

Part I: Project Information		Response
GEF ID	10351	
Project Title	Biodiversity protection through the Effective Management of the National Network of Protected Areas	
Date of Screening	6-Dec-19	
STAP member Screener	Rosie Cooney	
STAP secretariat screener	Virginia Gorsevski	
STAP Overall Assessment		<p><b>Minor issues to be considered during project design:</b> STAP welcomes the project entitled "Biodiversity protection through the effective management of the national network of protected areas" in Comoros submitted by UNDP. STAP feels that overall this is a strong project with a clearly defined objective with four fairly well developed components with a high likelihood of success. One area that could be improved is Component 3 with its focus on Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM). STAP fully supports this work; however, the PIF lacks information on the specific mechanisms of how community rights to manage land and resources would be strengthened. STAP recommends that project proponents refer to STAP's recent document entitled "Local Commons for Global Benefits" and refer to recommendations in Section 4 for additional guidance.</p>
<b>Part I: Project Information</b>		
<b>B. Indicative Project Description Summary</b>		
Project Objective	Is the objective clearly defined, and consistently related to the problem diagnosis?	Yes. The project objective is clearly defined as conserving terrestrial and marine biodiversity in Comoros by Strengthening the management of the UoC's newly created PA network through effective co-management with communities for sustainable development.
Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project's objectives?	Yes. There are 4 main components which address major barriers to conservation identified in this project. The first is to strengthen the national political, legal and institutional framework and capacity to better manage the PA system. The second is similar; however at the site level and includes community involvement. The third specifically focuses on CBNRM and efforts to promote income generating activities that may help to alleviate some pressure on natural landscapes and seascapes which are deteriorating at a rapid rate. The fourth is KM and M&E and gender empowerment.
Outcomes	A description of the expected short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention.	Each component includes just one outcome comprised of numerous components. Outcomes include increased capacity at the national level to manage the PA system, increased protection at site level through improved management effectiveness, increased area under CBNRM and capacity to generate nature-based livelihoods, and effective sharing of knowledge.

	Do the planned outcomes encompass important global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits?	If these outcomes are successful and the PAs are effectively managed and people are able to generate income in a way that takes pressure off of the natural environment, then there should be significant benefits to biodiversity. However, a critical question is the extent to which the project will succeed in creating "alternative livelihoods" which theoretically should reduce unsustainable and destructive farming practices. However, even if successful, very little is known about what impacts (if any) alternative livelihood projects have had on biodiversity conservation, as well as what determines the relative success or failure of these interventions (Roe <i>et al.</i> , (2015). "Are alternative livelihood projects effective at reducing local threats to specified elements of biodiversity and/or improving or maintaining the conservation status of those elements?" Environmental Evidence 4:22. DOI 10.1186/s13750-015-0048-1. This component is mainly about working with communities to collect data and strengthen community engagement through CBNRM; however, more detail should be given about how specifically this will take place and how the livelihoods will be chosen (e.g. economic assessment to determine demand for whatever will be produced).
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	As above.
Outputs	A description of the products and services which are expected to result from the project. Is the sum of the outputs likely to contribute to the outcomes?	Capacity is listed as an output but difficult to measure. National strategies, development plans and sectoral programs are harmonized, biodiversity data collection, management tools, community co-management models and partnerships, ecosystem services studies, skills training, value chain analysis, gender empowerment strategy, etc. In sum, there are numerous outputs associated with each of the outcomes.
Part II: Project justification	A simple narrative explaining the project's logic, i.e. a theory of change.	
<b>1. Project description. Briefly describe:</b>		
1) the global environmental and/or adaptation problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed (systems description)	Is the problem statement well-defined?	The problem statement is not specifically and precisely defined; however, it is clear after reading the section on threats what the major issues are in relation to loss of biodiversity.
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	Yes. The threats facing Comoros are well understood, with the main problem defined as loss of forest habitat through agricultural encroachment. Additional threats include destructive fishing practices, removal of beach sand, marine plastics, etc. Importantly, this project not only describes the threats and underlying causes (poverty, population growth, insecure land tenure) but also clearly articulates the barriers to the proposed solution of creating a national park system, which is a key strategy in the global effort to conserve biodiversity.
	For multiple focal area projects: does the problem statement and analysis identify the drivers of environmental degradation which need to be addressed through multiple focal areas; and is the objective well-defined, and can it only be supported by integrating two, or more focal areas objectives or programs?	N/A
2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects	Is the baseline identified clearly?	Yes. Several past projects are described in detail along with the history of the PA system in Comoros.
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits?	Yes
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	Yes

	For multiple focal area projects:	
	are the multiple baseline analyses presented (supported by data and references), and the multiple benefits specified, including the proposed indicators;	N/A
	are the lessons learned from similar or related past GEF and non-GEF interventions described; and	N/A
	how did these lessons inform the design of this project?	N/A
3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project	What is the theory of change?	No explicit theory of change is presented. The project appears to apply a nested approach whereby capacity is first strengthened at the national level to improve coordination and planning, followed by site specific capacity to improve management in a way that integrates local communities into the decision making process and also seeks to find new income generating activities to relieve pressure on the landscape.
	What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?	As above.
	What is the set of linked activities, outputs, and outcomes to address the project's objectives?	As above.
	Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions?	The project proponents seem to have a good understanding of the underlying assumptions; however, it is not entirely clear that the proposed interventions will necessarily lead to the change envisioned in this project as there are still many unknowns, such as questions regarding 'greening the value chain' as studies have been conducted but with no clear direction on implementation, financing, etc.
	Is there a recognition of what adaptations may be required during project implementation to respond to changing conditions in pursuit of the targeted outcomes?	Not explicitly discussed.
5) incremental/additional cost reasoning and expected contributions from the baseline, the GEF trust fund, LDCF, SCCF, and co-financing	GEF trust fund: will the proposed incremental activities lead to the delivery of global environmental benefits?	Yes. A new and well managed PA should lead to improved biodiversity and other environmental benefits.
	LDCF/SCCF: will the proposed incremental activities lead to adaptation which reduces vulnerability, builds adaptive capacity, and increases resilience to climate change?	N/A
6) global environmental benefits (GEF trust fund) and/or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF)	Are the benefits truly global environmental benefits, and are they measurable?	Yes
	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	Yes
	Are the global environmental benefits explicitly defined?	They are defined in terms of hectares under improved management as per Indicator 1.2 and 2.2 with the underlying assumption that improved management effectiveness will lead to a reduction in the rate of biodiversity loss for these areas.
	Are indicators, or methodologies, provided to demonstrate how the global environmental benefits will be measured and monitored during project implementation?	Component 4 relates to monitoring and evaluation; however, does not discuss how GEBs will be measured and monitored throughout.
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project's resilience to climate change?	Only that ecotourism will incorporate reef conservation into business model to mitigate against the effects of climate change (weak).
7) innovative, sustainability and potential for scaling-up	Is the project innovative, for example, in its design, method of financing, technology, business model, policy, monitoring and evaluation, or learning?	No.

	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	Corridors could be created between PAs to other protected reserves under co-management arrangements.
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	Incremental adaptation will be required once it is determine which products could be included in a 'green value chain' and which 'alternative livelihoods,' etc.
1b. Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.		General latitude and longitude is given for the Comoros Islands and maps of the parks are included in Annex A. In the future, it would be ideal if the GEF portal included an interactive map whereby these PAs could be explicitly outlined or where shapefiles could be uploaded, etc.
<b>2. Stakeholders.</b> Select the stakeholders that have participated in consultations during the project identification phase: Indigenous people and local communities; Civil society organizations; Private sector entities. If none of the above, please explain why. In addition, provide indicative information on how stakeholders, including civil society and indigenous peoples, will be engaged in the project preparation, and their respective roles and means of engagement.	Have all the key relevant stakeholders been identified to cover the complexity of the problem, and project implementation barriers?	Many stakeholders have been included. The one glaring omission that could prove to be fatal for the project is the fact that the private sector in the Comoros operating in the agricultural, fishing and tourism sectors have not engaged (p. 46).
	What are the stakeholders' roles, and how will their combined roles contribute to robust project design, to achieving global environmental outcomes, and to lessons learned and knowledge?	Each of the stakeholder groups has an important role to play as outlined in Table 1 (p. 41)
<b>3. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.</b> Please briefly include below any gender dimensions relevant to the project, and any plans to address gender in project design (e.g. gender analysis). Does the project expect to include any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women empowerment? Yes/no/ tbd. If possible, indicate in which results area(s) the project is expected to contribute to gender equality: access to and control over resources; participation and decision-making; and/or economic benefits or services. Will the project's results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators? yes/no /tbd	Have gender differentiated risks and opportunities been identified, and were preliminary response measures described that would address these differences?	Gender has been taken into consideration for this project.
	Do gender considerations hinder full participation of an important stakeholder group (or groups)? If so, how will these obstacles be addressed?	No.
<b>5. Risks.</b> Indicate risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved, and, if possible, propose measures that address these risks to be further developed during the project design	Are the identified risks valid and comprehensive? Are the risks specifically for things outside the project's control?	
	Are there social and environmental risks which could affect the project?	Risks are well described in Table 2.
	For climate risk, and climate resilience measures:	

	· How will the project's objectives or outputs be affected by climate risks over the period 2020 to 2050, and have the impact of these risks been addressed adequately?	The PIF cites specific impacts of climate change on the Comoros including temperature increases and sea level rise. Many effects are already being felt including coral bleaching and coastal erosion. The project - while not focusing on climate adaptation - could minimize some of these effects through reduced pressure on coastal areas, for example.
	· Has the sensitivity to climate change, and its impacts, been assessed?	No.
	· Have resilience practices and measures to address projected climate risks and impacts been considered? How will these be dealt with?	See earlier response regarding reef conservation.
	· What technical and institutional capacity, and information, will be needed to address climate risks and resilience enhancement measures?	There is another GEF project that specifically seeks to strengthen Comoros resilience against climate change and variability related disaster which ends in 2022 and will coordinate with this project.
<b>6. Coordination.</b> Outline the coordination with other relevant GEF-financed and other related initiatives	Are the project proponents tapping into relevant knowledge and learning generated by other projects, including GEF projects?	Yes
	Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?	Yes
	Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?	Yes - in fact the project specifically discusses lessons learned from a GEF-UNDP project (ID 4950) MTR that will be reviewed during PPG phase of this proposed project.
	How have these lessons informed the project's formulation?	As above.
	Is there an adequate mechanism to feed the lessons learned from earlier projects into this project, and to share lessons learned from it into future projects?	Yes
<b>8. Knowledge management.</b> Outline the "Knowledge Management Approach" for the project, and how it will contribute to the project's overall impact, including plans to learn from relevant projects, initiatives and evaluations.	What overall approach will be taken, and what knowledge management indicators and metrics will be used?	KM focuses on 1) gender empowerment strategy; 2) increased public awareness; 3) environmental education; 4) lessons learned and exchanges across PA sites; and participatory M&E. Indicators are number of brochures, posters, schools incorporating lessons learned, etc. This could be improved substantially.
	What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?	As above.
<b>STAP advisory response</b>	<b>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</b>	
<b>1. Concur</b>	STAP acknowledges that on scientific or technical grounds the concept has merit. The proponent is invited to approach STAP for advice at any time during the development of the project brief prior to submission for CEO endorsement.	
	* In cases where the STAP acknowledges the project has merit on scientific and technical grounds, the STAP will recognize this in the screen by stating that <b>"STAP is satisfied with the scientific and technical quality of the proposal and encourages the proponent to develop it with same rigor. At any time during the development of the project, the proponent is invited to approach STAP to consult on the design."</b>	

<p><b>2. Minor issues to be considered during project design</b></p>	<p>STAP has identified specific scientific /technical suggestions or opportunities that should be discussed with the project proponent as early as possible during development of the project brief. The proponent may wish to:</p>	
	<p>(i) Open a dialogue with STAP regarding the technical and/or scientific issues raised;</p>	
	<p>(ii) Set a review point at an early stage during project development, and possibly agreeing to terms of reference for an independent expert to be appointed to conduct this review.</p>	
	<p>The proponent should provide a report of the action agreed and taken, at the time of submission of the full project brief for CEO endorsement.</p>	
<p><b>3. Major issues to be considered during project design</b></p>	<p>STAP proposes significant improvements or has concerns on the grounds of specified major scientific/technical methodological issues, barriers, or omissions in the project concept. If STAP provides this advisory response, a full explanation would also be provided. The proponent is strongly encouraged to:</p>	
	<p>(i) Open a dialogue with STAP regarding the technical and/or scientific issues raised; (ii) Set a review point at an early stage during project development including an independent expert as required. The proponent should provide a report of the action agreed and taken, at the time of submission of the full project brief for CEO endorsement.</p>	