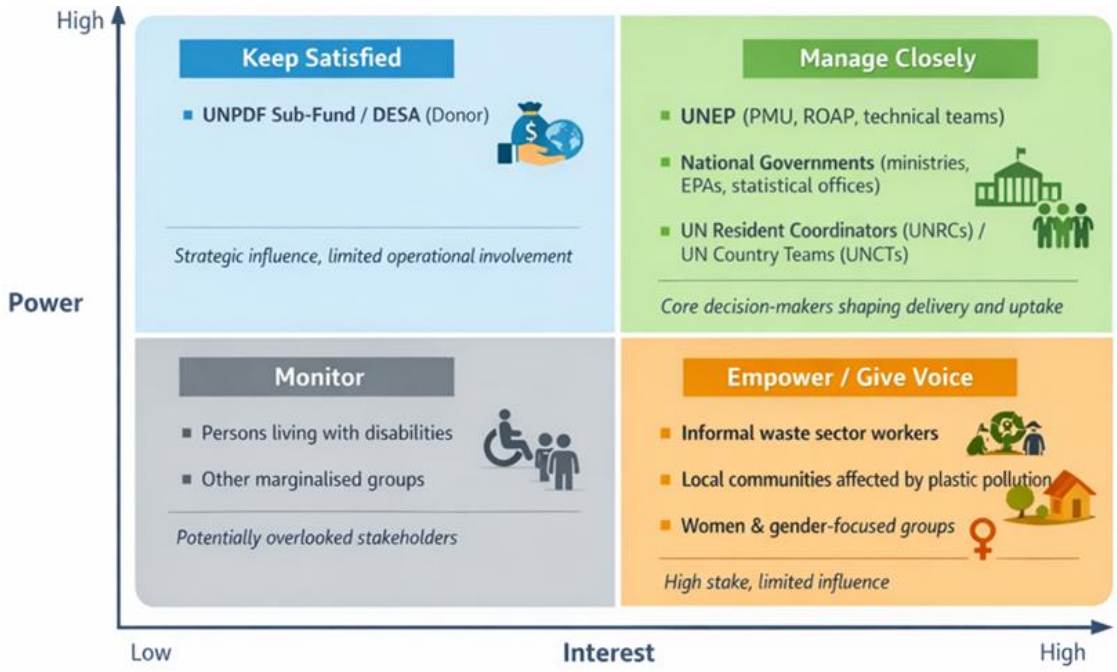
Table 5 – Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholder	Stakeholder Type	Role	Power Over / Interest
UNEP (HQ and ROAP – PMU, technical staff, fund management)	Implementing agency	Overall grant execution, technical guidance, financial management, coordination with partners and UN system	**High power / High interest** – central decision-making authority and accountability for delivery
UNPDF Sub-Fund (Donor / UNDESA)	Donor	Provides funding, sets strategic expectations (SDG alignment, partnerships, reporting), reviews progress	**High power / Medium interest** – strong influence through funding and reporting requirements, less involved in day-to-day delivery
National Governments (Ministries of environment, planning, statistics offices in 9 countries)	Primary beneficiaries / implementing counterparts	Development and implementation of NAPs, integration into policies, data/reporting systems	**High power / High interest** – ownership of policy uptake and long-term sustainability
UN Resident Coordinators (UNRCs) and UN Country Teams (UNCTs)	UN system partners	Integration of plastic pollution into CCAs and UNSDCFs; cross-UN agency country-level coordination	**Medium-High power / High interest** – influence integration into UN programming frameworks
Implementing partners (e.g. GRID-Arendal, universities, research institutes, NGOs)	Technical partners	Deliver analytical work, capacity building, policy support, tools and knowledge products	**Medium power / High interest** – strong role in outputs but limited strategic control
Private sector actors (e.g. PROs, companies engaged in EPR, such as IPRO, PCX Solutions)	Private sector stakeholders	Engagement in EPR design and implementation, contribution to circular economy solutions	**Medium-High power / Medium interest** – influence implementation feasibility; interest depends on regulatory incentives
Regional organisations and initiatives (e.g. SEA Circular, COBSEA, GIZ collaboration)	Regional partners	Support regional coordination, knowledge sharing, and alignment with ongoing initiatives	**Medium power / Medium-High interest** – facilitate scale and coherence but not decision-makers
Knowledge partners / global platforms (e.g., GGKP, GPML)	Knowledge and dissemination platforms	Dissemination of lessons learned, tools, and best practices	**Low-Medium power / Medium interest** – influence visibility and uptake, not implementation
Informal waste sector workers, vulnerable groups	Target group / affected stakeholders	Beneficiaries of improved waste systems and EPR schemes	**Low power / High interest** – directly affected but limited influence over design and decision-making
Women and gender-focused groups	Cross-cutting stakeholder group	Participation in capacity-building, consultations, and potential beneficiaries of inclusive policies	**Low power / Medium-High interest** – considered in design but weakly operationalised
Persons living with disabilities and other marginalised groups	Cross-cutting stakeholder group	Potentially affected by waste systems and policy changes; inclusion implied	**Low power / Low-Medium interest (as reflected in design)** – largely absent from design considerations
International negotiation processes (INC on plastics)	External policy context	Provides global policy direction influencing national commitments and relevance of project outputs	**High contextual influence / Indirect interest** – shapes enabling environment rather than implementation

23. Using the power-interest lens, the stakeholder analysis was used to identify priority stakeholders for engagement during the review, considering decision-making influence and stakes in grant outcomes. The matrix resulting from this analysis (see Figure 2) reflects a structurally UNEP- and government-centric power configuration consistent with

the project's catalytic approach – where policy tools and knowledge products are designed to support national policy processes, reinforced through institutional integration and regional coordination (¶18). This places institutional actors at the centre of delivery and policy uptake. By contrast, groups most directly affected by plastic pollution — particularly informal workers and other vulnerable populations — have high interest but limited influence are only partially integrated into the project design. In this context, their more limited role reflects the grant's policy support and capacity-building focus, while still pointing to an opportunity to strengthen inclusive engagement alongside technical and policy support.

Figure 2 – Stakeholder Power-Interest Matrix



E. Changes in Design during Implementation

24. The formal negotiation process for the global plastics treaty began with the first session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-1) during 28 November to 2 December 2022. As UNEP serves as the Secretariat of the INC process, the rapidly evolving and politically sensitive treaty negotiations created an external context that was not fully foreseeable during the grant design phase and had important implications for implementation. The grant therefore adapted its design and operational emphasis in response to this emerging global plastics process. Activities under Outcome 1 related to NAP development were partially deprioritised because National Action Plans (NAPs) were expected to become part of the substantive treaty negotiations amongst Member States. Advancing detailed or prescriptive guidance prior to treaty finalisation risked being perceived as pre-empting negotiated outcomes. As the Secretariat of the INC process, UNEP therefore needed to maintain neutrality and carefully sequence grant support in relation to the evolving negotiations. Progress Reports consistently indicate that NAP-related outputs (e.g., methodologies, indicator frameworks, and trainings) were "to be further planned following INC processes" and that activities were "carefully planned in close follow-up with ongoing INC processes". At the same time, the grant shifted operational emphasis toward Outcomes 2 and 3, respectively strengthening EPR systems and integrating plastic pollution into UN Country Team processes — areas less constrained by negotiation sensitivities and where immediate progress was feasible. This adaptive rebalancing is explicitly reflected in grant reporting, which notes a deliberate

focus on "Outcome 2, Outcome 3, and regional knowledge-sharing activities under Outcome 1" while awaiting clarity from the INC process. This shift reflects responsiveness to a dynamic external policy environment rather than a design weakness, with the project maintaining strategic alignment while adjusting sequencing and emphasis to remain relevant and operationally effective within a moving global governance context.

F. Financing

25. This grant was financed through a UNPDF Sub-Fund grant of USD 1,478,599.

26. Planned co-financing (in-kind) was anticipated from Norwegian Retailers' Environmental Funds (USD 200,000), Sea Circular Project (USD 1,200,000), and UNEP Environment Fund (USD 400,000), for a total of USD 1,800,000.

27. During implementation, co-financing and complementary resources mobilised through UNEP-managed initiatives and partners totalled USD 2,298,723 (see Table 6), exceeding the planned amount by 27.7%.

Table 6 – Grant Funding Sources

Funding source *All figures as USD*	**Planned funding**	**% of planned funding**	**Secured funding**[11]	**% of secured funding**
Cash				
Funds from the Environment Fund				
Funds from the Regular Budget				
Extra-budgetary funding (listed per donor):				
UNPDF	1,478,599	100	1,478,599	100
Sub-total: Cash contributions	1,478,599		1,478,599	
In-kind				
Environment Fund staff-post costs			74,653	47
Regular Budget staff-post costs				
Extra-budgetary funding for staff-posts (listed per donor)				
Japan supplementary budget, UNOPS PPD, Norway			84,874	53
Sub-total: In-kind contributions			*159,527*	*100*
Co-financing*				
Co-financing cash contribution				
Co-financing in-kind contribution				
Sea Circular Project	1,200,000	66	1,236,692	58
UNEP Environment Fund 2023	400,000	22		
Norwegian Retailer's Environmental Funds	200,000	12	211,862	10
China Trust Fund			537,868	25
GEF Plastics Reboot			102,774	5
GRID-Arendal			50,000	2
Sub-total: Co-financing contributions	*1,800,000*	*100*	*2,139,196*	*100*
Total	**3,278,599**		**3,777,322**	

[11] Secured funding refers to received funds and does not include funding commitments not yet realised.

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

II. REVIEW METHODS

A. Approach

28. In line with UNEP Evaluation Policy[12], UNEP Programme and Project Management Manual and Evaluation Manual[13], the review was undertaken at the grant's operational completion to assess performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency) and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the grant, including their sustainability. The review has two primary aims: (i) provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, (ii) promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned.

29. The target audiences for the review findings are UNEP and key partners, including national government counterparts (particularly Ministries of Environment and associated agencies), UNRCOs and UNCTs, implementing partners, and relevant regional and international organisations engaged in addressing plastic pollution in Asia-Pacific region.

30. Together with the evaluation framework of the UNPDF 2030 Agenda Sub-Fund, which emphasizes strategic relevance, catalytic effects, and contribution to systemic change, the terminal review applied UNEP's standard set of 9 multi-layered review criteria: A) Strategic Relevance; B) Quality of Design; C) Nature of External Context; D) Effectiveness (including availability of outputs; achievement of outcomes, likelihood of impact); E) Financial Management; F) Efficiency; G) Monitoring and Reporting; H) Sustainability; and I) Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues.

31. The full set of UNEP evaluation criteria and their sub-criteria (see **Annex I**) were purposefully synthesised into a manageable set of Key Evaluation Questions (see these KEQs in **Annex II**). This step reflects a deliberate prioritisation to ensure that the review remained methodologically robust and feasible within the available evidence base and resourcing. The resulting nine KEQs ensure:
    - alignment with UNEP criteria and UNPDF expectations for catalytic/systemic change;
    - analytical depth, supporting contribution analysis and theory-based evaluation;
    - coverage of the most decision-relevant dimensions of the project's performance.

32. These nine KEQs formed the Terminal Review's analytic backbone, providing a feasible framework for assessing the strategic relevance, coherence, effectiveness, governance, resource use, and likelihood of impact. For each KEQ, the Evaluation Matrix specifies: (i) sub-questions that span the breadth of the question; (ii) evaluable indicators of behavioural or institutional change; (iii) sources of evidence to substantiate those indicators; (iv) data collection methods. It also structured the triangulation of interview and documentary evidence consistent with UNEP's theory-based evaluation standards.

33. The TOR highlights two cross-cutting strategic questions relating to: (i) the added value within UNEP's broader work in this thematic area, and (ii) its complementarity and coherence with other UNEP interventions. These dimensions were not treated as standalone questions; they are covered by the review framework under KEQ1 (strategic relevance), KEQ2 (coherence), and KEQ5 (contribution) — and were examined through both desk review and stakeholder consultations.

[12] UNEP Evaluation Policy (October2022) from: https://wedocs.unep.org/items/26c8da10-c1f4-486d-8c4a-70e307b2436e
[13] UNEP Evaluation Manual (March 2023) from https://wedocs.unep.org/items/6c8792db-84f2-4ca1-b588-e3651afc9f23

34. Most review criteria are rated on a 6-point scale: 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) to Highly Unlikely (HU). Nature of External Context is rated from Highly Favourable (HF) to Highly Unfavourable (HU). The ratings for each criterion are 'weighted' to derive the Overall Performance Rating. The greatest weight is placed on the achievement of outcomes, followed by dimensions of sustainability.

35. 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 review criterion. All evidence gathered during the review in relation to this matrix were considered to generate review criteria performance ratings.

36. The review adopted a participatory approach, with regular exchanges with the grant team to clarify factual aspects, validate interpretations, and ensure accuracy of the analysis. The grant's TOC was reconstructed (see Figure 3) during the inception phase, based on desk review, to articulate the intended pathways of change, including key assumptions and external drivers. This reconstruction was presented in the Inception Report and did not elicit further feedback. Given the time constraints of remote interviews and the need to prioritise core evaluation questions, the TOC was not systematically reviewed with all stakeholders during the data collection phase. Instead, it was used by the Reviewer as an analytical tool to guide questioning, test causal linkages, and interpret evidence.

B. Data Collection

Primary data sources

37. As the outputs and outcomes of the grant's support are related to the development of plans, strategies, capacities, and knowledge – with no physical objects that can be directly observed, no field missions were undertaken for data gathering. Interviews, supported by semi-structured protocols tailored to each stakeholder, were carried out remotely (by Zoom, MS Teams), an approach that has proven to be both pragmatic and carbon neutral. A total of 19 stakeholders were consulted (58% women, 42% men) representing a cross-section of actors across the delivery architecture, including UNEP management and technical staff, donor representatives, UN Resident Coordinator Offices (RCOs) and UN Country Teams (UNCTs), national government counterparts, parties contracted through SSFAs to deliver the grant's outputs, regional organisations, and private-sector entities involved in EPR implementation (see **Annex IV**).

Strategies for inclusivity

38. To ensure coverage of diverse perspectives and maximise response rates, the evaluation applied a purposive sampling strategy informed by the stakeholder analysis, prioritising actors across governance, technical delivery, and implementation pathways. Engagement was facilitated through flexible scheduling, multiple follow-ups, and the use of remote modalities to accommodate geographically dispersed stakeholders. Attention was given to capturing potentially divergent views by including representatives from government, the UN system, implementing partners, private sector actors, and regional organisations – thereby enabling triangulation across institutional perspectives. Given the grant's policy support and capacity-building focus — where benefits to marginalised and potentially disadvantaged groups (e.g., informal waste workers and vulnerable communities) are expected to materialise primarily during subsequent implementation phases — direct consultation with these groups was not undertaken. Instead, their perspectives were indirectly assessed through secondary evidence, including the GRID-Arendal Impact Brief and implementing partner reports, which document multi-stakeholder consultation

processes, including engagement with informal waste workers and local actors in EPR-related activities. This approach is consistent with the grant's Theory of Change, which situates these groups as beneficiaries of strengthened policy frameworks, institutional capacity, and system-level interventions.

Secondary data sources

39. The review drew on a comprehensive set of secondary data sources including grant documentation, partner-generated materials, monitoring data, and contextual reference literature (see **Annex V**). Core evidence is provided by official project documents supplied by the team, including the UNEP Project Document (2022) and six Progress Reports with annex material (2023-2026), which together offer longitudinal insight into design, implementation, and reported results. These are complemented by project outputs and technical deliverables produced by contracted parties (e.g., GRID-Arendal, KEI, IPRO, PCX Solutions, Burapha University, NIEF, ISPAE) covering analytical studies, guidance tools, capacity-building materials, and country-specific reports across the three outcome areas (NAPs, EPR, UN system integration). Monitoring and results data are further captured through synthesis products such as an Impact Brief (April 2026), as well as country analyses and consultation reports, providing evidence on progress and early outcomes.

40. The analysis has been contextualised through relevant reference documents from UNEP, OECD, World Bank, and UN resolutions, which situate the project within broader policy, economic, and environmental frameworks on plastic pollution and circular economy.

C. Data Analysis

41. Data analysis was conducted using a structured, theory-based approach aligned with the Evaluation Matrix (**Annex III**) and reconstructed TOC (Figure 3) Evidence from desk review and stakeholder consultations was systematically screened, selected, and organised against the 9 KEQs (**Annex II**), ensuring that analysis remained focused on the most decision-relevant dimensions of project performance. A combination of thematic analysis and contribution analysis was applied: qualitative data from interviews were coded according to evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability) and key dimensions of the TOC (outputs, outcomes, drivers, assumptions, external factors) – enabling identification of patterns, convergence, and divergence across sources. This approach allowed the review to move beyond descriptive reporting towards assessing the plausibility of causal linkages and the project's contribution to observed changes, while explicitly considering alternative explanations and contextual influences.

42. To ensure analytical rigour and traceability, interviews systematically analysed and coded, to facilitate retrieval of evidence linked to specific findings, enabling triangulation across data sources, including project documentation, partner outputs, monitoring data, and stakeholder perspectives. Where relevant, qualitative judgements were complemented by structured assessments (e.g. scoring against UNEP evaluation criteria), while recognising the limitations of the available data. The analysis prioritised consistency and evidence-based reasoning, with findings derived from corroborated sources and clearly distinguishing between substantiated evidence and informed interpretation.

D. Limitations and Mitigation Strategies

43. The evidence base is inherently selective: with 19 stakeholder interviews and no field missions, the review could not ensure balanced representation across all 9 countries, stakeholder groups, and levels of implementation. This creates potential imbalances in perspectives, favouring institutional actors with higher visibility and accessibility (i.e., UNEP, national governments, implementing partners) over lower-power stakeholders such

as informal sector actors and vulnerable groups, whose voices are less systematically captured. In addition, the reliance on remote consultations introduced variable depth of engagement, as well as language and connectivity constraints in some contexts.

44. The documentary evidence, while extensive, presented some limitations for assessing higher-level results. Project reporting is strong on outputs and activities, but less able to document outcome-level changes (e.g., policy uptake, behavioural change, institutionalisation) expected to flow in future, beyond the project's close – thereby constraining the ability to robustly assess effectiveness and progress to impact. Monitoring data is not always structured to capture qualitative dimensions like relevance, quality, or use of outputs. As a result, the generalisability of findings is constrained, and conclusions are more appropriately framed as indicative and context-specific rather than universally representative.

45. There are inherent challenges related to attribution. Given the grant's catalytic nature — operating through policy support, capacity-building, and knowledge products — it is difficult to establish direct causal links between project interventions and observed changes, particularly within a dynamic external context shaped by the global plastics treaty negotiations. In addition, interview-based data may be affected by self-reporting bias, recall bias, or institutional positioning, with stakeholders potentially emphasizing successes or aligning responses with organisational narratives.

46. To mitigate these limitations, several approaches were deployed:
    - The review applied a theory-based approach. The reconstructed TOC provided an analytical framework to test causal pathways and assess contribution rather than attribution. Evidence was triangulated across multiple sources to validate findings and identify converging patterns.
    - Purposeful sampling, informed by stakeholder analysis, ensured that priority was given to actors with high decision-making power and direct involvement in implementation, while also seeking to include perspectives from lower-power/high-interest groups (using indirect means, ¶38) to address inclusivity considerations.
    - Remote data collection was strengthened through the use of structured interview protocols, follow-up, and the option for written inputs to increase participation.
    - Analytical transparency has been maintained by acknowledging evidence gaps, distinguishing between verified findings and informed judgement, and interpreting results within the project's broader external and institutional context.

E. Ethical Considerations

47. Throughout the review process and in the compilation of the Review Report, efforts have been made to represent the views of both mainstream and more marginalised groups. Data were collected with respect for ethics and human rights issues. Information was gathered after prior informed consent from informants, all discussions remained anonymous, and all information was collected according to the UN Standards of Conduct.

III. THEORY OF CHANGE AT REVIEW

48. The review reconstructed and further elaborated the grant's TOC (see Figure 3) to strengthen the analytical clarity of the causal logic at project level. While the project formed part of the broader ONE UNEP plastics programme framework, which includes an overarching TOC and the Project Document contained a simplified project-level TOC and results framework (see Table 3), these did not consistently distinguish between UNEP results levels, fully articulate the distinct causal pathways, and or specify the intermediate states linking project outputs to longer-term system-level effects. The reconstructed TOC therefore differentiates three interrelated pathways — policy integration (*P1*), EPR system operationalisation (*P2*), and UN system mainstreaming (*P3)* — and clarifies how grant outputs (technical guidance, capacity-building, knowledge exchange, coordination mechanisms) were expected to contribute to behavioural and institutional changes.

49. It further specifies how strengthened national capacities are expected to translate into the use of policy instruments, application of EPR frameworks, and integration of plastics into UN planning processes. These outcome-level changes are expected to translate into intermediate system-level changes, including strengthening foundations for lifecycle-oriented policies, strengthening conditions for operationalising EPR systems in priority sectors, and the embedding of coordinated and sustained UN support for plastics in country programming. These changes, conditional on stakeholder uptake, ultimately support progress towards circular economy approaches and reduced plastic pollution.

50. This required the reformulation of results statements across impact, outcomes, and intermediate states to correct output-level phrasing and align them with results-based management definitions, focusing on observable behavioural and system-level changes; the revised formulations and their justifications are presented in Table 7. Furthermore, the reconstructed TOC identified key drivers and core causal assumptions based on the analysis of project performance and factors influencing sustainability of results, including policy uptake dynamics, institutional capacity, incentive structures, and the effectiveness of UN system coordination; these are detailed in Table 8.

Table 7 – Justification for Reformulation of Results Statements

Formulation in original UNEP Project Document – 2022	Formulation for reconstructed TOC at review (RTOC)	Justification for reformulation
(LONG LASTING) IMPACT		
Contribute to reduction of plastic pollution and its associated impacts on climate, nature, and pollution in Asia-Pacific with environmental, social, and economic benefits.	Reduced plastic pollution and improved circularity in Asia-Pacific	The original formulation is broad and framed as a general contribution statement, combining multiple dimensions (environmental, social, economic) without clearly specifying the core change. The reformulation provides a clearer and more focused articulation of the intended long-term change, directly aligned with the project's TOC. It captures both the reduction of negative outcomes (pollution) and the positive system transformation (circularity), while avoiding over-claiming wider impacts that cannot be directly attributed. This improves conceptual clarity and ensures the impact statement remains credible and evaluable within the project's scope.

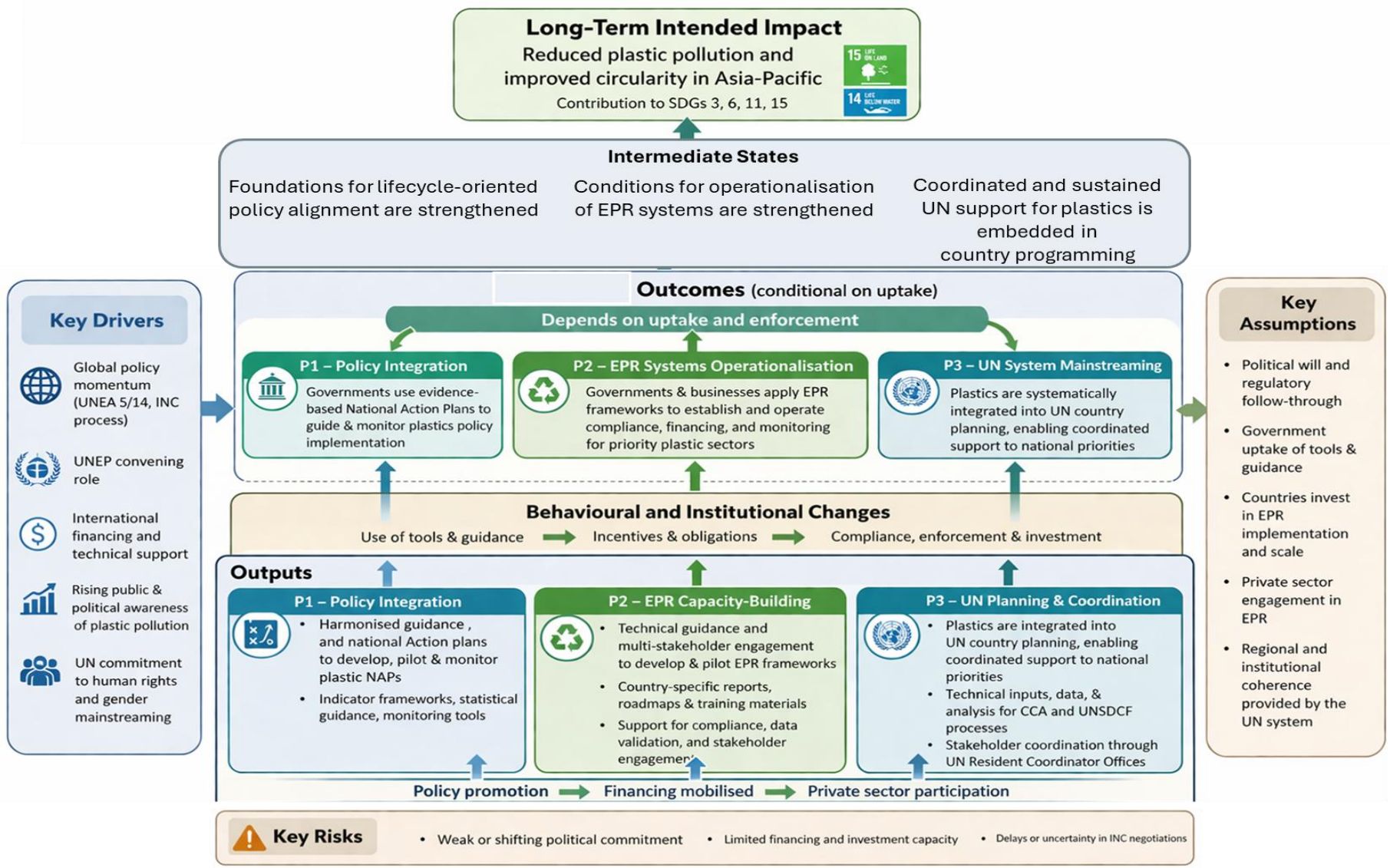
INTERMEDIATE STATES		
Not identified	Foundations for lifecycle-oriented policy alignment are strengthened	This captures change pathway #1 notions that: ➢ NAPs move from being documents to being implemented ➢ Policies begin to reflect lifecycle thinking (production → consumption → waste) ➢ Monitoring systems start informing adjustments
	Conditions for operationalisation of EPR systems are strengthened	This captures change pathway #2 notions that: ➢ PROs are operating and coordinating actors ➢ Companies are complying and reporting ➢ Financial flows (fees, incentives) are supporting waste management ➢ Systems are performing (collection, recycling, reporting)
	Coordinated and sustained UN support for plastics is embedded in country programming	This captures change pathway #3 notions that: ➢ Plastics are consistently present in CCA/UNSDCF cycles ➢ UN agencies are aligning their interventions ➢ There is increased likelihood of resource mobilisation and scaling
OUTCOMES		
Outcome 1: Enhanced capacity in governments of nine Asia-Pacific countries for developing and monitoring national action plans to reduce plastic pollution.	Governments use evidence-based National Action Plans to guide and monitor plastics policy implementation	The original outcome is framed at output level ("enhanced capacity"), whereas the reformulation reflects outcome-level change by capturing how governments use that capacity in practice. The revised formulation focuses on the active use of evidence-based National Action Plans to guide and monitor policy implementation, thereby strengthening evaluability and aligning with results-based management principles that define outcomes as changes in behaviour and institutional practice.
Outcome 2: Enhanced capacity in governments and businesses of three Asia-Pacific countries to design and implement Extended Producer Responsibility scheme to reduce plastic pollution with a focus on high-impact sectors as part of the National Action Plans	Governments and businesses apply EPR frameworks to establish and operate compliance, financing, and monitoring for priority plastic sectors	The original outcome is framed at output level ("enhanced capacity"), focusing on the provision of knowledge and skills to governments and businesses. The reformulated outcome shifts to outcome-level change by capturing the application of EPR frameworks in practice, including aspects related to compliance, financing, and monitoring in priority sectors. This better reflects the project's change logic and strengthens evaluability by focusing on observable system-level implementation rather than capacity alone.
Outcome 3: Enhanced capacity of UNRCs systems and UNCTs and other key country-level and regional environmental stakeholders in nine Asia-Pacific countries through the integration of actions to address plastic pollution in their respective CCAs and UNSDCFs	Plastics are systematically integrated into UN country planning, enabling coordinated support to national priorities	The original outcome is framed at output level ("enhanced capacity" of UNRCs and UNCTs), which does not capture how this capacity is used. The reformulated outcome shifts to system-level change, reflecting the actual integration of plastics into UN country planning instruments (CCA/UNSDCF) and the resulting coordination of UN support to national priorities. This aligns with results-based management principles by focusing on observable changes in UN system practices and strengthens evaluability by enabling assessment of whether plastics are effectively embedded in planning and used to guide coordinated action.

OUTCOME INDICATORS – no need for reformulation
Outcome 1 (1A 1.1): Number of countries with gaps in their existing national policies against plastic pollution identified; and with technical guidelines, support and training provided to design and update systemic and effective national action plans to reduce plastic pollution.
Outcome 1 (1A 1.2): Identified priorities in the region for the intergovernmental negotiation for the legally binding instrument on plastic pollution through regional consultations and fed into the INC process.
Outcome 1 (1A 1.3): Number of EPA and NSO staff members gaining knowledge and skills to monitor, evaluate, and report on progress to reduce plastic pollution through receiving technical guidelines, digital tools, technical support and training.
Outcome 2 (IA 2.1): Number of EPR technical guidelines/roadmaps developed to support implementation and enforcement by governments and businesses in Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines.
Outcome 2 (IA 2.2): Number of high-impact sectors/products related with plastics included in the national EPR guidance with clear operational measures through stakeholder consultation.
Outcome 3 (IA 3.1): Number of countries with CCAs and UNSDCFs updated with statistics and information related to plastic pollution to integrate the plastic agenda as an emerging priority for sustainable development.
Outcome 3 (IA 3.2): Number of RC and UNCT members receiving training and technical support with enhanced knowledge on integrating plastic agenda in national development frameworks and priorities.
OUTPUTS – no need for reformulation
Output 1.1 Harmonized methodology and template for national action plans developed.
Output 1.2 Harmonised indicator framework developed for monitoring, evaluating, and reporting on the progress against plastic pollution.
Output 1.3 Regional consultations for the international legally binding instrument on key topics supported.
Output 1.4 Training provided to national EPAs, NSOs and other national stakeholders of nine Asia-Pacific countries to monitor progress based on environmental statistics and digital innovation, and to share knowledge and experience on developing national action plans and reporting progress.
Output 2.1 Technical support provided to three countries (Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines) on Extended Producer Responsibility towards sectors on food and beverage, e-commerce, textiles and fishing gears etc
Output 3.1 Plastic agenda integrated into updated national CCAs and UNSDCFs in three countries (Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam).
Output 3.2 Capacity development training provided to UNRCs and UNCTs in nine countries

Table 8 –Expansion of TOC Drivers and Assumptions

	Formulation for reconstructed TOC at inception (RTOC)
DRIVERS	Global policy momentum (UNEA 5/14, INC process)
	UNEP's convening role
	International financing and technical support
	Rising public and political awareness of plastic pollution
	UN commitment to human rights and gender mainstreaming
ASSUMPTIONS	Political will and regulatory follow-through
	Government uptake of tools and guidance
	Countries invest in EPR implementation and scale
	Private sector engagement in EPR
	Regional and institutional coherence provided by the UN system

Figure 3 – Reconstructed Theory of Change



IV. REVIEW FINDINGS

A. Strategic Relevance

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

Table 9 – Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW, and Strategic Priorities

UNEP strategic document	Alignment with UNEP's mandate and thematic priorities
MTS (2022-2025) This project is intended to contribute to UNEP's MTS 2022-2025 as follows: ***Outcome 1A**: Decision-makers at all levels adopt decarbonization, dematerialization and resilience pathways*; ***Outcome 3A**: Human health and environmental outcomes are optimized through enhanced capacity and leadership in sound management of chemicals and waste; **Outcome 3B:** Waste management is improved, including through circular processes, safe recovery of secondary raw materials, and progressive reduction of open burning and dump sites; **Outcome 2C**: Nature conservation and restoration are enhanced; **Outcome 3C** Releases of pollutants to air, water, soil, ocean are reduced.*	This grant's design demonstrates strong alignment with the MTS (2022-2025), particularly under the Chemicals and Pollution Action subprogramme, as the project closely reflects UNEP's strategic approach to addressing pollution through lifecycle thinking, science-policy integration, and policy support. Its emphasis on developing national action planning frameworks, promoting circular economy instruments like EPR, and strengthening data, analytical tools and institutional capacity is consistent with UNEP's comparative advantage as a knowledge-driven, convening, and policy-support organisation. The grant also aligns with the MTS priority of integrating environmental considerations into broader development planning, through its engagement with CCA/UNSDCF processes and support to UN system coherence. However, alignment is primarily at the level of strategic approach and enabling functions: across the three change pathways, results are concentrated in analytical outputs, guidance, and institutional readiness – with limited evidence of implementation or systemic transformation during the project period. The project is therefore best characterized as strongly aligned with UNEP's strategic direction and delivery model, while still in the early stages of translating this approach into outcome-level change.
POW (2022-2025) According to its design document, this project contributes to UNEP's POW 2022-2025 as follows: ***POW Direct Outcomes:*** ***3.3**. Global plastic pollution is reduced* ***3.6**. Resource efficiency and circularity in key sectors are improved*	Demonstrates strong alignment with UNEP's POW (2022-2025) through its contributions to enabling conditions required to reduce global plastic pollution (Direct Outcome 3.3) and improve resource efficiency and circularity (Direct Outcome 3.6). Evidence shows substantive progress in policy integration, development of EPR systems, and strengthening of institutional and data frameworks –which are necessary precursors to reducing plastic pollution and advancing circular economy practices. However, alignment is more partial at the level of realised outcomes: there is limited evidence to date of measurable reductions in plastic pollution, fully operational circular systems, or sustained changes in resource use patterns. As such, the grant is well aligned with the intended POW outcomes in terms of contribution pathways but remains at an intermediate stage in translating these contributions into tangible environmental results.
Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building	The grant demonstrates strong, explicit alignment through its emphasis on country-driven capacity development, provision of analytical tools and data systems, support to policy and regulatory frameworks, and multistakeholder engagement. This alignment is clearly articulated in the Project Document and substantiated by implementation evidence across all three pathways although its results are concentrated at the level of capacity-building and system preparation, with institutionalisation and sustained application still emerging.
South-South Cooperation	The grant is well aligned with UNEP's notion of South-South Cooperation through its facilitation of regional knowledge exchange, peer learning, and dissemination of policy tools and best practices across participating countries. However, this alignment is primarily realised through UNEP-led platforms and processes – with limited evidence of direct country-to-country collaboration, joint implementation, or institutionalised cooperation mechanisms amongst the 9 participating countries. As such, the grant reflects a strong foundation for South-South Cooperation, but it is at a relatively early and facilitative stage.

Alignment to Donor Strategic Priorities

Table 10 – Alignment with Donor's Strategic Priorities

Donor strategic document, evidence	Alignment with donor strategic priorities
➢ UNPDF 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-Fund Evaluation Framework ➢ Stakeholder Interviews	The grant is strongly aligned with UNPDF priorities in terms of strategic positioning and policy and institutional support contributions, but only moderately aligned in terms of realised catalytic effects and institutionalised, self-sustaining change. There is strong alignment with UNPDF strategic priorities at the level of SDG integration, policy support, and UN system coherence. In particular, the grant has made a substantive contribution to strengthening the analytical and institutional foundations for addressing plastic pollution, including through lifecycle-oriented policy guidance (Viet Nam) and support to national action planning (8 countries). Evidence from Pathway 3 (UN System integration) indicates that the project has moved beyond awareness-raising to achieve meaningful analytical embedding of plastics within CCAs in multiple countries (Malaysia, Thailand, Viet Nam). Alignment is more partial regarding UNPDF's broader expectation of catalytic, system-level change. Across change pathways, results are concentrated at the level of enabling conditions (policy inputs, institutional readiness, capacity strengthening, early system-building) rather than more mature stages of implementation and institutional consolidation. Given the project's scale, timeframe, orientation, and the relatively early stage of plastics governance development in several participating countries, this pattern is broadly consistent with the intervention logic and context. Progress towards longer-term systemic transformation is therefore best characterized as emerging but not yet consolidated.

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

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

Strategic document	Alignment with global, regional, sub-regional, national environmental priorities
Global Priorities UNEA Resolution 5/14 (2022)	The grant is **highly relevant**, as its design closely aligns with this Resolution's globally agreed priorities, including lifecycle approaches, national action planning, circular economy measures (EPR), and strengthened data and monitoring systems. Its relevance is strongest at the level of policy direction and enabling conditions, with more limited evidence, so far, of translation into fully operational systems or measurable reductions in plastic pollution.
Regional/Sub-regional ASEAN Regional Action Plan for Combating Marine Debris in the ASEAN Member States (2021-2025) COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter 2019	The grant's design **closely aligns** with the core regional agenda of strengthening policy and regulatory frameworks, advancing circular economy instruments like EPR, improving data and monitoring systems, and promoting regional cooperation and knowledge exchange. Evidence from its three change pathways confirms that the grant has contributed meaningfully to these priorities, notably through support to national action planning, EPR system development, and regional peer learning platforms. However, as with global alignment, relevance is strongest at the level of enabling conditions and policy orientation, with more limited evidence of fully operational systems or sustained regional cooperation mechanisms during the project period. Overall, the grant is best characterised as highly relevant to regional priorities, while still in an intermediate stage of translating alignment into system-level outcomes.
National Priorities **Vietnam** National Action Plan on Marine Plastic Debris Management to 2030 **Indonesia** National Plan of Action on Marine Plastic Debris (2017-2025) **Philippines** National Plan of Action for the Prevention, Reduction and Management of Marine Litter	Overall, the grant is best characterized as **highly relevant** and **responsive to country-driven priorities on plastic pollution**, while still at an intermediate stage of translating this alignment into system-level results. Government-endorsed policy frameworks — such as national action plans on marine plastic debris (Viet Nam, Indonesia, Philippines), plastic waste management roadmaps (Thailand, Lao PDR), and circular economy or plastics sustainability strategies (Malaysia, Cambodia) consistently prioritize lifecycle approaches to plastics, strengthened regulatory frameworks, circular economy instruments (like EPR), and improved data, monitoring, and reporting systems. These priorities are directly reflected in the grant's design and delivery across its three change pathways, particularly through support to national action planning,

Thailand Roadmap on Plastic Waste Management (2018-2030) **Malaysia** Plastics Sustainability Roadmap (2021-2030) **Cambodia** Circular Economy Strategy and Action Plan (2021-2035) **Lao PDR** 2024-2030 National Plastic Action Plan (NPAP) **Brunei** Wawasan 2035 (national development strategy) **Samoa** National Waste Management Strategy	EPR system development, and provision of policy-relevant analytical tools and capacity-building. In countries where plastics-specific strategies are less developed (Brunei, Samoa), the grant remains aligned with broader waste management and environmental priorities, helping to fill recognised gaps in policy coherence and technical capacity. Evidence from implementation confirms that the grant has contributed meaningfully to advancing these national priorities at the level of policy integration, institutional readiness, and stakeholder engagement. However, as in other areas of the assessment, alignment is strongest at the level of enabling conditions — with more limited evidence of full operationalisation of regulatory systems or sustained implementation during the grant period.

Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence

Table 12 – Complementarity with existing interventions/coherence

Other initiatives by UNEP or other organisations	**Complementarity** *(including collaboration, coordination, overlap or duplication)*
UNEP Plastics Initiative based on the description in its Project Document: *ONE UNEP Plastic project on Accelerating a Global Circular Plastic Economy to Reduce Plastic Pollution and its Impacts 2022-2025* (Imoja ID: 130677)	**Complementarity**: Based on a review of the ONE UNEP Project Document, the UNPDF-funded project **fills a gap** by focusing on national action planning, EPR readiness, and integration of plastics into UN country-level frameworks — functions that are not systematically addressed by other interventions within the ONE UNEP's plastics project, which spans policy, private sector, finance, behaviour change, knowledge systems. The grant adds distinct value by translating global commitments, including those emerging from the UNEA mandate and INC process, into country-level policy architecture and planning tools, thereby contributing elements that would not otherwise be delivered through existing portfolio components. Furthermore, the grant uniquely works through UNRCs/CTs and works to embed plastics into CCA/UNSDCF process. This is not a standard feature of most ONE UNEP plastics interventions. **Coherence**: The grant is strongly aligned with UNEP's circular economy and lifecycle approach to plastics and reinforces broader portfolio objectives on policy development, data systems, and capacity-building. It is also linked conceptually to other initiatives (i.e., GPML, Sea Circular). Coordination relies on shared platforms (GGKP, GPML) rather than joint programming or co-delivery. The ONE UNEP plastic project includes knowledge platforms, capacity-building initiatives, and regional projects (e.g., Sea Circular, GPML-related work). The grant also produces guidance, tools, training, and knowledge products. Without strong coordination mechanisms, this creates risk of duplication of training efforts, parallel guidance/tools, etc. This creates a risk of stakeholder fatigue, which was highlighted by consulted stakeholders.
UNEP-led Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML)	The grant is **highly complementary** as it builds on GPML's role as a common planning backbone by strengthening country-level policy processes (NAPs, EPR readiness) and **directly enhancing its tools** (e.g., **contributing to the development of the Global Plastics Hub Action Planning Tool**) according to interview evidence, thereby reinforcing rather than duplicating GPML's enabling infrastructure — although, in a crowded landscape of NAP support initiatives, continued coordination is required to manage potential overlap in planning guidance and advisory support.
Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) initiatives,	The grant is **highly complementary**, as it strengthens national policy frameworks and engages additional national actors (e.g., PCD alongside COBSEA's DMCR focal point in Thailand according to interview evidence),

including UNEP's Regional Seas	thereby reinforcing regional coordination, while active efforts — like aligning on the EPR module and using COBSEA's regional platform to disseminate outputs — have helped minimise duplication and create synergies between national-level interventions and regional knowledge-sharing functions.
SEA Circular: Solving Plastic Pollution at Source, funded by Sweden, implemented by UNEP and COBSEA	The grant is **largely complementary** as it focuses on policy architecture (NAPs, EPR readiness, UN integration) while SEA Circular emphasizes private sector engagement and value-chain interventions, although some overlap risks exist in policy dialogue and capacity-building activities where coordination is essential to avoid duplication.
GIZ's MA-RE-DESIGN project in Thailand	While facing potential overlaps as both the grant and the project engage in policy support, EPR development, and capacity-building, coordination between the two was actively managed by GIZ (Coordination Meeting Report, March 2024) to avoid duplication — evidenced by **joint discussions that led to a deliberate division of labour** (e.g., GIZ focussed on PRO structure and policy processes in Thailand while the UNEP-grant supported development of an introductory EPR online module for Thailand and beyond.
Plastic Reboot, co-led by UNEP and World Wildlife Fund (WWF)	This multistakeholder platform led by Thai public and private actors promotes circular economy for plastics in Thailand focusing on value-chain collaboration, innovation pilots, recycling systems, and stakeholder engagement related to implementation and market interface. The grant is **largely complementary** as it focuses on policy frameworks (NAPs, EPR readiness, data systems) that can enable and structure the types of private-sector and value-chain initiatives Plastic Reboot promotes, with limited direct duplication but **some potential overlap in stakeholder engagement and awareness-raising activities if not coordinated**.
World Economic Forum's Global Plastic Action Partnership (GPAP) and its national constituents (NPAPs)	The grant is **partly complementary** but with **potential overlap risks** vis-à-vis the GPAP and its and National Plastic Action Partnerships (NPAPs), as both support national action planning and stakeholder platforms on plastics — while the UNEP project brings evidence-based, lifecycle methodology and UN system integration, interviews confirmed that similar diagnostics, consultations, and roadmap development processes are being undertaken under NPAPs, with actors in countries such as Indonesia and the Philippines actively participating in both processes, creating **potential duplication in planning and coordination functions unless closely aligned**.
World Bank's PROBLUE	The grant is **largely complementary** to the World Bank's programme, which focuses on policy frameworks (NAPs, EPR readiness, data systems) that can inform and enable PROBLUE's investments in infrastructure and implementation. There is limited direct duplication but a potential overlap in policy advisory functions where coordination is required.
Ellen MacArthur Foundation's The Global Commitment 2030, launched in 2018 with UNEP	This initiative has united over 1200 organisations across the world behind a common vision regarding plastic waste and pollution. The grant is **highly complementary**, as it translates global circular economy principles and corporate commitments into national policy frameworks and EPR systems in Asia-Pacific, with minimal risk of duplication given the Foundation's focus on private-sector standards and voluntary action versus the project's public policy orientation.

51. The grant has made substantive contributions to UNEP's and the donor (UNPDF) planned results, primarily by strengthening the enabling conditions required for systemic action on plastic pollution, in line with UNEP's MTS and POW (2022-2025). Across its three change pathways, the grant has supported national policy and EPR readiness, while enhancing data systems, analytical tools, and institutional capacity – thereby reinforcing UNEP's comparative advantage in the science-policy interface and policy support. It has also contributed to UN system coherence, notably through the integration of plastics into CCA processes in multiple countries, moving beyond awareness-raising towards analytical embedding. From a donor perspective, the grant aligns strongly with UNPDF priorities on

SDG integration, policy support, and system-wide coherence, and has delivered meaningful progress in establishing policy and institutional foundations. At the level of policy influence and institutional readiness, the grant's contribution is moderate while more limited in terms of catalytic, self-sustaining change, as evidence of implementation, regulatory enforcement, or sustained financing mechanisms is still emerging rather than consolidated.

52. Concerning the target countries and Asia-Pacific region, the grant has contributed to advancing national and regional priorities on plastic pollution, particularly in relation to lifecycle approaches and EPR readiness. Across countries, it has supported technical inputs and stakeholder engagement that have informed draft legislation, regulatory revisions, and institutional coordination processes, while strengthening the capacity of government agencies, private sector actors, and intermediaries to engage in EPR implementation. Regionally, it has reinforced peer learning and knowledge exchange mechanisms, including through collaboration with platforms like COBSEA and GPML, contributing to alignment across countries and dissemination of emerging practices. However, the depth and magnitude of contributions vary by pathway and country context, with most results concentrated in analytical outputs, capacity-building, and early-stage system development, and more limited evidence of fully operational regulatory systems, sustained behavioural change, or measurable reductions in plastic pollution. Overall, the grant's contribution is best characterized as catalytic and preparatory, laying foundations for longer-term system change while relying on continued follow-on support and complementary interventions to translate these gains into sustained impact

Findings Statements on Strategic Relevance and Complementarity

53. The grant's strong alignment stems from leveraging UNEP's comparative advantage in policy support and capacity-building, enabling contributions to policy frameworks, EPR readiness, and UN system integration; however, its concentration on enabling functions and limited linkage to implementation and financing pathways mean that contributions remain largely preparatory, with system-level change still emerging.

54. The grant fills a clear niche within a crowded plastics landscape by focusing on policy frameworks, EPR readiness, and UN system integration, thereby complementing interventions that target implementation, finance, and private sector engagement; however, because multiple actors operate in overlapping areas of policy advice, knowledge products, and capacity-building, its complementarity depends heavily on active coordination, without which risks of duplication and stakeholder fatigue emerge.

Rating for Strategic Relevance: 5
Rating for Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities: 5
Rating for Alignment to Donor Strategic Priorities: 5
Rating for Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Priorities: 6
Rating for Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence: 5

B. Quality of Grant Design

Table 13 – Summary of Quality of Grant Design Assessment Ratings

	SECTION	RATING	Summary Assessment
A	Preparation	5	Robust and well-evidenced problem analysis and a clear, comprehensive costed workplan. While stakeholder analysis is largely descriptive, and human rights, gender, and vulnerable group considerations are weakly operationalised, overall, the design demonstrates sound consideration of key stakeholders and contextual factors, providing a solid foundation for effective implementation.

B	Risk Identification and Safeguards	5	Well-addressed, with a structured risk log that identifies key risks, assesses their likelihood and severity, and proposes mitigation measures. Appropriate consideration of environmental, social, and operational risks. Given the grant's policy support and capacity-building nature, the level of risk analysis and safeguarding measures is proportionate and fit for purpose, providing a sound basis for managing potential risks during implementation.
C	Governance and Supervision Arrangements	4	These arrangements are clearly defined and functional, comprising a PMU and UNEP oversight, supported by regular reporting. Roles and responsibilities within UNEP are clearly specified, and coordination with regional and country-level actors is embedded in the design, including ongoing engagement with ROAP. While a PSC with country representation was foreseen, in practice, coordination was supported through joint advisory meetings, reflecting efforts to align with the broader "One UNEP" plastics project in the region. However, the governance model for this grant remained largely UNEP-centric, with limited formalisation of shared decision-making and accountability across partners that would provide mechanisms beyond UNEP to influence strategic and operational decisions and enhance national ownership.
D	Partnerships	6	Partner capacities were identified with a reasonable degree of specificity and linked to expected roles and incentives, providing a credible basis for collaboration. Roles of key stakeholders are clearly aligned with project components, and the division of labour reflects partners' mandates and comparative strengths. The approach builds effectively on UNEP's established regional networks and existing collaboration mechanisms, supporting coherence and implementation feasibility. Overall, the design demonstrates a well-grounded and appropriate partnership model for the grant's scope.
E	Strategic Relevance	6	Exceptionally strong. The grant demonstrates clear and comprehensive alignment with UNEP's MTS, POW, UNEA Resolution 5/14, several SDGs, and UNPDF 2030 Agenda Sub-Fund priorities. The design is firmly anchored in regional and national policy processes, including NAPs, CCAs, UNSDCFs, and the INC negotiations, ensuring high contextual relevance. It also shows well-articulated complementarity with existing UNEP initiatives and global platforms, effectively leveraging synergies under the "One UNEP" project framework. Overall, the grant is strategically well-positioned to contribute to national priorities and broader systemic change.
F	Logical Framework and Causality	4	The logframe provides an adequate and generally coherent structure, outlining a plausible progression from outputs to outcomes and longer-term impact. The envisaged outcomes — focused on capacity development, policy integration, and institutional strengthening — are realistic within the grant's scope and timeframe. Indicators and targets allow for basic tracking of progress, supporting monitoring. The grant's TOC and results framework were simplified for communication and operational purposes, particularly given the grant's positioning with the broader ONE UNEP plastics project framework. However, from an evaluative perspective, the causal pathways remain relatively high-level and linear, with limited explicit articulation of stakeholder roles, behavioural change mechanisms, interdependencies, and assumptions influencing uptake and sustainability of results. Overall, the framework was fit for purpose operationally but somewhat limited in analytical depth and evaluability.
G	Financial Planning	6	Financial management is strong, with a comprehensive, well-structured budget that clearly aligns resources with planned activities and outputs, ensuring good traceability. Financial assumptions are adequately reflected in the budget structure, and co-financing expectations are recognised in line with UNPDF's emphasis on partnership-based resource mobilisation. Overall, the financial planning provides a solid basis for implementation.
H	Efficiency	5	Overall, the approach provides a sound, practical basis for efficient implementation. The design demonstrates a clear intention to build on established initiatives and national processes, thereby enhancing coherence, reducing transaction costs and leveraging existing UNEP platforms, partnerships, and data systems to avoid duplication and maximise synergies. While efficiency considerations are evident in the use of partnerships and sequencing of activities, these remain implicit, with limited explicit analysis of cost-effectiveness or value-for-money.

I	Monitoring	5	Monitoring arrangements are strong, with a clearly allocated evaluation budget (in line with Sub-Fund requirements) and well-defined methods, responsibilities, and reporting frequency. The framework establishes a structured results-based management approach, supported by regular progress reporting and clear roles for UNEP and the PMU. This provides a solid basis for tracking progress and accountability. However, there is limited attention to systematic data disaggregation, as indicators do not consistently require breakdowns by gender and vulnerable groups.
J	Sustainability / Replication and Catalytic Effects	5	The design contains sustainability elements and catalytic potential through its focus on institutional embedding (e.g., integration into NAPs, CCAs, UNSDCFs) and socio-political alignment with national and regional processes. It emphasizes dissemination and knowledge sharing via established platforms (e.g. regional networks, GGKP, GPML), which support replication and scaling across contexts. The grant is explicitly oriented towards catalytic effects through its focus on leveraging tools, policy frameworks, and partnerships to stimulate broader system change. While financial sustainability and exit strategy are less explicitly articulated, the overall design provides a credible basis for sustained impact through institutionalisation and replication pathways.
K	Learning, Communication and Outreach	5	Learning, communication and outreach are adequately addressed by leveraging established regional and global platforms (GGKP, GPML) and existing partnerships to disseminate results and engage stakeholders. Communication is well-embedded through ongoing collaboration with other development partners (e.g., GIZ, COBSEA) governments, UNCTs, and regional initiatives – supporting visibility and uptake. Overall, the design is strong on outreach and dissemination, but weaker on institutionalised learning and adaptive feedback loops. The knowledge management approach could be strengthened through articulation of structured processes, roles, and feedback mechanisms to systematically capture and use learning.
	Total (Weighted) Score:	4.97	*Full analysis in the Inception Report, available from the Project Manager*

55. **Design strengths**. The grant demonstrates strong overall design quality, reflected in a high level of strategic relevance, a well-grounded problem analysis, and coherent integration within UNEP's broader plastics architecture. It is effectively embedded in existing regional and global platforms and partnerships, leveraging established initiatives and national policy processes (e.g. NAPs, CCAs, UNSDCFs) to enhance coherence, efficiency, and potential uptake. The design is supported by a comprehensive, costed workplan and robust financial planning, providing clear linkages between activities, outputs, and resources. It also shows a clear orientation towards catalytic effects, combining policy integration, capacity development, and knowledge dissemination to support scaling and broader system-level influence.

56. **Design weaknesses**. While overall design quality is sound and operationally fit for purpose, some areas could have been articulated in greater detail to strengthen evaluability and support more robust assessment of change. In particular, the logical framework and Theory of Change – which were intentionally simplified in the context of the broader ONE UNEP plastics project framework – could have more explicitly articulated causal mechanisms, stakeholder roles, interdependencies, and key assumptions influencing uptake and sustainability of results. Indicator quality and baseline information were also uneven across parts of the framework. Gender and social inclusion are acknowledged in the design but could be more systematically operationalised. Governance arrangements are clear and functional but remain UNEP-centric, with scope to further formalise shared decision-making and accountability across partners. Similarly, efficiency considerations and knowledge management are reflected in the design but could be more explicitly developed regarding value-for-money analysis and structured learning processes.

Rating for Quality of Project Design: Satisfactory

C. Nature of the External Context

57. The grant operated in a dynamic and evolving global policy environment shaped by the ongoing INC negotiations on a plastics treaty. While no major disruptions such as conflict or instability affected delivery, the politically sensitive and fluid nature of these negotiations introduced uncertainty regarding the scope and timing of key outputs, particularly NAPs. At the same time, sustained engagement by countries and the appointment of a new INC Chair signal continued momentum and potential for progress. The grant responded effectively to this context by adapting its implementation approach — prioritising areas such as EPR and UN system integration while maintaining flexibility — demonstrating responsiveness rather than a limitation in design.

58. The grant also operated within a crowded institutional landscape, requiring coordination to manage overlap and contributing to some stakeholder fatigue, which may have affected engagement. However, this environment also reflects increasing demand for more targeted, technically-grounded support, which is well-aligned well with the grant's focus. Looking ahead, broader geopolitical and economic dynamics — particularly those affecting fossil-based supply chains — introduce both risks and opportunities for the sustainability of results. While volatility may constrain short-term implementation and scaling, it may also strengthen the relevance of circular approaches over time. Overall, the context presents a mix of enabling and constraining factors.

Rating for Nature of External Context:	**Moderately Favourable**

D. Effectiveness

Availability of Outputs

Table 14 – Availability of Outputs

	Narrative Assessment *Nature and scale of outputs delivered, timeliness, quality, and utility to intended beneficiaries*	**Sources of Evidence** *Information sources for each output and its indicator/s; mention triangulation efforts*
Output 1.1: *Harmonized methodology and template for NAPs developed* **Performance against Indicator(s) and Target(s)** Fully completed (Sept 2025) **Other information, not related to the indicators, that demonstrates Output delivery:** An additional unplanned guidance note developed to complement the Action Planning Tool: *Science-Policy Approach to Support Countries in Designing Actions to Reduce Plastic Pollution*	Extending beyond a template, the grant delivered a refined Action Planning Tool grounded in a systematic comparative analysis of national measures across 12 countries and 17 policy areas. Rather than creating a standalone product, the grant strategically built on an existing platform within UNEP's GPML ecosystem, using targeted funding (USD 40,000) to streamline the tool into a clearer 5-step planning process (from an earlier 7-step structure), complemented by additional capacity-building resources (e.g., national source inventory guidance). The tool is integrated into the Global Plastics Hub, described by one stakeholder as "a common backbone for plastic policy support across countries". While delivery was moderately delayed – reflecting adaptation to the evolving INC context rather than implementation weakness – overall, Output 1.1 represents a well-targeted enhancement with high strategic value, shifting from a conceptual template to a practical, system-embedded planning tool, although uptake remains emerging as application depends on national processes and complementary support.	- Progress Reports - Action Planning Tool (Global Plastics Hub) - Analysis of National Strategies and Plans for Addressing Plastic Pollution in Asia-Pacific (produced by KEI under SSFA) - Science-Policy Guidance to support countries in designing actions to reduce plastic pollution (produced by GRID-Arendal under SSFA, finalised in March 2026) - Interviews with project team - Interview with partner (GPML)

Output 1.2: *Harmonised indicator framework developed for monitoring, evaluating, and reporting on the progress against plastic pollution* **Performance against Indicator(s) and Target(s)** Fully completed (Sept 2025)	Centred on plastic lifecycle KPIs and operationalised through the *Statistical Guideline for Measuring Flows of Plastic Throughout the Life Cycle* and associated UNITAR toolkit, this output moves beyond conceptual indicators to a fully specified measurement system, including data requirements, calculation methods, and classification structures, aligned with international statistical standards. Pilot testing in Viet Nam demonstrated that the framework is operationally feasible, enabling national experts to apply the methodology, use available data, and generate core indicators such as plastic consumption and waste. The same pilot showed that results depend heavily on data availability, quality, and methodological assumptions, leading to high uncertainty (±20-40%) therefore limiting immediate use for policy decisions. Timeliness is broadly adequate, with delivery aligned to later grant stages and strengthened through pilot validation and capacity-building. Output 1.2 represents a high-quality, system-level contribution to plastic monitoring, with strong foundational value but largely prospective uptake due to implementation complexity and the fact that effective application depends on sustained investment in national statistical capacity, data systems, and technical support.	- Progress Reports - Report on Pilot Testing (Dec 2024-June 2025) of Statistical Guideline for Measuring Flows of Plastic Throughout the Life Cycle in Viet Nam (prepared by NIEF under SSFA) - Interview with UNEP staff, government and implementing partners (Vietnam)
Output 1.3: *Regional consultations for the international legally binding instrument on key topics supported* **Performance against Indicator(s) and Target(s)** Consulatations convened: Nov 2023, March 2024, Sept 2024 Fully completed (Sept 2024)	Convened with support of credible partners (e.g. GRID-Arendal, COBSEA), this output focused on facilitation, knowledge exchange, and capacity-building, including preparation of background materials and targeted training content (e.g., on lifecycle approach). Utility is immediate but primarily catalytic, strengthening countries' understanding and engagement capacity rather than producing standalone products. The grant delivered this output on time and at appropriate scale, supporting multiple regional consultation moments aligned with the ongoing INC process (2023-2024) and major convening platforms (e.g., SEA of Solutions), effectively leveraging existing regional architectures for policy dialogue and knowledge exchange to enhance reach and participation. Stakeholders indicated that these consultations supported information sharing and alignment of perspectives, with post-event (i.e., 15 Dec 2025) survey feedback characterizing such sessions as "useful" and "very useful". The consultations appear to have contributed to strengthening countries' understanding of technical issues under discussion within the INC process and	- Progress Reports - UNEP PPTs: knowledge sharing meetings prior to INC-3 (3 Nov 2023) and INC-4 and Summary Report (7-8 March 2024) - SEA of Solutions Knowledge Sharing on Country Actions and Event Outcome Reports (Sept 2024 and 15 Dec 2025) - Post-Event (15 Dec 2025) Survey: responses from 12 mostly government representatives from 6 countries - Agenda Stakeholder Consultation Workshop on Plastic Pollution (17 June 2025) convened in Thailand - UNEP PTT: Sea of Solutions presentation of Global Plastics Hub national action planning tools and resources (16 Dec 2025) - Impact Brief (April 2026)

	to supporting regional dialogue and preparedness. Overall, Output 1.3 represents a well-timed, relevant facilitation effort, with value in supporting regional dialogue and technical understanding, although resulting outcomes remain diffuse and not easily attributable.	- Interviews with project team - Interviews with partners (COBSEA, GPML)
Output 1.4: *Training provided to national EPAs, NSOs, and other national stakeholders of 9 Asia-Pacific countries to monitor progress based on environmental statistics and digital innovation, and to share knowledge and experience on developing NAPs and reporting progress* **Performance against Indicator(s) and Target(s)** Fully completed (March 2026)	Closely aligned Outputs 1.1 and 1.2, the grant delivered this output through a distributed and iterative capacity-building approach rather than the originally envisaged 1-day training. Capacity building was provided across 8 countries in a context-responsive manner (considering the evolving INC process), combining technical support sessions and knowledge-sharing meetings. These were complemented by training materials and online resources, and included interactive consultations designed to both present tools and gather feedback from national stakeholders, enhancing relevance and practical applicability. Utility is strong in terms of immediate capacity strengthening, particularly for technical counterparts (EPAs, NSOs). However, given the complexity of the underlying tools, sustained application depends on continued technical support and institutional capacity.	- Progress Reports - UNEP PPT Country Support: Experience and Knowledge Sharing on Country Actions (Dec 2025) - Online Consultation Meeting: Data, Tools, and Workflow to Support Countries in Designing Actions to Reduce Plastic Pollution (27 March 2026)
Output 2.1: *Technical support provided to 3 countries (Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines) on Extended Producer Responsibility towards sectors on food and beverage, e-commerce, textiles and fishing gears etc.* **Performance against Indicator(s) and Target(s)** Fully completed (April 2026)	The grant delivered this output largely on time and with appropriate differentiation across three country contexts, tailoring support to distinct stages of EPR development (early-stage design in Thailand, legal framework development in Indonesia, and implementation in the Philippines). Delivery combined analytical work, policy advice, stakeholder consultations, and practical tools (e.g. ERP Operations Toolkit, Best Practice reports, online EPR module), reflecting a context-specific approach. Quality is strong, with support embedded in ongoing national processes and aligned with government priorities. Evidence from deliverables and stakeholder engagement indicates that the grant provided technically credible and policy-relevant inputs, including contributions to draft legislation, strengthening of PROs, and guidance on implementation challenges (e.g. compliance, incentives, stakeholder coordination). Utility is high and immediate, with clear contributions to advancing EPR processes in all three countries — supporting policy formulation (Thailand, Indonesia) and operationalisation (Philippines).	- Progress Reports - Philippines EPR Best Practices Report - Philippines Impact Report on EPR activities - Philippines NEAP LCA report - Philippines Capacity-Building Report - EPR in Action report published by PCX Solutions on its website - Indonesia IPRO input to Draft Presidential Regulation - Indonesia EPR Operations Toolkit - Indonesia Best Practices Report - ASEAN Case Study and EPR online module (prepared by Burapha University under SSFA) - Report on Capacity Building Program to Better Integrate Local Government and

	Overall, Output 2.1 represents a well-targeted and high-value intervention, effectively aligned with country needs and capable of influencing policy and implementation pathways, although ultimate impact depends on factors beyond project control as progress remains contingent on political processes, regulatory follow-through, and private sector response.	Informal Sector into the EPR System (Philippines) – 2025 - Assessment of Implementation of EPR in Plastic Packaging Sector in Viet Nam (prepared by ISPAE under SSFA, April 2026) - List of Enterprises participating in EPR Survey in Vietnam (administered by ISPAE) - Interviews with project team - Interviews with implementing partners (SSFA holders in Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand) - Interview with GIZ and PTT from its Coordination Meeting on EPR Implementation in Thailand (March 2024)
Output 3.1: *Plastic agenda integrated into updated national CCAs and UNSDCFs in 3 countries (Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam)* **Performance against Indicator(s) and Target(s)** Fully completed (June 2025) Malaysia (Oct 2024), Viet Nam (May 2025), Thailand (June 2025)	This output was delivered on time within its intended scope, with documented inputs into CCA processes (Malaysia 2024, Viet Nam 2024/2025, Thailand 2025) and associated UN planning cycles. The nature of delivery (analytical inputs, consultation workshops, strategic briefs) was appropriate for the institutional entry points of the UN system. Evidence from the reviewed CCAs indicates that plastics are now explicitly reflected within broader thematic areas (e.g. circular economy, sustainable consumption and production), demonstrating technically credible integration. However, integration typically occurs at the level of problem analysis and narrative framing rather than fully operationalised results frameworks, reflecting the structural constraints of CCA/UNSDCF processes and the relatively "targeted" nature of plastics within broader development agendas. From a strategic viewpoint, this output's utility is high, as this output strengthens the positioning of plastics within UN country programming and enables more coordinated UN engagement. It has clear value for UNRCs/CTs as an entry point for agenda-setting and cross-sector dialogue, particularly where plastics can be embedded within existing pillars rather than requiring standalone prioritisation. However, its practical influence on subsequent programming and resource allocation remains indirect and contingent on UNCT prioritisation and capacity. Overall, Output 3.1 represents a relevant and effectively delivered enabling effort,	- Progress Reports - UNEP Review of 28 CCAs and 20 Cooperation Frameworks, including 11 in Asia-Pacific region (2022) - CCA for Malaysia (Oct 2024) - draft Thailand Country Analysis (Oct 2025) - draft Viet Nam Country Analysis (Dec 2025) - Interviews with project team - Interviews with UNEP headquarters, Regional Office (ROAP) and UNRCO staff (Vietnam) - Impact Brief (April 2026) - reconstructed Theory of Change

	achieving meaningful analytical integration into UN planning frameworks. While the operational implications of this integration — including future programming, prioritisation, and resource mobilisation — remain dependent on subsequent UNCT processes and country-level follow-through beyond the immediate scope of the project, the output established an important foundation for more coordinated UN engagement on plastics issues.	

Output 3.2: *Capacity development training provided to UNRCs and UNCTs in 9 countries* **Performance against Indicator(s) and Target(s)** Fully completed (April 2026)	This output was delivered broadly on time and with substantive content, notably through the *UNCT Starter Pack* and *Guidance Note*, which provide a comprehensive, well-structured knowledge base on plastic pollution, policy entry points, and UNCT actions. The materials demonstrate high technical quality and strong alignment with UNEP's system-wide positioning, integrating lifecycle approaches, policy instruments, and links to UN programming frameworks. However, the scale of delivery is more global and knowledge-oriented than country-specific, with limited evidence of systematic in-country training across all 9 target countries. Pacific sub-region delivery was constrained, as UNEP channelled support through an intergovernmental coordination body, Secretariat of Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP), whose slow disbursement of resources prevented intended country-level activities from materialising in Samoa. In terms of utility, the materials are relevant and address a gap in UN system engagement on plastics, with stakeholders confirming that plastics had previously been marginal in UNCT agendas and the project provided a useful entry point for awareness and dialogue. At the same time, both regional and HQ-level interviews highlighted that uptake remains uneven: guidance products are sometimes perceived as too comprehensive for immediate operational use, and their application depends heavily on timing (i.e., alignment with CCA/UNSDCF cycles) and availability of dedicated RCO staff capacity. Evidence of use in UN programming processes exists (e.g., increased references to plastics in CCAs), which reflects partial uptake rather than systematic capacity enhancement. Overall, Output 3.2 represents a high-quality light-touch capacity-building intervention, with strong strategic relevance and good knowledge products, but limited evidence of capacity development at country level. Its main contribution lies in raising awareness and enabling entry points for UN system engagement, rather than in fully equipping UNCTs to operationalise support to countries.	- Progress Reports - UNEP Briefing to Asia Pacific RCs on Addressing Plastic Pollution (Feb 2024) - Guidance Note on Plastic Pollution for UNRCOs (April 2026) - Starter Kit for UN Country Team Engagement for Addressing Plastic Pollution (Feb 2026) - Interviews with project team and Regional Office (ROAP) - Interviews with RCO staff - Impact Brief (April 2026)

59. Achievement along Pathway 1 (Policy Integration) is assessed as moderately effective, with the grant delivering a coherent, high-quality package of analytical, methodological, and knowledge-exchange outputs broadly on time, in light of the necessary adaptation to the evolving INC context. Performance is strongest at the level of evidence generation and guidance, including a robust Action Planning Tool, a technically sound (albeit complex) indicator framework, and well-executed regional consultations and capacity-building activities that strengthened awareness, technical understanding, and peer exchange across countries. These outputs demonstrate strong utility for agenda-setting, planning, and capacity development, particularly amongst technical stakeholders, and are well aligned with lifecycle approaches to plastic pollution. However, effectiveness is weaker in terms of demonstrated national uptake and implementation, as application of tools remains uneven and dependent on country processes, data systems, and continued support. Overall, the pathway made a credible and strategically relevant contribution to strengthening the foundations for national action, but with results still largely situated at the level of guidance, capacity, and enabling conditions rather than observable system change.

60. Achievement along Pathway 2 (EPR Operationalisation) is assessed as strongly effective, with the project delivering a substantive, timely, and context-responsive package of EPR support across three countries, tailored to different stages of policy development and implementation. Output delivery is of high quality and strong practical utility, combining analytical work, policy advice, stakeholder engagement, and operational tools that directly supported regulatory development (Thailand, Indonesia) and implementation processes (Philippines). Evidence indicates tangible contributions to institutional strengthening and early system-building, including enhanced PRO operations, informed policy design, and stakeholder coordination.

61. Achievement along Pathway 3 (UN System Integration) is assessed as strongly effective, with timely delivery of high-quality analytical inputs and knowledge products that achieved meaningful integration of the plastics agenda into UN planning frameworks in three countries, alongside broader capacity support to UNRCs/UNCTs. Effectiveness is strongest at the level of analytical integration and agenda-setting, with clear evidence of plastics being embedded in CCAs and related processes, and relevant guidance materials strengthening UN system awareness and entry points for engagement. Utility is high at the strategic level, enabling more coordinated UN positioning on plastics, although capacity-building efforts were relatively light-touch and unevenly applied across countries.

Achievement of Outcomes

Table 15 – Achievement of Outcomes

Outcome 1:	**Original results statement:** Enhanced capacity in governments of 9 Asia-Pacific countries for developing and monitoring NAPs to reduce plastic pollution **Reformulated in RTOC as:** Governments use evidence-based NAPs to guide and monitor plastics policy implementation
Indicator and Performance:	**Outcome 1A 1.1**: Number of countries with gaps in their existing national policies against plastic pollution identified; and with technical guidelines, support and training provided to design and update systemic and effective national action plans to reduce plastic pollution (baseline 0; **target 9**). ***Achievement:*** *9 countries identified with gaps in their national policies to address plastic pollution* ***Achievement****: 8 countries received technical support in designing and updating their NAPs to address plastic pollution (Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam, Samoa). Brunei did not respond to UNEP's invitation to participate in such meetings.* **Outcome 1A 1.2**: Identified priorities in the region for the intergovernmental negotiation for the legally binding instrument on plastic pollution through regional consultations and fed into the INC process (baseline: 0; target: **1 list of identified priorities identified**).

	Achievement: *2 lists of priority topics identified from regional consultations* **Outcome 1A 1.3**: Number of EPA and NSO staff members gaining knowledge and skills to monitor, evaluate, and report on progress to reduce plastic pollution through receiving technical guidelines, digital tools, technical support and training (baseline: 0; **target: 60**. At least 3 participants from each 9 project countries. At least **40% of staff members are female**.). ***Achievement****: 90 (48 female -53%-, 42 male – 47%)*
Sources of Information / Evidence: *demonstrating the uptake of outputs by intended beneficiaries*	-Interviews with UNEP staff -Interview with implementing partners (SSFA holders) -Impact Report (April 2026), prepared by GRID-Arendal
Narrative Assessment: *Nature, depth, and scale of outcome and its contribution, credible association, or attribution to the project.*	The grant delivered a strong package of analytical, methodological and regional knowledge-exchange outputs under politically constrained conditions. These outputs improved the evidence base for lifecycle-oriented national action planning. The adaptive decision to avoid prescriptive NAP support during the INC negotiations was justified and helped maintain UNEP's neutrality. In turn, the grant's effectiveness remains stronger at the level of guidance, capacity, consultation and agenda-setting than at the level of demonstrated country uptake, implementation or measurable improvement in national monitoring systems.
Level of Achievement:	Progress to impact remains early and only partially evidenced. The Impact Brief (April 2026) confirmed that the NAP guidance was developed late, under compressed timelines, and was positively received and validated, but also noted that dissemination should not be equated with uptake and that monitoring is needed to know whether the guidance is actually used. Similarly, evidence gathered concerning outputs produced for Viet Nam indicates that UNEP-supported analysis and peer learning were useful, but uptake is still too early to ascertain, with outputs functioning mainly as inputs into ongoing policy processes rather than as instruments driving decision-making.

Outcome 2:	**Original results statement:** Enhanced capacity in governments and businesses of 3 Asia-Pacific countries to design and implement EPR scheme to reduce plastic pollution with a focus on high-impact sectors as part of the NAPs **Reformulated in RTOC as:** Governments and businesses apply EPR frameworks to establish and operate compliance, financing, and monitoring for priority plastic sectors.
Indicator and Performance:	**Outcome 1A 2.1** Number of EPR technical guidelines/roadmaps developed to support implementation and enforcement by governments and businesses in Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines (baseline: 0; **target: 3**) ***Achievement:*** *4 countries (Thailand, Philippines, Indonesia, Viet Nam)* **Outcome 1A 2.2**: Number of high-impact sectors/products related with plastics included in the national EPR guidance with clear operational measures through stakeholder consultation (baseline: 0; **target: Thailand**: food and beverage; sachets widely used by fast-moving consumer goods; sachets. **Indonesia**: food and beverage, sachets, fishing. **Philippines**: food and beverage, packaging in e-commerce and textile sector, sachets) ***Achievement****:* Philippines: plastic packaging including (a) sachets, labels, and other flexible packaging products, (b) rigid plastic packaging products including containers for food and beverages, home, personal care and cosmetic products, (c) plastic bags Indonesia: packaging targeted includes plastic (food and beverage packaging, food sachets, and consumer goods) besides aluminium can, glass, and paper. Viet Nam: Packaging includes these categories: 1) Paper and carton packaging; 2) Multi-layer mixed paper packaging; 3) Aluminium packaging; 4) Other iron and metal packaging; 5) Rigid PET packaging; 6) Rigid HDPE, LDPE, PP, PS packaging; 7) EPS, PVC and other rigid plastic packaging; 8) Soft plastic packaging (single, multi-material); 9) Glass packaging

Sources of Evidence: *demonstrating the uptake of outputs by intended beneficiaries*	-Interviews with implementing partners (SSFA holders) -Interviews with government partners -Statement of appreciation from Indonesia Ministry of Environment of IPRO's role in supporting guidance and coordination of industry in preparation and implementation of Producer Waste Reduction Roadmap -Philippines Impact Report on EPR Activities, prepared by PCX Solutions -Impact Report (April 2026), prepared by GRID-Arendal
Narrative Assessment: *Nature, depth, and scale of outcome and its contribution, credible association, or attribution to the project.*	The grant made credible progress along Pathway 2 toward impact by strengthening enabling conditions for EPR operationalisation, including technical guidance, SOPs, policy inputs, stakeholder consultations, local government capacity building, and initial MRV support. While these contributions have advanced institutional readiness, technical understanding, and early system-building for EPR implementation, operationalisation of EPR frameworks by governments and businesses remains at varying stages across the three countries. This reflects both differences in national readiness and the inherently long-term nature of EPR policy development, which typically evolves progressively over many years through iterative regulatory development, institutional strengthening, compliance mechanisms, and market adaptation. In several contexts, EPR itself remains an emerging concept still being mainstreamed within policy and regulatory systems. Progress therefore remains uneven but broadly consistent with the grant's positioning and the early stage of EPR development in the targeted countries. Overall, the pathway reflects a credible shift from guidance and awareness-raising toward early implementation support, with longer-term systemic effects still emerging.
Level of Achievement:	This pathway is assessed as moderately strong in preparing and accelerating EPR systems, with progress to impact evident but not yet consolidated. The grant has effectively strengthened institutional readiness and early system-building; however, decisive impact depends on factors beyond the project's control, including regulatory enforcement, functioning national registries, financing mechanisms, infrastructure, and the institutionalized inclusion of informal waste workers.

Outcome 3:	**Original results statement:** Enhanced capacity of UNRCs systems and UNCTs and other key country-level and regional environmental stakeholders in 9 Asia-Pacific countries through integration of actions to address plastic pollution in their respective CCAs/UNSDCFs **Reformulated in RTOC as:** Plastics are systematically integrated into UN country planning, enabling coordinated support to national priorities.
Indicator and Performance:	**Outcome 1A 3.1**: Number of countries with CCAs and UNSDCFs updated with statistics and information related to plastic pollution to integrate the plastic agenda as an emerging priority for sustainable development (baseline: 0; target: 3) ***Achievement:*** 3 – *CCA (2024) in **Malaysia** has been updated including statistics and information related to plastic pollution, with an emphasis on the need for addressing plastic pollution from a full life-cycle perspective* *CCA (2024) and CA (2025) in **Viet Nam** have integrated plastic agenda underlining the importance of considering a full life cycle of plastics.* *The CA (2025) in **Thailand** has incorporated the latest data and information on plastic pollution, which will subsequently feed into the UNSDCF (2027-2031).* **Outcome 1A 3.2**: Number of RC and UNCT members receiving training and technical support with enhanced knowledge on integrating plastic agenda in national development frameworks and priorities (baseline: 0; target: 40. At least 4 participants per country. At least 40% of participants of relevant training event/meetings are female) ***Achievement**: 8 RCs (50% female) received technical briefing on plastic pollution. 7 UNCT Thailand staff 43% female) received technical support during Stakeholder Workshop June 2025. UNCT Start Pack for UNCF engagement disseminated to 63 UNEP UNCT Focal Points (50% female). Guidance Note on Plastic Pollution for UNRCs disseminated to 36 RCO colleagues*
Sources of Evidence	-Interviews with UNEP staff and beneficiaries -Impact Report (April 2026), produced by GRID-Arendal under SSFA

Narrative Assessment: *Nature, depth, and scale of outcome and its contribution, credible association, or attribution to the project.*	The grant made credible progress under Pathway 3 by embedding the plastics agenda into national analytical and planning frameworks and strengthening the basis for coordinated system-wide engagement. Integration into CCAs and related processes represents a meaningful shift from fragmentation toward more coherent positioning of plastics within broader sustainable development agendas, creating entry points for cross-sector dialogue and future programming. Capacity-building efforts, technical briefings, and knowledge products have further supported awareness and technical understanding within the UN system. Given the grant's orientation, relatively limited resources, broad geographic coverage across nine countries, and 3-year implementation period, this pathway was primarily designed to strengthen enabling conditions. As such, progress is most evident at the level of analytical integration, agenda-setting, and institutional readiness – with longer-term operational implications dependent on subsequent UNCT prioritisation, country programming cycles, and future resourcing beyond the immediate scope of the grant.
Level of Achievement:	This pathway is assessed as moderately achieved, with strong performance in analytical integration, agenda-setting, and institutional embedding of plastics within UN planning processes. The grant successfully positioned plastics within key analytical and coordination frameworks and delivered relevant knowledge resources and technical support across multiple countries. Considering the grant's scale, timeframe, and breadth of geographic coverage, expectations regarding deeper operationalisation need to remain proportionate. Overall, this grant has established an important foundation for future UN system engagement on the plastics agenda, although sustained follow-through and operational expansion will depend on continued uptake, coordination, and resourcing beyond this project's timeframe.

62. **Outcome 1** is largely achieved at the output and immediate outcome level, with the grant exceeding or meeting its targets in identifying policy gaps (9 countries), providing technical support (8 countries), generating regional priorities relevant to the INC process, and strengthening capacity of national stakeholders (90 trained, exceeding targets). These achievements represent a strong contribution to building the analytical foundations, technical capacities and regional exchange needed for evidence-based national action planning on plastic pollution. Given the grant's enabling orientation – and the politically sensitive context created by the evolving INC negotiations – the grant appropriately focused on strengthening guidance, readiness, technical understanding, and policy dialogue rather than supporting implementation of NAPs. Evidence indicates that project-supported tools, guidance, and analytical products have informed ongoing policy processes and strengthened institutional preparedness, although longer-term uptake and operational application will depend on subsequent national follow-through beyond the grant's timeline and scope.

63. **Outcome 2** is largely achieved at the level of institutional readiness, policy development, and early operationalisation support, with the project exceeding targets for EPR guidance and supporting multiple countries and sectors with technically credible, context-specific inputs. Evidence indicates meaningful contributions to advancing EPR frameworks, including policy development, strengthening of PROs, supporting stakeholder coordination, and improved technical understanding of compliance, financing, and monitoring approaches in priority sectors. Given the relatively early stage of EPR development in the targeted countries — where EPR systems typically evolve progressively over extended timeframes — the grant was appropriately positioned as an enabling intervention rather than a vehicle for full system operationalisation. Progress is therefore most evident in strengthened enabling conditions, institutional preparedness, and early implementation momentum, with longer-term operational maturity dependent on

subsequent regulatory development, enforcement, financing, infrastructure, and sustained private sector engagement beyond the project timeframe.

64. **Outcome 3** is largely achieved at the level of analytical integration, agenda-setting, and capacity strengthening, with the grant meeting its targets for embedding the plastics agenda into national planning frameworks in three countries and exceeding targets for outreach and engagement with UN system actors. The grant supported more systematic inclusion of plastics in development analyses and planning processes through provision of relevant knowledge products and technical briefings. Given the grant's orientation, broad geographic scope, and limited timeframe and resources, this pathway was primarily designed to strengthen enabling conditions for more coordinated UN system engagement. Overall, the grant established an important institutional and analytical foundation for future UN system engagement on plastics issues, with longer-term operational implications dependent on subsequent country-level prioritisation, programming cycles, coordination, and resourcing beyond the immediate scope of the grant.

Likelihood of Impact

Table 16 – Likelihood of impact

Factors influencing likelihood of impact	Assessment	Justification
Drivers supporting the transition from Outputs to the Project Outcomes (from tools, guidance, and capacity → actual uptake and use)		
Cross-Cutting: ➢ UNEP's convening role and facilitation of multi-stakeholder engagement	In place	Strong evidence across pathways shows effective convening of governments, private sector, regional actors (EPR consultations, regional dialogues, UN coordination), contributing directly to uptake and alignment.
Cross-Cutting: ➢ Provision of technical support & capacity-building	In place	Delivered at scale (8 countries for NAPs, 3 countries for EPR, UN system engagement), with credible evidence of use in policy processes and institutional strengthening.
Cross-Cutting: ➢ Development and dissemination of operational tools, guidance	Partially in place	High-quality tools (Action Planning Tool, indicator framework, EPR toolkits, UNCT Starter Pack) developed and disseminated; however, uptake varies by context.
Cross-Cutting: ➢ Support aligned with national policy and planning cycles	Partially in place	Clear alignment in some cases (e.g. EPR processes, CCA inputs), but uneven timing (e.g. late delivery of NAP guidance) limited influence in early policy cycles.
P1 – Policy Integration ➢ Availability of user-oriented planning tools	In place	Action Planning Tool and supporting guidance are well-developed, operational, and positively received, though still in early stages of application.
P1 – Policy Integration ➢ Structured regional peer learning and exchange facilitated by the project	In place	Multiple regional consultations and knowledge-sharing events effectively supported exchange and diffusion of approaches across countries.
P2 – EPR Operationalisation ➢ Targeted technical assistance to governments and industry	In place	Strong, context-specific support delivered across all three countries, including SOPs, policy inputs, and implementation guidance with clear evidence of use.
P2 – EPR Operationalisation ➢ Support to PRO development and stakeholder coordination	In place	Particularly strong in Indonesia and the Philippines, where engagement contributed to strengthening operational platforms and coordination mechanisms.
P3 – UN System Mainstreaming ➢ Development of tailored knowledge products	In place	High-quality, system-oriented products (Starter Pack, Guidance Note) developed and disseminated, addressing a recognised gap.

P3 – UN System Mainstreaming ➢ Direct engagement with UNRCs / UNCTs and support to CCA and UNSDCF processes	Partially in place	Effective in targeted countries (CCA integration), but broader engagement remains uneven; capacity-building was more global and light-touch than country-specific, with gaps in full coverage (Pacific sub-region, i.e., Samoa)
Assumptions for the change process from Outputs to Project Outcomes (conditions for uptake)		
➢ Countries maintain commitment despite uncertainty in global policy processes	Holds	Despite INC uncertainty and need to adapt grant's support, most countries participated in activities, including identification of policy gaps (9 countries) and technical support for NAP development (8 countries). Ongoing participation in regional consultations indicates sustained engagement despite evolving INC context.
➢ Governments choose to use the tools and guidance provided	Holds	There is evidence that governments engaged with and validated the tools and used them as inputs into policy discussions and planning processes. Given the grant's enabling orientation and timeframe, application is most visible in ongoing policy development and preparedness processes, while longer-term operational use and institutional embedding are still emerging.
➢ UNCTs/RCOs prioritise plastics within competing agendas	Partially holds	Plastics have been integrated into three CCAs and related processes, indicating growing recognition and prioritisation. However, evidence shows that plastics remains a relatively targeted issue within broader development agendas, and prioritisation varies depending on competing priorities, UNCT and beneficiary absorptive capacity, and timing within planning cycles.
➢ Knowledge gained is retained and applied within institutions	Holds	While evidence of longer-term institutionalisation remains at an early stage, there are indications that knowledge products generated by the grant are beginning to support continuity beyond the immediate activities. Several deliverables — including the EPR Best Practice cases in the Philippines and the Viet Nam EPR assessment report developed through multistakeholder consultations — are expected to serve as ongoing reference resources for policy dialogue, system improvement, and future EPR development processes.
➢ Tools can be adapted to diverse national contexts	Holds	The grant's tools were applied across multiple countries at different stages, with evidence of adaptation through country-specific support and contextualisation. This demonstrates that the tools are sufficiently adaptable to varying institutional and policy environments.
Proportion of **Outcomes** fully or partially achieved	Largely achieved	The grant successfully established enabling conditions and triggered early institutional, analytical, and policy changes across the three pathways. While deeper operationalisation and longer-term institutional consolidation remain emerging, this is broadly consistent with the project's positioning, timeframe, and catalytic role.
Drivers supporting transition from Outcomes to Intermediate States (what project can influence to shift initial uptake → sustained institutionalisation and system functioning)		

➢ Continued technical advisory support and follow-up engagement	Partially in place	The grant provided sustained support during implementation (e.g. iterative EPR support, pilot testing, follow-up consultations), which helped move beyond one-off delivery. However, this support is time-bound and not yet institutionalised, with continuation beyond the project uncertain and uneven across countries.
➢ Facilitation of coordination across stakeholders (government–private sector–UN)	In place	Evidence is strong regarding effective facilitation of multi-stakeholder coordination, particularly in EPR processes (e.g. engagement with industry, PROs, government) and UN system integration. This has directly supported alignment and early system-building.
➢ Ongoing knowledge exchange and learning platforms	In place	The grant established and utilised functioning platforms for continued exchange (e.g. Global Plastics Hub, regional consultations, SEA of Solutions), which provide durable mechanisms for peer learning and knowledge diffusion beyond individual activities.
➢ Support to strengthening institutional linkages (e.g. between ministries, UN entities)	Partially in place	The grant made targeted contributions to institutional linkages (e.g., integrating plastics into UN planning processes, facilitating cross-sector dialogue), but these remain uneven and not yet fully embedded, particularly beyond environment-focused counterparts and across government systems.
Assumptions for change process from Project Outcomes to Intermediate States (conditions for operationalisation)		
➢ Governments translate guidance into enforceable policies and regulations	Partially holds	There is evidence of policy development, legislative inputs, and strengthened institutional readiness, although progress towards fully enforceable and operational regulatory frameworks remain at varying stages across countries and is expected to evolve progressively over longer timeframes.
➢ Regulatory frameworks are adopted and implemented	Partially holds	Frameworks exist or are advancing in several countries, although implementation and operationalisation remain at relatively early stages, consistent with the long-term and iterative nature of regulatory and EPR system development.
➢ Producers respond to incentives and comply with EPR obligations	Partially holds	Initial compliance and engagement are evident in some contexts, particularly where stakeholder coordination and producer responsibility mechanisms have advanced. However, broader and more but consistent private sector response remains dependent on evolving regulatory frameworks, incentive structures, and enforcement capacity.
➢ Countries invest in systems (data, monitoring, infrastructure)	Partially holds	Early investments and preparatory steps are evident (e.g. MRV approaches, data tools, institutional strengthening), although broader system-level investments and scaling remain dependent on longer-term national financing, infrastructure development, and policy follow-through beyond the grant's timeline.
➢ Institutional coordination across ministries is effective	Partially holds	Coordination has improved through project facilitation but remains uneven and not fully institutionalised across government systems.
➢ UN system integration leads to actual programming and not only analysis	Partially holds	Integration into planning frameworks and analytical processes has been achieved in targeted countries, creating foundations and entry points for future programming and coordination. Further operationalisation through resourced programmes will depend on subsequent UNCT prioritisation, planning

		cycles, and follow-on support beyond this project's scope.
Proportion of **Intermediate States** achieved	Positive direction	The direction of change is evident and early system-level shifts are emerging across policy integration, EPR readiness, and UN system mainstreaming. However, the maturity, scale, and institutional consolidation associated with fully realised intermediate states are still developing and would extend beyond what could reasonably be expected within the scope and timeframe of this intervention.
Drivers supporting transition from Intermediate States to Impact (from functioning systems → reduced plastic pollution & improved circularity)		
➢ Continued advocacy and agenda-setting by UNEP and partners	Partially in place	The grant contributed through regional engagement, integration into UN frameworks, and alignment with the global plastics agenda. However, the extent and continuity of future advocacy efforts will depend on evolving global negotiations (INC process), institutional prioritisation, and availability of follow-on resources and programming.
➢ Ongoing knowledge dissemination and normative influence	In place	Strong evidence that the grant contributed through durable channels for knowledge dissemination and normative influence (e.g. Global Plastics Hub, guidance products, regional platforms), which continue to shape discourse and provide reference points for policy development. These mechanisms are likely to persist beyond the project and support longer-term influence.
Assumptions for the change process from Intermediate States to Impact		
➢ Sustained political commitment over time	Partially holds	Commitment is visible in ongoing policy processes and engagement, but subject to change due to political cycles and evolving priorities, with no assurance of long-term continuity.
➢ Effective regulatory enforcement	Partially holds	Regulatory enforcement capacity remains uneven and generally at an early stage across participating countries. However, the grant contributed to strengthening enabling conditions, technical guidance, and institutional readiness that may support progressively stronger enforcement over time.
➢ Behavioural change in production and consumption	Weakly holds	Evidence of widespread behavioural change remains limited. Early shifts in awareness, stakeholder engagement, industry dialogue, and policy discourse suggest emerging conditions that may support longer-term behavioural adaptation.
➢ Stability of broader economic and political context	Partially holds	No major disruptions are reported, but external uncertainties (e.g. global negotiations, economic factors) create a moderately unstable context.

65. Overall, the grant has effectively established **key drivers** for uptake at the output-to-outcome level through strong technical support, operational tools, and convening functions. These have created robust enabling conditions for initial use and engagement, although uneven alignment with policy cycles and varying depth of UN system engagement have limited consistency across contexts. Regarding the transition to institutionalisation, drivers related to coordination and knowledge exchange remain strong, but sustained engagement and institutional embedding are only partially in place, reflecting the project's time-bound nature. At impact level, the grant's influence becomes

more indirect and limited, relying mainly on advocacy and normative contributions, with overall achievement increasingly dependent on external factors beyond project control.

66. Across the results chain, **assumptions** partially hold, which helps explain the pattern of results observed. Regarding the transition from outputs to outcomes, several key assumptions (e.g., government uptake, prioritisation, application of knowledge) appear sufficiently present to support initial use of project-supported tools, guidance, and analytical inputs. Moving from outcomes to intermediate states, assumptions related to regulatory translation, institutional follow-through, and producer compliance hold unevenly across contexts, contributing to varying levels of operational readiness and early implementation progress. Concerning the transition towards long-term impact, assumptions related to enforcement capacity, financing, infrastructure, market incentives, and behavioural change remain only partially fulfilled and can be expected to continue to evolve over extended timeframes. This reflects the broader systemic and developmental conditions required for sustained transformation in plastics governance, many of which extend beyond the immediate scope, resources, and duration of this project.

Findings Statements on Effectiveness*:*

67. **Strong delivery and quality of outputs:** The grant delivered a comprehensive and high-quality set of outputs, including analytical tools, guidance, capacity-building, and regional engagement mechanisms, which were largely completed on time and provided a strong technical and institutional foundation for advancing plastics policy development, EPR readiness, and UN system integration.

68. **Envisaged outcomes are largely achieved**. The grant achieved notable progress at the outcome level, with clear evidence of strengthened capacities, policy development, and early system-building across the three pathways; however, uptake and operationalisation remain uneven across countries and contexts, and longer-term institutional consolidation and implementation are still emerging.

69. **Credible pathway toward longer-term impact**. The grant established a credible pathway toward longer-term impact through strengthened enabling conditions, institutional readiness, and emerging system-level changes, but realisation of sustained environmental outcomes depends on external factors like regulatory enforcement, financing, infrastructure, market incentives, and institutional capacity, many of which extend beyond the project's direct scope and timeframe.

Rating for Effectiveness: *Satisfactory*
Rating for Availability of Outputs: Highly Satisfactory
Rating for Achievement of Outcomes: Satisfactory
Rating for Achievement of Likelihood of Impact: Likely

E. Financial Management

Adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures

70. The grant showed strong adherence to UNEP financial policies, procedures, and donor requirements, supported by effective coordination between grant and financial management functions and disciplined financial oversight (see Table 17). No evidence of non-compliance was identified. Timely disbursement, regular monitoring of expenditure against budgets and workplans, and due diligence processes for SSFA partners contributed to sound financial management and implementation accountability. Financial

execution was broadly on track, with total expenditure reaching USD 1,124,987 by 25 April 2026.

Completeness of Financial Information

71. The grant's financial information was complete, well-organised, and readily accessible (Table 17). Financial documentation was available and reflected consistent practices aligned with UNEP standards. The review also found evidence of close oversight by the Financial Management Officer and Project Manager, contributing to the quality, traceability, and reliability of financial information throughout implementation.

Table 17 – Financial Management

Financial management components:		Rating	Evidence/ Comments
1. Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures:		**HS**	Suitable systems, processes, and relationships between project's financial and project management sides were established and actively supported this alignment
Any evidence that indicates shortcomings in grant's adherence[14] to UNEP or donor policies, procedures or rules		No	Evidence of timely approval and disbursement, regular analysis of expenditure versus budget/workplan. Total expenditure reached USD 1,124,987.18 at 25 April 2026.
Was first disbursement carried out within 9 months of UNEP's grant approval date.		Yes	Yes- First disbursement received on 18 May 2023, approval date 14 March 2023. The first Progress Report (September 2023) confirms a first modest disbursement within four months of project start, rising to USD 66,182 within the first year of operation.
Were the procurement policies of UNEP and the donor(s) followed? *(where applicable)*		Yes	Due diligence of SSFA holders was conducted, together with engagement through SSFAs. Use of results-based disbursement mechanisms (tranche payments conditional on delivery and reporting) strengthened accountability.
2. Completeness of project financial information:			All applicable items were complete. The project was fully secured by UNPDF funding, bi-annual reporting met standards for completeness. There was close attention by the Financial Management Officer and Project Manager to the project's financial management.
Provision of key documents to evaluator (based on responses to A-H below)		**HS**	
A.	Co-financing and Grant Cost's tables at design (by budget lines)	Yes	Same level as letter of donor + internally by output. Co-financing exceeded the planned amount by 27.7%.
B.	Revisions to the budget	No	No revisions to the budget.
C.	All relevant grant legal agreements (e.g. SSFA, PCA, ICA)	Yes	SSFAs with key implementing partners (11) were provided to the Evaluator, together with the related final deliverables and reports for review.
D.	Proof of fund transfers	Yes	These are available within UNEP's system
E.	Proof of co-financing (cash and in-kind)	Yes	Signed donor and partner agreements. Co-financing was tracked and recorded by the Project Manager.
F.	A summary report on the grant's expenditures during the life of the grant (by budget lines, project components and/or annual level)	Yes	Summary reports provided bi-annually (for a total of six), together with project progress reports, outlining contributions received, expenditures (staff, travel, transfers/grants, general operating costs, indirect support costs transferred to UNEP).
G.	Copies of any completed audits and management responses *(where applicable)*	N/A	

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

H.	Procurement documents, including the approved requisition document and Source Selection Plan	Yes	These are available within UNEP's system
I.	Any other financial information that was required for this project (list):	No	
Overall rating		**Highly Satisfactory**	

Findings Statement on Financial Management*:*

72. The grant demonstrated strong financial management through mobilisation of co-financing exceeding planned levels by 27.7%, reflecting its ability to leverage additional resources and stakeholder commitment beyond the core budget. Adherence to UNEP policies and donor requirements, disciplined financial oversight, effective coordination between grant and financial management functions, and reliable financial reporting supported accountable implementation and financial execution broadly aligned with planned delivery.

Rating for Financial Management: Highly Satisfactory
Rating for Adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures: Highly Satisfactory
Rating for Completeness of Financial Information: Highly Satisfactory

F. Efficiency

73. Strong internal coordination between grant and financial management functions (¶70) was a key enabling factor of efficiency. Interviews highlighted regular budget tracking, forward planning, and close monitoring of commitments, which ensured that expenditures remained aligned with implementation progress. The use of results-based disbursement mechanisms (e.g. tranche payments conditional on delivery and reporting) reinforced this alignment and limited inefficient spending. Importantly, resource allocation was largely directed towards implementation through partners, with a significant share of funds channelled into technical delivery (SSFAs, knowledge products, capacity building), rather than administrative overheads.

74. The grant team also demonstrated proactive management in navigating partner risks (e.g. due diligence issues, institutional name changes, transfer delays), maintaining delivery momentum across a complex, multi-country and multi-partner portfolio. Despite a slow initial rollout, the team was able to recover lost time and deliver planned outputs within the agreed timeframe, indicating effective adaptive management and strong supervisory oversight.

75. Cost efficiencies were achieved by leveraging existing UNEP platforms (e.g. Global Plastics Hub) and regional mechanisms, like COBSEA, thereby avoiding duplication and reducing the need for parallel investments in tools, coordination structures, and outreach channels. Co-financing and in-kind contributions enhanced value for money by extending the reach of project outputs without proportionate increases in core budget requirements.

76. At the same time, efficiency was partially constrained by delays in early-stage implementation (related to uncertainties stemming from the INC negotiation process). Consequent delays in finalising partner agreements and initiating disbursements were driven by a combination of structural factors (e.g. UNEP compliance procedures, implementing partners whose names or status changed. which delayed SSFA approval) and underestimation of the time required to operationalise partnerships in such contexts. As a result, implementation was back-loaded, with a concentration of activities and expenditures in the later stages of the grant. While this did not ultimately compromise delivery, it reduced flexibility for iterative learning and created some timing inefficiencies, including completion of certain outputs in the grant's final stage. Overall, the grant compares favourably to similar

multi-country UN interventions in its ability to translate resources into outputs at scale while maintaining technical quality and adequate budget execution.

Findings Statements on Efficiency*:*

77. **Time-efficiency:** Initial implementation delays — linked to uncertainty and sensitivities around the INC negotiation process — led to back-loaded delivery, but strong adaptive management and supervision enabled the grant to recover and complete outputs within the planned timeframe, albeit with reduced flexibility for iterative learning.

78. **Cost-efficiency:** The grant achieved good value for money by directing most resources to implementation, tightly linking disbursements to results, and leveraging existing platforms and co-financing to expand outputs without proportional cost increases.

Rating for Efficiency: Satisfactory

G. Monitoring and Reporting

Monitoring of Grant Implementation:

79. **Quality of design and monitoring**. The monitoring system is structurally sound but was initially weak in performance tracking, improving over time. Bi-annual reports use a standardized template with clear indicators, supporting transparency and comparability across reporting periods. Early reports show limited measurable progress, with many outputs not yet started and indicators at zero despite ongoing activities, suggesting monitoring functioned more as an activity log than a results-based tool. Later reports provide more granular data (e.g., number of trainees, countries supported, policy outputs produced) and stronger links between activities and indicators, reflecting improved alignment with results-based management. However, monitoring remains stronger on output tracking than on outcome-level evidence, with limited data recorded regarding uptake, behavioural change, or system-level effects.

80. **Use of monitoring for adaptive management**. There is credible but uneven evidence that monitoring information informed adaptive management, particularly in response to external constraints and implementation bottlenecks. The progress reports document explicit adjustments in implementation strategy — most notably, the re-prioritisation of activities away from NAP development toward EPR and UN system integration due to sensitivities in the global INC negotiation process. Similarly, delays and low expenditure rates triggered internal reflection and subsequent acceleration of delivery and partner engagement in later phases, suggesting responsive management based on performance signals. However, these adaptations appear to be driven more by contextual and operational considerations than by systematic analysis of monitoring data against outcome-level indicators. There is limited evidence of structured feedback loops, learning mechanisms, or iterative use of monitoring data to refine intervention design or strengthen effectiveness at the outcome level. Overall, monitoring has supported operational course correction and responsiveness but has been less effective as a tool for strategic learning and evidence-based performance management.

Grant Reporting

81. Supported by a standardized template with defined indicators, baselines, and targets, which enables transparency and comparability across reporting periods, the grant's reporting is clear, consistent, and credible. Over successive reporting cycles, there is a

clear shift toward more granular and quantified reporting, including gender-disaggregated participation data, number of countries supported, and concrete policy outputs – reflecting improved alignment with results-based management. This progression improves the reliability and usefulness of reports as an account of implementation progress, although coverage was stronger for outputs than for higher-level results.

82. Reporting effectively supports accountability and provides a coherent picture of delivery, including evidence of adjustments in response to implementation challenges. However, its ability to accurately reflect progress at the outcome level is more limited, as systematic evidence on uptake, behavioural change, and system-level effects is largely absent. While later reports improve in linking activities to indicators, there is limited analysis of performance trends or results beyond immediate outputs, constraining their usefulness for deeper understanding of effectiveness and performance-based decision-making.

Findings Statements on Monitoring and Reporting*:*

83. The grant established a robust **monitoring** system that improved from being activity-based to more results-oriented reporting and supported adaptive management in a dynamic external context, particularly the INC process; however, the monitoring remained primarily output-focused and not yet reflecting a fully mature, outcome-oriented performance system for tracking uptake, behavioural change, or system-level results.

84. Grant **reporting** is clear, consistent, credible and showed progressive improvement to more quantified, results-oriented reporting, providing a reliable account of delivery and supporting accountability, thereby fulfilling its core function. However, it remained primarily output-focused, with limited outcome-level evidence (reflecting the grant's timeframe and adaptive implementation context) which limited its ability to assess outcome-level effectiveness and support forward-looking assessment of sustainability and durability of results.

Rating for Monitoring and Reporting:	**Satisfactory**
Rating for Monitoring of Implementation: Satisfactory	
Rating for Reporting: Satisfactory	

H. Sustainability

Socio-Political Sustainability

85. Socio-political sustainability is considered likely, reflecting a context of continued dependency on political and institutional factors combined with broadly favourable levels of ownership, engagement, and policy commitment. The grant is well-aligned with growing regional attention to plastics governance, including NAP development, EPR frameworks, and increasing public and political awareness, which together provide a supportive enabling environment for continuation. Regional consultations confirmed sustained government interest and engagement, with countries actively identifying priority policy areas (e.g. EPR, waste management, reuse systems) and requesting further technical support, indicating that outputs are perceived as relevant and worth advancing. Continued commitment by Member States to the INC process also provides an important positive political signal that countries will remain engaged in developing longer-term measures to address plastic pollution.

86. Evidence from regional exchanges shows that most countries had already initiated plastics-related policy and action planning efforts and are seeking to strengthen these, suggesting that the project reinforced emerging policy trajectories, thereby contributing to

continued policy attention and forward momentum. At the same time, the sustainability of these trajectories is influenced by broader socio-political and institutional challenges. Evidence from regional and bilateral consultations highlights persistent gaps in enforcement, inter-ministerial coordination, data systems, and financing, alongside capacity limitations at national and subnational levels. In several contexts, competing development priorities and limited resources mean that maturation and operationalisation of plastics policies and NAP-related frameworks are likely to require sustained engagement over extended timeframes (typically 5-10 years).

87. These constraints indicate that key assumptions underpinning longer-term sustainability and impact are partially fulfilled and continue to evolve across country contexts — particularly assumptions that political commitment will progressively translate into regulatory follow-through, institutional coordination, and system-level implementation. At the same time, evidence suggests that the broader socio-political environment is increasingly supportive of continued progress on plastics governance, with growing policy attention, regional exchange, and stakeholder engagement across participating countries. The grant demonstrated adaptive management by tailoring support to country demand and aligning activities with the evolving INC process, thereby helping sustain relevance and national ownership under changing policy conditions. While deeper political economy challenges (e.g. industry resistance, cross-sector coordination, competing priorities) remain important factors influencing the pace and durability of implementation, the overall socio-political trajectory is broadly conducive to continued advancement beyond the grant period.

Financial Sustainability

88. Financial sustainability is differentiated across the change pathways, with some grant elements showing credible prospects for continuation with limited additional funding requirements, while broader system-level outcomes remain dependent on sustained financial support. At the level of knowledge products and analytical outputs, ongoing financial dependence is relatively low. More resource-intensive areas – particularly EPR operationalisation and system-wide implementation – will continue to require substantial financing for data systems, infrastructure, enforcement, institutional capacity, and implementation support. Evidence from country consultations highlights that full implementation will require major sustained financing for data systems (e.g. national registries, MRV systems), infrastructure (collection, sorting, recycling), enforcement mechanisms, and institutional capacity. Through this grant, substantial co-financing was mobilised from UNEP donors and partners, totalling USD 2,298,723, which indicates that the grant was able to leverage additional resources and stakeholder commitment beyond its core budget, helping to strengthen the financial viability, continuity, and scaling potential of project-supported processes and partnerships. Further donor-supported initiatives are underway (e.g., multi-year support for waste data systems; the GEF-funded Plastic Reboot programme, resourced at USD 108 million operating during 2025-2030, which includes projects in Cambodia, Laos, the Philippines). At the same time, participating countries are actively pursuing further development of their EPR systems both within and beyond the One UNEP project framework. However, finance flows linked to producer compliance and regulatory implementation remain at relatively early stages of development and will require continued maturation over time through progressive strengthening of enforcement, institutional arrangements, and market participation.

89. Overall, the grant has laid important foundations for future financial sustainability by helping to strengthen enabling conditions for the progressive mobilisation of domestic, donor, and private-sector financing over time. The mobilisation of co-financing and emergence of follow-on initiatives indicate continued stakeholder and donor commitment

beyond the grant period. At the same time, broader system-level sustainability remains dependent on continued resource mobilisation and long-term support to move from policy development and planning toward operational implementation and functioning EPR systems.

Institutional Sustainability

90. The grant contributed to institutional sustainability by embedding plastics-related analysis, governance considerations, and planning processes within existing national and UN institutional frameworks. This included integration into CCAs in multiple countries (Thailand, Viet Nam, Malaysia) and support to policy development processes related to national action planning and EPR frameworks. Stakeholder interviews highlighted the practical value of the grant-supported analytical inputs, which RCO offices could use to inform and integrate plastics into official planning documents. In Thailand particularly, the grant strengthened institutional anchoring by coupling analytical inputs with stakeholder consultations, which enhanced legitimacy, relevance, and multi-actor engagement. An interviewee asserted that this combined approach distinguished UNEP's contribution from those of other UN agencies and international financial institutions (IFIs, like World Bank, IMF, ADB) competing for the RC's attention.

91. Some of the grant-supported outputs have become institutionally embedded within organisational mandates and systems, thereby strengthening prospects for continuity beyond the project period. Interview evidence from Thailand indicates that the EPR online module will be owned, hosted, and periodically updated by Burapha University under its institutional mandate, including a requirement to review and update course content every two years. This institutionalisation, combined with incentives to attract new learners and use of existing networks for dissemination, suggests that such this module can be considered as a self-sustaining institutional asset rather than a time-bound project output. Similarly, analytical contributions embedded within UN planning processes (i.e., CCAs) can continue to inform future programming and coordination processes beyond the grant's timeframe.

92. At the same time, institutional sustainability remains at a relatively early stage of consolidation, particularly regarding translation from analytical integration into longer-term programming, governance arrangements, and dedicated resource commitments. Evidence from interviews highlighted that inclusion of plastics within the CCA and related planning processes represents an important institutional entry point, although progression towards UNSDCF programming, operational outputs, and measurable indicators continues to depend on government priorities, competing development agendas, institutional capacities, and future programming cycles. Institutional ownership is therefore evolving rather than fully consolidated, particularly within complex development environments where multiple UN actors and IFIs engage simultaneously with national counterparts. Nevertheless, the grant has strengthened institutional visibility, legitimacy, coordination, and policy attention around plastics governance, thereby establishing credible foundations for continued institutional uptake and future programming beyond the grant's period.

Findings Statements on Sustainability*:*

93. Socio-political conditions are broadly supportive, with strong regional policy momentum, sustained government engagement, continued commitment to the INC process, and clear demand for further technical support – reflecting meaningful ownership and relevance. While implementation capacity and institutional consolidation remain uneven across

countries – particularly regarding enforcement, coordination, data systems, and financing – the overall socio-political trajectory is conductive to continued advancement of plastics governance beyond the project period.

94. Financial sustainability is differentiated across the three change pathways. Some outputs (analytical contributions, self-sustaining outputs, knowledge products) are institutionalised and can continue without additional funding. The mobilisation of substantial co-financing and the emergence of follow-on initiatives indicate continued stakeholder engagement and donor commitment. These offer positive signalling of support for the long-term sustainability of EPR operationalisation and broader plastics governance reforms, which remain dependent on sustained future investment, regulatory maturation, enforcement capacity, and continued institutional strengthening.

95. The grant achieved credible institutional anchoring by embedding plastics-related analysis and planning processes into UN planning frameworks and supporting national policy processes, with evidence that its analytical outputs informed official documents, were strengthened through stakeholder engagement, and in some cases, became embedded within existing organisational mandates and systems. Institutional sustainability remains at an evolving stage of consolidation, particularly regarding translation from analytical integration into longer-term programming, governance arrangements, and dedicated resource commitments. Nevertheless, the grant strengthened institutional visibility, legitimacy, coordination, and policy attention around plastics governance, thereby establishing credible foundations for continued institutional uptake and future programming beyond the grant's period.

Rating for Likelihood of Sustainability: Likely
Rating for Socio-political Sustainability: Likely
Rating for Financial Sustainability: Likely
Rating for Institutional Sustainability: Likely

I. Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

Quality of Management and Supervision

96. Grant management and supervision were highly effective, as evidenced by the full delivery of planned outputs within the project timeframe, with good technical quality (¶62) and near-complete budget execution (¶70). The team showed strong adaptive management (¶57) and recovered from early implementation lags to deliver a complex, multi-country, multi-partner portfolio on time through competent internal coordination, early engagement of partners with close oversight of deliverables maintained throughout, ensuring that contractual and financial processes did not compromise delivery quality. This level of control and responsiveness is consistent with high-performing UN project management standards, particularly in contexts involving multiple implementing partners and administrative constraints.

97. Stakeholder evidence consistently pointed to a collaborative, responsive, and well-coordinated management approach that facilitated both efficiency (¶73) and effectiveness (¶60, ¶61). The grant team was described by implementing partners and UNEP colleagues as "proactive, accessible, and solutions-oriented", with regular communication, flexibility in addressing implementation challenges, and a "strong partnership ethos" that enabled timely course correction and alignment with evolving needs. Coordination across organisational levels (headquarters, regional office, and partners) was particularly well-handled, with early engagement and deliberate co-creation

processes with Regional Office staff contributing to clarity of roles and reduced transaction costs.

98. The team also demonstrated strong system awareness, actively aligning with other initiatives to avoid duplication and maximise complementarity (Table 12). Overall, grant management and supervision combined technical competence, adaptive capacity, and effective stakeholder engagement, enabling delivery of results in a complex and dynamic operating environment.

Stakeholders' Participation and Cooperation

99. Stakeholder participation was broad-based, structured, and generally strong at the level of engagement and consultation, bringing together government institutions, the UN system, private sector actors, research organisations, and civil society across multiple countries.

100. The grant design explicitly positioned multi-stakeholder engagement as a core delivery mechanism, with clearly differentiated roles — from policy development (governments) to implementation (private sector, PROs), to knowledge generation (research institutions) and coordination (UN system). Evidence from country-level activities confirms active participation (e.g., multi-stakeholder workshops in Viet Nam engaged regulators, producers, waste management actors, and financial institutions to jointly assess EPR implementation challenges and co-develop recommendations). Similarly, regional knowledge-sharing events and consultations created platforms for peer learning and cross-country exchange, which stakeholders consistently valued as a mechanism for contextualising solutions and adapting policy approaches.

101. However, the depth of participation was uneven, with stronger performance in stakeholder consultation and weaker evidence of sustained engagement translating into behavioural or institutional change. In several cases, participation remained concentrated around workshops, consultations, and analytical processes, with more limited evidence of continued stakeholder engagement in implementation or decision-making processes. For instance, while consultations in Viet Nam involved 40-50 participants and generated inputs for policy refinement, stakeholders themselves noted that it is "still too early" to assess how far outputs are being used in practice or influencing concrete decisions. This reflects a broader pattern: participation effectively supported information exchange and consensus-building but did not consistently extend into ownership of implementation processes, particularly where systemic constraints (e.g. data gaps, unclear incentives, institutional fragmentation) persist.

102. Cooperation between UNEP, regional offices, implementing partners, and national counterparts was generally effective and characterized by responsiveness, technical credibility, and strong coordination at the operational level. The use of SSFAs enabled targeted engagement with specialized institutions (e.g., GRID-Arendal, ISPAE) and UNEP's convening role facilitated alignment across actors and levels. At the same time, evidence points to coordination remaining relatively centralised and mediated through UNEP, with limited direct interaction amongst some partners and stakeholders (e.g., knowledge partners working largely "in a silo" with UNEP rather than through broader multi-actor collaboration). This, combined with a crowded institutional landscape and overlapping initiatives, suggests that while cooperation was effective for delivering outputs, it was less consistently leveraged to build durable, system-level coordination mechanisms.

Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality

103. Gender equality was operationalised through participation targets and gender-disaggregated monitoring, with several indicators requiring at least 40% female

participation and results exceeding this threshold (e.g., 53% female participation in government capacity-building activities).

104. Beyond representation, the grant demonstrated meaningful attention to vulnerable groups, including targeted engagement with informal waste workers in EPR-related consultations and capacity-building processes (e.g. dedicated sessions in the Philippines combined with structured dialogues on livelihoods and system integration). Best Practices Reports on EPR implementation in the three target countries also highlighted the importance of the informal sector and need to ensure a just transition are critical considerations in designing EPR systems. Knowledge products and guidance (notably for UNRCOs and UNCTs) explicitly embedded human rights, gender equality, "leave no one behind", and "just transition" principles – recognising disproportionate impacts on vulnerable populations and the need for inclusive circular economy transitions.

Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS)

105. The grant did not apply a formal UNEP ESS framework at design or during implementation, and no structured safeguard monitoring or reporting was undertaken (see **Annex VI**). However, this is largely consistent with the project's focus on policy and capacity-building, which reflects a low-risk profile that did not generate direct environmental or social impacts. While safeguard considerations were not systematically articulated, the grant did incorporate good practice elements; notably, stakeholder engagement, inclusion of informal actors, and gender-disaggregated participation — which mitigated potential social risks in practice. Overall, the absence of formal ESS processes represents a procedural gap rather than a substantive risk, with no evidence of adverse safeguard impacts during implementation.

Country Ownership and Driven-ness

106. These elements are evident but uneven across pathways and countries, with stronger ownership at the level of engagement in analytical processes than in sustained institutional uptake. The grant successfully mobilised government counterparts — primarily Ministries of Environment and related agencies — through consultations, technical inputs, and co-development of analyses and guidance. Evidence from country-level processes (e.g. Thailand CA 2025, Viet Nam consultations, Indonesia EPR work) shows that national actors actively engaged in workshops, validation exercises, and policy discussions, and in some cases, according to interview evidence, directly used the grant-supported analytical outputs to inform national documents and processes. This indicates credible forward movement from outputs to early outcome-level uptake, particularly where support aligned with national planning cycles or ongoing policy processes. Regional consultations and knowledge-sharing events reinforced ownership by enabling countries to position their experiences, priorities, and constraints within a shared policy dialogue, rather than acting as passive recipients of technical assistance.

107. Ownership appears to be more concentrated amongst technical counterparts (SSFA holders) than fully embedded across government systems. While engagement was often led by environment ministries or technical agencies, there is limited evidence of sustained involvement from central planning bodies, finance ministries, or other sectors critical for implementation and resource allocation. This reflects a key assumption that is only partially holding (Table 16): that government actors would translate technical guidance into enforceable and implemented measures. While countries expressed strong interest and participated actively in consultations, including multi-stakeholder processes involving private sector and civil society, evidence of continued ownership in terms of policy adoption, financing decisions, or institutional mandates remains emerging rather than established (Table 16). The Impact Brief similarly notes that, although policy frameworks have

advanced, implementation is constrained by capacity, coordination, and enforcement challenges, underscoring that ownership has not yet fully translated into system functioning.

108. Overall, the grant generated meaningful but still fragile ownership, sufficient to support transition from outputs to early outcomes, but less assured in driving progress toward intermediate states. The reliance on SSFA partners and external expertise enabled effective delivery and engagement but may also have limited deeper institutional embedding within government systems, particularly beyond core technical counterparts. Given the grant's nature and compressed implementation window — combined with external uncertainty linked to the INC process — this level of ownership is broadly consistent with expectations. However, sustained progress will depend on whether national actors extend this initial engagement into cross-ministerial coordination, regulatory follow-through, and resource mobilisation, which remain outside the project's direct influence.

Communication and Public Awareness

109. Experience sharing and communication of learning was well-targeted to the actual change agents (government counterparts, technical stakeholders, UN system), which are the relevant audiences for the grant's policy-focused intervention. Engagement was suitably frequent – using regional consultations and technical workshops to facilitate peer learning, policy dialogue, and cross-country exchange – and established platforms (i.e., COBSEA, GPML), which are appropriate for institutional change processes in the plastics domain. Regional dialogues enabled countries to position their priorities, learn from each other's approaches, and contextualise solutions, while knowledge products were designed to be practical and user-oriented for decision-makers. Evidence from regional meetings and knowledge product development indicates that stakeholders actively engaged and contributed to shaping outputs, thereby supporting knowledge diffusion and early uptake within policy and planning processes. The use of existing networks and coordination mechanisms further enhanced reach and coherence, reducing duplication and reinforcing UNEP's convening role.

110. Apart from the online EPR module to be launched in Thai in Thailand (disseminated via COBSEA with English subtitles), public awareness activities targeting broader communities were limited. Some initiatives, like engagement with informal sector actors in the Philippines, contributed to improving awareness and inclusivity at sub-national levels, but these were embedded within consultations and capacity-building efforts rather than constituting a dedicated public awareness strategy. While feedback was collected through workshops and consultations (e.g., validation meetings, Mentimeter inputs), there was no systematic monitoring of how communication influenced behaviour, policy uptake, or subsequent results. However, these constraints are consistent with the project's orientation. Overall, communication performed its intended function, i.e., supporting coordination, knowledge exchange, and early policy-level influence.

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

111. Grant management and supervision were highly effective, combining strong adaptive management and proactive coordination to deliver all planned outputs on time, with good quality and near-complete budget execution despite a delayed start. A collaborative, responsive, and solutions-oriented approach — characterised by close partner engagement, effective cross-level coordination, and active alignment with other initiatives — enabled strong performance in a complex, multi-country implementation context.

112. Stakeholder participation, cooperation, and country ownership were strong at the level of engagement and coordination, with the grant effectively convening diverse actors, enabling knowledge exchange, and supporting early uptake of outputs in national policy processes.

However, both participation and ownership remain uneven and largely concentrated within technical counterparts, with limited evidence of sustained ownership, cross-government embedding, or translation into implementation, financing, and regulatory follow-through. As a result, engagement has not yet consistently progressed to behavioural change or self-sustaining, system-level collaboration beyond UNEP-mediated processes.

113. The grant adequately operationalised gender equality through participation targets and gender-disaggregated monitoring, achieving balanced representation where expected, and demonstrated meaningful attention to vulnerable groups through targeted engagement with informal workers. its guidance and knowledge products for UNRC/CTs explicitly embedded human rights, gender equality, "leave no one behind", and "just transition" principles and these notions were evidenced in reports produced by SSFA holders.

114. The grant did not apply a formal ESS framework or systematic safeguard monitoring; however, consistent with its low-risk nature and focus on policy and institutional support, no adverse environmental or social impacts were identified. Good practice measures (inclusive stakeholder engagement, attention to gender, involvement of informal sector actors) were integrated into design and implementation and helped mitigate potential risks in practice

Rating for Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues: Satisfactory
Rating for Quality of Project Management and Supervision: Highly Satisfactory
Rating for Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation: Highly Satisfactory
Rating for Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality: Satisfactory
Rating for Environmental and Social Safeguards: Satisfactory
Rating for Country Ownership and Driven-ness: Moderately Satisfactory
Rating for Communication and Public Awareness: Satisfactory

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions

115. **Conclusion 1: The grant made a meaningful contribution to strengthening the enabling environment for national and regional action on plastic pollution in Asia-Pacific**. Through policy support, technical guidance, regional exchange, and integration of plastics into broader governance and UN coordination processes, the project helped advance foundational conditions for more coherent, evidence-informed action on plastic pollution across the beneficiary countries. Its strongest contributions were in strengthening enabling conditions, institutional readiness, and policy attention. The grant also helped sustain regional momentum and policy coherence during a period of heightened international attention associated with the INC negotiations, which contributed to growing government awareness of plastic pollution and increasing recognition of policy approaches, such as NAPs, EPR systems, and plastics-related data and monitoring frameworks. While implementation and behavioural change remain dependent on broader political, institutional and market dynamics, the project successfully positioned itself as a credible enabling initiative within the wider landscape of support. UNEP engagement through follow-on initiatives (e.g., USD 108 million Plastic Reboot programme, 2025-2030), provides additional opportunities to build on the institutional and policy foundations established through this grant.

116. **Conclusion 2: Effectiveness was underpinned by a collaborative and adaptive implementation model, widely recognised by stakeholders as a strength**. Stakeholder feedback consistently highlighted the grant team's open, responsive and solution-oriented engagement style as a distinguishing feature. This approach enabled trust-building across diverse actors — national counterparts, UN entities, and technical partners — and supported iterative refinement of outputs in response to evolving country needs. The co-creation approach deployed with UNEP's Regional Office enabled regional expertise, networks, and perspectives to shape implementation, which was particularly valued for strengthening contextual relevance, ownership, and buy-in. In the context of Asia-Pacific's complex and crowded plastics support landscape, this collaborative model was instrumental in ensuring that support remained demand-responsive, strategically positioned, and aligned with national priorities. Stakeholders highlighted the grant's timely and useful contribution to elevating plastics within CCA/UNSDCF processes through the development of materials that help strengthen understanding of plastic pollution as a development issue and facilitate its integration into UN planning and coordination processes.

117. **Conclusion 3: The grant's positioning within a dynamic and uncertain global policy context both enabled relevance and constrained aspects of delivery**. The ongoing negotiations toward a global plastics treaty created a highly relevant but fluid operating environment. The grant responded appropriately by maintaining neutrality on prescriptive policy directions and adapting its focus toward areas of clearer traction; notably, EPR readiness and UN system integration. However, this same context limited progress on more politically sensitive outputs, particularly national action planning. The grant's flexibility in navigating this uncertainty represents a significant strength, while also illustrating the extent to which longer-term outcomes remain dependent on external policy convergence and national political commitment.

118. **Conclusion 4: The grant's strategic intent was relevant and broadly coherent, but weaknesses in the articulation of the Theory of Change and outcome-level results reduced evaluability and conceptual clarity regarding how change was expected to occur**. As reflected in the reconstructed TOC and the project's results framework (Table 3),

outcome statements were formulated primarily in terms of strengthened capacities, coordination, or support processes rather than clearly defined behavioural, institutional, or policy changes. This weakness did not relate to the selection of intervention areas themselves – which were aligned with evolving global and regional priorities on plastic pollution – but rather to the incomplete articulation of how the selected interventions were expected to generate change. The simplified grant-level TOC and results framework in the Project Document gave limited attention to the assumptions, drivers, enabling conditions, and intermediate states required for technical support to translate into implementation and impact. This reduced conceptual clarity regarding how change was expected to occur and made it more difficult to systematically assess progress toward longer-term outcomes across the project's diverse pathways.

119. **Conclusion 5: The grant demonstrated adaptive management and efficiency in delivering outputs within a complex, multi-country context**. Despite a slow initial rollout (stemming from the INC uncertainty), the grant recovered and delivered useful outputs within the planned timeframe. Efficiency was supported by strong internal coordination between programmatic and financial management functions, including results-based disbursement mechanisms that aligned funding with delivery. Strategic use of existing UNEP platforms and regional mechanisms avoided duplication and reduced transaction costs. The ability to navigate partner-related risks while maintaining delivery momentum reflects proactive management and effective supervisory oversight. While the project's UNEP-centric coordination model proved highly effective for maintaining coherence, responsiveness, and delivery momentum across a complex regional portfolio, it also concentrated strategic coordination and convening functions within the UNEP grant team. This reduced opportunities to move beyond consultation and coordination toward deeper institutional embedding, shared accountability, and sustained national ownership of results.

120. **Conclusion 6: The grant contributed primarily to strengthening enabling conditions for action on plastic pollution, while operational implementation and longer-term systems change remain dependent on broader portfolio effects and external enabling factors**. The grant made its strongest contributions through policy support, technical guidance, analytical integration, stakeholder coordination, and regional exchange. Progress towards operational implementation, institutionalisation, financing, regulatory enforcement, and behavioural change remains uneven across countries and was only partially evident within the project timeframe. While the EPR pathway shows advances in selected contexts, broader implementation at scale and system-level transformation were at an early stage in most of the beneficiary countries. This reflects not only the influence of external political, institutional, and market factors, but also the grant's intentionally bounded scope, duration, geographic coverage, and resource envelope. The grant was designed primarily to strengthen enabling conditions within the wider 'One UNEP Plastics' project of interventions rather than to address all dimensions required for full systems transition. Many conditions required for implementation — including financing mechanisms, market incentives, regulatory operationalisation, and business and consumer uptake — are being pursued through complementary UNEP initiatives and partnerships beyond this grant's scope.

    At the same time, limitations in the specificity of the original results framework and TOC (as detailed in Conclusion 4) reduced the grant's ability to systematically articulate and monitor how the grant-supported tools, guidance, analyses, and capacity-building efforts were expected to contribute to subsequent implementation and institutional uptake across countries and pathways. The experience nevertheless highlights the importance, in future policy support initiatives, of more explicitly situating project-level interventions

within broader portfolio-level transition pathways and clarifying how support for enabling conditions is expected to connect to operational implementation processes over time.

121. **Conclusion 7: Strengths in outreach and partnership were not fully matched by institutionalised learning and feedback mechanisms**. The grant effectively leveraged regional and global platforms and partnerships to disseminate knowledge and engage stakeholders, contributing to visibility and uptake of outputs. However, the knowledge management approach remained underdeveloped in terms of structured processes for capturing, analysing and feeding back learning into implementation. This limits the grant's ability to systematically consolidate and demonstrate transferable lessons and emerging good practices across countries, particularly in areas such as EPR implementation and integration of plastics into UN system programming.

122. **Conclusion 8: Human rights and gender dimensions were acknowledged in grant framing but not strongly operationalised in implementation or monitoring**. While aligned with UN commitments and reflected in the grant's overall framing, human rights and gender considerations were not a prominent driver of design or delivery. There is limited evidence of systematic integration of these dimensions into activities, outputs, stakeholder engagement approaches, or monitoring frameworks. As a result, the grant's contribution to inclusive and equitable approaches to addressing plastic pollution remains largely implicit rather than explicitly demonstrated or evidenced.

123. **Overall Conclusion:** The grant strengthened enabling conditions for national and regional action on plastic pollution in Asia-Pacific through policy support, technical guidance, regional exchange, and integration of plastics into broader governance and UN coordination processes, while operating within a complex and evolving policy environment. Its collaborative, adaptive, and technically grounded implementation model enabled it to translate emerging global plastics priorities into nationally relevant processes that were widely valued by stakeholders and contributed to growing regional momentum associated with the INC negotiations. The grant's strongest contributions were in strengthening policy attention, institutional readiness, coordination, and analytical foundations for future action within the broader 'One UNEP Plastics' project.

    At the same time, weaknesses in the grant's TOC and results framework reduced clarity regarding how the grant-supported activities were expected to contribute to implementation and longer-term change. While progress towards operational implementation and systems transformation remained uneven within the grant'a timeframe, this largely reflects the grant's intentionally bounded focus, as well as broader political, institutional, financial, and market conditions beyond its direct control. The experience nevertheless highlights the importance, in future policy support initiatives, of more explicitly linking enabling support to broader portfolio-level implementation and transition pathways.

Responses to Key Strategic Questions

The review ToR included two strategic questions of interest to UNEP.

124. Regarding question 1: **What added value did the work of this grant bring to UNEP's work in this thematic area and how is it visible**?

    The grant brought distinct added value to the One UNEP plastics project by filling an important gap that was not systematically addressed through other UNEP plastics initiatives: strengthening national policy architecture, EPR readiness, and integration of plastics into UN country-level planning processes (see ¶43, ¶44 and Table 12 on complementarity/coherence). The review found that the grant translated global plastics commitments emerging from UNEA Resolution 5/14 and the INC negotiations into

concrete country-level policy processes, tools, and institutional support mechanisms that would otherwise not have been delivered through existing portfolio components (¶45). Its added value is particularly visible in demonstrating a pathway for integrating plastics into CCA/UNSDCF processes through engagement with UNRCOs/CT — an approach identified as both innovative and atypical within UNEP's broader plastics portfolio (¶44, ¶45). The grant also strengthened and complemented UNEP-led regional and global mechanisms rather than duplicating them, including by reinforcing GPML's enabling infrastructure and contributing to the development of the Global Plastics Hub Action Planning Tool, while using platforms such as COBSEA to disseminate outputs and strengthen regional coordination (Table 12).

The visibility of this added value is further reflected in stakeholder perceptions that the grant acted as a "pioneer" and a practical example of how UNEP can work more strategically through regional offices in terms of co-creation (¶97). Overall, the grant demonstrated strong effectiveness in advancing policy integration, institutional alignment, and regional momentum on plastic pollution, with a collaborative and technically grounded implementation model that translated global plastics priorities into national and UN system processes in ways widely valued by stakeholders (¶123).

125. Regarding question 2: **To what extent, and in what ways, was the work of this grant complementary or coherent with other UNEP work, either with the PRC-approved project, PCP or Subprogramme already mentioned, or elsewhere in UNEP's Programme of Work?**

The grant has a high degree of complementarity and coherence with UNEP's broader plastics portfolio, the Chemicals and Pollution Subprogramme, and related POW outcomes (see Table 9) by occupying a distinct enabling and coordination niche rather than duplicating existing initiatives (see Table 12). The review found that the grant was strategically aligned with UNEP's MTS outcomes on plastic pollution reduction, circularity, and sound chemicals and waste management (¶51), while also complementing wider "One UNEP Plastics project" efforts (¶19) through its focus on policy planning, EPR readiness, monitoring frameworks, and UN system integration.

The grant complemented existing UNEP mechanisms and initiatives — including GPML, the Global Plastics Hub, COBSEA, and regional marine litter and circularity initiatives — by strengthening enabling conditions for national action and providing operational support that could feed into broader UNEP coordination and knowledge platforms (see Table 12). Rather than establishing parallel systems, the grant leveraged and reinforced existing regional structures and platforms to disseminate tools, facilitate knowledge exchange, and strengthen regional policy coherence, contributing to efficiency gains and reduced duplication (¶75).

The grant demonstrated a particularly distinctive contribution through its collaboration with UNEP's Regional Office and its efforts to integrate plastics into CCA/UNSDCF processes and broader UN system coordination mechanisms (¶116). Stakeholders described this as an innovative and relatively uncommon approach within UNEP's plastics programming, helping to position plastics not only as an environmental issue but also as a broader development and coordination challenge relevant to UNRCOs/CTs.

At the same time, the review noted that the grant operated within a crowded and evolving institutional landscape, requiring active coordination to manage overlaps and stakeholder fatigue (¶54). Nevertheless, the grant's adaptive management approach and strategic positioning helped maintain coherence and responsiveness within this wider ecosystem of plastics-related support (¶117).

126. Table 18 provides a summary of the ratings and finding discussed in Chapter IV. Overall, the grant's performance is rated as '**Satisfactory**'.

UNEP Evaluation Office Validation of Performance Ratings:

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

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

– That what is being assessed is the contents of the report and the extent to which it makes a consistent and justifiable case for the performance ratings it records.

- That the consultant has, within the report, presented all the evidence that was made available to them.

- That the Review has been based on a robust Theory of Change, reconstructed where necessary, which reflects UNEP's definitions at all levels of results.

- That the grant team and key stakeholders have already reviewed a draft version of the report and provided substantive comments and made factual corrections to the Review Consultant, who has responded to them. The Evaluation Office assumes, therefore, that it has received the Final (revised) version of the report.

In this instance the Evaluation Office assesses the quality of the Report at the 'Satisfactory' level and validates the overall project performance rating at the **'Satisfactory'** level.

Table 18 – Summary of Findings and Ratings[15]

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
Strategic Relevance			**The rating is validated.**	**S**
1. Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and strategic priorities	Strongly aligned with MTS and POW (2022-2025), reflecting UNEP's strategic focus on lifecycle approaches, science-policy integration, and policy support, with clear contributions to enabling conditions for pollution reduction and circularity. This alignment is realised primarily at the level of policy frameworks and institutional readiness, with more limited evidence of subsequent implementation or measurable environmental outcomes during the grant period.	**S**	The rating is validated.	S
2. Alignment to Donor/Partner strategic priorities	Strongly aligned with UNPDF strategic priorities — particularly on SDG integration, policy support, and UN system coherence. The grant has made substantive contributions to strengthening analytical and institutional foundations; however, alignment is more partial regarding catalytic, system-level change, as results remain concentrated at the level of enabling conditions, with implementation and sustained impact still emerging.	**S**	The rating is validated.	S
3. Relevance to global, regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities	Strongly aligned with global, regional, and national environmental priorities on plastic pollution through its promotion of lifecycle approaches, EPR systems, and improved policy and data frameworks. The grant has meaningfully advanced these agendas; although its contributions are primarily realised at the level of enabling conditions, with more limited evidence of translation into fully operational systems, sustained implementation, or measurable environmental outcomes.	**S**	The rating is validated with a note that in the main report the sub-category is rated 'HS' and the rating in this table has been accepted.	S

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

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
4. Complementarity with relevant existing interventions/coherence	Demonstrates strong complementarity and overall coherence within a crowded plastics landscape by filling a distinct niche — focused on policy frameworks, EPR readiness, and UN system integration. As multiple actors operate in overlapping areas of policy advice, knowledge products, and capacity-building, coherence depends on active coordination, with some risks of duplication and stakeholder fatigue where integration remains limited.	**S**	The rating is validated.	S
Quality of Design	Overall strong design quality, reflected in its high level of strategic relevance, well-grounded problem analysis, robust financial planning, and coherent partnership model that builds effectively on UNEP's comparative advantage and existing platforms. The design supports credible pathways for policy influence, capacity-building, and catalytic effects. However, some limitations in the depth of the logical framework and TOC, operationalisation of gender and inclusion, the UNEP-centric governance model, and the limited articulation of efficiency and learning mechanisms constrain its analytical precision and reduce its potential to fully support outcome-level measurement and adaptive management.	**S**	The rating is validated.	S
Nature of External Context	The grant operated in a dynamic global policy environment shaped by ongoing INC negotiations, which created uncertainty around the scope and timing of key outputs, particularly NAPs, but also sustained momentum for action on plastic pollution. While no major external disruptions affected implementation, the crowded institutional landscape required coordination and contributed to some stakeholder fatigue, even as it signalled strong demand for targeted, policy-oriented support. Overall, the context combined enabling momentum with manageable constraints, to which the project responded with appropriate flexibility and adaptation.	**MF**	The rating is validated.	MF
Effectiveness	The grant combined high-quality, fully delivered outputs with demonstrable but uneven outcome-level uptake and a credible — albeit conditional — pathway to impact.	**S**	The rating is validated.	S

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
1. Availability of outputs	The grant delivered a comprehensive and high-quality set of outputs, including analytical tools, guidance, capacity-building, and regional engagement mechanisms, which were largely completed on time and provided a strong technical and institutional foundation for advancing plastics policy development, EPR readiness, and UN system integration.	**HS**	The availability of outputs is assessed according to the results framework, but output indicator baselines and targets are not indicated within this report, leading to a lack of specificity in the assessment. For a HS rating all (100%) of programmed outputs should be available to the intended users. The rating is adjusted downwards to S.	S
2. Achievement of outcomes	The grant achieved notable progress at the outcome level, with clear evidence of strengthened capacities, policy development, and early system-building across the three pathways; however, uptake and operationalisation remain uneven across countries and contexts, and longer-term institutional consolidation and implementation are still emerging.	**S**	The rating is validated.	S
3. Likelihood of impact	The grant has established a credible pathway to impact, supported by strong enabling conditions and emerging system changes, but realisation of sustained environmental outcomes depends on external factors such as regulatory enforcement, financing, and institutional capacity, which are only partially in place.	**L**	The rating is validated.	L
Financial Management	The grant demonstrated strong financial management through mobilisation of co-financing exceeding planned levels by 27.7%, reflecting its ability to leverage additional resources and stakeholder commitment beyond the core budget. Adherence to UNEP policies and donor requirements, disciplined financial oversight, effective coordination between grant and financial management functions, and reliable financial reporting supported accountable implementation and financial execution broadly aligned with planned delivery.	**HS**	The rating is validated.	HS
1. Adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures	Strong adherence to UNEP and donor financial procedures, supported by disciplined oversight, timely disbursement, regular budget monitoring, and sound accountability mechanisms.	**HS**	The rating is validated.	HS
2. Completeness of financial information	Financial information was complete, well-organised, and readily accessible, supported by consistent reporting and strong oversight ensuring reliability and traceability.	**HS**	The rating is validated.	HS

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
3. Communication between finance and grant management staff	Strong coordination and communication between finance and grant management functions supported timely oversight, budget monitoring, and implementation accountability.	**HS**	This sub-category is no longer rated by the Evaluation Office and is also not in the review's main text and therefore marked as 'not rated' here.	N/R
Efficiency	The grant translated resources into outputs at scale with good value for money — driven by strong coordination between project and financial-management functions, results-based disbursement, and effective use of partnerships and existing platforms. While early delays linked to INC-related uncertainty led to back-loaded implementation and some timing inefficiencies, these were ultimately mitigated through adaptive management and close supervision.	**S**	The rating is validated.	S
Monitoring and Reporting		**S**	**The rating is validated.**	**S**
1. Monitoring of implementation	The grant established a robust monitoring system that improved from being activity-based to more results-oriented reporting and supported adaptive management in a dynamic external context, particularly the INC process; however, the monitoring remained primarily output-focused and not yet reflecting a fully mature, outcome-oriented performance system for tracking uptake, behavioural change, or system-level results.	**S**	The rating is validated.	S
2. Reporting	Reporting is clear, consistent, credible and showed progressive improvement to more quantified, results-oriented reporting, providing a reliable account of delivery and supporting accountability, thereby fulfilling its core function. However, it remained primarily output-focused, with limited outcome-level evidence (reflecting the grant's timeframe and adaptive implementation context) which limited its ability to assess outcome-level effectiveness and support forward-looking assessment of sustainability and durability of results.	**S**	The rating is validated.	S
Sustainability		**L**	**The rating is validated.**	**L**

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
1. Socio-political sustainability	Socio-political conditions are broadly supportive, with strong regional policy momentum, sustained government engagement, continued commitment to the INC process, and clear demand for further technical support – reflecting meaningful ownership and relevance. While implementation capacity and institutional consolidation remain uneven across countries – particularly regarding enforcement, coordination, data systems, and financing – the overall socio-political trajectory is conductive to continued advancement of plastics governance beyond the grant period.	**L**	The rating is validated.	L
2. Financial sustainability	Financial sustainability is differentiated across the three change pathways. Some outputs (analytical contributions, self-sustaining outputs, knowledge products) are institutionalised and can continue without additional funding. The mobilisation of substantial co-financing and the emergence of follow-on initiatives indicate continued stakeholder engagement and donor commitment. These offer positive signals of support for the long-term sustainability of EPR operationalisation and broader plastics governance reforms, which remain dependent on sustained future investment, regulatory maturation, enforcement capacity, and continued institutional strengthening.	**L**	The rating is validated.	L
3. Institutional sustainability	The grant achieved credible institutional anchoring by embedding plastics-related analysis and planning processes into UN planning frameworks and supporting national policy processes, with evidence that its analytical outputs informed official documents, were strengthened through stakeholder engagement, and in some cases, became embedded within existing organisational mandates and systems. Institutional sustainability remains at an evolving stage of consolidation, particularly regarding translation from analytical integration into longer-term programming, governance arrangements, and dedicated resource commitments. Nevertheless, the grant strengthened institutional visibility, legitimacy, coordination, and policy attention around plastics governance, thereby establishing credible foundations for continued institutional uptake and future programming beyond the project period	**L**	The rating is validated.	L
Factors Affecting Performance		**S**	**The rating is validated.**	**S**

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
1. Quality of grant management and supervision	Management and supervision were highly effective, combining strong adaptive management and proactive coordination to deliver all planned outputs on time, with good quality and near-complete budget execution despite a delayed start. A collaborative, responsive, and solutions-oriented approach — characterised by close partner engagement, effective cross-level coordination, and active alignment with other initiatives — enabled strong performance in a complex, multi-country implementation context.	**HS**	The rating is validated.	HS
2. Stakeholders' participation and cooperation	Stakeholder participation and cooperation were strong and well-structured, enabling inclusive engagement, effective knowledge exchange, and coordinated delivery across a complex, multi-country portfolio. The grant's convening role successfully brought together diverse actors and facilitated alignment among partners. Participation was strongest at the level of consultation and coordination, with early signs — but still limited evidence — of sustained ownership, behavioural change, or fully self-sustaining system-level collaboration beyond UNEP-mediated processes	**S**	The rating is validated with a note that in the main report the sub-category is rated 'HS' and the rating in this table has been accepted.	S
3. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality	The grant adequately operationalised gender equality through participation targets and gender-disaggregated monitoring, achieving balanced representation where expected, and demonstrated meaningful attention to vulnerable groups through targeted engagement with informal workers. its guidance and knowledge products for UNRC/CTs explicitly embedded human rights, gender equality, "leave no one behind", and "just transition" principles and these notions were evidenced in reports produced by SSFA holders.	**S**	The rating is validated.	S
4. Environmental and social safeguards	The grant did not apply a formal ESS framework or systematic safeguard monitoring; however, consistent with its low-risk, policy-oriented nature, no adverse environmental or social impacts were identified. Good practice measures (inclusive stakeholder engagement, attention to gender, involvement of informal sector actors) were integrated into design and implementation and helped mitigate potential risks in practice.	**S**	The rating is validated.	S

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
5. Country ownership and driven-ness	Country ownership is evident at the level of engagement and early uptake, with government counterparts actively using project-supported analyses in policy processes. However, it remains uneven and largely concentrated within technical agencies, with limited embedding across key decision-making institutions and weak translation into implementation, financing, and regulatory follow-through, indicating that ownership has not yet reached the level required to drive sustained system change.	**MS**	The rating is validated.	MS
6. Communication and public awareness	Communication and experience sharing were well-targeted, suitably frequent, and effective for the grant's primary institutional audiences, supporting peer learning, policy dialogue, and early uptake of outputs through established regional platforms and networks. Stakeholders actively engaged in shaping and using knowledge products, reinforcing UNEP's convening role and facilitating coordination across countries. Public awareness activities were limited and largely indirect and monitoring of communication effects was not systematic; however, this is consistent with the grant's policy-focused design, with communication effectively fulfilling its intended role in enabling institutional influence and knowledge diffusion.	**S**	The rating is validated.	S
Overall Performance Rating		**S**	**The overall rating is validated.**	**S**

B. Lessons learned

Lesson Learned #1:	**Co-creation between UNEP technical teams and Regional Offices can significantly strengthen the relevance, usability, and system-level uptake of regional environmental programming.**
Context/comment:	The grant demonstrated that early and sustained co-creation between UNEP technical divisions and the Regional Office was not simply a coordination mechanism, but a substantive enabling factor for effectiveness, relevance, and strategic positioning. Stakeholders particularly valued the way the grant team actively engaged ROAP during project development and implementation, enabling regional expertise, country-system knowledge, UN coordination perspectives, and contextual understanding to shape the design of activities, engagement strategies, and support materials. This approach was repeatedly identified as "innovative" and "a model for future programming", particularly in relation to engagement with UNRCOs/CTs. The experience suggests that regional environmental programmes are more likely to achieve traction, ownership, and system-level uptake when Regional Offices are engaged as co-design and co-implementation partners from the outset, rather than primarily as coordination actors. The lesson is particularly relevant in the context of evolving UN reform processes and increasing expectations for integrated, system-wide approaches to environmental programming. This grant's experience also highlighted that meaningful co-creation requires adequate time, staffing, and institutional space for iterative engagement between technical divisions and regional coordination functions. While this may increase short-term transaction costs, it can substantially improve contextual relevance, strategic alignment, usability of outputs, and opportunities for broader UN system uptake and collaboration.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	Conclusion 2 highlights that the co-creation approach with UNEP's Regional Office strengthened contextual relevance, ownership, buy-in, and strategic positioning within a complex regional landscape (¶116). Conclusion 5 notes that the grant's collaborative and adaptive management approach contributed to delivery momentum and effective coordination across a complex regional portfolio (¶119). The Overall Conclusion recognises that the grant's collaborative and technically grounded implementation model enabled effective translation of global plastics priorities into national and UN system processes (¶123).

Lesson Learned #2:	**Strong convening power can accelerate delivery and coordination, but may unintentionally centralise ownership and implementation dependency.**
Context/comment:	UNEP's strong convening and coordination capacity were major enabling factors for delivery, coherence, and responsiveness; however, when coordination, technical steering, and relationship management remain concentrated within the grant team, national ownership, distributed accountability, and institutional embedding may not deepen at the same pace. This lesson has broad applicability to: ➢ regional environmental programmes ➢ treaty-linked initiatives ➢ policy and institutional support interventions ➢ UN coordination platforms generally.

Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	Conclusion 2 highlights that the grant's collaborative and adaptive implementation model enabled trust-building, responsiveness, and strategic positioning across a complex and crowded regional landscape (¶116). Conclusion 5 notes that the UNEP-centric coordination model proved highly effective for maintaining coherence, responsiveness, and delivery momentum, but also concentrated strategic coordination and convening functions within the UNEP project team (¶119). Conclusion 5 further notes that this reduced opportunities to move beyond consultation and coordination toward deeper institutional embedding, shared accountability, and sustained national ownership of results (¶119). Conclusion 6 highlights that progress toward operational implementation and long-term systems change depend not only on external political, institutional, and financing conditions, but also on how grant-supported processes become institutionalised and taken forward beyond UNEP-led coordination structures (¶120). The Overall Conclusion notes that future policy support initiatives would benefit from more explicit pathways linking enabling support to longer-term institutional embedding, implementation follow-through, and transition processes beyond the immediate project structure (¶123).

C. Recommendations

Recommendation #1:	**In future policy support initiatives, strengthen Theory of Change design and more explicitly situate grant-level interventions within broader implementation and transition pathways.**
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Without clearer articulation of causal pathways, implementation assumptions, and portfolio-level transition linkages, policy support initiatives risk generating important enabling conditions, institutional momentum, and policy readiness without adequately clarifying how these contributions are expected to connect over time to operational implementation, institutional embedding, financing mechanisms, regulatory operationalisation, and measurable environmental outcomes. Weakly specified outcome pathways also reduce evaluability and limit the ability to systematically assess how project-supported activities contribute to subsequent change processes across different contexts and time horizons.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	While the grant successfully strengthened enabling conditions for action on plastic pollution (¶115), progress towards operational implementation, financing, institutionalisation, and behavioural change remained uneven and only partially evidenced within the grant timeframe (¶120). The review found that the grant's results framework and TOC did not sufficiently articulate how its policy support, technical assistance, coordination, and capacity-building were expected to contribute to subsequent implementation and institutional uptake across countries and pathways (¶118, ¶120). Outcome statements were formulated primarily in terms of strengthened capacities, coordination, or support processes rather than clearly defined behavioural, institutional, or policy changes (¶118), while drivers, assumptions, enabling conditions and actor responsibilities were not systematically articulated or monitored along change pathways. The overall Conclusion therefore highlights the importance, in future policy-support initiatives, of more explicitly linking grant-level interventions to broader project-level transition pathways and clarifying how support for enabling conditions is expected to contribute over time to implementation and institutional embedding (¶123).

Type of Recommendation[16]:	**Opportunity for Improvement** Future policy and institutional support initiatives should strengthen the quality and specificity of their results architecture and TOC design, particularly where projects operate across multiple countries, actors, and change pathways. Grants should more explicitly articulate how their intended contributions fit within broader implementation and transition processes, including how enabling support is expected to connect over time to implementation and institutional uptake. This includes: ➢ clearer articulation of causal pathways linking outputs to outcomes and longer-term contributions; ➢ explicit identification of implementation, financing, and institutionalisation and regulatory transition pathways; ➢ clearer specification of behavioural, institutional, regulatory, or policy changes expected at outcome level; ➢ stronger differentiation between UNEP's sphere of influence and external dependencies; ➢ explicit identification of assumptions, drivers, enabling conditions, sequencing logic, and actor responsibilities; ➢ monitoring systems capable of tracking utilisation, institutionalisation, regulatory uptake, implementation follow-through, and contribution to broader portfolio-level transition pathways over time.
Responsibility:	UNEP project design and management teams responsible for future national plastics projects and regional programmes, in collaboration with the relevant UNEP Division/Branch and Regional Offices.
Proposed implementation timeframe:	**Medium term (1-3 years)** – to be integrated into the design and inception phases of follow-on initiatives and future plastics interventions, including portfolio-level programme development and donor proposals,

Recommendation #2:	**Strengthen programme and project-level approaches for outcome-oriented monitoring, utilisation tracking, and organisational learning across UNEP plastics initiatives.**
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Current monitoring practice places stronger emphasis on tracking the production and delivery of outputs than on systematically assessing how these are subsequently used, institutionalised, and taken forward through broader implementation and transition processes. As a result, UNEP has limited evidence of regarding how policy support contributes over time to implementation, regulatory uptake, institutional embedding, mobilisation of financing, and broader systems change. This constrains organisational learning regarding which forms of policy and institutional support most effectively contribute to implementation and sustained uptake across different contexts. It also limits UNEP's ability to demonstrate catalytic influence, contribution to long-term change pathways, and value-for-money within increasingly complex multi-project and portfolio environments. Consequently, while current approaches enable UNEP to demonstrate activity, stakeholder engagement, and policy influence, they are less effective in evidencing contribution to implementation, regulatory uptake, behavioural change, and sustained environmental outcomes. Over time, this may constrain UNEP's ability to demonstrate catalytic impact, value-for-money, and contribution to system change — all of which are

[16] There are three types of recommendations: 1) Critical recommendation: address significant and/or pervasive deficiencies in governance, risk management or internal control processes, such that reasonable assurance cannot be provided regarding the achievement of programme objectives; 2) Important recommendation: address reportable deficiencies or weaknesses in governance, risk management or internal control processes, such that reasonable assurance might be at risk regarding the achievement of programme objectives. Important recommendations are followed up on an annual basis;. 3) Opportunity for improvement: comprise suggestions that do not meet the criteria of either critical or important recommendations and are only followed up as appropriate during subsequent oversight activity.

	increasingly important for sustaining donor confidence, mobilising future financing, and supporting UNEP's own ambitions to act not only as a normative and convening actor, but also as a catalyst for measurable and scalable environmental transformation.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	While the grant demonstrated strong performance in delivering relevant outputs and strengthening enabling conditions (¶115), evidence of implementation, institutionalisation, and sustained systems change were more limited and only partially evidenced within the grant timeframe (¶120). The review found that weaknesses in the formulation of outcomes and the TOC's articulation reduced evaluability (¶118). Longer-term outcome pathways, drivers and implementation assumptions were not sufficiently articulated across the results chain or monitored, limiting the ability to systematically assess how project-supported tools, guidance, analyses, and capacity-building efforts contributed to subsequent implementation and institutional uptake (¶120). In addition, structured mechanisms for capturing, analysing, and feeding back learning across countries and initiatives remained underdeveloped (¶121).
Type of Recommendation	**Opportunity for Improvement** UNEP should progressively strengthen outcome-oriented monitoring, utilisation tracking, and organisational learning at programme and project levels, particularly for policy and institutional support initiatives where subsequent change often materialises beyond the timeframe of individual projects. Rather than expecting individual short-duration regional projects to monitor long-term systems change after closure, future programme architectures and project-level monitoring systems should more explicitly track how grant-supported outputs and processes are subsequently utilised, institutionalised, financed, and operationalised across linked initiatives and over time. This could include: ➢ outcome-level indicators focused on utilisation, institutional uptake, implementation follow-through, and regulatory operationalisation; ➢ selective tracking of how outputs are applied within policy, regulatory, financing, and institutional processes during implementation and follow-on initiatives; ➢ stronger integration of utilisation evidence into adaptive management and programme management; ➢ structured learning and feedback mechanisms across related projects and regional projects that inform adjustments over time; ➢ periodic project-level synthesis, evaluative reflective, or follow-up assessment approaches capable of capturing evidence of catalytic influence and contribution to longer-term transition pathways.
Responsibility:	UNEP programme design, monitoring, and management teams responsible for regional plastics programmes and the broader Une UNEP plastic project, in collaboration with relevant UNEP Divisions/Branches, Regional Offices, and corporate results-based management and evaluation functions
Proposed implementation timeframe:	**Medium term (1-3 years)** – to be progressively integrated into the design, monitoring, and reporting systems of follow-on initiatives and future regional plastics programmes, including future donor proposals, results frameworks, and learning systems.

Recommendation #3:	**Strengthen shared governance, country ownership, and institutional anchoring in future programming**
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	While UNEP-led coordination models can be highly effective for maintaining coherence, responsiveness, and delivery momentum across complex regional portfolios, they may also concentrate strategic coordination, convening, and implementation functions within the grant management structure. Without stronger shared governance and institutional anchoring arrangements, coordination and stakeholder engagement risk remaining reliant on externally facilitated project mechanisms rather than becoming embedded within national systems, accountability structures, and implementation processes. This may limit deeper country ownership, institutionalisation, implementation follow-through, and the long-term sustainability and scalability of programme outcomes beyond the lifespan of individual projects.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	The review found that the grant's collaborative (¶97) and adaptive implementation model (¶57) was highly effective in maintaining responsiveness, coherence, and delivery momentum within a crowded and evolving regional landscape (¶116). Stakeholders consistently valued the grant team's open and co-creative engagement approach, particularly its collaboration with UNEP's Regional Office (¶97). However, the review also found that strategic coordination and convening functions remained highly concentrated within the UNEP grant team (¶56). Although stakeholder participation and policy engagement were strong, opportunities to move beyond consultation and coordination toward deeper institutional embedding, shared accountability, and sustained national ownership remained more limited (¶119). Continued progress toward implementation and longer-term impact remain dependent on political prioritisation, institutional coordination, financing, and regulatory follow-through beyond the grant's direct control (¶120).
Type of Recommendation	**Opportunity for Improvement** This recommendation concerns strengthening governance, institutional embedding, and country ownership arrangements in future programming rather than corrective action within the current grant. This may involve: ➢ earlier and more systematic engagement of national stakeholders during project formulation; ➢ operational multi-stakeholder steering and oversight arrangements; ➢ stronger government co-leadership structures; ➢ clearer institutional anchoring within national governance, planning, budgeting, and regulatory systems; ➢ broader engagement of institutions responsible for implementation, financing, and regulatory follow-through; ➢ approaches that progressively transition regional coordination mechanisms from externally facilitated collaboration toward more self-sustaining institutional arrangements.
Responsibility:	UNEP project design and management teams responsible for future programming, in collaboration with the relevant UNEP Divisions/Branches, Regional Offices, national government counterparts, and key implementation partners.
Proposed implementation timeframe:	**Medium term (1-3 years**) – to be integrated into the formulation, governance design, and inception phases of follow-on initiatives and future programmes, including future donor proposals and regional coordination mechanisms.

ANNEX I. UNEP'S REVIEW CRITERIA

All review criteria are to be rated on a 6-point scale. Sections A-I below, outline the scope of the review criteria. The set of review criteria are grouped in nine categories: (A) Strategic Relevance; (B) Quality of Project Design; (C) Nature of External Context; (D) Effectiveness, which comprises assessments of the availability of outputs, achievement of outcomes and likelihood of impact; (E) Financial Management; (F) Efficiency; (G) Monitoring and Reporting; (H) Sustainability; and (I) Factors Affecting Project Performance.

A. Strategic Relevance

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

Ai - Alignment to UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy17 (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities

The Review should assess the project's alignment with the MTS and POW under which the project was approved and include, in its narrative, reflections on the scale and scope of any contributions made to the planned results reflected in the relevant MTS and POW. UNEP strategic priorities include the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building[18] (BSP) and South-South Cooperation (S-SC). The BSP relates to the capacity of governments to: comply with international agreements and obligations at the national level; promote, facilitate and finance environmentally sound technologies and to strengthen frameworks for developing coherent international environmental policies. S-SC is regarded as the exchange of resources, technology and knowledge between developing countries.

Aii - Alignment to Donor/Partner Strategic Priorities

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

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

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

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

[18] http://www.unep.fr/ozonaction/about/bsp.htm

***Aiv - Complementarity with Relevant Existing Interventions/Coherence*[19]**

An assessment will be made of how well the project, either at design stage or during the project inception or mobilization[20], took account of ongoing and planned initiatives (under the same sub-programme, other UNEP sub-programmes, or being implemented by other agencies within the same country, sector or institution) that address similar needs of the same target groups. The Review will consider if the project team, in collaboration with Regional Offices and Sub-Programme Coordinators, made efforts to ensure their own intervention was complementary to other interventions, optimized any synergies and avoided duplication of effort. Examples may include work within Cooperation Frameworks or One UN programming. Linkages with other interventions should be described and instances where UNEP's comparative advantage has been particularly well applied should be highlighted.

B. Quality of Project Design

The quality of project design is assessed using an agreed template during the review inception phase. Ratings are attributed to identified criteria and an overall Project Design Quality rating is established. The complete Project Design Quality template should be annexed in the Review Inception Report. Later, the overall Project Design Quality rating[21] should be entered in the final review ratings table (as item B) in the Main Review Report and a summary of the project's strengths and weaknesses at design stage should be included within the body of the Main Review Report.

C. Nature of External Context

At review inception stage, a rating is established for the project's external operating context (considering prevalence of conflict, natural disasters, political upheaval[22]). This rating is entered in the final review ratings table as item C. Where a project has been rated as facing either an *Unfavourable* or *Highly Unfavourable* external operating context, and/or a negative external event has occurred during project implementation, the ratings for Effectiveness, Efficiency and/or Sustainability may be increased at the discretion of the Review Consultant and UNEP Project Manager together. A justification for such an increase must be given.

D. Effectiveness

***Di - Availability of Outputs*[23]**

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

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

[20] 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.

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

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

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

The Review will briefly explain the reasons behind the success or shortcomings of the project in delivering its programmed outputs and meeting expected quality standards.

Dii - Achievement of Project Outcomes[24]

The achievement of project outcomes is assessed as performance against the project outcomes as defined in the reconstructed[25] Theory of Change. These are outcomes that are intended to be achieved by the end of the project timeframe and within the project's resource envelope. Emphasis is placed on the achievement of project outcomes that are most important for attaining intermediate states. As with outputs, a table can be used to show where substantive amendments to the formulation of project outcomes is necessary to allow for an assessment of performance. The Review should report evidence of attribution between UNEP's intervention and the project outcomes. In cases of normative work or where several actors are collaborating to achieve common outcomes, evidence of the nature and magnitude of UNEP's 'substantive contribution' should be included and/or 'credible association' established between project efforts and the project outcomes realised.

Diii - Likelihood of Impact

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

The Review will also consider the likelihood that the intervention may lead, or contribute to, unintended negative effects (e.g. will vulnerable groups such as those living with disabilities and/or women and children, be disproportionally affected by the project?). Some of these potential negative effects may have been identified in the project design as risks or as part of the analysis of Environmental and Social Safeguards. The Review will consider the extent to which the project has played a catalytic role[26] or has promoted scaling up and/or replication as part of its Theory of Change (either explicitly as in a project with a demonstration component or implicitly as expressed in the drivers required to move to outcome levels) and as factors that are likely to contribute to greater or long-lasting impact.

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

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

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

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

E. Financial Management

Financial management will be assessed under two themes: *adherence* to UNEP's financial policies and procedures, and *completeness* of financial information. The Review will establish the actual spend across the life of the project of funds secured from all donors and including co-finance. This expenditure will be reported, where possible, at output/component level and will be compared with the approved budget. The Review will verify the application of proper financial management standards and adherence to UNEP's financial management policies. Any financial management issues that have affected the timely delivery of the project or the quality of its performance will be highlighted. The Review will record where standard financial documentation is missing, inaccurate, incomplete or unavailable in a timely manner.

F. Efficiency

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

The Review will give special attention to efforts made by the project teams during project implementation to make use of/build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities[27] with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency.

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

G. Monitoring and Reporting

The Review will assess monitoring and reporting across two sub-categories: monitoring implementation and project reporting.

Gi - Monitoring of Project Implementation

The Review will assess whether the monitoring system was operational and facilitated the timely tracking of results and progress towards project objectives throughout the project implementation period. This assessment will include consideration of whether the project gathered relevant and good quality baseline data that is accurately and appropriately documented. This should include monitoring the representation and participation of disaggregated groups, including gendered, marginalised or vulnerable groups, such as those living with disabilities, in project activities. It will also consider the quality of the information generated by the monitoring system during

[27] Complementarity with other interventions during project design, inception or mobilization is considered under Strategic Relevance above.

project implementation and how it was used to adapt and improve project execution, achievement of outcomes and ensure sustainability. The Review should confirm that funds allocated for monitoring were used to support this activity.

Gii - Project Reporting

UNEP has a centralised project information management system[28] in which project managers upload six-monthly progress reports against agreed project milestones. This information will be provided to the Review Consultant(s) by the UNEP Project Manager. Some projects have additional requirements to report regularly to funding partners, which will be supplied by the project team. The Review will assess the extent to which both UNEP and donor reporting commitments have been fulfilled on a timely basis and represent quality/accurate reporting. Consideration will be given as to whether reporting has been carried out with respect to the effects of the initiative on disaggregated groups.

H. Sustainability

Sustainability[29] is understood as the probability of the benefits derived from the achievement of project outcomes being maintained and developed after the close of the intervention. The Review will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the endurance of achieved project outcomes (i.e. 'assumptions' and 'drivers'). Some factors of sustainability may be embedded in the project design and implementation approaches while others may be contextual circumstances or conditions that evolve over the life of the intervention. Where applicable an assessment of bio-physical factors that may affect the sustainability of direct project outcomes may also be included.

Hi - Socio-political Sustainability

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

Hii - Financial Sustainability

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

[28] Prior to 2022 it was the Project Information Management System (PIMS) and from 2022 UNEP has the Integrated Planning Monitoring and Reporting (IPMR) solution.

[29] As used here, 'sustainability' means the long-lasting maintenance of outcomes and consequent impacts, whether environmental or not. This is distinct from the concept of sustainability in the terms 'environmental sustainability' or 'sustainable development', which imply 'not living beyond our means' or 'not diminishing global environmental benefits' (GEF STAP Paper, 2019, Achieving More Enduring Outcomes from GEF Investment)

Hiii - Institutional Sustainability

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

I. Factors Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

Ii - Quality of Project Management and Supervision

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

The Review will assess the effectiveness of project management with regard to: providing leadership towards achieving the planned outcomes; managing team structures; maintaining productive partner relationships (including Steering Groups etc.); maintaining project relevance within changing external and strategic contexts; communication and collaboration with UNEP colleagues; risk management; use of problem-solving; project adaptation and overall project execution. Evidence of adaptive management should be highlighted.

Iii - Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation

Here the term 'stakeholder' should be considered in a broad sense, encompassing all project partners, duty bearers with a role in delivering project outputs, target users of project outputs and any other collaborating agents external to UNEP and the implementing partner(s). The assessment will consider the quality and effectiveness of all forms of communication and consultation with stakeholders throughout the project life and the support given to maximise collaboration and coherence between various stakeholders, including sharing plans, pooling resources and exchanging learning and expertise. The inclusion and participation of all differentiated groups, including gender groups, should be considered.

Iiii - Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality

The Review will ascertain to what extent the project has applied the UN Common Understanding on the human rights-based approach (HRBA) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. Within this human rights context the Review will assess to what extent the intervention adheres to UNEP's Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment[30]. The report should present the extent to which the intervention, following an adequate gender analysis at design stage, has implemented the identified actions and/or applied adaptive management to ensure that Gender Equality and Human Rights are adequately taken into account. In particular, the Review will consider to what extent project design, implementation and monitoring have taken into consideration: (i) possible inequalities (especially

[30] The Evaluation Office notes that Gender Equality was first introduced in the UNEP Project Review Committee Checklist in 2010 and, therefore, provides a criterion rating on gender for projects approved from 2010 onwards. Equally, it is noted that policy documents, operational guidelines and other capacity building efforts have only been developed since then and have evolved over time. https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/7655/-Gender_equality_and_the_environment_Policy_and_strategy-2015Gender_equality_and_the_environment_policy_and_strategy.pdf.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y

those related to gender) in access to, and the control over, natural resources; (ii) specific vulnerabilities of disadvantaged groups (especially women, youth and children and those living with disabilities) to environmental degradation or disasters; and (iii) the role of disadvantaged groups (especially women, youth and children and those living with disabilities) in mitigating or adapting to environmental changes and engaging in environmental protection and rehabilitation. Note that the project's effect on equality (i.e. promoting human rights, gender equality and inclusion of those living with disabilities and/or belonging to marginalised/vulnerable groups) should be included within the TOC as a general driver or assumption where there is no dedicated result within the results framework. If an explicit commitment on this topic is made within the Project Document, then the driver/assumption should also be specific to the described intentions.

Iiv - Environmental and Social Safeguards

UNEP projects address environmental and social safeguards primarily through the process of environmental and social screening at the project approval stage, risk assessment and management (avoidance, or minimization, mitigation or, in exceptional cases, offsetting) of potential environmental and social risks and impacts associated with project and programme activities. The Review will confirm whether UNEP requirements31 were met to: review risk ratings on a regular basis; monitor project implementation for possible safeguard issues; respond (where relevant) to safeguard issues through risk avoidance, minimization, mitigation or offsetting and report on the implementation of safeguard management measures taken. The review will use the Safeguards Assessment Template to support assessment of the project's planning, monitoring and mitigation of environmental and social safeguards during design and implementation and attach the completed template as an annex in the review report. The Review will also consider the extent to which the management of the project minimised UNEP's environmental footprint.

Iv - Country Ownership and Driven-ness

The Review will assess the quality and degree of engagement of government / public sector agencies in the project. While there is some overlap between Country Ownership and Institutional Sustainability, this criterion focuses primarily on the forward momentum of the intended projects results, i.e. either: a) moving forwards from outputs to project outcomes or b) moving forward from project outcomes towards intermediate states. The Review will consider the involvement not only of those directly involved in project execution and those participating in technical or leadership groups, but also those official representatives whose cooperation is needed for change to be embedded in their respective institutions and offices (e.g. representatives from multiple sectors or relevant ministries beyond Ministry of Environment). This factor is concerned with the level of ownership generated by the project over outputs and outcomes and that is necessary for long term impact to be realised. Ownership should extend to all gender and marginalised groups.

Ivi - Communication and Public Awareness

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

[31] For the review of project concepts and proposals, the Safeguard Risk Identification Form (SRIF) was introduced in 2019 and replaced the Environmental, Social and Economic Review note (ESERN), which had been in place since 2016. In GEF projects safeguards have been considered in project designs since 2011.

ANNEX II. FRAMEWORK APPLIED IN THIS REVIEW

UNEP's standard set of 9 multilayered evaluation criteria requiring ratings (in **Annex I**) was reviewed, together with the evaluation framework of the UNPDF 2030 Agenda Sub-Fund, which emphasizes strategic relevance, catalytic effects, and contribution to systemic change. These two evaluation frameworks were synthesized into nine Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs) as outlined in Table 19. These questions ensure:

- alignment with UNEP and UNPDF expectations
- explicit responsiveness to UNPDF's catalytic/systemic change focus
- analytical depth within a limited evidence base, supporting elements of contribution analysis and theory-based evaluation
- systematic coverage of the most decision-relevant dimensions of the project's performance

Table 19 – Nine Key Evaluation Questions forming Terminal Review's Analytical Backbone

Code	Key Evaluation Question (KEQ)	**Coverage of Required Criteria mapped to codes in Evaluation Matrix.** Emphasis is denoted with highlight
RELEVANCE		
KEQ1	**To what extent is the project aligned with UNEP strategies, UNPDF/Sub-Fund priorities, and national and regional needs?**	**Covers (UNEP – Category A):** • **Ai** – Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW, Strategic Priorities • **Aii** – Alignment to donor/partner priorities • **Aiii** – Relevance to global, regional, and national priorities (including SDGs, UNSDCF, LNOB) • **Aiv** – Complementarity / coherence with other interventions **Covers (UNPDF Sub-Fund):** • Alignment with 2030 Agenda / SDGs • Relevance to systemic development challenges • Contribution to integrated approaches
COHERENCE		
KEQ2	**How effectively does the grant's support complement and add value within the broader landscape of related initiatives, including the "One UNEP" framework?**	**Covers (UNEP – Category A):** • **Aiv** – Complementarity / coherence with other interventions **Covers (UNPDF Sub-Fund):** • Contribution to integrated approaches
KEQ3	**To what extent was the grant design—particularly its Theory of Change, results framework, and partnership strategy—robust, realistic, and structured to achieve**	**Covers (UNEP – Category B)** – Quality of project design (ToC, logframe, assumptions, risks) **Covers (UNPDF Sub-Fund)** • Design for systemic change pathways • Clarity and plausibility of causal logic and catalytic intent • Integration of policy-implementation-institutional dimensions **Pathway integration:** • Explicit assessment of:

	systemic and catalytic change?	○ Policy integration pathway ○ EPR implementation pathway ○ UN system integration pathway ○ Coherence and interlinkages between the three pathways (Policy, EPR, UN system)
EFFECTIVENESS		
KEQ4	**To what extent were planned outputs delivered in terms of quantity, quality, timeliness, and relevance, and to what extent were they taken up and used by intended beneficiaries?**	**Covers (UNEP – Category Di, Output aspect)** • Availability of outputs (quantity, timeliness) • Relevance, quality, and usability of outputs • Evidence of uptake and early utilisation by target actors • Contribution of outputs to enabling subsequent change **Covers (UNPDF Sub-Fund):** • Delivery of foundational outputs enabling systemic change
PROGRESS TO IMPACT		
KEQ5	**To what extent has the grant contributed to its intended outcomes, including changes in policies, institutional practices, and stakeholder behaviour, and what has been UNEP's specific contribution?**	**Covers (UNEP – Category D, Dii - Outcome aspect)** • Achievement of project outcomes • Contribution / attribution analysis **Covers (UNPDF Sub-Fund):** • Contribution to: ○ Policy change ○ Institutional strengthening ○ Early system transformation signals • **Pathway integration:** Assessment of contribution across: Policy integration, EPR implementation, UN system integration, looking for evidence of: ○ Policy uptake and implementation ○ Institutional strengthening and embedding ○ Behavioural change among governments, businesses, and UN actors **Considering:** • Nature and credibility of UNEP's contribution (contribution analysis) • Influence of external factors (e.g. INC process, national contexts) on results
KEQ6	**What is the likelihood that grant outcomes will lead to sustained impact, including systemic change, scaling, replication, and catalytic effects, and through what mechanisms?**	**Covers (UNEP – Category D, Diii - Impact aspect)** • Likelihood of progressing from outcomes to impact • Considering: ○ catalytic role ○ replication / scaling ○ unintended effects • Looking for evidence and mechanisms of catalytic effects, including: ○ Mobilisation of additional resources ○ Policy diffusion and replication ○ Scaling through institutions or markets • Interaction and reinforcement between pathways: ○ Policy → implementation (EPR) ○ UN system → policy and implementation • Unintended positive or negative effects

		Covers (UNPDF Sub-Fund) • Catalytic effects • Mobilisation of additional resources • System-level transformation potential **Pathway integration** • Interaction between pathways: ○ Policy → enabling implementation (EPR) ○ UN system → strengthening policy and implementation • Degree of reinforcement vs fragmentation
EFFICIENCY, MANAGEMENT, PARTNERSHIPS		
KEQ7	**To what extent were grant resources used efficiently and in a timely and cost-effective manner, and how effectively were project management, partnerships, and existing systems leveraged to deliver results?**	**Covers (UNEP)** • **E** – Financial management (budget execution, compliance) • **F** – Efficiency (cost-effectiveness, timeliness, use of partnerships) **Assesses:** • Cost-effectiveness and timeliness of implementation • Financial management and budget execution • Quality of project management and supervision • Effectiveness of partnerships and coordination mechanisms • Use of existing platforms, data systems, and institutional arrangements **Covers (UNPDF Sub-Fund)** • Efficient use of catalytic funding • Leveraging existing systems and partnerships
MONITORING, REPORTING, LEARNING AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT		
KEQ8	**How effective was the grant's monitoring and reporting system in tracking progress, supporting learning and adaptive management, and informing decision-making?**	**Covers (UNEP – Category G + relevant I factors)** • **Gi** – Monitoring of implementation ○ Quality and use of monitoring data, including baselines ○ Reporting quality and compliance (UNEP and donor) ○ Ability to track: ▪ Outcome-level changes ▪ Systemic and catalytic effects • **Gii** – Project reporting quality • Relevant elements of: ○ **I** (Project management & adaptive management) **Covers (UNPDF Sub-Fund)** • Ability to track: ○ systemic change signals ○ catalytic effects • Learning and adaptation. Use of evidence for: ○ Adaptive management in response to challenges and changing context ○ Strategic decision-making ○ Learning and knowledge generation

SUSTAINABILITY, OWNERSHIP AND INCLUSION		
KEQ9	**To what extent are grant results likely to be sustained, considering institutional, financial, and socio-political factors, as well as stakeholder ownership, inclusion, and continued commitment?**	**Covers (UNEP – Category H + relevant I factors)** • **H (i)** – Socio-political sustainability (political will, stakeholder commitment) • **H (ii)** – Financial sustainability (resourcing for implementation and enforcement) • **H (iii)** – Institutional sustainability (policies, systems, governance structures) Also integrates cross-cutting factors from **Category I**: • Country ownership and leadership • Stakeholder participation and cooperation • Integration of gender, human rights, and inclusion considerations **Covers (UNPDF Sub-Fund):** • Institutionalisation of change • Durability of policy/regulatory frameworks • Sustainability of system-level transformation **Pathway integration:** • Are outcomes across pathways: ○ Institutionalised (laws, systems)? ○ Financially supported? • Extent to which outcomes across pathways are mutually reinforcing and embedded

1. These nine KEQs form the analytical backbone of the terminal review, providing a feasible framework for assessing the project's strategic relevance, coherence, effectiveness, governance, resource use, and likelihood of impact in line with the evaluation criteria of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) They are elaborated in an Evaluation Matrix (see Error! Reference source not found.).

ANNEX III. EVALUATION MATRIX AS GUIDE FOR DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

KEQ1 - Strategic Relevance – To what extent is the project aligned with UNEP strategies, UNPDF/Sub-Fund priorities, and national and regional needs?			
Sub-questions	**Indicators / Measures**	**Data Sources**	**Method**
To what extent is the grant aligned with UNEP MTS, PoW, and strategic priorities?	Explicit alignment of grant objectives with UNEP MTS/PoW; references in project design and reporting; consistency with UNEP thematic priorities	Project document; UNEP MTS/PoW; progress reports	Document review; content analysis
To what extent is the grant aligned with UNPDF/Sub-Fund priorities and SDGs?	Evidence of alignment with SDGs; articulation of systemic challenges; contribution to integrated approaches	UNPDF framework; project proposal; reporting to donor	Document review; comparative analysis
To what extent does the grant respond to national/regional priorities and needs?	Degree of alignment with national policies (NAP, NDC); stakeholder perception of relevance; demand-driveness	National policy documents; stakeholder interviews	Document review; interviews
To what extent does the grant address systemic development challenges?	Evidence that grant targets structural/systemic barriers; integration across sectors; relevance to broader plastics agenda	Project design; ToC; stakeholder inputs	ToC analysis; interviews

KEQ2 – Coherence – How effectively does the project complement and add value within the broader landscape of related initiatives?			
Sub-questions	**Indicators / Measures**	**Data Sources**	**Method**
To what extent is the grant coherent with other UNEP and UN initiatives?	Evidence of coordination mechanisms; absence of duplication; complementarities identified	UNEP portfolio documents; partner reports	Document review; portfolio mapping
How well does the grant contribute to "One UNEP" coherence?	Integration across UNEP divisions; joint initiatives; internal collaboration effectiveness	UNEP staff interviews; internal coordination records	Key informant interviews
To what extent does the grant complement external initiatives (donors, NGOs, governments)?	Synergies with parallel programmes; stakeholder perception of added value; avoided duplication	Partner interviews; programme documents	Interviews; comparative analysis
What gaps does the grant fill in the broader ecosystem?	Evidence of niche positioning; stakeholder recognition of unique contribution	Stakeholder interviews; project design	Interviews; triangulation

KEQ3 – Quality of Design – To what extent was the project design robust, realistic, and structured for systemic change?			
Sub-questions	**Indicators / Measures**	**Data Sources**	**Method**
How robust and coherent is the Theory of Change?	Clarity of causal pathways; logical sequencing; explicit assumptions; testability	Project document; reconstructed ToC	ToC analysis

Are assumptions and risks clearly identified and realistic?	Presence and quality of assumptions; risk mitigation strategies; alignment with context	Project document; risk logs	Document review
How well are the pathways (policy, EPR, UN system) articulated and integrated?	Evidence of pathway coherence; explicit linkages; reinforcement between pathways	ToC; progress reports	Analytical mapping
Is the results framework measurable and suitable for tracking systemic change?	SMART indicators; inclusion of outcome-level indicators; ability to track catalytic effects	Logframe; M&E framework	Indicator quality assessment
Is the partnership strategy appropriate to deliver results?	Clarity of partner roles; alignment with capacities; coverage of key actors	Project document; stakeholder interviews	Document review; interviews

KEQ4 – Effectiveness (Outputs and Uptake) – To what extent were outputs delivered and used?			
Sub-questions	**Indicators / Measures**	**Data Sources**	**Method**
Were outputs delivered as planned (quantity and timeliness)?	Delivery against workplan; delays; completion rates	Progress reports; workplans	Document review
What is the quality and relevance of outputs?	Technical quality; user relevance; alignment with needs	Output documents; stakeholder feedback	Expert review; interviews
To what extent have outputs been taken up and used?	Evidence of use (policies, tools, guidance applied); stakeholder utilisation	Interviews; policy documents	Contribution tracing
How have outputs enabled subsequent change?	Link between outputs and early outcomes; enabling conditions created	Country case examples; stakeholder narratives	Case-based analysis

KEQ5 – Progress to Outcomes – To what extent has the project contributed to outcomes and behavioural/institutional change?			
Sub-questions	**Indicators / Measures**	**Data Sources**	**Method**
What changes in policy, institutions, or behaviour are observable?	Adoption of policies; institutional changes; behavioural shifts among stakeholders	National policies; interviews	Outcome harvesting
What is UNEP's contribution to these changes?	Evidence of causal contribution; stakeholder attribution; triangulated contribution pathways	Interviews; documentation	Contribution analysis
How do results differ across the pathways?	Evidence of progress in policy, EPR, UN integration	Case studies; reports	
What external factors influenced results?	Role of INC process; national context; enabling/disabling factors	Interviews; contextual analysis	Process tracing

KEQ6 – Likelihood of Impact / Catalytic Effects – What is the likelihood of sustained impact and systemic change?			
Sub-questions	**Indicators / Measures**	**Data Sources**	**Method**
What evidence exists of catalytic effects?	Follow-on funding; replication; scale-up initiatives	Project follow-ups	Document review;
To what extent are outcomes likely to scale?	Evidence of policy diffusion; uptake in other contexts	Stakeholder insights	

How do pathways interact to enable systemic change?	Reinforcement between policy, EPR, UN integration	TOC analysis; interviews	Contribution analysis
Are there unintended effects	Evidence of spillovers; unintended consequences	Interviews	

KEQ7 – Efficiency, Management, Partnerships – To what extent were resources used efficiently and partnerships effective?			
Sub-questions	**Indicators / Measures**	**Data Sources**	**Method**
Were resources used cost-effectively and in a timely manner?	Budget execution rates; cost vs outputs; delays	Financial reports; budgets	Financial analysis
How effective was grant management?	Timeliness of decisions; coordination; problem-solving	Interviews; management records	Interviews
How effective were partnerships?	Partner performance; coordination quality; complementarities	Partner interviews; reports	Stakeholder analysis and document review
To what extent were existing systems leveraged?	Use of national systems; UN platforms; data systems	Project documentation	

KEQ8 – Monitoring, Reporting, Learning – How effective was monitoring and adaptive management?			
Sub-questions	**Indicators / Measures**	**Data Sources**	**Method**
How robust is the monitoring system?	Availability of indicators, baselines, tracking mechanisms	M&E framework; reports	Document review
How well does the system track outcomes?	Evidence of outcome-level monitoring	Reports; data systems	Analytical review
How effectively is data used for decision-making?	Examples of adaptive management; course correction	Interviews; meeting records	Process tracing
What is the quality of reporting?	Completeness; accuracy; compliance with UNEP/donor standards	Reports; donor submissions	Quality assessment

KEQ9 – Sustainability, Ownership, Inclusion – To what extent are results likely to be sustained?			
Sub-questions	**Indicators / Measures**	**Data Sources**	**Method**
Are outcomes institutionally embedded?	Integration into policies, laws, systems	National documents; interviews	Document review
Is there financial sustainability?	Budget allocations; funding commitments; investment mobilisation	Government budgets	Financial analysis
Is there stakeholder ownership and commitment?	Government leadership; continued engagement; ownership signals	Interviews; participation records	Document review, Stakeholder analysis
Are inclusion and equity considered?	Gender targets, stakeholder participation	Documents; interviews	
Are results across pathways reinforcing?	Evidence of integration across policy, EPR, UN system	TOC; case studies	

ANNEX IV. STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED

A total of 19 stakeholders were consulted (58% women, 42% men)

Organisation	Position	Role in the project	Gender
UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs / UN Peace and Development Trust Fund (UNPDF) in Washington, United States	Inter-Regional Advisor	Donor	Female
UNEP Industry and Economy Division in Paris, France	Coordinator for UNEP Plastics initiative	Overall project supervision	Male
UNEP Industry and Economy Division in Geneva, Switzerland	Project Manager and Associate Expert	Project implementation and management	Female
UNEP Industry and Economy Division in Paris, France	Associate Programme Officer	Technical backstopping on EPR; collaborator on regional knowledge-sharing through China Trust Fund project	Female
UNEP Industry and Economy Division in Paris, France	Fund Management	Fund management and overall support on administrative matters	Female
UNEP Policy and Programme Division in Nairobi, Kenya	Head, Policy Coordination Unit	Collaboration on plastic pollution knowledge product, support toward UNCT focal points	Female
UNEP Ecosystems Division, Source to Sea Pollution Unit in Nairobi, Kenya	Programme Management Officer	Focal point for Global Partnership on Plastic Pollution and Marine Litter (GPML) workflow for national action planning across the UN system, enhanced with UNPDF sub-allotment	Female
UNEP Regional Office Asia Pacific (ROAP) in Bangkok, Thailand	Regional Policy Coordinator	Coordination of UNEP projects in Asia-Pacific and engagement with UNRCs	Male
Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA)	Head of Secretariat	Collaborated on development of EPR module for Thailand; the UNPDF project provided financial support for SEA of Solutions 2025	Female
GIZ in Thailand	Technical advisor on circular economy, plastics, and EPR	Interface role between GIZ and government counterparts in Pollution Control Department	Female
UNRCO in Thailand	Economist	Supported Thailand's CCA 2025 through participation in multi-stakeholder workshop (17 June 2025) and Synthesis Report	Male
UNRCO in Viet Nam	National Officer	Project's main focal point in Viet Nam for SSFAs signed with NIEF and ISPAE	Male
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Institute of Strategy and Policy for Agriculture and Environment (ISPAE) – in Viet Nam	Senior Researcher	Responsible for operationalising SSFA on EPR with ISPAE. Joined regional knowledge-sharing event in Bangkok (15 Dec 2025) and action planning meeting (27 March 2026)	Male
Burapha University, International College in Thailand	Associate Dean in Academic Service and Sustainable Management	Responsible for operationalising SSFA on EPR in Thailand (online module)	Male
Producer Responsibility Organisation (PRO) in Philippines	Senior Manager of EPR and Projects	Responsible for operationalising SSFA on EPR in the Philippines	Female
Indonesia Packaging Recovery Organisation (IPRO) in Indonesia	Head of Management Board	Responsible for operationalising SSFA on EPR in Indonesia	Male
IPRO in Indonesia	Member	Involved in operationalising SSFA on EPR	Male
IPRO in Indonesia	Secretary General and Programme Manager	Involved in operationalising SSFA on EPR	Female
GRID-Arendal (Norway)	Principal Expert, Pollution	Responsible for operationalising SSFA with the project for several knowledge products	Female

ANNEX V. KEY DOCUMENTS AND OTHER RESOURCES CONSULTED

Project planning and reporting documents

- UNEP Project Document (2022). Strengthening National Capacities of Nine Asia-Pacific Countries to Address Plastic Pollution by Developing, Updating, Monitoring and Reporting on National Action Plans, in the Context of the Negotiation for a Global Agreement
- UNEP Project Document (2022). ONE UNEP Plastic Project on Accelerating a Global Circular Plastic Economy to Reduce Plastic Pollution and Its Impacts
- UNEP Press Release (7 February 2026). New Chair Elected to lead Negotiations on Global Plastic Pollution Treaty. Available at: https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/press-release/new-chair-elected-lead-negotiations-global-plastic-pollution-treaty
- Progress Report#1 and annexes covering the period: 01/04/2023 - 30/09/2023
- Progress Report#2 and annexes covering the period: 01/10/2023 - 30/03/2024
- Progress Report#3 and annexes covering the period: 01/04/2024 - 30/09/2024
- Progress Report#4 and annexes covering the period: 01/10/2024 - 31/03/2025
- Progress Report#5 and annexes covering the period: 01/04/2025 - 30/09/2025
- Progress Report#6 and annexes covering the period: 01/10/2025 - 31/03/2026
- Impact Brief (April 2026), prepared by GRID-Arendal

Project outputs related to Outcome 1: National Action Plans (NAPs)

- Agenda and Report on Regional Experience and Knowledge Sharing on Country Actions convened in Bangkok (15 December 2025), prepared by GRID-Arendal
- Agenda and Report on Online Consultation Meeting: Data, Tools, and Workflow to Support Countries in Designing Actions to Reduce Plastic Pollution (27 March 2026), prepared by GRID-Arendal
- Comparative analysis of existing non-binding action plans to address plastic pollution in 12 countries in Asia Pacific through a literature review, with recommendations for potential harmonization of action plans to address plastic pollution – prepared by Korea Environment Institute (KEI)
- Action Planning Tool, step-by-step guidance to support countries in developing their NAPs – enhanced existing tool of GPM – prepared by Global Plastics Hub (UNEP)
- Guidance - Science-Policy Approach to Support Countries in Designing Actions to Reduce Plastic Pollution (March 2026), prepared by GRID-Arendal
- Pilot Test Report on the Statistical Guideline for Measuring Flows of Plastic Throughout the Life Cycle in Viet Nam, prepared by National Institute for Economics and Finance (NIEF) of Viet Nam

Project outputs to Outcome 2: Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)

Indonesia

- EPR Operations toolkit for Indonesia, prepared by IPRO
- Best Practices Report for Indonesia, prepared by IPRO
- Input to Draft Presidential Regulation in Indonesia, prepared by IPRO
- Input to Ministry of Environment Guideline in Indonesia, prepared by IPRO
- Summary of Achievements in Indonesia, prepared by IPRO

The Philippines

- Best Practices Report for the Philippines, prepared by PCX Solutions
- Impact Report for the Philippines, prepared by PCX Solutions
- Life Cycle Assessment of Selected NEAPs (non-environmentally acceptable products and packaging materials) in the Philippines, prepared by PCX Solutions
- Report on Capacity Building Program to Better Integrate Local Government and Informal Sector into the EPR System in the Philippines, prepared by PCX Solutions

Thailand

- Online Module: EPR 101: Rethinking Responsibility in the Plastic Value Chain in Thailand, prepared by Burapha University's International College
- Case Study Report on EPR Policies for Plastic Packaging in ASEAN, prepared by Burapha University's International College

Project outputs to Outcome 3: UN System Integration

- Guidance Note on Plastic Pollution for UNRCOs (April 2026), prepared by GRID-Arendal
- UNCT Start Pack for Addressing Plastic Pollution (February 2026), prepared by UNEP
- Draft Thailand Country Analysis (7 October 2025), prepared by UNCT Thailand
- Draft Viet Nam Country Analysis (2 December 2025), prepared by UNCT Viet Nam
- Draft Malaysia Common Country Analysis (22 August 2024), prepared by UNCT Malaysia

Reference documents

- UNEP Press Release (7 February 2026). New Chair Elected to lead Negotiations on Global Plastic Pollution Treaty. Available at: https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/press-release/new-chair-elected-lead-negotiations-global-plastic-pollution-treaty
- OECD Report (2022). *Global Plastics Outlook: Economic Drivers, Environmental Impacts and Policy Options.* Available at: https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/global-plastics-outlook_aa1edf33-en.html
- OECD Report (2022). *Global Plastics Outlook: Policy Scenarios to 2060.* Available at: https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/global-plastics-outlook_de747aef-en.html
- UNEP Report (October 2021). *From Pollution to Solution: A Global Assessment of Marine Litter and Plastic Pollution.* Available at: https://www.unep.org/resources/pollution-solution-global-assessment-marine-litter-and-plastic-pollution
- World Bank Group (2021). *Market Study for Thailand: Plastics Circularity Opportunities and Barriers.* Available at: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/973801612513854507/pdf/Market-Study-for-Thailand-Plastics-Circularity-Opportunities-and-Barriers.pdf
- UNEP Report (2023). *Turning Off the Tap: How the World Can End Plastic Pollution and Create a Circular Economy*. Available at: https://www.unep.org/resources/turning-off-tap-end-plastic-pollution-create-circular-economy
- United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (2022). Resolution Adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly on 2 March 2022 (UNEP/EA.5/Res.14). Available at: https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3999257?v=pdf

ANNEX VI. 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.)	The Project Document template provided by the donor does not include a formal ESS screening reflecting UNEP's formal Safeguard Standards. Instead, risk considerations are implicit and embedded in general implementation risks (e.g., stakeholder engagement, policy sensitivity), rather than framed as environmental or social safeguard risks.
For any ESS issues identified at project design, were mitigation strategies developed (Y/N)? (If yes, briefly describe)	No structured ESS mitigation plan is articulated. The project design emphasizes multistakeholder consultation and alignment with national systems, which indirectly address social safeguard considerations (e.g. inclusion, participation).
Were any gaps in ESS issues identified at the review inception phase (Y/N)? (If yes, describe)	Yes, the absence of a formal ESS screening and safeguard categorisation represents a clear gap**.**

ESS MONITORING AT PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	
Is there evidence that the potential emergence of ESS issues was actively monitored during project implementation (Y/N)? [32] (If yes, briefly describe)	Across all 6 bi-annual progress reports, there is no explicit reference to ESS monitoring, safeguard risks, or safeguard compliance mechanisms. There are no indicators, reporting sections, or tracking mechanisms related to environmental or social risks. However, there is implicit attention to social dimensions, including: ➢ Engagement with informal waste workers and local stakeholders in EPR activities ➢ Inclusion of gender-disaggregated participation data ➢ Emphasis on stakeholder consultations and capacity building This indicates good practice on inclusion, but not formal ESS monitoring.
Is there a justification for the absence of ESS monitoring (Y/N)? (If yes, briefly describe)	Yes. The project is focussed on policy and capacity-building, corresponding to a low-risk profile where formal safeguard systems are justifiably minimal as there are no direct infrastructure investments and no direct environmental or social footprint.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSIVENESS DURING PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	
Identify the ESS issues/events triggered [33] by the project.	There is no evidence of safeguard-related incidents, risks, or adverse impacts triggered by the project.
Describe consequences of ESS issues/events during project implementation.	
Describe the management response and identify supporting documentation. [34]	
Were negative ESS effects offset by management response (Y/N)? (If yes, describe)	

[32] **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.
[33] '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.
[34] 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.

ANNEX VII. BRIEF CV OF REVIEWER

Name	Dr. Joyce Miller
Profession	Organisational Learning; Business Innovation and Resource Efficiency Consultant, Programme Designer, and Trainer; Leadership Coaching
Nationality	Swiss and Canadian
Country experience	• Europe: Denmark, France, Germany, Montenegro, The Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom • Mashrek / Maghreb: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia • Africa: Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda • Americas: Canada, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, United States • Asia: Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Viet Nam
Education	• PhD in Economic Science, Université de Lausanne/HEC, Switzerland (2008) • Master Coach in Leadership and Communication, IDC Institute Genève (2010) • Master of Business Administration (MBA), University of Western Ontario, Canada (1989) • Intensive Training Course in Environmental Assessment and Management, University of Aberdeen, Scotland (1994) • Honours Bachelor of Arts (Political Science and Administrative Studies), University of Waterloo, Canada (1986)

Short biography

Dr. Miller is an independent consultant and Founder/Director of the Swiss-based Capacity-Building Resource Exchange (CAPRESE) Sàrl, which supports the development of individual, team, and organisational capacities to create vision, mission, and strategy – and to implement change.

Key Specialties and Capabilities:

- Building capacities in individuals and organisations on Resource and Energy Efficiency, Circularity, Chemical Management, Innovation; Programme Design, Pedagogy, Training
- Strategy Consultancy; Leadership Development, Vocational Education; Organisational Assessment, Entrepreneurship, Business Development, Stakeholder Engagement

Selected Assignments and Experiences

- Developed Technical Paper for UNFCCC's Technology Executive Committee (TEC) and Policy Brief to improve Financial Mechanism (Green Climate Fund, Global Environment Facility) approach for accelerating vulnerable countries' action to address their climate change challenges (2021-2022)
- Supported GIZ's Pro-poor Growth and Promotion of Employment Green Innovation Centre (Nigeria) by enhancing skills of national facilitators to strengthen local agricultural cooperatives (2021-2022)

Selected Independent Evaluations

- Strategic Evaluation UNEP-convened Climate and Clean Air Coalition (2026)
- Strategic Evaluation: ILO's 'Just Transition' work under Partnership for Action on Green Economy (2025)
- Terminal Evaluations for UNIDO of GEF-funded Global Cleantech Innovation Program projects in Cambodia, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Nigeria (2024); Thailand (2020); Turkey, Pakistan, South Africa (2018)
- Terminal Evaluation: Swiss-funded Sustainable Recycling Industries: Egypt, Ghana (2023)
- Terminal Evaluation: BMZ-funded Economic Empowerment of Women in Green Industry (2022)
- Terminal Evaluation UNEP: Transforming Tourism Value Chains in Dominican Republic, Mauritius, Philippines, and St. Lucia (2022)
- Mid-Term Evaluation: EC-funded Promoting an Energy-Sustainable Palestinian industry (2022)
- Mid-Term Reviews UNIDO/UN Habitat: Sustainable City Development in Malaysia (2020), India (2021)
- Strategy Review UNESCAP: North-East Asian Subregional Programme of Intergovernmental Environmental Cooperation of China, Japan, Mongolia, South Korea, North Korea, Russian Federation
- Overall Effectiveness Evaluation of C&A Foundation (2019)
- Terminal Evaluation for UNEP of Eco-Innovation Project (2017)
- Mid-Term Review of UNIDO/UNEP Resource Efficient Cleaner Production Programme (2015)

ANNEX VIII. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Project Title and Reference No.: Strengthening National Capacities of Nine Asia-Pacific Countries to Address Plastic Pollution by Developing, Updating, Monitoring and Reporting on National Action Plans, in the Context of the Negotiation for a Global Agreement - SB-021354

Contact Person (TM/PM): Feng Wang, Ran Xie

	PLANS			
RECOMMENDATIONS	**ACCEPTED (YES/NO/PARTIALLY)**	**WHAT WILL BE DONE?**	**EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE**	**REPONSIBLE OFFICER/ UNIT/ DIVISION/ AGENCY**
In future policy support initiatives, strengthen Theory of Change design and more explicitly situate grant-level interventions within broader implementation and transition pathways.	YES	Linkages between the TOC of the One UNEP Plastics project and the TOC of its individual grants strengthened in the design and inception phases of future plastics interventions, including project-level programme development and donor proposals. Specify more clearly the behavioural, institutional and regulatory changes expected to occur and how they are expected to contribute to environmental outcomes in future TOCs.	In 1-3 years as recommended	Plastics Unit, IED
Strengthen programme and project-level approaches for outcome-oriented monitoring, utilisation tracking, and organisational learning across UNEP plastics interventions.	YES	Strengthen the alignment between the outcome indicators of the One UNEP Plastics project and individual grant under it. Take advantage of the coming mid-term review of the One UNEP Plastics project to rethink how to strengthen programme and project-level outcome-oriented monitoring.	In 1-3 years as recommended	Plastics Unit, IED

		Strengthen the exchanges and sharing of monitoring results among UNEP plastics interventions to facilitate mutual learning.		
Strengthen shared governance, country ownership, and institutional anchoring in future programming	YES	Seek more proactively to co-develop project and grant objectives and workplans with national partners. Anchor project activities within existing national policies or strategies. Strategically engage national institutions responsible for implementation and financing	In 1-3 years as recommended	Plastics Unit, IED

ANNEX IX. QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF THE REVIEW REPORT

Review Title: Strengthening National Capacities of Nine Asia-Pacific Countries to Address Plastic Pollution by Developing, Updating, Monitoring and Reporting on National Action Plans, in the Context of the Negotiation for a Global Agreement' 2023UNEP Grant

Consultant: Dr. Joyce Miller

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

Report Quality Criteria	**UNEP Evaluation Office Comments**	**Final Report Rating**
Section A: Executive Summary	Assessment	
1. Does the ***Executive Summary*** act as a concise, accurate standalone section, especially to inform decision-making? Consider how clearly and concisely the report presents: • a clear summary of the review object • review objectives, scope and methodology • the overall project review rating • a summary of main review findings, including key features of performance (strengths and weaknesses) • summary responses to key strategic review questions • summary of main conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations	Coverage/omissions: *All required elements are addressed except for summary responses to the two key strategic review questions. Their responses are in the Conclusions section.* Strengths/weaknesses: *The executive summary is concise and short. The section on key findings would have benefited from including key findings related to UNEP's role in the implementation of the grant, the countries' covered by the grant's support and any aspects related to gender and human rights.*	5
Section B: The Project	Assessment	
2. Does the report clearly describe the ***key parameters, scale and complexity of the evaluand***? Consider how well the report presents: • an overview of the main issue that the project is trying to address • timeline, including dates of project approval, duration and number of phases (where appropriate) • geographic coverage (regions/countries) • total secured budget and project financing, including a table with funding sources • implementing and funding partners • institutional context (i.e. UNEP sub-programme, Division, Branch etc) • implementation structure with diagram • UNEP results frameworks to which it contributes (e.g. PoW Direct Outcome) • summary of results framework as stated in the ProDoc (or as officially revised)	Coverage/omissions: All required elements on the Intervention context, institutional context, results framework, implementation structure and partners, stakeholders, changes in design during implementation, and financing are addressed. Strengths/weaknesses: Appropriate tables and figures are used to provide an overview of the grant, implementation structure and role of stakeholders. A concise description is provided of changes made during implementation.	4.5

Report Quality Criteria	**UNEP Evaluation Office Comments**	**Final Report Rating**
• stakeholder groups organised according to relevant common characteristics • whether the project has been evaluated in the past (e.g. mid-term, by an external agency, etc.) • substantive or significant changes in design during implementation	Weak/ no description of the nine countries addressed by the grant and how they were accommodated in the results framework. It would have been beneficial to describe UNEP's project and grant structures and how the grant was implemented as part of the "ONE UNEP Plastic Project on Accelerating a Global Circular Plastic Economy to Reduce Plastic Pollution and its Impacts" (SMA ID 130677) project.	
Section C: Review Methods and Theory of Change	Assessment	
3. Does the report present a clear, comprehensive and adequate description of the ***review methodology***? Consider how well it presents the following elements, and their adequacy based on the scope of the review: • statement of the purpose of the review and the key intended audience for the review findings • data collection methods and information sources • justification for methods used (e.g. electronic/face-to-face interviews, qualitative/quantitative analysis) • criteria and sampling strategies used to select stakeholders for consultations, and for sites/countries visited • number and types of respondents *(including in a table broken down by gender)* • strategies used to increase stakeholder engagement and response rate • methods used to include the voices/experiences of different and potentially excluded groups (e.g. women, marginalised) • data verification methods (e.g. triangulation) • data analysis methods (e.g. scoring, thematic analysis) • review limitations and mitigation measures (e.g. how these were addressed by the evaluator) • consideration for ethics and human rights issues, including how anonymity and confidentiality were protected	Coverage/omissions: All required elements are addressed. Strengths/weaknesses: Ethical considerations have been taken into account and strategies for inclusivity are described. It would have been beneficial to provide a detailed account of the purposeful sampling approach applied for the nine countries in data collection given the limitations for the review described. Annex IV. Stakeholders consulted indicates that national stakeholder in four (Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam) of the grant's nine countries were consulted during the review.	5
4. Does the report describe an assessment and reformulation of the ***Theory of Change***, and present an adequate articulation of the TOC causal pathways that were used to assess project performance (*narratively and diagrammatically)?* Consider how well the report presents: • whether the project design included a TOC	Coverage/omissions: All elements are addressed in the RTOC with emphasis on 3 interrelated pathways. Strengths/weaknesses: The RTOC emphases 3 interrelated pathways and intermediate states have been added to complete the	5

Report Quality Criteria	**UNEP Evaluation Office Comments**	**Final Report Rating**
• how the *TOC at* review [35] was designed (e.g. who was involved, etc) • confirmation/reconstruction of results in accordance with UNEP definitions (*including reformulation table, which may have initially been presented in the Inception Report and should appear in the Main Review report.)* • articulation of causal pathways • identification of drivers and assumptions • identification of key actors in the change process	RTOC with no reformulation of the indicators. It would have been beneficial if the narrative for the reformulation of outcomes had discussed the limitations of the available monitoring data from the existing indicators.	
Section D: Evidence and Analysis	Assessment	
5. Is the report based on ***sufficient and adequate data*** and ***clear and credible evidence***? Consider how well the report presents: • sufficient evidence that is consistent throughout the report • evidence that is supported by data sources (e.g. quotes, reports, etc) • evidence that is explicitly triangulated, unless noted as having a single source • gaps in data are explained and justified • data sources that are reliable, adequate, sufficient for the scope of the review	Coverage/omissions: Evidence is presented consistently throughout the report. Strengths/weaknesses: Evidence is triangulated to the extent data is available and with identification of areas of limited evidence. It would have been beneficial with multiple sources, including primary sources, of evidence at country level. For example, "…there is limited evidence of sustained involvement from central planning bodies, finance ministries, or other sectors critical for implementation and resource allocation. This reflects a key assumption that is only partially holding (Table 16)" Para. 107) Mostly findings are presented with source with a few exceptions; for example, Efficiency – "Overall, the grant compares favourably to similar multi-country UN interventions in its ability to translate resources into outputs at scale while maintaining technical quality and adequate budget execution." (para. 76)	4.5

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

Report Quality Criteria	**UNEP Evaluation Office Comments**	**Final Report Rating**
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 review framework • more than descriptions and provide insights into 'how' and/or 'why' the project performed a certain way • balanced, presenting both successes and weaknesses	Coverage/omissions: All elements of rigorous analysis and logical findings are addressed. Strengths/weaknesses: Findings are presented in a logical, clear and coherent way, which is balanced and aligned with the review framework.	6
Section E: Review 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[36]), with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups.	Coverage/omissions: All elements are addressed. Strengths/weaknesses: A detailed description and assessment are made of the alignment with UNEP, donors, global, regional and national priorities and complementarity with existing interventions. The assessment concludes with two findings statements on strategic relevance and complementarity. It would have been beneficial to include evidence on the substantive contributions presented as made through the grant (see para. 51-52) or adjusted the language to ensure reference was made to the Effectiveness chapter of the report.	5.5
8. 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?	Coverage/omissions: All elements are addressed with a concise summary of the design assessment, design strengths and weaknesses. Strengths/weaknesses:	**[37]NOT RATED**

[36] 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.

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

Report Quality Criteria	**UNEP Evaluation Office Comments**	**Final Report Rating**
	It would have been beneficial to assess in more detail the design of the grant as an intervention type and how it contributed to the ONE UNEP Plastics project. Weaknesses identified related to governance and supervision arrangements at country level and the limited involvement of counties in the decision-making structure of the grant could have been further assessed.	
9. Does the report recognise and describe, when appropriate, key features of the ***Nature of the External Context*** under which the project was implemented that limited the project's performance (e.g. conflict, natural disaster, political upheaval[38]), and how they affected performance?	Coverage/omissions: All elements are addressed. Strengths/weaknesses: The assessment addresses the political context and how it introduces opportunities and risk for the sustainability of results.	**[39]NOT RATED**
10. Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the ***Availability of Outputs*** to the intended beneficiaries? Consider how well the report presents: • a convincing, evidence-supported and clear presentation of the outputs made available by the project compared to its approved plans and budget • assessment of the nature and scale of outputs versus the project indicators and targets • assessment of the timeliness, quality and utility of outputs to intended beneficiaries • identification of positive or negative effects of the project on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).	Coverage/omissions: All elements have been addressed. Strengths/weaknesses: Evidence supporting the availability of outputs is supported by progress reports and sources of other documentation. It would have been beneficial for the assessment of the grant's success in producing the programmed outputs if output indicator baselines and targets had been included. It would have been beneficial with more evidence from national stakeholders e.g., on the systematic in-country training to support the assessment.	4.5

[38] 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.

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

Report Quality Criteria	**UNEP Evaluation Office Comments**	**Final Report Rating**
11. Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the ***Achievement of Outcomes***, as a result of the uptake, adoption and/or implementation of outputs by the intended beneficiaries? This may include behaviour changes at an individual or collective level. Consider how well the report presents: • a convincing and evidence-supported analysis of the uptake of outputs by intended beneficiaries • assessment of the nature, depth and scale of outcomes versus the project indicators and targets • discussion of the contribution, credible association and/or attribution of outcome level changes to the work of the project itself • any constraints to attributing effects to the projects' work • identification of positive or negative effects of the project on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).	Coverage/omissions: All elements are addressed. Strengths/weaknesses: Outcome achievements are indicated according to indicator baselines and targets. Sources of evidence are identified for each outcome. It would have been beneficia for the assessment with evidence of more national stakeholders and beneficiaries to support the assessment of achievement of outcomes, especially for outcome 1 which covers all nine grant countries.	5
12. 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).	Coverage/omissions: All elements are addressed except for identifying any unintended negative effects of the grant, including on disadvantaged groups and gender. Strengths/weaknesses: It would have been beneficial to include the TOC driver "UN commitment to human rights and gender mainstreaming" in the assessment of likelihood of impact.	4.5
13. Does the report present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under ***Financial Management*** and include a completed 'financial management' table? Consider how well the report addresses the following: • *adherence* to UNEP's financial policies and procedures • *completeness* of financial information, including the actual project costs and actual co-financing used and explanation of any variances between planned and actual expenditures	Coverage/omissions: All main elements have been addressed. Strengths/weaknesses: It would have been beneficial to assess how the additional co-financing contributed to the delivery of the planned results.	5
14. Does the report present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under ***Efficiency***? Consider how well the report presents: • cost-effective or time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe	Coverage/omissions: All elements have been addressed except for UNEP's environment footprint.	4.5

Report Quality Criteria	**UNEP Evaluation Office Comments**	**Final Report Rating**
• 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.	Strengths/weaknesses: Assessment of efficiency is consistent with and builds on assessments of grant design and quality of grant management. It would have been beneficial to include source for the comparison with similar multi-country UN interventions (para. 76 "Overall, the grant compares favourably to similar multi-country UN interventions in its ability to translate resources into outputs at scale while maintaining technical quality and adequate budget execution."	
15. Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the project's ***Monitoring and Reporting***? Consider how well the report addresses the following: • the quality of *monitoring of project implementation* (including use of monitoring data for adaptive management) • the quality of *project reporting* (e.g. PIMS and donor reports)	Coverage/omissions: Most elements have been addressed. Strengths/weaknesses: The assessment is based on evidence, but it highlights the limited evidence available to the reviewer on structured feedback loops, learning mechanisms and use of monitoring data. It would have been beneficial to include evidence of gender disaggregated data for the assessment of the sub-categories and how this was reported in IPMR.	5
16. Does the report present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under ***Sustainability*** (i.e. the endurance of benefits achieved at outcome level)? Consider how well the report addresses the following: • socio-political sustainability • financial sustainability • institutional sustainability	Coverage/omissions: Main elements are addressed by building on the continued commitment of Member States to the INC process and the One UNEP project and per the grant's 3 outcomes (policy integration, EPR systems operationalization and UN system mainstreaming. Strengths/weaknesses: It would have been beneficial for the assessment with an assessment of sustainability in the nine countries to the extent that data would be available.	4.5
17. Does the report present a well-evidence analysis of the ***Factors Affecting Performance***, either in this section or in cross-referenced sections?	Coverage/omissions:	4.5

Report Quality Criteria	**UNEP Evaluation Office Comments**	**Final Report Rating**
These factors are not always discussed in stand-alone sections and may be integrated in the other performance criteria as appropriate. However, if not addressed substantively in this section, a cross reference must be given to where the topic is addressed, and that entry must be sufficient to justify the performance rating for these factors. Consider how well the report addresses the following cross-cutting issues: • quality of project management and supervision[40] • 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	Main elements have been addressed. Strengths/weaknesses: The assessments are built on the RTOC assumptions and with monitoring reports, UNEP and partners as key sources. It would have been beneficial with more country specific data or country examples to substantiate and broaden the evidence base used for the assessment of factors.	
Section F: Conclusions, Lessons Learned and Recommendations	Assessment	
18. 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 project's performance (i.e. achievements and limitations) • add deeper insights and analysis beyond the findings under each individual criterion • are derived from the synthesized analysis of evidence gathered during the review process • provide clear and succinct response to the key strategic questions • address the human rights and gender dimensions of the intervention explicitly (e.g. how these dimensions were considered, addressed or impacted on) • provide lessons that are rooted in real project experiences, describe the context from which they are derived, and do not duplicate recommendations	Coverage/omissions: Main elements have been addressed. Strengths/weaknesses: The conclusion section present a full summary table, eight conclusions and one overall conclusion. Human rights and gender dimensions are also addressed. Responses to the review's two strategic questions are included in the conclusion section with cross-references to findings. The two lessons are presented with cross-references to findings in the review without duplicating the recommendations.	6
19. Does the report present ***Recommendations*** for specific action to be taken by identified people/position-holders to resolve concrete problems affecting the project or the sustainability of its results? Consider how well 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	Coverage/omissions: The three recommendations cover the required elements. Strengths/weaknesses:	5.5

[40] 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**
capacities) and specific in terms of who would do what and when • include at least one recommendation relating to strengthening the human rights and gender dimensions of UNEP interventions • represent a measurable performance target in order that the Evaluation Office can monitor and assess compliance with the recommendations. NOTES: **(i)** In cases where the recommendation is addressed to a third party, compliance can only be monitored and assessed where a contractual/legal agreement remains in place. Without such an agreement, the recommendation should be formulated to say that UNEP project staff should pass on the recommendation to the relevant third party in an effective or substantive manner. The effective transmission by UNEP of the recommendation will then be monitored for compliance. **(ii)** Where a new project phase is already under discussion or in preparation with the same third party, a recommendation can be made to address the issue in the next phase.	The recommendations are derived from findings of the report with cross-references indicated. It could have been beneficial to include human rights and gender dimensions in conjunction with strengthening TOC design (Rec. #1) and/ or strengthening of programme and project-level approaches for outcome-oriented monitoring (Rec. #2).	
Section G: Report Structure and Presentation	Assessment	
20. Is the report ***well-structured and complete***? Does it: • follow the Evaluation Office structure and formatting guidelines • include all required sections and annexes, as applicable • not exceed 50 pages in length from the Executive Summary to the end of the Conclusion Does the report ***present*** information clearly and appropriately? Is it written: • in clear and accessible language • largely free from grammar, spelling and punctuation errors • in an adequate and professional tone • with the use of visual aids, such as maps, graphs tables and photos	Coverage/omissions: All requirements have been addressed for a complete report. Strengths/weaknesses: The report length is 54 pages, set in an easily readable format and Roboto font 11, from the Executive Summary (included) to end of Conclusions. The format of the report makes use of tables and figures. The language is professional, appropriate, without errors and proof-read.	6
OVERALL REPORT QUALITY RATING		5

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

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.