

CHEMICALS  
AND WASTE  
MANAGEMENT  
PROGRAMME



# Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Strategy and Action Plan

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# CHEMICALS AND WASTE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME



## **About United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**

UNEP is the leading global voice on the environment. It provides leadership and encourages partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations.

## **About the Special Programme**

The Special Programme (also known as the Chemicals and Waste Management Programme) aims to support eligible countries in strengthening their institutions. This enables them to soundly manage their chemicals and waste, and to meet their international obligations—through the development and implementation of policies, legislation, and regulation at the national level.

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# Glossary<sup>1</sup>

## **Activity**

An action taken, or work performed, through which inputs are utilized to realise specific results.

## **Adaptive Management<sup>2</sup>**

A systematic process for continually improving management policies and practices by learning from the outcomes of previously employed policies and practices

## **Assumptions**

Significant external factors or conditions that need to be present for the realization of intended results but are beyond the influence of the project and its partners. Assumptions are often positively formulated risks. (See also Drivers).

## **Baseline<sup>3</sup>**

The status of the indicator at the beginning of a programme or project that acts as a reference point against which progress or achievements can be assessed.

## **Drivers**

Drivers are the significant external factors that, if present, are expected to contribute to the realization of the intended results. Drivers can be influenced by the project and its partners.

## **Evaluation**

The systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, programme, strategy or policy, its design, implementation, results and likelihood of impact.

## **Goals**

The higher-order objectives or results to which a Programme or project is intended to contribute.

## **Impact**

Long-lasting results arising, directly or indirectly from a project. Impacts are intended and positive changes and must relate to UNEP's mandate.

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1 Unless otherwise indicated, the definitions are based on the Glossary of Results Definitions Relevant for Harmonized Results Based Approach in UN Environment (July 2019) – itself compiled from different sources including UNEP's own practice (RBM training material, Programme Manual and Evaluation Unit glossary) as well as from UNDG, UNDP and OECD.

2 [greenfacts.org/glossary/abc/adaptive-management.htm](https://greenfacts.org/glossary/abc/adaptive-management.htm)

3 UNDG RBM Handbook (2012)

**Indicator**

A quantitative or qualitative measure that provides a simple and reliable means to assess results. Attributes of good indicators is that they conform to the CREAM<sup>4</sup> principles. Indicators are used to track progress towards project targets, which should conform to the 'SMART'<sup>5</sup> principles.

**Inputs**

The financial, human and material, resources used for project implementation

**Lessons Learned**

The new knowledge or understanding gained by the experience of implementing a project that is applicable to, and useful in, other similar contexts.

**Logical Framework**

A Logical Framework (Logframe) is a tool for summarizing the project's intended results. It specifies project results, indicators and their baseline and target values. It also includes a milestone schedule to deliver the expected output(s) and/or achieve intended result(s).

**Monitoring**

A continuing function that uses the systematic collection of data on project / programme parameters (e.g. expenditure, risk, milestone delivery, inclusive participation etc.) to provide management with indications of the extent of progress against plans and targets.

**Outcome**

Outcomes are the use (i.e., uptake, adoption, application) of an output by intended beneficiaries, observed as changes in institutions or behavior, attitude or condition.

**Outputs**

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

**Qualitative Indicator**

Verifiable indicators that use categories that can be ranked or compared to assess changes such as judgments, opinion, perceptions or attitude. This can include statements that are answered with yes or no.

**Quantitative Indicator**

Verifiable indicators that can be measured numerically e.g. numbers, percentage, rate and ratio.

**Results**

Results are intended changes in a state or condition that derive from a cause-and-effect relationship. Such changes must be describable and measurable/discernible. A results statement and its indicators should be collectively SMART<sup>4</sup> or CREAM<sup>5</sup> principles. Outputs, outcomes and impact are considered 'results' (as opposed to inputs and activities).

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4 CREAM refers to indicators that are Clear, Relevant, Economic, Adequate, Monitorable

5 SMART refers to targets that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-Bound

## **Results Based Management (RBM)**

RBM is a management strategy by which all actors, contributing directly or indirectly to achieving a set of results, ensure that their processes, products and services contribute to the achievement of desired results (outputs, outcomes and higher-level goals or impact). The actors use information and evidence on actual results to inform decision making on the design, resourcing and delivery of programmes and activities as well as for accountability and reporting

## **Results Matrix<sup>6</sup>**

A type of logic model that is tailored to monitoring progression toward the targets of the project results (outputs and outcomes)

## **Risks**

Significant factors or conditions that may negatively affect a project.

## **Targets<sup>7</sup>**

Specifies a particular value that an indicator should reach by a specific date in the future. For example, “total literacy rate to reach 85 percent among groups X and Y by the year 2010.”

## **Theory of Change**

Method for planning, participation and evaluation. It defines long term intended impact and then maps backward to identify necessary preconditions. It is a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a context. A Theory of Change also allows for unintended positive and/or negative effects to be depicted.

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6 Definition derived from expert forum

7 UNDG RBM Handbook (2012)



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# Context

## 1.1 Background to the Special Programme

The Special Programme was established<sup>8</sup> in 2015 to support strengthening the management of chemicals and waste by building institutional capacity at the national level to enhance the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM). It represents part of the sub-programme 5 on chemicals and wastes in the Programme of Work of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), in particular Project 515.2: 'Special Programme to support institutional strengthening at the national level to enhance the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)'. The Special Programme is managed by a Secretariat established within the UN Environment Programme's Economy Division (Chemicals and Health Branch), and is supported by a Trust Fund to which several donors contribute.

### **Overall Objective (Impact)**

Chemicals and waste are soundly managed throughout their lifecycle, and their adverse impacts on human health and the environment are minimized.<sup>9</sup>

### **Specific Objective (Outcome)<sup>10</sup>**

Governments of developing countries and countries with economies in transition are taking affirmative action to implement the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention and SAICM implementation plans.

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8 The Terms of Reference for the Special Programme, set out in the annex to the UNEA resolution I/5, describe the objective as being: "to support country-driven institutional strengthening at the national level, in the context of an integrated approach to address the financing of the sound management of chemicals and wastes, taking into account the national development strategies, plans and priorities of each country, to increase sustainable public institutional capacity for the sound management of chemicals and wastes throughout their lifecycle. Institutional strengthening under the Special Programme will; to facilitate and enable the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management".

9 This is the proposed revision to the impact statement, which is subject to approval by UNEP. It has been revised to better reflect Sustainable Development Goal 12.4. The original impact statement adopted for the Special Programme was 'Negative effects on human health and the environment are decreased, and the positive effect of chemicals and wastes on economies is increased.'

10 As defined in the Special Programme's logical framework (logframe) under UNEP project number 515.2.

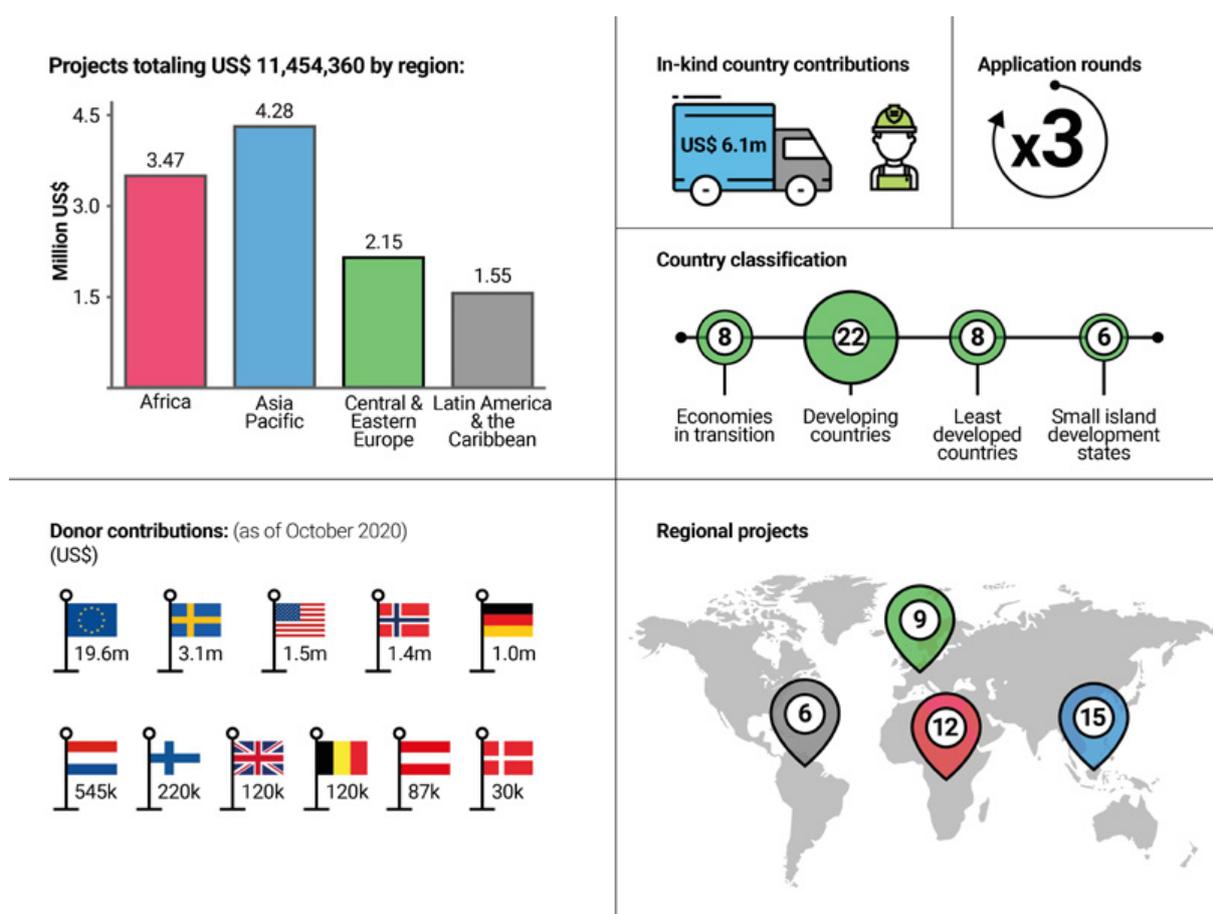
## Outputs<sup>11</sup>

1. Special Programme Trust Fund managed, and Secretariat services provided to the Special Programme Executive Board;
2. Project applications developed and projects approved and managed in line with the Terms of Reference of the Special Programme and guidance by the Special Programme Executive Board;
3. Communication products and services developed and disseminated to influence key stakeholders and inform country beneficiaries;
4. Monitoring system established to track Programme and Project progress toward Outcomes, and sustainability of project outcome beyond project end.

## Progress to date

The Special Programme commenced implementation in 2015, and since that time three rounds of applications and grant awards<sup>12</sup> have been completed. At June 2020, over 40 project applications have been approved, some 27 projects are in active implementation, and it is projected that, by 2022, a total of projected 99 projects (an additional 50+ projects) will have benefitted from the Special Programme Trust Fund. Figure 1 summarises key information on the implementation of the Special Programme.

**Figure 1: Overview of the Special Programme**



11 Proposed revised outputs, subject to approval by UNEP.

12 As at the date of this document.

## 1.2 Special Programme Elements

The Special Programme Theory of Change and the Logical Framework, originally adopted in April 2016, have both been revised to respond to recommendations made by the Mid Term Evaluation of the Special Programme, conducted by UNEP's Evaluation Office, and the Results Oriented Monitoring mission undertaken under the auspices of the European Union. The Theory of Change and the Logical Framework provide vital information for the development of the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Strategy and Action Plan.

### **Special Programme Theory of Change**

The **Theory of Change** provides an overview of the strategic direction of the programme by linking Outcomes and Activities to explain **How and Why** the desired change is expected to come about. The arrows indicate the **causal pathways**, the critical linkages between activities and outcomes.

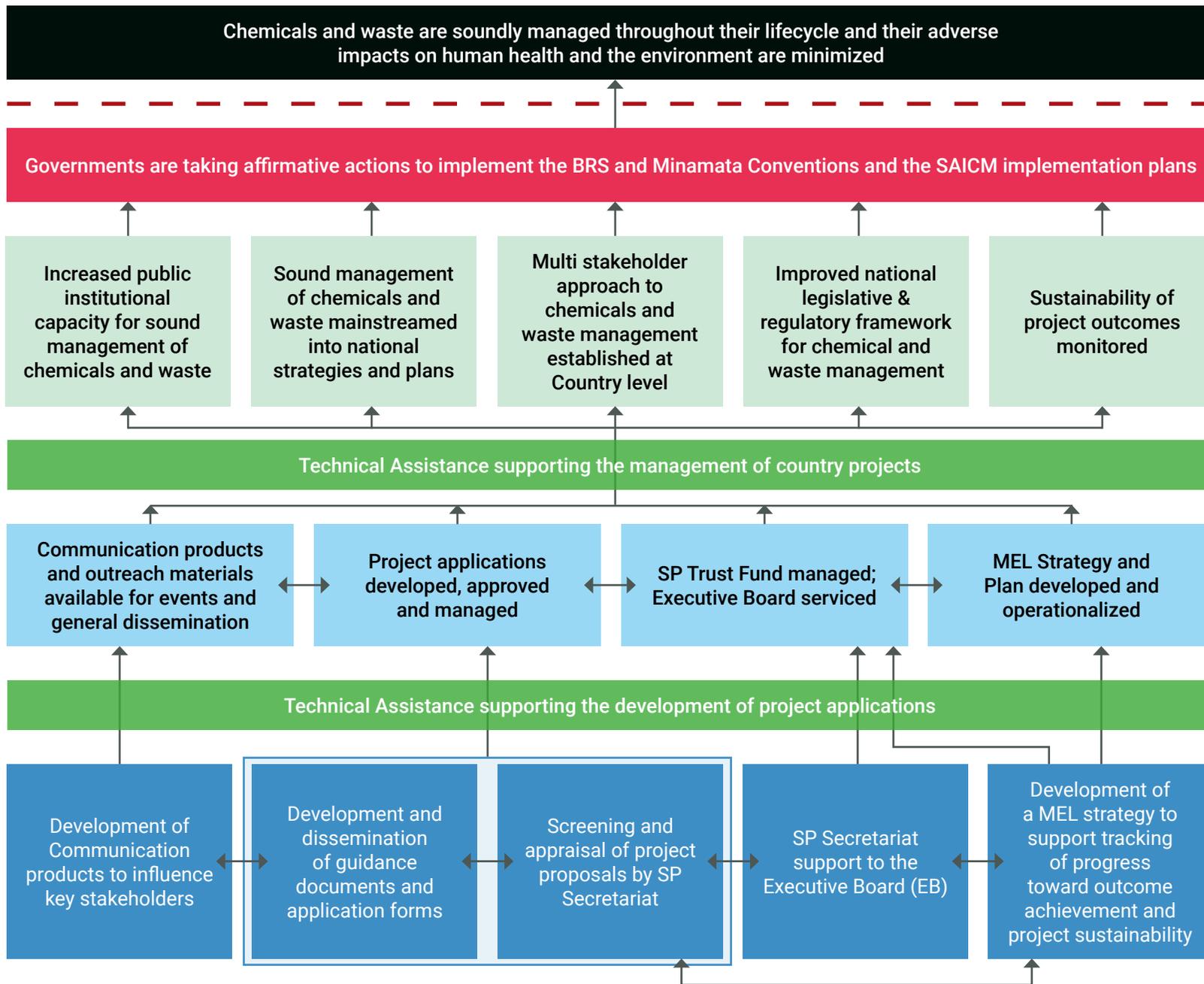
Monitoring and evaluation of the Programme will need to test these pathways to confirm whether and to what extent they hold true. This provides opportunities for learning, decision making, and adaptive management.

Updating a Theory of Change should be participatory with inputs coming from the various stakeholder groups (in this case, the Secretariat, Executive Board, Internal Task Team and some country level management). It can be changed based on new learning and understanding about how outcomes are actually being achieved.

**Figure 2: Theory of change for the Special Programme**<sup>13</sup> - following page

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<sup>13</sup> As at 16 November 2020. Subject to final approval by UNEP



**Legend**



**Assumptions**

**Outcome level**

Political and economic stability in applicant countries.  
 Government priorities to address chemicals and waste management remain high.  
 Adequate fiscal space exists within governments to support relevant implementing units and activities.

**Output level**

Countries willing and able to document best practices, lessons learned.

**Activity/input level**

Countries interested in accessing support to strengthen their institutional capacities.  
 Countries able to access and prepare applications of sufficient quality to attract funding.  
 Secretariat staff is adequate in quality and quantity to fulfil technical, administrative & management functions.

The Theory hypothesizes that:

**If** countries interested in accessing support to strengthen their institutional capacities for chemical and waste management are able, with the support and technical assistance from the Secretariat, to prepare quality Project Applications, **then** they can be provided funds from the Special Programme trust fund and support from the Secretariat to implement, monitor and evaluate projects that will increase their institutional capacity through: increased public institutional capacity for the sound management of chemicals and waste; the mainstreaming of chemicals and waste management into national strategies and plans; taking multi-stakeholder approaches to manage chemicals and waste; the improvement of legislative and regulatory frameworks for chemical and waste management; and with sustainability ensured.

And, **if** there is political and economic stability, government priorities for chemical and waste management remain high, and there is fiscal space to support the national activities and project implementing units, **then** governments will implement the Conventions and SAICM and this will contribute to the sound management of chemicals and waste throughout their lifecycle, and the minimization of their adverse impacts on human health and the environment.

### **Special Programme Logical Framework**

The Logical Framework (Table 1) provides more detailed information on the Programme Inputs, Outputs and Outcomes, as well as Indicators, Baselines, and Targets against which progress can be measured.

**Table 1: Logical Framework of the Special Programme<sup>14</sup>**

Intervention logic	Indicators	Baseline	Target (2025)	Means of verification	Assumptions/risks
<b>Programme Outcome</b>					
1. Governments from developing countries and countries with economies in transition are taking affirmative action to implement the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention and SAICM implementation plans	Core Indicator 1 Number of countries reporting strengthened government capacity and multi-stakeholder coordination mechanism to support development and implementation of National Strategies for chemicals management	0	99	Country Project reports	Political and economic stability in applicant countries  Government priorities regarding action to address management of chemicals and waste remain high
	Core indicator 2: Number of countries reporting improved level of integration of chemicals and/or waste management into national and sector planning	0	99	Country Project reports	
	1.1 Number of countries that have ratified or are in the process of ratifying the Basel, Rotterdam or Stockholm conventions, or the Minamata Convention with the support of the Special Programme	0	20	Reports of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, and the Minamata Convention	
	1.2 Number of countries reporting the adoption of policies and regulatory frameworks for management of chemicals and waste with the support of the Special Programme	0	50	Country project reports	
	1.3 Number of countries in compliance with their reporting obligations under the MEAs to which they are a party and/or submitting voluntary reports to SAICM.	0	40	Country Project reports	

<sup>14</sup> As at 16 November 2020. Subject to final approval by UNEP

Intervention logic	Indicators	Baseline	Target (2025)	Means of verification	Assumptions/risks
<b>Project Outputs</b>					
1. Special Programme Trust Fund managed and secretariat services delivered to the Special Programme Executive Board	1.1 Number of Executive Board meetings held (including teleconferences)	2	17	Executive Board meeting reports	Countries are interested in accessing support to strengthen their institutional capacities
	1.2 Attendance of Board members at each Executive Board meeting	88%	100%	Executive Board meeting reports	Countries are able to access and prepare applications of sufficient quality to attract funding
	1.3. Number of applications screened, reviewed and appraised by the secretariat for funding by the Special Programme Trust Fund	54	240	Secretariat internal reports	Revised versions of the application guidelines and applications forms will be available on the Special Programme website and circulated to relevant stakeholders
	1.4: Number of new or updated guidance documents and application forms prepared to support development of project applications (including gender consideration) to address the sound management of chemicals and waste	4	26	Secretariat internal reports	Political and economic stability in applicant countries

Intervention logic	Indicators	Baseline	Target (2025)	Means of verification	Assumptions/risks
2. Project applications developed, and projects approved and managed in line with the Terms of Reference of the Special Programme and guidance by the Special Programme Executive Board	2.1. Number of application cycles for the Special Programme	0	6	Published notices of Calls for Applications	Staffing at the Secretariat is adequate in quality and quantity to fulfil the technical support functions  Countries are interested in accessing support to strengthen their institutional capacities  Countries are able to access and prepare applications of sufficient quality to attract funding applicant countries  Political and economic stability in applicant countries
	2.2. Number of target countries that have accessed technical support including guidance documents and application forms and e-learning prepared to support development of projects per round of funding.	0	100	Requests for support to complete applications; Report of the Executive Board meeting; Secretariat reports	
	2.3. Number of legal agreements signed with recipient countries within 12 months of project approval	0	120	Signed legal agreements	
	2.4. Number of projects completed and successfully closed	0	100	Reports of the Executive Board meeting	
	2.5. Funds approved for projects (as a percentage of total funds allocated to the Special Programme Trust fund)	0	70%	Financial summary of funds approved and funds disbursed to projects	
	2.6. Funds disbursed for project implementation as a percentage of funds approved	0	90%	Financial summary of funds approved and funds disbursed to projects	
	2.7. Number of countries taking affirmative action towards integrating gender into their institutional strengthening processes	0	24	Country project reports	

Intervention logic	Indicators	Baseline	Target (2025)	Means of verification	Assumptions/risks
3. Communication products and services developed & disseminated to influence key stakeholders and inform country beneficiaries	3.1 Number of communications tools provided by the Special Programme Secretariat to support the sound management of chemicals and waste	0	25	Communication materials	Countries are willing and able to document best practices, lessons learned  Relevant country representatives are able to participate in communication events, whether in person or online
	3.2 Number of unique downloads of communications tools provided by the Special Programme Secretariat per round of funding to support the sound management of chemicals and waste	0	500	Internal Special Programme records	
	3.3. Number of targeted communication and outreach events undertaken	0	22	Report on events held	
	3.4. Number of case studies developed highlighting significant experiences (positive and negative), lessons learned and best practices in the course of project implementation (Country and Programme level)	0	100	Summary of Best Practices available on Special Programme Platform  Case Studies available on Special Programme Platform	

Intervention logic	Indicators	Baseline	Target (2025)	Means of verification	Assumptions/risks
4. Monitoring system established to track Programme and Project progress toward Outcomes, and sustainability of project outcomes beyond project end	4.1 Status of development of Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) strategy and Action Plan	No strategy and plan in place	Strategy and Plan developed and endorsed by the Executive board by Dec 2020 and Implemented	Monitoring, evaluation and learning Strategy and Action Plan	Staffing at the Secretariat is adequate in quality and quantity to fulfil the technical support functions
	4.2 Number of countries that are providing evidence of institutional arrangements in place and to be continued after project completion (Exit Strategy)	0	57	Final Country reports with exit Strategy National budgets	Resources available for implementation of monitoring, evaluation and learning Governments are able to allocate resource for continued action

### 1.3 Rationale for the development of a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Strategy

In March 2019, the European Commission (EC) conducted a Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) Review of the Special Programme as part of its ongoing monitoring of projects which are managed by the EC Directorate General of International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO).<sup>15</sup> The ROM report made several observations and recommendations including, but not limited to the following:

- The Special Programme lacks a sound system for tracking and recording the country projects' results; the three Logframe indicators at the outcome level do not capture all the actions the beneficiary governments are taking as a result of the projects implemented. The outcome indicators allow for only partial measurement of actions governments can take to implement the MEAs on chemicals and SAICM implementation plans, and the programme cannot track significant achievements at country level. Without additional indicators at outcome level, the Special Programme will not be able to showcase all its potential achievements.
- Recommendations included the identification of different outcome indicators apart from the three actually listed in the logframe to better capture the broad range of actions governments can take to implement the MEAs; continued improvement of support during the application process and streamlining the appraisal process; improving the system for monitoring of projects; and focusing the mid-term evaluation on, among other things, the identification of learning activities the secretariat could launch among the projects.

In the third quarter of 2019 the Special Programme benefited from a Mid Term Evaluation undertaken by the United Nations Environment Programme's Evaluation Office.<sup>16</sup> The Evaluation presented the following findings:

- There was a lack of a systematic system for monitoring progress and achievements in the Special Programme;
- The logframe of the Special Programme may not be adequate to capture changes at the national level and all the actions the recipient countries are taking as a result of the implementation of the country projects;
- Interim progress reports were moderately satisfactory as some delays were encountered and the quality of some reports was not satisfactory;
- There were inadequate qualitative indicators which were able to capture e.g. level of functioning and quality of work of multi-stakeholder mechanisms of dialogue, or improvement in the quality of the national reports submitted to the MEAs Secretariats;

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<sup>15</sup> Project reference D-38333, report completed in May 2019

<sup>16</sup> The final evaluation report was made available in January 2020; see <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/32644>

It was recommended that the Secretariat

- Revise outcome indicators, as the current ones may not be appropriate to capture financial and institutional changes at country level (or reporting to Multilateral Environmental Agreements)
- Monitor progress at both output and results (outcome) level in countries implementing the Special Programme funded projects;
- Provide a guidance document on country progress reports which could include some good examples of good quality reports.

Discussions held in December 2019 with the Special Programme Secretariat indicated that the following issues were also of importance:

- Reporting by the Secretariat to the various donors, which imposes a high administrative burden;
- The need to balance monitoring and reporting so that the frequency and modality are able to support early detection of issues and allow for appropriate adaptation to address these, while ensuring that the administrative capacity to effectively monitor projects is adequate, especially as the number of funded projects increases;
- The need to determine the sustainability factors demonstrated in successful projects while also identifying deficits that may have an adverse impact on these successes in the long term;
- The need to identify direct and indirect impacts of the intervention; and
- The identification and documenting of lessons learned in the various types of interventions and their applicability to inform improved performance in projects in future funding rounds.

## **1.4 Methodology for developing the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Strategy**

The Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning strategy development process included:

- i. Discussions with the Special Programme Secretariat, the Internal Task Team (which is composed of coordinators or representatives of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the Minamata Convention and SAICM), and members of the Executive Board;
- ii. Review of vital documents including the Special Programme Project documents, Mid-term Evaluation report, ROM Review Report and project beneficiary documents; and
- iii. Interviews with country focal points for the projects in Moldova, Micronesia, Uganda, Argentina, Papua New Guinea.

Based on the understanding gained from the above, an inception report was developed with the intention to demonstrate an understanding of the task of developing a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Strategy for the Special Programme and establish an approach for its development. The inception report included:

- i. A desk review of Special Programme documents (itemized above) as well as those of other global programmes such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Adaptation Fund (AF), Forestry Investment Fund (FIP) and the Climate Investment Fund (CIF) which have established Results based approaches to monitoring and reporting;
- ii. Identified issues with the indicators in the current logframe (LF) and proposed changes;
- iii. An approach to developing a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning for the Special Programme; and
- iv. A draft annotated Table of Contents of the proposed Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Strategy and Action Plan.

The inception report was presented to the Executive Board in February 2020, and feedback was received, particularly on the proposed logframe. These inputs were incorporated, and work commenced on developing a revised logframe and Theory of Change (ToC), taking into account the proposals made in the Mid-term Evaluation.

The revised Theory of Change is simplified with some content changes, including i) the addition of Assumptions; ii) inclusion of this monitoring, evaluation and learning strategy; iii) the modification of the outputs; and iv) additional causal pathways.

In addition to the strategy itself, a Toolkit was developed for use at the country level in developing and implementing projects under the Special Programme (refer to the document *Special Programme Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Toolkit*). The Toolkit has been developed to help countries in their implementation of the monitoring, evaluation and learning strategy. It is designed to be flexible, so that individual countries can adapt the tools to their needs. The Toolkit itself may be updated from time to time to reflect lessons learned through the implementation of the strategy.

The Strategy also proposes the adoption of two core indicators for the Special Programme, which should be reflected in the indicators at the country level (refer to the document *Special Programme Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Toolkit*).

The discussions with selected country beneficiaries (Moldova, Micronesia, Uganda, Argentina, Papua New Guinea) provided important information on their current monitoring and reporting activities, and particularly their level of understanding of their logframes and the current results reporting requirement. Discussions the Internal Task Team including coordinators or representatives of the BRS Conventions, the Minamata convention and SAICM, elicited their feedback on the proposed elements of the monitoring, evaluation and learning strategy, elicited. Members of the Executive Board also engaged in a session to review and provide feedback on the logframe, the Theory of Change and the Core indicators.

The draft Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Strategy, along with the Toolkit, were developed and refined in close consultation with the Secretariat of the Special Programme.

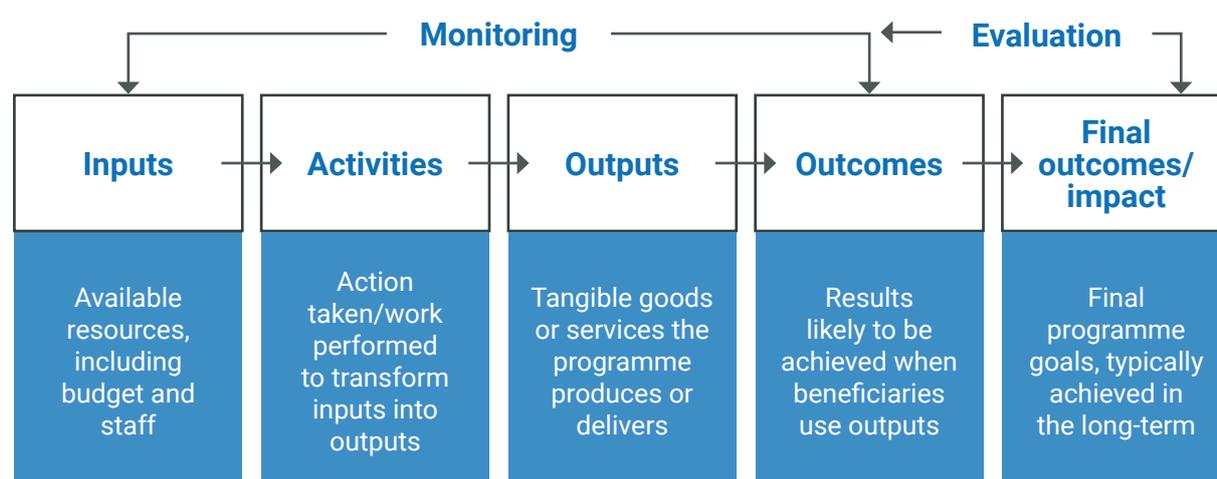
## 1.5 Purpose of a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Strategy

A well-functioning monitoring, evaluation and learning system is an important part of sound project/programme management and accountability. A structured, timely and reliable monitoring, evaluation and learning system provides information to:

- Support project/programme implementation with accurate, evidence-based reporting that informs management and decision-making to guide and improve project/programme implementation and performance;
- Contribute to organizational learning and knowledge sharing by reflecting upon and sharing experiences and lessons so that benefit can be derived from what is being done and how it is being done;
- Ensure accountability and compliance by demonstrating whether the work is being carried out as agreed, and in compliance with established standards of UNEP and in line with other donor requirements;
- Stakeholders (especially beneficiaries) to give feedback and provide input into the work carried out. This provides transparency, and an opportunity to learn from experiences and to adapt to changing needs;
- Promote and recognise accomplishments and achievements, building morale and contributing to resource mobilization.

Whereas **monitoring** is mainly focused on inputs, activities, outputs and short-term outcomes, an **evaluation**, such as an end of project (terminal) evaluation focuses more on longer term outcomes and (actual or potential) impact.

**Figure 3: Results Chain<sup>17</sup> showing the relationship between Monitoring and Evaluation**



<sup>17</sup> Basic Principles of Monitoring and Evaluation, ILO

Evaluations share some common characteristics with monitoring, however there are some significant differences.

Table 2: The Differences between Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring	Evaluation
<b>Ongoing</b> throughout the project cycle	<b>Periodic:</b> before, at the midterm and/or after the project as needed
<b>Keeps track, reviews and reflects</b> on progress (or lack thereof) in relation to project objectives	In-depth <b>analysis</b> to compare planned with actual achievements in relation to project objectives and expected outcomes
Usually <b>an internal organizational</b> process carried out by project staff	Can be an <b>internal and/or external</b> process conducted by staff or an independent party
Monitoring does not usually have judgments on the performance of a project	Evaluations have <b>value judgement</b> statements which give an 'opinion' of the performance of the project. E.g. recommendations for improvement or on the impact of the project
Let you know what activities were implemented and <b>what results were achieved</b>	Evaluations let you know the same things as Monitoring, but also let you know <b>how the results were achieved</b>
Alerts project managers to <b>problems and provides options</b> for corrective actions	Evaluation goes a step further than alerting project managers and <b>contributes to building theories</b> and models for change; provides project managers with <b>strategy and policy options;</b> <b>increases accountability</b> to project beneficiaries, donors and other partners

## 1.6 Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning in the UN system and in UNEP

In the late 1990s, the United Nations initiated results-based management (RBM) systems to improve the organization's effectiveness and accountability.<sup>18</sup> As such, agencies have employed the principles of RBM in policy, programme and project design as well as their monitoring and evaluation systems and practices. Several agencies have developed their own Guidelines to "Evaluation" and "Monitoring and Evaluation". While not explicit in the titles of these guidance documents, learning is a critical element of all of these systems, as it is understood that important knowledge is derived from lessons learned in development interventions. Knowledge is considered a valuable core asset of United Nations system organizations and constitutes their best comparative advantage<sup>19</sup>. The 2016 Review of Knowledge Management in the UN System posits that "It is knowledge that makes cooperation possible among Member States, irrespective of their size and location" and that "knowledge is acquired from lessons learned together with new ideas and concepts"<sup>20</sup>.

18 <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/UNDG-RBM-Handbook-2012.pdf>

19 Knowledge management in the United Nations System, UN Geneva 2016

20 Ibid.

UNEP's mandate, key principles and legal framework inform the organisation's interventions within the framework of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals. As with other UN entities, UNEP's work adopts a results-based management approach and has a strong focus on outcomes and long-term impact<sup>21</sup>.

UNEP regards monitoring progress towards results as one of the key processes involved during project implementation, whereby the logical framework, delivery plan, and budget in the Project Document are the references against which a project's actual progress is tracked and measured. This facilitates or supports adaptive management as necessary, to direct or adapt the implementation of the project towards desired results.

Evaluation is also a key component of the organization's results-based approach, and project and programmes are subject to a systematic and objective evaluation process that assesses their relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability with regard to the organization's mandate and long-term goals. Evaluation exercises 1) enable managers to measure performance, identify areas of improvement, good practices and lessons learned, thus providing a tool for adaptive management, operational improvement and positive learning and 2) assess the impact of UNEP activities on environmental policy-making and management at national, regional and global levels, serving as a basis for substantive accountability to the organization's governing bodies and relevant stakeholders.

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21 UNEP Programme Manual

# 2

## The Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Strategy of the Special Programme

## 2.1 Introduction

Evidence-based monitoring and evaluation must be integrated as part of the programme management cycle. It is the best way to measure progress, detect problems, correct them, improve performance and ensure learning at the project and programme level.

This Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Strategy serves as guidance to the Special Programme and its country project recipients for monitoring, evaluation and learning at the Programme and Project (country) levels.

## 2.2 Objectives

The objectives of the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Strategy are to:

- Ensure that evidence-based monitoring, evaluation and learning is managed as part of the Programme and project cycles of the Special Programme;
- Provide consistent information to stakeholders at all levels;
- Ensure that knowledge generated through learning is captured and disseminated internally and externally;
- Build capacity of implementers of programmes and projects to incorporate monitoring, evaluation and learning tools into design, planning, implementation and budgeting processes; and
- Guide the annual narrative and financial reporting processes.

The Strategy will guide the Secretariat to more consistently monitor and report on operational progress and technical and strategic achievements of the overall programme by means of the necessary reporting/data inputs from the individual projects in the beneficiary countries. These beneficiaries will in turn be guided towards enhancing their own logframes in order to ensure that relevant results and indicators of the Special Programme are integrated into country level monitoring, reporting, evaluation and learning systems.

## 2.3 Key Principles guiding the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Strategy

The following key principles underpin the Special Programme's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning strategy:

- **Focus on Results:** The Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Strategy is based on a results-based management approach that focuses on measuring results achievement in order to build learning processes while ensuring accountability for results.
- **Ownership** by Special Programme stakeholders is fundamental in formulating and implementing programme actions and country level projects to achieve the planned results. In respect of the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Strategy, the aspects of ownership considered are the extent to which Special Programme beneficiaries and other stakeholders understand the Special Programme's objectives; are involved in design of country-level interventions, and understand the parameters that are to be

measured over time to ensure contribution of the national results to the overall objectives of the Special Programme.

- **Engagement of stakeholders:** At all stages of planning, monitoring, evaluating, learning and improving, it is vital to engage stakeholders, promote buy-in and commitment, and motivate action. The Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning strategy helps to ensure that the Special Programme’s stakeholders and beneficiaries understand clearly how the outputs and outcomes of the country level projects contribute to the outcomes and objectives of the Special Programme itself.
- **Ensuring evidence-based practices:** The Strategy emphasises the importance of standardised and consistent data collection and reporting practices, as well as information and knowledge capture that provides validated evidence of achievement.

## 2.4 Purpose, Responsibilities and Tools for the Special Programme Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

Table 3 describes the purpose, responsibilities and tools related to the strategy’s components.

**Table 3: Purpose, Responsibilities and Tools**

Component	Purpose	Responsibilities and tools
<b>Monitoring</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provides management and the main stakeholders of an ongoing programme or project with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Logframe at Programme and Project level</li> <li>◊ UNEP develops logframe at Programme level</li> <li>◊ Country-level project management teams develop project logframes at country level</li> </ul>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Helps to understand achievement of intended and unintended results and their impact on stakeholders</li> <li>▪ Provides an important source of evidence for the achievement of results and programme performance.</li> <li>▪ Contributes to programme learning and knowledge building by drawing lessons from successes and failures, on what works and what does not</li> <li>▪ Serves as a basis for improved decision making for the further strategic programming of the Special Programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Theory of Change</li> <li>▪ Logframe at Programme and Project Level</li> <li>◊ Updating of the Theory of Change and the Programme logframe will be undertaken by the Secretariat as necessary</li> <li>◊ Updating of the country Project logframes will be undertaken by the country Project Management as necessary</li> </ul> <p>Types of Evaluation relevant to the Special Programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Programme and (where applicable) Project Mid-term Evaluation</li> <li>◊ To be undertaken by External experts with oversight from the Special Programme Secretariat M&amp;E officer/consultant/UNEP Evaluation Office (as applicable)</li> <li>▪ Programme/Project Terminal (End term) Evaluation, where applicable</li> <li>◊ To be undertaken by External experts with oversight from the Special Programme M&amp;E officer/consultant and UNEP Evaluation Office</li> </ul>
<b>Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Capture and share knowledge generated during the design and implementation phases</li> <li>▪ Ensure that projects with related activities build on each other's efforts to make a significant difference</li> <li>▪ Identify gaps that may need further research</li> <li>▪ Facilitate evidence sharing that will enable projects and the programme to adapt and apply best practices.</li> <li>▪ Facilitate identification of failures as learning opportunities</li> <li>▪ Share knowledge externally to create broader opportunities (e.g for funding) for the Special Programme</li> </ul>	<p>Elements of the Learning component include:</p> <p>UNEP to explore options for a platform for sharing key documents: website, SharePoint, knowledge portal, group emails, social media etc.</p> <p>Countries to organize evidence reflection sessions: presentation of results and reflection of challenges, successes etc.</p> <p>Lesson learning events: consolidation of lessons from projects and reflection</p>

# 3

## Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Planning at Programme and Project level



While ideally a monitoring, evaluation and learning strategy should be prepared during the design of a new programme or project, its development now for the Special Programme is timely given the likely expansion of the portfolio through the fourth and future rounds of funding applications, and in order to ensure continued good accountability to donors.

A Special Programme Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework (Appendix 1) has been developed to map the various components of the monitoring, evaluation and learning system and show how it will function to support the provision of accurate, evidence-based reporting and contribute to organizational learning and knowledge sharing.

It is anticipated that the Framework will be further refined and periodically modified and updated by a monitoring and evaluation professional engaged to support the Special Programme.

The main elements of the Framework include:

- **Indicators and indicator definitions:** This refers to the indicators in the Logical Framework; a definition for each indicator, the purpose of the indicator, how to calculate it etc.
- **Data to be collected:** Where the necessary data/information is located, and how it needs to be collected
- **Frequency:** How often is the data to be collected and reported
- **Analysis, Quality Control and storage:** How will the data be analysed; how will the accuracy be checked, and how (and for how long) will the data be stored
- **Reporting:** How will the data/findings be reported, with what frequency, and by whom and to whom
- **Roles and responsibilities:** Who are the persons/agencies that will be involved in the collection, analysis, quality control and reporting of data.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning planning is necessary at the Programme level, as well as the Project (country) level.

## 3.1 Programme Level Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

### 3.1.1 Monitoring

At the Programme level, the focus will be on monitoring the performance of the Special Programme as a whole. This includes oversight of the monitoring and reporting from projects undertaken by the country level project management (see 3.2). The Secretariat will provide guidance as necessary and undertake quality control of the data received from the Projects.

The Special Programme Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework (Appendix 1) will guide this action, as monitoring at the country level will feed data directly into the two Core (Outcome level) indicators in the Special Programme Monitoring Framework.

There will be a need to monitor the governance and operational systems as well as service delivery by the Secretariat. Some of the components of this include:

- The functioning of the Executive Board
- The Secretariat's efficiency and effectiveness in:
  - Launching the Call for Applications
  - Receiving and processing the project applications for submission to the Board
  - Provision of technical support to potential applicants to fill in their application
  - Preparation and finalisation of project agreements
  - Support to startup of projects including technical support for monitoring, evaluation and learning planning
  - Disbursement and tracking of funds
  - Monitoring progress of the implementation of country projects

The relevant indicators in the Special Programme Logframe will support reporting against these parameters.

Consistent and accurate monitoring at the country level is an important part of project implementation and supports the evaluation process by providing the necessary evidence of achievement upon which the programme can be assessed.

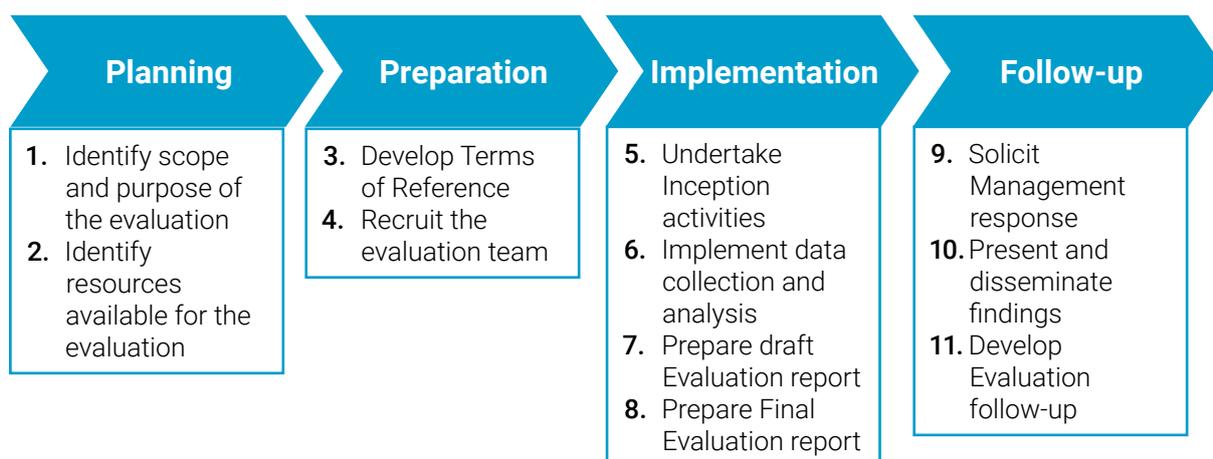
### **3.1.2 Evaluation**

The Special Programme benefitted from a mid-term evaluation in 2019, which provided valuable insights regarding progress to date, and recommendations for future actions. It is anticipated that at the end of the implementation period of the Special Programme, a terminal evaluation will be undertaken.

Like the mid-term evaluation, the terminal evaluation will be carried out by an external expert supervised by the UNEP Evaluation Office.

Preparing for an evaluation is as important as the execution of the actual evaluation activities. The planning, scoping and recruitment for an evaluation as well as overseeing the activity to the end is a multi- step process that will involve a number of persons outside of the Special Programme, including the UNEP Evaluation Office. The various steps and stages are captured below.

**Figure 4: Steps to Planning and Implementing an Evaluation<sup>22</sup>**



### Evaluation Principles

The integrity of project and programme evaluations must be maintained through the process, and UNEP subscribes to a number of guiding principles<sup>23</sup>:

#### Independence

The evaluation function must be independent of operational Programmes to ensure freedom from undue influence and to facilitate the objective assessment of project activities without interference.

#### Impartiality

Evaluations should be objective and free from bias. This is assured through objective design, independence from the influence of management, the projects, policies being evaluated and ensuring that there has been no prior involvement of evaluators in the action being evaluated.

#### Transparency

Evaluation activities should reflect an attitude of openness and include meaningful consultation with stakeholders and opportunities for participation in the process.

#### Credibility

Evaluations must command a high degree of credibility among the member states, governing bodies and managers at various levels. The main contributing factors are evaluator competence, data accuracy and reliability, and reports that meet quality standards.

#### Utility

Evaluations must serve the needs of the users and contribute to learning and accountability. They should be timely, have a relevant scope and design, involve meaningful stakeholder engagement, and provide realistic and practical recommendations.

#### Intentionality

The rationale for an evaluation and the decisions to be based on it should be clear from the outset. The scope, design and plan should meet the needs of the intended users.

#### Participation

Stakeholders should be consulted and meaningfully involved in the evaluation process when feasible and appropriate. This provides a means to achieve many of the desired attributes of an evaluation, such as transparency, credibility and utility.

#### Ethical considerations

This relates to the Evaluators and the Evaluation Office personnel who should have personal integrity; respect the confidentiality of informants; be sensitive to, and address human rights, discrimination and gender equality; have signed the UNDP Code of Conduct for Evaluations.

<sup>22</sup> Adopted from 'Guidance Note on Using DEVCOs Revised Logical Framework'

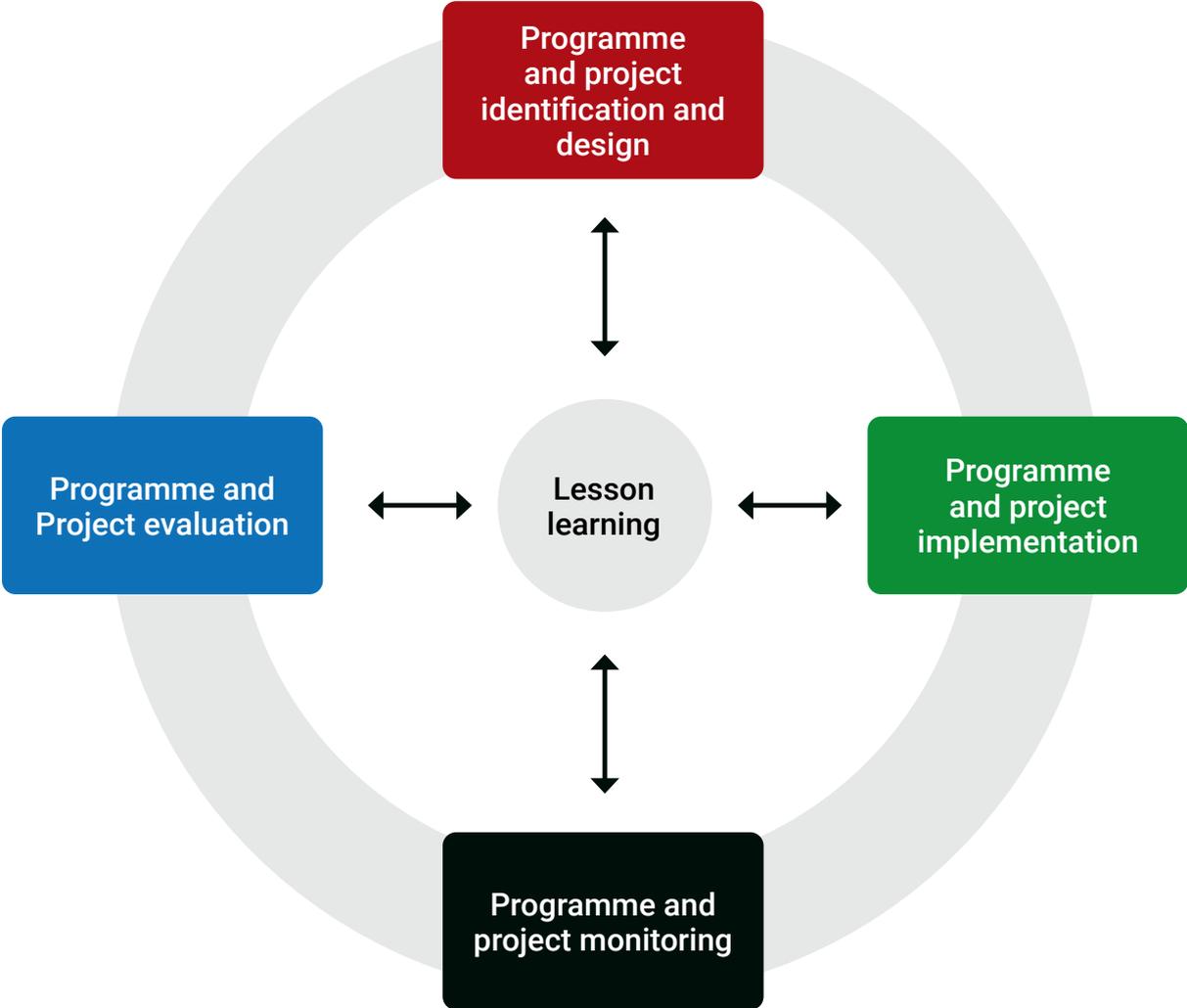
<sup>23</sup> UNEP Evaluation Policy (2016)

UNEP also has Evaluation Norms and Standards<sup>24</sup> to which contracted evaluators are bound. UNEP evaluations and reviews consider nine specific criteria<sup>25</sup>: strategic relevance; quality of project design; nature of external context; effectiveness, which comprises assessments of the provision of outputs, achievement of outcomes and likelihood of impact; financial management; efficiency; monitoring and reporting; sustainability; and factors affecting project performance and cross-cutting issues. Additional criteria can be proposed as appropriate by review consultants.

### 3.1.3 Learning

This activity is the one that is most likely to get overlooked in many projects, and so special effort must be made to integrate this in the Programme and Project implementation cycle at all stages.

**Figure 5: Programme/ Project Learning Cycle**



24 [unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914](http://unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914)

25 UNEP Evaluation Criteria- [unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/our-evaluation-approach/evaluation-criteria-and-ratings](http://unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/our-evaluation-approach/evaluation-criteria-and-ratings)

The learning function is vitally important to guide the further implementation of the Programme and ensure that the country projects, which are all implementing similar types of activities, can build on their own and each other's efforts and make a significant difference to the body of knowledge and practices relevant to chemicals and waste management.

Aspects to be addressed as part of the learning function for the Special Programme are:

- Sharing of evidence/results that can inform adaptive management and the application of best practices which have been identified;
- Identification of "failures" as learning opportunities;
- Identification of knowledge gaps that may need to be addressed during project implementation; and
- Ensuring the wide/external sharing of knowledge to generate interest in, and support for, the Special Programme.

While there is much to learn from the overall Programme organization, administration, and implementation, perhaps the richest learning opportunities reside at the project level where a wide range of beneficiary countries are implementing activities in diverse social, economic and political contexts. There is no "one size fits all" and so there are many opportunities for learning, from successes and failures alike.

At Programme level, lessons learned as well as best practices may be captured via activities such as reflection workshops, focus groups and lessons learning events that may be organized by the Secretariat and involving a number of country project representatives. The activity would be facilitated by a monitoring, evaluation and learning professional who will ask thought provoking questions about the project design and implementation experience from both ongoing and completed projects to identify for example:

- **"What happened?"**
- **"What repeatable, successful processes did we use?"**
- **"What definitely did NOT work?"**
- **"How could we ensure future projects go just as well, or even better?"**
- **"What could have gone better?"**
- **"What were the aspects that stopped you from delivering even more?"**
- **"What would your advice be to future project teams, based on your experiences?"**

## **3.2 Project level Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning**

At project level, the main activities to be undertaken by the management team will be monitoring, reporting and learning. In addition, where these are programmed, project evaluations or project reviews will be implemented by an external M&E professional, contracted for the purpose (See 3.2.2).

### **3.2.1 Project monitoring and reporting**

Planning for monitoring and reporting commences at the project initiation stage. Project applications submitted by countries include a logframe developed by the primary appli-

cant. The preparation of the logframe is an important activity that can be problematic if the project management team does not adequately understand how to undertake this, and how to use the logframe as a management tool.

Given the limited resources that may be available at the country level to support the full elaboration of a working logframe and appropriate monitoring and reporting systems, a fairly basic logframe should be acceptable in the initial project application. Support for the development of the logframe may be provided by the Secretariat as part of its technical assistance to countries in submitting the Project Application form.

Once the project is approved for funding, however, more detailed work on the logframe will be necessary, and this process should be participatory, involving the main stakeholders of the project. Ideally the process should be led by the project management team, although external assistance can be sought. The Special Programme will provide more specific guidance and feedback on the final logframe and the Monitoring and Reporting (M&R) Plan which could be established as a prerequisite for receiving the first tranche of funds. Further guidance for preparing a logframe and an M&R Plan can be found in the Special Programme Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Toolkit.

It will be vital for project beneficiaries to:

- Ensure that the Project logframes are aligned with the Special Programme results, milestones and targets;
- Clarify what is necessary for the application of monitoring, evaluation and learning in the project cycle;
- Provide a stepwise approach to implementing monitoring, evaluation and learning at project level;
- Identify necessary data collection and analysis;
- Establish a protocol for identifying and documenting lessons learned; and
- Undertake reporting that can feed into the overall reporting of the Programme.

The application of the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Strategy at country level should consider the following:

#### **a) Recipient Member Countries' monitoring and evaluation systems**

The Special Programme Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Strategy is designed to operate: (i) within national monitoring and evaluation systems, where they exist; and (ii) within the Special Programme's own results-based management approach. National systems and capacities will have to be taken into account when applying the principles of the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Strategy.

#### **b) Flexible and pragmatic approach**

The Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Strategy will be applied flexibly and pragmatically, taking into account recipient country circumstances.

## Data collection and reporting

In order to be able to aggregate project level results at the outcome level of the Programme, two Core indicators have been developed. Core Indicators are standard measures of performance across projects with similar specific objectives, as is the case with the Special Programme project beneficiaries. They allow for the countries to report into outcome (specific objective) level in the logframe of the Special Programme. The Special Programme Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Toolkit explains the scope of each core indicator in detail. Section B of the Toolkit provides a full description of the two core indicators which have been established at the Outcome level of the Programme. The indicators provide the opportunity for the country project achievements (such as multi-stakeholder dialogue processes, development of bills and regulations, and responsiveness to the reporting requirements of the MEAs) to be rolled into Outcome level indicators in the Special Programme Logframe. This will better showcase country level outcomes.

The Core Indicators will reflect the progress of the beneficiary country on several vital institutional development criteria which will be customised based on the focus of the projects.

### Core Indicator 1:

Extent of strengthened government capacity and coordination mechanism to support development and implementation of National Strategies for Chemicals and Waste Management as a result of funding from the Special Programme<sup>26</sup>

Progress on **Core indicator 1** will be reflected by assessments and scoring of relevant aspects addressed by the country projects. Some examples of these aspects, which are intended to be measured against a scale from 0–5 to meaningfully capture incremental qualitative improvements against the core indicator, as outlined in the proposed scorecard and scoring criteria set out in the Toolkit, are:

- Existence and ongoing maintenance of national chemical and/or waste databases;
- Existence of the necessary chemicals and waste management expertise;
- Existence of a department for chemicals and waste management which is provided with the necessary resources;
- Participation of government in a multi-stakeholder coordination mechanism for chemicals and waste management.

### Core Indicator 2:

Degree of integration of chemical and waste management into national and sector planning - formally proposed, adopted, or being implemented including required reporting to the relevant Conventions and voluntary reporting to SAICM<sup>27</sup>

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26 At the programme level this is measured by 'Number of countries reporting strengthened government capacity and multi-stakeholder coordination mechanism to support development and implementation of National Strategies for chemical and waste management'

27 At the programme level this is measured by 'Number of countries reporting improved level of integration of chemical and waste management into national and sector planning'

Progress on **Core Indicator 2** will be reflected by assessing and scoring the development, updating or implementation of a specific set of components, which are intended to be measured against a scale from 0–3 to meaningfully capture incremental qualitative improvements against the core indicator, as outlined in the proposed scorecard and scoring criteria set out in the Toolkit, such as:

- Chemicals and/or waste management policy, plan, strategy
- Chemicals and/or waste management legal framework
- Chemicals and/or management regulatory framework
- Reporting to the MEAs to which the country is a party

It is recognized that each country will be at a different stage of progress on the various criteria at project outset, therefore what will be measured is the **change** in the respective criteria from the Baseline year to subsequent years during which the Project is implemented.

The **Special Programme Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Toolkit** has been prepared specifically to guide country level project monitoring, reporting and learning. However, training in its use may be required for project personnel who have no monitoring and evaluation training or experience.

### 3.2.2 Project-level Evaluation

At the project level, mid-term reviews<sup>28</sup> can be invaluable in assessing progress and identifying and mitigating any challenges to implementation, output delivery and outcome achievement. Currently, there is no specific policy within the Special Programme governing project-level reviews, their timing, formats, or for which projects they should be commissioned. Further, all Special Programme funded projects are implemented within a 3-year period which is less than the threshold set by UNEP for mandatory mid-term evaluations. As such, while projects are not bound to conduct an evaluation, they may choose to commission these services to be carried out by an external evaluator. To date, a few projects have considered budgeting for “M&E”, however the costs allocated appear to be ad hoc, and the expectation of the proposed M&E service is unclear.

To maximise the benefits of mid-term and terminal reviews, their format, scope and rationale, especially for the more substantial projects that extend to three years, could be standardised.

The parameters for this mid-term review are generally similar to those for a typical terminal evaluation. However, there is more focus on the process indicators (Efficiency – cost effectiveness, timeliness; Effectiveness – progress toward outcome achievement, etc), and recommendations are important for the further implementation of the project. Sample Terms of Reference for a Country Project Mid Term Review can be found in Appendix 2.

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<sup>28</sup> A review differs from an Evaluation in that a Review is managed by the Project Manager, while the Evaluation is commissioned and managed by the UNEP Evaluation office

### 3.2.3 Project level Learning

At the Project level, as for the Programme level, and as shown in Figure 5 above, lessons learned (and best practices) can be identified at every step of the project cycle. For example, at the project design stage a particularly innovative participatory process to design and get buy-in for the proposed project may be a best practice. Conversely, a project that is designed by an external expert, with no consultation with stakeholders may falter in implementation because of lack of buy-in, and could be a lesson learned, of a bad practice that should be avoided.

Reflection on lessons learned and best practices can take place in country projects as part of the work of the project (country) coordination mechanism (e.g. the multi stakeholder advisory group) on a 6-monthly or annual basis. The *Special Programme Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Toolkit* provides guidance for the documentation of lessons learned. If facilitation is required, this should be programmed in the budget.

Documentation of lessons learned and best practices should be provided to the Secretariat as part of the annual project monitoring reports for placing, as appropriate, in a central storage system. This would preferably be a knowledge management platform that is readily accessible to actual and potential Special Programme beneficiaries, and one on which they can interact and learn from each other.

The collection and analysis of lessons learned and best practices will also be part of mid-term review, for those projects that will be commissioning these, and following completion and acceptance of the review, this information would be available for capture and storage.

# 4

## Transitioning to implementation of the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Strategy

The transition to the new Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Strategy is guided by the Work Plan and Action Plan below.

### **Proposed Institutional Arrangements**

The implementation of the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Strategy will require new institutional arrangements that include the services of a monitoring and evaluation expert/specialist attached to the Special Programme Secretariat. The expert could be a staff member of the Secretariat or a contracted consultant who is available as required. The monitoring and evaluation expert will work closely with the programme and administrative staff of the Secretariat, and report to the Secretariat's Programme Manager.

## 4.1 Provisional Work Plan for the implementation of the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Strategy 2020–2025

Tasks	Responsibility	Sep	Oct–	Jan–	Apr–	Jul–	Oct–				
		2020	Dec 2020	Mar 2021	Jun 2021	Sep 2021	Dec 2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Modify and finalise logframe and Theory of Change as necessary depending on internal UNEP reviews and feedback	Secretariat	■	■								
Pursue discussions with SAICM IT to determine to what extent SP knowledge platform can be accommodated (to include at least a searchable database with project profiles, case studies, lessons learned, other communication products) <sup>29</sup>	Secretariat	■	■								
Present the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Strategy and Action Plan to the Executive Board	Project Mgr./ Secretariat		■								
Endorse and approve funding for the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Strategy & Action Plan	Exec Board		■								
Identify and recruit a monitoring and evaluation professional	Secretariat			■	■						
Work with SAICM to establish the online knowledge sharing platform <sup>30</sup>	Secretariat/ MEL Officer			■	■	■	■				
Review and revise, as necessary, existing SP templates (Application Form, reporting templates etc)	MEL Officer/ Secretariat				■	■	■				

29 If discussions with SAICM does not yield positive results, the Special Programme will need to explore establishing its own knowledge platform

30 ibid

Tasks	Responsibility	Sep	Oct–	Jan–	Apr–	Jul–	Oct–				
		2020	Dec 2020	Mar 2021	Jun 2021	Sep 2021	Dec 2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Train a first cohort of country Project Managers in the development and use of logframes and the Toolkit	MEL Officer										
Review the training activity and revise training process as necessary, to institutionalise ongoing monitoring, reporting and learning support for subsequent cohorts of project managers	MEL Officer Secretariat										
Implement ongoing monitoring, reporting and learning support for project managers using relevant tools (E- learning, remote training etc.)	MEL Officer Secretariat										
Establish and maintain the monitoring system to support adaptive project management within the SP (including data collection, quality control and analysis of the data from the projects and Secretariat activity)	MEL Officer Secretariat										
Plan and facilitate periodic knowledge sharing, learning/reflection activities with country project personnel, to enable sharing of experiences, challenges, solutions and best practices, and develop case studies	MEL Officer, Secretariat, Communications										
Support the preparation of the SP Annual Progress reports and other thematic reports as required	MEL Officer										
Update the Programme Theory of Change and Logframe as necessary, based on changes over the period of implementation of the revised SP	Secretariat, MEL Officer										
<b>Prepare for Terminal Evaluation</b>											

## 4.2 Provisional Action Plan for Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Strategy Implementation

Timeline	QTR 1	QTR 2	QTR 3	QTR 4
<b>Year 0</b> 2020			Pursue discussions with SAICM IT to determine to what extent SP knowledge platform can be accommodated (to include at least a searchable database with project profiles, case studies, lessons learned, other communication products)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Modify and finalise logframe and Theory of Change as necessary depending on internal UNEP reviews and feedback</li> <li>2. Endorse and approve funding for the MEL Strategy &amp; Plan</li> </ol>
<b>Responsibility</b>			<b>Secretariat</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Secretariat</b></li> <li>2. <b>Executive Board</b></li> </ol>
<b>Year 1</b> 2021	Identify and recruit a M&E professional	<p>Review and revise, as necessary, existing SP templates (Application Form, reporting templates etc)</p> <p>Work with SAICM to establish online knowledge sharing platform</p>	<p>Train a first cohort of country project managers in the development and use of logframes, and the Toolkit</p> <p>Work with SAICM to establish online knowledge sharing platform</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review the training activity and revise training process as necessary, to institutionalise ongoing monitoring, reporting and learning support for subsequent cohorts of project managers</li> <li>2. Monitoring, Reporting and Learning support for subsequent cohorts of Project managers</li> <li>3. Work with SAICM to establish online knowledge sharing platform</li> </ol>
<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Secretariat</b>	<b>MEL Officer/Secretariat</b>	<b>MEL Officer/Secretariat</b>	<b>MEL Officer/Secretariat</b>
<b>Year 2</b> 2022	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ongoing Monitoring, reporting and learning support for project managers using relevant tools (E- learning, remote training etc.);</li> <li>2. Support the preparation of the SP annual progress reports and other thematic reports as required</li> </ol>			
<b>Responsibility</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>MEL Officer</b></li> <li>2. <b>Secretariat</b></li> </ol>			

Timeline	QTR 1	QTR 2	QTR 3	QTR 4
<b>Year 3</b> 2023	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Implement ongoing monitoring, reporting and learning support for project managers using relevant tools (E- learning, remote training etc.)</li> <li>2. Maintain the monitoring system to support adaptive project management within the SP (including data collection, quality control and analysis of the data from the Projects and Secretariat activity)</li> <li>3. Plan and facilitate periodic knowledge sharing, learning reflection activities with country project personnel, to enable sharing of experiences, challenges, solutions and best practices, and develop case studies</li> <li>4. Support the preparation of the SP annual progress reports and other thematic reports as required</li> </ol>			
<b>Responsibility</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. MEL Officer</li> <li>2. Secretariat</li> </ol>			
<b>Year 4</b> 2024	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Implement ongoing monitoring, reporting and learning support for project managers using relevant tools (E- learning, remote training etc.)</li> <li>2. Maintain the monitoring system to support adaptive project management within the SP (including data collection, quality control and analysis of the data from the Projects and Secretariat activity)</li> <li>3. Plan and facilitate periodic knowledge sharing, learning/reflection activities with country project personnel, to enable sharing of experiences, challenges, solutions and best practices, and develop case studies</li> <li>4. Support the preparation of the SP annual progress reports and other thematic reports as required</li> </ol>			
<b>Responsibility</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. MEL Officer</li> <li>2. Secretariat</li> </ol>			
<b>Year 5</b> 2025	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Implement ongoing Monitoring, reporting and learning support for Project managers using relevant tools (E- learning, remote training etc.)</li> <li>2. Maintain the monitoring system to support adaptive project management within the Special Programme (including data collection, quality control and analysis of the data from the Projects and Secretariat activity)</li> <li>3. Plan and facilitate periodic Knowledge sharing, Learning/ reflection activities with Country Project personnel, to enable sharing of experiences, challenges, solutions and best practices, and develop case studies</li> <li>4. Support the preparation of the SP annual progress reports and other thematic reports as required</li> </ol>			
<b>Responsibility</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. MEL Officer</li> <li>2. Secretariat</li> </ol>			

# Appendices:

The image features a close-up, low-angle shot of a wooden lattice structure, likely a chair or table frame. The wood is dark and polished, with some areas showing a lighter, natural wood grain. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows, creating a sense of depth and texture. The background is a soft, out-of-focus mix of warm colors, including shades of orange, red, and yellow, suggesting an indoor setting with warm lighting. The overall composition is abstract and geometric, focusing on the lines and curves of the wooden structure.

## Appendix 1: Special Programme Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework

Indicator	Definition	Data source	Frequency	Responsible	Reporting
	What is the indicator; Rationale for the indicator; How is it calculated?	How will it be measured/what is the source of data?	How often will it be measured?	Who will measure it?	Where will it be reported?
<b>Outcome: Governments from developing countries and countries with economies in transition are taking affirmative action to implement the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention and SAICM implementation plans</b>					
<b>Core Indicator 1</b> Number of countries reporting strengthened government capacity and multi-stakeholder coordination mechanism to support development and implementation of National Strategies for Chemicals and/or waste management	This reflects the number of countries reporting evidence of strengthened government capacity and coordination mechanism to support development and implementation of National Strategies for Chemicals and/or waste management based on their reporting on Core Indicator 1	Project (Country level) reports - Country reporting on Core Indicator 1	Annually	Country level management team; Secretariat M&E	Annual project (country) reports to the SP; SP annual report
<b>Core indicator 2</b> Number of countries reporting improved level of integration of chemicals and/or waste management into national and sector planning	This reflects the number of countries reporting improvements in their integration Chemicals and/or waste management into national and sector planning based on their reporting on Core indicator 2	Project (country level) reports - Country reporting on Core Indicator 2	Annually	Country level management team; Secretariat M&E	Annual project (country) reports to the SP; SP annual report
<b>Outcome Indicator 1.1</b> Number of countries that have ratified or are in the process of ratifying the Basel, Rotterdam or Stockholm conventions, or the Minamata Convention with the support of the Special Programme	This reflects the number of countries reporting that they have ratified, or are in the process of ratifying one or more of the MEAs – the number of ratifications will be disaggregated by MEA	BRS and Minamata conventions, and SAICM reports/ websites	Annually	Secretariat M&E	Annual project (country) reports to the SP; SP annual report

Indicator	Definition	Data source	Frequency	Responsible	Reporting
	What is the indicator; Rationale for the indicator; How is it calculated?	How will it be measured/what is the source of data?	How often will it be measured?	Who will measure it?	Where will it be reported?
<b>Outcome Indicator 1.2</b> Number of countries reporting the adoption of policies and regulatory frameworks for management of chemicals and waste with the support of the Special Programme	This is a count of the countries who have adopted policies and regulatory frameworks for the management of chemicals and waste	BRS and Minamata conventions, and SAICM reports	Annually	Secretariat M&E	Annual project (country) reports to the SP; SP annual report
<b>Outcome Indicator 1.3</b> Number of countries in compliance with their reporting obligations under the MEAs to which they are a party and/or submitting voluntary reports to SAICM.	This is a count of the countries who are reporting to the any of the MEAs dealing with Chemicals and waste management	BRS and Minamata conventions, and SAICM reports/ websites	Annually	Secretariat M&E	Annual project (country) reports to the SP; SP annual report
<b>Output 1: Special Programme Trust Fund managed, and secretariat services provided to the Special Programme Executive Board</b>					
<b>Output Indicator 1.1:</b> Number of Executive Board meetings (including teleconferences) held	This is a simple count of the number of EB meetings held.  It is a reflection of the activity of the EB undertaking oversight of the Programme and making decisions.	Executive Board Meeting Reports	Annually	Country level management team; Secretariat M&E	Annual project (country) reports to the SP; SP annual report
<b>Output Indicator 1.2:</b> Attendance of Board members at each Executive Board meeting	This is the number of Board members attending each Executive Board meeting and teleconference. The number will be disaggregated by region	Executive Board meeting attendance records	Annually	Country level management team; Secretariat M&E	Annual project (country) reports to the SP; SP annual report

Indicator	Definition	Data source	Frequency	Responsible	Reporting
	What is the indicator; Rationale for the indicator; How is it calculated?	How will it be measured/what is the source of data?	How often will it be measured?	Who will measure it?	Where will it be reported?
<b>Output Indicator 1.3</b> Number of applications screened, reviewed and appraised by the secretariat for funding by the Special Programme Trust Fund	This is a simple count of the number of applications processed and appraised by the Secretariat for submission to the EB for approval. It reflects the relative interest of the countries in applying for funds; as well as the ability of the Secretariat to handle to the processing of applications in a single Round (Call for proposals)	Output Indicator	Annually	Secretariat M&E	Annual project (country) reports to the SP; SP annual report
<b>Output Indicator 1.4</b> Number of new or updated guidance documents and application forms prepared to support development of project applications (including gender consideration) to address the sound management of chemicals and waste	This is a simple count of guidance documents and forms prepared by the Secretariat	Special Programme Internal records	6 monthly	Secretariat	Executive Board meeting reports; annual report of the SP
<b>Output 2: Project applications developed and projects approved and managed in line with the Terms of Reference of the Special Programme and guidance by the Special Programme Executive Board</b>					
<b>Output Indicator 2.1</b> Number of application cycles for the Special Programme	This indicator is a simple count of the number of application cycles (Calls for proposals) launched by the Secretariat	Special Programme internal records/ Published Calls for Applications	Periodically – according the Application cycle)	Secretariat Admin/ M&E	Annual report of the SP

Indicator	Definition	Data source	Frequency	Responsible	Reporting
	What is the indicator; Rationale for the indicator; How is it calculated?	How will it be measured/what is the source of data?	How often will it be measured?	Who will measure it?	Where will it be reported?
<b>Output Indicator 2.2</b> Number of target countries that have accessed technical support including guidance documents and application forms and e-learning prepared to support development of projects	This is a simple count of the number countries that have accessed technical support	Secretariat internal records, Board meeting reports	6monthly	Secretariat Admin/ M&E	Annual report of the SP
<b>Output Indicator 2.3</b> Number of legal agreements signed with recipient countries within 12 months of project approval	This is a simple count of the legal agreements signed between the Special Programme and successful project applicants.	Secretariat internal records; Signed agreements	6monthly	Secretariat Admin/ M&E	Annual report of the SP
<b>Output Indicator 2.4</b> Number of projects completed and successfully closed	This is a simple count of the number of completed projects that have provided the necessary closure documents and been signed off by the Special Programme	Secretariat internal records; Final technical and financial project reports	Annual	Secretariat Finance / M&E	SP annual reports, Board meetings

Indicator	Definition	Data source	Frequency	Responsible	Reporting
	What is the indicator; Rationale for the indicator; How is it calculated?	How will it be measured/what is the source of data?	How often will it be measured?	Who will measure it?	Where will it be reported?
<p><b>Output Indicator 2.5</b> Funds approved for projects (as a percentage of total funds allocated to the Special Programme Trust fund)</p>	<p>This indicator is a ratio of the total funds committed to approved projects, to the total Trust funds available for grants.</p> <p>It reflects the rate of grant funds commitment against the Total grant funds available for disbursement.</p> <p>Numerator – Total funds approved for projects</p> <p>Denominator – Total grant funding available</p>	<p>Financial records, PCAs</p>	<p>6-monthly</p>	<p>Secretariat Finance / M&amp;E</p>	<p>SP annual reports, Board meetings</p>
<p><b>Output Indicator 2.6</b> Funds disbursed for project implementation as a percentage of funds approved</p>	<p>This is the total funds disbursed to all country projects cumulatively as a percentage of the total funds available for project funding. It reflects the progress of implementation of approved projects</p> <p>This will be disaggregated to reflect the implementation progress of individual countries</p>	<p>Secretariat Financial records/reports;</p>	<p>Annually</p>	<p>Secretariat Finance/ M&amp;E</p>	<p>SP annual reports, Board meetings</p>
<p><b>Output Indicator 2.7</b> Number of countries taking affirmative actions towards integrating gender into their institutional strengthening processes</p>	<p>This is the number of countries reporting activities leading to the integration of gender into their institutional strengthening processes</p>	<p>Country project reports</p>	<p>Annually</p>	<p>Country projects/Secretariat</p>	<p>Annual country project reports/ SP annual reports</p>

Indicator	Definition	Data source	Frequency	Responsible	Reporting
	What is the indicator; Rationale for the indicator; How is it calculated?	How will it be measured/what is the source of data?	How often will it be measured?	Who will measure it?	Where will it be reported?
<b>Output 3: Communication products and services developed &amp; disseminated to influence key stakeholders and inform country beneficiaries</b>					
<b>Output Indicator 3.1</b> Number of communications tools provided by the Special Programme Secretariat to support the sound management of chemicals and waste	This is a simple count of the communications tools and services provided by the Special Programme.	Country reports; Secretariat records	Annually	Special Programme Secretariat Admin; Platform manager	SP annual reports, Board meetings
<b>Output Indicator 3.2</b> Number of unique downloads of communications tools provided by the Special Programme Secretariat per round of funding to support the sound management of chemicals and waste	This is a simple count of the downloads of communication tools from the database/platform/website	Website records	Annually	Country projects; Secretariat	Annual country project reports/ SP annual reports
<b>Output Indicator 3.3</b> Number of targeted communication and outreach events undertaken	This is a count of the targeted, sector specific communication events (disaggregated by country/theme /sector)	Country reports; Secretariat data Platform	Annually	Country projects; Secretariat M&E	SP annual reports
<b>Output indicator 3.4</b> Number of Case studies developed highlighting significant experiences (positive and negative), lessons learned and best practices in the course of project implementation (Country and Programme level)	This is a simple count of the Case studies developed addressing best practices and lessons learned. It is disaggregated by Programme level and Project level	Secretariat Data platform	Annually	Secretariat Admin/M&E	SP annual reports

Indicator	Definition	Data source	Frequency	Responsible	Reporting
	What is the indicator; Rationale for the indicator; How is it calculated?	How will it be measured/what is the source of data?	How often will it be measured?	Who will measure it?	Where will it be reported?
<b>Output 4: Monitoring system established to track Programme and Project progress toward Outcomes, and sustainability of project outcome beyond project end</b>					
<b>Output Indicator 4.1</b> Status of Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) strategy and Action Plan	This reflects on the status of development of a monitoring, evaluation and learning strategy for the Special Programme and its endorsement by the EB.	Secretariat reports, Board meeting report	Once	Secretariat Admin	Board meeting report, SP annual reports
<b>Output Indicator 4.2</b> Number of countries that are providing evidence of institutional arrangements in place and to be continued after project completion (Exit Strategy)	This is a count of countries which have developed an exit strategy at the end of implementation with actions that will continue the benefits received under the Special Programme support	Final Country Project Reports	Annually	Secretariat M&E	SP annual reports

## Appendix 2: Terms of Reference of Mid Term Reviews for UNEP Special Programme Country Projects

Country level projects of value US\$ 200,000 or more should have at least one external Mid Term Review activity. This is not a full evaluation but shares several of the elements of a full evaluation. It may be most beneficial to have one such review at the mid-point of the implementation period, but the review can be commissioned at another, earlier point if there are major challenges affecting the implementation that would benefit from external assessment and recommendations.

The primary focus of the review will be to:

- 1. Assess the progress of the project towards its expected results**
- 2. Identify any impediment to implementation**
- 3. Develop recommendations to support the further implementation of the project, to improve potential for the achievement of the results.**

### Methodology

Mid Term Review experts will assess projects using the UNEP criteria of Strategic Relevance, Quality of Design, Effectiveness, Financial Management, Efficiency, and Sustainability as well as criteria dealing with aspects linked to the quality of the project logic (Logframe or Theory of Change) and monitoring systems, and Cross-Cutting Issues (Gender, Human rights, Environment) and visibility.

**The criteria and what is involved in addressing them are shown below**

Criteria	Some elements assessed
<b>Strategic Relevance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS) and Programme of Work (POW)</li> <li>▪ Alignment to UNEP / Donor Strategic Priorities</li> <li>▪ Relevance to Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities</li> <li>▪ Complementarity with Existing Interventions</li> </ul>
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Project's strengths and weaknesses at design stage</li> <li>▪ Factors affecting this criterion may include (at the design stage):               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Stakeholders participation and cooperation</li> <li>▫ Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Nature of External Context</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Project's external environment (including the prevalence of conflict, natural disasters and political upheaval)</li> </ul>
<b>Effectiveness</b>	<p>The achievement of project outcomes is assessed as performance against the project outcomes as defined in the reconstructed<sup>31</sup> Theory of Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Achievement of Project Outcome</li> <li>▪ Availability of Outputs</li> <li>▪ Likelihood of Impact</li> </ul>

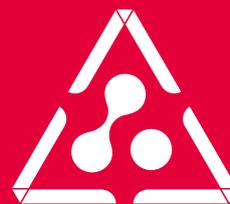
31 All submitted UNEP project documents are required to present a Theory of Change. The level of 'reconstruction' needed during an evaluation will depend on the quality of this initial TOC, the time that has lapsed between project design and implementation (which may be related to securing and disbursing funds) and the level of any formal changes made to the project design.

<b>Financial Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures</li> <li>▪ Completeness of project financial information</li> <li>▪ Communication between finance and project management staff</li> </ul>
<b>Efficiency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cost effectiveness and timeliness</li> </ul>
<b>Monitoring and Reporting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monitoring design and budgeting</li> <li>▪ Monitoring of project implementation</li> <li>▪ Project reporting</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Socio-political sustainability</li> <li>▪ Financial sustainability</li> <li>▪ Institutional sustainability</li> </ul>
<b>Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preparation and readiness</li> <li>▪ Quality of project management and supervision</li> <li>▪ Stakeholders participation and cooperation</li> <li>▪ Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity</li> <li>▪ Environmental, social and economic safeguards</li> <li>▪ Country ownership and driven-ness</li> <li>▪ Communication and public awareness</li> </ul>

Activities to be undertaken are:

1. Review project documentation ( Proposal, contract agreements, Progress reports, Steering committee minutes, other meeting reports, Technical reports etc.) and conduct field missions or remote interviews, of all parties involved (project management, partners, donors and management of other projects in the sector, target groups and final beneficiaries).
2. Analyse the data collected and respond to a standard set of Monitoring Questions (MQs) that help to structure the analysis of documentation and empirical data. The expert may add questions as s/he sees fit to fulfill the requirements of the task. A mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches should support the expert in drafting their responses to the MQs and the resulting Final review report.
3. At the end of the field phase of the review exercise, the expert will debrief the project management with a draft summary of the findings and recommendations. The debriefing activity will also be an opportunity to carry out fact checking of data and information collected over the period of the assignment.
4. Report preparation. The expert will prepare a report that provides an assessment of progress toward planned results (Outputs, Outcomes), identifies challenges and makes recommendations directed at Project management and/or the SP Secretariat to improve project implementation.

**CHEMICALS  
AND WASTE  
MANAGEMENT  
PROGRAMME**



The Special Programme



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