



## Independent Evaluation: The Global Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production Programme



This independent evaluation looks into two intertwined interventions: 1) The Global UNIDO-UN Environment Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production (RECP) Programme for Developing and Transition Countries which was designed by UNIDO in 2009 with an estimated budget of Euro 69.4 million, referred to as the Programme; and 2) the UNIDO Global Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production Project, developed under the Programme in 2011 and funded by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) with a grant of USD 16 million, referred to as the Project.

The Programme and the Project were built upon a 15-year collaboration on cleaner production between these two agencies. The long-term objective of these interventions is to improve the resource productivity and the environmental performance of industrial enterprises, and to contribute to sustainable industrial development and sustainable production and consumption in developing and transition countries.

### Main evaluation findings

#### Accomplishments and Limitations of the Project

By the time the Project started in 2012, the UNIDO-UN Environment collaboration had made important contributions towards the identification, development and testing of tools and methods for RECP to the diverse conditions in developing and emerging economies. The Project significantly pushed forward the processes that UNIDO and UN Environment had started during 1994-2009. Building on the earlier results, the Project helped to systematize and adapt RECP-related methods and toolkits to local conditions and develop case studies and other knowledge products that are well suited to small and medium enterprises in developing countries.

In the process, the Project helped hundreds of enterprises to become more efficient and to reduce levels of pollution. The economic and environmental benefits generated by the project at the enterprise level are likely to be sustainable. In most cases they consisted in eco-efficiencies that reduced costs of production or required investments with short capital recovery periods. The changes were perceived as assets to develop client loyalty and to improve their capacity to meet regulations and compete in broader markets.

The Project also helped to continue strengthening 58 National Cleaner Production Centres (NCP) in 55 developing countries that participate in the RECP Network (RECPnet). While the extent of capacities differed from centre to centre, those that are regular members of the network are often recognised as leading authorities on the topic in their countries. The changes adopted by the participating enterprises and the environmental and economic benefits generated by the adoption of the new technologies are mostly based on low hanging fruits that take advantage of eco-efficiencies or those that can be implemented at relatively low costs or with quick capital returns, which contribute to their sustainability.

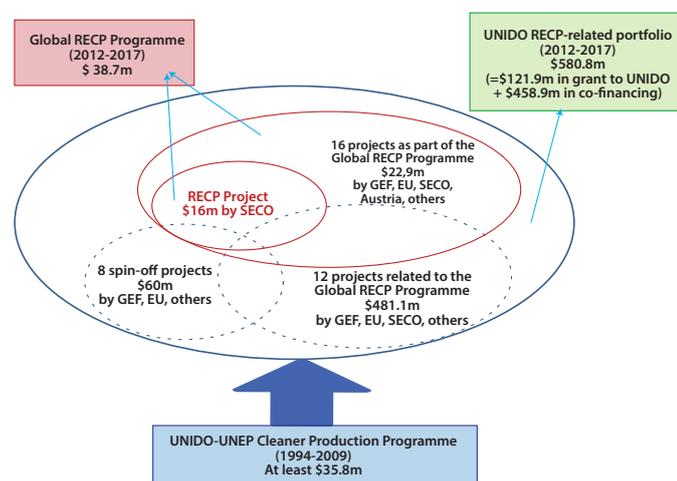
Despite its important accomplishments only in few occasions did the Project catalyse changes that went beyond the scale of the supported enterprises. The Project has mostly remained a collection of RECP-related workstreams that resulted in multiple isolated RECP success stories that are not mutually supportive. While important for the long term objectives of the Programme, the RECPnet was found to have low levels of ownership by member organizations.

## Accomplishments and Limitations of the Programme

While there seems to be an impression by key stakeholders that the Programme funding fell short of expectation, there was in fact a significant expansion of projects that included RECP activities within UNIDO between 2012 and 2017.

By October 2017 the total value of UNIDO projects related to RECP exceeded USD 580.8 million. While not all these funds were being implemented as part of the RECP Programme or channelled through UNIDO, this is 16 times more than the USD 35.8 million of the UNIDO-UNEP Cleaner Production Programme during 1994-2009. This growth of funding underlines the critical importance of RECP for UNIDO as an organization and of the need to coordinate RECP related activities and learning across projects and departments.

### UNIDO RECP-related Portfolio 2012-2017



Despite extensive reach of the Programme and of RECP related activities across UNIDO, the Programme accomplishments were hampered by a lack of integration of its different components, the insufficient attention to policy at design and the insufficient attention to mechanisms for broader adoption such as mainstreaming, replication and scaling-up.

### Factors Affecting Project and Programme Performance

The lack of integration of Project and Programme components during design and implementation limited the Project and Programme contributions to other UNIDO operations and hampered institutional learning across the organization. Monitoring and Evaluation, risk tracking and management

oversight during project implementation should be strengthened to enhance integration of UNIDO's RECP related operations.

The preference for technical skills in selecting project managers, without sufficient consideration of other skills needed to manage complex projects, is another factor that has contributed to operations that tend to gravitate towards technical arena while not giving sufficient attention to policy and other contextual issues.

### Recommendations

1. UNIDO should develop and implement a **strategy to strengthen its capacities in policy, regulatory and institutional reforms** and give more prominence to these topics in its projects and in NCPC capacity building. It should also draw on mature developing country NCPCs as the primary source of technical assistance for this topic.
2. UNIDO should ensure that its **institutional supervision systems are robust**, and that they guarantee the proper support, oversight, coordination, risk-tracking and integration of global programme and individual projects.
3. UNIDO should put in place **quality control systems** to ensure that **all new programmes and projects include a practical and sufficiently budgeted monitoring and evaluation plan** during the design phase, and that the plan is executed during implementation.
4. UNIDO, UN Environment and the NCPCs belonging to the RECPnet should come to an agreement within the next six months on a realignment of their roles and responsibilities in a way that **develop network ownership by the members and ensure sustainability**.
5. UNIDO and SECO should **scale up RECP to the level of eco-industrial parks** seeking to integrate support at the enterprise and park scales and address critical policy issues.
6. UNIDO and SECO should require programmes that seek to address complex processes to **develop explicit theories of change** that can guide the design and implementation of integrated projects to increase impact and transformational change.

Further information:

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