MOPAN Assessment Report

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

2020 Assessment Cycle

Published November 2021

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Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network

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Preface

ABOUT MOPAN

The Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) comprises 21 countries* that share a common interest in assessing the performance of the major multilateral organisations they fund. A MOPAN assessment report seeks to provide a diagnostic assessment, or snapshot, of an organisation and tell the story of an organisation's current performance, within its mandate. It is conducted through a rigorous process and takes a collaborative approach to ensure that the findings resonate with an organisation and its stakeholders. It draws on multiple lines of evidence (documentary, survey, and interviews) from sources within and outside an organisation to validate and triangulate findings set against a standard indicator framework that was developed based on international best practice.

MOPAN Members
as at 1 October 2021

Australia	Belgium	Canada
Denmark	European Union*	Finland
France	Germany	Ireland
Italy	Japan	Korea
Luxembourg	Netherlands	Norway
Qatar*	Sweden	Switzerland
United Arab Emirates	United Kingdom	United States
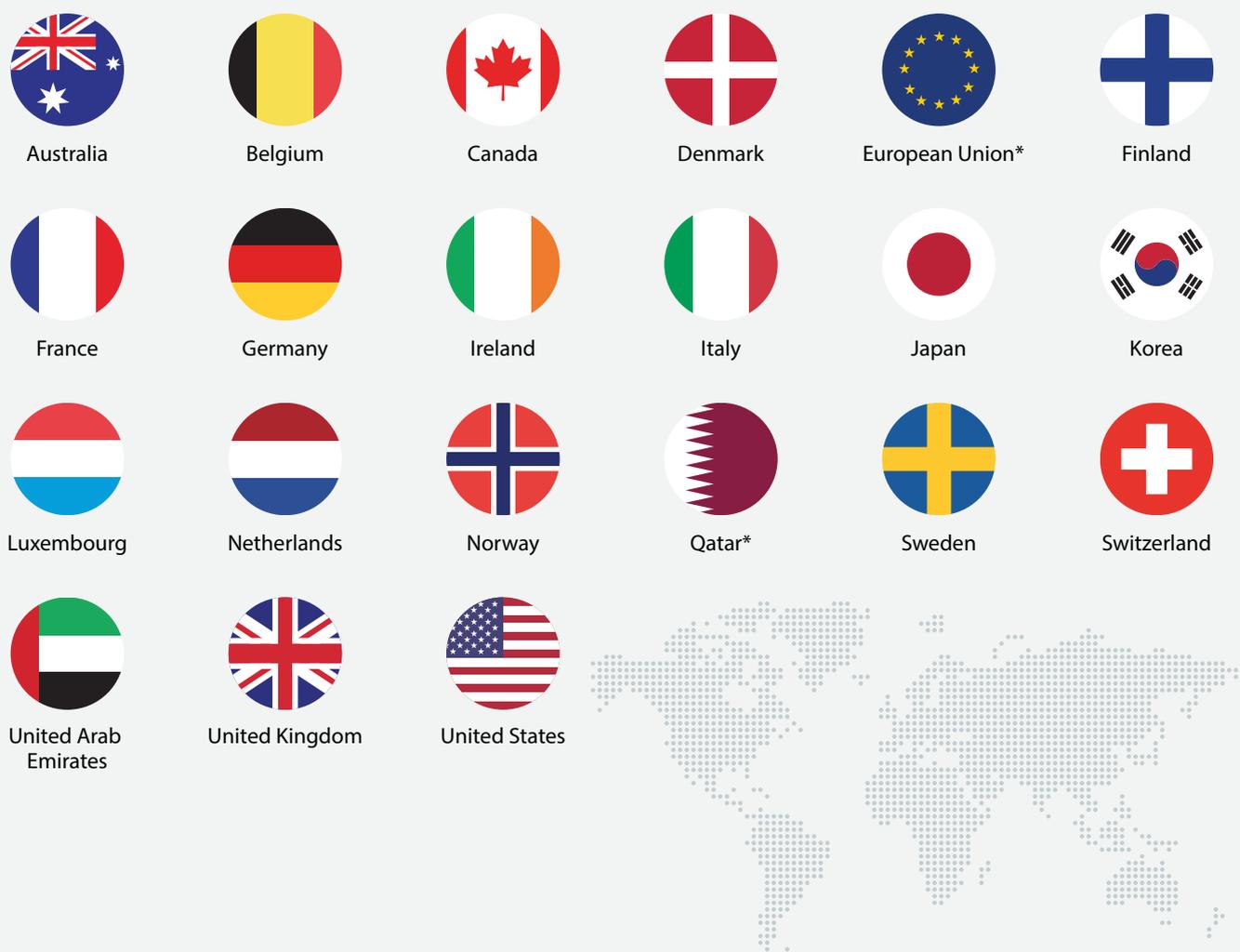
* The European Union and Qatar are observers

The following operating principles guide the implementation of MOPAN assessments, and MOPAN's Methodology Manual[1] describes how these principles are realised.

Operating principles

MOPAN will generate credible, fair and accurate assessments through:

- **implementing** an impartial, systematic and rigorous approach

- **balancing breadth with depth**, adopting an appropriate balance between coverage and depth of information

- **prioritising quality** of information over quantity

- **adopting a systematic approach**, including the use of structured tools for enquiry/analysis

- **providing transparency**, generating an "audit trail" of findings

- **being efficient**, building layers of data, seeking to reduce burdens on organisations

- **ensuring utility**, building organisational learning through an iterative process and accessible reporting

- **being incisive**, through a focused methodology, which provides concise reporting to tell the story of an organisation's current performance.

Applying these principles, MOPAN generates, collects, analyses, and presents relevant and credible information of organisations and development effectiveness. This knowledge base is intended to contribute to learning within and among the organisations, their direct clients and partners, and other stakeholders. Network members use the reports for their own accountability needs and as a source for strategic decision making.

Note that this assessment report is structured to present a high-level overview of findings across the body of the text (in Chapters 2 and 3), and that more detailed analysis underlying each score, as well as full referencing, is available in Annex A.

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1   MOPAN (2020), *MOPAN 3.1 Methodology Manual, 2020 Assessment Cycle*, http://www.mopanonline.org/ourwork/themopanapproach/MOPAN_3.1_Methodology.pdf

MOPAN ASSESSMENT PROCESS FOR UNEP

Inception
1 July – 16 November

Analysis and report writing
4 March – 30 August

**Launching
and closing**
August – September

Document review
1 August – 5 March

Survey
6 November – 28 February

**Inception briefing
with ILs**
26 October

**Emerging
findings
shared
with ILs
and UNEP**
28 June

**IAR shared
with UNEP**
2nd draft
26 July

Interviews
1 March – 12 May

| July | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | March | April | May | June | July | Aug | Sept | |
2020   2021

**Inception
report**
final draft
16 November

**Interim
document
review**
revised draft
15 February

**Summary
analysis**
22 May

IAR
1st draft
25 June

IAR
2nd draft
19 July

IAR
final draft
end Sept.

HISTORY OF MOPAN ASSESSMENTS FOR UNEP

2011 · · · · · · · · · · · **2016** · · · · · · · · · · · **2021**

**First MOPAN
UNEP assessment**

**Second MOPAN
UNEP assessment**
(2014 to mid-2016)

**Current MOPAN
UNEP assessment**
(mid-2016 to 2020)
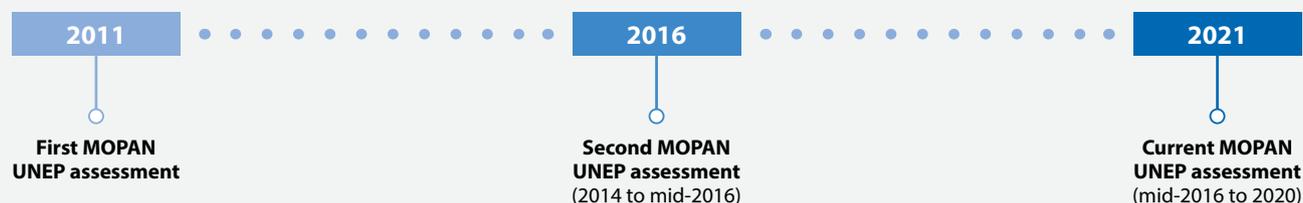
MOPAN's first assessment of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) – at the time called an Organisational Effectiveness Assessment – was published in December 2011.[2] It was based on information collected at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya and in eight countries. A survey targeted UNEP's direct partners, peer organisations, and MOPAN donors based in-country and at headquarters. To account for UNEP's limited country presence and to capture its normative work, direct partners and peer organisations at the regional and global levels were also invited to participate in the survey. Altogether, there were 215 survey respondents. UNEP was also assessed through an examination of publicly available corporate documents and programming documents from the selected countries. At that time, MOPAN assessments provided a snapshot of four dimensions of organisational effectiveness (strategic management, operational management, relationship management, and knowledge management).

MOPAN's second assessment of UNEP covered the period from 2014 to mid-2016.[3] It applied the MOPAN 3.0 methodology and considered organisational systems, practices, and behaviours, together with the results UNEP had achieved. It thus assessed five performance areas: four relating to organisational effectiveness (strategic management, operational management, relationship management and performance management) and the fifth to development effectiveness (results). UNEP's performance was assessed against a framework of key performance indicators (KPIs) and

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2   MOPAN (2011), *MOPAN Organisational Effectiveness Assessment: United Nations Environment Programme*,
    https://www.mopanonline.org/assessments/unep2011/index.htm.

3   MOPAN (2017), *MOPAN 2017 Institutional Assessment Report: UNEP*, https://www.mopanonline.org/assessments/unep2015-16/index.htm.

associated micro-indicators (MIs) that comprise the standards that characterise an effective multilateral organisation. This assessment also provided an overview of its trajectory of performance improvement.

This is the third MOPAN UNEP assessment, covering the period from mid-2016 to the end of 2020. It applies the MOPAN 3.1 methodology, which involves the same five performance areas used in the preceding assessment. However, some new indicators have been added while others have been reformulated. The rating scale has also been made stricter.

Acknowledgements

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Figures, boxes and tables

Abbreviations and acronyms

CPR	Committee of Permanent Representatives
CSD	Corporate Services Division
EC	European Commission
ED	Executive Director
EF	Environment Fund
ESR	Evaluation Synthesis Report
ESSF	Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEO	Global Environmental Outlook
HQ	Headquarters
IATI	International Aid Transparency Initiative
IFI	International Financial Institution
ILRI	International Livestock Research Institute
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreements
MI	Micro Indicator
MOPAN	Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTR	Mid-term Review
MTS	Medium-term Strategy
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation

OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
PCA	Partnership Cooperation Agreement
PoW	Programme of Work and Budget
PPD	Policy and Programme Division
PPR	Programme Performance Report
PRC	Project Review Committee
PSEA	Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
QPCR	Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review
RBM	Results-based Management
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
RO	Regional Office
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEA	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SH	Sexual Harassment
SSFA	Small-Scale Funding Agreement
SMT	Senior Management Team
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDS	United Nations Development System
UNEA	United Nations Environment Assembly
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

UNEP:
PERFORMANCE AT-A-GLANCE

UNEP: Performance at-a-glance

This is the third assessment of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), following two previous MOPAN assessments – in 2011 and 2017. Building on the previous ones, this 2021 assessment covers the period from July 2016 through 2020 and involves two distinct sub-periods under different Executive Directors (ED).

The period under review was a time of considerable transformation both in leadership and strategic and operational modalities. These include a new organisational structure at UNEP headquarters, application of United Nations Development System (UNDS) reforms that began in 2018, and an ongoing internal change process that started in 2019.

ABOUT UNEP

UNEP has several distinguishing characteristics. First, it is relatively small in terms of both financial resources and staff,[4] especially considering its large and increasingly urgent mandate. Second, it is both a normative and operational organisation, although over time it has taken on an increasingly operational role as an implementing agency for the Multilateral Fund for Implementation of the Montreal Protocol, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the European Commission (EC), and a range of bilateral donors on which it depends for the bulk of its financial resources. This results in a complex situation in which UNEP's normative work is insufficiently supported due to inflexible funding arrangements that favour operational work. Third, limited presence[5] on the ground in countries where most of these donor-funded projects are executed requires UNEP to apply robust project oversight and accountability arrangements, and to depend on other UN agencies. Fourth, it hosts or provides secretariat functions and administrative support[6] for many multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) located in various cities including Bonn, Geneva, Montreal, and Nairobi, and several specialised centres, networks, and initiatives. UNEP is widely, but not universally, spread around the world with many appendages.

These characteristics make carrying out its mission and mandate challenging, at a time when its international importance and visibility is growing. This includes its responsibility to lead integration of the environmental dimension of sustainable development and support achievement of the environment-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within the UN. Expectations of UNEP are high as it is placed at the centre of the UN sustainability agenda; yet a mismatch remains between the ambitious agenda and its capacity. In addition, evaluation of UNEP's full influence and impact is hampered by the limited assessment of the effects of its knowledge products and other activities more closely related to its normative role.

Notwithstanding these challenges, this assessment finds that UNEP possesses many attributes of an effective organisation. Its current leadership seeks to strengthen its capacity to influence the broader, ongoing UN system through its response to the UNDS reforms and an internal change process. The internal reforms aim to improve UNEP's strategic planning and operational efficiency, and strengthen results of its diverse interventions, including its knowledge products, advisory support, and the donor-financed projects it implements. UNEP is responding positively to an evaluation conducted by the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) issued in March 2019 that covered 2014-18. Progress has been made on several fronts – including greater accountability, clarity of roles and responsibilities, and change management, but challenges remain in other areas, such as results-based management (RBM).

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4   1 266 in 2020, of whom 748, or 59%, were level P1 or above.

5   UNEP has small country offices in only six of its member states (Brazil, China, India, Mexico, Russian Federation, and South Africa), six regional offices (Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, and West Asia), five sub-regional offices (Caribbean, Central Asia, Pacific, Southern Cone, and West Africa), and several external liaison or programme offices (Addis Ababa, Brussels, New York, and Vienna).

6   Independently or jointly with other UN agencies.

KEY FINDINGS

This current assessment has identified key strengths and areas for improvement (Figure 1). Among UNEP's key strengths are the strong commitment and technical capacity of its professional staff and their ability to collaborate effectively with a wide variety of partners and stakeholders. Its ability to quickly translate updated scientific information on all aspects of the environment, renewable natural resource management, and governance into key findings, lessons, and recommendations through its comprehensive knowledge products, guidance, and advisory support is an important substantive strength. Other noteworthy strengths include the quality and highly consultative nature of its strategic planning processes, as evidenced in the most recent medium-term strategy (MTS) and programme of work and budget (PoW), and the quality and utility of its knowledge products. Its project design processes are also participatory and subject to a systematic, internal upstream quality assessment.

Areas for continued improvement include:
(i)   increasing resource mobilisation and resource allocation flexibility through the Environment Fund (EF)
(ii)   strengthening the alignment between the strategic direction and the project portfolio
(iii)   clarifying persistent ambiguities and tensions related to UNEP's normative versus operational roles
(iv)   enhancing knowledge management to scale up insights gained from small projects
(v)   further integrating cross-cutting gender and human rights issues into operations
(vi)   strengthening efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of outcomes of the donor-funded projects for which it is the implementing agency
(vii)   strengthening the financing of evaluation and giving greater attention to the results of knowledge products and other normative activities.

New project designs and the UNEP project design review process would also benefit from greater attention to the capacity of project executing agencies, to certain types of risks (especially reputational) and associated mitigation measures, and to factors influencing the longer-term sustainability of desired results and benefits.

As innovative approaches to various aspects of environmental management and governance emerge, there is a need for *ex-post* evaluations to pay more attention to the extent to which they are scaled-up and replicated elsewhere.

Finally, UNEP's future trajectory appears to be positive. This is due in part to the internal change process that has been underway for the past two years. This positive trajectory is reflected in several areas, including its most recent strategic planning (MTS and PoW) exercise; the initiative to revise and update key policy documents on resource mobilisation, partnerships, and safeguards; and newly launched strategies such as the Strategy for Private Sector Engagement. UNEP is also taking steps to better assess its own influence on future PoW outcomes, although the results of this process will not be available before 2023.

FIGURE 1: UNEP'S PERFORMANCE RATING SUMMARY
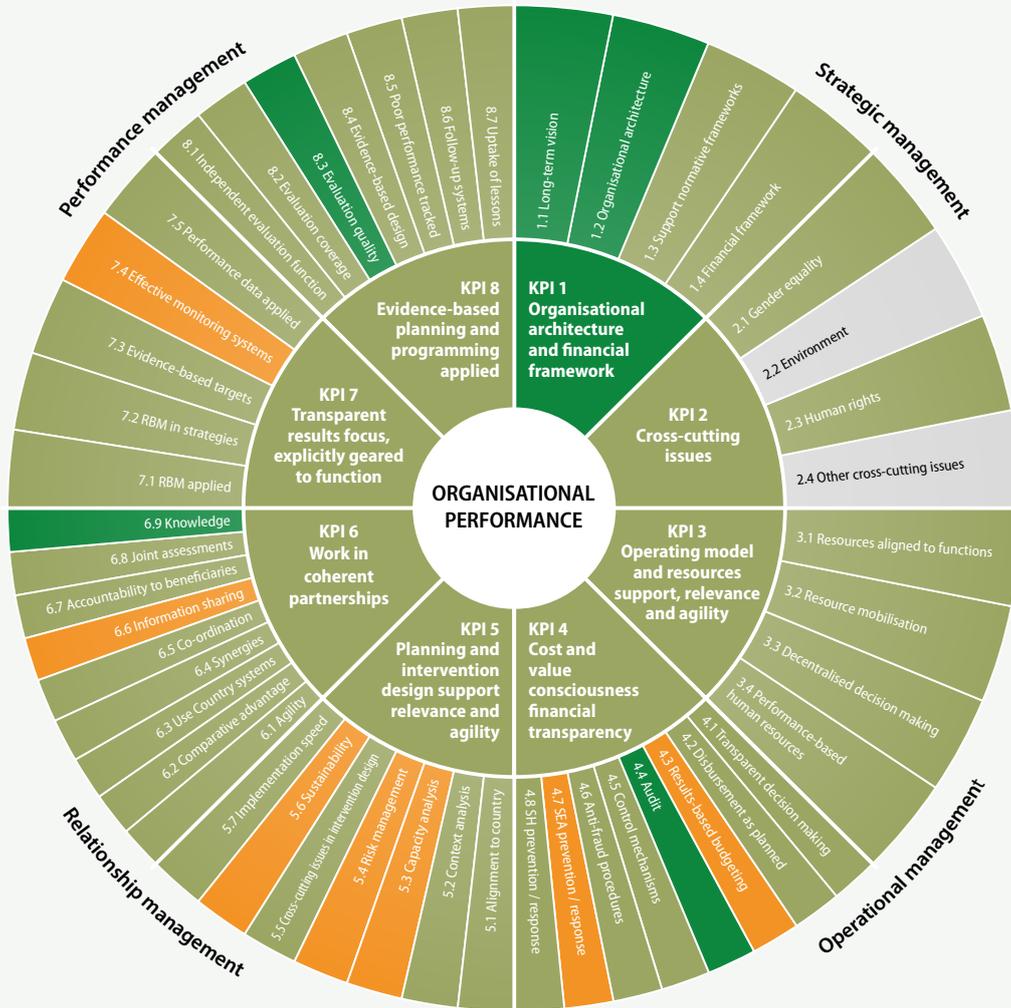
How to read these charts
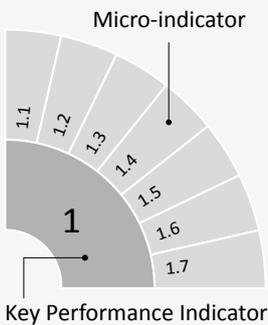
Micro-indicator

Key Performance Indicator

■ **Highly satisfactory** (3.51-4.00)

■ **Satisfactory** (2.51-3.50)

■ **Unsatisfactory** (1.51-2.50)

■ **Highly unsatisfactory** (0-1.50)

□ **No evidence / Not applicable**

FIGURE 2: UNEP'S PERFORMANCE RATING SUMMARY (previous rating scale)

Changes to MOPAN's rating system

MOPAN's methodology is continuously evolving, and a recent notable change is how ratings (and their corresponding colours) are applied based on the scores at micro-indicator (MI) and key performance indicator (KPI) level. Compared to the pre-2019 rating scale, applied in Figure 2, the threshold for a rating has been raised to reflect the increasing demands for organisational performance in the multilateral system. The underlying scores and approach to scoring are unaffected.

How to read these charts

Micro-indicator

Key Performance Indicator
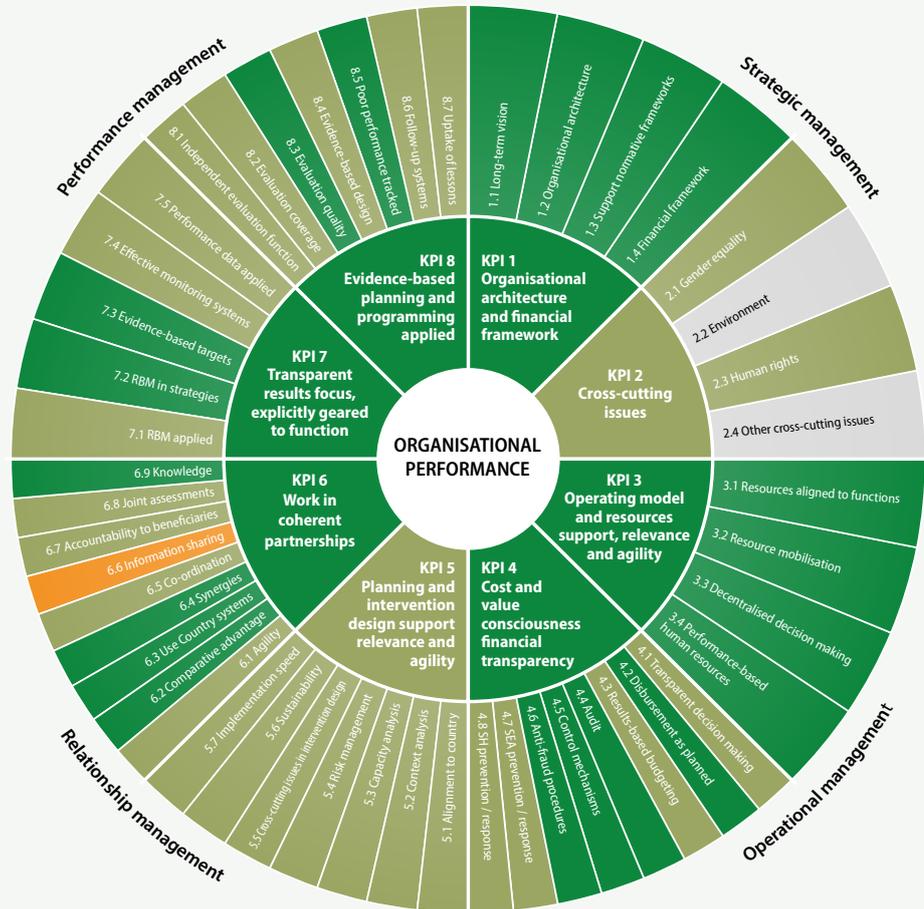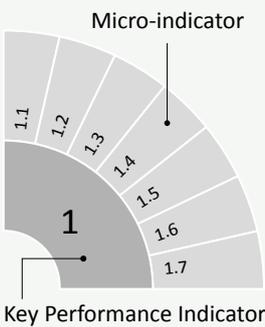
● **Highly satisfactory** (3.01-4.00)

● **Satisfactory** (2.01-3.00)

● **Unsatisfactory** (1.01-2.00)

● **Highly unsatisfactory** (0-1.00)

○ **No evidence / Not applicable**

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

1.1. INTRODUCING UNEP

Mission and mandate

The mission of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is to provide leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and their citizens to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations. UNEP has the dual mandate to promote international co-operation in the environment field and to co-ordinate environmental matters within the UN system. More specifically, according to UNEP's proposed programme budget for 2021, the organisation "is responsible for leading and coordinating action on environmental matters within the United Nations system."[7] It adds that:

> "in order to sustain the environmental dimension of development, to reinforce people's well-being and to achieve socioeconomic goals, the world needs a global focus that catalyses action at all levels. In response, UNEP will, within its mandate, provide strategic direction towards the achievement of environmental sustainability while contributing to a balanced integration of the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Acknowledging the integrated nature of the challenges that countries face (e.g., gender equality, unemployment, income inequality, social exclusion and lack of environmental safeguards), UNEP will play a critical role in defining a new global paradigm for sustainable development in which the environment is no longer treated in a silo."

UNEP was established in 1972 by United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 2997, following the recommendation of the UN Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm, Sweden earlier that year. At the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 2012, world leaders committed to enhance UNEP's role "as the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, that promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the UN system, and that serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment".[8] In response, the UNGA adopted a resolution[9] to strengthen and upgrade UNEP, including by establishing universal membership by all countries of UNEP's governing body.

UNEP's mandate is to "improve the quality of life without compromising future generations." From this perspective, UNEP is expected to play two major roles:

1. Provide global leadership to implement the environmental dimensions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, notably through:
   - informing the global community about the main environmental trends and challenges, their causes, and the effectiveness of the responses given so far, and translating this scientific knowledge into policy advice (science-policy interface)
   - organising intergovernmental environmental fora and facilitating multilateral commitments
   - building partnerships to set up or strengthen collective responses to these challenges
   - hosting the secretariats of several Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs).

2. Provide direct support to public and private stakeholders in developing countries to promote innovative solutions as pilots to support the messages promoted through the above activities.

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7   UNGA (2020), "Proposed programme budget for 2021. Part IV. International cooperation for development. Section 14. Environment", A/75/6 Section 14, United Nations General Assembly, New York, https://undocs.org/pdf?symbol=en/a/75/6(Sect.14).

8   UNGA resolution 66/288 "The future we want" dated 27 July 2012. See https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/66/288&Lang=E.

9   UNGA resolution 67/213 dated 21 December 2012. See https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/67/213

The first is considered UNEP's "normative" role, while the second constitutes the "operational" dimension of its activities (i.e., in the majority of cases, management of specific projects funded by a variety of donors and for which UNEP is the designated or selected implementing agency).

Since 2012, the demands on UNEP have continued to increase. For example, it was given the responsibility to lead on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the UNGA on 25 September 2015.[10] The agenda contains 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), most of which comprise environment-related indicators and targets. UNEP is the custodian for 26 SDG indicators and its responsibility includes co-ordinating and collaborating with UN partners, national governments, and other stakeholders on efforts to deliver the environmental goals of the 2030 Agenda at the national, regional, and global levels. Among other new responsibilities, it has also assumed the secretariat role for a ten-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns. UNEP hosts the secretariats of multiple multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and inter-agency co-ordinating bodies. It is also a long-standing implementing agency for the GEF and the Multilateral Fund for the Montreal Protocol, and more recently, an accredited agency for the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

Among the diverse MEAs and funds that UNEP hosts and to which it provides technical support, two of the secretariats report directly to UNEP's Executive Director (ED). The first is the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, which was established in June 1992 at the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro and has its own protocols; and the second is the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol, which was established in London at the second meeting of the Montreal Protocol in 1991. The secretariats of five other MEAs that report to UNEP's Deputy ED are the: (i) joint secretariat for the Basil, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions on Hazardous Waste, Hazardous Wastes and Chemicals in International Trade, and Persistent Organic Pollutants, respectively; (ii) Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species; (iii) Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, which has seven agreements; (iv) Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (Ozone Secretariat); and (v) Minimata Convention on Mercury. The secretariats of four other international environmental agreements – on (i) the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds; (ii) Populations of European Bats; (iii) Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas; and (iv) Gorillas and their Habitats – come under the Secretariat of Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals. Altogether, UNEP administers eight global and seven regional MEAs.

In addition to the above, the Secretariat of the Bamako Convention on the Ban of the Import into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movement and Management of Transboundary Wastes within Africa reports to the Director of UNEP's Africa Regional Office (RO). The Secretariat of the Carpathian Framework Convention for the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians and the Interim Secretariat of the Teheran Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea report to the Director of UNEP's Europe RO. The Regional Seas Programme, which is the organisation's most important mechanism for conserving the marine and coastal environments, has reported to the Director of UNEP's Ecosystems Division since its establishment in 1974, and includes co-ordination units for the following: (i) Abidjan Convention for Cooperation in the Protection, Management, and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West, Central, and Southern African Region; (ii) Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean – Mediterranean Action Plan; (iii) Cartagena Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region – Caribbean Environment Programme; (iv) Nairobi Convention for the Protection, Management, and Development of the Western Indian Ocean; (v) the Action Plan for the East Asia Sea Region; and (vi) the Action Plan for the Northwest Pacific Region.

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10   UNGA (2015) "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". Resolution A/RES/70/1, 70/1. United Nations General Assembly, New York. See https://undocs.org/A/RES/70/1.

Finally, the secretariats of two intergovernmental panels[11] and the UN Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation report to the Director of UNEP's Science Division.

Each of these multilateral and international agreements has their own mandate, mission, governance arrangements, organigram, staff, and budget. They were established at different times and have their own dedicated activities and partners, with their Secretariats (or co-ordinating units) in different geographical locations. All are related to UNEP's normative role and its priority concerns and responsibilities for environmental protection and sustainability – and more specifically to biodiversity, climate change, and pollution.

While on the one hand, the various multilateral and other international environmental conventions and agreements are directly linked to UNEP, on the other they also are distinct organisations with their own individual governing bodies and mechanisms, discrete interventions and results. Viewed comprehensively, UNEP is thus a very complex organisation with many extensions, each of which merits its own specific assessment. However, as with the two previous MOPAN assessments, the present exercise covers only the "core" UNEP and does not delve further into these multiple organisations with which it is involved in varied ways.

Most of UNEP's operational interventions are financed by the GEF, the Multilateral Fund, and GCF. Along with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank, UNEP was one of the three original implementing agencies of the GEF from the initiation of its pilot phase in October 1991. The Multilateral Fund was established in 1990 as the financial mechanism of the Montreal Protocol on ozone depleting substances. UNEP became an implementing agency on 19 June 1991, along with UNDP, the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), and the World Bank. The GCF was established in 2010 as the financial mechanism for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and more recently the Paris Climate Agreement. It focuses on both climate change adaptation and mitigation and has a much larger number of accredited implementing agencies than the GEF but a narrower substantive scope. The GEF remains the largest single funding source for UNEP-managed projects, even though the number of GEF implementing agencies has increased progressively over time and now stands at 18. Its focal areas are biodiversity, climate change, international waters, land degradation, and chemicals and waste, all of which are also among UNEP's primary concerns.

Governance arrangements

Since mid-2014 UNEP has been governed by the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA), composed of representatives of all 193 member states, which replaced the earlier governing council. The first meeting, UNEA-1, held in June 2014, formalised this transformation. UNEA customarily meets in Nairobi every two years to make strategic decisions and provide political guidance on global environmental issues. At UNEA-2 in May 2016, its schedule was changed to every odd-numbered year to align better with related UN processes for programme of work (PoW) and budget approvals. Thus, UNEA-3 met in December 2017 and UNEA-4 in March 2019. UNEA-5 was divided into two annual meetings, with UNEA-5.1 conducted virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic on 22-23 February 2021. The streamlined agenda focused on urgent and procedural decisions, for example the approval of the medium-term strategy (MTS) for 2022-25 and PoW for 2022-23. UNEA-5.2 is scheduled for February-March 2022.

UNEA is led by a president and a 10-member bureau, all elected for two-year terms starting at the closure of the session at which they are elected and ending at the closure of the following session. In addition to approving UNEP's MTSs and PoWs, UNEA provides directions and guidance to UNEP leadership and management through specific decisions and resolutions that are issued at the time of each biannual meeting. UNEP, which falls under the authority

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11   The Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services as well as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, initially established by UNEP and the World Meteorological Organisation.

of the UN Secretary General, is also subject to all directives and instructions issued by the UNGA, including the UNDS reforms mandated by the UNGA in May 2018.

UNEP's open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) represents UNEA between its biennial meetings. The CPR, which consists of all accredited permanent representatives to UNEP and meets at least four times a year, prepares the UNEA meetings and regularly reviews the implementation of its decisions. It was formally established as a subsidiary body to the Governing Council in May 1985. The CPR is led by a five-member bureau for two-year terms with each bureau member representing one of the five regional groups of UN member states. Its specific responsibilities (as stated in Governing Council decision 19/32 of 4 April 1997) are:

(i)   within the policy and budgetary framework provided by the Governing Council, to review, monitor, and assess the implementation of Council decisions on administrative, budgetary, and programme matters
(ii)   to review the draft PoW and budget during their preparation by the secretariat
(iii)   to review reports requested of the secretariat by the Governing Council on the effectiveness, efficiency, and transparency of the functions and work of the secretariat and to make recommendations to the Governing Council
(iv)   to prepare draft decisions for consideration by the Governing Council based on inputs from the secretariat and on the results of the functions specified above.

These responsibilities were updated by the Governing Council Decision 27/2 of 22 February 2013, which added the following roles:

(v)   contributing to the preparation of the agenda of its governing body
(vi)   providing advice to its governing body on policy matters
(vii)   preparing decisions for adoption by its governing body and overseeing their implementation
(viii) convening thematic and/or programmatic debates
(ix)   promoting effective ways and means to facilitate participation of the non-resident members of the committee, particularly from developing countries
(x)   performing any other functions delegated to it by its governing body.

Within UNEP, the Secretariat of Governing Bodies is responsible for supporting both UNEA and the CPR. The executive office at UNEP Headquarters (HQ) in Nairobi is responsible for operations. A new ED was appointed for a four-year term by the UN Secretary General in February 2019 following the previous ED's term from July 2016 to October 2018. The deputy ED served as acting ED in the interim.

Organisational structure

UNEP currently works through seven HQ divisions, six regional offices (ROs), five sub-regional offices, six country offices, and three liaison offices (Figure 3). It has a network of collaborating centres of excellence, such as the International Ecosystem Management Partnership in Beijing; the World Conservation Monitoring Centre in Cambridge, England; and the Danish Technical University, which focuses mainly on climate change and helps to produce the annual *Mitigation Gap* (since 2010) and *Adaptation Gap* (since 2014) reports. As noted above, it hosts the secretariats or co-ordination units of numerous MEAs. Maintaining close links with key global environmental scientific bodies, UNEP also hosts or administers:

- specialised centres and networks such as the Climate and Clean Air Coalition, together with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Climate Technology Centre and Network – an operational arm of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Technology Mechanism (together with UNIDO)

- special initiatives such as its own Finance Initiative and the Green Growth Knowledge Platform (together with Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the World Bank Group and other organisations)

- other individually or jointly administered special environmental programmes such as the Regional Seas Programme and REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) together with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and UNDP.

UNEP's matrix structure includes seven cross-cutting sub-programmes, whose co-ordinators were moved in 2020 from different thematic divisions to the Policy and Programme Division (PPD), which reports directly to the ED. Each sub-programme has sub-coordinators in each of the regional offices. The decision to move the sub-programme co-ordinators at HQ to PPD was recommended by the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) evaluation of UNEP and designed to strengthen co-ordination and accountability for delivery of the PoW. Prior to this, UNEP's Senior Management Team, chaired by the ED, had been strengthened following the arrival of a new ED in July 2016,

FIGURE 3. UNEP [1] **ORGANIGRAMME as of May 2020**
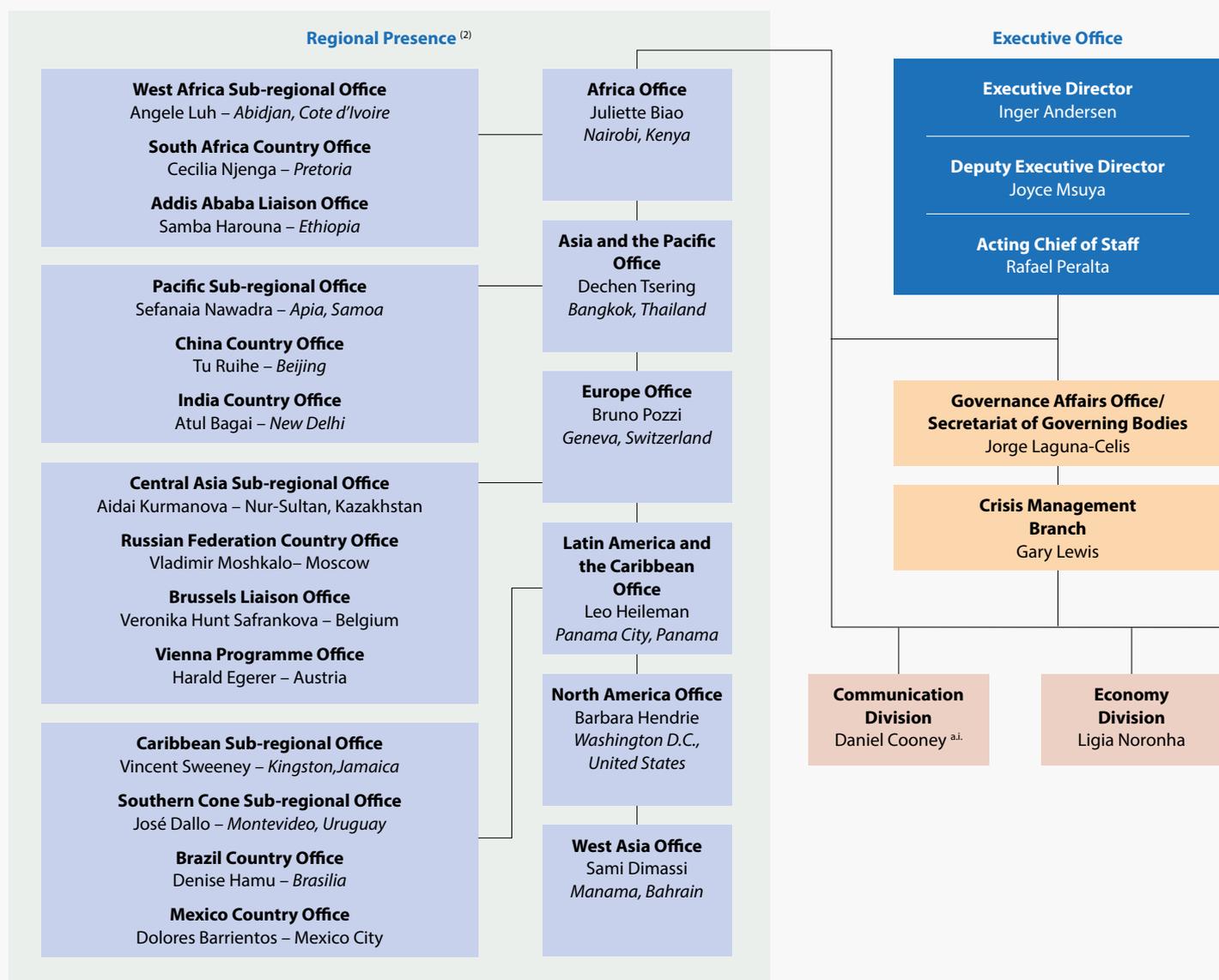
through the inclusion of the Regional Office Directors; this arrangement remains. In addition to the PPD, UNEP has six other divisions in a structure that was reorganised after mid-2016.

Regional offices are responsible for overseeing UNEP's activities in their respective regions and helping deliver the MTS and PoW. They are based in Nairobi (Africa), Bangkok (Asia and the Pacific), Geneva (Europe), Manama, Bahrain (West Asia), Panama City (Latin America and the Caribbean), and Washington D.C. (North America). There are sub-regional offices for the Caribbean, Central Asia, the Pacific, the Southern Cone of South America, and West Africa; and country offices in Brazil, China, India, Mexico, the Russian Federation, and South Africa. The liaison offices are in Addis Ababa and Brussels and co-ordinate with regional bodies such as the African Union, the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), and the European Union (EU). UNEP also has an office at UN HQ in New York and a programme office in Vienna. The New York office liaises with the secretariat and the New York-based UN agencies such as UNDP. There is also the UN Environment Management Group consisting of 51 UN entities and chaired by the UNEP ED. UNEP had 1 266 total staff in 2020, up from 1 113 in 2016 and 1 175 in 2018.

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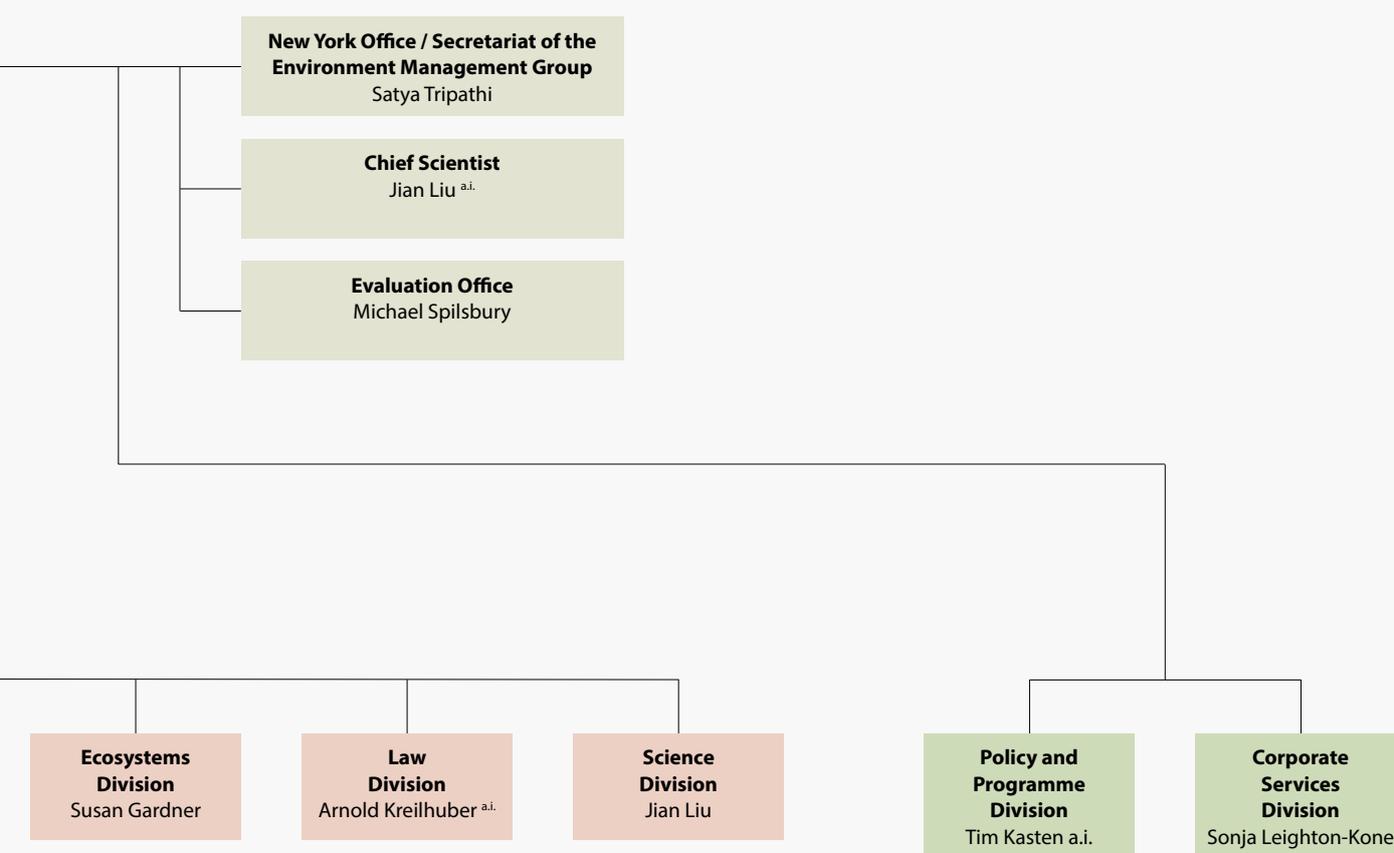
KEY:

(1) Please see below organizational structure for Multilateral Environmental Agreements and other Entities to which UNEP provides the Secretariat or Secretariat functions.

(2) UNEP also has regional presence through project offices, centres and secretariats that it hosts.

a.i. Ad Interim.

The MTS for 2014-17 and the PoWs for 2014-15 and 2016-17 were the main strategic planning documents reviewed previously. These featured seven sub-programmes: Climate Change; Disasters and Conflicts; Ecosystem Management; Environmental Governance; Harmful Substances and Waste; Resource Efficiency; and Environment under Review. The MTS for 2018-21 maintained the same number of sub-programmes, but slightly modified to better reflect their objectives and content: Climate Change; Resilience to Disasters and Conflicts; Healthy and Productive Ecosystems; Environmental Governance; Chemicals, Waste, and Air Quality; Resource Efficiency; and Environment under Review. Both four-year strategies and associated PoWs implicitly gave all seven sub-programmes the same priority.

To align with the recently approved MTS for 2022-25, changes are being made to these sub-programmes both in name and, in some cases, functions. UNEP considers 2021 as a "readiness year" for implementing the new corporate strategic plans and has developed a detailed plan called "MTS Readiness" that is an integral part of the Senior Management Team's work programme for this year. It contains over 30 deliverables, including strengthening project management, improving operational agility in terms of results-based management and results-based budgeting, and UN reform and UN country team engagement and delivery. It is expected to be fully implemented by 31 December 2021. The following changes will be made to sub-programmes (the Environmental Governance sub-programme remains unchanged):

- the Resilience to Disasters and Conflicts sub-programme will be eliminated, and its functions absorbed by others

- a new Digital Transformations sub-programme will be established

- the Economy sub-programme will be converted into the Finance and Economic Transformations sub-programme

- the Environment under Review sub-programme will be converted into the Science-Policy sub-programme

- the Climate Change sub-programme will become the Climate Action sub-programme

- Healthy and Productive Ecosystems will be converted to the Nature Action sub-programme;

- the Chemicals, Waste, and Air Quality sub-programme will become the Chemicals and Pollution Action sub-programme.

Implementation of the new MTS and PoW begins on 1 January 2022. These documents now differentiate between thematic[12] (characterised in the MTS as "interlinked and mutually supporting strategic objectives"), foundational,[13] and enabling[14] sub-programmes. This represents an important step forward in UNEP's strategic planning, partly responding to the 2019 OIOS evaluation's finding that UNEP had "failed to utilise internal priority setting mechanisms to optimise its PoW and to align its resources and capabilities accordingly."[15] The new MTS does this by clearly setting out the functional relationships among the three sets of sub-programmes; previously they had all been portrayed implicitly as of equal importance. The new MTS also gives greater attention to "securing a strong organisational design for collective accountability including in cooperation and coordination with the MEAs".

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12   Climate, Nature, and Chemicals and Pollution.

13   Science-Policy and Environmental Governance.

14   Finance and Economic Transformations and Digital Transformations.

15   United Nations Economic and Social Council (2019), *Evaluation of the United Nations Environment Programme*, Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/AC.51/2019/7&Lang=E

Finances and operations

UNEP has five funding sources:

(i)   The UN regular budget
(ii) Environment Fund (EF), which is composed of voluntary contributions by member states and over whose allocation UNEP has the greatest flexibility
(iii) global funds, including the GEF and GCF
(iv) other donor-provided earmarked resources
(v)   Programme support funds (i.e., general administrative fees for GEF and GCF projects).

The largest share is provided by the global funds and other earmarked sources, and the smallest share is the UN regular budget. The regular budget is approved annually by the UNGA to cover "post" (i.e., regular UN managers and staff at different levels, of which UNEP presently has 113) and "non-post" costs. All other earmarked sources provide multi-year financing for approved projects where UNEP is the implementing agency. UNEP regularly reports on its budget, income, funds available, and expenditures in each of its annual and biannual Programme Performance Reports (PPRs), most recently for 2018-19. It also estimates amounts from various funding sources for the current biennium (e.g., 2020-21) and projects them for the next one (e.g., 2022-23) in each new PoW. The Environment Fund was established in 1973 by the UN General Assembly. It is UNEP's main source of unrestricted funds provided by its member states, and is used to enable delivery of results while allowing flexibility to respond to emerging environmental challenges. In recent years, these contributions have fallen short of expectations, thereby limiting UNEP's ability to allocate resources to priorities not fully covered by earmarked funding.

In short, as around 80% of the total budget is allocated to donor-funded project implementation, UNEP's funding sources are not fully aligned with its own priorities. Table 1 presents the financial details for 2016-19 and Table 2 shows the estimates for 2020-23. The estimated and projected figures are also disaggregated by sub-programme in Table 3 for the current and next PoW. The tables reveal that earmarked sources account for most of UNEP's budgets and its actual expenditures for 2016-19, followed by the EF. The regular budget and programme support resources together fund less than 10% and have been relatively stable over time, unlike other sources. In comparing the budget with the funds available, Table 1 indicates that actual contributions to the EF have been far lower than budgeted for in recent years.

Table 1. UNEP budgets, income, available funds, and expenditures, 2016-19 (USD million)

Source/period	2016-17				2018-19			
	Budget	Income	Funds available	Expenditures	Budget	Income	Funds available	Expenditures
Global and other earmarked funds	343.8	1 001.9	706.6	743.8	445.0	776.7	959.0	648.5
Environment Fund	271.0	131.2	136.9	128.7	271.0	139.7	140.3	134.2
UN regular budget	45.4	45.4	45.4	45.3	44.7	44.7	48.5	46.5
Programme support	22.9	NA	38.1	35.8	33.0	NA	35.7	33.2
Total	**683.1**	**1 178.5**	**927.0**	**953.6**	**793.7**	**961.1**	**1 183.5**	**862.4**

Note: NA=not applicable
Source: UNEP (2018), *Programme Performance Report 2016-2017*, https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/31804; UNEP (2020), *Programme Performance Report 2018-2019*, https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/33851

Table 2. UNEP's estimated/projected budgets for 2020-21 and 2022-23 (USD million)

Source/period	2020-21	2022-23
Global and other earmarked funds	632.0	593.8
Environment Fund	200.0	200.0
UN regular budget	47.1	47.1
Programme support	38.0	38.0
Total	**917.1**	**872.9**

Source: UNEP (2021), *Programme of Work and Budget*, 2022-2023, https://wedocs.unep.org/xmlui/handle/20.500.11822/36423

In financial terms, the largest sub-programmes have been those for Climate Change; Healthy and Productive Ecosystems; and Chemicals, Waste, and Air Quality. Together they were expected to absorb close to 70% of all resources for sub-programmes in 2020-21 (Table 3). In total, the seven sub-programmes are expected to use around 93% of the entire budget between 2018-21. This trend is projected to continue in 2022-23 and most likely for the entire MTS 2022-25 period. This reflects the importance of global and other earmarked sources, including other UN agencies, the European Commission (EC) individual developed country donors, and the private sector. The funds from all these sources are in most cases earmarked for the projects that comprise the bulk of UNEP's operational activities. Moreover, most of these donor-funded projects fall under the Climate Change, Ecosystems, and Chemicals, Waste, And Air Quality sub-programmes. The Environment under Review and Environmental Governance sub-programmes receive some of the smallest amounts. These sub-programmes are responsible for many of UNEP's normative outputs. This suggests that donors consider these sub-programmes to be less important, even though the quality of UNEP's scientific and governance work is an important reason for them to work with the organisation.

Table 3. Estimated budget allocations by sub-programme, 2018-19 and 2020-21

Sub-programme/period	2018-19		2020-21	
	USD million	Share (%)	USD million	Share (%)
Climate Change	181.3	25.2	261.4	31.1
Resilience to Disasters & Conflicts	51.1	7.1	39.4	4.7
Healthy & Productive Ecosystems	169.7	23.6	189.4	22.5
Environmental Governance	78.8	10.9	78.5	9.3
Chemicals, Waste & Air Quality	100.4	13.9	136.5	16.2
Resource Efficiency	86.3	12.0	95.9	11.4
Environment under Review	52.2	7.3	40.0	4.8
Total for all sub-programmes	719.9	100.0	841.2	100.0
Total for entire PoW	788.6		917.1	
Sub-programmes/total for PoW		93.0		93.6

Source: UNEP (2019), *Programme of Work and Budget*, 2020-2021, https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/28411/UNEP_PoW_Budget_2020-2021_Final.pdf

1.2. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

UNEP is currently undergoing several important changes which began after the previous MOPAN assessment. The first of these entails implementing the UNDS reforms proposed by the Secretary General and mandated by UNGA.[16] UNEP views these reforms as an opportunity to enhance its influence and, as stated in its new MTS, it will make "full use" of them "to extend its reach as the global environmental authority to support all member states in their pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals."[17] More specifically, it affirms that "working with and through its sister UN entities, UNEP will support UN country teams, providing environmental data and analysis so that common country analyses have environmental science as their foundation. UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks will then include strong environmental components, providing clear guidance and pathways for the entire UN system to support the environmental dimensions of sustainable development."

The second transformation is in response to reforms introduced by the current UNEP ED (in 2019) and are the product of a highly participatory internal consultative process underlying the design of the recently approved MTS 2022-25 and PoW 2022-23. In addition to seeking greater coherence in UNEP's work, as reflected in the new strategic planning documents, internal changes aim to improve its overall focus, efficiency, and effectiveness, as well as to boost internal morale and external confidence. While initial internal and external reactions are positive, the results of these reforms are not fully observable within this assessment period.

For UNEP, COVID-19 had a profound, systemic effect on the organisation, and its internal and external context. This is addressed in Chapters 2 and 3. The third major transformation is brought about by the need to react to the COVID-19 pandemic that began in early 2020 and continued through the first half of 2021. UNEP issued specific plans to address COVID-19 both in the short and longer term, adjusted its ongoing work programme, and revised internal operating arrangements and procedures for both staff and partners. It also made timing requirements more flexible for projects whose implementation was adversely affected by COVID-19. In addition, along with partners, it rapidly produced and disseminated a new report on zoonotic diseases and how to avoid future pandemics caused by them (in July 2020).

1.3. PERFORMANCE JOURNEY

The previous MOPAN assessments of UNEP were conducted in 2011 and 2015-16. Frequent leadership changes during the previous period (2014-16) and the current assessment period have resulted in a challenging performance journey. Nevertheless, UNEP's current performance trajectory is positive.

The 2016 assessment found that UNEP's overall performance, "meets the requirements of an effective multilateral organisation." Strengths identified in the previous assessment period that resonate with current findings include long-term strategic plans, organisational systems and processes that are fit for purpose (also reflected as a strength in the 2011 assessment), and positive global perceptions of knowledge products (Box 1).

Areas of improvement that were identified in 2016 and that remain valid today include:

- results-based budgeting
- ex-post monitoring and evaluation of projects
- capacity analysis
- monitoring and reporting specifically on outcomes.

16 UNGA (2018), Resolution A/RES/72/279 of 31 May 2018, https://undocs.org/pdf?symbol=en/a/res/72/279.

17 UNEP (2021), *For People and Planet: The United Nations Environment Programme strategy for 2022–2025 to tackle climate change, loss of nature and pollution*, https://www.unep.org/resources/policy-and-strategy/people-and-planet-unep-strategy-2022-2025.

Areas identified for improvement that are now underway include alignment and integration with other UN agencies (through the application of the UNDS reform and implementation of UN agency partnership requirements) and partner analyses. These latter are being strengthened, at least in terms of formalised processes, through the newly revised Partnership Policy and Procedures. The remaining area for improvement identified across all three assessments is resource investment and allocation to support the organisation's relevance, agility, results, and effectiveness.

In 2019 the OIOS issued its evaluation of UNEP covering the period 2014-18.[18] Its main findings and conclusions are as follows:

- UNEP has remained highly relevant in the context of its evolving mandates, which it is integrating into its strategic planning. However, UNEP has had difficulty in operationalising its strategic plans, and failed to use internal priority setting mechanisms to optimise its PoW and align its resources and capabilities accordingly (including synergies with the MEAs for which UNEP provides the secretariats).

- UNEP has increased the prominence of global environmental issues, although its funding for core work has been unstable and is in decline. UNEP has implemented resource mobilisation and partnership strategies unevenly, which has resulted in a decline in flexible funding from member states and has increased competition for resources internally and with other UN agencies.

- The institutional arrangements and management approaches at UNEP have facilitated co-ordination across the organisation, including some improvements from recent reforms and policies in needed areas. However, their effectiveness is hindered by lack of accountability, as well as unclear roles and responsibilities, incomplete change management efforts, lack of support to knowledge management, uneven RBM and inadequate support for policy implementation.

- Despite the institutional and management challenges identified, UNEP staff remain proud of their work and feel valued by the organisation. However, morale, particularly at UNEP HQ, has been affected by internal politics and perceptions that senior-level priorities were disconnected from the rest of the organisation.

This evaluation resulted in five main recommendations:

(i)   reform how UNEP operationalises its strategic plans
(ii)   address accountability gaps between its operations and its strategic plan
(iii) develop and fully support UNEP resource mobilisation and partnership strategies based on priorities articulated in the strategic plan
(iv)   manage change deliberately and in line with its organisational culture; and
(v)   strengthen accountability, RBM, and learning.

Since receiving this evaluation UNEP has responded proactively to its findings and recommendations. This includes making changes in both the process and content of the new MTS and PoW, as well as adopting an internal change management process led by the present ED and the Senior Management Team in line with UNEP's internal culture. This is an ongoing process and improvements may be expected in the years ahead. Steady progress is being made to ensure that UNEP will be ready to start implementation of the new MTS and PoW in January 2022.

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18   United Nations Economic and Social Council (2019), *Evaluation of the United Nations Environment Programme*, Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/AC.51/2019/7&Lang=E

Box 1. Main strengths and areas for improvement from previous MOPAN assessments

Strengths identified in previous MOPAN assessments
- Organisational architecture and operating model:
  – Organisational systems and processes mostly very good and fit for purpose (2016).
  – Organisational architecture well aligned with mandate and comparative advantages, with matrix management system now well embedded (2016).
  – Long-term planning horizons and results provide clear vision and strategic direction (2016).
  – Effective partnerships are central to the service delivery model and leverage considerable additional resources (2016).
  – Provides regional and global perspectives on critical environment issues according to its primary function (2011).

- Independent evaluation function and quality assurance systems operate effectively, and good compliance with audit findings (2016).

- Knowledge products and normative operations:
  – Contributions to advancing normative frameworks on global environment and well received knowledge products that drive global dialogue (2016).
  – UNEP stakeholders value its contributions to policy dialogue and its respect for the views of its stakeholders (2011).

- Results-based management:
  – Now embraced and being applied across organisation, with training and appropriate guidance manuals and tools in place (2016).
  – UNEP has demonstrated commitment to managing for results (2011).

Areas for improvement identified in previous MOPAN assessments
- Operational versus normative role:
  – By virtue of UNEP's normative role, its work in countries may not necessarily align directly with the country's own top priorities (2011).

- Results-based management is a work in progress but presents an area for continued improvement:
  – Application of results-based budgeting still a work in progress (2016).
  – Country-level relevance of interventions and actual results/benefits delivered to target beneficiaries could be more clearly documented (2016).
  – Has made progress in results-based budgeting although there is still room for progress, and improvements could be made in the presentation of results indicators at the outputs level (2011).

- Resource structures to support operations and organisational effectiveness:
  – UNEP's criteria for programme resource allocation are not transparent (2011).
  – Could do better in disclosing its own criteria for allocating programme resources, noting it is the result of negotiating these processes (2011).

Box 1. Main strengths and areas for improvement from previous MOPAN assessments (*continued*)

- Project-level monitoring, oversight, efficiency, and replicability:
  – More emphasis on the monitoring and reporting of project outcomes (2016).
  – Post-intervention monitoring and evaluation would substantiate sustainability of outcomes, an aspect that currently lacks clarity (2016).
  – Regional strengthening and changes to delegation of authority framework will need to be monitored to ensure effectiveness (2016).
  – Unclear whether gender results are being delivered at the project level (2016).
  – Human well-being is not reflected consistently in UNEP's strategy or programmes (2011).

- Alignment and integration of broader governance and social justice issues need greater attention (2016).

Source: MOPAN (2017), *MOPAN 2017 Institutional Assessment Report: UNEP*, https://www.mopanonline.org/assessments/unep2015-16/index.htm; MOPAN (2011), *MOPAN Organisational Effectiveness Assessment Report: UNEP*, https://www.mopanonline.org/assessments/unep2011/index.htm.

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND OUTLOOK

Findings, conclusions and outlook

2.1. ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

Key findings

UNEP has a strategically important role in the UNDS, being charged with leading both the UNDS and its 193 member states in addressing "a planetary crisis" and interrelated "climate, biodiversity, and pollution emergencies" urgently and effectively.[19] This ambitious task has become even more difficult during a global pandemic that has created additional constraints. However, it has also created new opportunities for achieving greater climate change mitigation and resilience, and improving environmental sustainability at national and global levels. UNEP's role is pivotal in the global response to environmental challenges.

Despite persisting areas requiring improvement, UNEP is effective in responding to the increasingly important challenges it faces. UNEP understands the future needs and demands in the areas covered by its mandate. Its recently approved medium-term strategy (MTS) 2022-25 is based "on the recognition of the existence of three planetary crises – climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution – which put us at risk of irreversibly changing our relationship with the natural world."[20] These existential crises are among the most serious threats to the future of the planet, and thus make UNEP's ability to carry out its mission even more critical than in the past.

While UNEP was designed primarily as a normative organisation, over time it has also evolved into an implementing agency for projects financed by the GEF, Multilateral Fund, GCF, EC, and bilateral donors. Thus, in addition to generating and disseminating key environment-related knowledge products, hosting a range of MEAs, and managing or co-managing various environment and climate change-related centres and special initiatives, it has a significant operational role at the global, regional, and country levels. As a small UN entity, it operates in part through regional offices (ROs), and has limited financial and human resources and country presence. Given the increasing importance of its mission and growing demands from member states and other stakeholders, UNEP could benefit from access to additional resources as well as more effective use of its existing ones, including through better cost accounting, assessment of PoW outcomes and greater evaluation of the results and impacts of its knowledge products.

UNEP's matrix organisational form is effective and engages in a broad range of partnerships. It is highly dependent on these partnerships for most of its funding, and for executing donor-financed projects for which it serves as an implementing agency. Much of its work programme is executed by national government agencies (at their request and with their involvement) and other local project-level partners and collaborating institutions based on their respective comparative advantages. It also includes joint initiatives with other UN organisations such as FAO, UNDP, UNIDO, WHO, and the World Meteorological Organisation. UNEP's own comparative advantage, highlighted in its new MTS as the underlying basis for its establishment in 1972,[21] lies in its capacity to bring up-to-date environment-related scientific knowledge to bear on environmental policy and interventions and to provide guidance and support for improved environmental governance at both the national and global levels. Its multiple strategic and implementing

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19 As described by UNEP (2021), *For People and Planet: The United Nations Environment Programme strategy for 2022–2025 to tackle climate change, loss of nature and pollution*, https://www.unep.org/resources/policy-and-strategy/people-and-planet-unep-strategy-2022-2025; and UNEP (2021), *Making Peace With Nature: A scientific blueprint to tackle the climate, biodiversity and pollution emergencies*, https://www.unep.org/resources/making-peace-nature.

20 UNEP (2021), *For People and Planet: The United Nations Environment Programme strategy for 2022–2025 to tackle climate change, loss of nature and pollution*, https://www.unep.org/resources/policy-and-strategy/people-and-planet-unep-strategy-2022-2025.

21 Paragraph 1, which stated at the outset that "The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm Conference) provided a science-centred platform for world leaders and policymakers to converge and tackle the drivers of that crisis. As a result, UNEP was assigned the task of coordinating global responses to environmental challenges and related emerging issues, within and outside the United Nations, while keeping watch over the state of the world environment and linking science to policymaking." UNEP (2021), *For People and Planet: The United Nations Environment Programme strategy for 2022–2025 to tackle climate change, loss of nature and pollution*, https://www.unep.org/resources/policy-and-strategy/people-and-planet-unep-strategy-2022-2025

partnerships are coherent, purposeful, and generally effective. They partly help compensate for UNEP's lack of a physical presence in many countries. At the same time UNEP is using UNDS reforms to strengthen its influence at the country level. In addition to the implementing partners at the national, regional, and global levels for donor-funded projects, UNEP has a broad range of strategic and thematic partnerships with other UN entities, international and domestic environmental non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and academic and scientific research institutions and individual specialists that make important contributions to its flagship and other knowledge products. UNEP also plays an important convening and advocacy role for national environmental authorities at both the regional and global levels and integrates civil society and the private sector, together with the organisations mentioned above, into its programmes and activities.

UNEP has mandate-oriented systems, planning, and operations but it is challenged by the overall size and limited flexibility of its resource base. Its non-earmarked financing comes predominantly from the EF, which has had uneven and, in some cases, declining resource increments during the assessment period. The organisation's core UN budget has remained largely unchanged in the assessment period. UNEP's operations on the ground consist largely of donor-funded projects that are designed to pilot new or innovative approaches to different aspects of environmental management, consistent with its mandate and country, regional, and global priorities. It also regularly produces well-regarded science-based flagship and other knowledge products. Some are annual, such as the *Emissions Gap, Adaptation Gap* and *Frontiers: Emerging Issues of Environmental Concern* reports; while others are more periodic, such as the comprehensive *Global Environmental Outlook* (GEO) report. These and other UNEP documents are intended to inform policy and other environment-related decision making and interventions by the governments of member states and other organisations at the national, regional, and global levels.

UNEP has adapted and made improvements according to its (constrained) resources and changing operational context. This context has evolved significantly over the past five years driven by growing global commitments to greater environmental sustainability and the need to combat climate change, as enshrined in the SDGs and the Paris Climate Agreement. UNEP's role and activities within the UN system and beyond have become even more important. The assessment found evidence of improvement in most performance areas, including in its adoption of the UNDS reforms and more recently as the result of its ongoing internal change process. For example, UNEP has recently strengthened its participation in the UN multi-agency country diagnostic activities and resulting country Sustainable Development Framework process, by nominating specific RO staff for each country to ensure that relevant environmental considerations are covered. The change in UNEP's leadership in late 2018 and early 2019, and some re-positioning of management and senior staff, has strengthened the clarity and internal understanding of its strategic direction. This evolution is manifested both in its most recent consultative strategic plans and in the equally participatory internal "culture" change process initiated in 2019.

UNEP's response to COVID-19 was rapid and agile and has been both substantive and operational. It quickly prepared an action plan to help member states address their immediate and longer-term pandemic related needs and potential opportunities, including guidance to manage associated medical and hazardous waste and to "build back greener" in a climate and environmentally sustainable way. In July 2020 UNEP published, in collaboration with the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), a new knowledge product on zoonotic diseases and how to prevent the next pandemic. It provided operational flexibility for project implementation requirements and timelines affected by COVID and adopted a fully virtual mode of interaction both internally and with external stakeholders. An example of the latter is the UNEA 5.1 meeting that was held virtually in February 2021 to discuss and approve the new MTS and PoW, to ensure timely implementation in January 2022. The pandemic has not altered UNEP's basic mission or mandate, but it has reinforced its emphasis on the importance of nature protection due to the increasing risks of animal-to-human transmission of diseases that can be attributed to growing habitat destruction and associated increase in human-wildlife contact.

This assessment concludes that UNEP needs to resolve three main internal challenges going forward:

(i)   How can UNEP best equip itself to influence the efforts of the UNDS, its member states, the private sector, and other key stakeholders to respond urgently and effectively to the increasingly visible existential threats to the planet in the years ahead, in a context of limited human and financial resources? This links to the question of how can UNEP further increase resources and enhance internal control over their use when most of its financing is directed towards implementing specific donor-supported projects?

(ii)   How best to clarify persisting ambiguities and resolve internal tensions between normative versus operational activities between HQ and some ROs, taking into account management intent and donor expectations? UNEP could for instance ensure that its normative and operational work is mutually reinforcing and thus avoid opportunistic and undue emphasis on seeking support for disparate small projects that have modest impact and are unlikely to be scaled up.

(iii)   How to identify more clearly the results of UNEP's direct actions and outputs, both for the UN system and its member states? This includes the impacts of its normative, information and advocacy activities, its environmental policy and governance advice, and its associated knowledge products, in addition to those of the donor-funded projects for which it serves as the implementing agency.

The full list of key strengths and areas for improvement are noted in Box 2.

2.2. UNEP'S PERFORMANCE RATING SUMMARY

The performance conclusions consider four key attributes of an effective organisation: (i) whether it understands future needs and demands; (ii) whether it is organised and makes use of its assets and comparative advantages, including operating in coherent partnerships; (iii) whether it has mandate-oriented systems, planning and operations; and (iv) whether it adapts / makes consistent improvements according to its resource level and operational context.

For the 2020 assessments, further consideration is throughout also given to the organisation's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and its universal and transformational effect on UNEP's mandate, mission, operations and activities.

Box 2. Main strengths and areas for improvement in the MOPAN 2020 assessment

Main strengths
- Organisational architecture and operating model are supportive of the broader mandate.

  – Institution is guided and overseen by a periodic assembly (UNEA), consisting of 193 member states, and its Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR).
  – UNEP possesses competent and dedicated managers and staff.
  – Strategic plans are based on a long-term vision and align with the corporate mission and mandate as well as the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.
  – Projects and strategic plans are adaptable and adjustable based on consultation with and participation of external stakeholders.
  – Wide varieties of collaborative arrangements and partnerships exist based on comparative advantage.

● Newly revised policies and frameworks appear to be strengthening the organisation across the performance areas.

  – UNEP's Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework, Resource Mobilisation Strategy, Partnership Policy and Procedures, Delegation of Authority Policy and Framework, and Anti-fraud and Anti-corruption Guidelines, and other key policies and guidance documents, have been updated and revised during the current assessment period.
  – The first Strategy for Private Sector Engagement was issued in 2019, and application of this strategy has begun.
  – UNEP is successfully applying the UNDS reforms.
  – Organisational response to COVID-19 demonstrates adaptive management and substantive relevance.
  – Knowledge products are perceived as timely, useful, and of good quality, and are appreciated by partners and other stakeholders.

Areas for improvement

● Operational versus normative role is not clearly understood or universally implemented across the organisation.
  – Senior management is clear on UNEP's overarching normative nature, but application across the organisation is not universally observed.
  – Continued reliance on donor funding influences project selection and complicates an internal and external understanding, and appreciation of, the normative versus operational roles and thus UNEP's ability to deliver on its broader mandate.

● Results-based management remains a work in progress.
  – Improvements to results-based budgeting continue, despite the constraints of the current UN cost accounting systems.
  – Sub-programme results indicators and targets could be more outcome-oriented and clearly and explicitly linked to those at the contributing project level.

● Resource structures to support operations and organisational effectiveness.
  – UNEP's ability to deliver its PoW based on approved strategies and its comparative advantages could be strengthened through an increase in its unrestricted financial resources and greater internal control over budget allocation and use.
  – Resources for evaluation could be increased and made less dependent on donor-funded project budgets, allowing greater capacity to focus on sub-programme and special initiative performance and results, whose lessons may be more useful.

● Project-level monitoring, oversight, efficiency, and replicability.
  – Up-front analysis of institutional capacity, reputational risk, and sustainability could strengthen project design and initial quality.
  – Monitoring and oversight of implementation could be improved, including of the newly revised Environmental Social Sustainability Framework.
  – Poor recent project evaluation results show that effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability need to be improved.
  – Ex-post evaluation of project success factors, scale-up, and replicability could be enhanced and an assessment added of the performance of the executing agency or agencies and of UNEP itself as the implementing agency.

FIGURE 4: PERFORMANCE RATING SUMMARY FOR UNEP
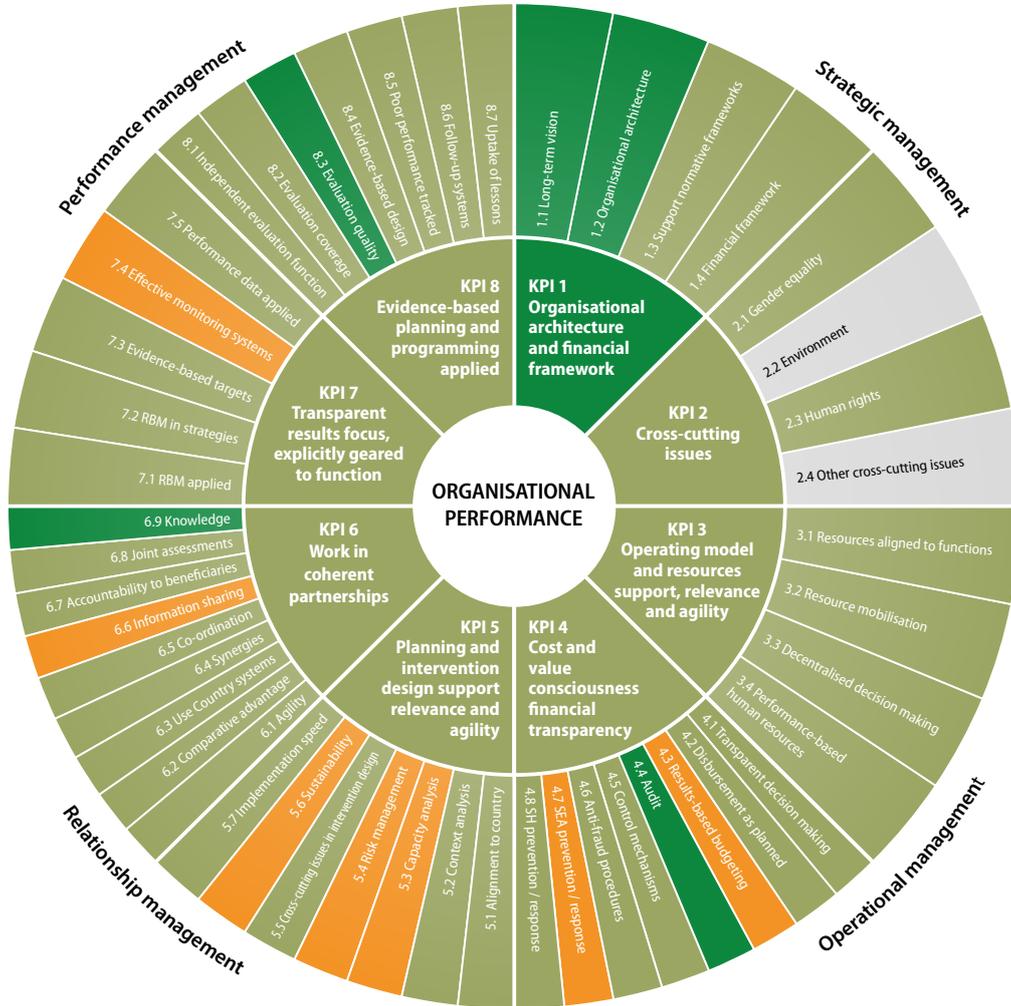
How to read these charts
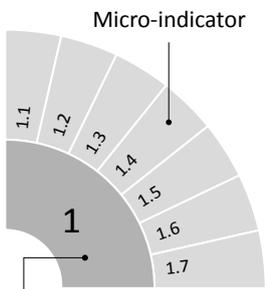
Micro-indicator

Key Performance Indicator

Highly satisfactory (3.51-4.00)

Satisfactory (2.51-3.50)

Unsatisfactory (1.51-2.50)

Highly unsatisfactory (0-1.50)

No evidence / Not applicable

HIGHLIGHTS BY PERFORMANCE AREA

Strategic Management

Legend:
- **Highly satisfactory** (3.51-4.00)
- **Satisfactory** (2.51-3.50)
- **Unsatisfactory** (1.51-2.50)
- **Highly unsatisfactory** (0-1.50)
- **No evidence / Not applicable**

Chart segments: 1.1 Long-term vision, 1.2 Organisational architecture, 1.3 Support normative frameworks, 1.4 Financial framework, 2.1 Gender equality, 2.2 Environment, 2.3 Human rights, 2.4 Other cross-cutting issues

KPI 1 Organisational architecture and financial framework; KPI 2 Cross-cutting issues

Strategic Management KPIs	KPI Score
KPI 1: The organisational architecture and the financial framework enable mandate implementation and achievement of expected results.	3.55
KPI 2: Structures and mechanisms support the implementation of global frameworks for cross-cutting issues at all levels	2.84

UNEP's strategic direction continues to evolve and improve over time. This was also recognised in the previous MOPAN assessment, which compared the MTS for 2018-21 with its predecessor (2014-17). This process has advanced further with the recently approved MTS for 2022-25, which differentiates sub-programmes according to whether they are "thematic" (climate action, nature action, and chemicals and pollution action), "foundational" (science-policy, and environmental governance), and "enabling" (financial and economic transformations and digital transformation, the latter being completely new). The new MTS also highlights the functional relationships among sub-programmes, which was not the case in the past. There is now greater focus and indication of relative priorities. However, this can be challenged by requests from member states through UNEA, if not well aligned to the MTS.

The new MTS articulates UNEP's comparative advantage as its capacity to provide up-to-date environment-related scientific knowledge for member states' policies and interventions, and to provide guidance and support for improved environmental governance at the national and global level. UNEP's organisational architecture was adjusted during the assessment period to better support for implementation of strategic plans. Nevertheless, the financial framework is still constraining due to its heavy reliance on earmarked donor funding. This reduces UNEP's flexibility to allocate resources and may perpetuate ambiguities over the relative importance and relationship between its normative and operational roles.

UNEP seeks to integrate the cross-cutting issues of gender equality, women's empowerment, and human rights (as UNEP's core activities are cross-cutting by nature, environment is not considered separately from its overall

performance in this report). Strong attention to gender balance is clearly reflected in its own internal leadership, management, and staffing. However, UNEP has made greater progress in achieving a gender balance internally than in the results of its projects. This shortcoming was evident both in strategic documents and during interviews. The organisation has emphasised that environmental rights are human rights, highlighting the need to protect environmental defenders. However, less attention is given to this concern in its operations despite its acknowledged importance. Both gender equality and human rights could be strengthened at both strategic and project levels.

Operational Management
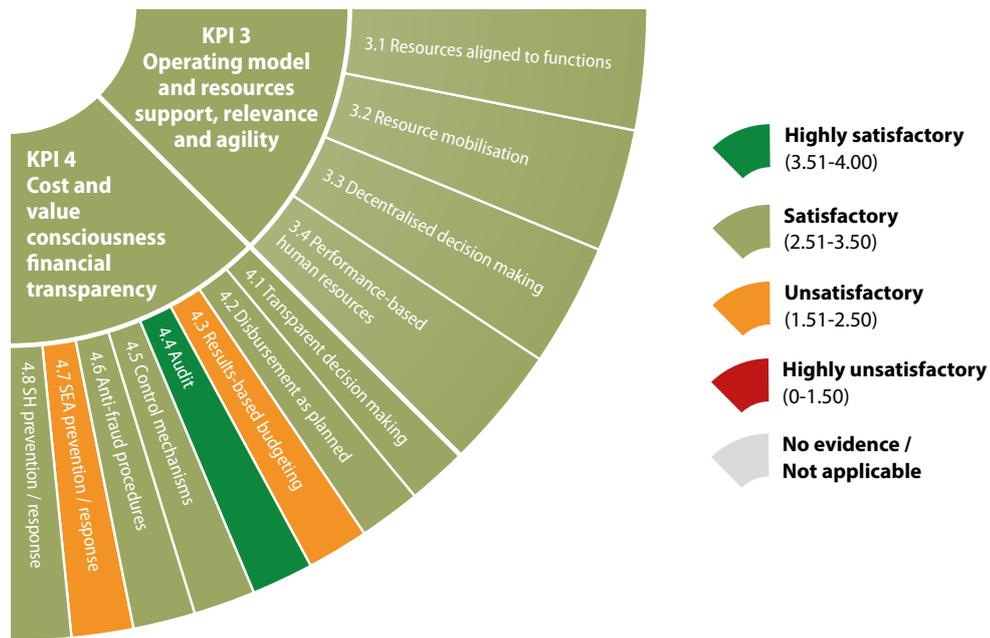
Operational Management KPIs	KPI Score
KPI 3: The operating model and human and financial resources support relevance and agility.	3.30
KPI 4: Organisational systems are cost- and value-conscious and enable transparency and accountability.	3.06

UNEP's assets and capacities are well aligned with the strategic directions established in its MTS and associated PoWs. Existing mechanisms ensure continuing relevance, agility, and accountability. However, UNEP remains highly dependent on earmarked funds from key donors, particularly GEF and GCF. This can also be characterised as a working modality as GEF, GCF, EC projects are designed together with governments and key stakeholders. At least half of GEF, GCF, and EC projects are developed at the request of governments, in line with country policies, and are also aligned with UNEP's MTSs and PoWs. Projects are executed by country and other local partners where UNEP is the implementing agency. UNEP attempts to ensure that new projects are consistent with the current MTS and PoW through a project quality design review process. UNEP's overall financial and human resources – and its country presence – remain limited. It is seeking to increase the financial resources for the EF, as these allow it greater freedom in its substantive work. This fund ultimately depends on the level of voluntary contributions from member states and other partners, including the private sector. Despite some recent success in obtaining "soft earmarking" for the use of financial resources from a few bilateral donors and increasing private sector contributions, voluntary contributions from member states continue to be limited and variable.

UNEP modifies its operating model as its sub-programmes evolve over time and adapts its activities to changing external circumstances, both at the programme and project level. Its proactive response to COVID-19 at both levels during 2020 provides a good illustration of its agility and flexibility. While there are areas in which accountability can be improved, there has been progress as UNEP strives to further strengthen the organisation's results focus and associated management practices. UNEP is also seeking to strengthen its ability to carry out its normative role and align the design of its operations more closely with the priorities associated with this role.[22] UNEP is making the donor-funded projects for which it is the implementing agency more efficient and effective and their results more sustainable. At the same time, it is reviewing both the number and scope of its knowledge products to ensure their continued relevance and quality. UNEP's performance on cost and value consciousness and financial transparency is good, although it could be strengthened at the sub-programme level. It also has measures in place to prevent and address fraud, corruption, sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and sexual harassment (SH) risks in accordance with the policies and guidance issued by the UN Secretariat. While there has been an effort to consolidate some functions or separate some responsibilities, UNEP depends significantly on the actions of other UN entities, especially the UN Office in Nairobi (UNON) for training and OIOS for investigations into SEA and SH allegations.

Relationship Management
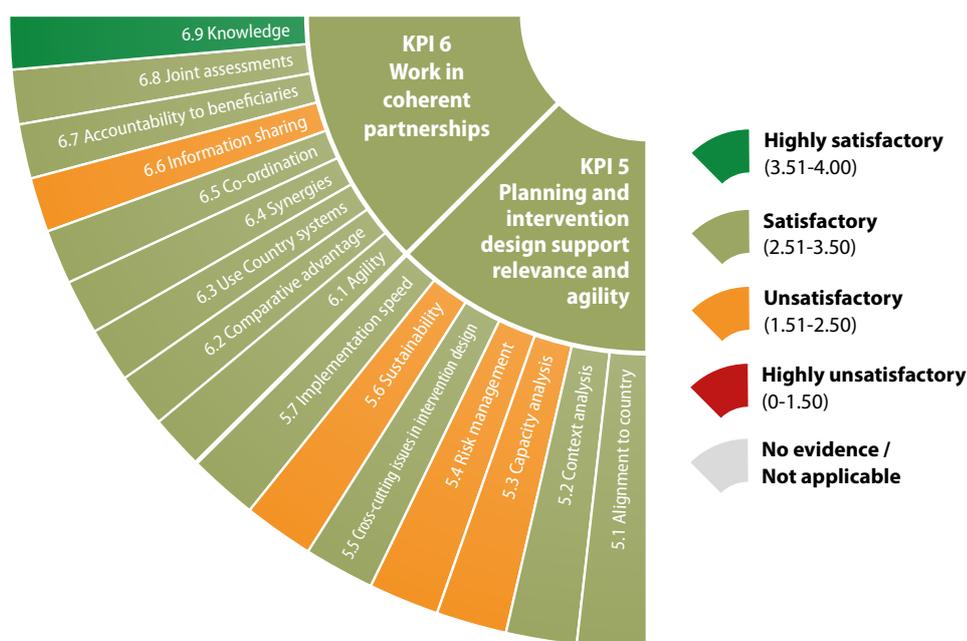
Relationship Management KPIs	KPI Score
KPI 5: Operational planning and intervention design tools support relevance and agility within partnerships.	2.74
KPI 6: Working in coherent partnerships directed at leveraging and catalysing the use of resources.	3.03

UNEP's operating model relies on a broad range of country and other partners for its resources and for executing the projects where it is the implementing agency. This enhances and sustains its relevance and ability to leverage effective solutions for environmental issues and challenges, while strengthening its capacity to maximise the results of the interventions it supports. UNEP's partnerships are critical to its ability to produce knowledge products and support pilot, capacity-building, and other interventions on the ground. They support UNEP in providing advice to its

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22   UNEP ensures that all new projects for which it is the implementing agency are now fully consistent with its normative role, which was not the case previously.

member states on environmental policies and actions by drawing on current and consolidated scientific knowledge on the growing global and local environmental challenges.

UNEP has a range of partnerships and other collaborative arrangements with stakeholders. These include key donors, national governments, other UN entities, academic and scientific research institutions, NGOs, financial intermediaries, and the private sector. They are based on each partner's comparative advantage, and are formalised mainly through specific partnership co-operation agreements (PCAs) and memoranda of understanding. At the project level they are structured through specific legal agreements, such as non-financial legal agreements (e.g., memoranda of understanding) or financial agreements (e.g., small-scale funding agreements and project agreements. UNEP's partners are screened and subjected to an up-front risk assessment, as set out in its 2011 Partnership Policy and Procedures document, revised and updated in late 2019.[23] UNEP also issued its first Private Sector Engagement Strategy in October 2019. Executing partners at the country level are actively involved in project preparation as well as implementation, including helping to undertake contextual and situational analysis, capacity analysis, risk identification and mitigation, integration of cross-cutting issues such as gender and human rights, and definition of measures to promote sustainability. However, several of these areas would benefit from strengthening based on evaluation results.

UNEP's partnerships are important for leveraging and catalysing financial and knowledge resources. They can be used to mobilise co-financing for project implementation from governments, other domestic counterpart resources, GEF, GCF, EC, and other donors. UNEP is also committed to supporting South-South and triangular co-operation and knowledge exchange among countries, including through multi-country operations and the production and dissemination of key knowledge products. Developing these products involves strong collaboration with scientific and other experts, including editors, authors, and peer reviewers associated with a wide variety of institutions in both developed and developed countries. Some of these documents are annual, such as the climate change-related *Emissions Gap*, *Adaptation Gap* and the *Frontiers: Emerging Issues of Environmental Concerns* reports. Others are more periodic, such as the flagship *Global Environmental Outlook* reports, the most recent being *GEO-6*,[24] published in 2019. These reports are designed to inform national policy and decision makers, as well as the general public.

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23   This policy is nearing the end of a pilot implementation phase and expected to go into effect by the end of 2021.

24   See https://www.unep.org/resources/global-environment-outlook-6.

Performance Management
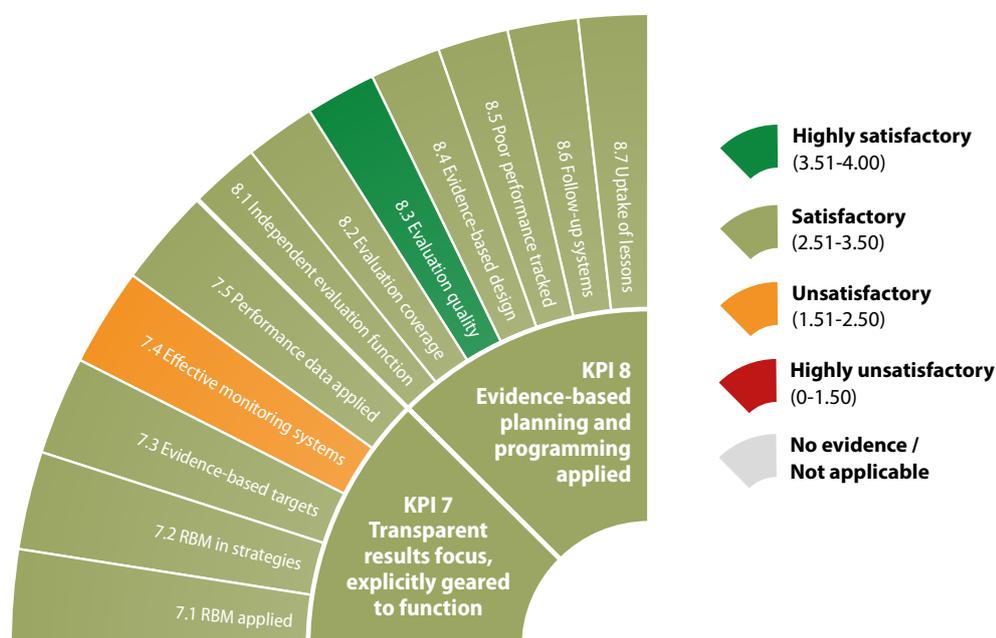
Performance Management KPIs	KPI Score
KPI 7: The focus on results is strong, transparent and explicitly geared towards function.	3.03
KPI 8: The MO applies evidence-based planning and programming.	3.12

UNEP's systems are increasingly geared towards managing and accounting for results. UNEP has increased its results focus over time and seeks to strengthen RBM and budgeting, including during the present assessment period. There is greater attention given to incorporating lessons learned from prior experience and programme, sub-programme, and project evaluation recommendations into its evolving MTSs, PoWs, and project designs. However, this remains a work in progress, especially for results-based budgeting and costing intended sub-programme outcomes in PoWs. UNEP reviews performance-related information on a quarterly, annual, and biannual basis and uses this information to make adjustments while implementing sub-programmes and projects. Monitoring and reporting by executing partners at the project level remains weak, however, and could be strengthened.

UNEP's evaluation function is largely independent, although the Evaluation Office reports to the ED and not directly to **UNEA.** UNEP's governance set up limits the ability of the Evaluation Office to report directly to UNEA. Thus, it would be helpful to ensure that evaluation findings are systematically presented to and discussed by the governing bodies on a regular basis. This could be done at the initiative of the ED, and would allow the CPR to consider the evaluation report together with the management response and provide guidance. Moreover, the Evaluation Office relies significantly on donor-financed project budgets and fees, rather than core funding, for its project level mid-term and terminal evaluations. It would be useful for CPR/UNEA to review the adequacy of this office's resources, as well as its financial independence. Although UNEA approves the Evaluation Office's two-year work plan, attached to each PoW, its current funding still leads to a donor-driven bias in favour of project evaluations to the detriment of sub-programme evaluations and the assessment of broader initiatives. As the 2019 OIOS evaluation also concluded, these more strategic assessments may provide richer learning opportunities for the organisation. UNEP evaluations are carried out by experienced consultants and are of good quality. Internal mechanisms and incentives exist for ensuring evaluation lessons and recommendations inform new strategic plans and projects. These mechanisms and incentives

have received renewed support from UNEP's leadership, which values the evaluation function and the evidence-based planning it promotes. In practice, despite the relatively lower share of resources spent, evaluation feedback appears to have more influence on programme and sub-programme planning than on new project design. This is largely due to a combination of timing and substantive constraints as sometimes evaluation reports become available too late in the project preparation process or are not of direct relevance to the new project design. Evaluations could give greater attention to whether the projects for which UNEP is the implementing agency and that are intended to "pilot" innovative approaches are the right vehicles. In addition, when projects are successful, evaluations might be more helpful if they also seek to determine the extent to which the approaches they embody are being scaled up and replicated elsewhere.

Results
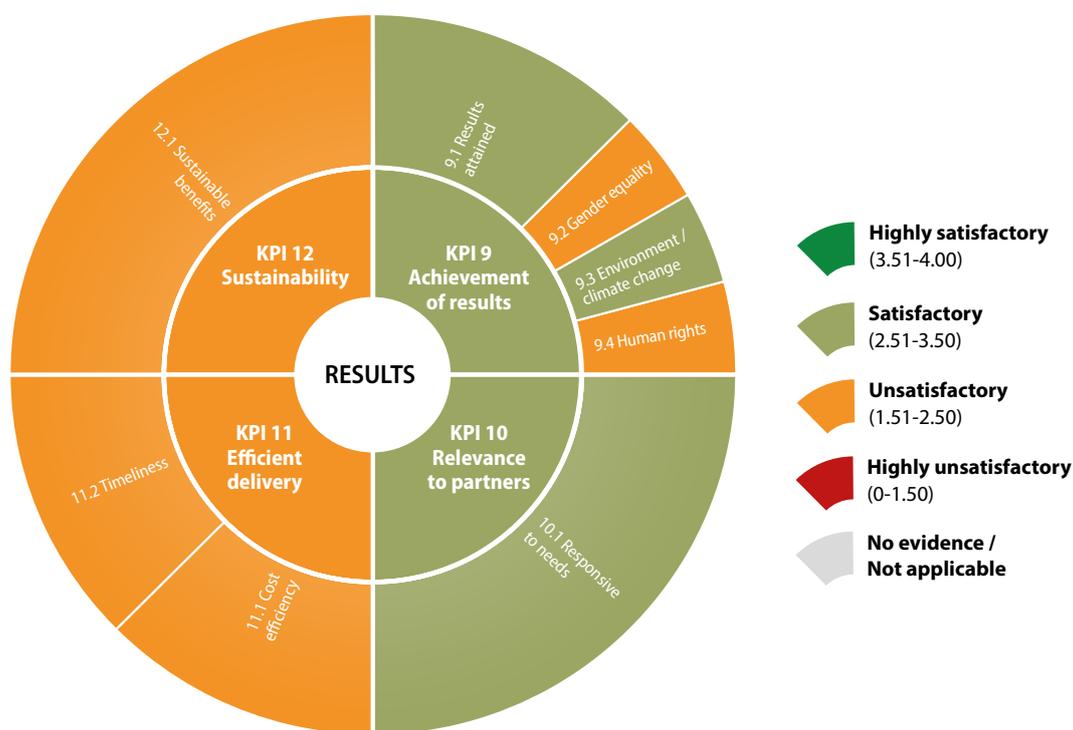
Results KPIs	KPI Score
KPI 9: Development and humanitarian objectives are achieved, and results contribute to normative and cross-cutting goals.	2.67
KPI 10: Interventions are relevant to the needs and priorities of partner countries and beneficiaries, as the organisation works towards results in areas within its mandate.	3.00
KPI 11: Results are delivered efficiently.	2.00
KPI 12: Results are sustainable.	2.00

UNEP reports improved results over time but there remains a disconnect between programme and project-level outcomes. The programme and sub-programme results reported during the assessment period achieved much higher satisfactory ratings than the projects which largely implement these broader initiatives. UNEP's PoW and sub-programme results[25] improved significantly between 2016-17 and 2018-19, which UNEP attributes at least in part to

25   As reported in its annual and biannual PPRs.

more realistic initial target setting for the more recent PoW. However, project performance is weaker, as summarised every two years in the Evaluation Synthesis Reports (ESRs).[26] This is especially the case for criteria such as efficiency and sustainability, which are not specifically assessed in the Programme Performance Report (PPRs), as well as effectiveness. As UNEP's sub-programmes are reportedly implemented through projects, this apparent "disconnect" is puzzling and requires clarification but might be explained by the fact that different methodologies are used to assess overall programme, sub-programme and individual project performance. Although the Evaluation Office periodically assesses sub-programmes as well as projects, only two sub-programme evaluations were issued during this assessment period.[27] Most of the donor-funded projects that were evaluated over the period were associated with climate change, ecosystems, and chemicals and pollution sub-programmes, none of which were evaluated by this office. The efficiency and sustainability of the projects for which UNEP is the implementing agency require greater attention. Project efficiency, for instance, is assessed by UNEP primarily in terms of timeliness of implementation rather than cost-effectiveness. Low project sustainability ratings in turn clearly suggest the need for substantial strengthening of the associated financial and institutional preconditions. The achievements of the PoW and sub-programmes would benefit from greater ex-post assessment.

Neither of these periodic reporting exercises clearly assess UNEP's performance per se, and inconsistencies in assessments do not necessarily indicate inadequate results systems. While it undoubtedly plays a role, UNEP alone is not responsible for the results reported in the PPRs and ESRs. Thus, the extent to which results can be attributed to its interventions, as opposed to those of other actors, remains unclear. For example, member states implement as many actions in the PoWs, if not more, as UNEP. UNEP is proposing to clarify the extent of its influence on sub-programme achievements, but this information will not be available until at least 2023 (i.e., when the first year of implementation of PoW 2022-23 is assessed). For most donor-funded projects, country-level executing agencies are responsible for delivering outputs and achieving the desired outcomes.[28] At present there is insufficient consideration of UNEP's specific role as the implementing as opposed to executing agency in this process. Moreover, UNEP's results reporting does not include the influence and impact of its flagship and knowledge products, which are likely to be substantial. While their impact and attribution are admittedly difficult to assess, these documents are nonetheless widely disseminated and constitute a significant share of UNEP's direct outputs. Feedback from the partner survey (see section on Lines of Evidence) indicates that they are viewed as timely, useful, and high quality. This is also the case for its normative and advocacy activities through the UN Environment Management Group, which it chairs, and in the UN country-level sustainable development co-operation planning process. More specific evaluation studies of these roles could be useful. Thus, the broader results of UNEP's activities are underreported at present.

2.3 UNEP'S FUTURE TRAJECTORY

UNEP's performance trajectory over the past few years has been positive and is expected to continue to improve. UNEP's journey during the assessment period has involved two distinct phases. The first – from mid-2016 to late 2018 – was characterised by uneven leadership, a different vision from the previous period in terms of operational priorities, lessening attention to its normative role, and a weakening focus on results. These contributed to declining external stakeholder confidence and internal staff morale. The second phase – from late 2018 to the present – has witnessed a strong and consistent effort by the new leadership to reverse these trends in a consultative and participatory way.

While key aspects have improved, the internal change process continues. Among the improvements is a clear definition of the relationships among the organisation's seven strategic priorities and sub-programmes, introduced

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26   Prepared by the UNEP Evaluation Office.

27   Resource efficiency, prepared at the beginning of the period, and Environment under review, issued close to the end.

28   There are a few exceptions, such as preparation of the GEO reports for example, in which UNEP is the executing as well as the implementing agency, but these are a small minority of all donor-financed operations for which it is the designated implementing agency, most of which occur in a specific country or countries.

in MTS 2022-25 for the first time. A second is the decision (reflected in the PoW 2022-23) that future programme and sub-programme performance assessments will now seek to capture the results of UNEP's actions to support PoW implementation at three distinct levels: its direct support, the results enabled by it, and the results it influenced. These are important steps forward and will allow for better accounting and more precise assessment of UNEP's performance in the future.

However, ambiguities and tensions remain over the dichotomy between UNEP's normative versus operational roles and activities, including between HQ and some ROs. While both roles are important, their compatibility and need for mutual support could be stressed, reinforced, and ensured. Additional clarity from senior management may still be necessary and internal incentives adjusted accordingly. Positive early signs include the more inclusive preparation of the new MTS and PoW, the ongoing internal change process, and the recent implementation of new strategies and policies (e.g., the Strategy for Private Sector Engagement, Revised Partnership Policy and Procedures, and the Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework). Other encouraging developments are the clear initiatives and planning for RBM improvements via Umoja[29] updates, and the increasing importance of normative outputs and roles. As these had either taken place or were being piloted at the end of the current assessment, their impact remains to be seen. However, this area is expected to improve within the next assessment period.

UNEP is aware of future challenges and the need to augment and diversify its resources. This awareness is revealed in the MTS 2022-25, which highlights both the "planetary crisis" that the world is now confronting and its negative implications for global human development. It also recognises the internal financial and other needs if it is to step up its response effectively. These include substantially greater and more diversified financing for the EF and enhanced flexibility in allocating its resources. UNEP is also conscious of the performance areas and sub-areas that require further strengthening based on the 2019 OIOS evaluation, its own assessments, internal and external "discovery sessions," and deliberations over the past two years. It has explicitly identified most of them in the new MTS and PoW, including some not specifically addressed in the present exercise. These include the need for stronger collaboration with the MEAs, which UNEP has now formally pledged to do in the years immediately ahead.

Increasing demands from UNEP's member states and other stakeholders will be a key challenge in the coming years, requiring it to use its limited human and financial resources in the most efficient and cost-effective way. This is regardless of whether resources can be successfully increased and diversified in the next few years. Sustaining and advancing UNEP's current positive trajectory will thus depend not only on the organisation itself, but also on its external donors, and especially its member states, equipping it with the resources it needs to address the environmental issues that require enhanced global leadership. The magnitude and interconnectedness of global environmental challenges mean that UNEP's resources will always be limited – its task is therefore to use these resources strategically and efficiently to achieve its ambitious objectives and priorities.

Clarifying UNEP's operating model to delineate the links between its donor-funded projects and broader normative mandates and activities in its evolving corporate strategic planning documents could affect the future trajectory positively. To help resolve the ambiguities and tensions between its normative and operational roles, UNEP could further clarify how the actions and intended "outcomes" identified in its strategic planning documents (MTSs and PoWs) are translated into donor-financed projects on the ground. Alternatively, it could also clarify how these projects, which individually and collectively operationalise the strategic plans, support UNEP's normative role. This would be especially useful considering that these operations must respond to the priorities of specific donors as well as to those of UNEP, which may not always fully overlap.

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29 Umoja, which means 'unity' in Kiswahili, is the United Nations' administrative reform initiative, which involves a complete re-work of the way the organisation manages its administration, in both business processes and Information Technology solutions.

The final challenge would be to clearly identify the results of UNEP's direct actions and outputs, both for the UN system and its member states. These include the results of (i) its normative, information, and advocacy activities; (ii) its environmental policy and governance advice; (iii) its associated knowledge products; and (iv) the knowledge products of the donor-funded projects for which it serves as the implementing agency. Doing so might also help resolve the apparent disconnect between its reported results at the PoW and project levels. This suggests the need to shift the focus of its evaluation efforts to give less emphasis to donor-required project-level assessments and greater attention to its other initiatives and types of activity. It also indicates a need to make greater resources available for UNEP's Evaluation Office, so it is less dependent on earmarked donor project financing and requirements.

These challenges notwithstanding, UNEP's trajectory during the new MTS period is likely to remain positive. This judgement is based on UNEP's strong and consistent leadership since late 2018, its more focused guiding strategic framework, and its clear awareness of the need to further improve its RBM, operational efficiency, internal accountability, and lesson learning from its prior experience and evaluation results. Further improvements in the coming years are likely to be driven by continued internalisation of the ongoing UNDS reforms and implementation of the internal change process that began in 2019 and which appears to be backed by firm senior management commitment and governing body support.

DETAILED LOOK AT KEY FINDINGS

Detailed look at key findings

3.1. ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

This chapter provides a more detailed assessment of UNEP's performance across the five performance areas – strategic management, operational management, relationship management, and performance management and results – and the KPIs that relate to each area, accompanied by their score and rating.

MOPAN Performance scoring and rating scale

🟩 Highly satisfactory (3.51-4.00)   🟨 Satisfactory (2.51-3.50)

🟧 Unsatisfactory (1.51-2.50)   🟥 Highly Unsatisfactory (0.00-1.50)   ⬜ No evidence / Not applicable

Assessment key findings draw on information from the three evidence sources (document reviews, interviews and a partner survey – see Chapter 4 for more information) and the section uses quotes from the survey to illustrate findings and highlight feedback from stakeholders. Further analysis per micro-indicator and detailed scoring can be found in Annex A, while the full survey results are included in Annex C. For the full list and citation details of the documents referred to, please see Annex B.

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT
Clear strategic direction geared to key functions, intended results and integration
of relevant cross-cutting priorities.
UNEP's strategic direction and management continue to evolve and improve. This was also recognised in the previous MOPAN assessment, which compared the medium-term strategy (MTS) 2018-2021 with its predecessor for 2014-17. This process has advanced further during the current assessment period (mid-2016-20), and the recently approved MTS for 2022-25 provides clearer focus and prioritisation by differentiating between the thematic, foundational, and enabling sub-programmes. It also highlights the functional relationships across sub-programmes, which was previously not the case. However, this improved focus for the MTS can be challenged by requests from member states through UNEA, if the requests are not well aligned with the MTS. From this perspective, some member states report they find it difficult to estimate the impact of their requests, for example in terms of cost.

Gender and human rights need greater attention at the project level as cross-cutting issues.[30] UNEP seeks to integrate gender equality, women's empowerment, and human rights more generally in strategic planning and target setting, notably where it acts as the implementing agency. Gender balance is reflected in its internal leadership, management, and staffing. Progress on gender in operational and strategic management is evident, but is less apparent in project results – a shortcoming noted in recent strategic documents and interviews. Less attention has been given to human rights more generally in UNEP's operations despite its acknowledged importance. UNEP recognises environmental rights are human rights, emphasising the need to protect environmental defenders by applying its recently amended Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework. The framework requires indigenous and vulnerable peoples to be safeguarded from potential adverse impacts that may result from UNEP's projects.

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30   UNEP's mission and mandate proactively promote environmental sustainability both within the UN system and among its member states. Since UNEP's core activities on the environment are cross-cutting by nature, environmental sustainability is not considered separately from its overall performance in this report.

KPI 1: Organisational architechture and the financial framework enable mandate implementation and acheivement of results

Score: 3.55

There has been constant improvement in the MTSs and their associated PoWs since 2014. The most recent strategic planning documents are the MTS 2022-25 and the PoW for 2022-23, approved in February 2021 and with implementation beginning January 1, 2022. This assessment reviewed the MTSs for 2014-17 and 2018-21, as well as the PoWs for 2016-17, 2018-19, and 2020-21. The improvements to these strategic documents are evident. Established around a long-term vision consistent with the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, UNEP's key strategic documents during the evaluation period contain specific references to the SDGs and relevant indicators. Planning is based on situational analyses, drawing on accumulated knowledge of the state of the global environment presented in GEO reports and other key UNEP environmental stocktaking and flagship reports. The strategic documents are based on lessons extracted from the annual and biannual PoW performance reviews and project-specific or higher-level (sub-programme and other) corporate evaluations, with results synthesised in biennial reports by UNEP's Evaluation Office.

UNEP's organisational architecture is congruent with its long-term vision and operating model, which support implementation of its strategic plans. UNEP's organisational architecture consists of seven divisions at HQ, six regional offices, five sub-regional offices, six country and several other offices. The architecture and operating model are adjusted periodically to ensure continuing relevance and alignment with the current MTS. Strategic plans and targets are implemented through sub-programmes, each comprising projects funded by various sources. Each sub-programme is implemented structurally through a matrix with a co-ordinator at UNEP HQ and a sub-coordinator in each of the ROs (Figure 3).

The new structure supports better internal co-ordination. Until 2020 the sub-programme co-ordinators in Nairobi reported to a number of different division directors depending on the substance of each sub-programme. They have now been centralised in the new PPD to ensure better overall co-ordination of PoW implementation. The new operating model allows for stronger co-operation across the organisation both vertically and horizontally, and responsibility for results are clearly identified both at division and RO levels.

UNEP's strategic plans are based on its comparative advantages and aligned with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. According to survey results (see Chapter 4, Lines of evidence for details of the survey), partners are positive about the clarity and vision demonstrated in UNEP's strategies and policies (Figure 5). While most respondents agreed that UNEP's strategies and policies demonstrate a good understanding of its comparative

Figure 5. UNEP'S STRATEGIES AND POLICIES DEMONSTRATE CLARITY OF VISION
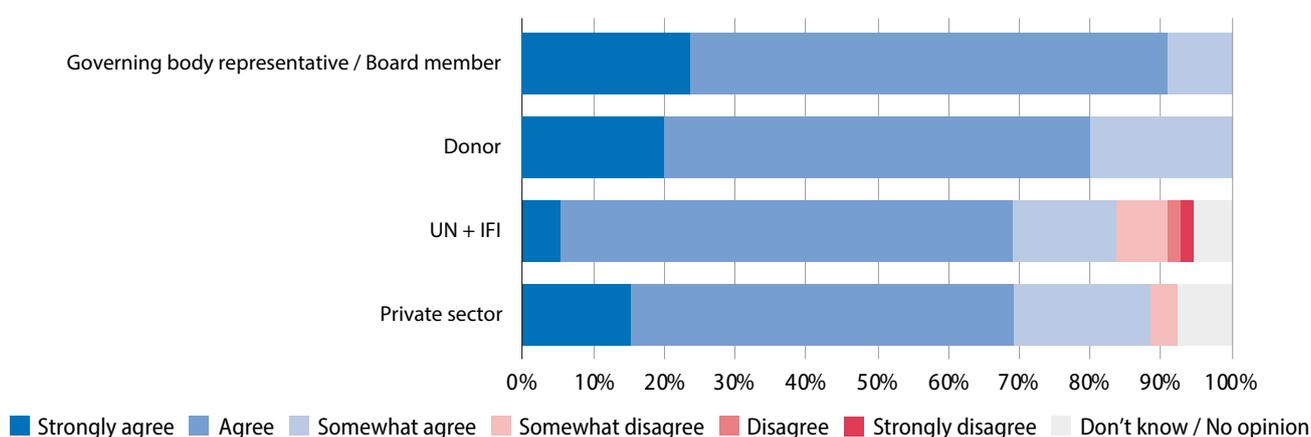
Legend: Strongly agree | Agree | Somewhat agree | Somewhat disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know / No opinion

Source: Based on responses to the 2020 MOPAN external partner survey: UNEP, January 2021-March 2021.

advantage, it could be more explicit within strategic planning documents. Systems are being put into place to monitor and track results against the SDGs through PoW indicators and targets, but this process has not been completed. These results are publicly available and are reported annually and biannually for each sub-programme through UNEP's Programme Performance Reports (PPRs). Progress on sub-programme implementation is also reported to member states through quarterly reports to the CPR that summarise key highlights and the main opportunities, challenges, and responses faced by each one.

UNEP remains highly dependent on external donors for its funding, but seeks to align donor resources with its MTS and PoWs. Funding sources consist of GEF, GCF, UN entities, the EC, individual countries, and the private sector. Collectively they provided approximately 80% of UNEP's resources administered between 2016 and 2019. Viewed from a different perspective, UNEP can be seen as an "instrumental" entity for the global funds which, according to their policies, allow or encourage UN entities to become executing or implementing entities. From either standpoint, UNEP seeks to align the use of these resources with its MTS and PoW priorities both within and across sub-programmes. This is confirmed by part of its project design quality review process, which requires that each new project design include a statement as to how it will contribute to the current PoW. However, the extent of this alignment depends on the priorities of beneficiary countries and donors.

UNEP has limited discretion in the use of funds. UNEP has greater discretion over the use of the resources in the EF, which is funded through voluntary contributions by member states. However, it financed only around 13.5% of UNEP's actual expenditures in 2016-17 and 15.6% in 2018-19 (see Chapter 1, Finances and operations). UNEP continues to seek flexible funding from its member states and other key stakeholders, especially bilateral donors, and private sector partners. UNEP issues a Voluntary Indicative Scale of Contributions from each member state for the EF for this purpose and tracks actual contributions. It reports some limited success in seeking flexible bilateral funds – two Scandinavian countries have recently provided what UNEP refers to as "soft earmarking" resources. However, it recognises that greater flexibility might be required.

At least 15% of UNEP's total resources are currently pooled funding and are destined for jointly implemented projects or programmes with other UN entities, especially UNDP and FAO. Partner survey respondents mostly agreed that UNEP's financial framework supports effective implementation of its mandate and strategy. However, UNEP senior managers affirm that additional resources and greater flexibility would strengthen the organisation's ability to implement its mission. It faces additional constraints from the recent freeze in UN regular budgets, which has contributed to the inability to fill numerous permanent staff vacancies over the assessed period.

KPI 2: Structures and mechanisms support the implementation of global frameworks for cross-cutting issues[31] at all levels in line with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda principles

Score: 2.84

UNEP has taken positive steps to promote gender equality, but more needs to be done – especially in projects. It has had a publicly available policy and strategy on gender equality and the environment since 2015. It has produced other relevant products on this subject, including a UN Environment Gender Implementation Parity Plan in 2018, and most recently a report on gender and climate change in the context of COVID-19 (2020). Gender-related indicators are included in strategic plans, and project designs are screened and evaluated for gender elements. Human and financial resources have been made available for this purpose, and staff training has been carried out. Survey respondents strongly agree that UNEP promotes gender equality (Figure 6). However, UNEP recognises in its current and upcoming

31   As UNEP's core mission and mandate include environmental sustainability and climate change, these are not assessed as part of this analysis of cross-cutting issues. The analysis of KPI 2 in this assessment, unlike the previous MOPAN assessment, refers only to MIs 2.1 (gender equality and the empowerment of women) and 2.3 (human rights, including protection of vulnerable people – i.e., those at risk of being "left behind").

Figure 6. UNEP PROMOTES GENDER EQUALITY
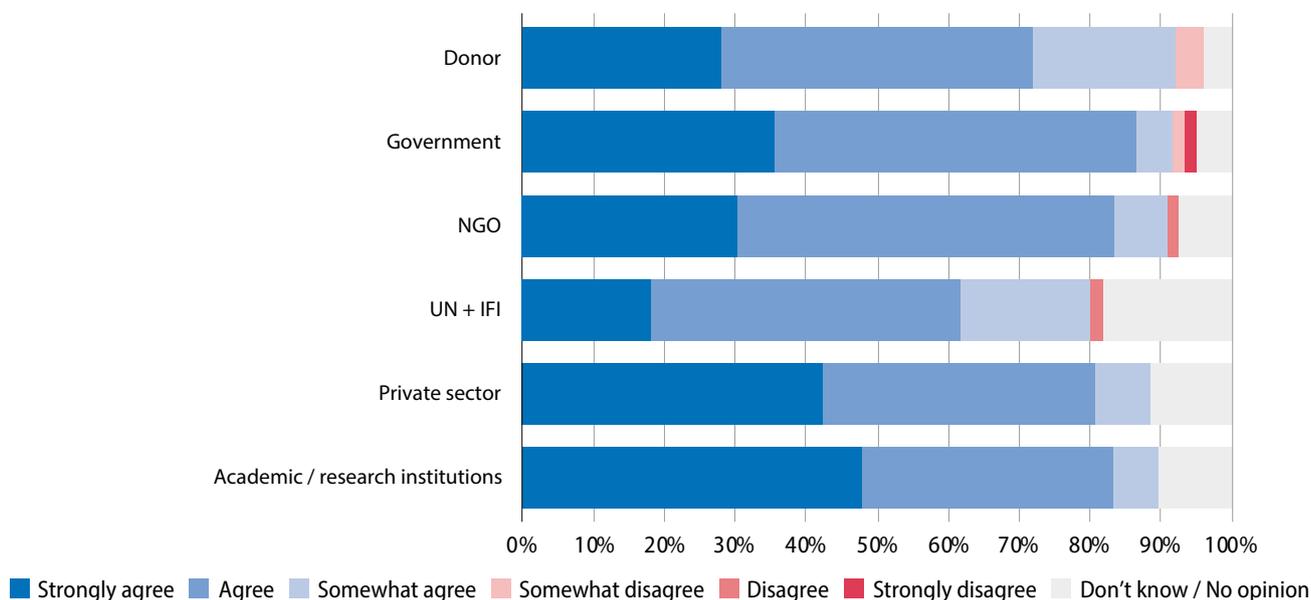
■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know / No opinion

Source: Based on responses to the 2020 MOPAN external partner survey: UNEP, January 2021-March 2021.

MTSs that additional work is needed, especially in project implementation and monitoring. Recent UNEP project terminal evaluations also confirm mixed results in this regard.

UNEP has pursued and largely achieved gender parity in staffing and management. The current Executive Director and Deputy, the Chief Scientist, three of the seven Division Directors, four of the six Regional Directors (or Acting Directors), all senior management, and the recently appointed head of the New York office are currently women.

In the past UNEP gave less attention to human rights issues, but their importance are now explicitly recognised in MTS 2022-25. There are existing activities under the Environmental Governance sub-programme, managed by the Environmental Law Division. The primary instrument for human rights is UNEP's ESSF, which has been in place since September 2014 and was revised and broadened in February 2020. This framework refers specifically to indigenous peoples and other vulnerable populations who could potentially be adversely affected by projects where UNEP is the implementing agency. UNEP has also affirmed that environmental rights are human rights, and since 2016 has provided policy guidance on "environment, human rights, and addressing inequalities" and their "integration into the UNEP organisational culture and programmatic activities".[32] Greater attention could be given to human rights in UNEP's strategic plans and corporate objectives as well as in project design documents, which do not currently include specific human rights indicators. UNEP also lacks a specific tracking system for this purpose, and does not focus on human rights in project evaluations, other than in the form of plans to mitigate social safeguard risks. Despite positive survey results, UNEP's work on human rights could be strengthened further both in strategic planning and intervention, specifically in indicators, targets, and accountability systems.

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32   UNEP (2016), *Policy Guidance on Environment, Human Rights and Addressing Inequalities: Integrating Human Rights in the UNEP Organisational Culture and Programmatic Activities*, https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/28398

OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT
Assets and capacities organised behind strategic direction and intended results,
to ensure relevance, agility, and accountability.

While UNEP's assets and capacities are well organised to support the strategic directions established in its MTSs and associated PoWs, it remains heavily dependent on earmarked funds. Mechanisms are in place to ensure continuing relevance, agility, and accountability. However, as previously observed, UNEP relies significantly on earmarked funding from key donors, particularly GEF and CGF, and on country and other partners to execute the projects for which it is the implementing agency. At the same time, its overall financial and human resource levels and country presence is limited. During the assessment period, UNEP actively sought to increase the financial resources made available for the EF, over whose allocation it has greater control. However, this ultimately depends on voluntary contributions from member states and other partners, including the private sector. Despite recent success in obtaining some "soft earmarking" funds from some bilateral donors and increasing private sector contributions, those from member states continue to be limited and vary over time.

UNEP adapts its project and programme activities to changing external circumstances. Its proactive response to COVID-19 at both levels is a good illustration of this agility and flexibility (Box 3).

While there are areas where accountability can be improved, there has been progress and UNEP is striving to further strengthen its results focus and associated management practices. It is also seeking to further enhance the organisation's normative role and align more closely the design of its operations on the ground with its normative priorities as set out in its key strategic documents (i.e., MTSs and PoWs). It is also trying to make the donor-funded projects for which it is the implementing agency more efficient and effective, including boosting the sustainability of results. At the same time, it is reviewing both the number and range of its knowledge products to ensure their continued strong relevance and high quality.

KPI 3: The operating model and human and financial resources support relevance and agility   Score: 3.30

UNEP's operating model and organisational structure have been progressively aligned with its current strategic plan (MTS 2018-2021) and PoWs 2018-2019 and 2020-2021. UNEP staffing and resource allocation across functions are aligned with its organisational goals and priorities as set out in these documents. Numerous organisational changes were made soon after the previous ED took office in mid-2016. These enhanced the role of the Regional Office Directors by incorporating them into the Senior Management Team (SMT) and reorganised and renamed the HQ Divisions. Despite being hindered by resource constraints, these internal restructuring efforts had a clear purpose, were aligned with corporate priorities, and sought to strengthen co-ordination of MTS and PoW implementation. UNEP is supporting the UN country resident co-ordinator system under the UNDS reforms both through cost-sharing and resident co-ordinator nominations. It also applies mutual recognition principles in key functional areas, especially procurement.

The capacity of UNEP's human resources is highly appreciated. Most respondents to the partner survey (Figure 7) agreed that UNEP's staff are sufficiently experienced and skilled to work in the various contexts in which it operates (Figure 8). Quantity, not quality, of staff is perceived by partners to be a constraint: only 67% of respondents agree that UNEP has sufficient staff – either in or accessible to the countries where it operates – to deliver its intended results. This was one of the survey questions that received the lowest level of partner agreement and reflects the organisation's limited in-person presence in partner countries.

All staff, including senior management, undergo an annual performance assessment, in accordance with UN Secretariat policies and procedures. It is based on annual staff work plans that are linked to the annual work

Box 3. How has the COVID-19 response affected UNEP's mandate and delivery?

UNEP has shaped its response to COVID-19 by adjusting implementation of the current PoW (2020-21) and the recently approved MTS (2022-25). More strategically, it has developed a four-phase COVID response plan that includes short and long-term actions. The short-term response focuses on the medical and humanitarian emergency and especially the safe management and disposal of medical and other pandemic-related hazardous waste. The medium and longer-term aims are to encourage and assist member states, particularly lower and middle-income states, to implement a "transformational change for nature and people" by using the opportunity presented by the emergency to "green" their economies, "build back better," promote the modernisation of global environmental governance, and recover from the pandemic in a more environmentally sustainable and climate-friendly way.

UNEP's immediate response to the short-run challenges focus on:
- knowledge, information, and awareness
- medical waste country management assessments
- policy and legal frameworks for managing COVID-19 medical waste
- segregation, sorting, storage, and stockpiling of COVID-19 waste;
- New infrastructure and capacity.

Its longer-term response will focus on: improving science and policy options to better understand and respond to zoonotic threats; investing in nature for improved human health, sustainable socio-economic recovery, poverty reduction, and livelihood recovery; providing science, technical support and advocacy to ensure progress on environmental issues through global processes; raising awareness of the links between nature, health, and sustainable living; and continued learning.

In investing to build back better over the longer term, UNEP has pledged to:

- reach real economy actors to rebuild, scale up, and accelerate sustainable consumption and production, and create new green jobs

- link recovery efforts with the clean energy transition, nature-based solutions, and the Paris Agreement

- support governments in rebuilding the next generation of social, ecological, and productive infrastructure

- evaluate the opportunities for intergovernmental bodies with regards to virtual meetings – applying rules of procedure to online meetings, setting out guidance and identifying barriers and possible reforms; examining and working to overcome the logistical challenges of moving to online platforms; organising training and staffing needs to ensure that both it and the Secretariats of the MEAs have the tools they need to support virtual meetings

- ensure close co-ordination with MEAs and ROs as it moves forward with its efforts to modernise global environmental governance.

As one practical result of these COVID-related activities, UNEP has used up-to-date scientific information to inform decision making on the possible causes of the pandemic.

Figure 7. UNEP HAS A SUFFICIENT NUMBER OF STAFF, EITHER IN OR ACCESSIBLE TO COUNTRIES WHERE IT OPERATES, TO DELIVER INTENDED RESULTS

Strongly agree   Agree   Somewhat agree   Somewhat disagree   Disagree   Strongly disagree   Don't know / No opinion
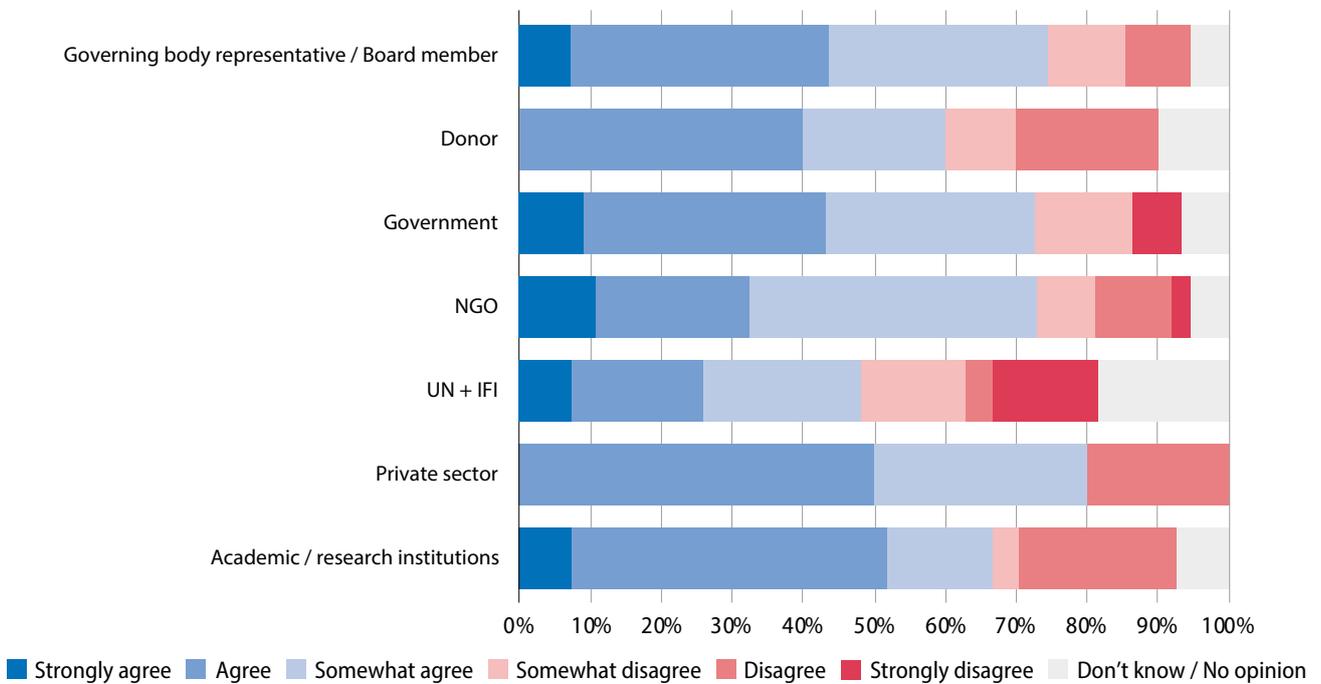
Source: Based on responses to the 2020 MOPAN external partner survey: UNEP, January 2021-March 2021.

Figure 8. UNEP'S STAFF ARE SUFFICIENTLY EXPERIENCED AND SKILLED TO WORK SUCCESSFULLY IN THE DIFFERENT CONTEXTS OF OPERATION

Strongly agree   Agree   Somewhat agree   Somewhat disagree   Disagree   Strongly disagree   Don't know / No opinion
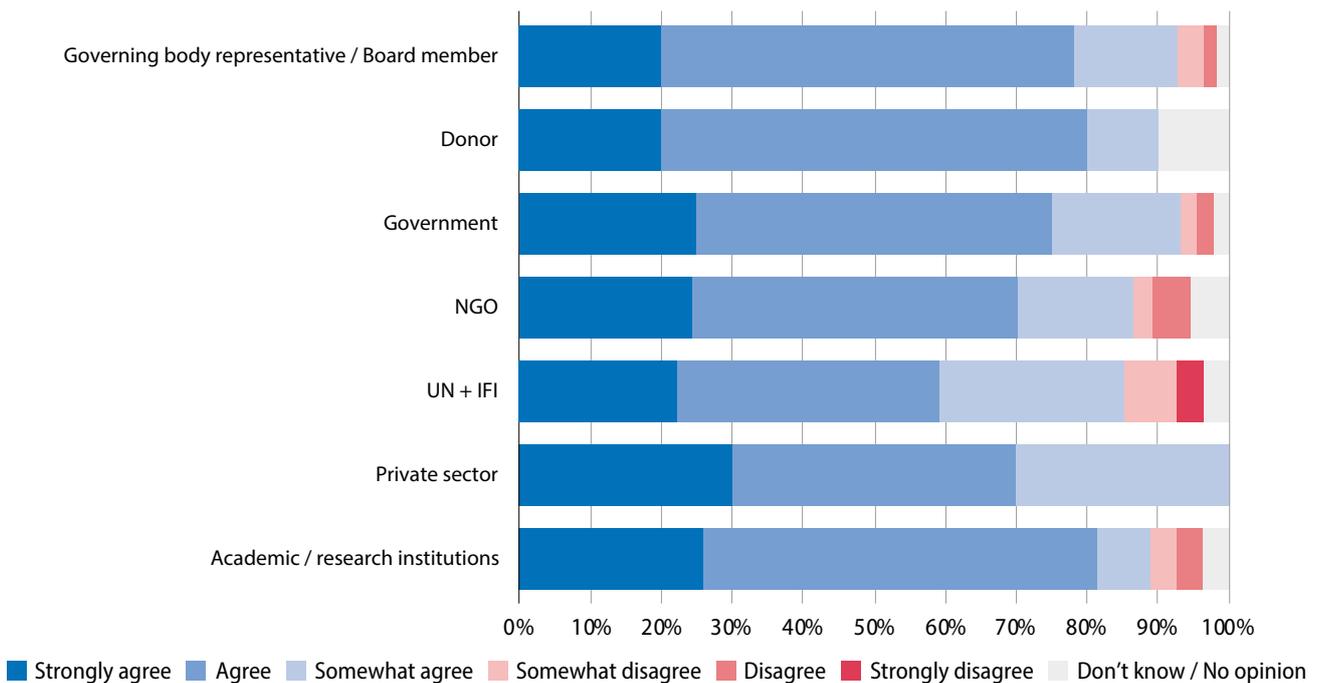
Source: Based on responses to the 2020 MOPAN external partner survey: UNEP, January 2021-March 2021.

programme, in turn derived from the current biannual PoW and thus UNEP's corporate objectives. The performance assessment system feeds into decision making about staff careers. There is an internal process to manage staff disagreements and complaints over performance assessments.

There is an organisation-wide policy for delegating decision making, including to the Divisional and RO levels. This refers specifically to UNEP's Delegation of Authority Policy and Framework, approved on 4 November 2019. The inclusion of the RO Directors in the SMT, which began in 2017, has continued under the current ED, thereby ensuring their continued active participation in organisational decision-making processes. The survey asked whether UNEP can make strategic decisions locally – 87% of respondents agreed.

UNEP has stepped up its efforts to expand and diversify its funding base, both with donor governments and the private sector. While it continues to obtain substantial multi-year financing from the GEF, GCF, and other earmarked sources, it also seeks increased domestic funding from partner countries and other institutions, including the private sector. While its efforts to do so intensified during the assessment period, especially in relation to voluntary contributions to the EF, it has had limited success so far. Meanwhile, UNEP now systematically collects the 1% levy agreed under the UNDS reforms, and recompenses the UN Secretariat.

KPI 4: Organisational systems are cost- and value-conscious and enable transparency and accountability

Score: 3.06

UNEP's updated Partnership Policy and Procedures align with Umoja and are to be fully implemented in 2021. The revised policy is currently being piloted to ensure it is aligned with Umoja-2 – a system that aims at efficient and transparent resource management to improve results.[33] While the policy includes a general statement on resource allocation to partners, this also depends significantly on external sources of global and other earmarked funding, which must likewise approve their financing for specific projects. As UNEP's support is available to all 193 member states, it does not formally prioritise countries, nor does it have country strategies. However, in practice, it seeks to give greater attention to developing, low-income, landlocked, and fragile and conflict-affected countries.

UNEP's resource allocation procedures allow for adaptation to different contexts both at the sub-programme and project level. Within each MTS, adjustments are made to the successive PoWs based on changing conditions, performance against key indicators and new requests from member states. In projects, resource allocations are often adjusted following mid-term reviews (MTRs) or other key supervision reports based on observed implementation performance. The survey asked governing bodies the extent to which UNEP's resource allocation was transparent and consistent with agreed strategic priorities; 82% agreed it was. The four stakeholder partner groups were also asked whether UNEP openly communicates criteria for allocating resources; 64% agreed (Figure 9).

UNEP sets indicative budgets in its PoWs for allocating resources to each sub-programme. It also sets expected disbursements to executing partners for the projects for which it is the implementing agency, as indicated in the respective project design documents and associated legal and partnership agreements. It regularly tracks disbursements at the sub-programme and individual project levels. Explanations for where disbursements deviate from plans, including changing contextual factors, are considered in annual and biannual PPRs for the sub-programme level, in project implementation progress reports, in MTRs, and in terminal evaluations. However, in some cases these processes could be strengthened to improve efficiency.

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33 Umoja is a single, global solution that seeks to enable efficient and transparent management of the United Nation's financial, human, and physical resources and to improve its programmatic delivery. Umoja 2 includes a diverse suite of projects to aid strategic planning, budgeting, and performance management. It is expected to provide managers at UNEP and other entities under the UN Secretariat with new tools for top-down and bottom-up planning, to proactively track deliverables and key performance indicators, and to blend internal and external data to communicate the results of programmes to diverse stakeholders. It also includes an element to support management of implementing partners, fundraising and donor relationships, supply chains, and conferences and events.

Figure 9. UNEP OPENLY COMMUNICATES THE CRITERIA FOR ALLOCATING FINANCIAL RESOURCES
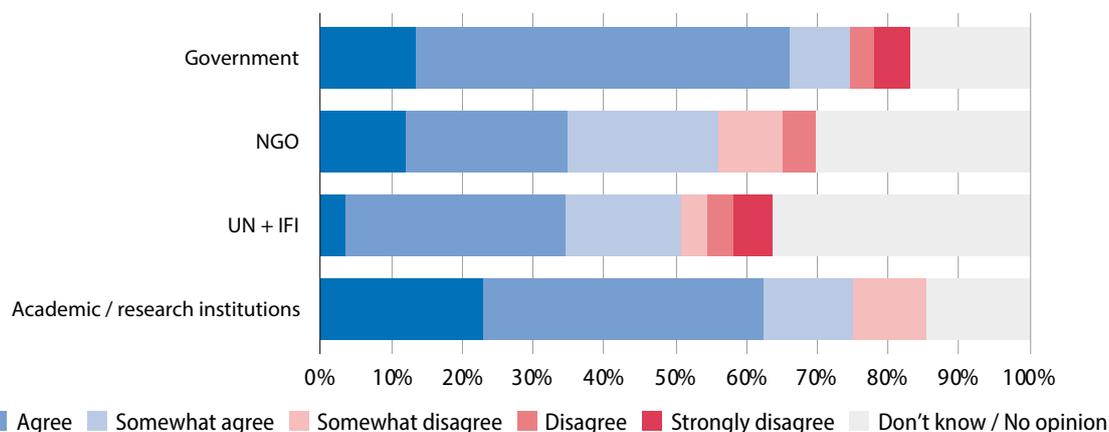
Source: Based on responses to the 2020 MOPAN external partner survey: UNEP, January 2021-March 2021.

Variances, including in implementation timing, are caused by both external and internal factors. UNEP's lack of physical presence in many of the countries where its projects are implemented means it lacks day-to-day project oversight and supervision. It therefore is heavily reliant on executing agency reporting. These are possible contributing factors to project performance issues that could be strengthened. Only just over half of survey respondents agreed that UNEP provides reliable information on the timing and amount of financial allocations and disbursements.

Though recent budgets (2018-19, 2020-21, and 2022-23) align financial resources with strategic objectives and the intended results for sub-programmes, there are some omissions. Systems track the respective costs and disbursements for sub-programmes and projects, but not for each management result or "output" identified in the PoWs. While the budgets for each PoW sub-programme and donor-funded project provide estimate costs for the implementation of each, this is currently not the case for each expected sub-programme achievement or activity listed in the PoWs.

Results-based budgeting remains a work in progress. The chain from project results to sub-programme management results and to overall sub-programme results remains incomplete because the specific links between individual projects and desired higher-level results are unclear. Moreover, UNEP does not track costs at the country level. This disconnect derives primarily from shortcomings in the UN Secretariat's results-costing and cost accounting procedures. Thus, despite the introduction of internal improvements in its budget management since 2018, full results-based budgeting at UNEP remains a work in progress. When asked whether UNEP applies the principles of results-based budgeting and reports expenditures according to results, 78% of governing body members agreed. However, the understanding of RBM appears to vary widely among different stakeholders.

External financial audits are conducted annually and comply with international standards. This is confirmed by a recent external audit, conducted at the end of December 2019. Both management responses and action plans to address the gaps and weaknesses identified are available. This is also the case for recommendations from performance audits involving UNEP[34] that are periodically carried out by the OIOS. UNEP tracks compliance with these recommendations and evaluation reports.

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34   In some cases, they are conducted together with other Nairobi-based UN entities, specific MEAs or other co-ordinating bodies whose secretariats are hosted by UNEP.

UNEP follows the Secretary General's requirements on fraud and corruption, which have been in place since September 2016. In addition, its Corporate Services Division (CSD) issued interim anti-fraud and anti-corruption guidelines in May 2019 that were subsequently finalised and came into effect in 2020. These guidelines define the roles and responsibilities of management and staff in applying and complying with them. Most staff have been trained in these requirements, their application is regularly monitored, and the results periodically reported to the governing body. Appropriate channels exist for reporting suspicion of misuse of funds, and annual reports of cases of fraud, corruption, and other financial irregularities, together with the actions taken in response, are made public. At the project level, UNEP recognises that reporting of misconduct depends largely on country implementing partners as its capacity for independent verification at this level is limited. The majority of governing body representatives surveyed agreed that UNEP adequately addresses issues and concerns raised by internal control mechanisms.

UNEP is bound to the Secretary-General's Bulletin on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (SEA)[35] and other UN Secretariat policies and directives on SEA. The policies apply to all UN staff, and UNEP indicated that, as such, it is not required to have a dedicated policy on SEA. ST/SGB/2019/8 of September 2019 provides a broad definition of discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and abuse of authority and relies on ST/AI/2017/1 for detailed procedures for handling preliminary assessment reports of possible incidences of unsatisfactory conduct. UNEP issued an action plan for SEA prevention in 2020 and there are resources and internal structures in place to implement the Secretariat's SEA policy both at HQ and in the field, as well as mechanisms to track implementation. Most UNEP staff have undertaken mandatory training in this policy.

PSEA could be strengthened at the project level. While UNEP has standards in place for implementing partners to prevent and respond to SEA, it is unable to ensure this through independent on-the-ground verification of individual projects. It has contributed to some inter-agency efforts to prevent and respond to SEA in the field and has participated in best practice fora at HQ. However, more could perhaps be done at the country and specific project level to increase oversight. Actions taken to address SEA allegations during the assessment period were timely, although it is the role of OIOS to undertake the actual investigations. The number of allegations and actions taken are publicly reported in a UN Secretariat annual report. UNEP adopts a victim-centred approach and has a victim-support function in place. Implementing partners were surveyed as to whether UNEP requires them to apply clear standards for preventing and responding to sexual misconduct by staff involving host populations. Slightly over half agreed. Four stakeholder groups plus the private sector were also asked whether UNEP participates in any joint or inter-agency efforts to prevent, investigate, and report on any misconduct by personnel involving host populations. Over half of respondents did not know (Figure 10) – probably due to the limited dissemination of its activities in this area.

UNEP does not have a dedicated policy statement or codes of conduct on sexual harassment; instead it applies the UN Secretariat's policy and directive. The Secretary-General's Bulletin of September 2019 also address more general issues of discrimination and abuse of authority. This document builds on and refers to more general UN staff rules. There are well-defined roles, structures, and resources established within UNEP to track the implementation of the policy. Multiple mechanisms can be accessed by staff seeking advice, informal resolution, or reporting of SH allegations. Once reported, OIOS conducts all SEA and SH allegation-related investigations. UNEP then makes the specific personnel decisions based on OIOS's findings. Very few cases were reported during the assessment period.

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35   ST/SGB/2003/13. See: https://undocs.org/en/ST/SGB/2003/13

Figure 10. UNEP PARTICIPATES IN JOINT / INTER-AGENCY EFFORTS TO PREVENT, INVESTIGATE AND REPORT ON ANY SEXUAL MISCONDUCT BY PERSONNEL IN RELATION TO THE HOST POPULATION

Legend: ■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know / No opinion
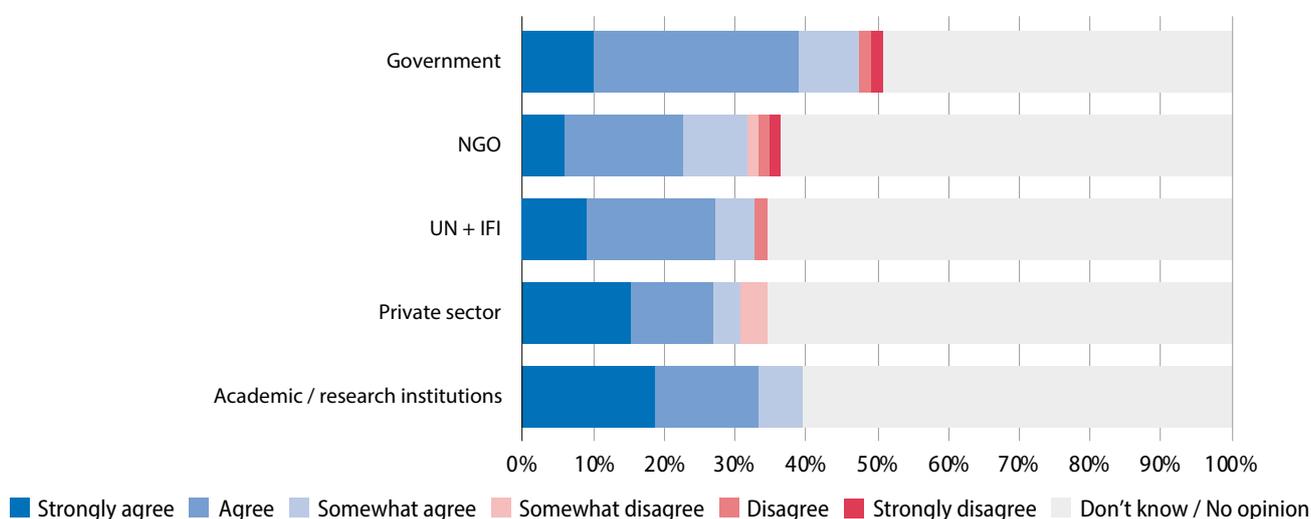
Source: Based on responses to the 2020 MOPAN external partner survey: UNEP, January 2021-March 2021.

Box 4. How has UNEP demonstrated its operational flexibility in responding to COVID-19?

UNEP has adapted to the COVID-19 crisis by moving to a virtual working environment while remaining "open for business." This response has included sharply limiting mission travel and allowing managers and staff in some cases to work from their home countries, as well as from their homes at duty stations. The pandemic affected UNEP's work programme at both the sub-programme and individual project levels, and there were some implementation delays, especially to projects. However, UNEP moved from in-person to virtual formats for interactions with member states, partners, and other stakeholders to maintain planned events and schedules.

UNEP undertook a number of administrative steps to mitigate potential risks associated with the uncertainties imposed by COVID-19, including: (i) freezing recruitment of vacant positions funded by the regular budget, except those deemed critical by the ED (e.g. the Chief Scientist), although this now seems to have been partially lifted; and (ii) being conservative in allocating core funds during 2020, only partially allocating funds for the year to enable a continuous assessment of the organisation's liquidity status. Despite these constraints, one notable recent achievement was the virtual realisation of the first half of the UNEA 5 meeting in February 2021. This allowed the governing body to formally review and approve UNEP's MTS for 2022-2025 and linked PoW 2022-2023 as originally scheduled. With implementation of these key strategic planning documents starting on January 1, 2022, this gives sufficient time for UNEP to make the necessary internal changes. However, as the biannual UNEA meetings are normally held in person in Nairobi, this pandemic-related arrangement also required the UNEA 5 meeting to be divided into two parts with the first meeting focusing on urgent and procedural questions and the second part, to be held in February 2022, on other business that would have already been considered at the same time had the pandemic not occurred.

Partners surveyed for this assessment were positive about the speed and effectiveness of UNEP's administrative and operational response to the COVID crisis. Many found the increased virtual interaction with managers and staff beneficial and praise UNEP's proactivity and flexibility on its management of projects for which it is the implementing agency. They also found helpful UNEP's timely guidance on COVID-related waste management, and its encouragement to use the pandemic as an opportunity to boost the environmental sustainability and climate-resilience of their economic recovery-related activities and investments.

RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

Engaging in inclusive partnerships to support relevance, leverage effective solutions and maximise results

UNEP's operating model relies heavily on a broad range of country and other partners both for its resources, and for executing the projects for which it is the implementing agency. UNEP's partnerships are also critical for producing useful knowledge products and to support pilot, capacity-building, and other interventions on the ground. In addition, they support UNEP provide advice to member states on environmental policies and actions based on current and consolidated scientific knowledge in terms of climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity, ecosystems and their sustainable management, pollution prevention and control, and other key and often inter-connected environment-related challenges. This enhances and helps ensure UNEP's continuing relevance as well as its ability to leverage effective solutions, and boosts its capacity to maximise the results of the interventions it supports.

UNEP has various partnership and collaborative arrangements with stakeholders. Stakeholders include key donors, national governments, other UN entities, academic and scientific research institutions, non-governmental organisations, financial intermediaries, and the private sector. As observed above, the arrangements are formalised at the project level through specific legal agreements, such as non-financial legal agreements (e.g., memoranda of understanding), financial agreements such as small-scale funding agreements, and project agreements. Based on each partner's or collaborating institution's comparative advantages, all agreements are screened and subject to a risk assessment by UNEP prior to entering into a partnership agreement.[36] The recent revision and update of UNEP's partnership policy and procedures document was undertaken in part to strengthen risk management and due diligence; clarify roles and responsibilities; streamline processes, procedures, and workflows; enhance monitoring and evaluation; and incorporate OIOS recommendations. Executing partners in countries are actively involved in project preparation and design and implementation, including contextual and situational analysis, capacity assessments, risk identification and mitigation measures, integrating cross-cutting issues such as gender and human rights, and adopting measures to promote sustainability. All these aspects are considered by UNEP's Project Review Committee (PRC), which applies the project design quality matrix to new projects. However, according to UNEP project evaluation results, several of these areas could be further strengthened in project design, including the executing institution capacity assessment, risk management, and measures for efficiency and the sustainability of project results and benefits.

UNEP's partnerships with donors and implementing agencies are important for leveraging and catalysing financial and other resources. This includes mobilising co-financing and government and other domestic counterpart resources – together with GEF, GCF, EC, and other donor funding – for project implementation. It also entails proactively supporting South-South and triangular co-operation and knowledge exchange among countries, including through multi-country operations, and the production and dissemination of well-regarded knowledge products. In some cases, such documents are issued on an annual basis, as with the climate change-related *Emissions Gap* and *Adaptation Gap* and the *Frontiers: Emerging Issues of Environmental Concerns* reports, and in others more periodically as, for instance, the flagship *Global Environmental Outlook* reports, the most recent of which, *GEO-6*, was published in 2019. All these reports are designed to inform national policy and decision-makers, as well as the general public, and involve strong collaboration with scientific and other experts as editors, lead and contributing authors, and peer reviewers associated with a wide variety of institutions in both developed and developed countries. On some specific topics, UNEP also relies extensively on collaboration with other centres (e.g. the World Conservation Monitoring Centre, the Danish Technical University, the International Ecosystem Management Partnership in Beijing, as well as NGO partners, such as the World Resources Institute) for information gathering, analysis, and dissemination; advocacy on environmental issues; and other services. Active interaction and co-ordination with partners are thus critical to its interventions and their effectiveness.

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36   Initially set out in UNEP's 2011 Partnership Policy and Procedures document, this was revised in 2019 and expected to be fully implemented in 2021. UNEP also issued its first Private Sector Engagement Strategy in October 2019.

## KPI 5: Operational planning and intervention design tools support relevance and agility in partnerships

UNEP's operational planning and intervention design improved during the assessment period. Although it does not prepare country or regional strategies, the inclusion in designs of targeted results and reference to beneficiary needs has improved. UNEP takes regional priorities into account in preparing its strategic plans through periodic regional environment ministers fora organised and hosted by its ROs, and through bilateral contact with national environmental authorities. These plans are also formally approved by the member states, first endorsed in draft by the CPR and then formally and definitively adopted by UNEA. Survey respondents agreed that UNEP's programme was designed and implemented to fit with national programmes and their results.

Accountability systems do not capture or prioritise stakeholder needs, nor do they track and report sufficiently on human rights indicators. At the design stage each project is reviewed for its alignment with the new ESSF. However, limited human resource capacity means this is not applied with equal rigour across all projects. While the programme manual notes that a process exists for updating roles and responsibilities, adequate structures and incentives for sufficient investment of time and effort in alignment processes appear to continue to be a challenge.

Tools exist for designing interventions based on contextual and situational analysis, but are not standardised across projects financed by different donors. Of the partners responding to the survey, 86% either somewhat agreed, agreed or strongly agreed that UNEP's programme is tailored to the specific situations and needs of the local context (Figure 11). Although reflection points with partners (opportunities for review when the context changes) are not a requirement, these were apparent in reviewed project design and implementation documents. However, it is difficult to change projects based on these stakeholder consultations and reflections due to information flows and resource constraints. Of the partners responding to the survey, 89% agreed to some extent that UNEP's work takes national capacity into account, including that of government, civil society, and other actors.

Figure 11. SURVEY: UNEP'S PROGRAMME IS TAILORED TO THE SPECIFIC SITUATIONS AND NEEDS IN THE LOCAL CONTEXT
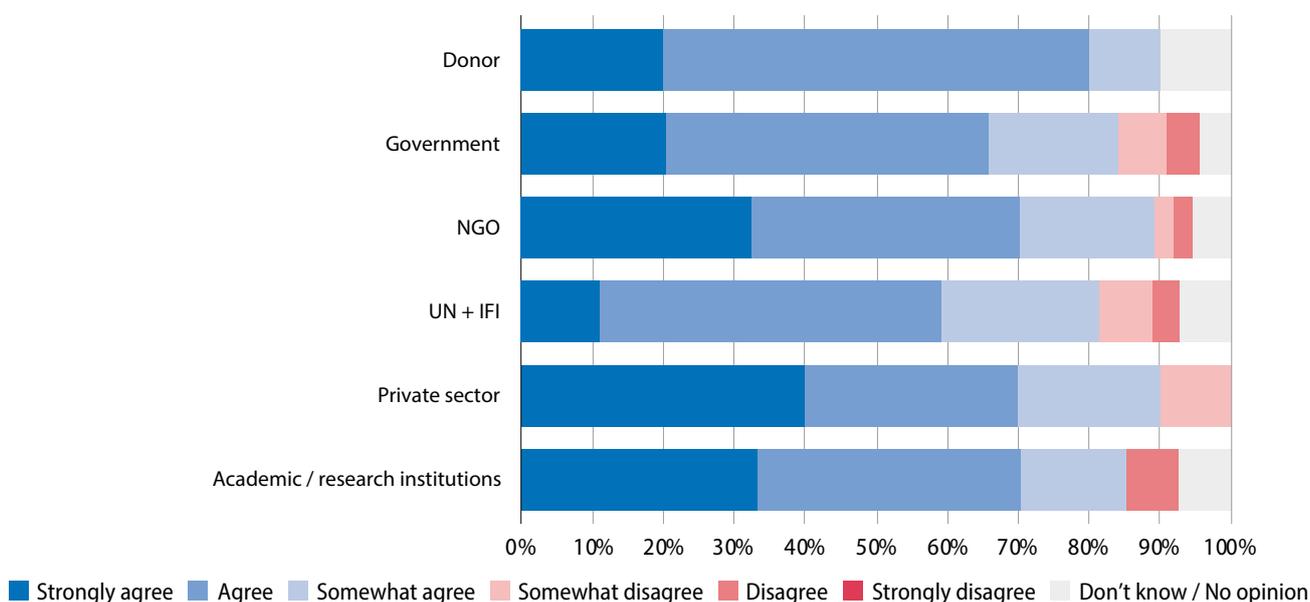
Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know / No opinion

Source: Based on responses to the 2020 MOPAN external partner survey: UNEP, January 2021-March 2021.

Capacity is not assessed systematically or in a standardised manner across projects. Reflection points with partners during implementation are not universally required. Based on an independent review of 16 recent project design documents, capacity assessment is not employed systematically or required for all interventions. Where observed, the reflection points in most reviewed project design documents are most evident through MTRs and stakeholder consultations. Clear strategies for addressing weaknesses, with a view to sustainability, are not evident or observed to be jointly conducted with development partners. It was noted that implementing partners' capacity and gaps in capacity are assessed, but not systematically or before the project is formulated.

There are detailed risk identification and management strategies in project design documents, particularly safeguards requirements. However, they are not consistent in detailing all categories of risk. Operational, strategic, political, and reputational risks were not specifically referred to across the project documents reviewed. They are only implicitly considered under "management risk" in most cases. There are requirements for project documents to include a section on project risks and this occurs to varying degrees. Most of the project design and implementation documents included analysis of operational risks and political risk, with less information and analysis on reputational risk and potential risks of misconduct in relation to host populations. "Strategic risk" is not a category/ terminology used by UNEP in their analysis, but some aspects of the project design quality assessment matrix fall under this category. All categories of risk were not systematically or explicitly analysed; however, when they were analysed, mitigation measures were explicitly stated. When asked whether UNEP appropriately manages the risks related to its programme, 82% of partner group respondents agreed (Figure 12). Assessment of gender and human rights concerns is required for all projects, but greater attention is given to the former, except when social safeguard policies are triggered (e.g., potential project impacts on indigenous peoples). However, UNEP observes that it applies human rights questions to all projects and screens every project, and that local stakeholders (rightsholders) and marginalised people are identified among the (potentially) affected people.

Analysis of cross-cutting issues (gender and human rights) in intervention design varies across projects. Requirements for projects to be gender coded and included in the project design quality assessment matrix were implemented and factored into UNEP project evaluations. All project design documents reviewed integrated gender

Figure 12. UNEP APPROPRIATELY MANAGES RISK RELATING TO ITS PROGRAMME
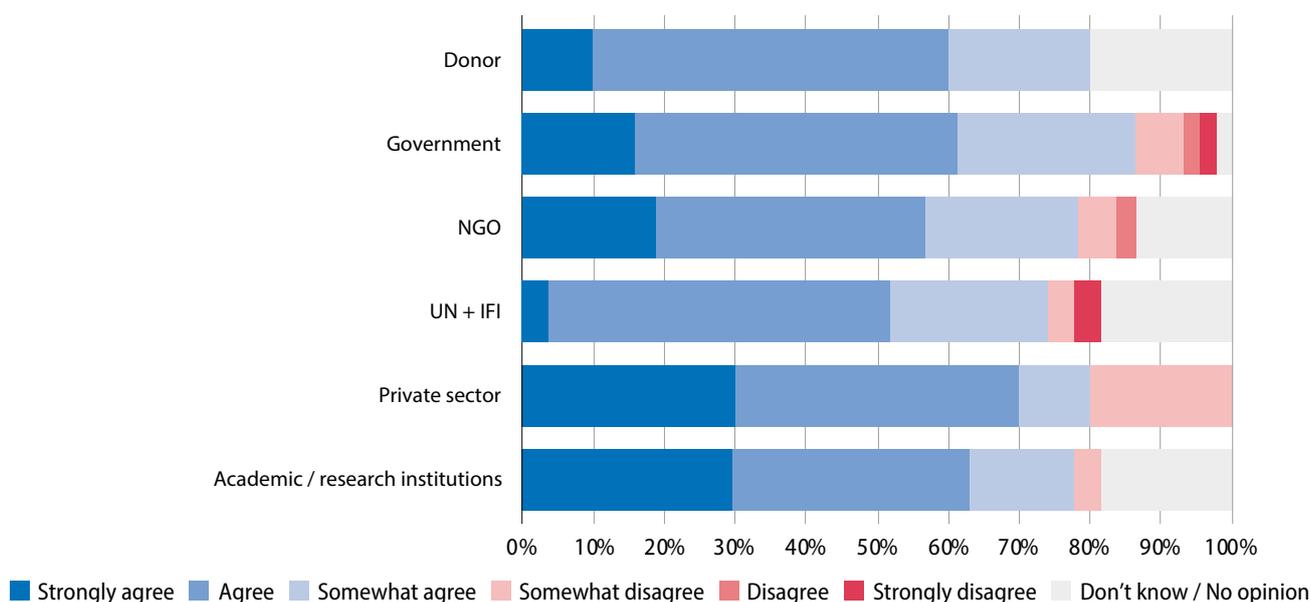
Source: Based on responses to the 2020 MOPAN external partner survey: UNEP, January 2021-March 2021.

aspects and underwent the required safeguards standards review in line with UNEP's ESSF. However, there are no requirements directly related to human rights. Projects vary greatly in monitoring and evaluating, and in their integration into planning for interventions, as these depend on donor requirements and funding arrangements. There is a need for improved monitoring against these indicators.

Project design documents contain statements on the sustainability of results, but proactive planning for long-term sustainability of project results is not required and monitoring of their sustainability is limited due to timing and resource constraints. Despite being a critical feature of project design in the programme manual, evaluations show that a substantial portion of projects for which UNEP is the implementing agency do not sustain results over time, nor do they perform well in terms of interventions planned to affect policies or legislation that may improve sustainability.[37] Thus, it would be particularly important to increase sustainability through better project design and implementation if UNEP wants to enhance its influence and impact on the ground. However, when partners were asked whether UNEP designs and implements its work so that effects and impacts can be sustained over time, on average 65% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, and 82% somewhat agreed, which is at odds with project evaluation findings.

Institutional procedures and tools support active monitoring of implementation. Management oversight and tracking of PoW and project performance by division and region through quarterly business reviews have recently been upgraded through a dashboard. UNEP does adapt its PoWs and project implementation to changing circumstances, as for example in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, there are still hindrances in benchmarking and reporting as well as implementation delays due to human resource and capacity constraints. Partners mostly agreed that UNEP adapts its work to country or regional context changes.

KPI 6: Working in coherent partnerships is directed at leveraging and catalysing the use of resources

Score: 3.03

UNEP relies substantially on external partners, including national governments, for delivering its PoWs and executing the projects for which it is the implementing agency. At the strategic level of partnerships (for formulating MTSs and POWs), agility and procedures for joint planning and programming are evident. However, joint planning and programming are limited for projects as the identification occurs at the programme framework level where partnerships are determined. Mechanisms, largely medium-term reviews and stakeholder consultations, provide opportunities to adjust programmes. Seven partner groups were surveyed on whether UNEP adapts to changing circumstances as jointly agreed with partners: 62% agreed or strongly agreed, while an additional 21% somewhat agreed (Figure 13).

UNEP's partnership arrangements and project legal agreements take into account the comparative or collaborative advantage of the executing agencies. An illustration is UNEP's co-operation MoU with the UN's Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, signed in August 2019. It emphasises their "mutual commitment to advancing universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms...in accordance with relevant universal standards and in conformity with the mandates and goals of the two Organisations." Many other examples are available. Partners were asked whether UNEP's work with its partners is based on a clear understanding of why it is best placed to target specific sectoral and/or thematic areas. Among those who responded, 71% agreed or strongly agreed, while an additional 15% somewhat agreed.

UNEP's commitment to development partnerships is clear in the priority it gives to South-South and triangular collaboration and cross-country implementation arrangements. This commitment was initially set out in 2011 in UNEP's specific policy guidance document for its PoWs. It was reaffirmed in MTS 2022-25, which states that it will "strengthen South-South and triangular cooperation to enable all member states to progress towards environmental

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37   Based on terminal evaluation reports.

## Figure 13. UNEP ADAPTS ITS WORK AS THE CONTEXT CHANGES
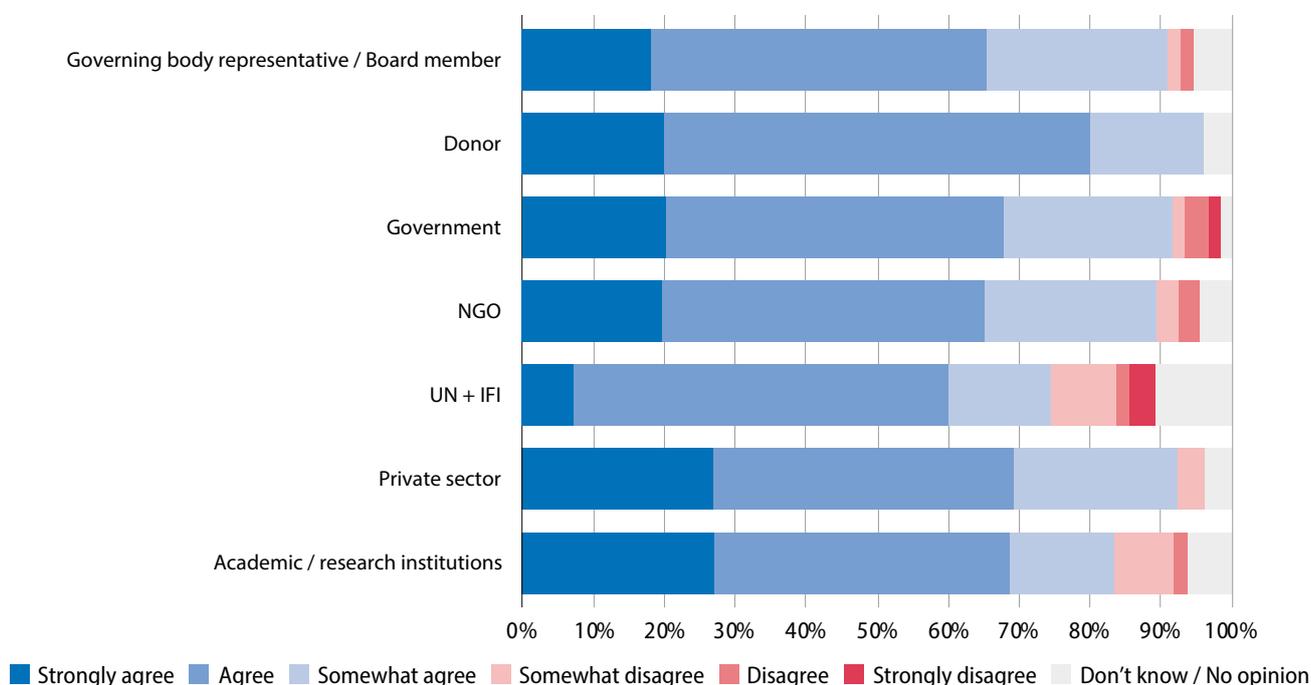
Source: Based on responses to the 2020 MOPAN external partner survey: UNEP, January 2021-March 2021.

sustainability, while fostering complementarities with North-South cooperation." More specifically this co-operation would be promoted "across its policy, programming, and partnership activities." Of the seven partner groups asked whether UNEP supports countries to build development partnerships, 76% agreed at least to some extent (Figure 14). While UNEP does not use or seek to build country systems for procurement, financial management, and safeguards *per se* – perhaps due to internal capacity constraints – 81% of surveyed partners agreed that it helped to develop country capacity for these functions.

Synergies with partners for aligning resources with the 2030 Agenda are evident in UNEP's strategic plans and in its projects for which it is the implementing agency. Since 2016, UNEP's strategic documents have referred to, and their results are tracked in terms of their contributions to, specific SDGs. All new project design documents are reviewed by the Project Review Committee to ensure that they explicitly demonstrate these links. Key business practices in terms of planning and design are also co-ordinated with relevant partners. Planning and implementation arrangements include partner and other stakeholder consultations. However, this co-ordination is less apparent in monitoring and reporting and is not standardised.

UNEP demonstrates some improved accountability and transparency. Despite UNEP's revised Access-to-Information policy and its committed alignment to the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) principles, the available evidence shows only slow movement towards greater transparency and sharing of key information with donors, strategic, and implementing partners beyond its traditional PPRs and ESRs. Standards and procedures for accountability to beneficiaries is evident through the revised (2020) ESSF and the updated partnership policy and procedures. There is guidance and training in this area, but it is not required. Survey respondents largely agreed that UNEP shares key information with partners on an ongoing basis.

Joint assessments of progress in implementing agreed commitments are carried out with donors, national implementing agencies, and other partners. A high level of joint partner and multi-stakeholder dialogue around

Figure 14. UNEP SUPPORTS COUNTRIES TO BUILD DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIPS
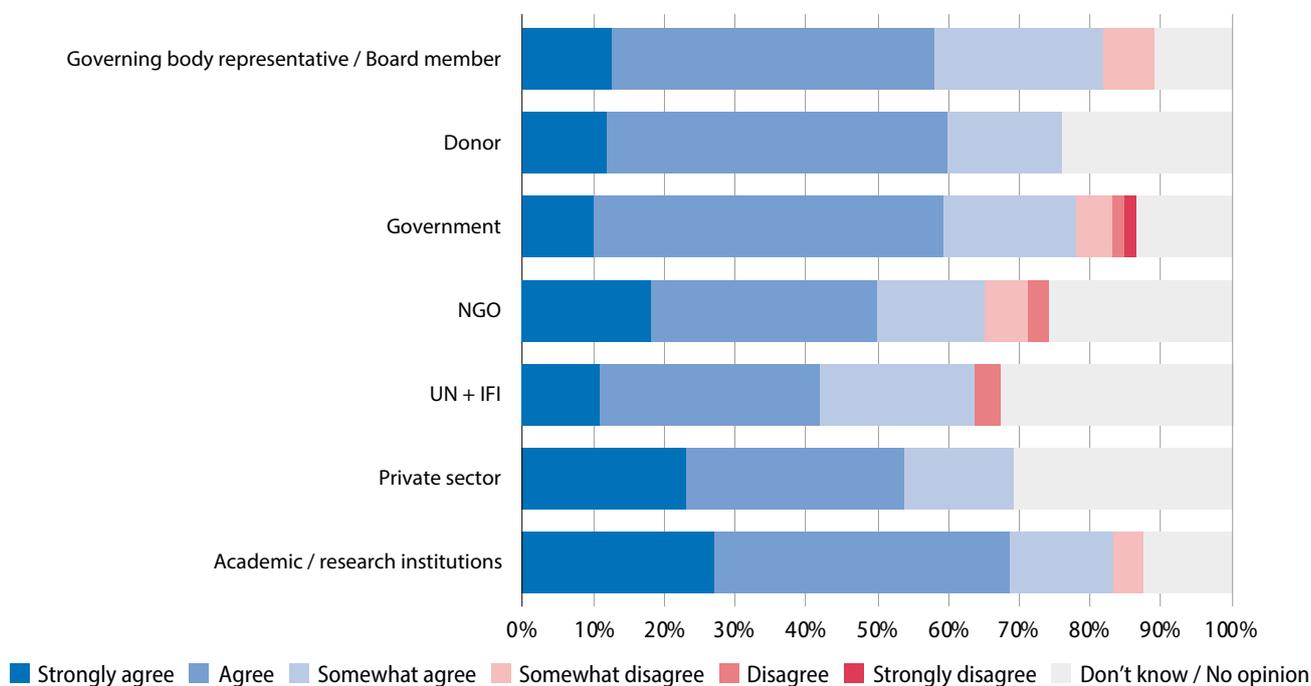
Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know / No opinion

Source: Based on responses to the 2020 MOPAN external partner survey: UNEP, January 2021-March 2021.

commitments is evident. In addition, UNEP regularly reviews progress in implementing its agreements with the GEF, bilateral donors, and other key partners. This is done both to respond to identified performance issues and to adjust agreements to changing priorities or modes of operation on either or both sides. This is the case for UNEP's MTS for 2018-21 and the GEF's programming directions for each new tranche (e.g., GEF-7 issued in 2018). Project implementation progress in turn is reviewed jointly by UNEP and the respective executing agencies during regular supervision, in the MTRs, and on completion. When asked if "UNEP participates in joint evaluations at the country/regional level," 58% of all partners surveyed either agreed or strongly agreed. Of the respondents in the donor, IFI and other UN agency, and private sector categories, 91% agreed (at all three levels of agreement) with the statement, "UNEP is actively engaged, appropriate to its role, in inter-agency co-ordination mechanisms." When asked whether UNEP jointly monitors progress on shared goals with local and regional partners, respondents in donor, government, NGO, private sector, UN, and IFI categories on average 64% agreed or strongly agreed that this was the case, while 79% somewhat agreed.

UNEP's knowledge products are well regarded and support country policy development and advocacy for environmental progress and sustainability. Knowledge products are among UNEP's principal direct outputs. They are widely disseminated and perceived by a broad range of partners as being timely, useful, and of high quality. There are no product-specific evaluations of these products, although the number of downloads of each product over time is closely tracked by UNEP. The evidence here comes mainly from the findings of the 2019 OIOS evaluation, which concluded *inter alia* that UNEP has successfully "increased the prominence of global environmental issues." Of the partners surveyed on whether UNEP's knowledge products were useful to their work, nearly all replied positively (Figure 15). On average, 87% agreed or strongly agreed with this statement and an additional 8% somewhat agreed; only 4% disagreed to some extent. Partners were also asked to respond to the statement that "UNEP's knowledge products are presented in a format that makes them easy to use." On average, 79% agreed or strongly agreed and 93% somewhat agreed or higher. On average, 88% of respondents agreed (at all three levels of agreement) that "UNEP's knowledge products are timely." Finally, 84% agreed (at all three levels) that "UNEP provides high-quality inputs to policy dialogue" (Figure 16).

Figure 15. UNEP'S KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS ARE USEFUL FOR MY WORK
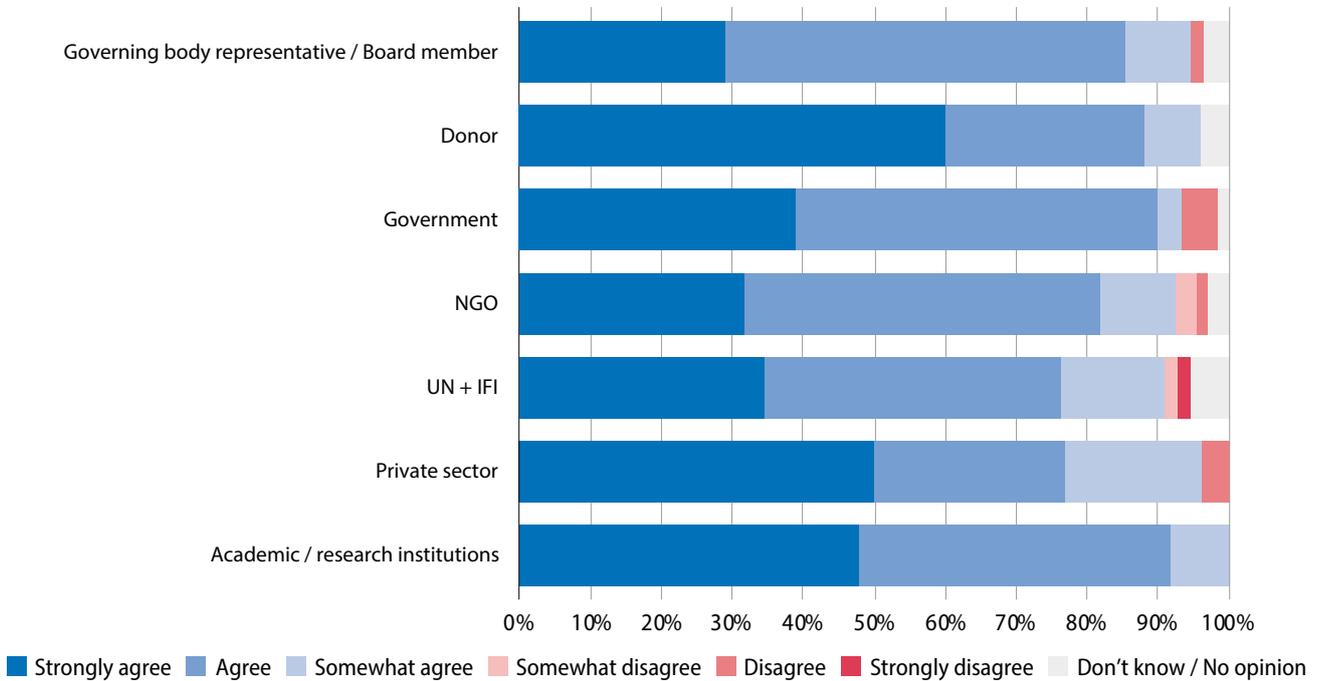
Legend: ■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know / No opinion

Source: Based on responses to the 2020 MOPAN external partner survey: UNEP, January 2021-March 2021.

Figure 16. UNEP PROVIDES HIGH-QUALITY INPUTS TO POLICY DIALOGUE
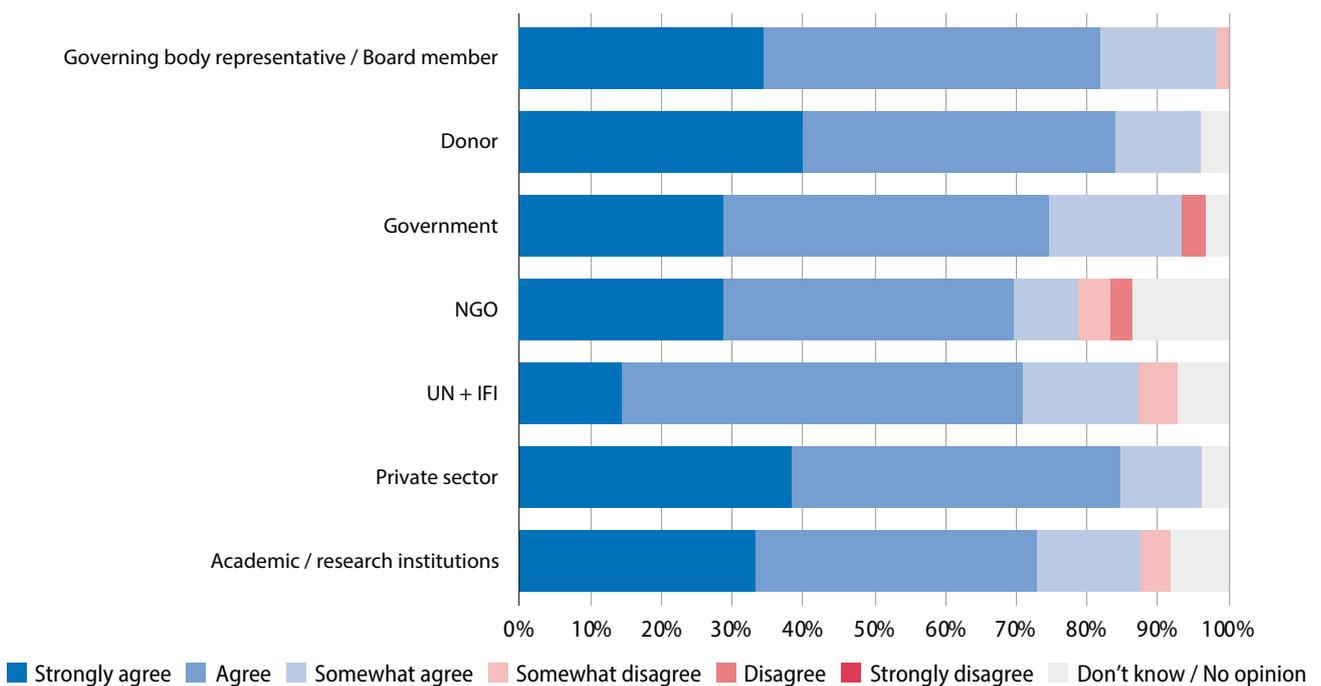
Legend: ■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know / No opinion

Source: Based on responses to the 2020 MOPAN external partner survey: UNEP, January 2021-March 2021.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Systems are geared towards managing and accounting for development and humanitarian results and the use of performance information, including evaluation and lesson learning

UNEP's systems are geared towards managing and accounting for development and humanitarian results, consistent with its mission and mandate to promote environmental sustainability. However, the focus on monitoring, reporting and results could be strengthened. UNEP has increased its results focus over time and sought to strengthen its results-based management (RBM) and budgeting. It is also giving increased attention to incorporating lessons learned from prior experience and associated evaluation recommendations from programmes, sub-programmes, and projects. However, as UNEP recognises, this remains a work in progress, especially results-based budgeting and, more specifically, costing intended sub-programme outcomes in its PoWs. It reviews performance-related information on a quarterly, annual and biannual basis and uses this information to make adjustments during sub-programme and project implementation. However, project level monitoring and reporting by executing partners could be strengthened.

UNEP's evaluation function is largely independent, although the Evaluation Office reports to the ED and not directly to the governing bodies (CPR and UNEA). Its limited financial independence constrains programming. It relies on donor-financed project budgets and fees for its project mid-term and terminal evaluations. This appears to lead to a donor-driven bias in its work in favour of project evaluations. This is to the detriment of sub-programme evaluations and assessments of broader initiatives which could provide richer learning opportunities for the organisation, as noted by the 2019 OIOS evaluation of UNEP. UNEP evaluations are carried out by experienced consultants, are of good quality, and there are internal mechanisms and incentives in place to feed evaluation lessons and recommendations into new strategic plans and projects. These internal mechanisms have received renewed support from the UNEP leadership, which values the evaluation function and evidence-based planning. However, in practice and despite the relatively lower share of resources spent, this feedback appears to be more influential on programme and sub-programme planning than on new project design due to a combination of timing and substantive constraints. Evaluations could give greater attention to whether the projects for which UNEP is the implementing agency, and that are intended to "pilot" innovative approaches, are the right vehicles. In addition, when such projects are found to have been successful, evaluations would be more helpful if they also examine whether and/or the extent to which the approaches they embody are being scaled up and replicated.

KPI 7: The focus on results is strong, transparent, and explicitly geared towards function   Score: 3.03

UNEP management is committed to a results culture. This commitment is evident in the most recent strategic planning documents and in senior leadership encouragement since 2018, which has also served to incentivise staff. The decision[38] to better assess the degree of UNEP's influence on the outcomes of its PoW for 2022-23 is an indication of this commitment. However, UNEP's management and recent strategic planning documents also recognise that this remains a work in progress and that additional tools for measuring and managing results may be necessary. While many staff were being trained in RBM, training has been delayed over the past year due to COVID-19. It is also not clear whether sufficient resources have been allocated for incorporating RBM approaches and methods. Governing body members and donors were asked whether UNEP prioritises a results-based approach; 56% of the former and 60% of the latter agreed or strongly agreed, while 84% overall agreed to some extent or higher.

UNEP's organisation-wide strategic plans include results indicators and output targets for sub-programmes, as do the design documents for the projects where it is the implementing agency. UNEP prepares annual

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38   As approved by UNEA in February 2021.

and biannual PPRs that are discussed with its governing body – annually with the CPR and biannually with UNEA. Corporate strategies are updated regularly: every four years in the case of MTSs and every two years for PoWs. The annual and biannual corporate PPRs indicate areas of strong performance and gaps between planned and actual results. The biennial ESRs summarise aggregate project performance based on the evaluation of completed projects, sub-programmes, and other evaluations undertaken during the period.

Targets and indicators are generally adequate to capture causal pathways between interventions and the outcomes that contribute to higher order objectives. Baselines are included for new interventions at both the sub-programme and project levels. Results targets are reviewed and adjusted, as appropriate, at the project level (e.g., MTRs) and results targets at both the project and sub-programme levels are set through a process that involves consultation with beneficiaries, including member states for MTSs and PoWs. This process has been enhanced for the most recent MTS 2022-25 and PoW 2022-23 by, for the first time, differentiating the extent to which UNEP is responsible for a specific observed outcome. All partner groups, except governing body members, were asked whether UNEP consults with stakeholders on setting results at a country level. On average, 69% agreed or strongly agreed and 81% somewhat agreed or higher, while 17% did not know (Figure 17).

Data are available for corporate reporting and planning, but are weak at the project level. A system for ensuring data quality is also in place. However, it is less clear that the corporate monitoring system is adequately resourced. While the corporate monitoring system does not generate outcome data at the sub-programme level, evaluators frequently note that project monitoring systems are weak. Project evaluations do systematically consider both the delivery of outputs and the achievement of intended outcomes and, where possible, desired impacts, and assess the likely sustainability of benefits. However, this is difficult for UNEP evaluators to verify due largely to project monitoring inadequacies.

Figure 17. UNEP CONSULTS WITH STAKEHOLDERS ON THE SETTING OF RESULTS TARGETS AT A COUNTRY LEVEL
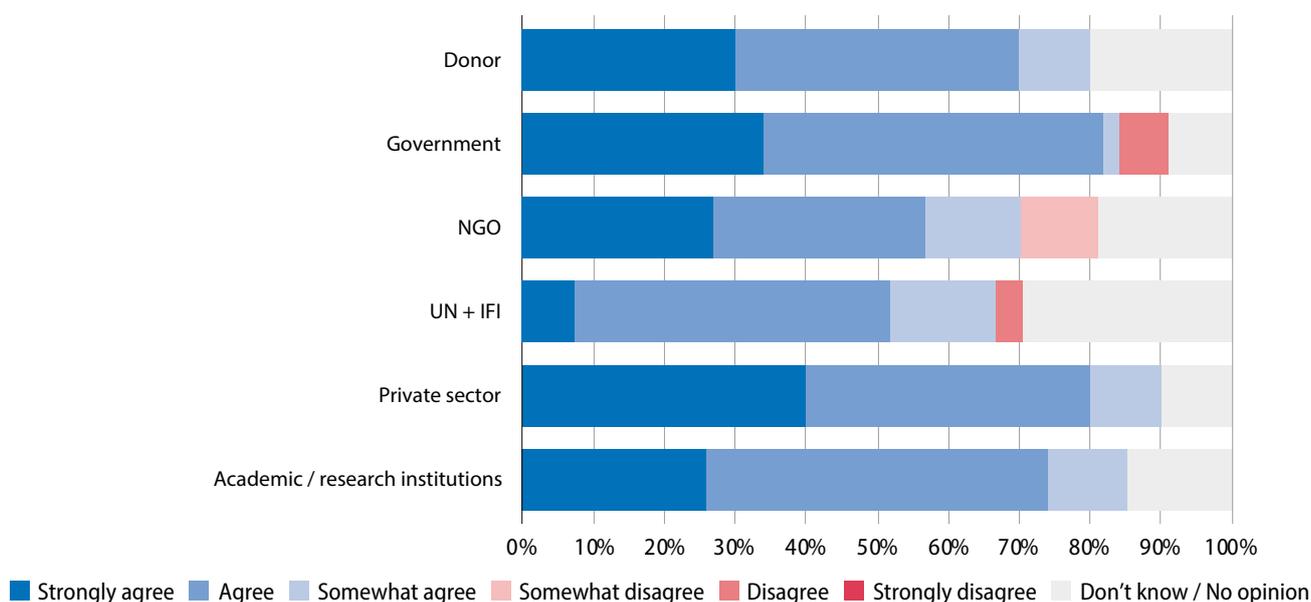
Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know / No opinion

Source: Based on responses to the 2020 MOPAN external partner survey: UNEP, January 2021-March 2021.

Planning documents are based in part on past performance data. Lessons learned at the programme, sub-programme, and project levels are informed by performance data, especially for projects. Management, including the Senior Management Team, review corporate performance data through an updated quarterly business review process that now includes a dashboard. In addition to supporting dialogue with the governing bodies, performance data support dialogue with global and regional partners, as well as with implementing partners and donors for specific projects.

KPI 8: The organisation applies evidence-based planning and programming	Score: 3.12

While UNEP's Evaluation Office is independent from other management functions, it reports to the ED rather than to the governing bodies. While it regularly informs UNEA and the CPR of evaluation findings and recommendations through the biannual ESRs, this may become a more regular part of the direct interaction between UNEP management and the governing bodies. The Evaluation Office's degree of actual institutional independence as well as the value and importance given to its work within the organisation, is thus dependent on the ED. While there are constraints, it may be useful to consider ways to institutionalise the structural and financial independence of this office.

Evaluation work plans[39] are approved every two years by the governing body and form the basis for the annual work programme. However, the work programme could be flexible about the actual number and specific completed projects to be evaluated each year due to variations in their closing dates**.** Except for special requests from specific donors, the Evaluation Office has discretion over the evaluation programme, and its staff is largely funded by core UN budget resources. However, the cost of specific project evaluations, especially in the case of GEF operations, which constitute the bulk of its annual work programme, are financed either from respective project budgets or from GEF administrative fees received by UNEP. Project and sub-programme evaluations are submitted directly for consideration by the appropriate management levels, and evaluators – who are generally specialised consultants – can conduct their work without undue influence by the unit being evaluated. On the other hand, the bulk of the Evaluation Office's activity entails donor-mandated project evaluations, leaving less time and resources available for higher-level evaluations, including those for special initiatives, sub-programmes, and other corporate priorities.

The 2016 evaluation policy describes the principles for ensuring coverage, quality, and use of findings.[40] UNEP does not have decentralised evaluations. The policy is currently under review and the new version is expected to be completed by the end of 2021. Both the biannual evaluation plans and the annual evaluation work programmes seek to provide systematic coverage of the projects for which UNEP is the implementing agency. Sub-programmes are evaluated periodically, in principle one per year, but only two (Resource Efficiency and Environment under Review) were issued during the entire current assessment period, which is below average.

UNEP seeks to take project findings and recommendations into account in designing new projects. Evaluation Office staff and consultants, who carry out most of the evaluation work, apply UNEP's evaluation policy and guidance in carrying out their activities, including for field missions at the country level. All partner groups except governing body members were asked whether UNEP follows through to ensure evaluations are carried out on interventions that are required to be evaluated. Nearly 69% agreed (including all three levels of agreement).

UNEP's evaluations are based on design, planning, and implementation; are quality oriented; and use appropriate methodologies. This is ensured through both the current evaluation policy and the Evaluation Office's frequently issued guidance documents. As a result, UNEP's evaluation processes and products are of good quality. While evaluation reports

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39   These are included as an annex to each PoW.

40   UNEP (2017), *Evaluation Policy,* Nairobi, draft March 2016, approved 11 January 2017.

provide less information on methodological limitations and concerns, for the most part they present evidence, findings, and conclusions in a comprehensive and balanced way. Formal or informal feedback loops inform the design of new interventions for both sub-programmes and projects, but communication with the governing bodies on evaluation findings could be improved. For sub-programmes, this feedback has occurred at least since the MTS for 2018-21, and the process has been further strengthened in recent years. For projects, this feedback is reflected in the quality of the project design matrix that is applied to all new operations by the PRC. This requires that new projects demonstrate that their design has been informed by lessons from other past projects. Staff are thus encouraged to incorporate or apply lessons learned at both levels. However, the 2019 OIOS evaluation of UNEP found that project evaluation findings were of limited usefulness in practice for the design of new operations either because this information was available too late in the project preparation process or because the projects evaluated were not relevant. The number or share of new operation designs that draw on lessons from evaluative approaches are not made public in the biannual ESRs.

UNEP has systems to identify, monitor, and record poor performers both for sub-programmes and projects. Sub-programme results are made public through the annual and biannual PPRs. Project results are covered in project mid-term and terminal evaluations as well as in the periodic reports that are required for all GEF and GCF operations and for projects financed by other donors through UNEP's Project Information and Management System. Regular reporting tracks the status of all sub-programme management results and project implementation, including poor performers. In the case of projects, this depends on monitoring and reporting by executing agencies, which is sometimes inadequate. UNEP sub-programme co-ordinators and project managers are expected to pay greater attention to those sub-programmes and projects experiencing performance problems. Responsibilities for taking corrective action to help resolve problems are generally clear at both levels, although actual implementation of these actions on the ground is the responsibility of the respective executing partners and/or agencies. All seven partner groups surveyed were asked whether UNEP consistently identifies which interventions are underperforming: 62% agreed (at all three levels of agreement). The same groups were asked if UNEP addresses any areas of under-performance, with which only 57% agreed, while 33% did not know (Figure 18).

### Figure 18. UNEP ADDRESSES ANY AREAS OF INTERVENTION UNDER-PERFORMANCE
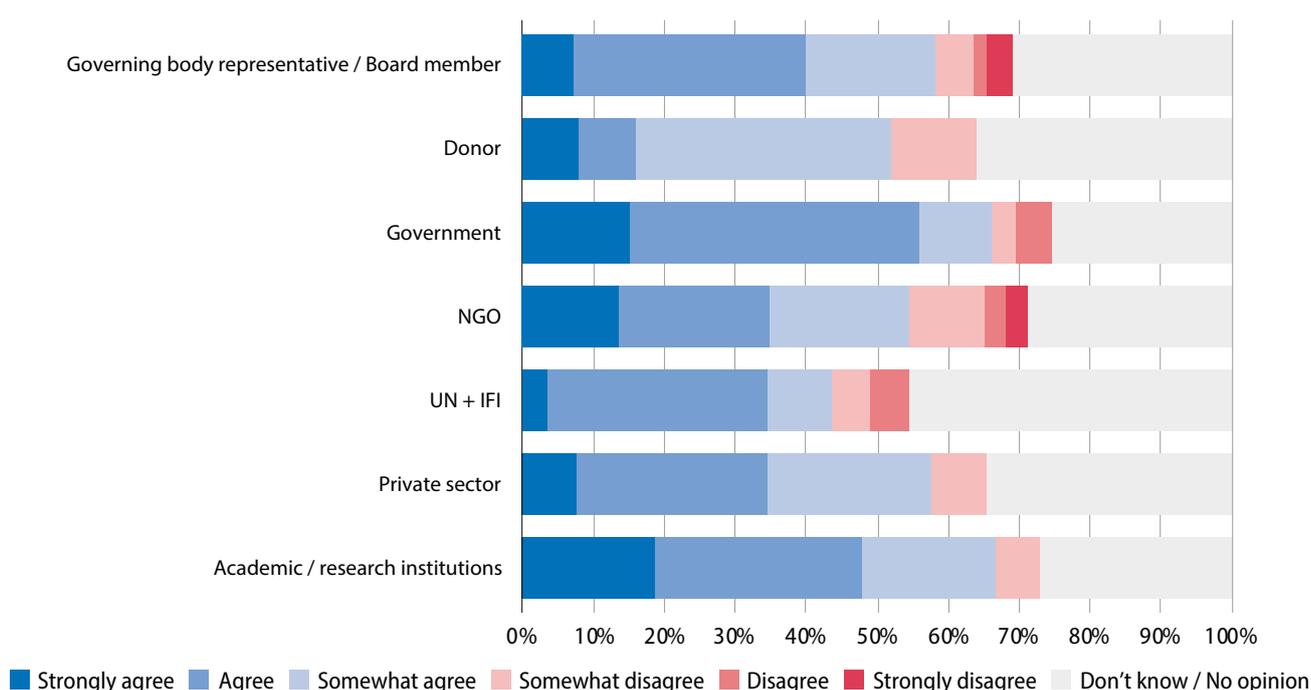
Source: Based on responses to the 2020 MOPAN external partner survey: UNEP, January 2021-March 2021.

While OIOS performance audits include management responses for audit recommendations and action plans with clear responsibilities and timelines, this is not the case for all evaluations. For evaluations carried out by UNEP's Evaluation Office, the results and recommendations are discussed with the relevant project managers and sub-programme co-ordinators and, as appropriate, their supervising Division Directors. There is a process in place for these managers to report back on the follow-up actions taken. According to the Evaluation Office, compliance is "somewhat less" than 100%. The Evaluation Office issues a biannual evaluation synthesis report (ESR), which discusses the implementation status of evaluation recommendations. It is not issued on an annual basis, reportedly because of the comparatively small sample of evaluations done every year. UNEP is in the process of adopting a fully automated system to track evaluation recommendations and monitor compliance. It has recently moved from a manual system to a semi-automated one that requires manual engagement and follow-up with management, but analysis of management's implementation compliance with evaluation recommendations and processes is automated. It intends to move to a full online workflow process for recommendation compliance using an Umoja-compatible application (Unite Evaluation) that has been developed for all Secretariat evaluation entities. However, it will require testing before UNEP can fully adopt it.

UNEP has a full repository of evaluations and their recommendations available online and publicly accessible. It also has mechanism for distilling and disseminating lessons internally and, every two years, externally through the ESRs. The MTS, PoW, and project documents seek to incorporate lessons learned and best practices identified through evaluations and from the experiences of other pertinent entities within and outside the UNDS. This occurs primarily through the UNEG, which meets periodically to exchange experience and share knowledge obtained through their activities. UNEP's Evaluation Office also uses qualitative and word query software to help distil findings and lessons from its project and other evaluations. However, it is less clear how many of the identified lessons and best practices are applied in practice, as this ultimately depends on the actions of implementing partners and project executing agencies. All partner groups except governing body members were asked whether UNEP learns lessons from previous experience rather than repeating the same mistakes. Most responded positively, with over 62% agreeing – at all three levels of agreement (Figure 19).

Figure 19. UNEP LEARNS LESSONS FROM PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE, RATHER THAN REPEATING THE SAME MISTAKES
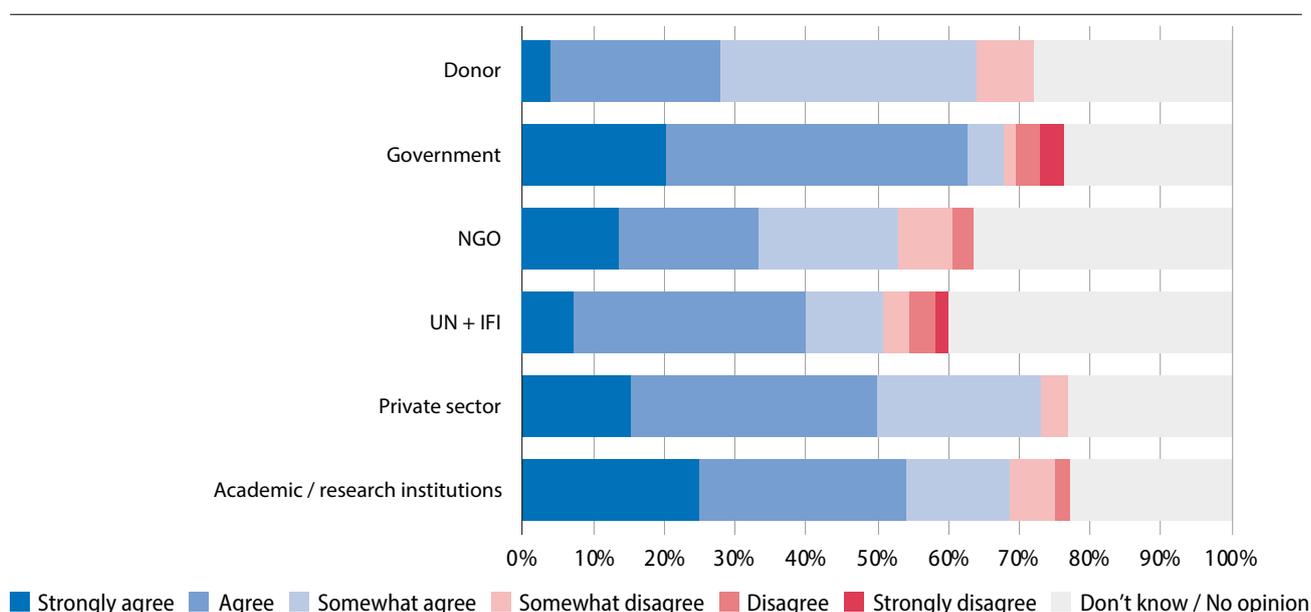
Source: Based on responses to the 2020 MOPAN external partner survey: UNEP, January 2021-March 2021.

3.2. DEVELOPMENT/HUMANITARIAN EFFECTIVENESS

RESULTS

Achievement of relevant, inclusive and sustainable contributions to humanitarian and development results in an efficient manner

UNEP's sub-programme results improved significantly between 2016-17 and 2018-19. However, project performance[41] is much weaker and at odds with the sub-programme results. Sub-programme results were higher for the latter biennium, which UNEP attributes to more realistic initial target setting in the more recent PoW. This is especially the case for criteria such as efficiency and likely sustainability, which are not specifically assessed in the PPRs, as well as effectiveness. As UNEP's sub-programmes are reportedly implemented through projects, this apparent significant "disconnect" is puzzling. Different methodologies are used to assess performance of the overall programme/sub-programme and individual projects, and while the Evaluation Office periodically assesses sub-programmes as well as projects, it only issued two sub-programme evaluations during the present assessment period: (i) Resource Efficiency near the beginning of the period; and (ii) Environment under Review towards the end. Most of the donor-funded projects that were evaluated over the period were associated with the climate change, ecosystems, and chemicals and pollution sub-programmes that were not evaluated by this office as a whole. Moreover, an unfortunate gap in UNEP's "results" is derived from the difficulty of assessing the influence and impact of UNEP's flagship and other knowledge products, which constitute a significant share of its outputs, and its normative and advocacy activities more generally. Feedback in the partner survey indicates that these are viewed by external stakeholders as high quality and useful, however.

KPI 9: Development and humanitarian objectives are achieved and results contribute to normative and cross-cutting goals

Score: 2.67

The results achieved by UNEP and its implementing partners are diverse and complex. Accordingly, causal links between UNEP's interventions and observed results are often difficult to attribute to its actions, and also depend on those of the member states and other organisations. The recently approved PoW for 2022-23 recognises that the degree to which UNEP's own interventions may contribute to the PoW indicators and targets can vary significantly. This is the case for both sub-programmes and projects as the reported results do not depend exclusively on UNEP's actions. Genuine assessment of UNEP's true influence and impact is thus challenging. This is especially the case for the outcomes of UNEP's normative, co-ordinating, convening, and advocacy roles, as well as for its flagship reports and other knowledge products, despite being widely used and cited by governments and other users.

The effectiveness of UNEP's interventions varies. UNEP assesses the extent to which it achieves its objectives at two distinct levels (i) through a consolidated overall PoW performance assessment presented in the PPRs; and (ii) through terminal project and other evaluations whose findings are summarised in the biannual ESRs. UNEP has produced two sub-programme evaluations during the assessment period and was also the subject of external performance audits carried out by OIOS, as well as an overall OIOS evaluation issued in March 2019. On reviewing these reports and a sample of 27 recent project terminal evaluations, the MOPAN assessment finds that UNEP's effectiveness rate was highest for objectives such as improved capabilities, national consensus/commitments, use of studies/analyses, the demonstration effect of successful pilot projects, and institutional strengthening. It was lowest for objectives such as regional co-operation, actual implementation of strategies/policies, and enforcement of multi-country agreements.

Effectiveness is rated at satisfactory or above in around 55% of the completed project evaluations[42] undertaken during the during the assessment period but there is a significant performance gap between the most recent ESR and PPR. This level of effectiveness is also largely confirmed by the analysis of 27 of the most recent

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41   As summarised in the evaluation synthesis reports prepared by the UNEP Evaluation Office.

42   According to the most recent ESR (2018-19).

evaluations carried out by the assessment team (52% satisfactory or highly satisfactory). In contrast, the most recent PPR (2019) states that UNEP achieved 93% of its expected outcomes across all sub-programmes, compared to 65% for 2016-17. While this suggests a significant improvement, it is more likely explained by the more realistic targets in the recent PoWs. The apparent significant performance gap between the ESR and PPR is partly explained by the fact that project effectiveness evaluations include longer-term outcomes and expected impacts, while the overall institutional programme performance assessment focuses predominantly on sub-programme outputs, and includes projects that were designed and largely implemented prior to the biennium in which they were evaluated. Thus, the two assessments are based on different methodologies, timelines, and sets of performance indicators and are thus not directly comparable.

UNEP is guided on cross-cutting issues by its policy and strategy for gender equality and the environment (2015), but performance remains weak. By 2017, UNEP had met 12 of the 15 indicators of the UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. It has appointed gender focal points and sought to incorporate gender considerations into its MTSs and the projects for which it is the implementing agency. It also introduced responsiveness to human rights and gender equity as a standalone project evaluation criterion in 2018. Despite this progress, UNEP's performance on achieving gender and human rights outcomes in projects remains weak. According to project evaluation reports and the respective ESR, the lowest performance among the projects evaluated was for "Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender" (only 32% satisfactory or highly satisfactory). An analysis of the sample of 27 recent project evaluations found that only 30% of the evaluations had noted the responsiveness of the project to gender equity as satisfactory or highly satisfactory. The positive elements most frequently identified were: (i) integrated and explicit gender-related outputs and outcomes; (ii) identification of gender-differentiated roles; (iii) promotion of women farmers and women scientists; (iv) gender-differentiated monitoring indicators; and (v) women integrated as major actors in the project. The negative findings were: (i) gender-responsiveness not considered in the project design; (ii) gender-responsiveness was part of the project design, but not considered in project implementation; and (iii) lack of gender differentiated data.

Several recent evaluations that consider the impact of UNEP-supported programmes and projects on human rights suggest that overall application of its human rights-related policies has been mixed. The recently approved MTS 2022-2025 also recognises that UNEP's project performance on the delivery of human rights, as well as gender outcomes, remains weak. Only 22% of the 27 project sample evaluations rated project responsiveness to human rights as satisfactory or above. The main positive messages on human rights from these evaluations are: (i) indigenous people are major actors in the protection of biodiversity; (ii) indigenous people's awareness of their rights over the biodiversity of their territories has been enhanced; and (iii) children are identified as a target group for malaria control. Negative aspects include: (i) human rights were not considered in project design or were considered irrelevant and thus not rated by the evaluator; (ii) human rights were identified in the project proposal, but not considered during project implementation; and (iii) projects protecting indigenous people's rights over biodiversity achieved limited outcomes. However, UNEP observes that in terms of specific social safeguard risks (in addition to the guiding principles), its Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework (ESSF) covers physical and economic resettlement, labour and working conditions, health, safety, and security as well as indigenous people's issues.

KPI 10: Interventions are relevant to the needs and priorities of partner countries and beneficiaries, as the organisation works towards results in areas within its mandate

Score: 3.00

UNEP does not specifically assess the extent to which its PoWs and their constituent sub-programmes are relevant to the needs and priorities of partner countries and beneficiaries. They are assumed to be relevant and member states are consulted on their content and have to approve them.[43] UNEP's Evaluation Office assesses all completed projects for which UNEP is the implementing agency for their "strategic relevance," among other criteria. According to the ESR for 2016-17, "in assessing strategic relevance, evaluations examined the extent to which project implementation strategies and results showed alignment with the following: (i) UNEP's and/or other funding agency's mandate, strategic direction and thematic priorities; (ii) regional, sub-regional and/or national environmental priorities; the needs and priorities of the target groups; (iii) complementarity to other recent, ongoing or planned interventions in the project area or on the same concern; and (iv) where applicable, the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building, South-South Cooperation policies, Gender Balance, as well as Human Rights Based Approach and inclusion of indigenous peoples' issues, needs and concerns." Thus, the strategic relevance ratings reported in the ESRs consider regional and national environmental priorities and the needs and priorities of beneficiaries (target groups), among other considerations.

Almost all evaluated projects are rated satisfactory in terms of strategic relevance, but this may be due to the criterion used. According to the ESR for 2016-17, 96% of all evaluated projects were rated satisfactory or above, while those for 2018-19 reported an even higher share (98%). However, the latter report also observed that "a number of issues need to be considered." First, this criterion assesses alignment with UNEP, donors, regions, and countries' strategic frameworks and priorities, as well as the complementarity between UNEP's projects and other existing/planned interventions. Consistent alignment is, therefore, largely a function of various approval processes. If the criterion were to examine the 'substantive contribution' being made by projects to the strategic frameworks and priorities to which they are aligned, the performance would look considerably different. It adds that "perhaps more importantly, this is a 'soft' indicator of performance and the continued high, performance levels are currently offering very little learning. Going forward, the criterion may prove to be more useful once UNEP has articulated a sharper definition of priorities and strategic focus."

An analysis of relevance for the sample of 27 recent project terminal evaluations, which were mostly issued in 2019 and 2020, confirms the high ratings reported in the 2018-19 ESR. Almost all the evaluations (26 out of 27) rated the project's relevance as satisfactory or highly satisfactory for all areas, including: (i) relevance to UNEP mandate and strategies (MTS); (ii) relevance to the objectives of the corresponding sub-programme; (iii) relevance to the corresponding Sustainable Development Goal; (iv) relevance to the local context; and (v) relevance to (coherence with) other existing interventions.

KPI 11: Results are delivered efficiently

Score: 2.00

Efficiency remains difficult to measure due to the lack of disaggregated financial information necessary to analyse the costs associated with specific results areas in project monitoring and reporting. Instead, UNEP assesses project efficiency based on implementation timeliness, the sequencing and arrangement of activities, and the extent to which it has built on existing structures and institutions. UNEP does not specifically assess efficiency of overall programme or sub-programmes, although as indicated for KPI 9, its overall performance (the extent to which its PoW targets are met within the biennium of reference), is reported to have been high in 2018-19 and to have improved significantly on the previous biennium.

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43   Through the CPR and UNEA.

The proportion of satisfactory/highly satisfactory ratings for efficiency are variable and affected by many factors. The ratings reported in the ESRs show variability over time: from ratings of 54% for projects evaluated in 2010-11, to 62% in 2012-13, 66% in 2014-15, 49% in 2016-17, but just 39% in 2018-19. However, the sample of 27 project evaluations rates efficiency more positively than the 2018-19 ESR, suggesting that there may have been some improvement in recent years. The most frequent causes of inefficiencies identified by these evaluations are preparation and implementation delays. Other factors include: (i) insufficient or inadequate human resources; (ii) insufficient funding; (iii) unpredictable availability of funds; (iv) poor project design; (v) lack of focus of project activities; (vi) insufficient coherence/co-ordination with other interventions; and (vii) disbursement difficulties due to co-financing procedures. The evaluations also identified some elements that have helped to improve efficiency, such as (i) better adaptation to country conditions and procedures; (ii) more flexible management; and (iii) smarter partnership agreements.

Project implementation delays are mainly due to poor project design, unrealistic implementation plans, slow start-up, poor co-ordination between executing and implementing agencies, and/or delayed signature of legal agreements by recipients. More generally, the efficiency of UNEP's activities has been hampered by often inter-related factors, including: (i) an unstable resource base; (ii) internal competition among projects; (iii) insufficient coherence between HQ and regional teams; and (iv) insufficient accountability instruments and practices. UNEP has struggled to implement a business model that adequately funds the core work needed to support its leadership role. Unable to grow the EF, UNEP continues to rely heavily on earmarked funding. This has limited its ability and flexibility in responding to member states' requests for new or additional activities, including areas related to its science-policy expertise and capacity-building support. Competition for funding within UNEP and between UNEP and other UN agencies has likewise contributed to broader system-wide inefficiencies and insufficient coherence, according to the 2019 OIOS evaluation. This challenge therefore has two complementary factors that lead to the same outcome: the insufficient core funding by member states and other donors and the need to allocate greater funding to core activities. Resolving these problems would benefit from developing a mechanism or trigger to secure more stable funding for core activities.

<div style="color:#2a6ebb">KPI 12: Results are sustainable</div> <div style="background:#f0a020">Score: 2.00</div>

Sustaining results remains challenging. On average, around 35% of the projects implemented under UNEP's responsibility and evaluated by the 2018-19 ESR were assessed as likely to be sustainable. This was a slight decline from the 39% reported in the previous 2016-17 ESR. This criterion is interpreted as the likelihood that the positive outcomes achieved will endure. To measure this, evaluators assess: (i) whether a project's outcomes are sensitive to socio-political, financial, and institutional factors within the implementing context; and (ii) whether the project has put measures in place to mitigate these sensitivities. Financial sustainability is considered the most fragile point by evaluators.

Several factors affect sustainability in UNEP projects. The main factors identified in project evaluations as limiting sustainability include: inadequate financial resources, insufficient mainstreaming of new practices into policies, staff mobility and related loss of skills and limited institutional memory, tensions between countries participating in multi-country projects, lack of an exit strategy in project design, failure to adopt necessary legal and institutional frameworks, cost recovery mechanisms not working as expected, and failure to embed the project in a supportive broader strategic framework.

ABOUT THIS ASSESSMENT

About this assessment

4.1. THE MOPAN APPROACH

The approach to MOPAN assessments has evolved over time to adjust to the needs of the multilateral system. The MOPAN 3.1 Approach, applied in this assessment, is the latest iteration.

MOPAN conducted Annual Surveys from 2003-08 and used a methodology titled the MOPAN Common Approach from 2009-14. The MOPAN 3.0 Approach was first adopted for 2015-16 cycle of assessments.

In 2019, MOPAN 3.0 was relabelled as MOPAN 3.0* to acknowledge a change in how ratings (and their corresponding colours) were aligned with the scores defined for indicators. Compared to previous cycles conducted under MOPAN 3.0, the threshold for ratings was raised to reflect increasing demands for organisational performance in the multilateral system. The underlying scores and approach to scoring remained unaffected.

Starting in 2020, all assessments have used the MOPAN 3.1 Methodology,[44] which was endorsed by MOPAN members in early 2020. The framework draws on the international standards and references points, as described in the Methodology Manual. The approach differs from the previous 3.0 approach in the following ways:

- Integration of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda into the framework

- Two new micro-indicators (MIs) for the prevention and response to SEA/SH

- The incorporation of elements measuring key dimensions of reform of the United Nations Development System (UNDS Reform)

- A reshaped relationship management performance area, with updated and clearer key performance indicators (KPIs) 5 and 6, which better reflect coherence and which focus on how partnerships operate on the ground in support of partner countries (KPI 5), and how global partnerships are managed to leverage the organisation's resources (KPI 6).

- A refocused and streamlined results component. A change to how ratings (and their corresponding colours) are applied, based on scores defined for indicators. Compared to the previous cycles conducted under MOPAN 3.0, the threshold for a rating has been raised to reflect the increasing demands for organisational performance in the multilateral system. The underlying scores and approach to scoring are unaffected. This approach was already implemented in MOPAN 3.0* (2019 cycle).

Table 4 lists the performance areas and indicators used in MOPAN 3.1.

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44   MOPAN (2020), *MOPAN 3.1 Methodology Manual, 2020 Assessment Cycle*, http://www.mopanonline.org/ourwork/themopanapproach/MOPAN_3.1_Methodology.pdf

Table 4: Performance areas and key performance indicators

Aspect	Performance area	Key performance indicator (KPI)
Organisational effectiveness	Strategic management	**KPI 1**: Organisational architecture and the financial framework enable mandate implementation and achievement of expected results
		KPI 2: Structures and mechanisms support the implementation of global frameworks for cross-cutting issues at all levels
	Operational management	**KPI 3**: Operating model and human and financial resources support relevance and agility
		KPI 4: Organisational systems are cost- and value-conscious and enable financial transparency and accountability
	Relationship management	**KPI 5**: Operational planning and intervention design tools support relevance and agility within partnerships
		KPI 6: Working in coherent partnerships directed at leveraging and catalysing the use of resources
	Performance management	**KPI 7**: Strong and transparent results focus, explicitly geared to function
		KPI 8: Evidence-based planning and programming applied
Development/ humanitarian effectiveness	Results	**KPI 9**: Development and humanitarian objectives are achieved, and results contribute to normative and cross-cutting goals
		KPI 10: Interventions are relevant to the needs and priorities of partner countries and beneficiaries, and the organisation works towards results in areas within its mandate
		KPI 11: Results are delivered efficiently
		KPI 12: Results are sustainable

Source: MOPAN (2020), *MOPAN 3.1 Methodology Manual, 2020 Assessment Cycle*,
http://www.mopanonline.org/ourwork/themopanapproach/MOPAN_3.1_Methodology.pdf

4.2 APPLYING MOPAN 3.1 TO UNEP

Interpretations and adaptions to the methodology

This assessment has used the MOPAN 3.1 methodology, but the KPIs have been interpreted so as to be meaningful given UNEP's specific mandate. The only adaptation made to the MOPAN 3.1 assessment framework was, in agreement with the MOPAN Secretariat, not to consider environmental sustainability and climate change as a separate cross-cutting issue for KPI 2 because UNEP's core mission is precisely to promote environmental sustainability, including effective responses to climate change, within the UN system and among its member states. In relation to KPI 2, in consultation with both UNEP and the MOPAN Secretariat, it was agreed that the only cross-cutting issues to be assessed would be gender equality and women's empowerment and human rights. This made MI 2.2, 2.4 not applicable.

Lines of evidence

This assessment relies on three lines of evidence: a document review, a partner survey, and staff interviews and consultations. The assessment team collected and reviewed a significant body of evidence:

● **A document review.** This comprised a review of around 200 publicly available documents published primarily during the assessment period (i.e., mid-2016 through the end of 2020), although some earlier and more recent publications were also considered. These included the two previous MOPAN assessments of UNEP and UNEP's MTS for 2022-2025 and PoW for 2022-2023, which were formally approved by UNEA in February 2021 but prepared and endorsed by the CPR during the assessment period. Earlier documents included policies and guidelines that were still in force, such as UNEP's programme manual (2013), or updated and revised during the assessment period, as in the case of the Partnership Policy and Procedures (2019) and the ESSF (2020). UNEP's organigrams prior to the assessment period (January 2016) and afterwards (May 2020) were also examined to document both the organisational and management changes at HQ and in the ROs that occurred during the assessment period. UNEP kindly shared several internal documents that are not publicly available, and which were used by the assessment team as background information only, although the content of these documents was also confirmed through interviews. With these exceptions, all the documents reviewed are available in final form and in English.

Among the documents reviewed were (i) purposeful samples of 19 new UNEP project design reports approved by the Project Review Committee (PRC); (ii) 27 UNEP terminal project evaluations; (iii) two sub-programme evaluations (Resource Efficiency and Environment under Review); and (iv) other reports of evaluations undertaken by the UNEP Evaluation Office during the assessment period. In addition, an external evaluation of UNEP was considered, as well as nine audits involving UNEP – either individually or together with the other two Nairobi-based UN agencies (UNON and UN-Human Settlements Programme) and the Secretariat of a Multilateral Environmental Agreement that it hosts (Convention of Biological Diversity). These were concerned with the adequacy and effectiveness of various aspects of their governance, risk management, and control processes. They were undertaken by the OIOS with their respective Management Responses and Action Plans, issued between November 2016 and December 2010.

● **An online survey of partners**. Seven groups of UNEP partners were surveyed in February and March 2021. They were representatives of: (i) the governing body (i.e., UNEA); (ii) donors; (iii) governments; (iv) other UN agencies and international financial institutions; (v) NGOs; (vi) the private sector; and (vii) and academic and research institutions. With the assistance of UNEP, a total of 1 153 partners were invited to respond. Of these, the MOPAN Secretariat considered 1 077 potential respondents, as 74 invitations bounced back and 2 of the invitees opted out. Altogether, there were 334 responses – a 31.2% response rate, which is considered reasonable for an online survey based on the Secretariat's experience with the use of this instrument. For the purposes of analysis, the other UN agencies and IFIs were combined into a single category due to the relatively low number of respondents in each of these subgroups. Table 5 indicates the number and percentage of respondents by category and by global vs. country/regional status.

The survey was sent to 15 middle- and lower-income countries in different regions (previously agreed with UNEP as suitable for the survey), although some partners from other countries responded as well. These countries were, in descending order by the number of responses: Kenya (21), Mexico (10), People's Republic of China (8), India (8), Brazil (7), Indonesia (6), South Africa (6), Ethiopia (5), Philippines (5), Costa Rica (4), Eswatini (4), Democratic Republic of Congo (3), Madagascar (3), Antigua and Barbuda (2) and Peru (1).

Governing body members who responded were from: Brazil, Germany, and Norway (3 each); Canada, Democratic Republic of Congo, Finland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Peru, Sweden, Switzerland, and United Kingdom (2 each); and Albania, Antigua and Barbuda, Belgium, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, People's Republic of China, Comoros, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Franca, and Ghana (1 each). These were different respondents, however, than those indicated in the previous paragraph where the same countries are mentioned twice.

Table 5. Partner survey respondents by category

Type of partner	Global	Country/regional	Total	Share
Governing body	55	–	55	16.5
Donor	15	10	25	7.5
Government	15	44	59	17.7
IFI/UN entity	28	27	55	16.5
NGO	29	37	66	19.7
Private sector	16	10	26	7.8
Academic/research	21	27	48	14.3
Total	**179**	**155**	**344**	**100.0**

Donor respondents were from Belgium and the EU (3 each); Canada, Finland, Italy, Netherlands, and other (2 each); and Burundi, Denmark, Ethiopia, Germany, Madagascar, Mexico, Norway, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, and the United States (1 each).

Other salient characteristics of the survey respondents include:
– 66% had been engaged with UNEP for three years or more, 24% for 1 to 3 years, and 10% for 4 to 12 months.
– 37% had monthly contact with UNEP, 28% had weekly contact, 10% daily contact, and 25% just a few times a year.
– 42% considered themselves very familiar with UNEP, 40% moderately familiar, 11% extremely familiar, and 6% slightly familiar.

● **Interviews and consultations**. The assessment team carried out two rounds of extensive interviews. The first, during the inception stage, included discussions with UNEP's ED, Deputy ED, all seven Division Directors (one of whom was also acting as the Chief Scientist), and four of the six RO Directors (for Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean), representing the regions where the majority of its operations are located. Interviews also were held with the Chief of Staff, the Director of the Evaluation Office, and the GEF/GCF Co-ordinator. In some cases, their deputy directors or other professional staff were also involved. The Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, who had previously been the Director of UNEP's Law Division, was also interviewed in order to provide a sense of the nature of the relationship and interactions between UNEP and the MEAs. These interviews helped the assessment team to become familiar with UNEP, its normative aspects, its operations on the ground, its future plans, the nature of its ongoing internal change process, and its responses to the UNDS reforms and the COVID-19 pandemic**.** An initial discussion was also held with the Institutional Leads for this assessment, which provided insights on the current priorities of UNEP from the perspective of MOPAN member countries.

The second round of interviews were held following submission of the Initial Document Review report. These involved many other UNEP managers, in most cases below the Division Director level, and staff. The primary purposes of these interviews and meetings were to fill information gaps and clarify questions that had arisen during the initial document review, as well as to triangulate findings based on that review and the partner survey results, most of which were very positive with respect to UNEP's performance. Some additional documents were provided by UNEP over the course of these meetings. All interviews and consultations needed to be carried out virtually on account of the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.3 LIMITATIONS

As stated at the outset, UNEP is a very complex organisation, hosting the secretariats of or providing administrative and technical support services to some 15 MEAs and many other "appendages" (i.e., both individually and jointly managed centres, networks, platforms, initiatives, scientific bodies, and special programmes, etc.). Thus, UNEP is also involved to varying degrees in their performance. However, each of these extension bodies has its own specific mission and mandate, governance arrangements, internal architecture and operating mechanisms, funding sources, and performance issues, as well as its own trajectory during the assessment period. The interview with the current Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity during the inception phase of the assessment, and an October 2019 OIOS audit of this Secretariat, provided an indication of the specificity of the relationships (both administrative and technical) between UNEP and each of the individual MEAs. Even if a sample of these organisations had been covered in the assessment, it would have added considerable complexity to the exercise, as well as requiring significant additional time and resources. Thus, the team decided that the institutional assessment would be limited to UNEP's direct mandate, strategic documents, activities, and internal administrative arrangements.

Another limitation of this assessment was the difficulty of truly assessing – and more importantly attributing to UNEP – the actual results of its work due to its strong engagement with and dependence on such a wide variety of partners to deliver its work programme. This is true for both the PoW and its sub-programmes and for projects. It also means that the results at each level as reported in the annual and biannual PPRs, ESRs and individual terminal project evaluations necessarily reflect the performance of these key partners perhaps to a greater extent than that of UNEP *per se*. Thus, based on the information available, it is not possible to determine the extent to which the reported results are due to UNEP or to the other partners involved, for example the member states in the case of the PoWs. An encouraging development is that the internal assessment of the results of the PoW for 2022-2023 will seek to "capture" them at three different levels: (i) those that can be attributed to UNEP's direct support; (ii) those for which UNEP provides "enabling" interventions; and (iii) those for which it provides "influencing" interventions. However, it would also be helpful if UNEP were to add a more specific and in-depth assessment of its own and the executing agency or agencies' performance to its terminal project evaluations.

Partly related to the previous point, another limitation of this assessment is its inability to sufficiently capture the results of UNEP's normative activities, including the influence and impact of its knowledge products. While arguably more difficult from a methodological standpoint and because evaluation funding has not generally been "earmarked" for such assessments, this is due to insufficient evaluation of the effects of these products on member state policies and practices. While there are a couple of questions in the partner survey on the quality and utility of its knowledge products (and which were among those with the highest "agree" ratings from the various categories of respondents), there are no significant evaluations of their influence, even though it is believed to be substantial. Thus, this could not be adequately reflected in the results section of the framework. Instead, the assessment is limited to reported evidence on the achievements of the outcome indicators included in the PoWs and those derived from terminal donor-funded project evaluations for which UNEP is the "implementing" (but not executing) agency, and which provide a very different picture of UNEP results. This is unfortunate given that so many of UNEP's direct outputs are its published knowledge products.

The closest that the Evaluation Office has come to an assessment of UNEP's knowledge products is the recent (September 2020) publication of its Environment under Review sub-programme evaluation. This sub-programme is responsible for the development of many knowledge products, while the Communications Division is responsible for disseminating them. The review concluded that this sub-programme "is highly relevant to the current global environmental agenda and needs, including: UNEP's evolved mandate as per UNEA, (Rio+20 and recent global policy directives concerning UNEP's mandate, OIOS 2019 Report), post 2015 and Agenda 2030 mandate, the SDGs, the existential threats due to climate change and biodiversity loss and highlighting other emerging priorities such

as zoonotic diseases." However, it was not able to comment on their actual use or influence by those outside the organisation, and thus this could not be considered in our assessment.

Finally, not being able to visit UNEP HQ due to COVID-19 both during the inception phase and following the Initial Document Review and survey is also considered a limitation for the assessment. While UNEP was very forthcoming and extremely helpful in providing information in the form of documents and through both rounds of interviews and meetings, this process would have been more efficient and probably more effective had it been possible to carry out these discussions in person, including organising focus group meetings on selected aspects. Although the dependence on virtual meetings had some advantages, such as allowing for interactions with managers and staff based outside UNEP's Nairobi HQ, it did affect the team's ability to interact with UNEP managers and personnel.
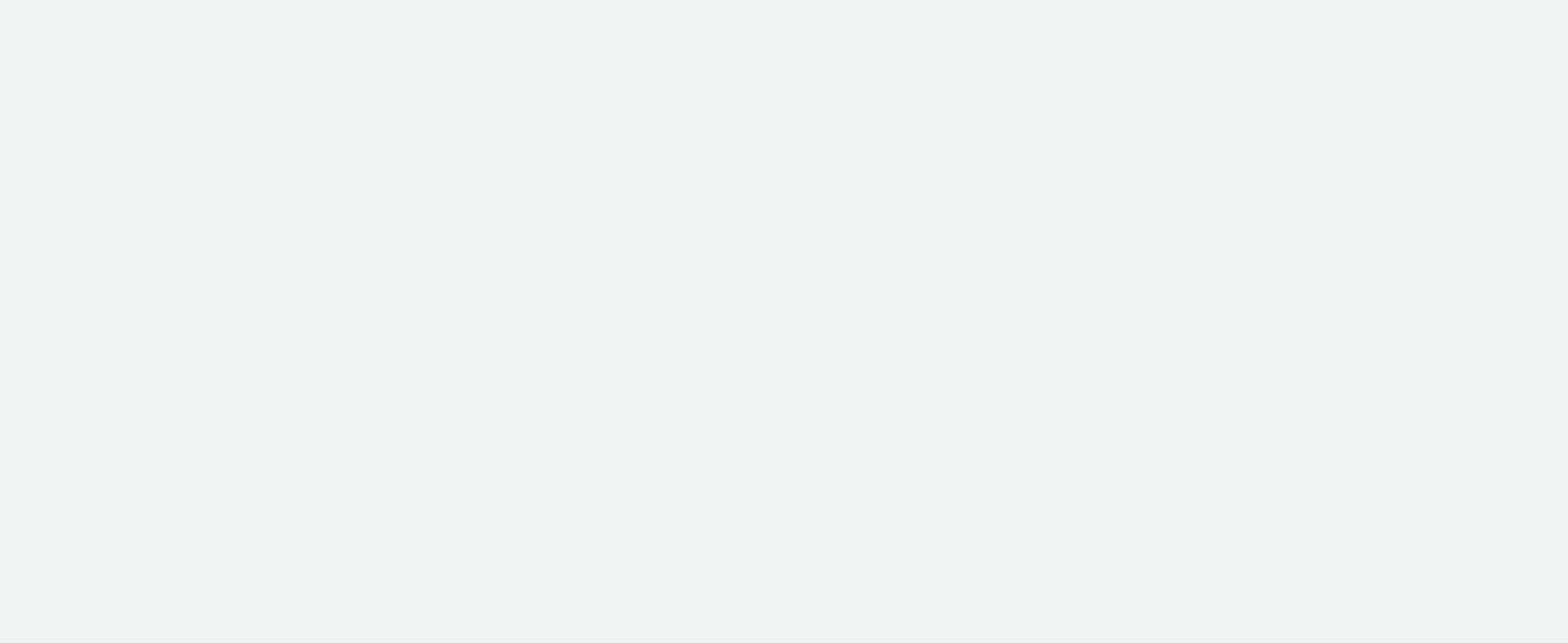
ANNEXES

Annex A. Performance ratings and analysis table

METHODOLOGY FOR SCORING AND RATING

The approach to scoring and rating under MOPAN 3.1 is described in the 2020 Methodology Manual,[45] which can be found on MOPAN's website.

Each of the 12 KPIs contains several micro-indicators (MIs), which vary in number. The KPI rating is calculated by taking the average of the ratings of its constituent MIs.

Scoring of KPIs 1-8

The scoring of KPIs 1-8 is based upon aggregated scoring of MIs. Each contain a number of elements, which vary in number, that represent international good practice. Taking the average of the constituent scores per element, a score is then calculated per MI. The same logic is pursued at aggregation to the KPI level, to ensure a consistent approach. Taking the average of the constituent scores per MI, an aggregated score is then calculated per KPI.

Scoring of KPIs 9-12

The scoring of KPIs 9-12 is based upon a meta-analysis of evaluations and performance information, rated at the MI level and aggregated to the KPI level. For KPI 9, results against the mandate and contribution to cross-cutting results are given equal weight. KPIs 9-12 assess results achieved as assessed in evaluations and annual performance reporting from the organisations.

Rating scales

Whenever scores are aggregated, rating scales are used to translate scores into ratings that summarise the assessment across KPIs and MIs. The rating scale used under MOPAN 3.1 is shown below.

■	**Highly satisfactory** (3.51-4.00)	■	**High evidence confidence**
■	**Satisfactory** (2.51-3.50)	■	**Medium evidence confidence**
■	**Unsatisfactory** (1.51-2.50)	■	**Low evidence confidence**
■	**Highly Unsatisfactory** (0.00-1.50)		
■	**No evidence / Not applicable**		

A score of "N/E" means "no evidence" and indicates that the assessment team could not find any evidence but was not confident of whether or not there was evidence to be found. The team assumes that "no evidence" does not necessarily mean that the element is not present (which would result in a zero score).

Elements rated N/E are excluded from any calculation of the average. A significant number of N/E scores in a report indicates an assessment limitation (see the Limitations section at the beginning of the report). A note indicating "N/A" means that an element is considered to be "not applicable". This usually owes to the organisation's specific nature.

UNEP SCORING OVERVIEW

Strategic management

KPI 1: Organisational architecture and financial framework

- 1.1 Long-term vision
- 1.2 Organisational architecture
- 1.3 Supports normative frameworks
- 1.4 Financial framework

KPI 2: Cross-cutting issues
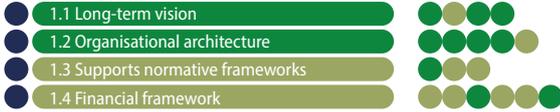
- 2.1 Gender equality
- 2.2 Environment
- 2.3 Human rights
- 2.4 Other cross-cutting issues

Operational management

KPI 3: Resources support, relevance and agility

- 3.1 Resources aligned to functions
- 3.2 Resource mobilisation
- 3.3 Decentralised decision-making
- 3.4 Performance-based human resources

KPI 4: Cost and value consciousness, financial transparency

- 4.1 Transparent decision-making
- 4.2 Disbursement as planned
- 4.3 Results-based budgeting
- 4.4 Audit
- 4.5 Control mechanisms
- 4.6 Anti-fraud procedures
- 4.7 SEA prevention / response
- 4.8 SH prevention / response

Relationship management

KPI 5: Planning / intervention design support, relevance and agility

- 5.1 Alignment to country
- 5.2 Context analysis
- 5.3 Capacity analysis
- 5.4 Risk management
- 5.5 Cross-cutting issues in intervention design
- 5.6 Sustainability
- 5.7 Implementation speed
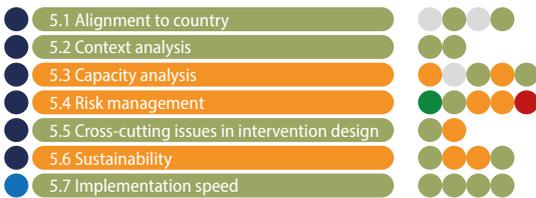
KPI 6: Work in coherent partnerships

- 6.1 Agility
- 6.2 Comparative advantage
- 6.3 Use country systems
- 6.4 Synergies
- 6.5 Co-ordination
- 6.6 Information sharing
- 6.7 Accountability to beneficiaries
- 6.8 Joint assessments
- 6.9 Knowledge

Performance management

KPI 7: Transparent results focus, explicitly geared to function

- 7.1 RBM applied
- 7.2 RBM in strategies
- 7.3 Evidence-based targets
- 7.4 Effective monitoring systems
- 7.5 Performance data applied

KPI 8: Evidence-based planning and programming applied

- 8.1 Independent evaluation function
- 8.2 Evaluation coverage
- 8.3 Evaluation quality
- 8.4 Evidence-based design
- 8.5 Poor performance tracked
- 8.6 Follow-up systems
- 8.7 Uptake of lessons
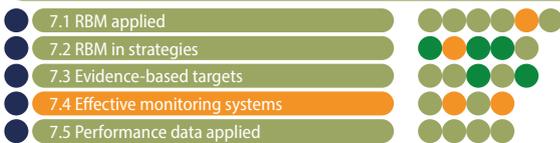
Results

KPI 9: Achievement of results

- 9.1 Achieves objectives
- 9.2 Gender equality / empowerment
- 9.3 Environmental sustainability
- 9.4 Human rights

KPI 10: Relevance to partners

- 10.1 Interventions relevant to needs

KPI 11: Results delivered efficiently

- 11.1 Results are cost-efficient
- 11.2 Results achieved on time

KPI 12: Results are sustainable

- 12.1 Benefits likely to continue

Legend:

- High confidence
- Medium confidence
- Little to no confidence
- Highly satisfactory
- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Highly unsatisfactory
- No evidence/Not applicable

Key performance indicator

Evidence confidence

Micro-indicator

Element 1
Element 2
Element 3
Element 4
Element 5
Element 6
Element 7
Element 8
Element 9

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS TABLE

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Clear strategic direction geared to key functions, intended results and integration of relevant cross-cutting priorities

KPI 1: Organisational architecture and financial framework enable mandate implementation and achievement of expected results	KPI score
Highly satisfactory	**3.55**

UNEP presents a new MTS every four years. Each of these strategies and their intended results are operationalised through two successive biennial PoWs. The most recent of these strategic planning documents are the MTS for 2022-25 and the PoW for 2022-25, which were approved during the virtual UNEA 5.1 meeting in February 2021 and whose implementation will start on January 1, 2022. The MTSs for 2014-17 and 2018-21 were also reviewed for this assessment, as were the PoWs for 2016-17, 2018-19, and 2020-21. These strategic documents, which are publicly available, have improved over time. They are based on a long-term vision consistent with the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and contain specific reference to the pertinent SDGs. The plans are based on a clear "situational analysis" that draws upon both accumulated knowledge on the state of the global environment as presented in the periodic GEO reports, the most recent of which was published in 2019, and other key UNEP environmental stocktaking and flagship documents. They are also based on lessons learned from experience derived both from annual and biannual PoW performance reviews and from project-specific and higher-level (e.g., sub-programme) evaluations, the results of which are synthesised in biennial reports by UNEP's Evaluation Office.

UNEP's organisational architecture is congruent with its long-term vision and operating model, which supports implementation of the strategic plans. This architecture and operating model are periodically adjusted to ensure continuing relevance and alignment with the current MTS. The MTSs and associated PoWs are implemented through a set of sub-programmes, each comprising projects funded by various sources, including the GEF and GCF. UNEP's organisational architecture consists of seven divisions at HQ, six regional offices (ROs), five sub-regional, six country and several other offices. Each MTS/PoW sub-programme is implemented through a matrix structure that has been in place for some time. Each sub-programme has a Coordinator at UNEP HQ and a sub-coordinator in each of the ROs.

Until 2020, the sub-programme co-ordinators in Nairobi were situated in different divisions and reporting to different division directors in accordance with the substance of each one, but they have now been centralised in the PPD to ensure better overall co-ordination of PoW implementation. The operating model allows for strong co-operation across the organisation both in vertical and horizontal terms and responsibility for results are clearly identified both at the Division and RO levels. Around 77% of those who responded to the partner survey agreed or strongly agreed that UNEP's strategies and policies demonstrate clarity of vision and around 95% somewhat agreed or higher. In addition, 63% agreed or strongly agreed that UNEP's strategies and policies demonstrate good understanding of its comparative advantage and more than 92% somewhat agreed or higher. However, UNEP's comparative advantage could be set out more explicitly in its strategic planning documents.

UNEP's strategic plans are aligned with both the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR). However, the organisation, unlike some other UN entities, is not a party to the Grand Bargain. A system is in place to track results in relation to the SDGs as well as PoW indicators and targets. These results are reported publicly annually and biannually by sub-programme through UNEP's PPRs. Progress on sub-programme implementation is also reported to member states through quarterly reports to the CPR that summarise key highlights and the main opportunities, challenges, and responses faced by each one.

UNEP is highly dependent on external donors for its funding. These consist of both the global funds (GEF and GCF) and other earmarked sources, including other UN entities, the EC, individual countries, and the private sector, all of which finance the generally multi-year projects for which UNEP is the selected implementing agency. Together these sources provided roughly 80% of the resources UNEP administered between 2016 and 2019. UNEP seeks to ensure proper alignment of the use of these resources with its MTS and PoW priorities within and across sub-programmes, but ultimately this depends on beneficiary country or countries and donor priorities as well.

As the funding framework is a part of the biannual PoWs that must be approved by UNEA, they are regularly reviewed by this body and on a more frequent basis by the CPR. UNEP has greater discretion over the use of the resources in the EF, which is capitalised through voluntary annual contributions by member states. However, it financed only around 13.5% of UNEP's actual expenditures in 2016-17 and 15.6% in 2018-19. These limitations notwithstanding, UNEP encourages its member states and others, especially bilateral donors and private sector partners, to provide more flexible funding. It has achieved a certain degree of success in this regard as two Scandinavian countries have recently provided what UNEP refers to as "soft earmarking" resources. However, it recognises that greater flexibility is still needed.

UNEP reports that at least 15% of its total resources are currently pooled funds and involve jointly implemented projects or programmes with other UN entities, especially UNDP and FAO. The responses to the partner survey indicated that 53% agreed or strongly agreed and 78% somewhat agreed or higher that UNEP's financial framework supports effective implementation of its mandate and strategy. However, UNEP senior managers affirm that additional resources and greater flexibility in their allocation would strengthen its ability to implement the organisation's mission. The mission has also been constrained by the recent freeze in core UN funding, which has contributed to its inability to fill numerous persisting permanent staff vacancies, including for the Chief Scientist and several Division Directors.

MI 1.1 Strategic plan and intended results based on a clear long-term vision and analysis of comparative advantage in the context of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda	Score
Overall MI rating	**Highly satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.75**
Element 1: A publicly available strategic plan (or equivalent) contains a long-term vision	4
Element 2: The vision is based on a clear analysis and articulation of comparative advantage	3
Element 3: The strategic plan operationalises the vision and defines intended results	4
Element 4: The strategic plan is reviewed regularly to ensure continued relevance and attention to risks	4
MI 1.1 Analysis	**Source documents**
UNEP presents a new medium-term strategy (MTS) every four years. Each of these strategies and their intended results are operationalised through biennial PoWs. The assessment examined the MTSs for 2014-17, 2018-21, and 2022-25, the most recent one having been approved by UNEP's governing body, UNEA, in its virtual meeting in February 2021, as well as the associated PoW for 2022-23. Together, the four-year MTSs and the PoWs constitute UNEP's strategic plans. These documents are all made publicly available once approved by UNEA, which meets every two years in part for this purpose. These strategic planning documents have improved over time and are based on a long-term vision (to 2030) that is consistent with the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. As of the PoW 2016-17 and the MTS 2018-21, these documents also contain specific reference to the SDGs. This vision is based on a clear analysis, presented as "situational analysis" in the MTSs, which is itself based on more comprehensive analyses of the state of the global environment undertaken by UNEP and published in periodic flagship documents, including, most prominently, the *Global Environmental Outlook* (GEO) reports. The most recent of these reports, GEO 6, was published in 2019. Around 77% of the partners surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that UNEP's strategies and policies demonstrate clarity of vision and more than 95% somewhat agreed or better. It is particularly noteworthy that 90% of governing body members and 80% of donors agreed with this statement (at all three levels of agreement).	7, 9, 10, 13, 30, 53, 75, 83, 103, 110, 116

As the entity responsible for overseeing the environmental dimension of sustainable development across the UN system and in the SDGs, UNEP's comparative advantages are primarily its ability to make science/policy linkages and promote improved environmental governance, although this has not been explicitly stated in some of the MTSs and PoWs in the past. However, the MTS for 2022-25 highlights these two areas, for the first time, as "foundational" priorities for its three "thematic" sub-programmes – climate action, nature action, and chemicals and pollution action. It can nevertheless be argued that UNEP has not explicitly articulated its comparative advantage in all its MTSs and PoWs in the past, although this is implicit. Around 63% of the partner survey respondents agree or strongly agree that UNEP's strategies and policies demonstrate good understanding of its comparative advantage and more than 92% somewhat agreed or better. Donor partners gave the relatively highest ratings, followed by governing body members, while other UN agencies and IFIs (which were considered together in the same category due to the small number of IFI respondents) and private sector respondents gave somewhat lower ones. The approved PoWs, including the one for 2022-23, identify the intended results for each of the seven sub-programmes for their respective two-year periods. Implementation of the strategic plans (MTS and PoWs) is reviewed regularly by UNEP senior management. The CPR reviews PoW implementation on behalf of UNEA on an annual basis, and UNEA does it itself does every two years, prior to approval of each new PoW to ensure its continued relevance and attention to risks. For this purpose, UNEP publishes a Programme Performance Report after the conclusion of each PoW, as well as following each year of PoW implementation. These annual and biannual reports draw lessons from each of these exercises, so they can be considered when preparing the next one. The PoWs also identify external factors and risks that could affect their implementation at the sub-programme level, although unexpected risks, such as the onset and impacts of COVID-19 were not – and could not be – anticipated in advance. UNEP nonetheless reacted quickly to the pandemic soon after its effects became apparent and developed plans to address them both in the short run and over the longer-term.	7, 9, 10, 13, 30, 53, 75, 83, 103, 110, 116

MI 1.1 Evidence confidence	High confidence

MI 1.2: Organisational architecture congruent with a clear long-term vision and associated operating model	Score
Overall MI rating	**Highly satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.80**
Element 1: The organisational architecture is congruent with the strategic plan	4
Element 2: The operating model supports implementation of the strategic plan	4
Element 3: The operating model is reviewed regularly to ensure continued relevance	4
Element 4: The operating model allows for strong co-operation across the organisation	4
Element 5: The operating model clearly delineates responsibilities for results	3
MI 1.2 Analysis	**Source documents**
UNEP's evolving organisational architecture is congruent with, and its operating model supports implementation of, its strategic plans (i.e., the MTSs and their associated PoWs). All of the plans reviewed by the assessment team identify priority areas that are implemented through specific sub-programmes, which are consistent with UNEP's long-term vision. Around 66% of governing body members, the only partners surveyed in this case, agreed or strongly agreed that UNEP organises and runs itself in a way that fully supports it vision; 96% somewhat agreed or above.	10, 28,44, 53, 83, 85,101

UNEP's organisational architecture, specifically its Executive Office and the divisional structure at HQ, has been adjusted over time to ensure congruence with and more effective implementation of each new strategic plan. However, the existing structure at the regional level remained unchanged during the assessment period. There was a restructuring, for example, prior to implementation of MTS 2018-2021. This restructuring increased the number of HQ divisions from five to seven by adding new divisions for Policy and Programmes and Corporate Services. The five former division names and some of their functions were also modified at that time, although interviews with current UNEP managers suggest that these changes were primarily cosmetic rather than substantive.

More specifically, after a new ED assumed office in mid-2016, the former Programme Strategy and Planning Team, which had previously reported to the Deputy ED; and the former Office for Operations and Corporate Services, which reported to the ED; were converted into new divisions reporting to the ED. In addition (i) the former Division of Communications and Public Information became the Communication Division; (ii) the former Division of Environmental Law and Conventions became the Law Division; (iii) the former Division of Technology, Industry, and Economics became the Economy Division; (iv) the former Division of Early Warning and Assessment became the Science Division; and (v) the former Division of Environmental Policy Implementation became the Ecosystems Division. The directors of these five divisions continue to report to the Deputy ED, as do the six Regional Directors.

At around the same time as these changes were made to UNEP's organisational architecture, the ED made the RO Directors members UNEP's Senior Management Team, thereby facilitating their more active and direct participation in key discussions and decisions on the design and implementation of the strategic plans, as well as in policy and administrative matters more generally. This arrangement has remained in place under the current ED, who assumed office in 2019.

UNEP's operating model (i.e., the seven sub-programmes, together with their constituent donor-funded country and multi-country level projects, environment-related policy advice, technical assistance, and normative knowledge products) has also been adjusted over time to ensure greater coherence with the strategic plan. This will likely also occur in advance of the implementation of MTS 2022-2025, which will start on January 1, 2022. The new MTS eliminates one existing sub-programme (Resilience to Disasters and Conflicts) and adds another (Digital Transformations). More significantly, the new MTS differentiates for the first time between the three types of priority areas/sub-programmes and clarifies the functional relations among them. It indicates how the two "enabling" sub-programmes will support the two "foundational" ones and how these four sub-programmes collectively will support the three "thematic" ones.

Each sub-programme has a designated co-ordinator at UNEP HQ and regional sub-coordinators in each of the ROs, of which the four most important in terms of UNEP-implemented operations on the ground are for Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Strategic plan implementation is thus overseen by managers and staff located both at UNEP HQ in Nairobi and by those in the field. There are also Sub-Regional Offices for the Caribbean, Central Asia, the Pacific, the Southern Cone of South America, and West Africa, and country offices in Brazil, China, India, Mexico, the Russian Federation, and South Africa – all of which report to the respective Regional Directors.

The operating model is reviewed regularly to ensure continued relevance and effectiveness. This review necessarily occurs every two years in connection with preparation of each successive PoW and involves the governing bodies as well as UNEP managers and technical staff. Even more fundamental reviews occur roughly every four years for developing each new MTS, which entails widespread stakeholder consultation as well as the participation of and approval by the CPR and UNEA.

10, 28,44, 53, 83, 85,101

The operating model likewise allows for strong co-operation across the organisation – across the substantive divisions at HQ and between them and the field (i.e., the regional, sub-regional, and country) offices. This is facilitated by UNEP's *de facto* matrix architecture of divisions and regions, together with its operating model of cross-cutting thematic and support sub-programmes and the appointment of central sub-programme coordinators and regional sub-coordinators for each one. To strengthen the operating model's effectiveness further, in 2020 all sub-programme coordinators, who were formerly located in different HQ Divisions and thus reported to different Division Directors, were moved to the PPD to ensure stronger oversight and tighter co-ordination of PoW implementation.	10, 28,44, 53, 83, 85,101
The PoWs identify responsibilities at the specific division and RO levels for delivering the outputs/outcomes that are identified for each sub-programme. In many cases, these are shared between HQ divisions and ROs, and/or across different divisions at HQ. This has been the case for each of the PoWs reviewed for the assessment period. These responsibilities are further broken down into "Accountable Divisions" and "Contributing Divisions and Regional Offices," for each output/outcome for each sub-programme. However, UNEP could be more specific as to which ROs would be involved in each case, as most of the activities required to achieve specific proposed PoW results are likely to be implemented through donor-funded projects in previously identified countries.	

MI 1.2 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 1.3: Strategic plan supports the implementation of global commitments and associated results	Score
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.33**
Element 1: The strategic plan is aligned to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, wider normative frameworks and their results (including, for example, the Grand Bargain and the QCPR)	4
Element 2: A system is being applied to track normative results for the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and other relevant global commitments (for example, the QCPR and the Grand Bargain, where applicable)	3
Element 3: Progress on implementation and aggregated results against global commitments are published at least annually	3

MI 1.3 Analysis	Source documents
Since the MTS 2018-2021 and the PoW for 2018-19, UNEP's strategic plans have been aligned with and support the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (hereafter "2030 Agenda"). These strategic plans have identified the alignment of their proposed activities and their respective targets and indicators with specific SDGs. The PoW for 2016-17 was submitted to UNEA for approval in June 2014 – more than a year prior to approval of the 2030 Agenda in September 2015. UNEP is also subject to the QPCR (i.e., the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review of operational activities for development of the UN system), which was recently the object of a new Resolution (No. 75/223) adopted by the General Assembly on 21 December 2020. However, unlike numerous other UN entities, UNEP is not a party to the Grand Bargain.	13, 18, 19, 53, 54, 81, 83, 104
A system is in place to track UNEP's normative results against the 2030 Agenda. Implementation progress and aggregated results relating to commitments for each sub-programme are reported in the annual PPR for 2018 and the biannual ones for 2016-17 and 2018-19. The corresponding annual PPR for 2020 is being prepared, according to interviews. As concerns the SDGs specifically, according to the PPR for 2018-19, "UNEP is the custodian agency for 26 of the indicators for the	

SDGs and works…to improve access to information and knowledge by cooperating with other UN entities to help build countries' capacities to track their progress towards the SDGs." It also "works closely with member states to increase indicator data availability and inform policy action [and] to strengthen national reporting systems." In addition, UNEP has "joined up with the UN Statistics Division (UNSD), UN regional economic commissions and other key UN entities to help countries develop the capacity to deliver environmental statistics and report on SDGs." Recent PoWs and PPRs identify how UNEP support through each sub-programme contributes to each individual SDG. However, the extent to which UNEP tracks its commitments under the QPCR is less clear.	13, 18, 19, 53, 54, 81, 83, 104

MI 1.3 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 1.4: Financial framework supports mandate implementation	Score
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.33**
Element 1: Financial and budgetary planning ensures that all priority areas have adequate funding in the short term or are at least given clear priority in cases where funding is very limited	3
Element 2: A single integrated budgetary framework ensures transparency	3
Element 3: The financial framework is reviewed regularly by the governing bodies	4
Element 4: Funding windows or other incentives in place to encourage donors to provide more flexible/un-earmarked funding at global and country levels	3
Element 5: Policies/measures are in place to ensure that earmarked funds are targeted at priority areas	3
Element 6: [UN] Funding modalities with UN reform: 15% of total resources are from pooled funding	4

MI 1.4 Analysis	Source documents
UNEP managers argued in interviews that the organisation's current financial resources are insufficient to allow it to fully implement its mandate and thus to ensure that all its priority areas have adequate funding in the short term. Some of its partners seem to agree: only 53% of governing bodies agreed or strongly agreed and another 23% somewhat agreed that UNEP's financial framework supports the effective implementation of its mandate and strategy. It is noteworthy, however, that 15% disagreed to some extent or more strongly and 5% of the respondents strongly disagreed. This appears in part to reflect the fact that UNEP's financial framework and overall resource envelope are highly dependent on the contributions of external donors, including the global funds (i.e., GEF, and in more recent years, GCF), that finance the projects for which UNEP is the selected implementing agency. These sources, together with other earmarked funds provided by the European Community (EC), other UN agencies, individual country donors, and the private sector, accounted for 80% of UNEP's budget in 2016-17 and 81% in 2018-19, according to the PPR for the more recent of these two biennia. The EF, which is replenished annually by voluntary contributions from member states, and over whose allocation UNEP has greater discretion, represented 15% of UNEP's budget in 2016-17 and 14% in 2018-19, while UNEP's regular budget accounted for just 5% of the total in both periods. The regular budget is primarily used to finance UNEP's permanent managerial and staff positions, which presently total 113, while consultants and UN Volunteers are financed from other sources. UNEP's share of the regular budget, which is allocated annually by the UN General Assembly based on obligatory country contributions, has been frozen for the past several years. This has impeded UNEP from filling a number of key vacancies, including for the Chief Scientist, as well as Division Directors, although acting directors are in place.	38, 79, 81 , 83, 85, 103, 104

UNEP's single integrated budgetary framework, as presented in each PoW, ensures transparency at the sub-programme and global levels (but not regional or country levels, hence the 3 rating). Actual performance in this regard is tracked and subsequently assessed in the annual and biannual PRRs. Recent non-public documents made available to the assessment team, however, do provide a breakdown of budget allocations by division and RO. UNEP's financial framework is reviewed regularly by the governing bodies (i.e., the CPR and UNEA), which approve its budgets on a biennial basis together with the respective programmes of work. The EF provides a window to encourage countries and other donors to provide more flexible/unearmarked funding from voluntary country and private-sector contributions. UNEP's first-time Private Sector Engagement Strategy (2019) and its recently revised and updated Partnership Policy and Procedures – currently being piloted and expected to come fully into force by the end of 2021 – together with its previously revised and updated Resource Mobilisation Strategy (2017), all seek to diversify funding sources and incentivise donors to provide more flexible/unearmarked funding. UNEP has recently stepped up its efforts both to increase financing from these and other sources, including the private sector, and to receive more "soft" earmarked funding from bilateral donors. This has been met with some success, although UNEP needs to continue to incentivise this. Earmarked funds typically support multi-year operations, so once approved by UNEP and their respective donors, they support collective priorities, especially interventions at the country and multi-country levels and primarily to address climate change, healthy and productive ecosystems, and management of chemicals, waste, and air quality. They also give UNEP relative certainty about a large share the financial flows from these sources over a rolling multi-year period. Overall, this means that the allocation of UNEP's financial resources heavily coincides with the priorities of UNEP's major donors, although these align with UNEP's own priorities in general terms. According to interviews and as illustrated by UNEP's project design template, the organisation seeks to ensure that the projects it implements are consistent with and situated within its PoWs. Also according to interviews, moreover, UNEP often uses its limited discretionary resources to finance those sub-programmes and internal priorities that draw less or insufficient donor attention in the form of earmarked project funding. This was the case for the Global Environmental Outlook (GEO) 6 flagship publication in 2019, for example. Finally, joint initiatives and jointly implemented donor-funded projects and programmes (such as REDD+) with other UN agencies, including FAO, UNDP, UNIDO, and others, constitute pooled funding and exceed the UN reform requirement. More specifically, UNEP interviews reveal that some 20% of the organisation's total resources are presently pooled.	38, 79, 81 , 83, 85, 103, 104
MI 1.4 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

KPI 2: Structures and mechanisms in place and applied to support the implementation of global frameworks for cross-cutting issues at all levels, in line with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda principles	KPI score
Satisfactory	**2.84**
Because UNEP's core mission and mandate are to seek environmental sustainability and climate change, the environment was not assessed separately as a "cross-cutting" issue. It was likewise agreed with UNEP and the MOPAN Secretariat that no other cross-cutting issues merit specific assessment at this time. Therefore, the analysis of KPI 2, unlike for the previous MOPAN assessment, refers only to MIs 2.1 (gender equality and the empowerment of women) and 2.3 (human rights, including protection of vulnerable people – i.e., those at risk of being "left behind").	

UNEP has had a publicly available policy and strategy on gender equality and the environment since 2015. It has also produced other relevant documents on this subject, including a UN Environment Gender Implementation Parity Plan in 2018, and most recently a report on gender and climate change in the context of COVID-19 (2020). It includes gender-related indicators in its strategic plans and screens for and subsequently evaluates gender elements in the design of the projects for which it is the implementing agency. Human and financial resources have been made available for this purpose and staff capacity has been developed.

UNEP has pursued and largely achieved gender parity in its internal staffing and management; the present ED and her deputy, 3 of the 7 Division Directors or Acting Directors, and half of the 6 Regional Directors (all of whom are members of UNEP's SMT), are women. The partner survey reveals that roughly 77% of all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that UNEP promotes gender equality; nearly 90% somewhat agreed or higher. However, UNEP recognises in both its current and forthcoming MTSs that additional work is needed in this area, especially in projects. Recent UNEP project terminal evaluations confirm mixed results to date.

Despite explicitly recognising its importance in the most recent MTS for 2022-25, UNEP has given less attention to human rights issues more generally. While there are some ongoing activities in this regard under the Environmental Governance sub-programme and managed by the Environmental Law Division, the primary instrument is UNEP's Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework (ESSF), which has been in place at least since September 2014 and was revised and updated in February 2020. This refers especially to indigenous peoples and other vulnerable populations that could potentially be adversely affected by projects for which UNEP is the implementing agency. UNEP has also affirmed that "environmental rights are human rights" and provided policy guidance on "environment, human rights, and addressing inequalities" and their "integration into the UNEP organisational culture and programmatic activities" since 2016.

Insufficient attention is given to human rights in UNEP's periodic strategic plans and corporate objectives, as well as in project design documents, which lack specific indicators for the issue. Nor does UNEP possess a specific tracking system for this purpose or focus significantly on it in its project evaluations, other than in the form of plans to mitigate social safeguard risks. Despite this, roughly 78% of all those who responded to the partner survey agreed or strongly agreed that UNEP promotes human rights and nearly 88% somewhat agreed or higher. Despite these positive survey responses, UNEP's work with respect to human rights could be strengthened both in strategic planning and intervention, including through indicators, targets, and accountability systems.

MI 2.1 Corporate/sectoral and country strategies respond to and/or reflect the intended results of normative frameworks for gender equality and women's empowerment	Score
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.00**
Element 1: Dedicated policy statement on gender equality available and showing evidence of application	4
Element 2: Gender equality indicators and targets fully integrated into the MO's strategic plan and corporate objectives	2
Element 3: Accountability systems (including corporate reporting and evaluation) reflect gender equality indicators and targets	3
Element 4: Gender equality screening checklists or similar tools inform the design for all new interventions	3
Element 5: Human and financial resources are available to address gender equality issues	3
Element 6: Staff capacity development on gender is being or has been conducted	3

MI 2.1 Analysis	Source documents
UNEP has had a publicly available dedicated policy and strategy on gender equality and the environment since 2015. It has also produced several other relevant documents on this subject, including a UN Environment Gender Implementation Parity Plan in 2018 and, most recently, a report on gender and climate change in the context of COVID-19 (2020). There is evidence of their application within the organisation, particularly the composition of senior management, and in country interventions, albeit with mixed results to date (discussed further in connection with KPI 9, MI 9.2 below).	
While unlike at the project level UNEP explicitly recognises and stresses the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment in its strategic plans and corporate objectives, these plans do not contain gender-related indicators *per se*.	
An accountability system is in place for gender aspects in the projects for which UNEP is the implementing agency. Their gender-related performance is assessed in the project terminal evaluations and reported publicly in the aggregate biannual ESRs issued by UNEP's Evaluation Office. More generally, UNEP's activities on gender and the environment are also considered in its annual and biannual PPRs, as is UNEP's own internal staff gender distribution (in the section on human resources). While UNEP's record for the gender balance of its SMT is presently very positive, with both the ED and her Deputy as well as three of the Division Directors and half of the Regional Directors being women, its strategic plans and assessment reports recognise that there is a continuing need for improvement in individual projects.	10, 11, 15, 16, 24, 25, 36, 47, 53, 56, 59, 64, 66, 68, 83, 95, 109, 116, 153, 171
Despite this, the partner survey carried out for this assessment indicates that an average of around 77% of all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that UNEP promotes gender equality and nearly 90% somewhat agreed. Even though government responses were among the most positive, followed by those of NGOs and academic/research institutions, a few government respondents either somewhat or strongly disagreed. While positive overall, responses by other UN agencies and IFIs and NGOs were somewhat less so than those of other surveyed groups such as the private sector and donors.	
UNEP does include gender indicators for projects. It also systematically screens for gender elements and impacts in the design of all new interventions. This is evident both in UNEP's project design document template, which includes a specific "Gender Marker Self-Assessment" annex, and in the Quality of Project Design Matrix applied by the PRC, which requires that "a gender analysis specific to the project be provided, including consideration of how the problem [to be addressed by the project under review] affects men and women differently, if appropriate" as part of its preparation.	
According to interviews, human and financial resources have been made available for this purpose, including the appointment of gender focal points, and staff capacity development on gender. According to UNON, which provides this training, as of 2 June 2021, 92% of UNEP staff had completed the mandatory course "I Know Gender: An Introduction to Gender Equality for UN staff," while 4% had not fully completed it and 4% had not yet enrolled. However, all staff training over in 2020 has been somewhat hindered by the COVID pandemic, according to interviews.	
MI 2.1 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 2.2: Corporate/sectoral and country strategies respond to and/or reflect the intended results of normative frameworks for environmental sustainability and climate change	Score
Overall MI rating	**N/A**
Overall MI score	**N/A**
Element 1: Dedicated policy statement on environmental sustainability and climate change available and showing evidence of application	N/A
Element 2: Environmental sustainability and climate change indicators and targets fully integrated into the MO's strategic plan and corporate objectives	N/A
Element 3: Accountability systems (including corporate reporting and evaluation) reflect environmental sustainability and climate change indicators and targets	N/A
Element 4: Environmental screening checklists or similar tools inform design for all new interventions	N/A
Element 5: Human and financial resources are available to address environmental sustainability and climate change issues	N/A
Element 6: Staff capacity development on environmental sustainability and climate change is being or has been conducted	N/A
MI 2.2 Analysis	**Source documents**
Given UNEP's core mission and mandate for environmental sustainability, including the need to address climate change, these subjects are not assessed separately as a specific cross-cutting issue, as agreed with the MOPAN Secretariat.	N/A
MI 2.2 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 2.3: Corporate/sectoral and country strategies respond to and/or reflect the intended results of normative frameworks for human rights including the protection of vulnerable people (those at risk of being "left behind")	Score
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**2.67**
Element 1: Dedicated policy statement on human rights available and showing evidence of application	3
Element 2: Human rights indicators and targets fully integrated into the MO's strategic plan and corporate objectives	2
Element 3: Accountability systems (including corporate reporting and evaluation) reflect human rights indicators and targets	2
Element 4: Human rights screening checklists or similar tools inform design for all new interventions	3
Element 5: Human and financial resources are available to address human rights issues	3
Element 6: Staff capacity development on human rights is being or has been conducted	3
MI 2.3 Analysis	**Source documents**
UNEP's policy statement on human rights frames this concern in the context of the environment and addressing inequalities and is presented as "policy guidance" in a document issued in 2016. In addition to arguing that "environmental rights are human rights," UNEP has given attention to specific human rights concerns through its ESSF, which has been in place at least since January 2015. It was revised and updated, then formally approved by the ED, and became effective in February 2020. This is particularly the case with respect to indigenous peoples; community health,	11,13, 29, 30, 53, 55, 83, 86, 95, 97, 109, 113, 116, 139, 142, 153

safety, and security (which was added in the updated version); displacement and involuntary resettlement; and labour and working conditions. These could all potentially be affected by projects for which UNEP is the implementing agency and thus these safeguards are required to be applied to these projects. "Leaving no one behind" is one of the guiding principles of the ESSF, together with human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment.

Less attention has been given to human rights generally, however, in UNEP's strategic plans and corporate objectives (i.e., in the MTSs and PoWs) or in its project design documents. However, this has started to change at the strategic planning level. More specifically, while no explicit attention was given to human rights and the environment in the MTS 2018-2021, this situation has improved in the recently approved MTS for 2022-25. This reflects both stronger leadership for these issues within UNEP, and according to interviews, a more positive "enabling environment" in member states (through UNEA) than in the past. Some member states continue to be resistant however. Human rights concerns still mainly appear in projects in the form of attention to identifying and planning to mitigate gender inequality and social safeguard risks in addition to the implicit attention to environmental rights as human rights.

UNEP notes that there is a human rights screening checklist within the Safeguard Risk Identification Form (SRIF) template and some safeguard tools, such as environmental and social impact assessment (ESIA), environmental and social management plans (ESMP), stakeholder engagement plans (SEP), gender action plans (GAP), etc. also consider social and human rights issues. There are no separate SEP or GAP formats as these management plans follow the same logic as the ESMP. These tools are selectively required depending on the donor requirements or risk types/ levels.

The partnership survey reveals that roughly 78% of all respondents agree or strongly agree that UNEP promotes human rights. An additional 10% somewhat agree. The most positive answers came from private-sector respondents, followed by those representing governments and academic/research institutions. Next came donors and NGOs, with other UN agencies and IFIs giving the least positive responses, despite still being positive.

11,13, 29, 30, 53, 55, 83, 86, 95, 97, 109, 113, 116, 139, 142, 153

UNEP does not include human rights indicators and targets in its strategic plans, however. Interviews confirm that it currently lacks an organisation-wide accountability system to track them, and also that UNEP does not have a general human rights screening checklist or similar tool to inform the design of new interventions. It does screen all projects for potential risks to indigenous peoples – for which there is a specific Safeguard Standard (No. 7) – and other vulnerable groups, and there is a specific annex in UNEP's project document template for this purpose. It should be noted, however, that in relation to private-sector engagement, human rights indicators are certainly part of the UNEP due diligence process and embedded in UN Global Compact's 10 Principles that UNEP abides by when bringing on private sector partners.

Some financial resources are available in the present PoW to address human rights issues. These are primarily for use by the Law Division under the Environmental Governance sub-programme through the partnership co-operation agreement (PCA) with the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) for 2018-21. As noted above, human rights have been given greater prominence in the new MTS. However, according to interviews, it is not yet known whether this financial support will continue or whether it will be expanded in the next MTS period. The PPD has also allocated SIDA funding of $15,000 to carry out human rights training for UNEP staff members. The training course is currently under development.

Human rights-related training has been provided to staff in the past in conjunction with the previous Safeguards Framework. Though postponed during 2020 due to the COVID pandemic, it is planned for the new Safeguards Framework during 2021, according to interviews. According to

UNON, which provides this mandatory training, as of 2 June 2021, 83% of UNEP staff had completed the training on UN Human Rights Responsibilities while 6% had not completed it and 11% not yet enrolled. The human rights training is planned to be delivered in Q4 of 2021 as one of the key elements of the Safeguard training. UNOHCHR, ILO and UNEP Law Division are working closely with the PPD/UNEP for this task. This training will be quite different from the UN Human Rights training course as it will be contextualised to the UNEP project types and approaches. PPD/UNEP is developing a corporate wide self-paced programme planning/development training package that will encompass all the cross-cutting issues. This will be rolled out during the 2nd quarter of 2022 and will be contextualised to UNEP's programme planning processes.	11,13, 29, 30, 53, 55, 83, 86, 95, 97, 109, 113, 116, 139, 142, 153
MI 2.3 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 2.4: Corporate/sectoral and country strategies respond to and/or reflect the intended results of normative frameworks for other cross-cutting issues (e.g. good governance, protection, nutrition, innovation)	**Score**
Overall MI rating	**N/A**
Overall MI score	**N/A**
Element 1: Dedicated policy statement on any other cross-cutting issue available and showing evidence of application	N/A
Element 2: Cross-cutting issue indicators and targets fully integrated into the MO's strategic plan and corporate objectives	N/A
Element 3: Accountability systems (including corporate reporting and evaluation) reflect cross-cutting issue indicators and targets	N/A
Element 4: Cross-cutting issue screening checklists or similar tools inform design for all new interventions	N/A
Element 5: Human and financial resources (exceeding benchmarks) are available to address cross-cutting issues	N/A
Element 6: Staff capacity development on cross-cutting issue is being or has been conducted	N/A
MI 2.4 Analysis	**Source documents**
It was agreed with UNEP and the MOPAN Secretariat that there are at present no other cross-cutting issues for UNEP.	N/A
MI 2.4 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT

Assets and capacities organised behind strategic direction and intended results, to ensure relevance agility and account-ability.

KPI 3: Operating model and human and financial resources support relevance and agility	KPI score
Satisfactory	3.30

UNEP's organisational structure has been progressively aligned with the requirements set out in the current strategic plan (MTS 2018-2021 and PoWs 2018-2019 and 2020-2021). Numerous organisational changes were made soon after the previous ED took office in mid-2016, which inter alia enhanced the role of the RO Directors by incorporating them into the SMT and reorganised and renamed the HQ Divisions. UNEP staffing and resource allocation across functions are likewise generally aligned with its organisational goals and priorities as set out in the present strategic plans, although the above-mentioned budget constraint and other funding restrictions limit UNEP's flexibility. Despite this, internal restructuring efforts during the assessment period have had a clear purpose, are aligned with corporate priorities, and seek to strengthen co-ordination of MTS and PoW implementation. UNEP is supporting the UN country resident co-ordinator (RC) system as required under the UNDS reforms, both through cost-sharing and RC nominations, and it applies mutual recognition principles in key functional areas, especially procurement. The partner survey indicates, however, that, on average, only 41% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed and 67% somewhat agreed or better that UNEP has sufficient staff either in or accessible to the countries where it operates to deliver intended results. Nearly 22% disagreed. This was one of the survey questions that obtained the lowest level of partner agreement and reflects the organisation's limited in-person presence in countries. On the other hand, roughly 72% of those surveyed agreed or strongly agreed and just over 90% somewhat agreed or higher that UNEP's staff are sufficiently experienced and skilled to work in the different contexts in which it operates. Thus, staffing quantity rather than quality is perceived by partners to be a constraint.

During the assessment period, UNEP has stepped up its efforts to expand and diversify its funding base, both with donor governments and the private sector. While it continues to obtain substantial multi-year financing from the GEF, GCF, and other earmarked sources, it also seeks increased domestic funding from partner countries and other institutions, including private ones. While these efforts have intensified during the assessment period, especially for voluntary contributions to the EF, it has had mixed success. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on country fiscal situations has undoubtedly been a contributing factor over the past 12 months. UNEP now systematically collects and passes on to the UN Secretariat the 1% levy required under the UNDS reforms.

An organisation-wide policy is in place for the delegation of decision-making authority within UNEP, including at the Divisional and RO levels. Inclusion of the RO Directors in the SMT has persisted under the current ED, thereby ensuring their continued active participation in organisational decision-making processes. Three of the seven partner types were surveyed as to whether UNEP can make strategic decisions locally. The results were also comparatively less positive than for other survey items, with just 58% of all respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that this was the case, although 87% somewhat agreed or better.

UNEP has a system in place requiring all managers and staff, including senior staff, to undergo an annual performance assessment, with the ED reporting to the UN Secretary General for this purpose. This system is implemented by UNEP for all staff at a frequency which reflects UN Secretariat policies and procedures. It is based on annual staff work plans that are linked to the annual work programme, which is derived from the current biannual PoW and thus UNEP's corporate objectives. UNEP human resource managers confirm that the performance assessment system is used in decision making about promotions, etc. and that there is an internal process to manage staff disputes and complaints regarding performance assessments.

MI 3.1: Organisational structures and staffing ensure that human and financial resources are constantly aligned and adjusted to key functions	Score
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.33**
Element 1: Organisational structure is aligned with, or being reorganised to, requirements set out in the current strategic plan	4
Element 2: Staffing is aligned with, or being reorganised to, requirements set out in the current strategic plan	2
Element 3: Resource allocations across functions are aligned to current organisational priorities and goals as set out in the current strategic plan	3
Element 4: Internal restructuring exercises have a clear purpose and intent aligned to the priorities of the current Strategic Plan	4
Element 5: [UN] Engagement in supporting the resident coordinator systems through cost-sharing and resident coordinator nominations	4
Element 6: [UN] Application of mutual recognition principles in key functional areas	3
MI 3.1 Analysis	**Source documents**
As observed in MI 1.2 Element 1 above, UNEP's structure was reorganised early during the assessment period to align it more closely with the requirements of the current strategic plans (MTS 2018-2021 and PoWs 2018-2019 and 2020-2021). During 2021, it is likely that additional changes will be made, particularly to account for the establishment of the new Digital Transformations sub-programme and suppression of the Resilience to Disasters and Conflicts sub-programme, whose activities and projects will be absorbed by other sub-programmes, according to interviews. This is expected to occur before implementation of MTS 2022-2025 and PoW 2022-2023 begins in January 2022. This mini reorganisation will likely entail appointing a coordinator at UNEP HQ and regional sub-coordinators for the new sub-programme, together with further specification and alignment of the corresponding PoW activities and projects. The associated outcomes of this new sub-programme (i.e., "number of digital platforms deployed as a result of UNEP support for automatically monitoring global progress against climate, nature and chemicals and pollution targets to support transparency, predictive analytics and risk identification," etc.) and an indicative budget (US$ 45.187 million for 2022-23), have already been approved as part of the new PoW.	26, 27, 28, 30, 41, 53, 57, 58, 72, 83, 85, 87, 91, 98, 99, 101, 103, 115, 116, 140

UNEP staffing is also generally aligned with this plan, but due to a freeze on the regular UN budget, there continue to be unfilled vacancies among its permanent positions that are funded from this budget source, including at the Division Director and other senior levels at its HQ in Nairobi. These staffing shortages may adversely affect the organisation's ability to fully meet the requirements set out in the new strategic plan. According to interviews UNEP intends to hire additional specialists to support implementation of the new Digital Transformations sub-programme. As indicated below, some partners also see the limited number of staff as a constraint, especially for its engagement at the country level. However, they rate the technical quality of existing UNEP personnel very positively.

More specifically, the partner survey indicates that, on average, only 41% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed and 67% somewhat agreed or better that UNEP has a sufficient number of staff either in or accessible to countries where it operates to deliver intended results. Nearly 22% disagreed at least to some extent with this statement. This was one of the items in the survey that obtained the lowest level of partner agreement and points to UNEP's very limited

in-person presence in countries. Other UN agencies and IFIs, followed by donors, were the partner groups that most strongly disagreed with this statement. These were followed by respondents representing academic/research institutions, governments, and NGOs. However, all respondent groups expressed some degree of dissatisfaction with the current situation.

On the other hand, roughly 72% of all those surveyed agreed or strongly agreed and just over 90% somewhat agreed or higher that UNEP's staff are sufficiently experienced and skilled to work in its various contexts of operation. The highest ratings came from academic/research institutions, donors, and governing body members and the lowest from other UN organisations and IFIs, followed by the private sector and NGOs, with governments falling in the middle. Finally, overall ratings were also lower for the statement "UNEP's staff are presently in country for a long enough time to build the relationships needed"; this too is thus perceived by partners as a comparative weakness. Only around 56% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, although 89% somewhat agreed or better. Those respondents with the relatively lowest levels of agreement were donors and NGOs followed by government and private sector respondents.

UNEP's resource allocations across functions are generally aligned with its current organisational goals and priorities as set out in the present strategic plan. Most resources in the PoW for 2020-21, for example, are allocated to the Climate Change (30.7% of the total for all sub-programmes) and Healthy and Productive Ecosystems (22.3%) sub-programmes, followed by Chemicals, Waste, and Air Quality (16.0%). As the MTS for 2022-25 clearly indicates, these areas correspond to UNEP's three thematic priorities, which the other four sub-programmes are primarily designed to support. However, the above-mentioned budget constraints, combined with other funding restrictions, may have an adverse impact on the alignment.

This notwithstanding, internal restructuring efforts during the assessment period have had a clear purpose, are aligned with priorities and seek to improve co-ordination in implementing the current strategic plan. As suggested in MI 1.2 above, the decision in 2020 to centralise all sub-programme co-ordinators in the PPD, together with the earlier decision that this key division should report directly to the ED, aimed to strengthen the management and oversight of MTS and improve PoW co-ordination and implementation, in order to increase their effectiveness.

According to interviews, as required under the UNDS reforms UNEP is supporting the UN country Resident Co-ordinator (RC) system both through cost-sharing (i.e., the 1% levy referred to in MI 3.2 Element 5 below) and by submitting Resident Coordinator nominations (offering five potential candidates, despite its own staffing constraints).   Interviewees likewise indicated that the organisation is currently applying UN mutual recognition principles in key functional areas, especially procurement. This is in accordance with the statement issued by the Business Innovation Group (BIG) and signed by the UNEP ED on 9 October 2019.

	26, 27, 28, 30, 41, 53, 57, 58, 72, 83, 85, 87, 91, 98, 99, 101, 103, 115, 116, 140

MI 3.1 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 3.2: Resource mobilisation efforts consistent with the core mandate and strategic priorities	**Score**
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.40**
Element 1: Resource mobilisation strategy/case for support explicitly aligned to current strategic plan	3
Element 2: Resource mobilisation strategy/case for support reflects recognition of need to diversify the funding base, particularly in relation to the private sector	3

Element 3: Resource mobilisation strategy/case for support seeks multi-year funding within mandate and strategic priorities	4
Element 4: Resource mobilisation strategy/case for support prioritises the raising of domestic resources from partner countries/institutions, aligned to goals and objectives of the strategic plan/ relevant country plan	3
Element 5: [UN] 1% levy systematically collected and passed on to the UN Secretariat	4
MI 3.2 Analysis	**Source documents**
UNEP's resource mobilisation and case for support are explicitly aligned with the current strategic plan. The new MTS for 2022-25 affirms, for example, that "securing contributions to the EF, as well as funding that is only softly earmarked, is indispensable if UNEP is to be equipped to deliver on the priorities agreed by the member states while delivering tangible results." However, the fact that UNEP's resources, which consist largely of earmarked resources from global funds (i.e., the GEF and, increasingly, the GCF) and other earmarked sources, constrain its overall flexibility. This is despite the fact that they are generally aligned with many of UNEP's own priorities, as expressed in the sub-programmes included in its current MTS and PoW and the specific projects and activities through which they are implemented. UNEP has nevertheless stepped up its efforts during the assessment period to increase and diversify its funding base, both with donor governments and the private sector, and obtains multi-year funding from the global funds and other earmarked project-related sources. This is reflected in UNEP's Resource Mobilisation Strategy issued in November 2017. The purpose of this document was to ensure that funding was available to implement the approved MTS 2018-2021 and its PoWs, as well as the associated costs of the work of the governing bodies to enable UNEP "to deliver on its strengthened mandate as the leading global environmental authority." It is also reflected in UNEP's first Private Sector Engagement Strategy, released in October 2019, one of whose four "pillars" is "mobilising resources to accelerate momentum toward a sustainable future." In addition, UNEP is piloting implementation of its updated and revised Partnership Policy and Procedures, which are expected to come fully into force by the end of 2021 and which also aim in part to boost resource mobilisation. Looking ahead, these efforts will also include updating its 2017 Resource Mobilisation Strategy "to reflect the recent decisions of the Environment Assembly," according to MTS 2020-2025, while UNEP's aforementioned updating of its partnership strategy aims at ensuring "stronger pursuit of its comparative advantage to match its increased ambition for resource mobilisation in order to deliver on its strategic priorities." Through these various initiatives, as well as its ongoing Finance Initiative (UNEP-FI) – established in 1992 to engage the private sector and global financial sector "to bring about systematic change in finance to support a sustainable world," according to its mission statement – the organisation has also sought to increase domestic resources from partner countries and other institutions, including the private sector. As suggested above, UNEP is also trying to obtain greater voluntary country contributions to the EF, but with mixed success to date due in part to national fiscal constraints on account of the COVID pandemic. While UNEP does not develop specific country plans, it does respond to country "demands" for support by implementing financing for approved GEF, GCF and other donor-funded projects and activities. According to interviews, as required under the UNDS reforms UNEP is also collecting and systematically passing on the 1% levy to the UN Secretariat.	38, 72, 77, 83, 84, 85, 103 116
MI 3.2 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 3.3: Resource reallocation/programming decisions responsive to need can be made at a decentralised level	Score
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.25**
Element 1: An organisation-wide policy or guidelines exist that describe the delegation of decision-making authorities at different levels of the organisation	4
Element 2: Policy/guidelines or other documents provide evidence of a sufficient level of decision-making autonomy available at the country level (or other decentralised level as appropriate) regarding resource reallocation/programming	4
Element 3: Evaluations or other reports contain evidence that reallocation/programming decisions have been made to positive effect at country or other local level as appropriate	2
Element 4: The MO has made efforts to improve or sustain the delegation of decision-making on resource allocation/programming to the country or other relevant levels	3
MI 3.3 Analysis	**Source documents**
An updated (as of November 2019) organisation-wide policy and framework is in place for delegating decision-making authority at different levels within UNEP. According to this document, it "incorporates the recommendations of the Secretary General and best practices as identified by the UN Joint Inspection Unit" as well as "principles from the UN Guidebook on Delegation of Authority and best practices identified by the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN)." It covers the RO and HQ Divisional levels in addition to the Executive Office, and states further that "UNEP division directors, regional directors, and other heads of offices are delegated authority by the ED for the management of human and financial resources entrusted to their respective offices to facilitate the successful implementation of a duly-approved annual work plan." It adds that "division directors, regional directors, and other heads of offices are responsible for ensuring the efficient and effective use of such resources and for ensuring that these resources are used for the purposes for which they are provided." More generally, this document clarifies decision-making responsibilities for directors at different levels over human resources, financial management, procurement, asset management, and property management.	
As UNEP has very few country offices, all decentralised decisions are taken by the RO Directors. This includes relative autonomy for reallocation and programming decisions at the project level. The policy and framework document specifies that directors at both the division and regional levels have authority for the "redeployment of funds within and between expenditure groups within boundaries imposed by General Assembly and Environment Assembly." It also states that both these levels have approval authority for projects and project document revisions.	74, 89, 154-157, 158-166, 168-180
Three partner categories were asked whether UNEP can make strategic decisions locally. The results were a little less positive than for many other survey questions, with just 58% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing, although 87% somewhat agreed or better. The private-sector representatives responded most positively, while other UN entities and IFIs were the least positive. Donors fell between the two.	
Evaluation reports indicate that when necessary, UNEP reallocation or programming decisions have had positive effects when taken at the regional level, although more substantial revisions generally also require donor approval. Such decisions cannot be taken however at country level.	
As previously observed, early on in the assessment period under the previous ED, the RO Directors became members of the UNEP's SMT and this arrangement has continued under the current ED.	

Interviews indicate that the participation of decentralised managers and staff in preparing the most recent MTS and PoW has been further enhanced by sustaining and further strengthening their role in overall resource allocation and programming processes. However, as in most organisations, final decisions are still centrally determined.	74, 89, 154-157, 158-166, 168-180
MI 3.3 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 3.4: HR systems and policies are performance based and geared to the achievement of results	**Score**
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.20**
Element 1: A system is in place which requires all staff, including senior staff, to undergo performance assessment	4
Element 2: There is evidence that the performance assessment system is systematically and implemented by the organisation for all staff and to the required frequency	3
Element 3: The performance assessment system is clearly linked to organisational improvement, particularly the achievement of corporate objectives, and to demonstrate ability to work with other entities	3
Element 4: Staff performance assessment is applied in decision-making on promotion, incentives, rewards, sanctions etc.	3
Element 5: A clear process is in place to manage disagreement and complaints regarding staff performance assessments	3
MI 3.4 Analysis	**Source documents**
UNEP has a system in place that requires all staff, including senior staff, to undergo performance assessment, with the ED reporting to the UN Secretary General for this purpose. There is also evidence that this system is implemented by UNEP for all staff on an annual basis, in accordance with UN policies and procedures. Interviews indicate that the performance assessment system is linked with UNEP's achievement of corporate objectives as it is based on annual staff work plans that are specifically tied to the annual programme of work, derived from the current PoW. The extent to which this system specifically assesses that ability of staff to work with other entities is less clear. The written responses to the partner survey do suggest that this ability is good, however. In the specific case of UNEP's responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, there was considerable praise for staff's ability to interact both proactively and flexibly to help address evolving country needs, especially in response to COVID-associated project implementation challenges. Interviews likewise confirm that the performance assessment results influence decisions on promotions, etc., and that a clear process is in place to manage staff disputes and complaints over their performance assessments.	2, 67
MI 3.4 Evidence confidence	**Medium confidence**

KPI 4: Organisational systems are cost- and value-conscious and enable financial transparency and accountability	KPI score
Satisfactory	3.06

UNEP is piloting a revised and updated version of its 2011 Partnership Policy and Procedures document issued in late 2019 and which is expected to come into force before the end of 2021. This timing is required to ensure that it will be adequately aligned with the UMOJA-2 Implementation Partners module, which is also currently under development. While the policy includes a general statement on resource allocation to partners, this depends significantly on the external sources of global and other earmarked funding for specific projects. As UNEP's support is available to all 193 member states, it does not officially have priority countries, nor does it have country strategies. However, in practice, it seeks to give greater attention to developing countries in general and to the lowest income ones in particular, together with landlocked and fragile and/or conflict-affected countries, including small island developing states.

UNEP's resource allocation procedures allow for adaptation to different contexts both by sub-programmes and projects. This occurred in response to the unanticipated COVID-19 pandemic, for example, in 2020. The governing bodies were surveyed on the extent to which UNEP's allocation of resources was transparent and consistent with agreed strategic priorities: 60% of those who responded agreed or strongly agreed and 82% somewhat agreed or higher, while 12% expressed at least some disagreement. The four stakeholder partner groups were also asked whether UNEP openly communicates criteria for allocating resources. Slightly less than half of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed and 64% somewhat agreed or higher, while 10% disagreed to some extent or more and 26% did not know.

UNEP sets targets for resource allocation to each sub-programme in its PoWs in the form of indicative budgets. It also sets expected disbursements to executing partners for the projects for which it is the implementing agency, as indicated in the respective project design documents and associated legal and/or partnership agreements. It regularly tracks financial disbursements both at the sub-programme and individual project levels. Explanations of discrepancies with plans, including due to changing contextual factors, are considered in annual and biannual PPRs at the sub-programme level and in project implementation progress, MTRs, and terminal evaluations. However, in some cases these processes could be improved.

Such discrepancies, including implementation delays, can have both external and internal causes. However, in most cases the causes are external to UNEP, and include both performance issues in project execution and unexpected factors, such as the impact of COVID-19. UNEP's lack of physical presence and day-to-day project oversight and supervision in many of the countries where its projects are implemented, means it relies strongly on executing agency reporting. This is a possible contributing factor to performance issues that could be strengthened in the future. The four implementing partner groups were asked whether UNEP provides reliable information on when financial allocations and disbursements will happen, and on the amounts. Overall, 52% agreed or strongly agreed and around 63% somewhat agreed or higher, while 9% disagreed at least to some extent and nearly 26% did not know.

The most recent organisational budgets (i.e., for 2018-19, 2020-21, and 2022-23) presented in the respective PoWs align financial resources with strategic objectives and the intended results of the respective plans for each sub-programme. However, as noted above, these budgets are driven by both donor and UNEP's strategic priorities and the overall funding levels are ultimately largely determined by donor partners such as the GEF and GCF as well as by UNEP. While the budgets for each PoW sub-programme and donor-funded project provide estimated costings for implementing each of them, this is not currently the case for each management result at the sub-programme level. Systems are available to track the respective costs and resource disbursements at both the overall sub-programme and project levels, but not for each management result, or "output", identified in the PoWs.

The costing chain from donor-funded project result to sub-programme management result and to overall sub-programme result remains incomplete, and UNEP does not track costs at the country level. According to UNEP budget managers, this disconnect derives primarily from shortcomings in the UN Secretariat's results-costing procedures which UNEP is required to follow. Thus, despite making internal improvements to its budget management in 2018, full results-based budgeting at UNEP remains "a work in progress." When asked whether UNEP applies principles of results-based budgeting and reports expenditures according to results, 58% of governing body members who responded agreed or strongly agreed and 78% somewhat agreed or higher, while 12% disagreed to some extent or more and 10% did not know.

External financial audits are conducted annually and comply with international standards. This is confirmed for the most recently available external audit, for the year ending December 31, 2019. Both management responses and action plans to address any identified gaps and weaknesses are available. This is also the case for recommendations from performance audits involving UNEP (in some cases together with other Nairobi-based UN entities or specific MEAs whose secretariats or other co-ordinating bodies are hosted by UNEP). These are carried out periodically by the UN Office of Internal Oversight and Services (OIOS). UNEP tracks compliance with these recommendations as well as those from evaluation reports more generally.

UNEP follows the Secretary General's requirements and procedures for fraud and corruption, in place since September 2016. In addition, its CSD issued interim anti-fraud and anti-corruption guidelines in May 2019. These guidelines define the roles and responsibilities of management and staff in applying and complying with them. Most staff have been trained in these requirements, their application is regularly monitored, and the results periodically reported to the governing body. Channels are in place to report suspicions of misuse of funds, and annual reports are publicly available on cases of fraud, corruption, and other financial irregularities, together with the actions taken in response to them. UNEP recognises, however, that reporting any such misconduct at the project level depends largely on country implementing partners as its capacity for independent verification at this level is limited. When asked whether UNEP adequately addresses issues and concerns raised by internal control mechanisms, 63% of governing body respondents agreed or strongly agreed and 83% somewhat agreed or higher, while just 3% disagreed to some extent or more and 14% did not know.

UNEP is bound to ST/SGB/2003/13 and other UN Secretariat policies and directives on sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). As the Secretary General Bulletin is applicable to all UN staff, and UNEP indicated that, as such, it is not required to have a dedicated policy on SEA. UNEP also applies other protocols which are applicable to all UN Secretariat entities, e.g., those on the Provision of Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and the on Allegations of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Involving Implementing Partners. UNEP developed an action plan for SEA prevention in 2020 and will update the action plan annually. It has mechanisms, resources and internal structures in place to track implementation of the Secretariat's SEA policy both at HQ, according to UNEP HR managers. Most UNEP staff have reportedly taken mandatory training in the topic. While UNEP has standards in place for implementing partners to prevent and respond to SEA, it is not able to ensure this through independent on-the-ground verification for individual projects. It has contributed to some inter-agency efforts to prevent and respond to SEA in the field and participated in best practice fora at HQ, although it is likely that more can be done. Actions taken on SEA allegations during the assessment period appear to have been timely, although this depends on OIOS, which undertakes the actual investigations. The number of allegations and actions taken are publicly reported in a general UN Secretariat annual report. UNEP adopts a victim-centred approach and has a victim-support function in place. Implementing partners were surveyed as to whether UNEP requires them to apply clear standards for preventing and responding to sexual misconduct in relation to host populations. Roughly 54% agreed or strongly agreed that it did, and nearly 64% somewhat agreed or higher. Around 11% disagreed to some extent or more, and 35% responded that they did not know. The same four stakeholder groups plus the private sector were also surveyed as to whether UNEP participates in any joint or inter-agency efforts to prevent, investigate, and report on any misconduct by personnel in relation to host populations. The largest share of responses (59%) was "don't know," while 29% agreed or strongly agreed, another 9% somewhat agreed, and 3% disagreed at least to some extent.

UNEP likewise does not have an organisation-specific dedicated policy statement or code of conduct for sexual harassment (SH) but it also applies the UN Secretariat's policies and directives, which, according to the pertinent Secretary-General's Bulletin of September 2019, also address more general issues of discrimination and abuse of authority. This document builds on and refers to more general UN Staff Rules. Mechanisms are in place at UNEP HQ and in its field offices to track the status of the policy's implementation and there are well-defined roles, structures, and resources in place within UNEP for this purpose. Multiple mechanisms can be accessed by staff seeking advice, informal resolution, or reporting on SH allegations and the organisation appears to act quickly in response. ST/SGB/2019/8 of September 2019 provides a broad definition of discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and abuse of authority and relies on ST/AI/2017/1 to provide a very detailed procedure for handling preliminary assessments of reports alleging this type of unsatisfactory conduct. However, as noted above, OIOS investigates all SEA and SH allegations and takes the personnel decisions based on its findings. UNEP is then required to execute them, although actual cases during the assessment period were very few. According to UNEP, the results of the fact-finding panels set up by OIOS to investigate SEA and SH reports are not transferred to the ASG/OHR for further review if there are grounds to

indicate that the alleged offender/staff member's actions may be a misconduct. For some reports of possible unsatisfactory conduct OIOS may recommend UNEP to take some actions which UNEP is mandated to implement. However, for SEA and SH cases these would be referred to the ASG/OHR for review of the investigative report and for the necessary action to be taken.

MI 4.1: Transparent decision-making for resource allocation, consistent with strategic priorities over time (adaptability)	Score
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.00**
Element 1: An explicit organisational statement or policy is available that clearly defines criteria for allocating resources to partners	2
Element 2: The criteria reflect targeting to the highest priority themes/countries/areas of intervention as set out in the current strategic plan	3
Element 3: Resource allocation mechanisms allow for adaptation in different contexts	4
Element 4: The organisational policy or statement is regularly reviewed and updated	3
MI 4.1 Analysis	**Source documents**
UNEP does not have a single explicit statement or policy that clearly defines criteria for allocating resources to partners. At a more general level, the situation is actually reversed as donor partners allocate resources to UNEP for the specific projects for which UNEP is the designated implementing agency. Most of the financial resources the organisation manages and uses, in fact, arrive through this process. How these resources are then allocated to implementing partners in turn is set out in specific project design documents and legal agreements for each one. This is also the case for UNEP knowledge products. UNEP also seeks to compensate for the lesser attention given by donors to the normative side of its activities by using its less constrained (albeit nevertheless limited) funding to support these sub-programmes. UNEP is in the process of piloting its recently revised and updated Partnership Policies and Procedures document, whose previous version came into effect in 2011. This process is expected to be completed by the end of 2021 and will seek to ensure that the new document is fully aligned with the UMOJA-2 Implementation Partners Module. While it contains a general statement on resource allocation to partners, as indicated above, for the most part this ultimately depends on the external sources of funding (i.e., the donor partners themselves). However, UNEP seeks to ensure that the use of these resources coincides with its own priorities in its MTSs and PoWs. When asked if UNEP's allocation of resources was transparent and consistent with agreed strategic priorities, 60% of governing bodies responding agreed or strongly agreed and 82% somewhat agreed or higher, while 12% somewhat disagreed or disagreed and 6% did not know. Four partner groups were surveyed as to whether UNEP openly communicates criteria for allocating resources. Slightly less than half of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed and 64% somewhat agreed or higher, while 10% disagreed at least to some extent and 26% did not know. Governments and academic/research institutions responded most positively, while other UN entities and IFIs were the least positive, followed by NGOs. However, about 6-7% of both government respondents and those from other UN entities and IFIs strongly disagreed, suggesting that UNEP's transparency in this regard could be improved. While resources are targeted at the highest priority themes and areas of intervention (climate change and healthy and productive ecosystems in PoW 2020-2021), as UNEP's support is made available to all 193 member states, it does not explicitly identify priority countries for political sensitivity reasons. However, in practice, it seeks to focus on lower income developing countries, landlocked and conflict-ridden nations and environmentally fragile small island developing states.	4, 82, 102, 103 104, 116, 117

The recently approved MTS 2022-2025, for example, declares, on the one hand, that "UNEP will support an integrated and balanced implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It will continue to build the capacity of member states and partners to integrate the environment into all aspects of sustainable development, leveraging the interactions and co-benefits of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals." On the other, it observes that UNEP "will address the special needs of least developed countries, land-locked developing countries and small island developing States, facilitating access to finance, technology and innovative solutions to help them build more resilient and inclusive economies and societies in a post-COVID-19 world." But it does not identify any specific priority countries *per se.* UNEP's resource allocation mechanisms allow for adaptation to different contexts by sub-programmes and projects, as its response to the COVID-19 pandemic during 2020 illustrates. UNEP's 2011 partnership policy, as noted above, has recently been reviewed and updated, but this arguably could happen more frequently, given the critical importance of UNEP's various partnerships for the organisation.	4, 82, 102, 103 104, 116, 117

MI 4.1 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 4.2: Allocated resources disbursed as planned	**Score**
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.25**
Element 1: The institution sets clear targets for disbursement to partners	4
Element 2: Financial information indicates that planned disbursements were met within institutionally agreed margins	3
Element 3: Clear explanations, including changes in context, are available for any variances against plans	3
Element 4: Variances relate to external factors rather than to internal procedural blockages	3

MI 4.2 Analysis	**Source documents**
UNEP sets clear targets in its PoWs for allocating resources to sub-programmes, and in its project design documents and associated legal and partnership agreements for disbursements to executing partners for the specific projects for which it is the implementing agency. UNEP regularly tracks disbursements in individual sub-programmes and project, and the individual projects are associated with specific sub-programmes, according to interviews. At the sub-programme level, the results of this process are tracked and reported through annual and biannual PPRs, and at the project level through the periodic Project Implementation Reports for GEF projects, or equivalent progress documents for projects funded by other donors. While these reports generally confirm that disbursements are met within institutionally agreed margins, project terminal evaluations reveal that there are often significant delays due to implementation delays. Actual performance at the project level is discussed in further detail in KPI 11 (Results are delivered efficiently). When asked whether UNEP provides reliable information on when financial allocations and disbursements will happen, and the respective amounts, overall 52% of the four implementing partner groups agreed or strongly agreed and around 63% somewhat agreed or higher, while 9% disagreed at least to some extent and nearly 26% did not know. The most positive responses came from academic and research institutions, followed at some distance by governments, NGOs, and other UN entities and IFIs. This suggests that some improvement may be warranted in this regard.	81, 10 4, 112, 119, 141

Explanations for deviations from plans, including because of contextual factors, are considered in PPRs at the sub-programme level and in mid-term and terminal evaluations of specific projects. For example, the PPR for 2018-19 observes that UNEP and its partners (in this case FAO and UNDP) met only 47% its PoW targets for the number of countries that implement forest-friendly policies, measures that deliver social and environmental benefits, as well as quantifiable emissions reductions through the jointly administered REDD+ programme (21 countries out of an anticipated 45). The explanation provided for this shortfall was that not enough countries requested support for this work area, which also points to the reality that the PoW-related results reported by UNEP do not depend on its actions alone and, at least up to now, its actual degree of influence over these results is not specifically assessed. This, however, is expected to change under the PoW for 2022-23, which will be a considerable improvement. Furthermore, in some cases, explanations could also be improved. For example, the chapters in the PPRs presenting sub-programme results do not draw explicit links between the evolution of the external context and any adjustments that may have been required. Nor do they describe the linkages with specific project results, even though according to interviews the sub-programmes are implemented through projects. UNEP project evaluations, on the other hand, do contain a section on the "initial context" justifying project design. They likewise discuss variances during implementation, and external factors are considered in assessing project performance and results. Such discrepancies, including implementation delays, can have both external and internal causes. However, in most cases the causes are external to UNEP, and include both performance issues in project execution and unexpected factors, such as the impact of COVID-19. However, some survey respondents reported internal processing delays as well. Given UNEP's lack of a physical presence in many of the countries its operations support, lack of day-to-day project supervision is likely to be a contributing factor. This MI is rated as medium confidence because the assessment team was not able to review disbursement data for individual projects and because of the lack of specific ex-ante and ex-post "outcome" costing information for the PoWs.	81, 10 4, 112, 119, 141
MI 4.2 Evidence confidence	**Medium confidence**
MI 4.3: Principles of results-based budgeting applied	**Score**
Overall MI rating	**Unsatisfactory**
Overall MI score	**2.25**
Element 1: The most recent organisational budget clearly aligns financial resources with strategic objectives/intended results of the current strategic plan	3
Element 2: A budget document is available that provides clear costs for the achievement of each management result	2
Element 3: Systems are available and used to track costs from activity to result (outcome)	2
Element 4: There is evidence of improved costing of management and development results in budget documents reviewed over time (evidence of building a better system)	2
MI 4.3 Analysis	**Source documents**
UNEP's most recent organisational budgets, as presented in the respective approved PoWs, align financial resources with its strategic objectives/intended results, as indicated in the respective strategic plans at the general sub-programme level. Project design documents also contain detailed budget information.	30, 83, 89, 103, 104

However, the individual "expected outcomes" (many of which, in fact, are outputs) or management results within each sub-programme are not yet specifically costed. Thus, UNEP's results-based budgeting (RBM) at present only occurs at an aggregate (sub-programme) or highly decentralised (individual project) level. According to interviews, this "gap in the middle" in terms of budgeting and costing reflects the fact that UNEP is required to follow general UN Secretariat processes that don't allow for costing at the level of sub-programme results.	
Governing body members were asked whether UNEP applies principles of results-based budgeting and reports expenditures according to results: 58% agreed or strongly agreed and 78% somewhat agreed or higher, while 12% disagreed to some extent (although none strongly disagreed) and 10% did not know. However, interviews confirm that UNEP's RBM continues to be a work in progress.	
Systems are available at the project level to track costs from activity to result, as well as, in the aggregate, at the sub-programme level, but not at the level of specific PoW management results/"outcomes" within each sub-programme, so UNEP's tracking systems remain incomplete in this regard.	30, 83, 89, 103, 104
According to interviews and recent specific UNEP budget documents for 2021 kindly provided to the assessment team upon request but not publicly available, there is evidence of improved budgeting during the assessment period. These documents refer specifically to budget allocations to divisions and ROs from different budget sources (EF, etc.), which have been developed and disseminated internally to UNEP managers in recent years. In addition, there have been more realistic projections of likely voluntary country contributions to the EF, and thus to UNEP's overall budget envelope for implementing its strategic plans. This has also had an impact on target setting for the PoWs over time and helps to explain UNEP's much better performance as reported in the respective PPRs for 2016-17 and 2018-19. Those interviewed attributed this in good measure to more realistic target setting. Internal budgeting processes within UNEP have also improved since 2018 in terms of allocating resources to specific divisions and ROs from different funding sources, as well as in terms of the prioritisation of activities to receive resources from the EF. This information, which was initially also provided in interviews, was subsequently illustrated by recent detailed internal budget documents that are not publicly available.	

MI 4.3 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 4.4: External audit or other external reviews certify that international standards are met at all levels, including with respect to internal audit	**Score**
Overall MI rating	**Highly satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**4.00**
Element 1: External audit conducted which complies with international standards	4
Element 2: Most recent external audit confirms compliance with international standards across functions	4
Element 3: Management response is available to external audit	4
Element 4: Management response provides clear action plan for addressing any gaps or weaknesses identified by external audit	4

MI 4.4 Analysis	Source documents
External audits are conducted annually and comply with international standards. This is confirmed based on a review of the most recent external audit for the year that ended on December 31, 2019. Both management responses and action plans to address any identified gaps and weaknesses are available, according to interviews. This is the case both for annual financial audits and those related to UNEP's performance for specific identified areas of weakness carried out periodically by the UN's Office of Internal Oversight and Services (OIOS) of which there were nine issued between November 2016 and December 2019.	44, 61, 103, 111, 132, 133, 134
MI 4.4 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 4.5: Issues or concerns raised by internal control mechanisms (operational and financial risk management, internal audit, safeguards etc.) adequately addressed	Score
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.40**
Element 1: A clear policy or organisational statement exists on how issues identified through internal control mechanisms/reporting channels (including misconduct such as fraud, sexual misconduct) will be addressed	3
Element 2: Management guidelines or rules provide clear guidance on the procedures for addressing any identified issues and include timelines	4
Element 3: Clear guidelines are available for staff on reporting any issues identified	4
Element 4: A tracking system is available that records responses and actions taken to address any identified issues	3
Element 5: Governing body or management documents indicate that relevant procedures have been followed/action taken in response to identified issues, including recommendations from audits (internal and external) with clear timelines for action	3

MI 4.5 Analysis	Source documents
Even though UNEP does not have specific policies how issues identified through internal control mechanisms/reporting channels are addressed, it has been following general UN Secretariat policies since May 2019. However, it has issued a set of guidelines on how it will address issues related to misconduct, including fraud and SH, identified through internal control mechanisms or reporting channels. These guidelines include proscribed procedures and timelines for reporting and addressing any such issues by management and staff. UNEP's governing body was asked whether UNEP adequately addresses issues and concerns raised by internal control mechanisms: 63% agreed or strongly agreed and 83% somewhat agreed or higher, while just 3% disagreed to some extent and 14% responded that they did not know. Thus, in general, the majority of those who oversee UNEP concur with this statement. According to interviews a dedicated misconduct tracking system has been in place since 2012 that allowed for frequent follow up and implementation of recommendations which were an outcome of misconduct processes. In 2017, the Misconduct Tracking system (MTS) was developed and used for peacekeeping operations. The MTS provided a centralised tracking system for misconduct reports and for follow ups. In 2019 the use of MTS was rolled out to other UN entities in the UN Secretariat outside peacekeeping operations. It was further upgraded and renamed the Case Management Tracking System (CMTS) in January 2021. Currently two UNEP staff members who are the Conduct and Discipline Focal Point (CDFP) and an alternate CDFP have access to the CMTS, but their access	20, 33, 44, 65, 73, 90

is limited to UNEP-specific cases. Another CDFP alternate has been designated and will also have access to CMTS.	
Management documents systematically commit UNEP to take appropriate actions in response to identified issues, including recommendations from external audits, with clear timelines for action. According to interviews, follow-up actions are subsequently tracked and reported.	20, 33, 44, 65, 73, 90
MI 4.5 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 4.6: Policies and procedures effectively prevent, detect, investigate and sanction cases of fraud, corruption and other financial irregularities	**Score**
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.50**
Element 1: A clear policy/guidelines on fraud, corruption and any other financial irregularities is available and made public	4
Element 2: The policy/guidelines clearly define/s the roles management and staff roles in implementing/complying with them	4
Element 3: Staff training/awareness-raising has been conducted on policy/guidelines	3
Element 4: There is evidence of policy/guidelines implementation, e.g., through regular monitoring and reporting to the governing body	4
Element 5: There are channels/mechanisms in place for reporting suspicion of misuse of funds (e.g., anonymous reporting channels and "whistle-blower" protection policy)	3
Element 6: Annual reporting on cases of fraud, corruption and other irregularities, including actions taken, and ensures that they are made public	3
MI 4.6 Analysis	**Source documents**
UNEP follows the Secretary General's requirements and procedures regarding fraud and corruption; these are publicly available and have been in place since September 2016. In addition, UNEP's CSD issued internal anti-fraud and anti-corruption guidelines in 2019. These documents clearly define the roles of management and staff in implementing and complying with them. Most staff have been trained in the requirements of these documents, although interviews revealed that some regular training activities had to be postponed during 2020 due to the COVID pandemic, so there may have been a recent lag in this regard. However, according to UNON, which provides and reports on this training, as of 2 June 2021, 92% of all UNEP staff had completed the mandatory course on Preventing Fraud and Corruption at the United Nations, while 2% were still to complete it and 6% had not yet enrolled. There is likewise regular monitoring of the application of these guidelines and results are reported to the governing body. According to interviews, anonymous channels are in place for reporting suspicion of misuse of funds, "whistle blowers" are protected, and annual reports of cases of fraud, corruption, and other financial irregularities, as well as the actions taken in response, are made public. However, at the project level, actual reporting of any such misconduct ultimately depends on the oversight of the implementing partners, as UNEP's capacity for independent verification at this level is limited.	20, 73, 100, 111, 153
MI 4.6 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 4.7: Prevention and response to SEA	Score
Overall MI rating	**Unsatisfactory**
Overall MI score	**2.38**
Element 1: Organisation-specific dedicated policy statement(s), action plan and/or code of conduct that address SEA are available, aligned to international standards, and applicable to all categories of personnel	2
Element 2: Mechanisms are in place to regularly track the status of implementation of the SEA policy at HQ and at field levels	3
Element 3: Dedicated resources and structures are in place to support implementation of policy and/or action plan at HQ and in programmes (covering safe reporting channels, and procedures for access to sexual and gender-based violence services)	2
Element 4: Quality training of personnel / awareness-raising on SEA policies is conducted with adequate frequency	3
Element 5: The organisation has clear standards and due diligence processes in place to ensure that implementing partners prevent and respond to SEA	2
Element 6: The organisation can demonstrate its contribution to interagency efforts to prevent and respond to SEA at field level, and SEA policy/best practice coordination fora at HQ	2
Element 7: Actions taken on SEA allegations are timely and their number related to basic information and actions taken / reported publicly	3
Element 8: The MO adopts a victim-centred approach to SEA and has a victim support function in place (stand-alone or part of existing structures) in line with its exposure/risk of SEA	2
MI 4.7 Analysis	**Source documents**
UNEP does not currently have an organisation-specific policy on SEA. It follows ST/SGB/2003/13, which is applicable to all staff. UNEP also applies other protocols which are applicable to all UN Secretariat entities e.g., on the Provision of Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and the protocol on Allegations of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse involving implementing partners. UNEP has developed an action plan for SEA prevention in 2020 and will update the action plan annually. The SEA Action plan includes a provision that all UNEP "staff members must sign the oath of office upon arrival in the duty station and that this incorporates all ethics and conduct associated with serving as a staff member in the UN."	
UNEP does have mechanisms in place to track implementation of the UN's SEA policy at HQ and in the ROs. The ED's letter to UNEP's governing body (CPR) dated 11 February 2020 affirmed that UNEP had "taken all appropriate measures to address such allegations, in accordance with established rules and procedures for dealing with cases of staff misconduct." It also certified that she had reported to the Secretary-General all allegations of SEA that had been brought to her attention.	1, 10, 95, 146, 148-153
Dedicated structures and resources are in place to support implementation of the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Action Plan for 2020. According to this document, "UNEP has appointed one C&D (Conduct and Discipline) focal point and three alternates based in Nairobi" for this purpose. This is clearly indicated in the ED's Memorandum to all UNEP personnel on 8 October 2020. Headed "Fostering a better work culture in UNEP," it indicated that the UN entities' C&D focal points (CDFPs) constitute a newly established mechanism and "their role includes providing information to individuals affected by conduct issues in the workplace about resources	

and avenues for advice." This memo also stated that a new email address had been created to submit reports on possible unsatisfactory conduct to the UNEP ED, although it "does not preclude reporting these situations directly to the OIOS." It should also be observed, however, that the function of the CDFP is not only implementation of the PSEA Action Plan for 2020. The CDFP also handles all aspects of conduct and discipline and assists the ED to implement the obligations in ST/SGB/2019/8 and ST/AI/2017/1, including the PSEA Action plans.

As of May 2020, 70.5% of UNEP staff had completed the mandatory PSEA course, according to the 2020 PSEA Action Plan, and reminders were to be "sent out to the staff advising them of their obligation to complete this mandatory training." More recent interviews revealed that the total had risen to 78%, but that some expected training in 2020 had to be postponed due to the COVID pandemic. Further progress is needed for UNEP to achieve complete coverage. The Executive February 2020 letter to the CPR stated that "UNEP has also raised awareness of its staff members, affiliated personnel and beneficiaries of assistance, insofar as applicable, regarding the prohibition of SEA and ways of reporting such acts." An update from UNON, which provides this training, states that as of 2 June 2021, 86% of UNEP staff had completed the mandatory Prevention of SEA by UN Personnel, while 3% were still to complete it and 11% had not enrolled. Thus, performance clearly appears to be improving.

According to the 2020 PSEA Action Plan, UNEP is currently updating its legal agreement templates to include clear standards and due diligence processes to ensure that implementing partners prevent and respond to SEA. Interviews confirmed that this updating process had been concluded; legal agreement templates for GCF projects are already being used. Templates for non-GCF projects are not yet in use pending the finalisation of consultations with implementing partners and alignment with UMOJA 2, which is still in process. In addition, despite UNEP's limited presence at the country level, it will be in a better position to independently verify implementing partner compliance with these new requirements thanks to the internal grievance redress system under UNEP's revised Safeguard Framework, known as the Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework (ESSF).

1, 10, 95, 146, 148-153

UNEP has provided the assessment team with copies of the revised template for its donor partner agreements, which state the following: "Concerned Programme Officers must note that Donor Agreements with Australia, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom and the United States of America require specific wording to be added to this template. Such wording must provide that UNEP, and its implementing partners, will take all reasonable and adequate steps to prevent sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) of any person linked to the delivery of the Donor Agreement by both its employees and any implementing partner and respond appropriately when reports of SEAH arise." Similar provisions have been introduced in UNEP's revised PCA and Small-scale Funding Agreement (SSFA) templates, which UNEP has also provided to the assessment team.

Implementing partners were surveyed as to whether UNEP requires them to apply clear standards for preventing and responding to sexual misconduct in relation to host populations. Roughly 54% agreed or strongly agreed and almost 64% somewhat agreed or higher; around 11% disagreed at least to some extent, while nearly 35% responded that they did not know. The NGOs gave the highest positive ratings while government respondents gave the lowest positive ratings, with other UN entities and IFIs and academic/research institutions falling in the middle. However, the differences among these four groups were small and only some government and NGO respondents disagreed to some degree. What is striking is that more than a third of respondents apparently did not know whether this is a UNEP requirement.

UNEP can demonstrate some contribution to inter-agency efforts to prevent and respond to SEA in the field, and to SEA policy/best practice co-ordination at HQ. However, its activity in the field is highly constrained by its general lack of country presence. Even so, in her February 2020 letter to the CPR, the UNEP ED "joined the UN Secretary-General's campaign through Twitter to support his approach to eradicating SEA in United Nations operations." Interviews also revealed that UNEP SEA focal points attend the SEA working group meetings monthly, which include all Secretariat entities and are chaired by UN HQ. However, UNEP does not have a reporting on this contribution, and it is possible that more could be done.

The same four stakeholder groups as above, plus the private sector, were asked whether UNEP participates in any joint or inter-agency efforts to prevent, investigate, and report on any misconduct by personnel in relation to host populations. Here also the largest share of responses (59%) was "don't know" (unsurprisingly as partners may not have much information on this) while 29% agreed or strongly agreed, 38% somewhat agreed or higher and 3% disagreed to some extent. The highest positive responses on average came from government respondents, followed by academic and research institutions; the lowest positive responses were from the private sector.

The timeliness of actions in response to SEA allegations is largely out of UNEP's control as all such actions rely on investigations undertaken by OIOS, some of which were delayed over the past year because of the COVID pandemic, according to interviews. However, the number and related basic information are reported publicly in the aggregate on an annual basis, together with those of numerous other UN entities and their implementing partners in a report from the Secretary-General to the UN General Assembly. According to the updated PSEA Action Plan for 2021, during 2020-21, "two UNEP staff members were separated from the organisation because of SEA."

While UNEP is aware of the need to apply a victim-centred approach to SEA, its lack of country presence means it needs to rely on other UN entities to provide direct support and services. The 2020 PSEA plan states, for example, that "given UNEP's limited presence in the field, UNEP will explore seeking to partner with other UN agencies with field presence to address this."

The confidence level for this MI is presently rated "Medium" pending receipt by the assessment team of additional documentation it has recently requested.

MI 4.7 Evidence confidence	**Medium confidence**

MI 4.8: Prevention of and response to SH	Score
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**2.71**
Element 1: Organisation-specific dedicated policy statements and/or codes of conduct that address SH available, aligned to international standards and applicable to all categories of personnel	2
Element 2: Mechanisms are in place to regularly track the status of implementation of the policy on SH at HQ and at field levels	3
Element 3: The MO has clearly identifiable roles, structures, and resources in place for implementing its policy/guidelines on SH at HQ and in the field: support channel for victims, a body coordinating the response, and clear responsibilities for following up with victims	3
Element 4: All managers have undergone training on preventing and responding to SH, and all staff have been trained to set behavioural expectations (including with respect to SH)	3
Element 5: Multiple mechanisms can be accessed to seek advice, pursue informal resolution or formally report SH allegations	3

The right column of the first block contains: 1, 10, 95, 146, 148-153

Element 6: The organisation ensures that it acts in a timely manner on formal complaints of SH allegations	2
Element 7: The organisation transparently reports the number and nature of actions taken in response to SH in annual reporting and feeds into inter-agency HR mechanisms	3

MI 4.8 Analysis	**Source documents**
UNEP does not have an organisation-specific dedicated policy statement or code of conduct that addresses SH. Instead, it applies the UN Secretariat's policies and directives on SH, which presumably are aligned with international standards. According to the pertinent Secretary-General's Bulletin of September 2019, it also addresses more general issues of discrimination and abuse of authority. This document, in turn, builds on and refers to more general UN Staff Rules. In addition, according to the letter sent by the UNEP ED to the CPR on 11 February 2020, covering the organisation's SH actions during 2019, in May 2019 the Acting ED "issued a memo to all personnel on preventing and addressing SH in the workplace." She added that "the memo reminded the personnel of our obligation to work in a manner that eliminates harassment in the workplace and to maintain the highest standards of conduct [and]…refers to the UN Zero-tolerance for SH that UNEP explicitly adopted as well. It also stated that "in July, UNEP circulated the recently issued Code of Conduct to Prevent Harassment, Including SH at UN System Events."

According to interviews, mechanisms are in place both at UNEP HQ and in its field offices to track the status of the Secretary-General's policy's implementation. This is reflected in UNEP's Investigation Report on the number of allegations between January 2019 and April 2020 and how they had been resolved or were being investigated by OIOS (see also response in Element 7 below).

There are also clearly defined roles, structures, and resources in place within UNEP for this purpose, according to interviews. The Acting ED's May 2019 memorandum put in place the following roles and structures: (i) it appointed an interim focal point for SH (a Senior Legal Officer) to be complemented by the Chief of Human Resources, who was in the process of being recruited at the time; and (ii) it also designated the Acting Chief of Staff as UNEP's focal point for whistle-blower protection and the Director of Corporate Services as the interim focal point for protection against retaliation.

According to the ED's 11 February 2020 letter to the CPR, "in November [2019], in order to create awareness and lasting organisational cultural changes, together with the Nairobi Staff Union, the UN Secretariat-based entities (UNON, UNEP, and UN-Habitat) organised harassment awareness training for managers, led by an external consultant supported by local experts from Joint Medical Services, the Office of Oversight Services, and the Ombudsman's Office." The aforementioned May 2019 memo from the Acting ED likewise required all personnel to complete the mandatory training on Prevention of SH and Abuse by United Nations Personnel – Working Harmoniously." In addition, according to UNON which provides this training, as of 2 June 2021, 89% of UNEP staff had completed the mandatory training, while 3% had yet to complete it and 9% were not enrolled.

Multiple mechanisms can be accessed by staff seeking advice, informal resolution, or reporting on SH allegations. The May 2019 memo from the Acting ED also provided guidance to all UNEP personnel on how to submit SH complaints and access the UN Secretariat 24/7 Helpline. As concerns complaints resolution, the memo states "as to the means to resolve SH complaints, please note that under ST/SGB/2008/5, while not an obligation, any affected person may attempt an informal resolution of the matter with the alleged offender on a voluntary basis if they feel comfortable doing so. The affected person may also seek managerial intervention or access to the service of the Ombudsman. Ultimately, it is an individual choice to pursue an informal resolution | 65, 106, 123, 146, 147, 153 |

or to file a formal complaint. Attempts at informal resolution do not preclude formal reporting of the matter." It also states that "a formal complaint alleging SH should be filed with OIOS using the web-based hotline," or alternatively the staff member "may submit a written complaint to the ED of UNEP who shall then forward the complaint to OIOS as soon as possible." Finally, it affirmed that "each focal point will provide guidance to an affected individual independently, in confidentiality, and in full respect to the will of the individual."	
According to interviews, the organisation responds quickly to SH allegations, although as OIOS carries out the investigations and decision processes, the timeliness of case resolution does not depend on UNEP alone. In addition, the processing of some cases by OIOS was delayed in 2020 on account of the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, UNEP is not independently able to ensure a timely response.	65, 106, 123, 146, 147, 153
UNEP transparently reports the number and the nature of actions taken in response to SH, but thus far very few cases have been reported. According to UNEP's Investigation Report covering the period 1 January 2019 through 30 April 2020, of the three cases reported, OIOS was conducting a preliminary assessment into one of the cases, rather than an investigation. The investigations for the other two cases have been completed and the alleged offender's/staff members' contracts have been terminated. One of the cases included an SH component amongst the other issues that were listed in the report. OIOS conducted an initial review and there was no conclusive proof of SH having occurred. The other components of the report received were referred to UNEP to conduct a preliminary assessment and to decide whether the report will be investigated further.	
MI 4.8 Evidence confidence	**Medium confidence**

RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

Engaging in inclusive partnerships to support relevance, leverage effective solutions and maximise results

KPI 5: Operational planning and intervention design tools support relevance and agility within partnerships	KPI score
Satisfactory	**2.74**

UNEP's operational planning and intervention designs, as they relate to the inclusion of targeted results and reference to beneficiary needs, have improved during the assessment period. Although it does not possess country or regional strategies per se, it takes regional priorities into account in preparing its strategic plans through periodic Regional Environment Ministers Fora organised and hosted by its ROs and through bilateral contacts with national environmental authorities. These documents are also consulted on and formally approved by the member states through the CPR and UNEA, respectively. On average, 67% of partners surveyed agreed or strongly agreed and 88% somewhat agreed or higher that UNEP's programme was designed and implemented to fit with national programmes and intended results, while only 5% disagreed.

Interventions and strategies refer to the needs of beneficiaries; however, as cited in the 2019 OIOS evaluation of UNEP, accountability systems relating to capturing and prioritising stakeholder needs are not clear; nor do they track and report on human rights indicators. At the design stage all projects are reviewed and aligned with the new ESSF, but the process is hindered by insufficient human resource capacity to apply equal rigour across all projects. While it was noted that a process exists for updating roles and responsibilities under the Program Manual, evidence of structures and incentives that allow investment of time and effort in alignment processes is a challenge for the organisation.

Tools exist for shaping intervention design based on contextual and situational analysis, but are not standardised across projects financed by different donors. Among partners surveyed, 68% agreed or strongly agreed and 86% somewhat agreed or higher that UNEP's programme is tailored to the specific situations and needs of the local context, and just 8% disagreed to some extent or more. Based on the Service Provider's independent review of a sample of 16 recent project design documents,

capacity analysis does not appear to be employed systematically and is not required for all interventions for which UNEP is the implementing agency, but the projects reviewed were positioned within the operating context where applicable. Though reflection points with partners are not a requirement, they were apparent in the reviewed project design and implementation document. Poor information flows and resource constraints hinder changes to projects based upon these stakeholder consultations and reflections. When asked if UNEP's work takes national capacity into account, including that of government, civil society, and other actors, 74% of the surveyed partners who responded agreed or strongly agreed and 89% somewhat agreed or higher, while only 6% disagreed to some extent or more.

Capacity analysis is not conducted systematically or in a standardised manner across projects and reflection points with partners are not required throughout the implementation process. These reflection points in most reviewed implementation and design documents are most evident through MTRs and stakeholder consultations where observed. Clear strategies for addressing weaknesses, in order to ensure sustainability, are not evident or observed to be jointly conducted with development partners. It was noted that implementing partners are evaluated for capacity needs and gaps, but not before the project is formulated.

Detailed risk identification and management strategies are present to a certain extent in project design documents, particularly in relation to safeguards requirements, but were not consistent in detailing all categorisations of risk. Operational, strategic, political, and reputational risk are not specifically referred to across the documents reviewed, but are only implicitly applied under "management risk" in most cases. There are requirements for project documents to contain a section on project risks and these are employed to varying degrees. Most of the project design and implementation documents included analysis of operational and political risk, with less representation and analysis of reputational and potential risks of misconduct with respect to host populations. "Strategic risk" is not a category/terminology used by UNEP in their analysis, but some risks identified within the Project Design Quality Assessment matrix would fall under this category. While not all categories of risk were explicitly analysed, where they were analysed, mitigation measures were explicitly stated. Seven partner groups were surveyed as to whether UNEP appropriately manages risks related to its programme. Among all 151 respondents, 61% agreed or strongly agreed and 82% somewhat agreed or higher, while 9% disagreed to some degree or more. Assessment of gender and human rights concerns is required for all projects, but greater attention is given to the former, except when social safeguard policies (e.g., potential project impacts on indigenous peoples) are triggered.

Analysis of cross-cutting issues (gender and human rights) in intervention designs, varies across projects. Requirements for projects to be gender coded and for this dimension to be included in the Project Design Quality Assessment matrix had been implemented in the project design documents reviewed and factored into UNEP project evaluations. All project design documents reviewed integrated gender issues and underwent the required Safeguards Standards Review, in line with UNEP's Environmental Safeguards and Standards Framework. However, there are no requirements for review directly related to human rights, and there is a need for improved monitoring against these indicators. The monitoring and evaluation of projects and integration into planning for interventions are highly variable when it comes to cross-cutting issues and is reliant on donor and funding arrangements.

Statements on sustainability are contained in project design documents, but proactive planning for long-term sustainability of project results is not required and the monitoring of sustainability is limited due to timing and resource constraints. While indicated as a critical feature of project design within the Program Manual, a substantial portion of projects do not sustain results over time because of poor monitoring and planning beyond the initial design and implementation phases. Nor do they perform well in making changes to intervention plans to address shifts in policy and legislation that may impact sustainability. Poor performance and low institutional procedures for accountability for long-term sustainability. All seven partner groups were asked whether UNEP designs and implements its work so that effects and impacts can be sustained over time. On average 65% or respondents agreed or strongly agreed and 82% somewhat agreed or more, while 10% somewhat disagreed or higher.

Institutional procedures support the speed of implementation of both UNEP's normative and operational activities, but hindrances in benchmarking and reporting as well as implementation delays resulting from human resource and capacity constraints remain. Management oversight and tracking of PoW and project performance by division and region through the continuing quarterly business review process has recently been upgraded by using a dashboard. Adaptation to changing circumstances for both PoW and project implementation occurs, as for example clearly happened during 2020 in response to

the COVID-19 pandemic. However, in more significant cases at the project level (i.e., when formal restructuring is needed), this also generally requires donor agreement. All partners were surveyed as to whether UNEP adapts its work to country or regional context changes. On average 66% agreed or strongly agreed and 87% somewhat agreed of higher, while 9% somewhat disagreed or more.

MI 5.1: Interventions/strategies aligned with needs of beneficiaries and regional/ country priorities and intended national/regional results	Score
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.00**
Element 1: The organisation's country or regional strategies refer to national/regional body strategies or objectives	N/A
Element 2: Reviewed interventions/strategies refer to the needs of beneficiaries, including vulnerable populations	3
Element 3: The organisation's country strategies or regional strategies link targeted results to national or regional goals	N/A
Element 4: Structures and incentives in place for technical staff that allow them to invest time and effort in alignment process	3
MI 5.1 Analysis	**Source documents**

Due to its small size, lack of presence in most of the countries where it operates, and limited resources, UNEP does not prepare country or regional strategies. Consequently, there cannot be reference to national or regional body strategies or objectives or linked targeted results to national or regional goals in such documents (as they do not exist). Thus, Elements 1 and 3 are not rated and the rating for Element 2 refers only to interventions.

Like other UN entities, however, UNEP provides inputs on environment-related issues for the periodic Common Country Assessments (CCAs) and country Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs, previously known as UN Development Assistance Frameworks, or UNDAFs). Since 2018, it has increased its contributions to these documents in response to the UNDS reforms. UNEP likewise gathers information on country and regional environmental priorities through the periodic regional fora hosted by its ROs, as well as from bilateral contacts with national environmental officials. This information is considered in the preparation of its MTSs and their associated PoWs. In addition, the member states, through UNEA, approve all UNEP strategic plans and thus have an opportunity to verify that they generally reflect national and regional environmental priorities. These UNEP strategic planning documents, however, do not refer explicitly to national or regional environmental strategies or objectives *per se*. In response to the UNDS reforms initiated in 2018, according to interviews, UNEP has incentivised its field-based staff to increase their proactivity and time spent on preparing new CCAs and UNSDCFs to ensure adequate integration of environmental considerations into these exercises and their respective outputs.

30, 32, 42, 43, 49, 53, 127, 80, 83, 85, 92, 105, 181-199

During project preparation, implementing partners are instructed to consult expected beneficiaries and other local affected stakeholders, including indigenous peoples where appropriate. Thus, their needs and concerns are considered through this process. All projects are also required to undergo a mandatory up-front safeguards risk assessment, which is verified through UNEP's project design quality review. Potential project impacts (both positive and negative) on vulnerable, especially indigenous, populations are likewise considered through this process. In short, the project design quality assessment matrix is used by the PRC to verify that all affected stakeholders are identified during project preparation and that there is evidence of stakeholder participation in its design. The

project document template, in turn, includes an annex on beneficiaries which requires that, where applicable, the project document should "provide information on the project beneficiaries (e.g., households, tradespeople, disadvantaged groups, members of civil society, etc.) and update it every six months." Accordingly, structures (i.e., the PRC) and incentives (the mandatory PRC project design quality review process for all new operations) are in place for technical staff to invest time and effort to align intervention designs with stakeholder needs.

All seven partner groups in the country/regional respondents' category were surveyed as to whether UNEP's programme is designed and implemented to fit with national programmes and intended results. On average 23% of 155 respondents agreed, 44% strongly agreed, and 21% somewhat agreed, while 3% disagreed at least to some extent or more. Overall, only 8% presented a negative perception in the questionnaire, and 88% were in a positive agreement category. Of the respondents in both country and global categories, only 5% disagreed that UNEP's programmes respond to the needs of beneficiaries, including the most vulnerable children. The 2018-19 ESR identifies alignment of interventions with stakeholder needs as a weak point, especially for vulnerable populations. However, it should be kept in mind that this report refers to completed projects evaluated in 2018-19, which for the most part were designed prior to the current assessment period, so performance may have improved in recent years.

30, 32, 42, 43, 49, 53, 127, 80, 83, 85, 92, 105, 181-199

High confidence

MI 5.2: Contextual/situational analysis (shared where possible) applied to shape intervention designs and implementation	Score
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.00**
Element 1: Intervention designs contain a clear statement positioning the intervention within the operating context.	3
Element 2: Reflection points with partners take note of any significant changes in context.	3
MI 5.2 Analysis	**Source documents**

UNEP project documents appear to clearly position the proposed intervention within its operating context. In the terminology of UNEP's project document template, this corresponds to a description of the results of the required "problem and situational analysis," which includes a description of "the context in which the intervention is planned." The Project Design Quality Assessment Matrix applied by UNEP's PRC verifies that each intervention it reviews "includes a credible and evidence-based problem and situation analysis narrative that explains the causal relationships between problems, root causes, barriers, and effects." It also certifies that "the problem analysis is based on quantifiable and valid baseline data" and that "the baseline is specific to the project area, where relevant" and that "a problem tree diagram is provided."

Of the 19 recent projects reviewed by the assessment team, 93% describe the intervention's operating context and position the intervention within it. Thus, project objectives and strategies are based on an analysis that considers the problem(s) to be addressed and situates them in their local, country, and/or regional contexts. However, the quality of the situational analysis varies across projects and is not standardised. This may be due to constrained resource availability for project preparation in some cases. All project documents are shared with and may also need to be formally approved by the respective donor partners. For example, the GEF Secretariat reviews the project design/ appraisal documents and the GEF Council, as well as UNEP, approves all the projects it finances for which UNEP is the implementing agency.

53, 80, 92, 105, 102, 104, 116, 181-199

All seven partner groups surveyed, 155 in the country/regional category, were asked it UNEP's programme is tailored to the specific situations and needs of the local context. On average, 68% agreed or strongly agreed that this was the case and 18% somewhat agreed, while 8% disagreed to some extent.

Reflection points between UNEP with country implementing partners and other local stakeholders take place periodically during project execution, and especially during MTRs, at which point any significant changes in context are noted, for example in Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) or MTR reports for GEF-financed projects. These projects constitute most of the operations for which UNEP is the implementing agency (406 of 588, or 69% of the total, with the GCF now accounting for nearly another 10%, according to UNEP's Open Data site). Should significant modifications to initial project designs be required as a result, following an MTR for example, the respective donor partner is also normally consulted and may need to formally approve any changes. However, the degree of rigour of these reviews during project implementation may vary in accordance with the requirements of the different donors involved, with the GEF notably being the most stringent among them.

	53, 80, 92, 105, 102, 104, 116, 181-199
MI 5.2 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 5.3: Capacity analysis informing intervention design and implementation, and strategies to address any weakness found are employed	Score
Overall MI rating	**Unsatisfactory**
Overall MI score	**2.50**
Element 1: Intervention designs contain a clear statement of capacities of key national implementing partners	2
Element 2: Capacity analysis, from the perspective of using and building country systems, considers resourcing, staffing, monitoring and operating structure.	N/A
Element 3: Capacity analysis statement has been jointly developed with country partners and shared with development partners	3
Element 4: Capacity analysis statement includes clear strategies for addressing any weaknesses, with a view to sustainability, where applicable developed jointly with development partners	2
Element 5: Reflection points with partners take note of any significant changes in capacity	3
MI 5.3 Analysis	**Source documents**

UNEP does not use or help to build country systems capacity for procurement, financial management, or safeguards. Instead, it applies either general UN requirements (procurement and financial management) or its own safeguards, as per the recently revised and updated ESSF (2020) or its predecessor that came into effect in January 2015. General UN procurement requirements, for example, are set out in the UN Procurement Manual, whose most recent version was issued in June 2020, and which "serves as operational guidance for all staff involved in any stage of the procurement process."

Among the 19 recently approved project design documents reviewed by the assessment team, 62.5% contain clear statements regarding the capacities of key national implementing partners. However, this assessment is not conducted systematically or standardised across all projects, which suggests a possible need for improvement.

Among the seven partner groups asked if "UNEP's work takes into account national capacity, including that of government, civil society, and other actors," on average 74% agreed or strongly agreed, 15% somewhat agreed, and 6% somewhat disagreed or more.

	13, 23, 24, 30, 53, 80, 83, 181-199

Capacity analysis statements in the design documents for the 19 recently approved UNEP projects independently reviewed by the assessment team have been either developed with or informed by country partners. However, they are not directly shared with development partners other than the specific project donors, even though they can be made available for consultation by any interested party. Planning for the sustainability of project results beyond their immediate implementation periods is limited for most of the cases reviewed. This aspect would benefit from greater attention during project preparation and in the PRC's project design quality review process. However, the design template contains sections providing short summaries on what may make the project sustainable and/or possible external constraints to sustainability. Reflection points with implementing partners during project execution, especially MTRs, take note of any significant changes in capacity. According to interviews, any such changes are recorded in Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) for GEF-financed interventions or equivalent documents for projects financed by other donors, as well as in MTR reports.	13, 23, 24, 30, 53, 80, 83, 181-199

MI 5.3 Evidence confidence	High confidence

MI 5.4: Detailed risk (strategic, political, reputational, operational) management strategies ensure the identification, mitigation, monitoring and reporting of risks	Score
Overall MI rating	Unsatisfactory
Overall MI score	2.40
Element 1: Intervention designs include detailed analysis of and mitigation strategies for operational risk	4
Element 2: Intervention designs include detailed analysis of and mitigation strategies for strategic risk	3
Element 3: Intervention designs include detailed analysis of and mitigation strategies for political risk	2
Element 4: Intervention designs include detailed analysis of and mitigation strategies for reputational risk	2
Element 5: Intervention design is based on contextual analysis including of potential risks of sexual abuse and other misconduct with respect to host populations	1

MI 5.4 Analysis	Source documents
UNEP project documents are required to contain a specific section on "Project Management Risks" under the general heading of "Intervention Strategy," as well as on "Environmental and Social Safeguard Risks," according to the project document template. More specifically, it states that "using the problem and situation analysis and assumptions in the ToC [Theory of Change, which all project designs are also mandated to present] as a starting point, identify the potential management risks of the project." It clarifies that "management risks refer to potential challenges in achieving project results from operation within the context and chosen intervention strategy." It also requires that project design documents "ensure that risks have corresponding mitigation or management actions to avoid or minimise such risks with responsible staff" and that "risk management activities and related resource requirements should be captured in the project workplan and budget." The Project Design Quality Assessment Matrix, in turn, verifies that these documents ensure that "risks that might prevent project objectives from being achieved are captured in a risk analysis table with corresponding risk management or mitigation measures" and that "risks rated at high level have corresponding mitigation activities incorporated in the project workplan."	21, 30, 76, 80, 83, 95, 102, 104, 113, 181-199

While these documents do not refer specifically to operational, strategic, political, or reputational risks, it is implicitly assumed that they are to be considered under the general heading of project "management risks." While the project risk assessment is based in part on the contextual analysis, It is less likely that it would include potential risks of sexual abuse and other misconduct with respect to host populations unless they are explicitly considered under the heading of "reputational risks." However, both the project document template and the quality assessment matrix could be made more explicit about including this type of risks in the future.	21, 30, 76, 80, 83, 95, 102, 104, 113, 181-199
The review of design documents for 19 recently approved projects revealed that 94% included specific or implicit analysis of and mitigation strategies for operational risk. Some, however, were more detailed than others. This review also found that 70% of these project documents included detailed analysis of and mitigation strategies for strategic risk, nearly 90% contained such analyses of and mitigation strategies for political risk, 25% for reputational risk, and 60% for the risk of potential misconduct with host populations (although risk of sexual abuse was not specifically mentioned in any of the project documents).	
More generally, the UN Secretariat's pillars on risk include reputational risk, and the current PoW (i.e., for 2020-21) mentions that "with new uncertainties always on the horizon, UNEP is exposed to physical, financial, and political risks but also to significant reputational risks." And it affirms that "the Executive Office, with support from the Policy and Programme Division, will ensure that appropriate controls are in place to identify, reduce and manage risk through an effective corporate risk management framework." At the project design level, however, reputational risk is the least analysed and covered in terms of mitigation plans and least cited in the risk logs and risk management sections. While analysis and mitigation measures are present, especially for risks of corruption and countering extremism, and annexes and reviews of ESSF policies are present for each project, analysis of potential risks of SEA is not standardised or presented for all projects. On the other hand, integrated human rights principles and safeguards for host populations are reviewed in most project documents. UNEP observes that in its due diligence processes it emphasises risk mitigation and reputational risk to the organisation – this could reflect down to the project level.	
The seven partner groups were surveyed as to whether UNEP appropriately manages risks relating to its programme. On average 61% of all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that it did, while 21% somewhat agreed, and 9% disagreed to some degree or more.	

MI 5.4 Evidence confidence	High confidence

MI 5.5: Intervention designs include the analysis of cross-cutting issues (as defined in KPI 2)	Score
Overall MI rating	Satisfactory
Overall MI score	2.75
Element 1: Approval procedures require an assessment of the extent to which cross-cutting issues have been integrated in the design.	3.5
Element 2: Plans for intervention monitoring and evaluation include attention to cross-cutting issues.	2
MI 5.5 Analysis	Source documents
The analysis of this MI refers only to two cross-cutting issues: gender and women's empowerment, and human rights. Environmental sustainability and climate change, being central to UNEP's core mandate, are thus not regarded as incrementally cross-cutting. However, had environmental sustainability and climate change been considered separately as a cross-cutting issue, the overall MI rating would have been higher than 2.75.	21, 30, 49, 53, 62, 80, 83, 104, 181-199

UNEP's project document template contains an annex called "Gender Marker Assessment." This requires all projects to be gender-coded into one of five categories: (i) gender-blind; (ii) gender partially mainstreamed; (iii) gender well mainstreamed; (iv) targeted action on gender; and (v) not applicable. Each of these categories also has specific criteria for their application. In the case of "gender well mainstreamed," for example, these criteria are that "gender is reflected in the context, implementation, log frame, and the budget"; while for "not applicable" the criteria are that "a gender analysis reveals that the project does not have direct interactions with and/or impacts on people, therefore gender is considered non applicable." A brief explanation is also required to justify the proposed code, which implies that a "gender analysis" needs to be carried out for all projects. The Project Design Quality Assessment Matrix requires that "the project's gender-responsive approach is explained and rated using the Gender Marker Self-Assessment." It also requires that "the project includes specific, budgeted gender activities in the workplan" and that "gender considerations are included in the log frame with established outputs, indicators, baseline(s), and targets, as applicable." Gender-related results also factor in UNEP project evaluations (see MI 9.2 below).

The review of 19 recently approved project documents found that 100% integrated gender issues in project design and 100% also underwent safeguards standards review, that notes where either indigenous peoples or one or more of UNEP's other social "safeguard standards" were triggered where applicable. As these projects were mostly approved before the new ESSF came into effect, the previous safeguards framework had been applied when their project documents were prepared and their design was assessed by the PRC. Thus, if Element 1 were rated for gender alone the "score" would have been a 4.

While there are no specific requirements for human rights in general, UNEP's current ESSF (which was revised, updated, and approved in February 2020 and immediately came into effect), requires specific analysis as part of all project design of their potential impacts on: (i) indigenous peoples; (ii) community health, safety, and security; (iii) displacement and involuntary resettlement; and (iv) labour and working conditions. Prior to this, UNEP's environmental and social safeguards framework dating from January 2015 covered all the same categories except community health, safety, and security. In addition, UNEP's Project Design Quality Matrix requires special attention during the internal project review/appraisal process to the following: (i) "the constraints, needs, and ideas of marginalised or disadvantaged people (women, youth, elderly, disabled people, indigenous people, ethnic minorities, or others) who may be affected by the project" and (ii) that "steps are taken to avoid or mitigate any negative impacts on the poor and most vulnerable in terms of livelihoods and access to resources." Thus, the rating for this is 3.

Plans for intervention monitoring and evaluation of cross-cutting (and all other) issues vary across projects. This appears to depend largely on specific donor requirements – for example, GEF and GCF projects generally have more rigorous monitoring and evaluation than those financed by other funding sources – as well as on the resources allocated in project budgets for implementation monitoring and evaluation during the design phase. Issues of human rights, discrimination, and gender inequality are considered in UNEP project evaluations, but evaluators have found the quality of project monitoring by implementing agencies to frequently be weak. Thus, a need remains for their quality and consistency to be further strengthened and streamlined across projects for which UNEP is the implementing agency.

21, 30, 49, 53, 62, 80, 83, 104, 181-199

| **MI 5.5 Evidence confidence** | **High confidence** |

MI 5.6: Intervention designs include detailed, realistic measures to ensure sustainability (as defined in KPI 12)	Score
Overall MI rating	**Unsatisfactory**
Overall MI score	**2.50**
Element 1: Intervention designs include statement of critical aspects of sustainability, including institutional framework, resources and human capacity, social behaviour, technical developments and trade, as appropriate	3
Element 2: Intervention design defines key elements of the enabling policy and legal environment required to sustain the expected benefits of successful implementation	2
Element 3: The critical assumptions that underpin sustainability form part of the approved monitoring and evaluation plan	2
Element 4: Where shifts in policy and legislation will be required for sustainability, the intervention plan directly addresses these reforms and processes in a time-sensitive manner	3
MI 5.6 Analysis	**Source documents**
According to the UNEP Program Manual, project designs are required to assess the likely sustainability of project results. The evaluation section of the manual and the most recent Evaluation Policy revision indicate that sustainability is a critical element that should form part of project monitoring and evaluation plans. There is also a section in the UNEP project concept document template on this subject, with three sub-sections: (i) sustainability; (ii) uptake; and (iii) replicability. In terms of sustainability the template clarifies that the project document should "reflect on the likelihood of the expected project results to endure past project end" and "where project outcomes are sensitive to socio-political, financial, and institutional factors, describe the measures that will be taken to mitigate these sensitivities." UNEP's Project Design Quality Assessment matrix verifies that "there is a sustainability strategy for the longer-term maintenance of project outcome(s) and benefits, including consideration for socio-political, institutional, and financial factors, the project assesses and develops the institutional, technical and human capacities needed to sustain these benefits, that efforts are described to ensure full ownership on the part of national and regional partners, and that the exit strategy and post-project exit strategy and post-project financing mechanisms are explained." However, our review of a sample of 19 recent project design documents found that the application of this guidance varied in practice. All seven partner groups in the country/regional category were asked whether "UNEP designs and implements its work so that effects and impacts can be sustained over time." On average, 65% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement and 17% somewhat agreed, while 10% disagreed to some degree or more. Thus, partner responses were largely positive. The assessment team's review of design documents for 19 recently approved projects, moreover, found that 80% contained statements on critical aspects of sustainability, including institutional, financial, technical, and other relevant aspects. This review also determined that 80% of intervention designs defined key elements of the enabling policy and legal environment required to sustain the expected benefits of successful implementation. Project evaluations have found that sustainability concerns are expected to be incorporated into project M&E arrangements, but that the monitoring required to adequately assess sustainability is often lacking and/or hindered due to insufficient resources for this purpose in project budgets. Only 20% of the project documents reviewed by the assessment team, moreover, included the critical assumptions underlying sustainability as part of their approved monitoring and evaluation plans.	21, 53, 92, 80, 181-199

Our review found that 60% of the approved project design documents observed that, if shifts and policy and/or legislation will be required for sustainability, the intervention plan would address them in a time-sensitive way, although this consideration was not applicable for 25% of the projects reviewed. Some intervention designs identify elements relating to the enabling policy and legal environment required for sustaining project benefits but fail to provide information as to how this could best be achieved.	
More generally, the 2018-19 ESR identifies sustainability -- assessed for three sub-categories: socio-political, institutional, and financial sustainability -- as an area that requires greater attention in UNEP's work. More specifically, only 36% of the completed projects were rated satisfactory or higher in terms of their likely sustainability. OIOS performance audits and UNEP evaluation recommendations likewise indicate that better description and planning requirements need to be included in project document sustainability discussions. Project planning for long-term sustainability of results, therefore, should be improved.	21, 53, 92, 80, 181-199

MI 5.6 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 5.7: Institutional procedures (including systems for hiring staff, procuring project inputs, disbursing payment, logistical arrangements etc.) positively support speed of implementation and adaptability in line with local contexts and needs	**Score**
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.00**
Element 1: The organisation has internal standards set to track implementation speed.	3
Element 2: Institutional procedures are adaptable to local contexts and needs.	3
Element 3: The organisation's benchmarks (internally and externally) its performance on implementation speed across different operating contexts	3
Element 4: Evidence that procedural delays have not hindered speed of implementation across interventions reviewed.	3

MI 5.7 Analysis	**Source documents**
UNEP has internal standards and tracking systems in place for project implementation, as specified in project design documents and legal agreements. Until a few years ago, though internal standards existed, implementation tracking was internal to divisions or ROs. However, it has now been standardised across the organisation as part of the quarterly business review (QBR) process by the SMT for which a new dashboard has recently been introduced. Through this mechanism UNEP can internally benchmark its implementation progress across both divisions and regions. It does not do so externally however (e.g., by comparing its implementation performance with that of other UN or non-UN entities). Some past evaluations have also shown that standards for project implementation were lacking, so this may also vary in response to the requirements of different donors.	
UNEP has flexibility to adapt project content and implementation schedules to changing circumstances, including in local contexts or needs, as well as to incorporate additional financial resources and/or to address emerging issues (such as the impact of COVID-19) at the individual intervention level. Written responses to the partner survey praised UNEP's flexibility in adapting project timelines following COVID-related implementation delays. However, major changes in project design during implementation generally require approval from both donors and UNEP.	53, 80, 92, 181-199
All seven partner categories were asked if "UNEP adapts it work to country or regional context changes." Among the respondents, on average, 66% agreed or strongly agreed, 21% somewhat agreed, while just 9% somewhat disagreed or higher. Thus, partners generally view UNEP as being flexible in this sense.	

There is little evidence that UNEP's internal procedural delays have significantly hindered the speed of implementation of reviewed interventions. There were a few complaints along these lines among the written comments by survey respondents, but these appear to have been the exception rather than the rule. Resource limitations and human resource capacity constraints were identified by survey respondents as reasons for some delays (e.g., for processing disbursement requests or replying to some stakeholder questions) which may have affected the pace of implementation of some projects.

As also observed in MI 11.2, both the biannual ESRs and our independent review of 27 recent UNEP evaluations show that most completed projects experienced implementation delays. The main reasons identified for this were poor project design, unrealistic project implementation planning, delayed implementation start-up, poor co-ordination between the executing and the implementing agencies, or slow signature of legal agreements by different countries in multi-country projects. For the most part, these delays were due either to design deficiencies or delays on the beneficiary country or countries' side rather than to UNEP's internal procedures. However, some written responses to the partner survey suggest that there have been a few exceptions.

Confidence is rated Medium for this MI due to our inability to clearly assess the extent to which internal procedural delays may have slowed implementation across all interventions reviewed, part of which are still ongoing.

53, 80, 92, 181-199

| MI 5.7 Evidence confidence | Medium confidence |

KPI 6: Working in coherent partnerships directed at leveraging and catalysing the use of resources	KPI score
Satisfactory	3.03

UNEP is highly dependent on external partners for delivering its PoWs and executing the projects for which it is the implementing agency. At the strategic level of partnerships for formulation of MTSs and POWs, agility and procedures for joint planning and programming are evident. However, joint planning and programming are more limited at the project level as the identification occurs at the programme framework level where partnerships are determined. Mechanisms, largely Medium-Term Reviews and stakeholder consultations, allow for programmatic adjustments following changes to conditions. The seven partner groups were surveyed as to whether UNEP adapts to changing circumstances as jointly agreed with partners. On average 62% agreed or strongly agreed and 83% somewhat agreed or higher, while just 6% disagreed to some extent or more. UNEP's partnership arrangements and project legal agreements take comparative or collaborative advantage fully into account. Partners were also surveyed as to whether UNEP's work with its partners is based on a clear understanding of why it is best placed to target specific sectoral and/or thematic areas. Among those who responded, 71% on average agreed or strongly agreed, 86% somewhat agreed or higher and 9% somewhat disagreed or more.

UNEP's commitment to furthering development partnerships for the benefit of countries is manifested in the priority it gives to South-South and triangular collaboration and cross-country implementation arrangements. All seven partner groups were asked whether "UNEP supports countries to build development partnerships." On average, 61% agreed or strongly agreed and 76% agreed at least to some extent, while 5% somewhat agreed or more. While according to those interviewed UNEP does not use or seek to build country systems for procurement, financial management, or safeguards *per se*, due to internal capacity constraints, 81% of surveyed partners nevertheless somewhat agreed or higher that UNEP helped to develop country capacity in these areas, while just 6% disagreed. Thus, there may have been insufficient clarity as to exactly what is meant by "country systems."

Synergies with partners for using resources in a way that is consistent with and contributes to the 2030 Agenda are evident in both UNEP's strategic plans and the projects for which it is responsible. Resource allocation and statements on external coherence vary by partnership type and the practice in this area is not always standardised. Key business practices in terms

of planning and design are co-ordinated with relevant partners. Planning and implementation arrangements likewise include partner and other stakeholder consultations. This co-ordination, however, is less apparent in monitoring and reporting and is not standardised. Among the partners surveyed, 46% of those who responded to the statement "UNEP management processes do not cause unnecessary delays for partners in implementing operations" on average agreed or strongly agreed and 63% somewhat agreed, while 13% somewhat disagreed or higher and 24% stated they did not know.

UNEP's revised Access-to-Information Policy and committed alignment to IATI principles shows slow and delayed movement towards increased transparency and sharing of key information with donors, strategic and implementing partners. Standards and procedures for accountability to beneficiaries are evident through the Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework, which has been recently (2020) revised and updated, and in the updated and revised Partnership Policy and Procedures. Guidance and training in this area have been provided but are not required. All seven partner groups were asked if "UNEP shares key information with partners on an ongoing basis". On average, 38% agreed or strongly agreed, and 56% strongly agreed or higher, while 10% disagreed to some extent or more and 15% did not know.

Joint assessments of progress in implementing agreed commitments are carried out with donors, national implementing agencies and other partners. A high level of joint partner and multi-stakeholder dialogue around normative commitments is evident. Among the seven partner groups asked if "UNEP participates in joint evaluations at the country/regional level," 58% agreed or strongly agreed on average and 71% somewhat agreed, 3% disagreed to some extent or more, and 26% did not know. Of the respondents in the donor, IFI and other UN agency, private sector, and respondent categories, 91% somewhat agreed or above with the statement, "UNEP is actively engaged, appropriate to its role, in inter-agency co-ordination mechanisms," and just 4% disagreed. In response to whether UNEP jointly monitors progress on shared goals with local and regional partners, 64% of respondents in the donor, government, NGO, private sector, UN, and IFI categories on average agreed or strongly agreed that this was the case, while 79% somewhat agreed, 8% disagreed, and 13% did not know.

UNEP's knowledge products support country policy development and advocacy for greater environmental progress and sustainability; they are widely disseminated and perceived by a broad range of partners as being timely, useful, and of high quality, although determining their ultimate impact is difficult. Nearly all the 155 partners responded positively to the question of whether UNEP's knowledge products were useful to their work. On average, 87% agreed or strongly agreed with this statement and an additional 8% somewhat agreed, while only 4% disagreed to some extent or more. Partners were also asked to respond to the statement that "UNEP's knowledge products are presented in a format that makes them easy to use." On average, 79% agreed or strongly agreed and 93% somewhat agreed or higher, while just 5% disagreed to some degree of more. On average, 88% of the respondents somewhat agreed or higher that "UNEP's knowledge products are timely," while just 5% somewhat disagreed or higher. Finally, the groups responded to the statement "UNEP provides high quality inputs to policy dialogue", again with largely positive results; on average, 68% agreed or strongly agreed, 84% somewhat agreed or higher, and only 6% disagreed to some extent or more.

MI 6.1: Planning, programming and approval procedures make partnerships more agile when conditions change	Score
Overall MI rating	Satisfactory
Overall MI score	3.00
Element 1: Procedures in place to encourage joint planning and programming	3
Element 2: Mechanisms, including budgetary, in place to allow programmatic changes and adjustments when conditions change	3
Element 3: Institutional procedures for revisions permit changes to be made at the appropriate level to ensure efficiency	3

MI 6.1 Analysis	Source documents
At the strategic planning level (i.e., MTS and PoW), UNEP has procedures and mechanisms in place for key partner consultations, input, and feedback, including with member states through the governing bodies that formally approve these documents (CPR and UNEA). Procedures for joint programming and planning with donor and implementing partners and other local stakeholders likewise exist at the project level. The 2018 UNDS reform mandate now also requires that at least 15% of UNEP's total budget resources be used for joint programming with other UN agencies, a target that has been met in recent years. Examples of joint programming with other UN agencies include for the UN REDD+ programme co-managed by UNEP, FAO, and UNDP; the Climate Technology Centre and Network, jointly hosted by UNEP and UNIDO; and the Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) in relation to climate change, also jointly implemented by UNEP and UNDP.	
The seven partner groups were surveyed as to whether UNEP adapts to changing circumstances as jointly agreed with partners. On average, 62% agreed or strongly agreed and 21% somewhat agreed, while 6% somewhat disagreed or higher. Thus, for the most part, partners view UNEP as being flexible in this regard.	
Similarly, mechanisms are in place to allow programmatic adjustments to scale up and make other appropriate revisions to project design in consultation with implementing and donor partners (where needed) when conditions change. This often occurs after MTRs that can also involve mid-term evaluations by UNEP's evaluation office, or for non-GEF or GCF-funded operations in which the full amount required to implement a project is approved by the respective donor in stages based on observed partial results. It also applies for cases in which additional funding is needed either from the same or other sources, as occurred in the case of the preparation of the GEO 6 report, for example, according to interviews.	53, 63, 84, 97, 102, 120, 128
Dividing MTS implementation into two successive two-year PoWs creates room for adjustments both to programmed activities and proposed budget allocations as approved by the governing bodies and agreed with donors. Even within individual PoW periods, there is flexibility to respond to changing conditions, especially in the face of unexpected circumstances such as the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, just a few months after implementation of the PoW for 2020-21. Thus, institutional procedures for programming revisions at UNEP permit changes to be made at both the broader strategic plan and project-specific levels to ensure their continuing relevance, improved implementation efficiency, and enhanced effectiveness under changing circumstances. As indicated in UNEP's Delegation of Authority Policy and Framework, moreover, decisions on programming changes within projects can be made at both the central (i.e., divisional) and decentralised (RO) levels.	
MI 6.1 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 6.2: Partnerships are based on an explicit statement of comparative or collaborative advantage i.e., technical knowledge, convening power/partnerships, policy dialogue/advocacy	Score
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.20**
Element 1: Corporate documentation contains clear and explicit statement on the comparative advantage that the organisation is intending to bring to a given partnership	3
Element 2: Corporate documentation contains a clear and explicit statement on the collaborative advantage that the organisation intends to realise through a given partnership	3

Element 3: Resources/competencies needed for intervention area(s) are aligned to the perceived comparative or collaborative advantage	3
Element 4: Comparative or collaborative advantage is reflected in the resources (people, information, knowledge, physical resources, networks) that each partner commits (and is willing) to bring to the partnership	3
Element 5: [UN] Guidance on implementing the Management and Accountability Framework exist and is being applied	4

MI 6.2 Analysis	**Source documents**
UNEP depends heavily on various types of partners to help deliver both its normative and operational products. These include donors (both global funds such as GEF and GCF and others such as the EC, individual governments, etc.), other UN entities (such as FAO, UNDP, and WHO), project implementing agencies (again including governments and other local organisations), international financial institutions (IFIs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the private sector, and academic and scientific research institutions. UNEP also has various "collaborating centres" such as the World Conservation Monitoring Centre, the Danish Technical University, and the International Ecosystem Management Partnership in Beijing, among others. At a generic level, UNEP documents contain statements regarding the comparative advantages that each organisation should bring to a given partnership. These documents include the 2011 Partnership Policy and Procedures, whose 2019 updated and revised version is currently being piloted and is expected to become fully effective later in 2021; and the 2017 Private Sector Strategy. More concretely, for some types of partnership (e.g., those with donors, governments, and other environmental organisations) such statements take the form of bilateral PCAs or Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), while for others (i.e., those with project implementing partners) roles and responsibilities are expressed in the form of project design documents, which include capacity assessments and implementation budgets, and are formalised through associated legal agreements. In the case of the PCA between the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and UNEP signed in December 2018 for the provision of financial support for implementing the MTS 2018-2021, to cite one example, SIDA explicitly recognises UNEP's comparative advantage as its aim to "reduce environmental risks and increase the resilience of societies and the environment as a whole." As a second example, UNEP's partnership with the ILRI to jointly produce its 2020 publication "Preventing the Next Pandemic: Zoonotic Diseases and How to Break the Chain of Transmission" was a collaborative response to the UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-economic Response to COVID-19 by "the leading global environmental authority and advocate" and "the renowned ILRI and other key partners to develop an evidence-based assessment report on the risk of future zoonotic outbreaks, according to the Introduction to this document, which also states that "this report is one of the first that specifically focuses on the environmental side of the zoonotic dimension of disease outbreaks during the COVID-19 pandemic. It tries to fill a critical knowledge gap and provide policymakers with a better understanding of the context and nature of potential future zoonotic disease outbreaks." Resources and competencies are likewise aligned with comparative advantages in accordance with these partnership documents at both the programme/sub-programme and project levels and are reflected in the human, financial, technical, and organisational resources that each partner commits to the respective partnership. In the case of the SIDA-UNEP Cooperative agreement, the Swedish Government allocates resources for specific sub-areas in the four MTS sub-programmes for healthy and productive ecosystems; environmental governance (including to promote, protect, and respect environmental rights and address related environmental law issues and promote	4, 12, 37, 63, 78, 84, 102, 129

greater protection for environmental defenders, for instance); chemicals, waste, and air quality; and resource efficiency, in which it implicitly recognises that UNEP's technical comparative advantage coincides with its own priorities. In the joint UNEP-ILRI report on zoonotic diseases, co-authors from both organisations, as well as from the South African Medical Council (SAMC), among others, make specific contributions in accordance with their respective pertinent areas of expertise. Joint lead and contributing authorship of specific chapters in all of UNEP's other knowledge products, including the periodic GEO reports, by specialists from a wide variety of institutions around the world based on their individual comparative advantage is also the rule.	
The seven partner groups were surveyed as to whether UNEP's work with partners is based on a clear understanding of why it is best placed to target specific sectoral and/or thematic areas. Among those who responded, 71% on average agreed or strongly agreed with this statement while 86% somewhat agreed or higher, while just 9% somewhat disagreed or higher. Thus, there appears to be generally strong positive consensus on this topic.	4, 12, 37, 63, 78, 84, 102, 129
UN guidance on implementing the Management and Accountability framework exists in the form of process plans and is led by a UN reform task team and overseen by the UN Sustainable Development Group. According to interviews, UNEP is actively participating in the rollout phase and has established an internal task team for this purpose. More generally, the recently approved MTS for 2022-25 affirms that "UNEP will make full use of the United Nations development system reform to extend its reach as the global environmental authority to support all member states in their pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals. Working with and through its sister United Nations entities, UNEP will support United Nations country teams, providing environmental data and analysis so that common country analyses have environmental science as their foundation."	

MI 6.2 Evidence confidence	High confidence

MI 6.3 Demonstrated commitment to furthering development partnerships for countries (i.e., support for South-South collaboration, triangular arrangements, and use of country systems)	Score
Overall MI rating	Satisfactory
Overall MI score	3.33
Element 1: Clear statement on how the organisation will support principles of collaboration with countries on their development agenda (Nairobi Principles, 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda)	4
Element 2: Clear statement/guidelines for how the organisation will support development partnerships between countries	3
Element 3: Clear statement/guidelines for how the organisation will use country systems.	N/A
Element 4: Internal structures and incentives supportive of collaboration/cooperation with countries, and use of country systems where appropriate	3
MI 6.3 Analysis	Source documents
UNEP's 2014-2017 MTS did not yet have linkages to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, which was only issued in September 2015; neither did the PoW for 2016-17, which was submitted for approval by UNEA in June 2015. However, the MTS 2018-2021 was firmly based on the 2030 Agenda, as were its associated PoWs for 2018-19 and 2020-21, and this continues to be the case in the recently approved MTS for 2022-25 and PoW for 2022-23. The 2018-2021 MTS, for example, observed that "within its mandate, UNEP will…support countries in their efforts to become more environmentally sustainable, while balancing the integration of the economic and social	30, 77, 80, 83, 92 97, 103, 108, 116

dimensions of sustainable development." Among the "Operating Principles" summarised in this MTS, it observed that "a strengthened strategic regional presence will…enable UNEP to foster effective and relevant partnerships, including through South-South and triangular cooperation and with the wider UN system at regional, subregional, and country levels." Going forward, the MTS for 2022-25 pledges that "UNEP will strengthen South-South and triangular cooperation to enable all member states to progress towards environmental sustainability, while fostering complementarities with North-South cooperation." Thus, UNEP is committed to the principles of collaboration with countries on their sustainable development agendas.

UNEP has clear statements and guidelines for how it supports development partnerships between countries. Among other documents, these include internal policy guidance for the integration of South-South co-operation in its PoWs (2011), which affirmed, *inter alia*, that "UNEP is committed to enhancing the capacity of developing countries through the South-South Cooperation modality." It likewise established a specific Partnership Development Fund (using EF resources) in September 2014 in part to advance its South-South co-operation efforts. This fund contains a specific "envelope" for South-South co-operation (its other "envelope" being for Strategic Partnership Development) and UNEP staff were encouraged to submit applications for the use of these resources. Thus, internal structures and incentives exist to support collaboration and co-operation among and between countries.

This is also the case for sharing, both within and across regions, experience and lessons learned in those GEF, GCF, and other donor-financed multi-country projects for which UNEP is the implementing agency. The section that refers to relevance in UNEP's Project Document Template for example, requires, where applicable, a description of how the project will use South-to-South and triangular co-operation as a mechanism for implementation, as well as the identification of which developing countries will take part in any such activities.

All seven partner groups were asked whether "UNEP supports countries to build development partnerships." On average, 61% agreed or strongly agreed and 15% somewhat agreed, while 5% somewhat disagreed or more. In response to whether UNEP helps develop capacity of country systems, 81% somewhat agreed or higher, and 6% disagreed at least to some extent.

As noted in MI 5.3 above, UNEP does not use or seek to build capacity for country systems. Thus Element 3 is not rated, and the rating of Element 4 refers only to UNEP's internal structures and incentives that support collaboration/co-operation with and among countries.

	30, 77, 80, 83, 92 97, 103, 108, 116

MI 6.3 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 6.4: Strategies or designs identify and address synergies with development partners, to encourage leverage/catalytic use of resources and avoid fragmentation in relation to 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda implementation	**Score**
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.25**
Element 1: Strategies or designs clearly identify possible synergies with development partners and leverage of resources/catalytic use of resources and results	3
Element 2: Strategies or designs clearly articulate responsibilities and scope of the partnership	4
Element 3: Strategies or designs are based on a clear assessment of external coherence	3
Element 4: Strategies or designs contain a clear statement of how leverage will be ensured	3

MI 6.4 Analysis	Source documents
UNEP's MTSs and PoWs identify possible synergies with development partners and indicate how the organisation plans to leverage resources and catalyse results by this means. The MTS for 2018-21 states, for example, that "through strategic partnerships, UNEP will catalyse transformative change, leverage impact on the environmental dimension of sustainable development and contribute to the social and economic dimensions of sustainable development." The MTS for 2020-25 observes that "UNEP will identify the key transformative actions for the environment that will drive the desired systemic changes at the heart of sustainable development." It adds that "in collaboration with its partners, UNEP will target these drivers through leveraging a "networked multilateralism" that demonstrates impact and scale, bringing together the UN system, regional organisations, international financial institutions, and other key players."	
This is more explicitly expressed at the country level in recent UN Country Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, which indicate for which sets of UN system activities UNEP will contribute together with other UN agencies. Of the seven "priority areas" in the UN Sustainable Development Framework for India for 2018-22, for example, UNEP is expected to contribute together with other agencies to two: health, water, and sanitation; and climate change, clean energy, and disaster resilience. UNEP project design documents, in turn, clearly set out how available donor and other resources will be used by the responsible executing agencies in pursuing their intended objectives.	
The responsibilities and scope of specific partnerships are defined both at the strategic and project design levels. For strategic partnerships this is done through specific bilateral agreements and MoUs. An examination of selected PCAs and MoUs together with a review of a sample of recent project design documents verifies that the respective responsibilities and scope of individual partnerships are articulated through these documents. Both strategic planning documents (MTSs and PoWs) and project designs are reviewed internally by the SMT. Strategic planning documents are externally reviewed by the governing bodies (CPR and UNEA) and project designs by UNEP's PRC and the respective donors. According to the recently approved MTS for 2022-25, for example, the "stream of consultation for its preparation and that of the simultaneously developed and approved PoW for 2022-2023 involved: (i) sessions with the CPR; (ii) "discovery sessions with MS; (iii) UNEP internal "discovery" processes, including as part of the internal transformation process initiated by the new ED; (iv) consultations on priorities with strategic partners, including other UN entities; (v) "discovery sessions: with MEA Secretariats; and (vi) "discovery sessions" with major groups and stakeholders, including children and youth, faith-based organisations, and the private sector."	5, 6, 17, 51, 53, 60, 63, 81, 83, 85, 120, 121, 116
The seven partner groups were surveyed as to whether UNEP co-ordinates its financial contributions with partners to ensure coherence and avoid fragmentation. On average, 56% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, 13% somewhat agreed, and 8% somewhat disagreed or higher, while 23% did not know.	
Strategic plans and project design documents likewise indicate how leverage, including budgetary resources, will be ensured. However, at the PoW level, actual resource availability from different sources can vary significantly during the implementation period, while for some projects additional resources may become available during implementation, depending on the donor involved. This is especially the case for projects financed by some bilateral donors, who approve funding allocations incrementally based on actual results.	
The annual and biannual PPRs indicate the extent to which original PoW budget estimates are surpassed and/or where there are shortfalls in actual expenditures for each funding source during their respective implementation periods. The same is true for project terminal evaluation reports.	

For the PoW 2018-2019, for example, the PPR indicated that while the initial budget for its implementation was US$ 793.3 million, actual expenditures came to US$ 862 million. This increase was to a doubling of global fund resources (from an up-front estimate of US$ 140 million to an actual value of US$ 293.4 million) and a smaller rise in funding from other earmarked sources (from US$ 305 million to US$ 354.9 million) together with a sharp decrease in expected expenditures from the EF (i.e., US$ 134.1 million versus the initial budget estimate of US$ 271 million). This clearly also illustrates both the significant variability of the level and sources of UNEPs funding availability during its PoW implementation periods and its high reliance on earmarked funding, with as much as three-quarters of its total resources during this biennium earmarked for specific project expenditures.	5, 6, 17, 51, 53, 60, 63, 81, 83, 85, 120, 121, 116

MI 6.4 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 6.5: Key business practices (planning, design, implementation, monitoring and reporting) co-ordinated with relevant partners	**Score**
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.00**
Element 1: Active engagement in joint exercises/mechanisms (planning, coordination, monitoring, evaluation) to support external coherence	3
Element 2: Participating in joint monitoring and reporting processes with key development partners	3
Element 3: Identifying shared information or efficiency gaps with development partners and developing strategies to address them	3
MI 6.5 Analysis	**Source documents**
UNEP actively engages in joint planning exercises with other UN entities in countries for preparing the periodic UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks. It has stepped up this involvement in recent years as part of its response to the 2018 UNDS reforms. UNEP has made a conscious effort to strengthen its participation in Common Country Assessments (CCAs), as well as its inputs to the resulting UNSDCFs, to ensure that national environmental challenges are properly considered and that the environmental dimension is adequately reflected in the UN's proposed future actions. Even despite its limited country presence, through this engagement the MTS for 2022-2025 explicitly pledges that "UNEP will make full use of the United Nations development system reform to extend its reach as the global environmental authority to support all member states in their pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals." Interviews indicate that specific RO staff members have now been designated to lead this process for each country. Three survey questions refer to UNEP's relations with its development partners, two of which received responses from all seven partner groups, while the third received responses from four. For the first question, 46% of those who responded to the statement "UNEP management processes do not cause unnecessary delays for partners in implementing operations" agreed or strongly agreed and 17% somewhat agreed, while 13% somewhat disagreed or higher and 24% stated that they did not know. As to the second question to which all partner groups responded, "UNEP Participates in joint evaluations at the country/regional level," 58% agreed or strongly agreed on average and 13% somewhat agreed, 3% disagreed to some extent or more, and 26% did not know. However, of the 47 respondents in the donor, IFI, private sector, and UN respondent categories, 92% somewhat agreed or higher with the statement, "UNEP is actively engaged, appropriate to its role, in inter-agency co-ordination mechanisms," and 4% somewhat disagreed or higher, with	53, 63, 102, 124, 144, 145

just 4% stating no opinion or didn't know. Thus, most partners regard UNEP as being significantly involved in inter-agency co-ordination. Engagement points with specific partners are also detailed within the respective PCAs and MoUs. They are referred to more generally in UNEP's Programme Manual and other pertinent documents, such as the Partnerships Policy and Procedures (2011), whose 2019 updated and revised version is nearing the end of its piloting phase, and the 2017 Private Sector Strategy, both of which were issued during the assessment period. They are also indicated in individual project design documents and their associated legal agreements, which involve both the donors and the project executing agencies at the individual country or multi-country levels. Such documents include for example the timing of MTRs. UNEP's involvement in joint monitoring and reporting processes for projects with local development partners is somewhat limited due to its lack of country presence, although it attempts to oversee project implementation both from HQ, especially for operations involving multiple countries in different regions, and from the ROs. This is less the case, however, for larger programmes for which it has joint implementation responsibilities with other UN agencies, such as with UNDP and FAO, for REDD+ (see, for instance, the joint 2019 11th Consolidated Annual Progress Report of the UN-REDD Programme Fund, published in 2020) and with UNIDO for the activities of the Climate Technology Centre and Network. One recent example of the latter is the November 2020 joint "Directors' Update" from both organisations to the Centre's Advisory Board on Climate Technology Centre and Network, which focused, *inter alia,* on the operational challenges faced by the centre due to the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., limitations on face-to-face meetings and training, on the one hand, and other communications restrictions as a result of the "digital divide," on the other). It also outlined its responses. These included (i) a focus on "building back better"; (ii) integrating COVID-19 responses into existing technical assistance and training initiatives, including knowledge sharing among civil society organisations and social entrepreneurs; and (iii) encouraging implementing partners to develop alternative approaches to maintain the continuity of technical assistance implementation through means such as online engagement with stakeholders, adapting work plans and timelines, and periodic stocktaking of implementation risks due to the pandemic. UNEP regularly shares information on programme/sub-programme and project performance both with its governing bodies and development partners and other interested parties. It does so through its annual and biannual PPRs and its biannual ESRs, as well as through individual project, sub-programme, and other evaluation reports that are issued upon their completion. The PPRs and evaluation reports include strategies and recommendations to address performance shortcomings, including efficiency gaps, that are identified through these mechanisms, as is also the case for project MTRs.	53, 63, 102, 124, 144, 145

MI 6.5 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 6.6: Key information (analysis, budgeting, management, results etc.) shared with strategic/implementation partners on an on-going basis	**Score**
Overall MI rating	**Unsatisfactory**
Overall MI score	**1.80**
Element 1: Clear corporate statement on transparency of information is aligned to the International Aid Transparency Initiative	3
Element 2: Information is available on analysis, budgeting, management in line with the guidance provided by the International Aid Transparency Initiative	2

Element 3: Responses to partner queries on analysis, budgeting, management, and results are of good quality and responded to in a timely fashion	2
MI 6.6 Analysis	**Source documents**
Corporate statements on transparency of information are aligned with the International Aid Transparency initiative (IATI), founded in 2008. UNEP's strongest links with its standards are expressed in its Revised Access to Information Policy, issued in January 2016. This revised policy is prefaced with the following statement: "the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme, at its twenty-seventh…session…decided to enhance transparency and openness in its work, and in this regard requested the ED to establish a written access-to-information policy. Subsequently, the ED established the UNEP Access-to-Information Policy on 6 June 2014…Having undertaken a process of its review, the ED establishes the present Policy that supersedes the above-mentioned interim policy." Further relevant statements regarding information disclosure are contained within individual project design documents and legal agreements. UNEP formally joined IATI as a new member in March 2016, at which time it committed to become a "IATI publisher." UNEP now has an IATI implementation plan, whose implementation began toward the end of the current assessment period but will not be completed until 2022. Initial publication of projects in alignment with IATI requirements started in 2018, but extensions have been provided due to UMOJA updating implementation delays. Planning for information availability for analysis, budgeting, and management is in line with IATI, but this plan will not come fully into effect until after the present assessment period. However, UNEP makes information on analysis, budgeting, and management publicly available both through its periodic strategic planning and its programme performance documents. All seven partner groups were asked if "UNEP shares key information with partners on an ongoing basis." On average, roughly 56% agreed or strongly agreed, 17% somewhat agreed, 10% disagreed to some extent or more, and 15% responded that they don't know. Thus, for the most part either the responses were positive, or respondents did not know. Requirements for responses to partner queries based on UNEP's revised Access-to-Information policy are reiterated in its 2020 Handbook for Stakeholder Engagement, but it is too early to assess their application in the current assessment, even though at least in some cases it appears to have been positive. However, within The Review of UNEP's Sub Programme Coordination Function in 2017, it was noted that lack of transparency can lead to risks and tensions and low feedback on submissions. Survey respondents nonetheless noted that quarterly reports and reviews provide information on various project aspects and that responses are provided by relevant divisions. The confidence level rating for this MI is Medium. This is due to the difficulty in verifying with strategic/implementation partners that information on analysis, budgeting, management, and results, etc. is shared on an ongoing basis rather than through periodic strategic planning documents and Programme Performance and ESRs. Evidence from partners is based on the survey data alone.	10, 31, 34, 40, 75, 97, 102, 124, 138
MI 6.6 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 6.7: Clear standards and procedures for accountability to beneficiaries implemented	Score
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**2.80**
Element 1: Explicit statement available on standards and procedures for accountability to beneficiary populations i.e. Accountability to Affected Populations	3
Element 2: Staff guidance is available on the implementation of the procedures for accountability to beneficiaries	3
Element 3: Training has been conducted on the implementation of procedures for accountability to beneficiaries	2
Element 4: Programming tools explicitly contain the requirement to implement procedures for accountability to beneficiaries	3
Element 5: Approval mechanisms explicitly include the requirement to assess the extent to which procedures for accountability to beneficiaries will be addressed in the intervention	3
MI 6.7 Analysis	**Source documents**
UNEP statements are available on standards and procedures for accountability to beneficiary populations in its Partnership Policy and Procedures document (2011, updated and revised in 2019 and presently being piloted) and the ESSF (January 2015, updated and revised version effective February 2020), which also provide guidance to staff on implementing the pertinent procedures. Training has been provided to staff in implementing procedures for accountability to beneficiaries by applying the ESSF and stakeholder consultation requirements during project preparation and implementation. The most recent training was based on the updated and revised version of the ESSF, although during 2020 some training had to be postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. At the project level, UNEP's project document template requires an assessment of environmental and social safeguard risks associated with the proposed operations, including those with the potential to affect beneficiaries and other populations, especially those belonging to indigenous communities and other vulnerable groups. It contains a specific Safeguard Risk Identification Form for this purpose, including the risk of displacement and involuntary resettlement of indigenous peoples. It also requires, where appropriate, preparation of a specific "Stakeholder Engagement Plan." The Project Design Quality Assessment Matrix used by the PRC also requires verification that "all stakeholders that are affected by or who could affect (positively or negatively) by the project are identified." Thus, UNEP's programming tools and project approval mechanisms explicitly include a requirement to assess the extent to which procedures for accountability to beneficiaries will be addressed during the intervention in question.	53, 80, 95, 96, 102, 181-199
MI 6.7 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 6.8: Participation with national and other partners in mutual assessments of progress in implementing agreed commitments	Score
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**2.67**
Element 1: Participation in joint performance reviews of interventions e.g., joint assessments	3
Element 2: Participation in multi-stakeholder dialogue around joint sectoral or normative commitments	3
Element 3: Use of surveys or other methods to understand how partners are experiencing working together on implementing mutually agreed commitments	2

MI 6.8 Analysis	Source documents
UNEP's revised and updated Partnership Policy and Procedures (2019) includes guidance for joint performance reviews. As it is currently in the pilot stage, its application to actual reviews of interventions cannot yet be assessed. However, planning for stakeholder consultation and joint partner review and assessment at the project level in connection with both their design and subsequent monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is evident in both UNEP's project document template and its Project Design Quality Assessment matrix. For sub-programmes, UNEP is engaged in joint assessments with other partners. It states, for example, that "field-based assessments of the environmental impacts of crises on human health, livelihoods and security form the core of UNEP's conflict and disaster management operations." In this context more specifically, it states that it "works with the EC, World Bank and other UN entities to complete Post-Disaster Needs Assessments (PDNAs) [which] look at the key issues present on the ground and costing them... [and] is initiated through the UN/World Bank, although is free for the country." It adds that "upon requests from national governments, UNEP is available to conduct post-crisis environmental assessments based on in-depth field work, laboratory analysis, and state-of-the-art technology." This activity more generally is carried out through UNEP's Joint Environmental Unit with the Office of Coordination for UN Humanitarian Affairs, through which it "mobilises and coordinates the international emergency response and identification of acute environmental risks caused by conflicts, disasters, and industrial accidents, mobilising its Flash Environmental Assessment Tool (FEAT)."

When asked whether UNEP jointly monitors progress on shared goals with local and regional partners, 64% of survey respondents in the donor, government, NGO, private sector, UN, and IFI categories agreed or strongly agreed that this was the case, while 15% somewhat agreed, 8% somewhat disagreed or more, and 13% did not know.

 Multi-stakeholder dialogue also takes place around joint sectoral and normative products and associated delivery commitments. This is apparent in the large number of lead and contributing authors and peer reviewers from different institutions that participate in preparing all of UNEP's flagship and other reports, most of which are normative and multisectoral in nature. UNEP also uses high-level consultations for formulating its MTSs and PoWs. At the project level, partner and stakeholder surveys are sometimes used in connection with the M&E process, but this is not a standardised requirement across projects.

The confidence level for this MI is rated Medium due to the inability to verify with national and other partners the extent to which they participate in mutual assessments with UNEP of progress in implementing agreed commitments. Evidence from partners is based on the survey data alone. | 31, 102, 181-199 |
| MI 6.8 Evidence confidence | **Medium confidence** |

MI 6.9: Use of knowledge base to support policy dialogue and/or advocacy	Score
Overall MI rating	**Highly satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.67**
Element 1: Statement in corporate documentation explicitly recognises the organisation's role in knowledge production	4
Element 2: Knowledge products produced and utilised by partners to inform action	3
Element 3: Knowledge products generated and applied to inform advocacy, where relevant, at country, regional, or global level	3

Element 4: Knowledge products generated are timely/perceived as timely by partners	4
Element 5: Knowledge products are perceived as high quality by partners	4
Element 6: Knowledge products are produced in a format that supports their utility to partners	4
MI 6.9 Analysis	**Source documents**
UNEP's role in environment-related scientific knowledge collection, synthesis, and dissemination for policy makers, other development partners, and the public in general in the programmatic areas for which it is responsible is clearly recognised in corporate documents, including strategic plans (i.e., MTSs and PoWs) and its flagship reports, among others. The principal aim of UNEP's knowledge products is to inform environment-related decisions and actions by member states and other stakeholders, and they are applied by a broad range of users to inform advocacy at the country, regional, and global levels. UNEP publishes the Global Environmental Outlook (GEO) and other periodic reports, the "Frontiers" reports on emerging environmental issues, and annual series such as the Emissions Gap (since 2010) and Adaptation Gap (since 2014) reports on country, regional, and global performance on climate change. UNEP also recently published a "synthesis" report called "Making Peace with Nature: A Scientific Blueprint to Tackle the Climate, Nature, and Pollution Emergencies", along with a summary for policy makers. This report was particularly timely as it was issued just in advance of the most recent UNEA 5.1 meeting, in February 2021, to accompany submission of and help underlie the MTS for 2022-25, which was duly approved. When asked whether UNEP's knowledge products were useful to their work, nearly all responses were positive. On average, 87% agreed or strongly agreed with this statement and 8% somewhat agreed, while only 4% disagreed to some extent or more. UNEP's knowledge products involve collaboration with a broad range of individual and institutional partners, who contribute in-depth scientific and environmental expertise. The products are generally viewed by users as being both highly relevant and timely, as well as of high quality: 88% of respondents somewhat agreed or higher that "UNEP's knowledge products are timely," while only 5% disagreed. UNEP applies extensive expert oversight and peer review processes in the production of its knowledge products to ensure that they adequately capture and present up-to-date scientific information and policy-relevant analysis and recommendations. Their lead and contributing authors are among the principal specialists in their respective fields. In response to the statement "UNEP provides high quality inputs to policy dialogue", the groups surveyed were again largely positive; on average, 68% agreed or strongly agreed, 16% somewhat agreed, and only 6% disagreed to some extent or more. These products are disseminated through numerous means and levels, not only including summaries for policy makers, but also in some cases versions for children. The same partner groups were also asked whether "UNEP's knowledge products are presented in a format that makes them easy to use." On average, 79% agreed or strongly agreed and 14% somewhat agreed, while just 5% disagreed to some degree of more.	30, 31, 46, 85, 97
MI 6.9 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Systems geared to managing and accounting for development and humanitarian results and the use of performance information, including evaluation and lesson-learning

KPI 7: Strong and transparent results focus, explicitly geared to function	KPI score
Satisfactory	3.03

Current UNEP management is strongly committed to a results culture and this commitment has increased over time. This is evident in the most recent strategic planning documents and in senior leadership encouragement since 2018, which has also served as an incentive to staff. However, both UNEP's current management and recent strategic planning documents recognise that this remains a work in progress and additional tools for measuring and managing results are needed. While many staff have been trained in RBM in recent years, training has been delayed over the past year due to COVID-19, and it is not clear that sufficient resources have been allocated for incorporating RBM approaches and methods into UNEP's ways of working. Governing body members and donors were surveyed as to whether UNEP prioritises a results-based approach; 56% of the former and 60% of the latter agreed or strongly agreed, while 84% of both groups agreed to some extent or higher and an average of 11% for both groups somewhat disagreed or more.

UNEP's organisation-wide strategic plans include results indicators and output targets at the sub-programme level, as do the design documents for the projects for which it is the implementing agency. However, UNEP does not have country strategies. UNEP prepares annual and biannual PPRs that are discussed with its governing body – annually with the CPR and biannually with UNEA. Corporate strategies are updated every four years at the MTS level and every two years for PoWs. The annual and biannual corporate PPRs indicate areas of strong performance and discrepancies between planned and actual results. The biennial ESRs summarise aggregate project performance based on the evaluation of completed projects, sub-programmes, and other evaluations undertaken during the period of reference.

Targets and indicators are generally adequate to capture causal pathways between interventions and the outcomes that contribute to higher order objectives, and baselines are included for new interventions at both the sub-programme and project levels. Results targets are reviewed and adjusted, when necessary, at the project level (e.g., at least at the time of MTRs) and results targets at both the project and sub-programme levels are set through a process that involves consultation with beneficiaries, including member states at the MTS and PoW level. This process has been enhanced under current management for the most recent MTS (2022-2025) and PoW (2022-2023), which were approved by UNEA in February 2021. All partner groups except governing body members were asked whether UNEP consults with stakeholders on setting results at a country level. On average, 69% agreed or strongly agreed and 81% somewhat agreed or higher, while only around 2% disagreed at least to some extent, and 17% did not know.

Reporting processes ensure data are available for corporate reporting and planning, including for internal change processes, and a system for ensuring data quality exists. However, it is less clear that the corporate monitoring system is adequately resourced, while it does not generate outcome data at the sub-programme level. Project monitoring systems, moreover, are frequently assessed by evaluators as being weak. While project evaluations systematically consider the delivery of outputs and the achievement of intended outcomes and desired impacts where possible, and assess the likely sustainability of benefits, this is sometimes difficult for UNEP evaluators to verify, due to project monitoring inadequacies.

Planning documents are based in part on past performance data and lessons learned at the programme, sub-programme, and project levels, and adjustments are informed by performance data, especially at the project level. Management, including the SMT and the Executive Office, review corporate performance data through an updated quarterly business review process that now includes an associated "dashboard". In addition to supporting dialogue with the governing bodies, performance data support dialogue with global and regional partners, as well as with implementing partners and donors for specific projects.

MI 7.1: Leadership ensures application of an organisation-wide RBM approach	Score
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**2.83**
Element 1: Corporate commitment to a result culture is made clear in strategic planning documents	3
Element 2: Clear requirements/incentives in place for the use of an RBM approach in planning and programming	3
Element 3: Guidance for setting results targets and developing indicators is clear and accessible to all staff	3
Element 4: Tools and methods for measuring and managing results are available	3
Element 5: Adequate resources are allocated to the RBM system	2
Element 6: All relevant staff are trained in RBM approaches and methods	3
MI 7.1 Analysis	
Interviews and strategic planning documents confirm that UNEP's current management is strongly committed to a results culture and that this commitment has increased over time. This is evident both in the most recent strategic plans and in senior leadership encouragement since mid-2019, which also serve as an incentive to staff. The recently approved MTS 2022-2025 states, for example, that "UNEP recognises that the continuing transition to RBM is as much a transformation of the institution's internal culture as it is a management issue. The use of data, monitoring and evaluation is a critical tool for decision-making." And it pledges that "UNEP will enhance its internal capacity to deliver results and will develop indicators that are aligned with organisational objectives to reflect true transformational change. It will engage in project cycle reform, invest in human resources, and build capacity through customised and in-house training and the establishment of technical networks across the organisation that can support programme delivery, while developing "best-in-class" fiduciary and governance standards that build on enterprise risk management tools." However, both UNEP management and the strategic planning documents also acknowledge that this remains a work in progress.

This notwithstanding, UNEP's 2013 Programme Manual clearly states that "the desired results of project design drive the budget formulation process." More specifically, it observes that "budgeting at output level should be aligned with budgetary analysis and human resource requirements of total project budget and linked to expenditure items." Project managers are responsible for developing detailed project budgets based on cost estimates for delivering outputs and activities planned in each one, applying a specific budget format in the process. Project documents are required to present a summary of the budget, including for project monitoring and evaluation, as well as an indication of the project funding source or sources. These figures are then reviewed as part of the PRC's assessment of the quality of project design as indicated by a specific section in the Project Design Quality Matrix. Thus, clear requirements and incentives (through the mandatory PRC review) are in place for taking a RBM approach to project planning and programming.

This process is less thorough at the PoW level, however, as the specific "outcomes" identified for each sub-programme are not costed -- or therefore budgeted -- in advance. Estimated sub-programme budgets, accordingly, are only put forward at the aggregate level. This is the main area where additional work is needed.

Members of the governing body and donors were surveyed as to whether UNEP prioritises a results-based approach: 56% of the former and 60% of the latter respondents agreed or strongly | 10, 30, 82, 83, 88, 92, 103, 104, 116, 125, 126, 128, 143 |

agreed, while 84% of both agreed to some extent or higher, while an average of 11% for both groups somewhat disagreed or more. Thus, while these partners were not unanimous, for the most part their responses were positive. Guidance for setting results targets and developing indicators for projects is available to all staff through the UNEP Programme Manual and similar guidance documents provided by key individual donors such as the GEF and GCF. Additional guidance, according to interviews, is provided by UNEP's Global Funds and Partnerships Cluster, which contains a unit for each of these major funding sources, within the Corporate Services Division (CSD). Tools and methods are also available for measuring results of both sub-programmes and projects, as evidenced in the annual and biannual PPRs, individual mid-term and terminal project evaluation reports, and the biannual ESRs issued by UNEP's Evaluation Office. It is less clear whether adequate resources are currently allocated to the RBM system, particularly at the sub-programme level, considering the persisting inability of UNEP to assess the cost-effectiveness of results reported at the sub-programme level due to the abovementioned lack of costing data for each "outcome" or management result. As stated in MI 11.2, moreover, there is an enduring inability to assess cost-effectiveness at the project level. This impedes a more comprehensive ex-post assessment of project efficiency that instead is based largely on the degree of compliance with up-front estimated project implementation timelines. Finally, while many UNEP staff have been trained in RBM in recent years, according to interviews, as with other training activities, this was delayed over the past year due to COVID-19.	10, 30, 82, 83, 88, 92, 103, 104, 116, 125, 126, 128, 143

MI 7.1 Evidence confidence	High confidence

MI 7.2: Corporate strategies, including country strategies, based on a sound RBM focus and logic	Score
Overall MI rating	Satisfactory
Overall MI score	3.40
Element 1: Organisation-wide plans and strategies include results frameworks	4
Element 2: Clear linkages exist between the different layers of the results framework, from project to country and corporate level	2
Element 3: An annual report on performance is discussed with the governing bodies	4
Element 4: Corporate strategies are updated regularly	4
Element 5: The annual corporate reports show progress over time and notes areas of strong performance as well as deviations between planned and actual results	3
MI 7.2 Analysis	**Source documents**
UNEP's organisation-wide strategic plans (i.e., PoWs) identify desired outputs for sub-programmes, including specific indicators and targets. Design documents for the projects for which UNEP is the implementing agency require presentation of "theories of change" that describe the intervention logic from project outputs to outcome(s) and onward to the higher-level desired results and impact, in accordance with UNEP's product document template. These are essentially equivalent to results frameworks at these respective levels. UNEP does not have country strategies, so the links are directly between the project and sub-programme levels. However, the links are not clear between specific project results, as reported in terminal evaluation reports and summarised biannually in UNEP Evaluation Office's ESRs, and	30, 49, 53, 54, 81, 83, 85, 92, 103, 104, 107, 116, 128

sub-programme results, as reported in the annual and biannual PPRs, and there appears to be a significant "disconnect" between them. The annual and biannual corporate PPRs assess the implementation of the PoWs, indicating areas of strong performance and discrepancies between planned and actual results. For each objective of the programme, indicators of achievement have been identified. Their definitions are fairly stable from one PoW to the next. However, their baselines and targets are less stable, and sometimes inconsistent, from one POW to the other, which impacts the performance as reported by the PPRs. According to interviews, these differences are often due to specific demands from individual member states during the course of each MTS period. The PPRs are discussed with UNEP's governing bodies – annually with the CPR and biannually with UNEA. UNEP's evaluation office also issues individual project, sub-programme, and other evaluation reports on an *ad hoc* basis when each is finalised, as well as a synthesis report summarising the findings and recommendations of all project and other evaluations carried out during each PoW biennium in the year following its conclusion. These evaluation reports are all publicly available. As noted above, corporate strategies are updated every four years at the MTS level and every two years for PoWs. The annual and biannual corporate PPRs show progress over time and indicate areas of strong performance and discrepancies between planned and actual results. As noted above, the biennial ESRs also summarise aggregate project performance based on the evaluation of completed projects, sub-programmes, and other evaluations undertaken during the period of reference. Both sets of reports reveal improvement in UNEP's performance in 2018-19 compared with 2016-17, although not for all the criteria in the case of the ESRs. This improvement was especially clear in PPRs, but interviews indicated that this was perhaps largely due to more realistic target setting in the 2018-19 PoW than for its predecessor. The wide gap between the average project's performance as reported by the evaluation synthesis and the overall institutional performance reported by the most recent PPR is partially explained below (see MI9.1).	30, 49, 53, 54, 81, 83, 85, 92, 103, 104, 107, 116, 128

MI 7.2 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 7.3: Results targets set on a foundation of sound evidence base and logic	**Score**
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.40**
Element 1: Targets and indicators are adequate to capture causal pathways between interventions and the outcomes that contribute to higher order objectives	3
Element 2: Indicators are relevant to expected results to enable the measurement of the degree of goal achievement	3
Element 3: Development of baselines are mandatory for new Interventions	4
Element 4: Results targets are regularly reviewed and adjusted when needed	3
Element 5: Results targets are set through a process that includes consultation with beneficiaries	4
MI 7.3 Analysis	**Source documents**
Targets and indicators for sub-programmes and projects are generally adequate to capture causal pathways between interventions and the outcomes that contribute to higher order objectives. Theories of change (ToC), indicating the causal pathways between the interventions, outputs, and outcomes expected to contribute to higher order objectives, are now explicitly provided in both cases. This has been done for the three thematic sub-programmes (climate action, nature	10, 30, 81, 83, 92, 103, 104, 116, 128, 143, 154-180, 181-199

action, and chemicals and pollution action) together with descriptions of how the other four sub-programmes would support each one in the PoW for 2022-25. These ToCs were previously presented as "strategies" for each sub-programme in the PoWs for 2018-19 and 2020-21. All projects are also required to have specific ToCs that, according to UNEP's project document template, explain "the strategic option focusing on the causal pathways selected to solve the problems identified" in the similarly required preceding "problem and situation analysis." Each ToC is specifically assessed as part of the mandatory review by the PRC, as indicated in the Project Design Quality Matrix. This requires an up-front assessment of the logical links between project inputs and activities, planned outputs, and expected outcomes, and the indicators associated with each one.

Project indicators are thus checked to ensure that they are relevant to expected results both at the output and outcome levels, although in practice PoWs tend to focus more on outputs than outcomes. These indicators are likewise used to inform programme performance for each biennium as reported in the annual and biannual PPRs. Also using these indicators, project performance is noted in all terminal evaluations undertaken by UNEP's Evaluation Office, which bases its assessments of project effectiveness on these terminal reports, as verified through our independent review of a sample of 27 recent evaluation reports.

Based on recent experience, results targets at the PoW level are generally not adjusted during the course of their two-year implementation period. At least this was the case for the PoW for 2018-19. However, due to COVID-19, it is not yet clear whether any of the current PoW targets will need to be changed, or alternatively, upon its conclusion, whether any unanticipated shortfalls will be attributed to the impact of the pandemic. According to both interviews and written survey responses, COVID has affected project implementation schedules and thus delivery of outputs and some targets have needed to be adjusted. In any case, project results targets are regularly reviewed during supervision and especially at the time of MTRs, as well as if additional financing becomes available (mainly for non-GEF and GCF projects), as needed and appropriate.

Baselines are required for all new interventions, both for sub-programmes and projects. Our review of the PoWs for 2018-19, 2020-21, and 2022-25 verifies that there are baselines for each specific "outcome" indicator. At the project level, the PRC is required to verify that all new project design documents have baselines and targets for outputs and outcomes and that they are "meaningful and aligned with the indicators," according to the Project Design Quality Matrix.

Results targets for sub-programmes are set through a process that involves consultation with member states and other stakeholders at the MTS and PoW levels. This process has been enhanced by current management for the most recent MTS (2022-2025) and PoW (2022-2023), including through a range of "discovery sessions" as specifically labelled in these documents. Consultations with project beneficiaries is also required as part of the project preparation process and the respective design documents are required to provide evidence of stakeholder participation.

Finally, all partners except governing body members were asked whether UNEP consults with stakeholders on setting results at a country level. On average, 69% agreed or strongly agreed and 81% somewhat agreed or higher, while only around 2% disagreed at least to some extent, and 17% did not know. Government and private sector partners had the highest share of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed, while respondents from other UN agencies and IFIs and NGOs were the least positive, with donors and academic/research institutions falling in between. However, the other UN entities and IFIs also gave the largest share of "don't know" responses followed by donors and NGOs.

10, 30, 81, 83, 92, 103, 104, 116, 128, 143, 154-180, 181-199

| MI 7.3 Evidence confidence | High confidence |

MI 7.4: Monitoring systems generate high-quality, useful performance data in response to strategic priorities	Score
Overall MI rating	**Unsatisfactory**
Overall MI score	**2.50**
Element 1: The corporate monitoring system is adequately resourced	3
Element 2: Monitoring systems generate data at output and outcome levels of the results chain	2
Element 3: Reporting processes ensure data is available for key corporate reporting and planning, including for internal change processes	3
Element 4: A system for ensuring data quality exists	2
MI 7.4 Analysis	**Source documents**
The corporate monitoring system is adequately resourced, including by the recent addition of a corporate dashboard to inform the quarterly business review process. Project budgets are likewise expected to include resources for monitoring implementation progress and results. However, poor project monitoring quality reported by evaluators suggests that additional resources, as well as better oversight by UNEP, may have been needed in some cases. Project monitoring systems are expected to generate data at both the output and outcome levels of the results chain, as reflected in the annual and biannual PPRs; however, these focus mainly on output delivery. Project evaluators often find that this data is either quantitatively or qualitative inadequate, especially at the outcome level. Reporting processes ensure data are available for key corporate reporting and planning purposes, including for monitoring internal change processes. This is particularly important at the present time as UNEP undergoes an internal transformation, including of its internal "culture," initiated by the new ED in 2019. As previously noted, the new MTS 2022-2025 explicitly refers to this process by stating that "UNEP recognises that the continuing transition to RBM is as much a transformation of the institution's internal culture as it is a management issue." There is a system for ensuring data quality at the corporate level and it has improved in recent years, with the new corporate dashboard being one example. However, there is a continuing need to improve both the quality and consistency of monitoring data on project implementation progress and results.	81, 83, 92, 104, 107, 122 154-180
MI 7.4 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 7.5: Performance data transparently applied in planning and decision-making	Score
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.00**
Element 1: Planning documents are clearly based on performance data	3
Element 2: Proposed adjustments to interventions are clearly informed by performance data	3
Element 3: At corporate level, management regularly reviews corporate performance data and makes adjustments as appropriate	3
Element 4: Performance data support dialogue in partnerships at global, regional and country levels	3

MI 7.5 Analysis	Source documents
Planning documents are based in part on past performance data at both the overall programme, sub-programme, and project levels and adjustments to interventions are informed by performance data, especially for projects. According to interviews, results targets in more recent PoWs have been made more realistic as experience had found them to be excessively ambitious. The recent strategic plans covering the period 2018 to the present explicitly report lessons learned from assessments of previous plans, as well as from project evaluations. However, there is still room for some improvement, especially for projects. Adjustments to projects are informed by implementation performance information as recorded in the periodic Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) for GEF operations and equivalent progress reports for projects funded by other donors. Management, including the SMT and the Executive Office, periodically review corporate performance data. To do so they now use an updated quarterly business review process and associated dashboard, together with the annual and biannual PPRs, periodic project and other evaluations, and biannual ESRs. In addition to supporting dialogue with the governing bodies (CPR and UNEA) at the programme and sub-programme (i.e., MTS and POW) levels, individual project performance data support dialogue with donor and implementing partners at the global (e.g., with GEF and GCF), regional, and to a somewhat lesser extent, national levels, given UNEP's limited country presence.	53, 81, 83, 88, 92, 103, 104, 107, 116
MI 7.5 Evidence confidence	High confidence

KPI 8: Evidence-based planning and programming applied	KPI score
Satisfactory	**3.12**

While UNEP's Evaluation Offices is independent from other management functions, its Director reports to the ED rather than to the governing bodies. However, it regularly informs UNEA and the CPR of evaluation findings and recommendations. Its degree of actual institutional independence as well as the value and importance given to its work within the organisation thus ultimately largely depends on the attitude of and the Evaluation Office's relationship with each ED. According to the Director of the Evaluation Office, who has been in this position throughout the assessment period, this relationship is much stronger than when her predecessor was in post, as the previous ED did not give as much attention or value to evaluation results.

Evaluation work plans are approved every two years by the governing body as an annex to each PoW. They form the basis for the Evaluation Office's annual work programme, although this needs to be flexible in terms of the actual number of completed projects to be evaluated each year due to delays to their closing dates. Except for special requests from specific donors, the office has discretion over the evaluation programme, and its staff is largely funded by core UN budget resources. However, the costs of specific project evaluations, especially for GEF operations which constitute the bulk of the annual work programme, are financed either out of the respective project budgets or from GEF administrative fees received by UNEP. Evaluations both at the project and sub-programme levels are submitted directly for consideration at the appropriate levels of management for the object of the evaluation. Evaluators, who are generally specialised consultants, can conduct their work without undue influence from the unit of analysis being evaluated. On the other hand, the bulk of the Evaluation Office's activity entails donor-mandated project evaluations, thus leaving less time and resources available for higher level evaluations, including of special initiatives, sub-programmes, and other corporate priorities.

UNEP's 2016 evaluation policy describes the principles to ensure the coverage, quality, and use of findings and guides the implementation of different categories of evaluations. UNEP does not have decentralised evaluations. This policy is currently in the process of being revised and updated and the new version is expected to become operational later in 2021. Both the biannual evaluation plans and the annual evaluation work programmes seek to provide systematic coverage of the projects

for which UNEP is the implementing agency. Sub-programmes are evaluated periodically, in principle one per year, but only two (Resource Efficiency and Environment under Review) were issued during the present assessment period, which implies under-delivery.

UNEP seeks to take project findings and recommendations into account in designing new projects. Evaluation Office staff and specialised consultants, who carry out most of the actual evaluation work, apply UNEP's evaluation policy in carrying out their activities, including at the country level. All partner groups except governing body members were asked whether, where interventions are required to be evaluated, UNEP follows through to ensure that they are carried out. On average, around 52% agreed or strongly agreed and nearly 69% somewhat agreed or higher, while around 3% disagreed at least to some extent.

UNEP's evaluations are based on design, planning, and implementation; are quality oriented; and use appropriate methodologies for data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Both the current evaluation policy and the Evaluation Office's frequently issued guidance documents are aimed at ensuring that this is the case. As a result, UNEP's evaluation processes and products are generally of high quality. While less information is provided in evaluation reports on methodological limitations and concerns, for the most part, the reports present evidence, findings, and conclusions in a complete and balanced way. Formal or informal loops exist within UNEP to feed lessons into the design of new interventions at both the sub-programme and project levels. For the former, this has been the case at least since the MTS for 2018-21 and this process has been further strengthened in recent years under UNEP's present leadership. For the latter, it is reflected in the quality of the project design matrix that is applied to all new operations by the internal PRC, which requires that new projects demonstrate that their design has been informed by lessons from similar and other past projects. Staff are thus encouraged to incorporate or apply lessons learned at both levels. However, a 2019 OIOS evaluation of UNEP found that, at the project level at least, evaluation findings had been of limited usefulness in practice for the design of new operations either because this information became available too late in the project preparation process or because the projects themselves were too small. The number or share of new operation designs that draw on lessons from evaluative approaches, moreover, is not made public in the biannual ESRs.

UNEP has systems in place to identify, monitor, and record poorly performing interventions at both the sub-programme and project levels. Results of the former are made public through the annual and biannual PPRs, and ex-post results for the latter are covered in project mid-term and terminal evaluations, as well as in the periodic project implementation reports (PIRs) that are required for all GEF operations, and equivalent documents for CGF operations and for projects financed by other donors through UNEP's Project Information and Management System. Regular reporting tracks the status of all sub-programme management results and project implementation, including poorly performing projects. In the case of projects, however, monitoring and reporting depends essentially on executing agencies, which is sometimes inadequate. UNEP sub-programme co-ordinators and project managers are expected to pay greater attention to those sub-programmes and projects experiencing performance problems. Responsibilities for taking action to help resolve any such problems are generally clear at both levels although actual implementation of such actions on the ground is the ultimately responsibility of the respective executing partners and/or agencies. All seven partner groups surveyed were asked whether UNEP consistently identifies which interventions are underperforming. Just over 39% agreed or strongly agreed on average and nearly 62% agreed somewhat or higher, while around 11% disagreed to some extent or more and the remaining 27% responded "don't know." The same groups were asked if UNEP addresses any area of underperformance, which yielded the following results: on average around 37% agreed or strongly agreed and 57% somewhat agreed or higher, 10% disagreed to some extent or more, and 33% did not know.

OIOS performance audit reports that involve UNEP (in some cases together with other agencies) include annexed management responses for all audit recommendations and action plans that indicate responsibilities (at the division level) and a timeline for implementation of each one. For the evaluations carried out by UNEP's Evaluation Office, evaluation results and recommendations are discussed with the relevant project managers and sub-programme co-ordinators and, as appropriate, their supervising Division Directors. There is also a process in place for these managers to report back on the follow-up actions taken, although, according to the Evaluation Office, compliance is "somewhat less" than 100%. The Evaluation Office issues a biannual ESR that discusses the implementation status of evaluation recommendations. It is not issued annually due reportedly to the comparatively small annual sample of evaluations.

UNEP has a full repository of evaluations and their recommendations which is publicly available online. It also has mechanism for distilling and disseminating lessons internally and, every two years, externally through the ESRs. The MTSs/PoWs and project documents seek to incorporate lessons learned and best practices identified through evaluations, as well as the experience of other pertinent entities within and outside the UN Development System. This occurs primarily through the UNDS-wide evaluation group (UNEG) that meets periodically to exchange experience and share knowledge obtained through their activities. UNEP's Evaluation Office also uses "text-mining" software to help distil findings and lessons from its project and other evaluations. It is less clear, however, how many of the identified lessons and best practices are applied in practice, which ultimately depends on the actions of implementing partners and project executing agencies. All partner groups except governing body members were asked whether UNEP learns lessons from previous experience rather than repeating the same mistakes. Most of those surveyed responded positively, although some 30% did not know; roughly 45% agreed or strongly agreed that this was the case, while over 62% somewhat agreed or higher and just 7% somewhat disagreed or more.

MI 8.1: A corporate independent evaluation function exists	Score
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.00**
Element 1: The evaluation function is independent from other management functions (operational and financial independence)	4
Element 2: The head of evaluation reports directly to the governing body of the organisation (structural independence)	2
Element 3: The evaluation office has full discretion in deciding the evaluation programme	3
Element 4: The central evaluation programme is fully funded by core funds	2
Element 5: Evaluations are submitted directly for consideration at the appropriate level of decision-making for the subject of evaluation	4
Element 6: Evaluators are able to conduct their work during the evaluation without undue interference by those involved in implementing the unit of analysis being evaluated (behavioural independence)	4
MI 8.1 Analysis	**Source documents**
UNEP's Evaluation Office is independent from other management functions, as is clearly indicated by the organisation's current (May 2020) and previous (January 2016) organograms and confirmed by interviews. The Evaluation Office Director reports to the UNEP ED rather than to the governing bodies (CPR, UNEA), though it regularly informs these bodies of evaluation findings and recommendations. According to interviews, however, this is the standard arrangement for all UN entities that are subordinated to the Secretary-General's office, so this arrangement is beyond UNEP's control. Evaluation work plans are approved every two years by the governing bodies as part of and in conjunction with each new PoW. These plans form the general basis for the Evaluation Office's annual work programmes, which, however, according to interviews, need to be flexible in terms of the actual projects to be evaluated each year due to occasional changes in their respective implementation periods and closing dates. Except for the requirement by some donors, especially the GEF, that all the projects financed with their resources must be evaluated, the office has discretion over the evaluation programme. The Evaluation Office's Director and small permanent staff are funded by core resources. However, the costs of specific project evaluations, especially in the case of GEF projects which constitute the majority, are financed either out of the respective project budgets or from GEF administrative fees	21, 30, 49, 83, 94, 103, 114

received by UNEP. Thus, the central evaluation programme is only partly funded by core UN budget resources and most of the actual evaluations are donor-financed. Evaluations both at the project and sub-programme levels are submitted directly for consideration at the appropriate levels of decision making for the subject of the evaluation (i.e., project managers and Division Directors for projects and sub-programme co-ordinators and Division Chiefs for sub-programmes). Evaluators, who are generally specialised consultants under the overall guidance and quality assurance of UN Evaluation Office staff, can conduct their work without undue influence from the units (i.e., Division and RO managers and personnel, sub-programme coordinators) responsible for the projects, programmes, or sub-programmes being evaluated.	21, 30, 49, 83, 94, 103, 114
MI 8.1 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 8.2: Consistent, independent evaluation of results (coverage)	Score
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.00**
Element 1: An evaluation policy describes the principles to ensure the coverage, quality and use of findings, including in decentralised evaluations	4
Element 2: The policy/an evaluation manual guides the implementation of the different categories of evaluations, such as strategic, thematic, corporate level evaluations, as well as decentralised evaluations	3
Element 3: A prioritised and funded evaluation plan covering the organisation's planning and budgeting cycle is available	3
Element 4: The annual evaluation plan presents a systematic and periodic coverage of the MO's interventions, reflecting key priorities	2
Element 5: Evidence demonstrates that the evaluation policy is being implemented at country-level	N/A
MI 8.2 Analysis	**Source documents**
UNEP does not have decentralised evaluations, as all its evaluations are conducted and/or overseen by the Evaluation Office at its HQ in Nairobi. Nor, for this reason, does it implement its evaluation policy at the country level, even though specific project evaluations include country-level visits by the consultants who carry them out. For this reason, Element 5 is not rated. UNEP's 2016 evaluation policy describes the principles for ensuring the coverage, quality, and use of findings and guides the implementation of different categories of evaluations. It has been supplemented during the assessment period by a series of more specific guidance notes for use by the consultants who undertake UNEP evaluations. According to interviews and the draft internal (i.e., not publicly available) proposal shared by the Evaluation Office with the assessment team, this policy and associated documents are presently being revised and updated to incorporate this accumulated additional guidance and improve its operationalisation. According to the Evaluation Office, the new evaluation policy, strategy, and manual are expected to be completed by the end of 2021 as part of UNEP's broader MTS 2022-2025 readiness efforts and they will also be aligned with changes to its project cycle management procedures. The draft new policy and strategy will be discussed by the SMT and approved by the ED.	10, 21, 22, 30, 35, 48, 62, 69, 80, 83, 93, 103, 154-180

The current evaluation policy and manual, together with the more recent specific guidance documents mentioned above, guide the implementation of the different categories of UNEP evaluations, including those of both sub-programmes and projects, as well as specific thematic and other corporate evaluations. All partner groups except members of the governing body were asked whether, where interventions are required to be evaluated, UNEP follows through to ensure that evaluations are carried out. On average, around 52% agreed or strongly agreed and nearly 69% somewhat agreed or higher, while around 3% disagreed at least to some extent and 29% did not know. The groups that gave the highest positive responses were representatives of governments and academic/research institutions, while those with the lowest positive responses were from the private sector and NGOs, with respondents from donors and other UN entities and IFIs falling in between. However, about 19% of donor respondents disagreed to some extent and significant shares of those responding from the private sector, NGOs, and other UN entities did not know. This low level of agreement in the survey somewhat surprising, however, because the Evaluation Office is required to evaluate all GEF- and non-GEF-funded projects. According to unpublished data provided to the assessment team by the Evaluation Office for 2016 through 2019, it had evaluated 90 completed GEF and 48 non-GEF projects, i.e. a total of 138 operations. This illustrates the predominance of GEF-funded projects in UNEP's portfolio (65%) among those completed during the assessment period. A prioritised evaluation plan for each two-year funding cycle is annexed to each biannual PoW. But as observed above, changes are normally required to the projected number of terminal project evaluations undertaken during their implementation period due to changes in actual project closing dates. Both the biannual evaluation plans and the annual evaluation work programmes seek to provide systematic coverage of the projects for which UNEP is the implementing agency. Sub-programmes are evaluated on a periodic basis, ideally one per year, but in fact only two (i.e., the Resource Efficiency and Environment under Review sub-programmes) were evaluated during the current assessment period. As UNEP is required by donors, especially GEF, to evaluate all projects that receive funding from these sources, most of the Evaluation Office's time and resources are allocated to project-level evaluations. Consequently, according to interviews, this limits the attention that it can give to other types of evaluations, such as of sub-programmes and other initiatives, whose resulting findings and lessons learned may be of significantly greater value to UNEP. Greater flexibility and resources are thus required for the Evaluation Office to be able to provide more systematic and timely coverage of the full range of UNEP's interventions, including its flagship knowledge products.	10, 21, 22, 30, 35, 48, 62, 69, 80, 83, 93, 103, 154-180
MI 8.2 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 8.3: Systems applied to ensure the quality of evaluations	Score
Overall MI rating	**Highly satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.80**
Element 1: Evaluations are based on design, planning and implementation processes that are inherently quality oriented	4
Element 2: Evaluations use appropriate methodologies for data collection, analysis and interpretation	4
Element 3: Evaluation reports present the evidence, findings, conclusions, and where relevant, recommendations in a complete and balanced way	4

Element 4: The methodology presented incudes the methodological limitations and concerns	3
Element 5: A process exists to ensure the quality of all evaluations, including decentralised evaluations	4
MI 8.3 Analysis	**Source documents**
UNEP's evaluations are based on design, planning, and implementation processes that are quality oriented. This conclusion is based on the contents of the ESRs for 2016-17 and 2018-19; the assessment team's independent review of a sample of 27 recent project and two sub-programme evaluations issued by the UNEP Evaluation Office during the assessment period; and the annual and biannual PPRs. The assessment team's independent review of the Evaluation Office's ESRs, and recent UNEP evaluations, also confirmed that they use appropriate methodologies for data collection, analysis, and interpretations and present the pertinent evidence, findings, conclusions, and recommendations in a comprehensive and objective way. Based on the assessment team members' extensive experience of independent evaluations undertaken by four different multilateral development banks, UNEP's project level evaluations are judged to be particularly thorough and of high quality. This assessment likewise supports the findings of an OIOS Independent Evaluation Division (IED) "dashboard study" of the UNEP Evaluation Office published in April 2019, which concluded that UNEP "had robust evaluation systems in place across all relevant Evaluation Dashboard indicators [and that] a strong evaluation policy, plan, and procedures were in place." The one area where additional improvements could be made, however, is in presenting the methodological limitations of some evaluations. The Evaluation Office's guidance and oversight of specific project and other evaluations seek to ensure the quality of all evaluation products. For example, according to interviews, Evaluation Office staff prepare the specific terms of reference for the consultants who carry out each evaluation and ensure the quality of the findings and recommendations before authorising publication of the evaluation reports.	10, 21, 22, 35, 48, 69, 154-180
MI 8.3 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 8.4: Mandatory demonstration of the evidence base to design new interventions	**Score**
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**2.60**
Element 1: A formal requirement exists to demonstrate how lessons from past interventions have been considered in the design of new interventions	3
Element 2: Clear feedback loops exist to feed lessons into the design of new interventions	4
Element 3: Lessons from past interventions inform new interventions	2
Element 4: Incentives exist to apply lessons learned to new interventions	3
Element 5: The number/share of new operations designs that draw on lessons from evaluative approaches is made public	1

MI 8.4 Analysis	Source documents
There is a formal requirement to demonstrate how lessons from past projects have been considered in the design of new ones in the Project Quality Design Matrix applied by the PRC for all new operations. According to this source, all project design documents need to explain how lessons learned and evaluation findings (as well as recommendations from a previous phase or similar interventions, if applicable) have influenced project design. While there may not be a similar formal requirement at the sub-programme and programme levels for learning from lessons when formulating strategic plans, this has nevertheless become UNEP's practice in recent years. This is illustrated by the PoW for 2016-17, and, most recently, the MTS for 2022-25, which contains a specific sub-section on "Lessons Learned: Building on the Past for Higher Performance in the Future." Formal (project) or informal (sub-programme) feedback loops exist at UNEP to feed lessons into the design of new interventions at both levels. For the former, this occurs, as stated above, through the project design review process. For the latter, the informal process has been strengthened and made more visible under current leadership. Interviews confirmed this and indicated that the current ED attaches great value to evaluation findings and their integration into new initiatives, as well as to the work of the Evaluation Office more generally. This is also reflected in the inclusion of the lessons learned section in the most recent MTS referred to above, which was not the case for the previous one for 2018-21. Thus, UNEP staff are incentivised to incorporate lessons learned at both the sub-programme and project levels. However, interviews confirm that lessons learned from previous completed operations and associated evaluation reports may not always be incorporated in practice because they are not available in a timely way during the project preparation process or because there are no past precedents for the design of some new operations. Another potential reason, according to this source, is that the new projects in question are "very small." Thus, this is an area that would benefit from improvement. The number or share of new UNEP operation designs that draw on lessons from evaluative approaches is not currently made public in the biannual ESRs or other documents reviewed by the assessment team. However, through the project design quality review process, this information should be possible to obtain and thus be made publicly available in the future.	21, 83, 85, 92, 103, 104, 116, 129, 130, 131, 181-199
MI 8.4 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 8.5: Poorly performing interventions proactively identified, tracked and addressed	Score
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.25**
Element 1: A system exists to identify poorly performing interventions	4
Element 2: Regular reporting tracks the status and evolution of poorly performing interventions	3
Element 3: A process for addressing poor performance exists, with evidence of its use	3
Element 4: The process clearly delineates the responsibility to take action	3

MI 8.5 Analysis	**Source documents**
UNEP has systems in place to identify, monitor, and record poorly performing interventions at both the sub-programme and project levels. Results of the former are made public through the annual and biannual PPRs, while results of the latter are covered in individual project mid-term and terminal evaluations, as well as in the project implementation reports (PIRs) that are required for all the GEF operations for which UNEP is the implementing agency, and for other projects through the Project Information and Management System.	
All seven partner groups surveyed were asked whether UNEP consistently identifies which interventions are underperforming. Just over 39% agreed or strongly agreed on average and nearly 62% agreed somewhat or higher, while around 11% disagreed to some extent or more and the remaining 27% responded "don't know." The more positive responses came from governing body members, followed by government representatives and those from academic and research institutions, while respondents from other UN entities, IFIs and NGOs were less positive. Private sector and donor respondents fell somewhere in between.	
Regular reporting tracks the status of all sub-programme activities and projects, including poorly performing ones. According to interviews, UNEP sub-programme co-ordinators and project managers pay greater attention to sub-programmes and projects experiencing performance problems or issues.	81, 89, 92, 104
All partner groups were also asked if UNEP addresses any areas of underperformance. This yielded the following results: on average, around 37% agreed or strongly agreed and 57% somewhat agreed or higher, 10% disagreed to some extent or more, and 33% did not know. Those groups that responded most positively were representatives of governments and academic/research institutions followed by governing body members and the private sector, while those which were less positive were other UN entities and IFIs, followed by donors and NGOs.	
Within UNEP, responsibilities for taking action to try to resolve poor performance are clear. For sub-programmes this is the role of sub-programme co-ordinators and regional sub-coordinators, while for projects the affected project managers and, if necessary, their divisional managers take on this role. However, in individual projects, actual execution of these actions on the ground is ultimately the responsibility of the respective implementing partners.	
MI 8.5 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 8.6: Clear accountability system ensures responses and follow-up to and use of evaluation recommendations	**Score**
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.00**
Element 1: Evaluation reports include a management response (or has one attached or associated with it)	3
Element 2: Management responses include an action plan and/ or agreement clearly stating responsibilities and accountabilities	3
Element 3: A timeline for implementation of key recommendations is proposed	3
Element 4: An annual report on the status of use and implementation of evaluation recommendations is made public	3

MI 8.6 Analysis	Source documents
UNEP project, sub-programme and other evaluation reports – unlike OIOS audit reports – do not include formal management responses. However, according to interviews, UNEP's practice is to discuss specific evaluation results and recommendations with the relevant project managers and sub-programme coordinators and their supervisors. There is also a process in place for these managers to report back to the Evaluation Office on the follow-up actions taken, although compliance is less than 100%, according to interviews. The biannual ESRs also confirm that management responds to evaluation recommendations (see below). UNEP's Evaluation Office issues a publicly available biannual ESR that reports on the status of use and implementation of evaluation recommendations (not on an annual basis due to the comparatively small yearly sample of evaluations). As illustrated by the ESR for 2018-19, these reports contain a specific section on compliance with evaluation recommendations, with sub-sections on acceptance and implementation of the recommendations. As concerns accepted recommendations, it states: "during the 2016-17 biennium, a total of 441 recommendations were issued. The Evaluation Office received management responses for 329 (75%) of those recommendations, while no formal management response was received for the remaining 112 recommendations (25%). From these 329 formal management responses received, 76% were accepted, 11% were rejected, 13% were partially accepted, and 1% had no acceptance status indicated." As concerns recommendation implementation, it observed that: "implementation of accepted evaluation recommendations is tracked for 18 months during which time their compliance status recorded. The period for which recommendations may remain open often spans over more than one biennium." It also stated that among the 329 evaluation recommendations issued in the 2016-2017 biennium, 164 had reached their deadline for completion and, among these, "32 (20%) required no further implementation action as conditions or contexts had changed, making further implementation unnecessary. Of the remaining 132 evaluation recommendations, 99 (75%) were fully implemented, 28 (21%) were partially implemented and only 5 (4%) were registered as 'not compliant' (i.e., they were accepted but not implemented)." Finally, this document observed, interestingly, that UNEP's "evaluation compliance system still relies on communication by email for the collation of responses. It is hoped that …the introduction of an UMOJA-based 'Evaluation Module' will facilitate a more efficient evaluation response mechanism through an online workflow application."	21, 44, 45, 46, 61, 92
MI 8.6 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 8.7: Uptake of lessons learned and best practices from evaluations	Score
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.00**
Element 1: A complete and current repository of evaluations and their recommendations is available for use	4
Element 2: A mechanism for distilling and disseminating lessons learned internally exists	3
Element 3: A dissemination mechanism to partners, peers and other stakeholders is available and employed	3
Element 4: Evidence is available that lessons learned and best practices are being applied	2

MI 8.7 Analysis	Source documents
UNEP has a repository containing all evaluation reports and their recommendations, which is publicly available online.	
UNEP also has mechanism for distilling and disseminating lessons both internally and externally (i.e., as soon as the evaluations are finalised, and their respective reports are issued by the Evaluation Office). As noted in the previous MI, evaluation results and recommendations are systematically discussed internally by the Evaluation Office with the pertinent sub-programme co-ordinators and project managers and their supervisors. In addition, every two years, it also publishes an overview of these evaluations and their findings through the ESRs, by means of which acceptance and implementation of evaluation recommendations is also made available to partners, peers, and other stakeholders.	46, 83, 85, 92, 103, 116, 128, 181-199
All partner groups except governing body members were asked whether UNEP learns lessons from previous experience rather than repeating the same mistakes. While roughly 30% did not know, 45% agreed or strongly agreed that this was the case and 62% somewhat agreed or higher, while just 7% somewhat disagreed to some extent or more. The most positive replies came from the private sector and government representatives, while the least positive ones came from other UN entities and NGOs -- which were also the two groups that had the relatively highest share of "don't know" answers. Academic/research institutions and donors fell in between these extremes. Thus, among those partners who responded, most view UNEP positively for its ability to learn from mistakes.	
The MTSs, PoWs and project documents seek to incorporate lessons learned and best practices that have been identified through evaluations and the experience of other environment and development-oriented entities within and outside the UN Development System (UNDS). At the project level, however, it is unclear how many of the identified lessons and best practices – as opposed to implementation of evaluation recommendations discussed in the preceding MI – are applied in practice, as this ultimately depends on the actions of implementing partners and project executing agencies and is not specifically assessed *ex-post*. Thus, evidence for this is lacking.	
MI 8.7 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

RESULTS

Achievement of relevant, inclusive and sustainable contributions to humanitarian and development results in an efficient manner

KPI 9: Development and humanitarian objectives are achieved and results contribute to normative and cross-cutting goals	KPI score
Satisfactory	**2.67**

The results achieved by UNEP and its implementing partners are diverse and complex. Accordingly, the causal links between the interventions UNEP supports and their observed results are often indirect and far from exclusively attributable to its actions alone, as they also depend on member states and other organisations. This is the case at both the sub-programme and project levels. As the recently approved PoW for 2022-23 now clearly recognises, moreover, UNEP's own interventions may influence the achievement of desired management results in the form of PoW indicators and targets to different degrees. Genuine performance assessment is thus challenging, especially for the outcomes of activities related to UNEP's normative role. Identifying the impacts of its highly regarded flagship reports and other knowledge products, which are widely used and cited by governments and others, is challenging.

UNEP assesses the extent to which it achieves its objectives at two distinct levels: (i) through a consolidated overall PoW performance assessment presented in the annual and biennial PPRs; and (ii) through terminal project and other evaluations,

whose findings are summarised in the biannual ESRs. UNEP also produced two sub-programme evaluations during the assessment period and was the object of external performance audits carried out by OIOS, as well as an overall OIOS evaluation issued in March 2019. The assessment of the effectiveness of UNEP's activity is based on these sources together with an independent review of 27 of the most recent project terminal evaluations, selected to take the diversity of UNEP's objectives and sub-programmes into account. Based on this sample, the effectiveness rate was highest for objectives such as improved capabilities, national consensus/commitments, use of studies/analyses, convincing effect of pilot projects, and institutional strengthening. It was lowest for objectives such as regional co-operation, actual implementation of strategies/policies, and enforcement of multi-country agreements.

Effectiveness is rated as satisfactory or above in around 55% of the completed project evaluations undertaken during the assessment period, according to the most recent ESR for 2018-19. This level of effectiveness is also confirmed by the analysis of 27 of the most recent evaluations carried out by the assessment team (52% S or HS). In contrast, the most recent PPR (for 2019-20) states that UNEP achieved 93% of its expected outcomes across all sub-programmes. While the corresponding figure for 2016-17 was 65%, suggesting a significant improvement, UNEP officials attribute this in part to the more realistic targets in the more recent PoWs. The apparent significant performance gap between the ESR and PPR is partly explained by the fact that project effectiveness evaluations include longer-term outcomes and expected impacts, while the overall institutional programme performance assessment focuses predominantly on outputs at the sub-programme level, as well as referring to projects in the former case that were designed and largely implemented prior to the biennium in which they were evaluated. Thus, the two assessments are based on different methodologies and sets of performance indicators and are not directly comparable.

UNEP is guided by its policy and strategy for gender equality and the environment (2015), which was given a high rating by staff. By 2017, UNEP had met 12 of the 15 indicators of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. As noted above, it has appointed gender focal points and sought to incorporate gender considerations into its MTSs and the projects for which it is the implementing agency. Despite this progress, and having introduced responsiveness to human rights and gender equity as a standalone project evaluation criterion in 2018, UNEP's performance on the delivery of gender and human rights outcomes in projects remains weak. According to project evaluation reports for 2018-19 the lowest performance level (i.e., only 32% satisfactory or highly satisfactory) among the projects evaluated was for "Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender." Our analysis of the sample of 27 recent evaluations found that only 30% of the evaluators had considered the responsiveness of the project to gender equity as satisfactory or highly satisfactory. The positive elements most frequently identified in these reports were: (i) integrated and explicit gender-related outputs and outcomes; (ii) identification of gender-differentiated roles; (iii) promotion of women farmers and women scientists; (iv) gender-differentiated monitoring indicators; and (v) women integrated as major actors in the project. The negative findings were that: (i) gender-responsiveness was not considered in the project design; (ii) gender-responsiveness was part of the project design, but not considered in project implementation; and (iii) lack of gender-differentiated data.

Several recent evaluations that consider the impact of UNEP-supported programmes and projects on human rights suggest that overall application of its human rights-related policies has been mixed in the past. The recently approved MTS 2022-2025 also recognises that UNEP's project performance on the delivery of human rights, as well as gender, outcomes remains weak. Only 22% of the 27 evaluations in our sample rated project responsiveness to human rights satisfactory or above. The main positive messages from these evaluations about human rights are the following: (i) indigenous people are major actors for the protection of biodiversity; (ii) indigenous people's awareness of their rights over the biodiversity on their territories has been enhanced; and (iii) children are identified as a target group for malaria control. Negative aspects were that: (i) human rights were not considered in project design or were considered irrelevant and thus not rated by the evaluator; (ii) human rights were identified in the project proposal, but not considered during project implementation; and (iii) projects protecting indigenous people's rights over biodiversity obtained limited outcomes.

MI 9.1: Interventions assessed as having achieved their objectives, and results (analysing differential results across target groups, and changes in national development policies and programs or system reforms)	Score
MI rating	Satisfactory
MI score	3
4. Highly satisfactory: The organisation achieves all or almost all intended significant development, normative and/or humanitarian objectives at the output and outcome level. Results are differentiated across target groups.	
3. Satisfactory: The organisation either achieves at least a majority of stated output and outcome objectives (more than 50% if stated) or the most important of stated output and outcome objectives is achieved	
2. Unsatisfactory: Half or less than half of stated output and outcome level objectives is achieved	
1. Highly unsatisfactory: Less than half of stated output and outcome objectives has been achieved, including one or more very important output and/or outcome level objectives	
MI 9.1 Analysis	Source documents
UNEP assesses the extent to which it achieves its objectives at two levels: (i) through a consolidated overall PoW performance assessment presented in annual and biennial PPRs; and (ii) through terminal project and other evaluations, whose findings are summarised in biannual ESRs issued by the Evaluation Office. UNEP also produced two sub-programme evaluations during the period under review, for the Resource Efficiency and Environment under Review sub-programmes, and is the object of external audits carried out by OIOS. Our assessment of the effectiveness of UNEP's activity is based on these sources and on a sample of 27 of the most recent evaluations, which takes the diversity of UNEP's objectives to account. The set of results (outputs delivered and outcomes obtained by UNEP) is diverse and complex. The causal links between UNEP's interventions and the observed results are often indirect and far from exclusive. Thus, attribution is difficult and genuine performance assessment is challenging, especially for some categories of results. As noted under KPI 7, results monitoring at the project level is considered weak by evaluators, which also contributes to the difficulty of assessing effectiveness. UNEP's mandate is to "improve the quality of life without compromising future generations." From this perspective, UNEP is expected to play two major roles: 1 Provide global leadership to implement the environmental dimensions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, notably through: • organising global conferences and facilitating global commitments • informing people about the main environmental trends and challenges, their causes, and the effectiveness of the responses given so far, and translating this scientific knowledge into policy advice (science-policy interface) • building partnerships to set up or strengthen collective responses to these challenges • hosting the secretariats of several Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). 2. Provide direct support to public and private stakeholders to promote innovative solutions as pilots to support the messages promoted through the above activities. The first is considered to be UNEP's **"normative"** role, while the second constitutes the **"operational"** dimension of its activities (i.e., in the majority of cases, management of specific projects funded by a variety of donors and for which UNEP is the designated or selected implementing agency).	3, 14, 30, 46, 81, 83, 85, 92, 104, 154-180

To build the assessment of UNEP's performance on a broad and balanced sample of recent evaluations, the MOPAN assessment team divided the types of results into 10 classes and selected a sample of 27 evaluation reports representing these classes.

Overall performance

UNEP assessed its overall performance in 2018 based on 54 targeted indicators for its 7 sub-programmes. According to the 2018 PPR, which covered the first half of the 2018-19 PoW period, 81% of these indicators had already achieved 100% of the target or more, 13% of the indicators achieved between 60 and 99% of the target, and 6% of the indicators achieved below 60%. The 2018-2019 PPR, which reported on the same list of sub-programmes and indicators, depicted even better performance for the whole period. According to this report, 93% of the targets were met during the 2018-19 period. The assessment team found little information about the cumulative results for the period of this MOPAN review (2016-20). As described under MI 7.2, Element 1, the objectives and targets were defined in two successive biennial Programmes of Work (PoW). The analysis of these PoWs shows inconsistencies in the definition of the baselines and targets of the indicators, which affect the performance assessments presented in the PPRs. According to UNEP, these inconsistencies over time are driven largely by member state interventions and shifting priorities.

Project performance

The 2018-2019 ESR shows that 57% of the projects evaluated in 2018 were rated "satisfactory" or highly satisfactory (S or HS) for the criterion of effectiveness. This ratio has been relatively stable between 2016 and 2019 and is confirmed by the analysis of 27 of the most recent evaluations carried out by the assessment team (52% S or HS). This relatively low but stable figure emerging from the consolidation of projects evaluations suggests that the gap between actual results and targets is wider for projects than for sub-programmes and the PoWs (as shown in the PPRs). UNEP recognises that, in theory, aggregate performance of projects should equal performance against the targets set in the PoWs, as assessed by the PPRs. However, UNEP explains that the definition of effectiveness used in project evaluations differs from the one used for the PPR preparation, and they also refer to different time periods since the projects evaluated during any specific biennium and thus reported on in the respective ESRs, were designed and largely implemented during earlier biennia, while the performance ratings presented in the PPRs refer to the biennium which had recently concluded. In addition to this timing "disconnect," when assessing project effectiveness the Evaluation Office gives only a limited weight to the delivery of outputs, whereas the achievement of outcomes and likelihood of impact are given much more importance. The PPR process, on the other hand, does not rate likelihood of impact and gives more importance to the delivery of outputs. These considerations likely help to explain the gap between the average performance assessment of project effectiveness and the overall performance of the organisation at the PoW and sub-programme levels. However, as previously mentioned, UNEP's Evaluation Office also carries out periodic evaluations at the sub-programme level that seek to be more outcome and impact-focused and contain recommendations for improving responses.

Based on this sample of 27 evaluations, the effectiveness rate was highest for objectives such as improved capabilities, national consensus/commitments, use of studies/analyses, convincing effect of pilot projects and institutional strengthening. Effectiveness was lowest for objectives such as regional co-operation, actual implementation of strategies/policies, and enforcement of multi-country agreements.

3, 14, 30, 46, 81, 83, 85, 92, 104, 154-180

MI 9.1 Evidence confidence	
The discrepancy between the overall performance, as assessed by the PPRs, and the effectiveness assessment provided by project and sub-programme evaluations on the one hand, and inconsistencies in baselines and targets definitions between successive PoW on the other, limit the credibility of the evidence available to assess MI 9.1	**Medium confidence**

MI 9.2: Interventions assessed as having helped improve gender equality and women's empowerment	Score
MI rating	**Unsatisfactory**
MI score	**2**
4. Highly satisfactory: Interventions achieve all or nearly all of their stated gender equality objectives	
3. Satisfactory: Interventions achieve a majority (more than 50%) of their stated gender objectives	
2. Unsatisfactory: Interventions either lack gender equality objectives or achieve less than half of their stated gender equality objectives. (Note: where a programme or activity is clearly gender-focused (maternal health programming for example) achievement of more than half its stated objectives warrants a rating of satisfactory	
1. Highly unsatisfactory: Interventions are unlikely to contribute to gender equality or may in fact lead to increases in gender inequalities	

MI 9.2 Analysis	Source documents
UNEP is guided by its policy and strategy for gender equality and the environment (2015), which was given a high rating by staff. By 2017, UNEP had met 12 of the 15 indicators of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. It had appointed gender focal points and incorporated gender into its medium-term strategy and projects.	
In 2019, the UN system-wide Evaluation Performance Indicator review included 32 evaluation reports that were assessed against three performance criteria: (i) UN standards for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (GEEW) is integrated into the evaluation scope of analysis, and indicators are designed in a way that ensures GEEW-related data will be collected; (ii) gender-responsive methodology, methods, tools, and data analysis techniques are selected; and (iii) the evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations reflect a gender analysis, including one linked to meeting the gender-related UN Evaluation Group norms and standards. The performance indicators are rated against a five-point scale ('not applicable'; 'missing'; 'approaches requirements'; 'meets requirements'; and 'exceeds requirements').	15, 25, 46, 47, 56, 68, 83, 85, 92, 109, 116, 154-180
In 2018, the overall score of the UNEP Evaluation Performance indicator was 5.16 points ("approaches requirements"), whereas in 2019 it was 6.53 points ("meets requirements"). This indicated a significant improvement which was attributed to the UNEP Evaluation Office guidance template, which includes clear gender criteria in all evaluation terms of reference (ToRs). A larger number of evaluations had applied this template than in the previous year. Challenges remained when the project did not collect relevant data during implementation. In addition, evaluation reports generally still contain very little on the notion of gender empowerment or equality.	
Among the more recent gender-related outputs (i.e., what UNEP has delivered to promote gender equality and women's empowerment), important analytical and normative "products" can be identified, such as the pathbreaking Global Gender and Environment Outlook 2016 (GGEO), the recent UNEP-UN Report on Gender and Climate Change in the Context of Covid 19, and Gender and Environment Statistics: Unlocking information for action and measuring the SDG 20.	

Several normative initiatives, already mentioned in relation to MI 2.1, can also be listed as gender-related outputs. These include: (i) UNEP's Policy and Strategy for Gender and the Environment, 2015; (ii) instruments aiming at improving the ability to monitor and evaluate the gender-related outcomes of UNEP's activity, such as the gender markers required to indicate the extent of gender mainstreaming at the design phase of the project, or the Gender Methods Note for Consultants produced by the Evaluation Office to assess the gender related-effects of projects; and (iii) the decision to align UNEP with the United Nations system-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN SWAP).

Gender-related outcomes (changes in gender equality and empowerment induced by the above outputs) are harder to prove. Since the inception of the Gender Parity Implementation Plan, gender parity of UNEP staff has improved considerably, particularly at mid-level professional and senior management levels. UNEP's hiring managers and Executive Office continue to actively engage and work to oversee and improve overall gender parity targets and the organisation remains committed to reaching parity goals, including at the project level.

Despite appointing gender focal points and introducing responsiveness to human rights and gender equity as a standalone project evaluation criterion in 2018, UNEP's project performance on the delivery of gender and human rights outcomes remains weak. In project evaluation reports, the criterion that shows the lowest performance levels is Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender (32% S/HS).

The Evaluation Office analysis (in the 2018-19 ESR) of gender responsiveness at the project level notes that: (i) in several cases, the project proposal intended to include women, but there was no evidence of this in project implementation; (ii) in the majority of the projects evaluated, gender indicators or disaggregated targets/differentiated strategies were not included in the project design; (iii) in a few projects, a gender and social assessment/analysis was carried out during project implementation and, in the case of one project, led to the development of a rapid assessment tool to address gender and social dimensions; and (iv) there are isolated cases of good performance, often where there is strong community involvement.

Our analysis of 27 evaluations found that only 30% of the evaluators considered the responsiveness of the project to gender equity to be satisfactory or highly satisfactory. The positive elements most frequently identified were the following: (i) integrated and explicit gender-related outputs and outcomes; (ii) identification of gender-differentiated roles; (iii) promotion of women farmers and women scientists; (iv) gender-differentiated monitoring indicators; and (v) women integrated as major actors in the project. The negative elements identified were: (i) gender-responsiveness was not considered in the project design; (ii) gender-responsiveness was part of the project design, but not considered in its implementation and (iii) lack of gender differentiated data.

15, 25, 46, 47, 56, 68, 83, 85, 92, 109, 116, 154-180

MI 9.2 Evidence confidence	High confidence

MI 9.3: Interventions assessed as having helped improve environmental sustainability/ tackle the effects of climate change	Score
MI rating	Satisfactory
MI score	3

4. Highly satisfactory: Interventions include substantial planned activities and project design criteria to achieve environmental sustainability and contribute to tackle the effects of climate change. These plans are implemented successfully, and the results are environmentally sustainable and contribute to tackling the effects of climate change

3. Satisfactory: Interventions include some planned activities and project design criteria to ensure environmental sustainability and help tackle climate change. Activities are implemented successfully, and the results are environmentally sustainable and contribute to tackling the effects of climate change	
2. Unsatisfactory: EITHER Interventions do not include planned activities or project design criteria intended to promote environmental sustainability and help tackle the effects of climate change. There is, however, no direct indication that project or programme results are not environmentally sustainable. AND/OR the intervention includes planned activities or project	
1. Highly unsatisfactory: Interventions do not include planned activities or project design criteria intended to promote environmental sustainability and help tackle climate change. In addition, changes resulting from interventions are not environmentally sustainable/do not contribute to tackling climate change.	
MI 9.3 Analysis	**Source documents**
Improving environmental sustainability and addressing climate change are UNEP's main goals. The outcomes of UNEP's activity related to these objectives have been assessed under MI 9.1. It was therefore agreed with the MOPAN Secretariat that this MI would be rated the same as MI 9.1 based on the analysis presented for that MI, and will not be repeated here.	
MI 9.3 Evidence confidence	

MI 9.4: Interventions assessed as having helped improve human rights, including the protection of vulnerable people (those at risk of being left behind)	**Score**
MI rating	**Unsatisfactory**
MI score	**2**
4. Highly satisfactory: Interventions include substantial planned activities and project design criteria to promote or ensure human rights and reach those most at risk of being left behind. These plans are implemented successfully, and the results have helped promote or ensure human rights demonstrating results for the most vulnerable groups.	
3. Satisfactory: Interventions include some planned activities and project design criteria to promote or ensure human rights. These activities are implemented successfully and the results have promoted or ensured human rights.	
2. Unsatisfactory: EITHER Interventions do not include planned activities or project design criteria intended to promote or ensure human rights or demonstrate their reach to vulnerable groups. There is, however, no direct indication that project or programme results will not promote or ensure human rights, AND/OR The intervention includes planned activities or project design criteria intended to promote or ensure human rights but these have not been implemented and/or have not been successful	
1. Highly unsatisfactory: Interventions do not include planned activities or project design criteria intended to promote or ensure human rights. In addition, changes resulting from interventions do not promote or ensure human rights. Interventions do not focus on reaching vulnerable groups.	
MI 9.4 Analysis	**Source documents**
Assessing the results of interventions aiming at improving human rights and protecting vulnerable people in the context of UNEP's mandate requires the expected results of UNEP action in that field to be identified. As said in the assessment of MI 2.3, UNEP's initial policy statement was presented in 2016 in a document providing policy guidance on environment, human rights, and addressing	8, 29, 42, 50, 55, 71, 95, 104, 116, 154-180

inequalities. The document stated that UNEP had a responsibility to explain and advocate the human rights-environment linkages to UN system entities in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The related actions to be taken were presented under MI 2.3 E 1. In 2018, promoting greater protection for environmental defenders also became a priority. In 2020, UNEP launched a new ESSF, approved on 23 February 2020, also mentioned under MI 2.3

UNEP's Indigenous Peoples (IPs) Safeguard Standard as well as its 2012 Indigenous Peoples (IP) Policy Guidance document discussed the need to partner with indigenous communities for projects and identified mechanisms for engaging with them. The UN General Assembly adopted a resolution recognising the role of human rights defenders in promoting and protecting human rights as they relate to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment. The Interfaith Rainforest Initiative was launched in Colombia in November 2018 at an event convened by UNEP and a coalition of Colombian and global multi-faith partners. This initiative brought together leaders from every major faith tradition, indigenous peoples, Afro-Colombian communities, climate scientists and NGOs in pledging to defend the Amazon. Thanks to the support of UNEP and under the aegis of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLA or CEPAL in Spanish), 16 countries adopted the landmark Escazú Agreement, the first binding treaty to grant environmental rights the same legal status as human rights. UNEP has supported negotiations throughout the entire process and continues to support concerted policy action for its implementation.

Several recent terminal evaluations (TEs) consider the impact of UNEP-supported programmes and projects on human rights including gender, and suggest that overall application of its human rights-related policies has been mixed in the past.

8, 29, 42, 50, 55, 71, 95, 104, 116, 154-180

The recently approved MTS 2022-2025 states that, despite appointing gender focal points and introducing responsiveness to human rights and gender equity as a standalone project evaluation criterion in 2018, UNEP's project performance on delivering gender and human rights outcomes remains weak.

Only 22% of the 27 evaluations in our sample have rated the project's responsiveness to human rights satisfactory or above. The main messages from these evaluations on human rights are the following:

Positive aspects: (i) indigenous people identified as major actors for the protection of biodiversity and, therefore, potential beneficiaries of agreements such as the Nagoya Convention; (ii) indigenous people's awareness of their rights over the biodiversity on their territories has been enhanced.; and (iii) children identified as target groups (control of malaria). Negative aspects: (i) human rights not taken into account in the design of projects, and considered irrelevant and not rated by the evaluator; (ii) human rights identified in the project proposal, but not considered during project implementation; and (iii) projects protecting indigenous people's rights over biodiversity obtained limited outcomes.

According to the evaluation of the GEF engagement with indigenous people (2017), UNEP is committed to operating in conformity with the GEF Minimum Standard 4 on restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement. This evaluation shows that in 2016, UNEP was involved in 58 indigenous people-related projects as the implementing agency. Conclusion 6 of this evaluation states that the GEF's ability to determine the degree of application of Minimum Standard 4 and the benefits that flow from its engagement with indigenous peoples are restricted by the lack of monitoring data.

| **MI 9.4 Evidence confidence** | **High confidence** |

MI 9.5: Interventions assessed as having helped improve any other cross-cutting issue	Score
MI rating	**N/E**
MI score	**N/E**
4. Highly satisfactory: Interventions include substantial planned activities and project design criteria to promote or ensure any other cross-cutting issue. These plans are implemented successfully and the results have helped promote or ensure any other cross-cutting issue.	
3. Satisfactory: Interventions include some planned activities and project design criteria to promote or ensure any other cross-cutting issue. These activities are implemented successfully and the results have promoted or ensured any other cross-cutting issue.	
2. Unsatisfactory: EITHER Interventions do not include planned activities or project design criteria intended to promote or ensure any other cross-cutting issue. There is, however, no direct indication that project or programme results will not promote or ensure any other cross-cutting issue, AND/OR Intervention include planned activities or project design criteria intended to promote or ensure any other cross-cutting issue but these have not been implemented and/or been successful	
1. Highly unsatisfactory: Interventions do not include planned activities or project design criteria intended to promote or ensure any other cross-cutting issue. In addition, changes resulting from interventions do not promote or ensure any other cross-cutting issue.	
MI 9.5 Analysis	**Source documents**
As agreed with UNEP and the MOPAN Secretariat, this assessment did not identify other cross-cutting issues.	N/A
MI 9.5 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

KPI 10: Interventions are relevant to the needs and priorities of partner countries and beneficiaries, as the organisation works towards results in areas within its mandate	KPI score
Satisfactory	**3.00**
KPI10 has only one MI. See summary of MI 10.1	
MI 10.1: Intervention objectives and design assessed as responding to beneficiaries', global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities (inclusiveness, equality and Leave No One Behind), and continuing to do so where circumstances change	**Score**
MI rating	**Satisfactory**
MI score	**3**
4. Highly satisfactory: Systematic methods are applied in intervention design (including needs assessment for humanitarian relief operations) to identify target group needs and priorities, including consultation with target groups, and intervention design explicitly responds to the identified needs and priorities	
3. Satisfactory: Interventions are designed to take into account the needs of the target group as identified through a situation or problem analysis (including needs assessment for relief operations) and the resulting activities are designed to meet the needs of the target group	
2. Unsatisfactory: No systematic analysis of target group needs and priorities took place during intervention design or some evident mismatch exists between the intervention's activities and outputs and the needs and priorities of the target groups	

1. Highly unsatisfactory: Substantial elements of the intervention's activities and outputs were unsuited to the needs and priorities of the target group	
MI 10.1 Analysis	**Source documents**
UNEP does not specifically assess the extent to which its PoWs and their constituent sub-programmes are relevant to the needs and priorities of partner countries and beneficiaries, but they are assumed to be relevant. Member states are consulted on their content, and, through the CPR and UNEA, are responsible for their approval. UNEP's Evaluation Office, however, does evaluate all completed projects for which UNEP is the implementing agency for their "strategic relevance", among other criteria. According to the ESR for 2016-17, "in assessing strategic relevance, evaluations examined the extent to which projects' implementation strategies and results showed alignment with the following: UNEP's and/or other funding agency's mandate, strategic direction and thematic priorities; regional, sub-regional and/or national environmental priorities; the needs and priorities of the target groups; complementarity to other recent, ongoing or planned interventions in the project area or on the same concern; and where applicable, the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building, South-South Cooperation policies, Gender Balance, as well as Human Rights Based Approach and inclusion of indigenous peoples issues, needs and concerns." Thus, the strategic relevance ratings reported in the ESRs consider regional and national environmental priorities and the needs and priorities of beneficiaries (i.e., target groups), among other considerations. According to the ESR for 2016-17, 96% of all evaluated projects in 2016-17 were rated satisfactory or higher. The ESR for 2018-19 reported an even higher figure (98%). However, it also observed that "a number of issues need to be considered. Firstly, this criterion assesses 'alignment' with strategic frameworks and priorities at the levels of UNEP, donors, regions, and countries as well as the complementarity between UNEP's project and other existing/planned interventions. Consistent alignment is, therefore, largely a function of various approval processes. If the criterion were to look at the 'substantive contribution' being made by projects under evaluation to the strategic frameworks and priorities to which they are aligned, the performance would look considerably different." It adds that "perhaps more importantly, this is a 'soft' indicator of performance and the continued high, performance levels are currently offering very little learning to the house. Going forwards, the criterion may prove to be more useful when UNEP has articulated a sharper definition of priorities and strategic focus." The analysis of the relevance criterion for a sample of 27 recent evaluations, generally dated 2019 and 2020, confirms the high ratings reported in the ESR 2018-19: 100% of the sampled evaluations rated the criterion of relevance as HS or S: 26 of the 27 evaluations rated the relevance S or HS at all levels, including: (i) relevance to UNEP mandate and strategies (MTS); (ii) relevance to the objectives of the corresponding sub-programme; (iii) relevance to the corresponding SDG; (iv) relevance to the local context; and (v) relevance (coherence) with other existing interventions.	85, 92, 104, 154-180
MI 10.1 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

KPI 11: Results are delivered efficiently	KPI score
Unsatisfactory	**2.00**

Efficiency is a challenging criterion to assess in UNEP's case as financial information is frequently unavailable at the level of disaggregation necessary to determine cost-effectiveness. Due to the lack of disaggregated financial information suited to analysing the costs associated with specific results areas, assessment of project performance in terms of actual economic efficiency is necessarily constrained. Instead, UNEP assesses project efficiency based on implementation timeliness, the sequencing and arrangement of activities, and the extent to which they have built on existing structures and institutions. UNEP does not specifically assess efficiency at the overall programme or sub-programme levels, although as indicated in KPI 9, its overall performance (assessed as the extent to which its PoW targets are met within the biennium of reference), is reported to have been high in 2018-19 and to have improved significantly on the previous one.

The proportion of satisfactory/highly satisfactory ratings for efficiency reported in the ESRs accordingly fluctuates over time. However, there are signs of a recent steady decline (i.e., from ratings of 54% for projects evaluated in 2010-11 to 62% in 2012-13, 66% in 2014-15 and 49% in 2016-17, but just 39% in 2018-19). Our sample of project evaluations, however, rates efficiency more positively than in the 2018-2019 ESR, suggesting that there may have been some improvement in more recent years. By far the most frequent causes of inefficiencies identified by these evaluations are preparation and implementation delays. Other factors include: (i) insufficient or inadequate human resources; (ii) insufficient funding; (iii) unpredictable availability of funds; (iv) poor project design; (v) lack of focus of project activities; (vi) insufficient coherence/co-ordination with other interventions; and (vii) disbursement difficulties due to co-financing procedures. The evaluations also identified some elements that have helped to improve efficiency, such as (i) better adaptation to country conditions and procedures; (ii) more flexible management; and (iii) smarter partnership agreements.

Recent evaluations also show that implementation delays were mainly due to poor project design, unrealistic project implementation planning, delayed start-up, poor co-ordination between executing and implementing agencies, and/or slow signature of legal agreements by countries included in multi-country programmes. More generally, the efficiency of UNEP's activities has been hampered by often inter-related factors, including: (i) an unstable resource base; (ii) internal competition among projects; (iii) insufficient coherence between HQ and regional teams, although efforts are now being made by UNEP management to improve this situation; and (iv) insufficient accountability instruments and practices. UNEP has struggled to implement a business model that adequately funds the core work needed to support its leadership role. Unable to grow the EF, UNEP continues to rely heavily on earmarked funding. This has limited its ability and flexibility to respond to member state requests for new or additional activities, including areas related to its science-policy expertise and capacity-building support. Competition for funding within UNEP and between UNEP and other UN agencies has likewise contributed to broader system-wide inefficiencies and insufficient coherence, according to the 2019 OIOS evaluation.

MI 11.1: Interventions/activities assessed as resource-/cost-efficient	Score
MI rating	**Unsatisfactory**
MI score	**2**
4. Highly satisfactory: Interventions are designed to include activities and inputs that produce outputs in the most cost/resource efficient manner available at the time	
3. Satisfactory: Results delivered when compared to the cost of activities and inputs are appropriate even when the programme design process did not directly consider alternative delivery methods and associated costs	
2. Unsatisfactory: Interventions have no credible, reliable information on the costs of activities and inputs and therefore no data is available on cost/resource efficiency	
1. Highly unsatisfactory: Credible information is provided which indicates that interventions are not cost/resource efficient	

MI 11.1 Analysis	Source documents
Efficiency remains a challenging criterion to assess as financial information is frequently unavailable at the disaggregated levels necessary to determine cost-effectiveness. Evaluations view no-cost extensions as reflecting poor implementation efficiency. The proportion of S/HS ratings under the efficiency criterion shows some fluctuation and signs of recent steady decline. S/HS ratings were 54% in 2010-11; 62% in 2012-13; 66% in 2014-15; 49% in 2016-17 and 39% in 2018-19. Given the lack of disaggregated financial information suited to analysing the costs associated with specific results areas, interpretation of performance against the efficiency criterion is constrained. Evaluations assess projects based on their project delivery timeliness, the efficient sequencing and arrangement of activities, and the level to which projects have built on existing structures and institutions.	
The efficiency of UNEP's activities has been hampered by different inter-related factors, especially: (i) unstable resource base; (ii) internal competition between projects; (iii) insufficient coherence between HQ and regional teams, although efforts are now being made by UNEP management to improve this situation; and (iv) inappropriate accountability instruments and practices. UNEP has struggled to implement a business model that adequately funds the core work needed to support its leadership role. Unable to grow the EF, UNEP continues to rely heavily on earmarked funding. This has significantly limited the organisation's flexibility to respond to Member State requests for core activities, including areas related to science, policy expertise, and capacity-building support. Competition for funding within UNEP and between UNEP and other UN agencies has also contributed to inefficiencies and insufficient coherence.	85, 92, 154-180
Our sample of recent project evaluations rates efficiency significantly more positively than the 2018-19 evaluation synthesis. The main causes of inefficiencies identified by these evaluations are the following: (i) preparation and implementation delays (by far the most frequent cause identified); (ii) insufficient or inadequate human resources; (iii) insufficient funding; (iv) unpredictable availability of funds; (v) poor design of the project; (vi) lack of focus of project activities; (vii) insufficient coherence/co-ordination with other interventions; and (viii) disbursement difficulties due to co-financing procedures. The evaluations also identified a few elements contributing to improved efficiency, such as (i) adaptation to countries' conditions and procedures; (ii) flexible management; and (iii) smart partnership agreements.	
MI 11.1 Evidence confidence	**Medium confidence**

MI 11.2: Implementation and results assessed as having been achieved on time (given the context, in the case of humanitarian programming)	Score
MI rating	**Unsatisfactory**
MI score	**2**
4. Highly satisfactory: All or nearly all the objectives of interventions are achieved on time or, in the case of humanitarian programming, a legitimate explanation exists for delays in achieving some outputs/outcomes	
3. Satisfactory: More than half of the intended objectives of interventions are achieved on time, and this level is appropriate to the context that existed during implementation, particularly for humanitarian interventions.	
2. Unsatisfactory: Less than half of the intended objectives are achieved on time but interventions have been adjusted to take account of the difficulties encountered and can be expected to improve the pace of achievement in the future. In the case of humanitarian programming, a legitimate explanation exists for delays	

1. **Highly unsatisfactory:** Less than half of stated objectives of interventions are achieved on time, and no credible plan or legitimate explanation is identified that would suggest significant improvement in achieving objectives on time	
MI 11.2 Analysis	**Source documents**
"No cost extensions" are considered under efficiency because any extension to the end date of a project is usually not accompanied by an increase in project support costs. However, any extension to the original project timeframe means additional overhead costs for implementing and executing agencies and delays the project's effectiveness. The sample of 27 recent evaluations selected by the assessment team show that the majority of projects have experienced delays mainly due to poor project design, unrealistic project implementation planning, delayed start-up of project implementation, poor articulation between the executing and the implementing agencies, or slowness to sign legal agreements between countries in multi-country programmes.	92, 154-180
MI 11.2 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

KPI 12: Results are sustainable	KPI score
Unsatisfactory	**2.00**
KPI 12 has only one MI See summary of MI 12.1	
MI 12.1: Benefits assessed as continuing, or likely to continue after intervention completion (Where applicable, reference to building institutional or community capacity and/or strengthening enabling environment for development, in support of 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda)	**Score**
MI rating	**Unsatisfactory**
MI score	**2**
4. **Highly satisfactory**: Evaluations assess as likely that the intervention will result in continued benefits for the target group after completion. For humanitarian relief operations, the strategic and operational measures to link relief to rehabilitation, reconstruction and, eventually, development are credible. Moreover, they are likely to succeed in securing continuing benefits for the target group. Sustainability may be supported by building institutional capacity and/or strengthening the enabling environment for development.	
3. **Satisfactory:** Evaluations assess as likely that the intervention will result in continued benefits for the target group after completion. For humanitarian relief operations, strategic and operational measures link relief to rehabilitation, reconstruction	
2. **Unsatisfactory:** Evaluations assess as a low probability that the intervention will result in continued benefits for the target group after completion. For humanitarian relief operations, efforts to link the relief phase to rehabilitation, reconstruction and, eventually, to development are inadequate. (In some circumstances such linkage may not be possible due to the context of the emergency. If this is stated in the evaluation, a rating of satisfactory is appropriate)	
1. **Highly unsatisfactory:** Evaluations find a very low probability that the programme programme/ project will result in continued intended benefits for the target group after project completion. For humanitarian relief operations, evaluations find no strategic or operational measures to link relief, to rehabilitation, reconstruction and, eventually, to development	

MI 12.1 Analysis	Source documents
The most recent ESR assesses on average around 35% of the 2018-19 evaluated projects implemented under UNEP's responsibility as likely to be sustainable. This is a slight decline from the 39% share reported in the previous ESR for 2016-17. Interpreted as the likelihood that the benefits achieved at outcome level will endure, the sustainability criterion assesses: (i) whether a project's outcome level achievements are sensitive to socio-political, financial, and institutional factors within the implementing context; and (ii) whether the project has put measures in place to mitigate these sensitivities. Financial sustainability is considered the most fragile point by evaluators. Thus, overall project performance in this regard is unsatisfactory. According to the 27 recent evaluations we selected for independent assessment, the main factors that enhance the sustainability of project results include strong government ownership and support, stable and effective institutional frameworks, comparison/competition among peers (which enhances ownership in multi-country projects), adequate economic incentives, knowledge transfer (championship), private sector involvement, and limited operating costs. The main factors identified as limiting sustainability are: inadequate financial resources, insufficient mainstreaming of new practices into policies, staff mobility and related loss of skills and limited institutional memory, tensions between countries participating in multi-country projects, lack of an exit strategy in project design, failure to adopt necessary legal and institutional frameworks, cost recovery mechanisms not working as expected, and failure to embed the project in a supportive broader strategic framework.	92, 154-180
MI 12.1 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

Annex B. List of documents

No.	Document title
1	United Nations Secretariat (2003), "Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse", *Secretary-General's Bulletin*, 9 October 2003, https://www.unhcr.org/protection/operations/405ac6614/secretary-generals-bulletin-special-measures-protection-sexual-exploitation.html
2	United Nations Secretariat (2010), "Performance Management and Development System", *Administrative Instruction* ST/AI/2010/5, 30 April 2010, https://careers.un.org/lbw/attachments/Performance_Management_Policy.pdf
3	UNEP Evaluation Office (2011), *Formative Evaluation of the UNEP Programme of Work for 2010-2011*, https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/290
4	UNEP (2011), Partnership Policy and Procedures, October 2011.
5	GEF (2012), "Financial Procedures Agreement between UNEP, acting as Implementing Agency of the GEF, and the World Bank, as Trustee of the GEF Trust Fund", April 10, 2012, http://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/FPA%20UNEP%202012.pdf
6	Framework Agreement on Strategic Cooperation between The Ministry of Environmental Protection of the People's Republic of China and the United Nations Environment Programme, 14 December 2012
7	UNEP (2012), *Global Environment Outlook: Environment for the future we want* – GEO 5, https://www.unep.org/resources/global-environment-outlook-5
8	UNEP (2012), *UNEP and Indigenous Peoples: A Partnership in Caring for the Environment: Policy Guidance*, https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/11202
9	UNEP (2013), *Medium Term Strategy 2014-2017*, https://www.unep.org/resources/report/unep-medium-term-strategy-2014-2017
10	UNEP (2013), UNEP Programme Manual, https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.411.2550&rep=rep1&type=pdf
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199	GEF (2018), GEF-6 Request for Project Approval: "*Building Core Capacity for Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and Relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Benin – 9809*"

Annex C. Results of the 2020 MOPAN external partner survey

The online survey was administered by MOPAN and was conducted over a period of a 5 weeks, starting on 29 January 2021 and closing on 10 March 2021.

Number of respondents: 336   **Effective sample size:** 1 077   **Survey response rate:** 31%

Respondent's profile:

	Global	Country / Regional
Governing body representative / Board member	55	
Government	15	44
NGO	29	37
UN + IFI	28	27
Private sector	16	10
Academic / research institutions	21	27
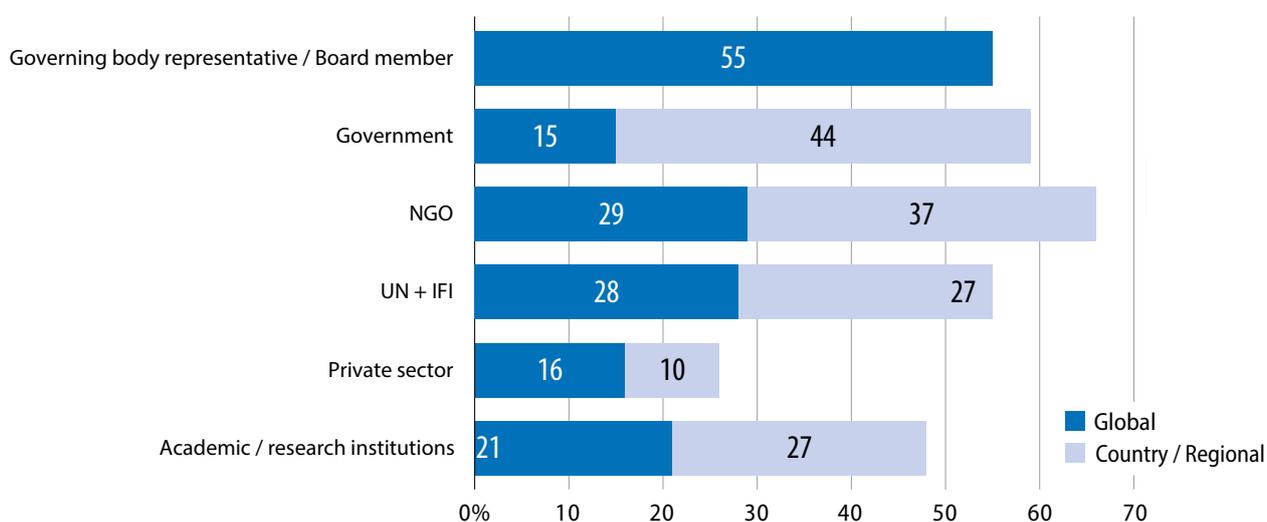
Note: Results displayed only reflect responses to questions that are relevant to specific partner categories. Where partner categories have not been asked a particular question, their category is not listed.

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

The strategies (and policies) of UNEP demonstrate clarity of vision
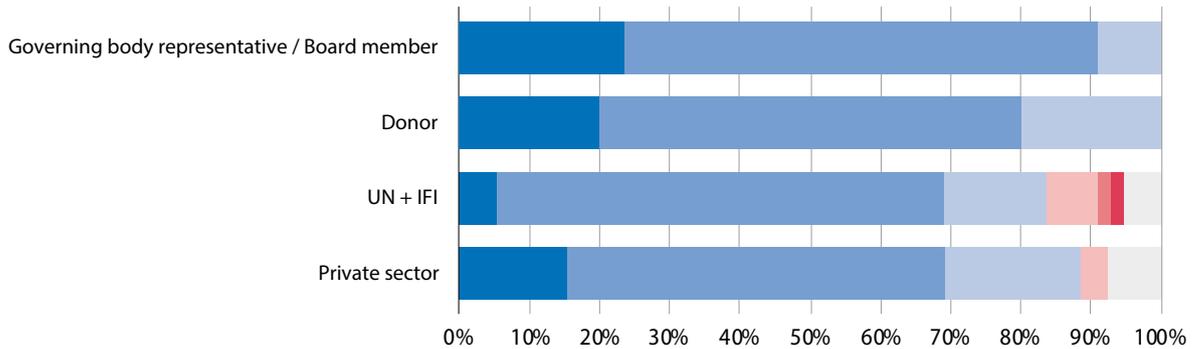
The strategies (and policies) of UNEP demonstrate good understanding of comparative advantage
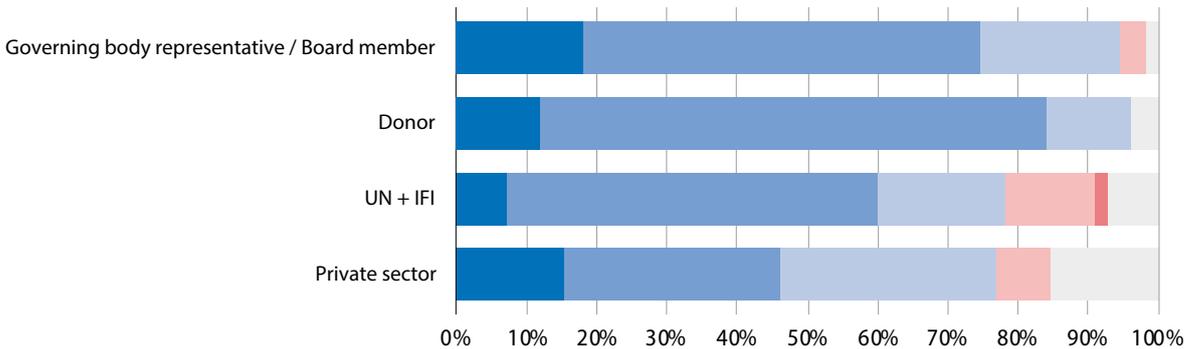
UNEP organises and runs itself in a way that fully supports its vision
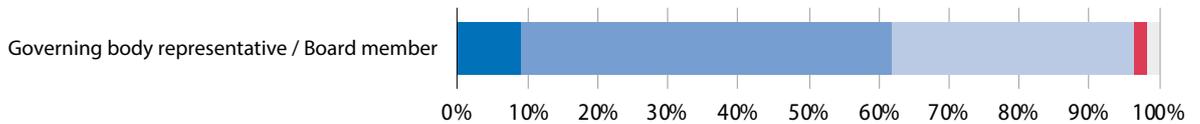
UNEP's financial framework supports the effective implementation of the mandate and strategy

| Strongly agree | Agree | Somewhat agree | Somewhat disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know / No opinion |
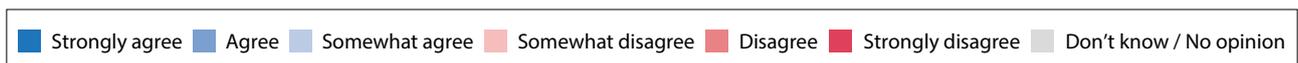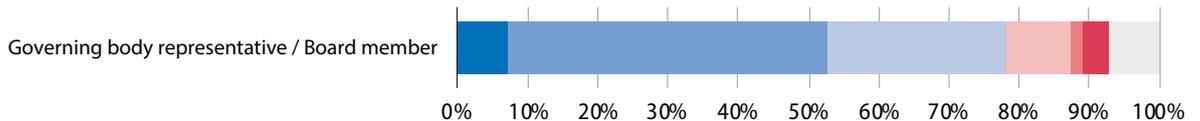
OCHA's strategic allocation of resources is transparent and coherent with agreed strategic priorities
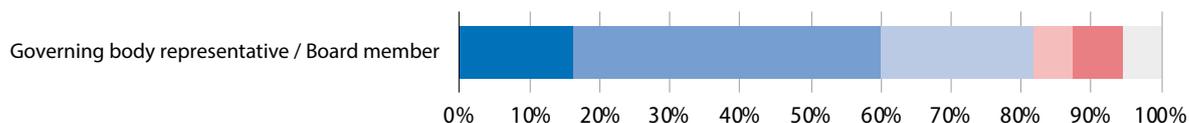
Governing body representative / Board member

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

UNEP applies principles of results-based budgeting and reports expenditures according to results

Governing body representative / Board member

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

UNEP adequately addresses issues and concerns raised by internal control mechanisms

Governing body representative / Board member

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
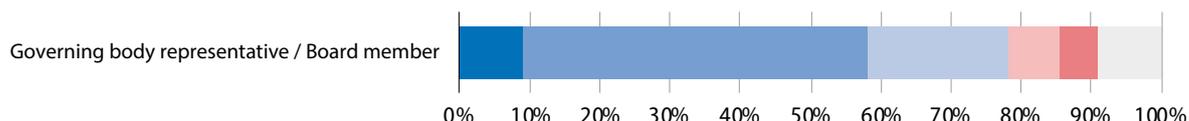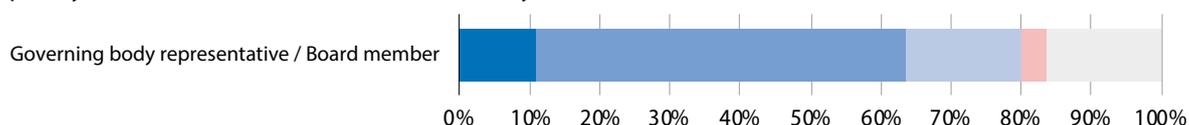
STAFFING

UNEP has a sufficient number of staff, either in or accessible to countries where it operates to deliver intended results

Governing body representative / Board member

Donor

Government

NGO

UN + IFI

Private sector

Academic / research institutions

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know / No opinion

UNEP's staff are sufficiently experienced and skilled to work successfully in the different contexts of operation

Governing body representative / Board member

Donor

Government

NGO

UN + IFI

Private sector

Academic / research institutions

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
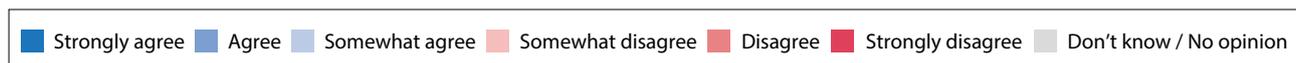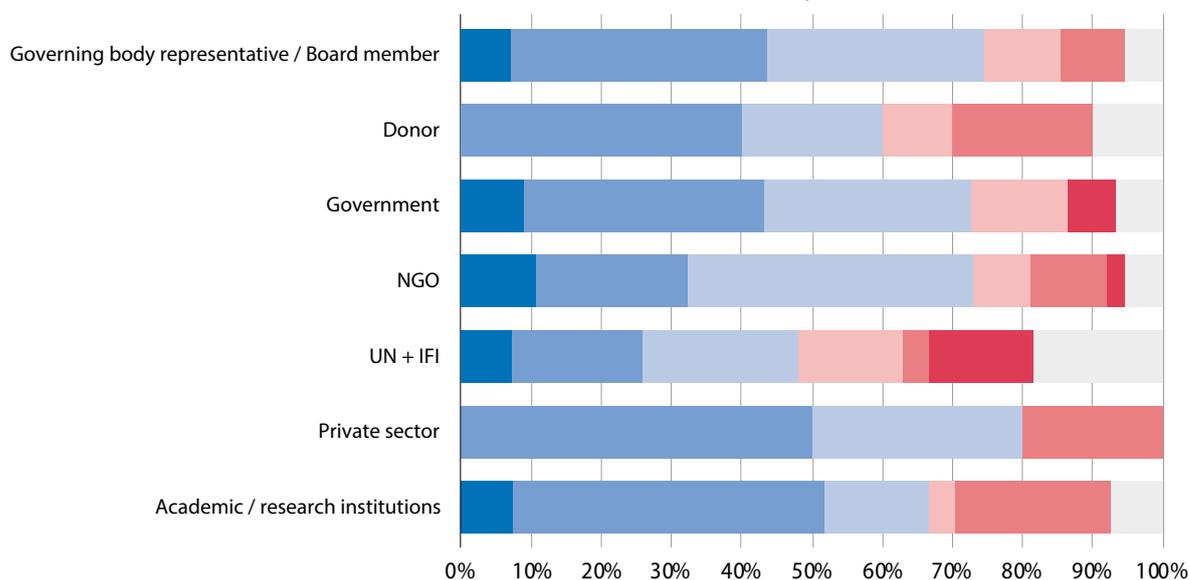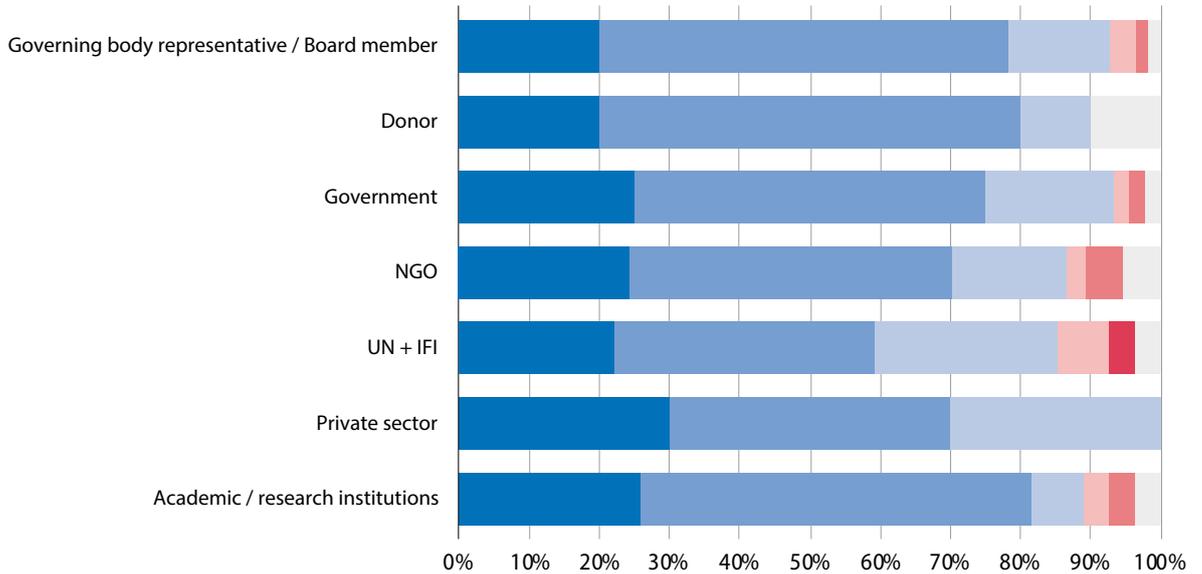
UNEP's staff are present in country for a long enough time to build the relationships needed

Donor

Government

NGO

UN + IFI

Private sector

Academic / research institutions

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
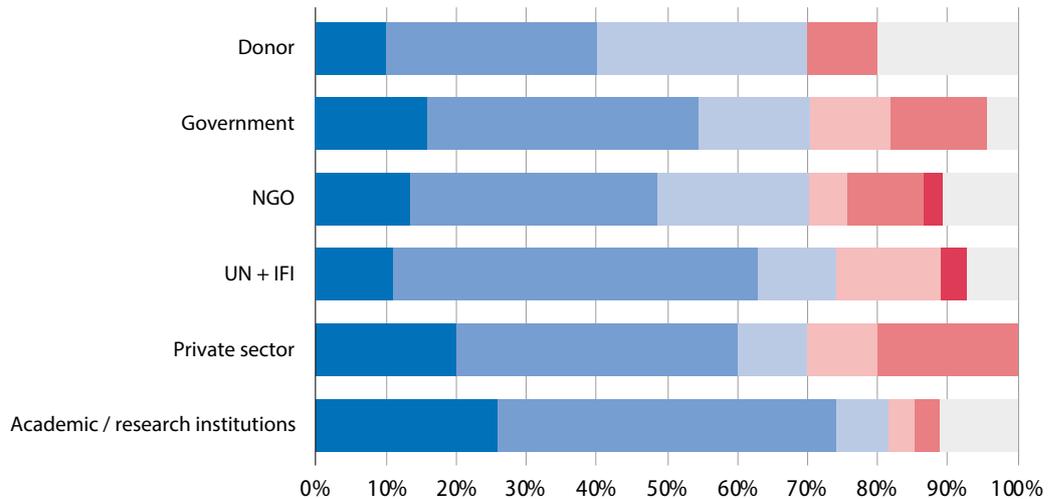
UNEP can make critical strategic or programming decisions locally

Donor

UN + IFI

Private sector

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know / No opinion
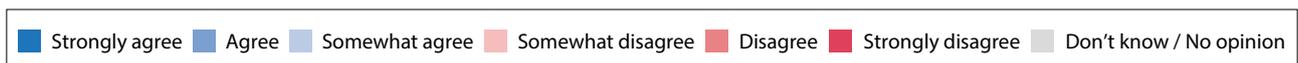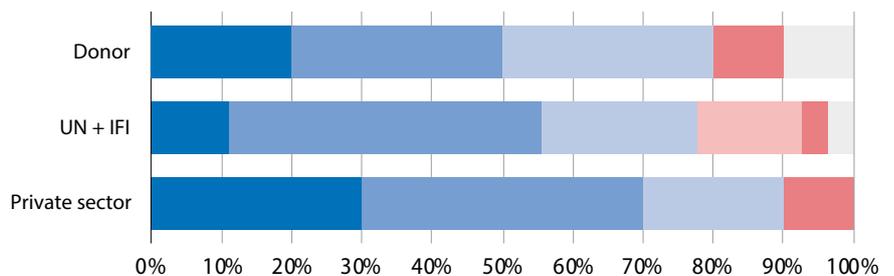
CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

UNEP promotes gender equality
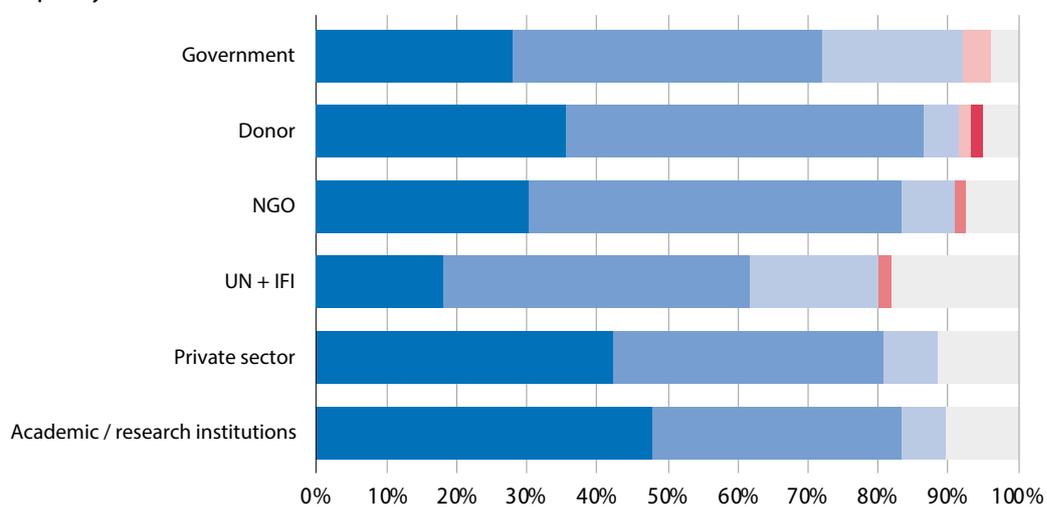
UNEP promotes human rights
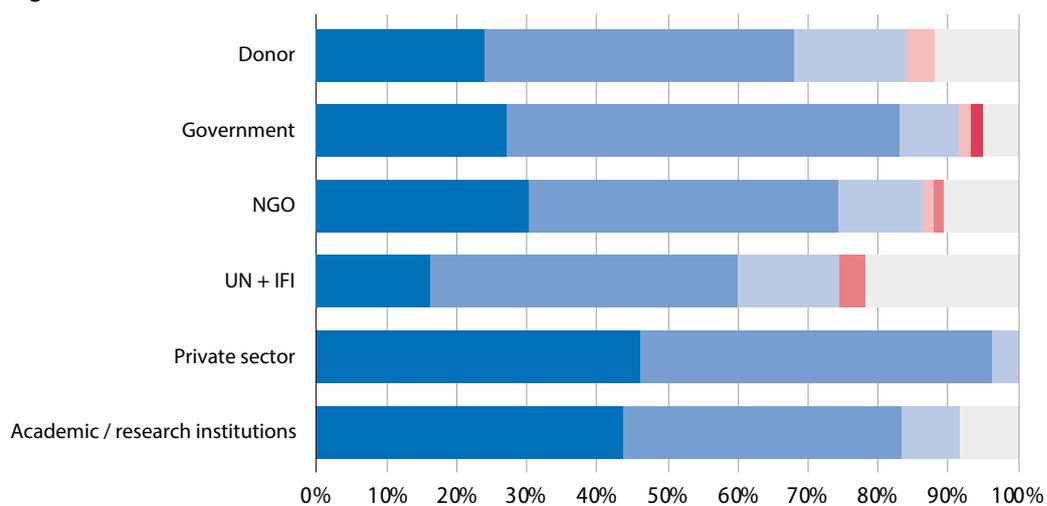
Strongly agree ▪ Agree ▪ Somewhat agree ▪ Somewhat disagree ▪ Disagree ▪ Strongly disagree ▪ Don't know / No opinion

INTERVENTIONS

UNEP's programmes respond to the needs of beneficiaries, including the most vulnerable children

UNEP adapts its work as the context changes
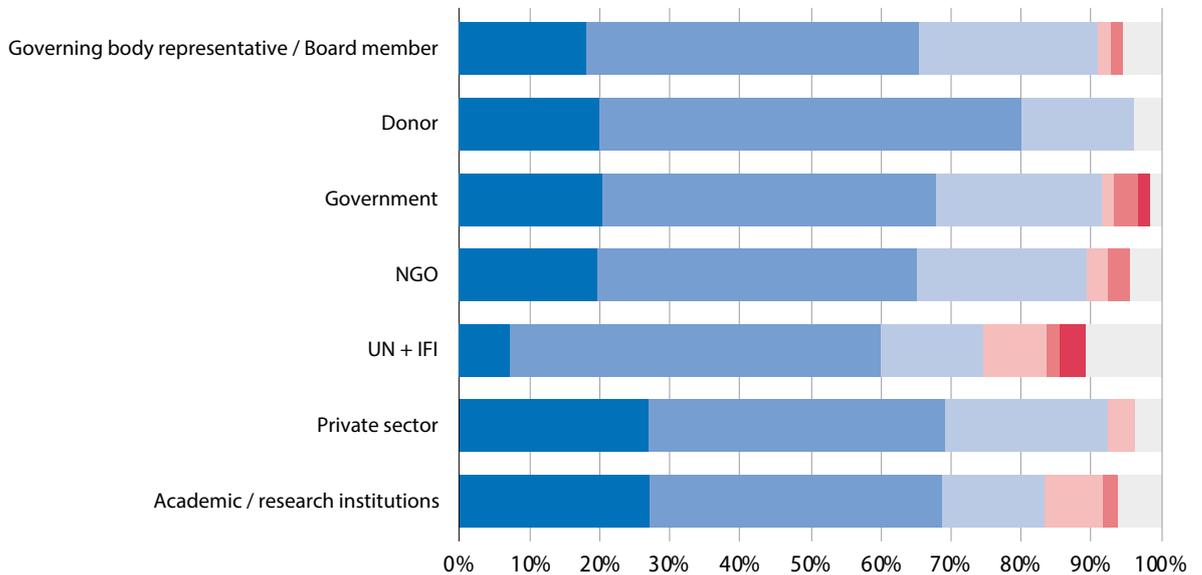
Strongly agree Agree Somewhat agree Somewhat disagree Disagree Strongly disagree Don't know / No opinion

UNEP's programme is designed and implemented to fit with national programmes and intended results
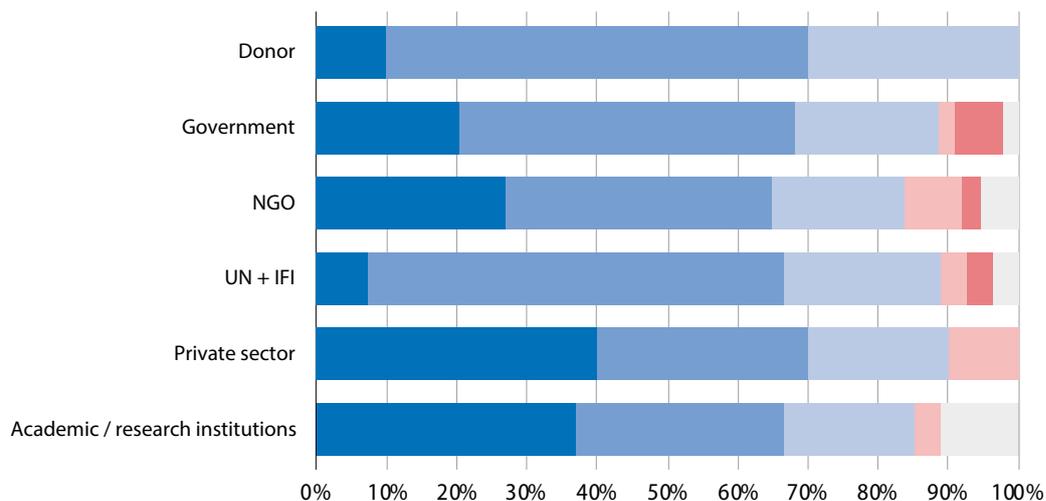
UNEP's programme is tailored to the specific situations and needs in the local context
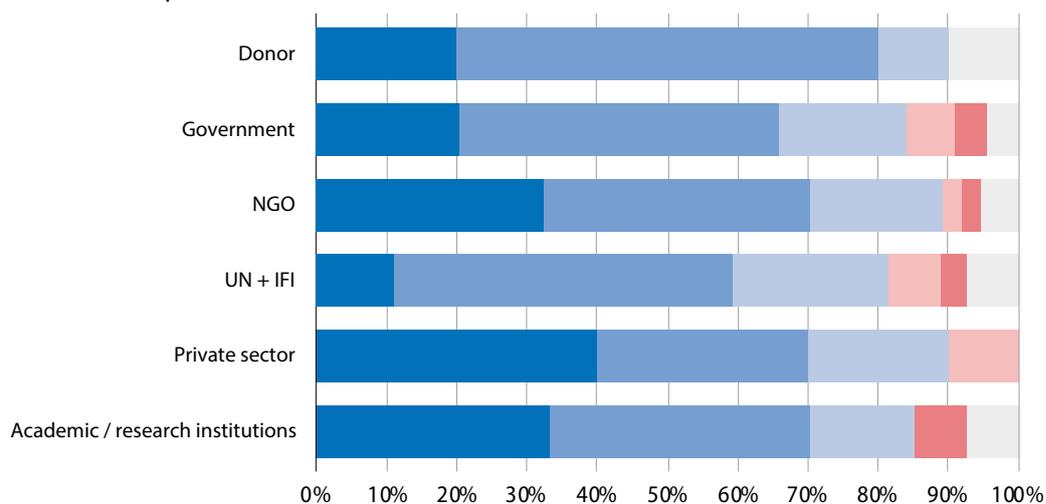

■ Strongly agree   ■ Agree   ■ Somewhat agree   ■ Somewhat disagree   ■ Disagree   ■ Strongly disagree   ■ Don't know / No opinion

UNEP's work with partners is based on a clear understanding of why it is best placed to target specific sectoral and/or thematic areas

UNEP's work takes into account national capacity, including that of government, civil society and other actors

Strongly agree   Agree   Somewhat agree   Somewhat disagree   Disagree   Strongly disagree   Don't know / No opinion
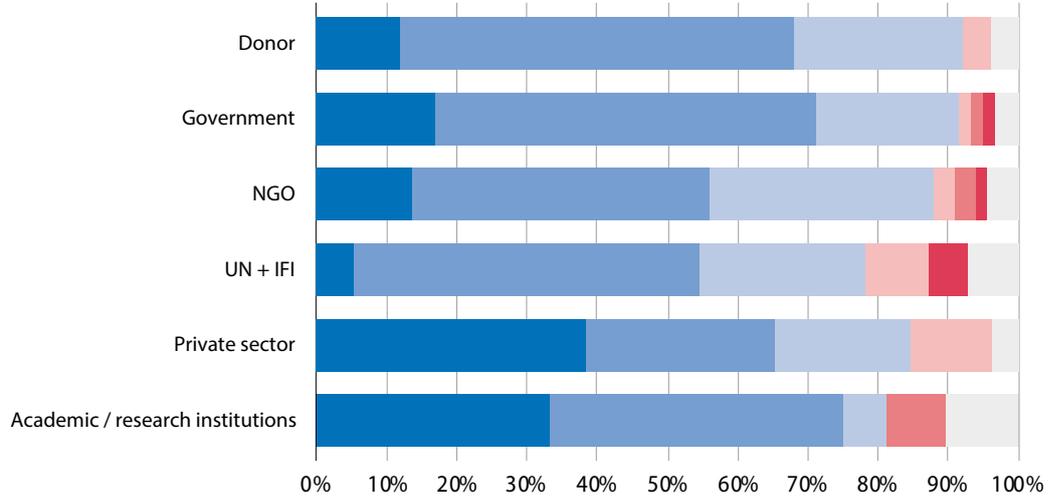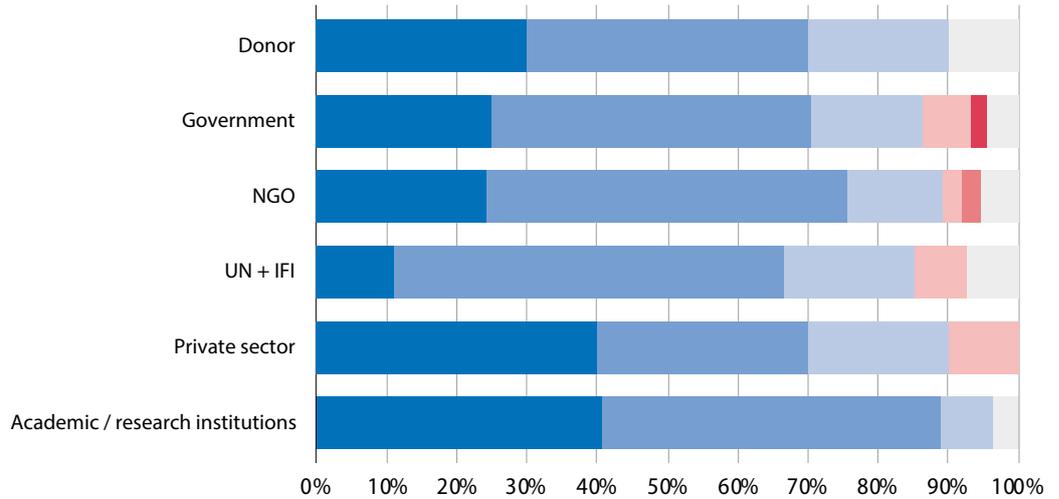
UNEP designs and implements its work so that effects and impact can be sustained over time
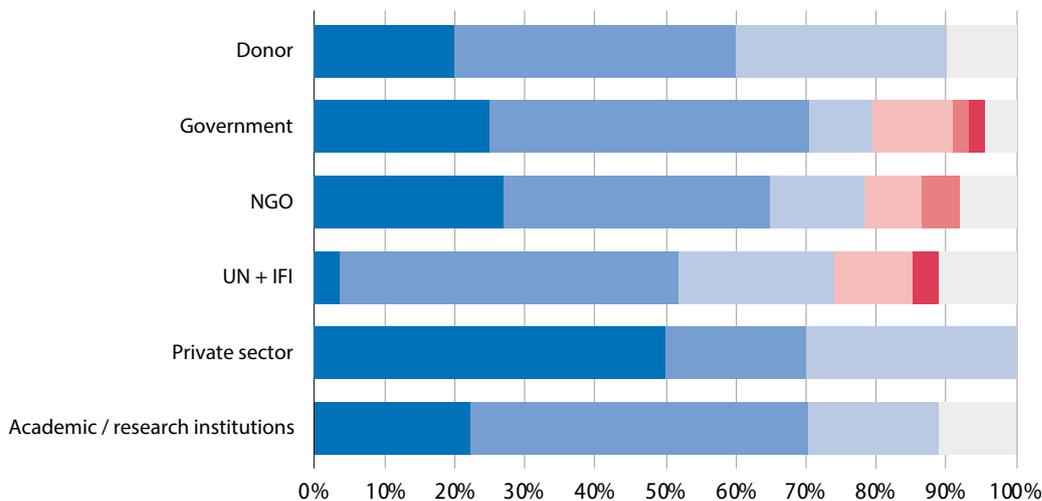
UNEP appropriately manages risk relating to its programme
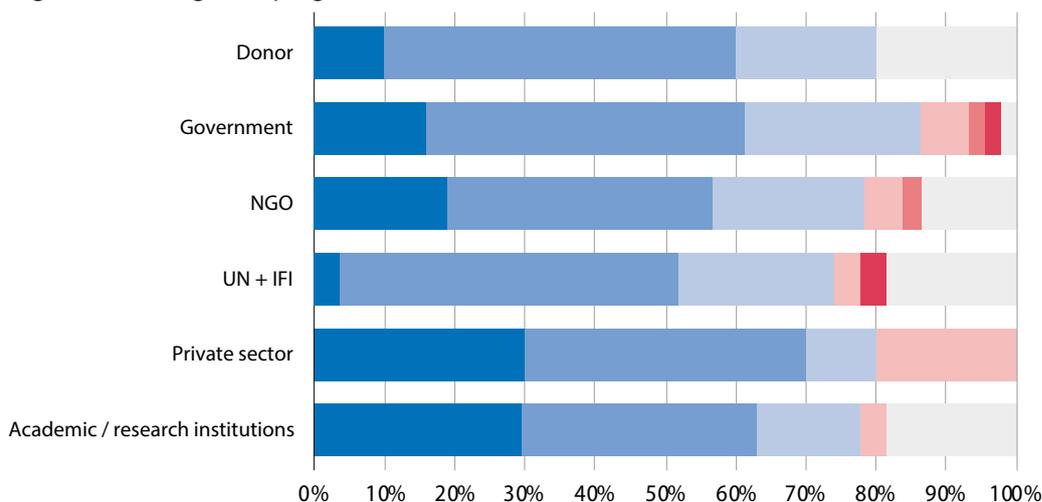
MANAGING FINANCIAL RESOURCES

UNEP openly communicates the criteria for allocating financial resources

Strongly agree   Agree   Somewhat agree   Somewhat disagree   Disagree   Strongly disagree   Don't know / No opinion
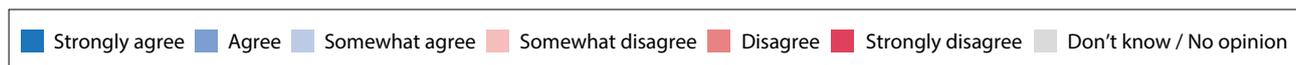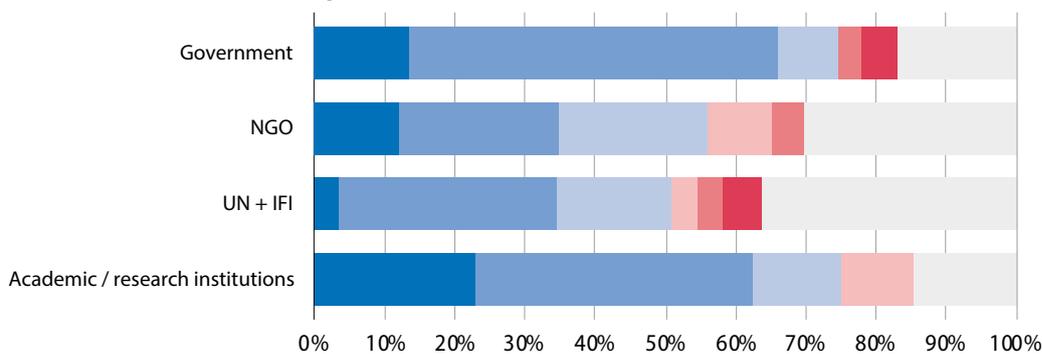
UNEP provides reliable information on when financial allocations and disbursement will happen, and the respective amounts
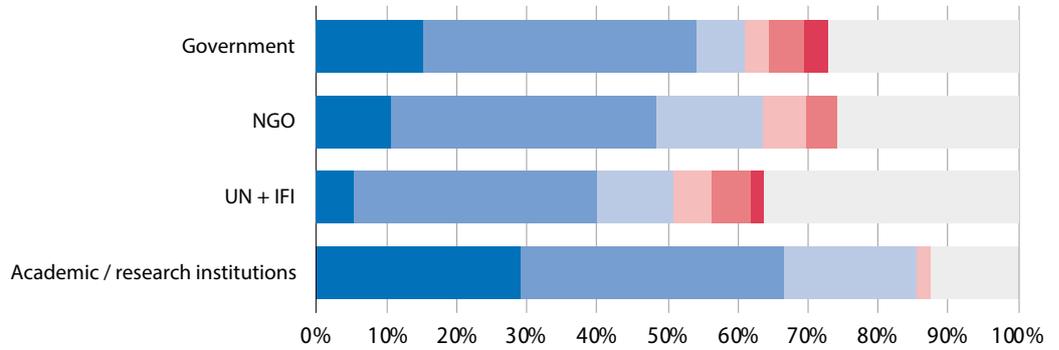
UNEP co-ordinates its financial contributions with partners to ensure coherence and avoid fragmentation / duplication

Strongly agree   Agree   Somewhat agree   Somewhat disagree   Disagree   Strongly disagree   Don't know / No opinion
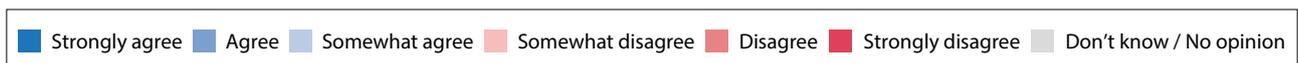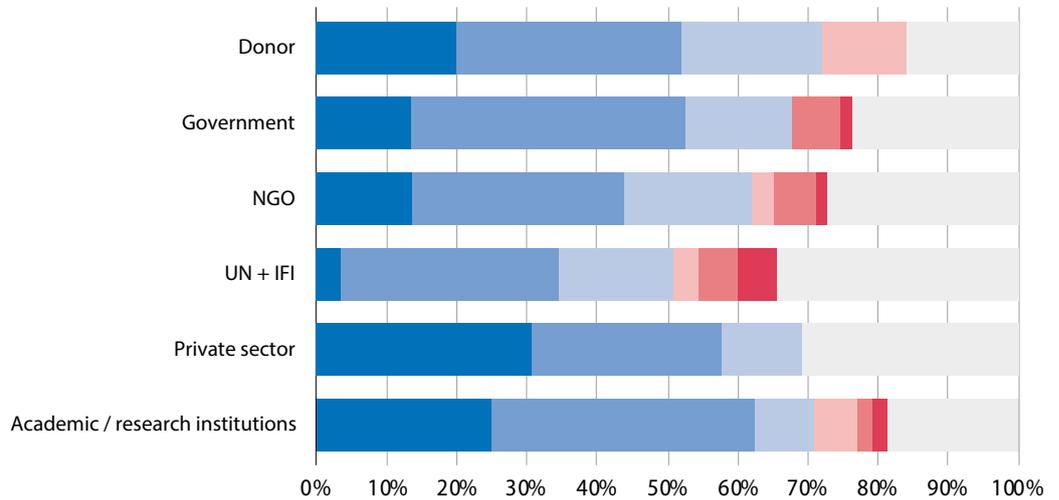
MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS

UNEP's knowledge products are useful for my work
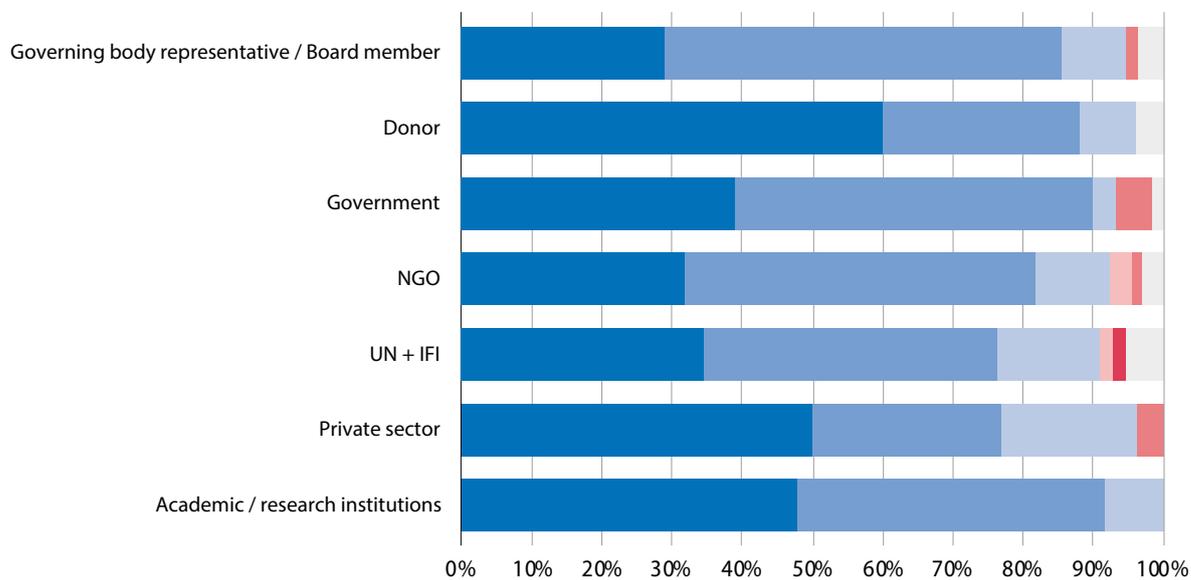
UNEP's knowledge products are provided in a format that makes them easy to use
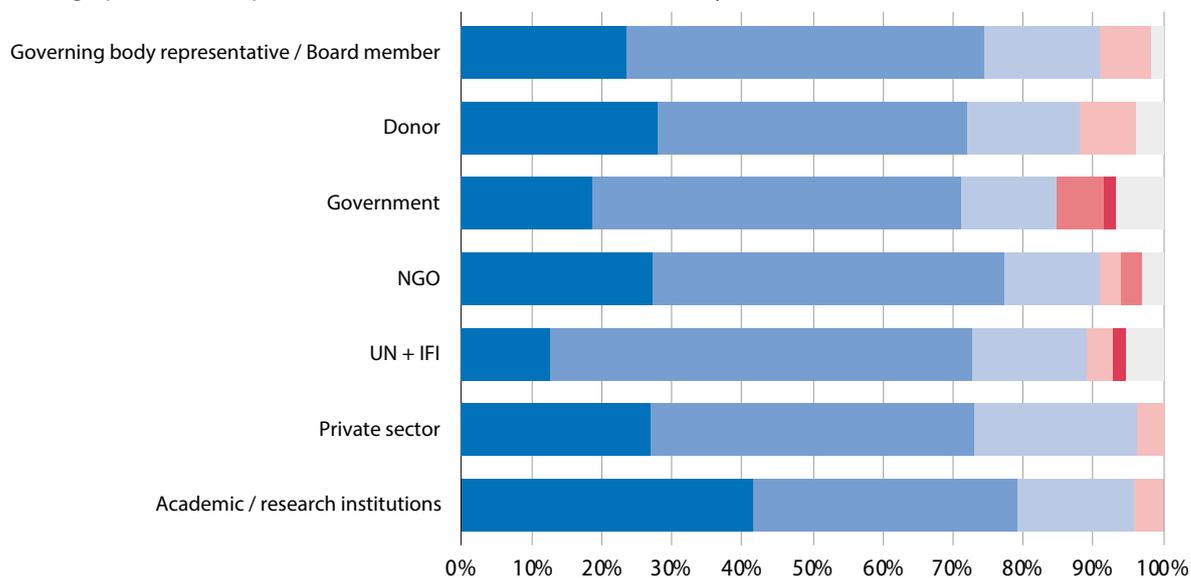
Legend: Strongly agree · Agree · Somewhat agree · Somewhat disagree · Disagree · Strongly disagree · Don't know / No opinion

UNEP's knowledge products are timely
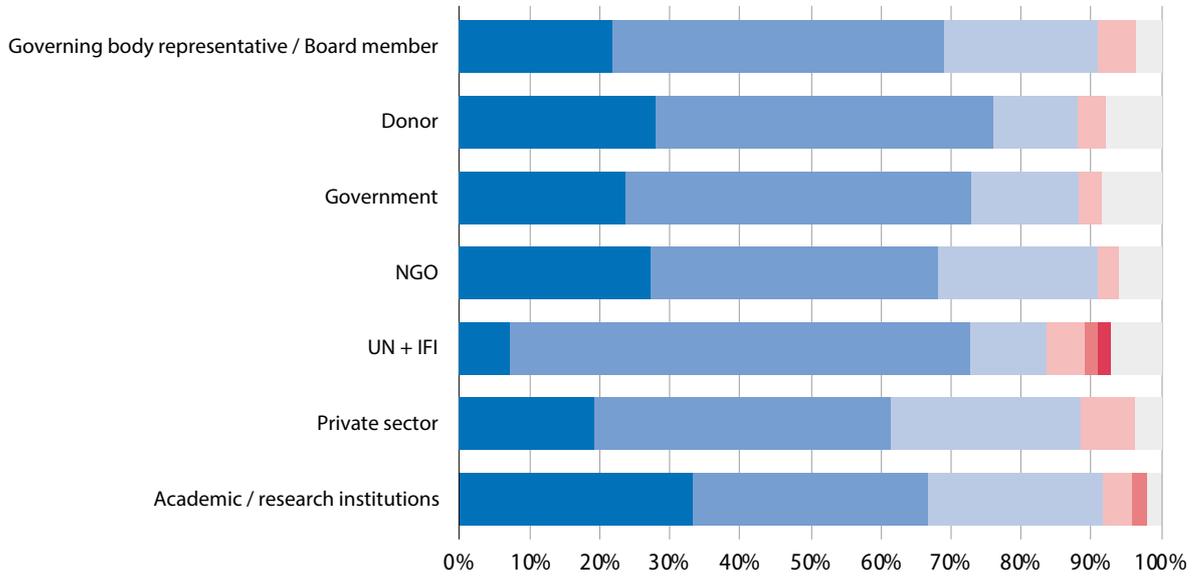

UNEP provides high-quality inputs to policy dialogue

Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know / No opinion
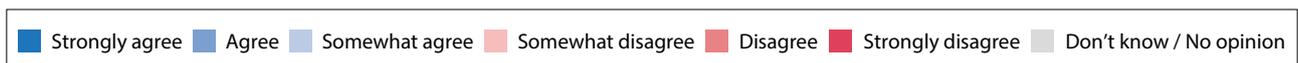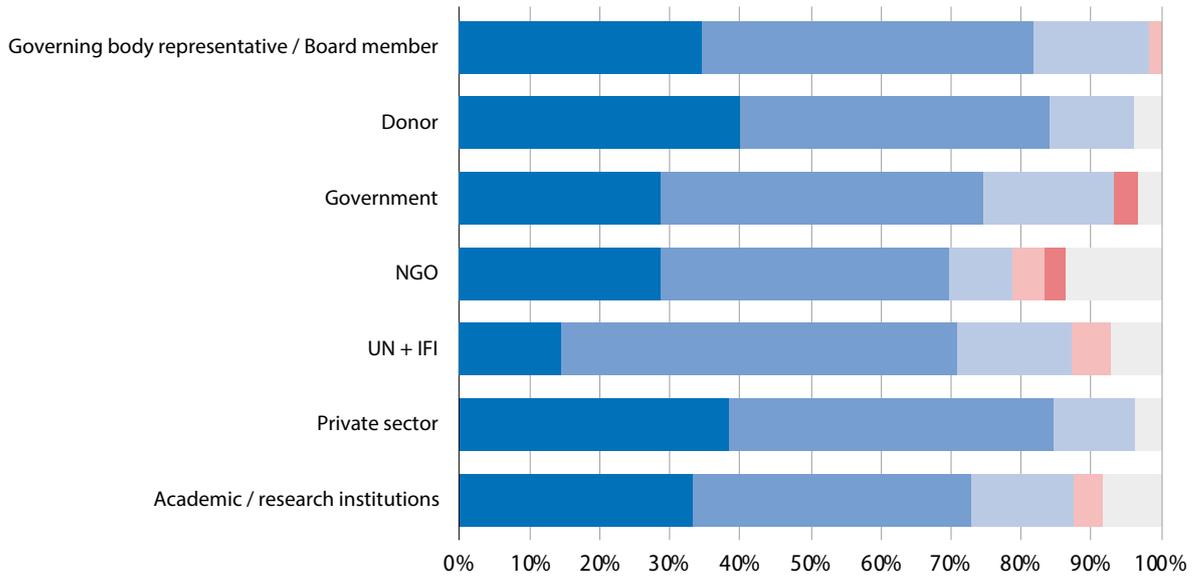
UNEP shares key information with partners on an ongoing basis
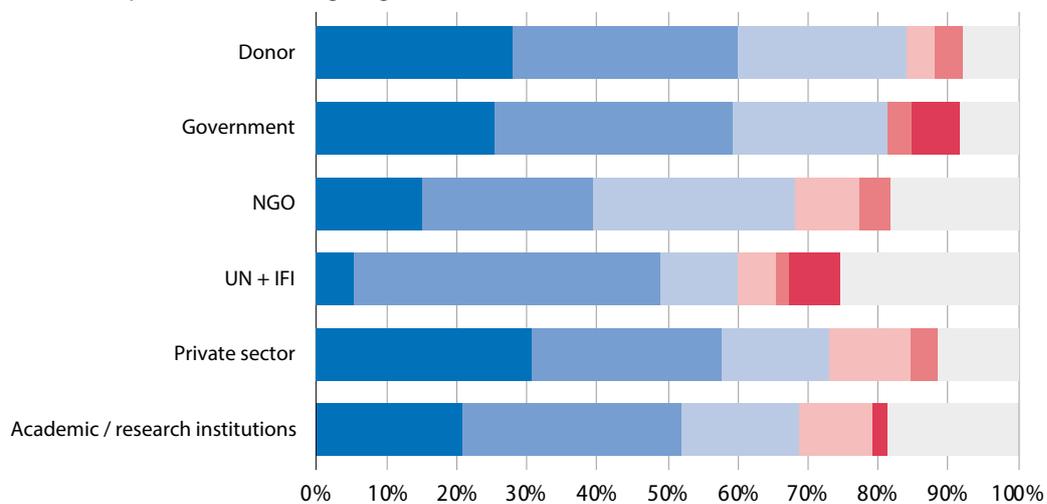
UNEP adapts to changing conditions as jointly agreed with partners
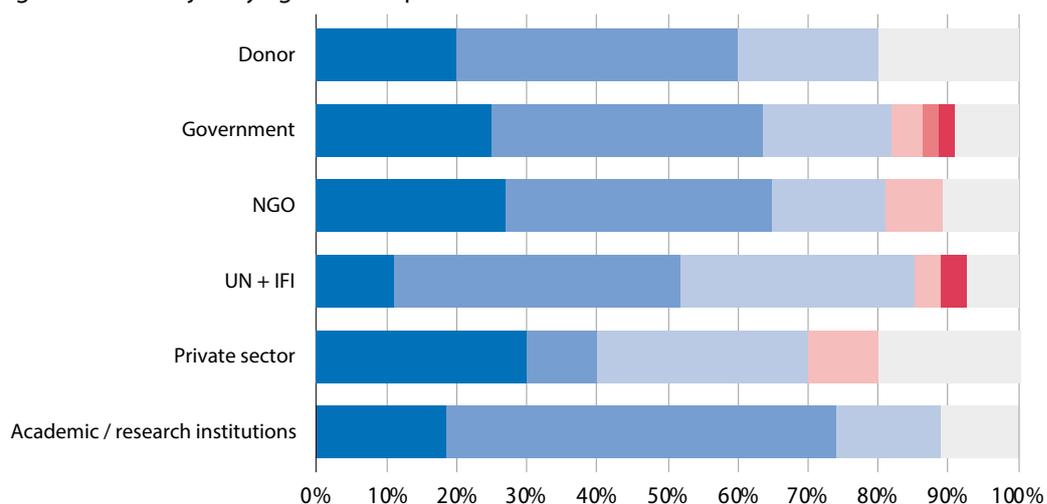
Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know / No opinion

UNEP helps develop the capacity of country systems
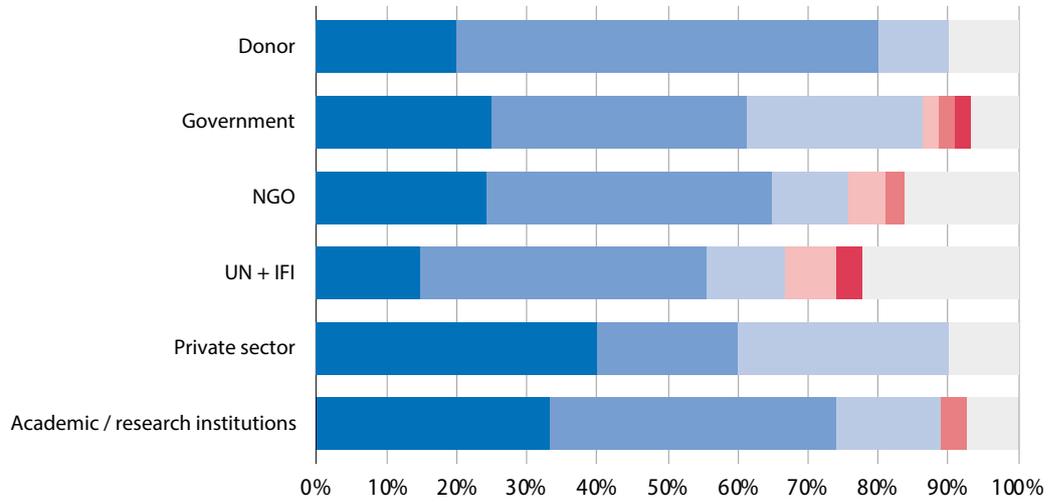
UNEP management processes do not cause unnecessary delays for partners in implementing operations

Strongly agree Agree Somewhat agree Somewhat disagree Disagree Strongly disagree Don't know / No opinion
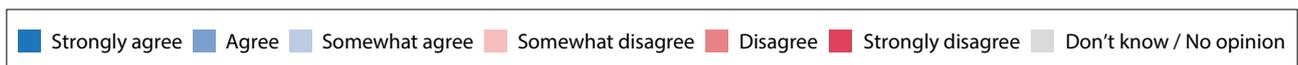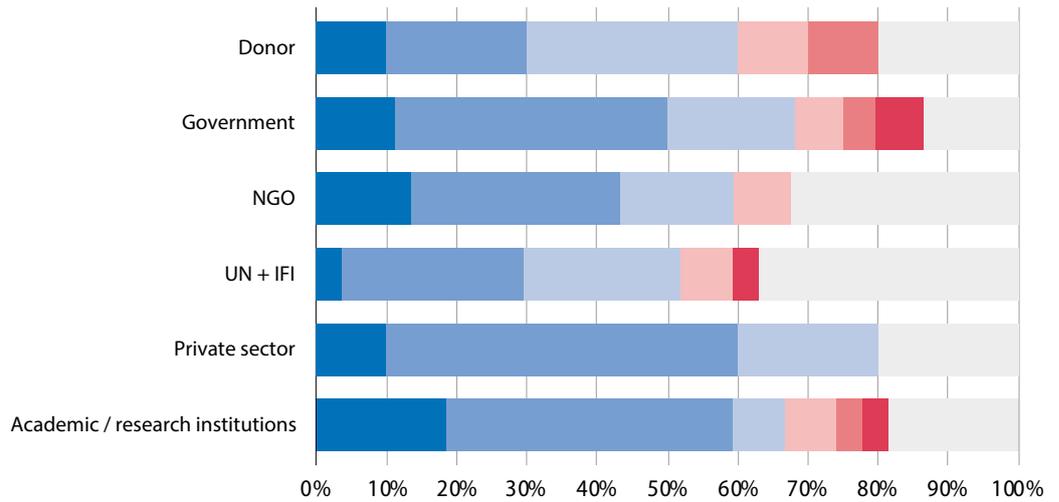
UNEP supports countries to build development partnerships
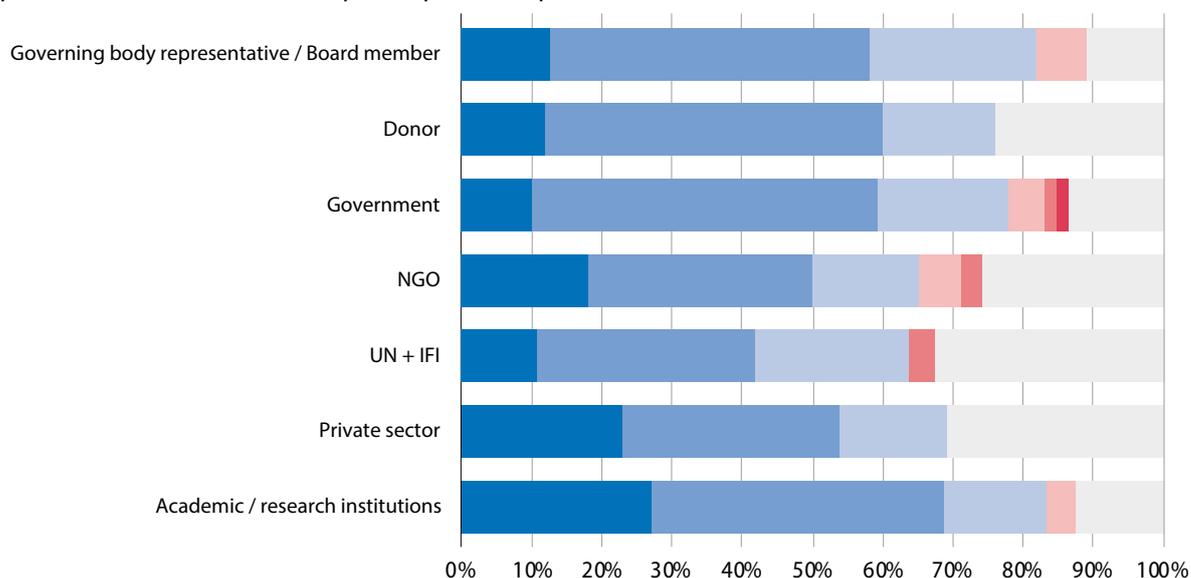
UNEP is actively engaged, appropriate to its role, in inter-agency co-ordination mechanisms
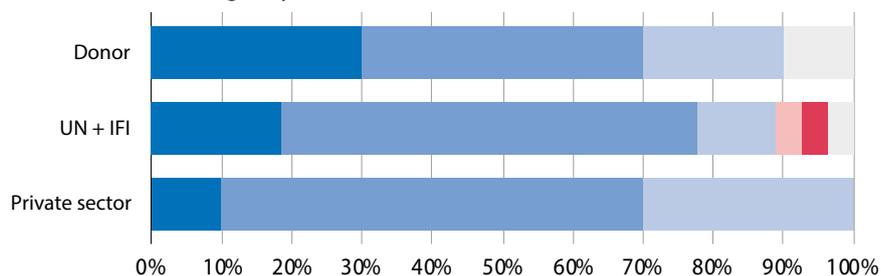
UNEP jointly monitors progress on shared goals with local and regional partners
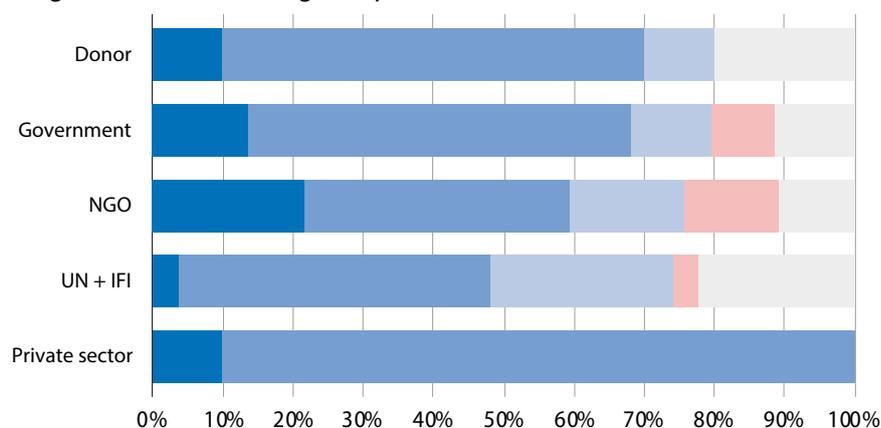
Strongly agree   Agree   Somewhat agree   Somewhat disagree   Disagree   Strongly disagree   Don't know / No opinion

UNEP requires its partners to apply clear standards for preventing and responding to sexual misconduct in relation to host populations
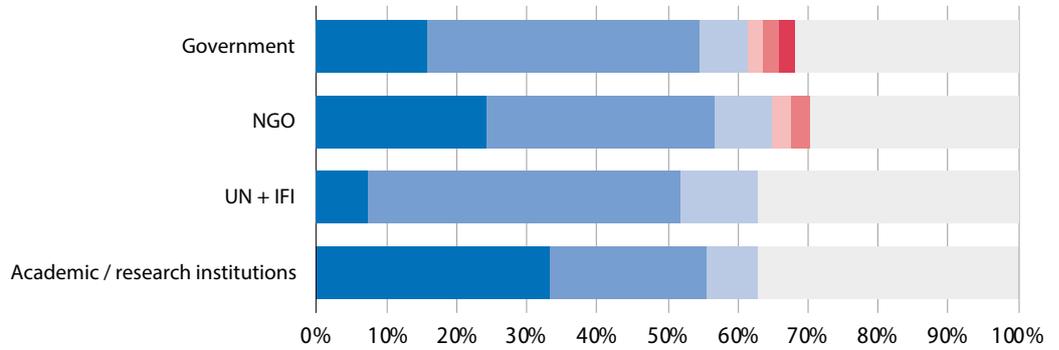
PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

UNEP prioritises a results-based approach
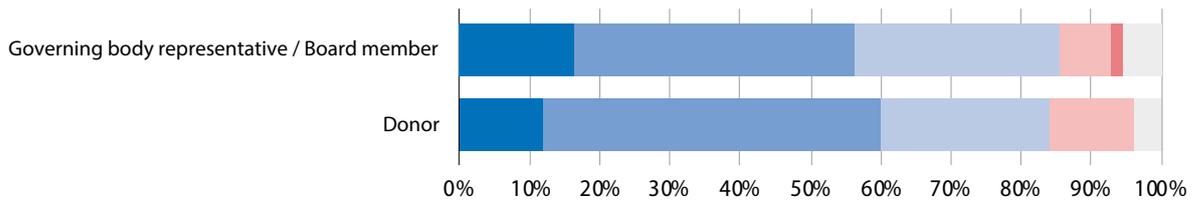
UNEP consults with stakeholders on the setting of results targets at a country level

Strongly agree · Agree · Somewhat agree · Somewhat disagree · Disagree · Strongly disagree · Don't know / No opinion
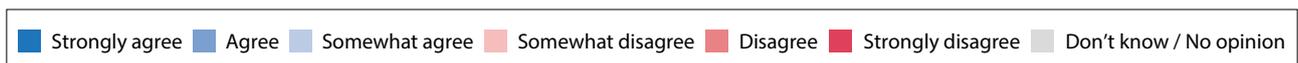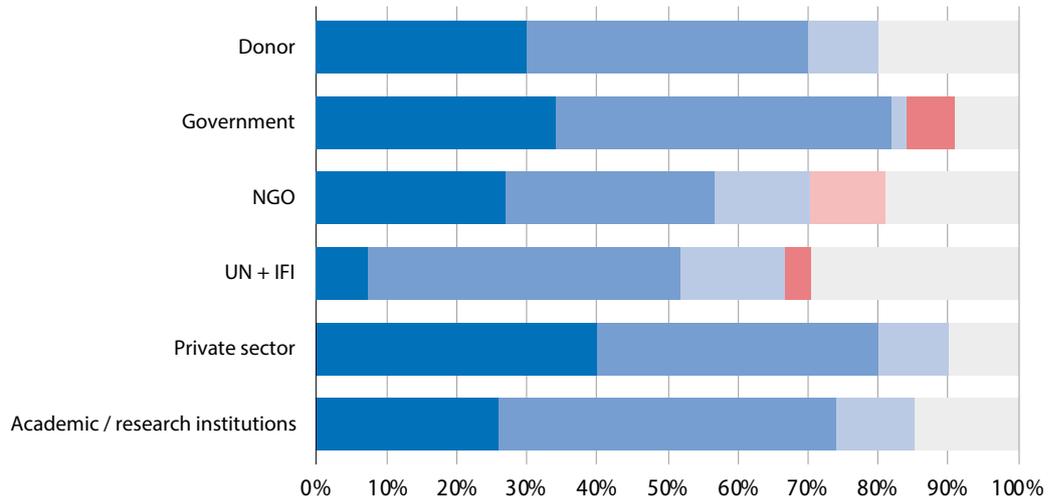
## UNEP consistently identifies which interventions are under-performing
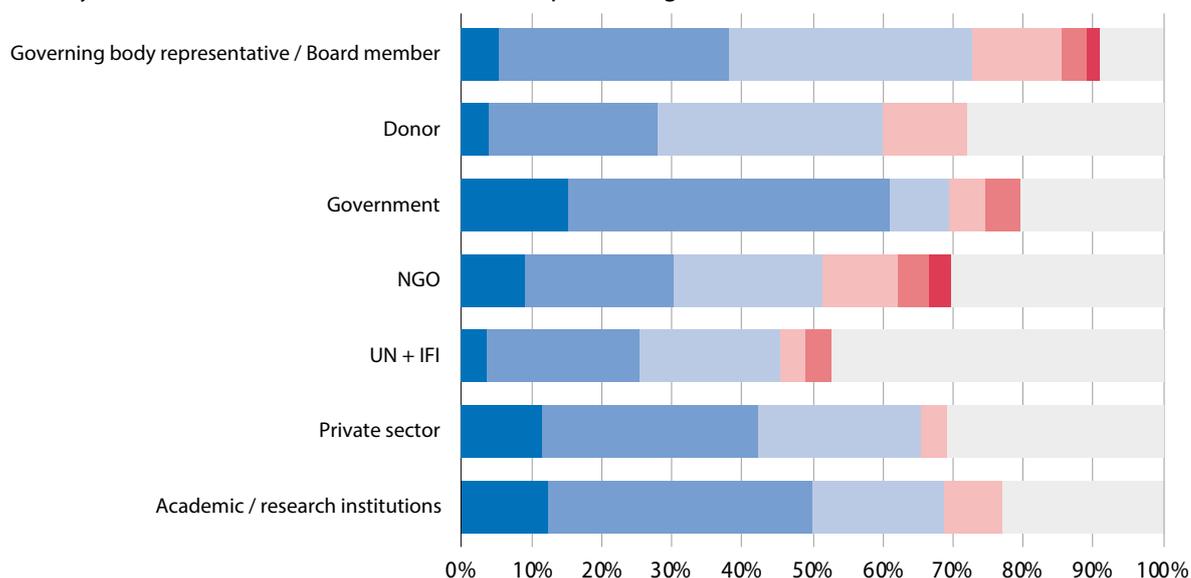
## UNEP addresses any areas of intervention under-performance
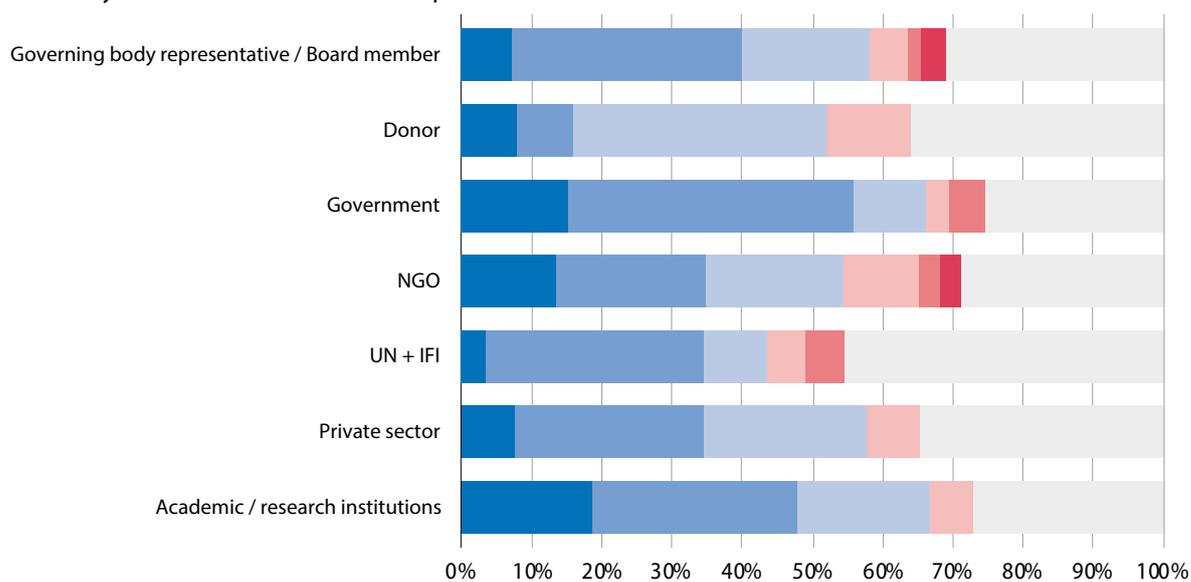
| Strongly agree | Agree | Somewhat agree | Somewhat disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know / No opinion |

UNEP participates in joint / inter-agency efforts to prevent, investigate and report on any sexual misconduct by personnel in relation to the host population (SEA)
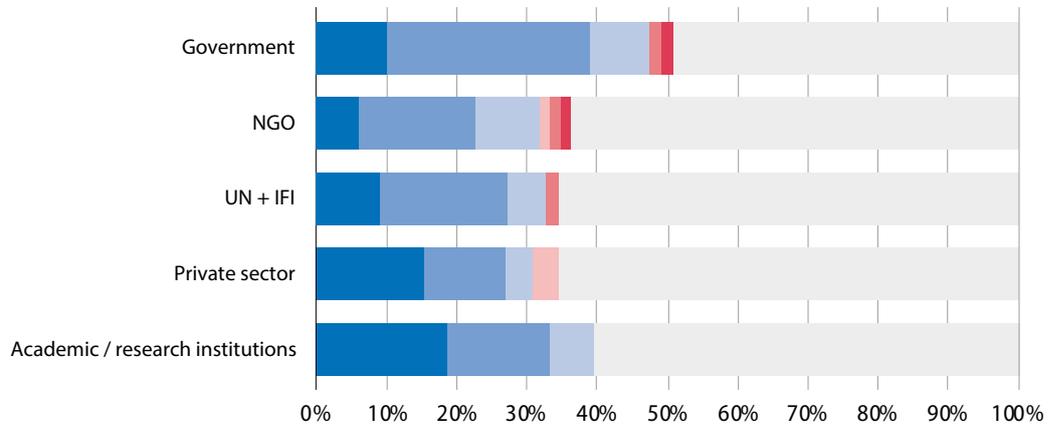
Where interventions are required to be evaluated, UNEP follows through to ensure evaluations are carried out

Legend: Strongly agree | Agree | Somewhat agree | Somewhat disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know / No opinion
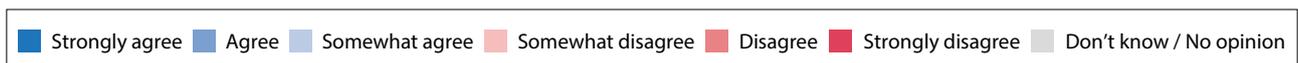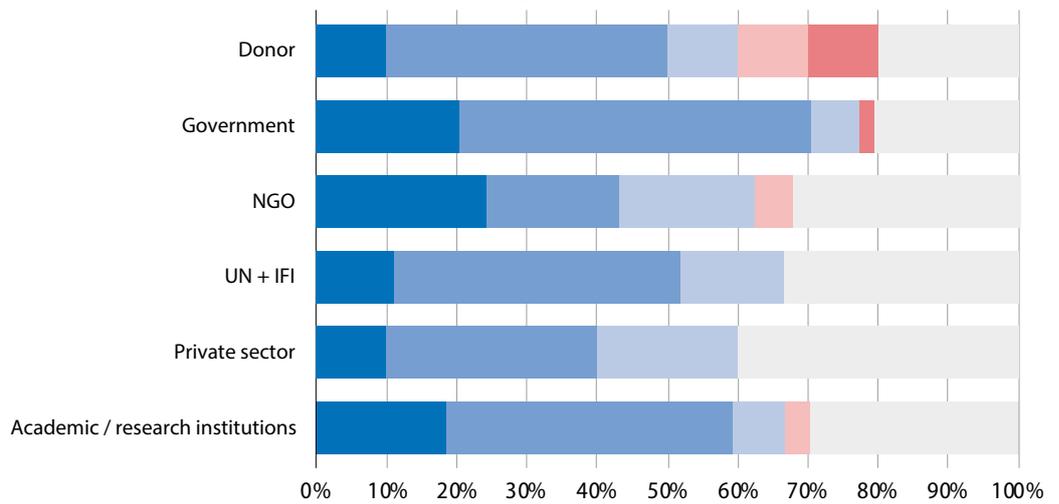
UNEP participates in joint evaluations at the country / regional level
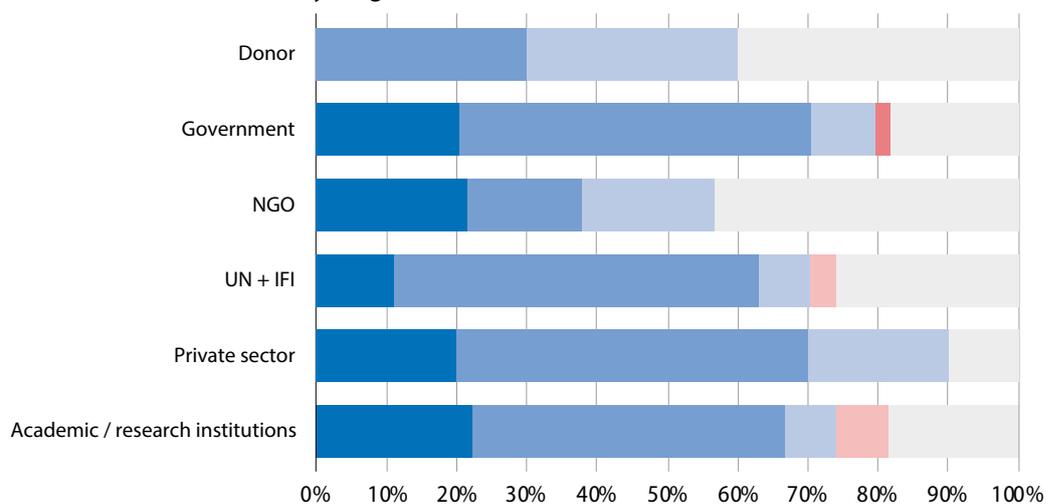
UNEP learns lessons from previous experience, rather than repeating the same mistakes

Strongly agree   Agree   Somewhat agree   Somewhat disagree   Disagree   Strongly disagree   Don't know / No opinion