Part I: Project Information	Response	
GEF ID	10371	
Project Title	Biodiversity conservation, restoration and integrated sustainable development of lower Mangoky and South-Mananara watersheds	
Date of Screening	May 22 2020	
STAP member screener	Rosie Cooney	
STAP secretariat screener	Virginia Gorsevski	
STAP Overall Assessment and Rating	**Minor** STAP welcomes this project from FAO to promote forest and landscape restoration in southern Madagascar. However, the intended benefits (60 km^2 under improved practices and 15 km^2 restored) appear markedly minor in comparison to the size of the GEF investment ($7.3m). Overall it is comprehensive and well-written and includes several strong components. Most notably, the focus on spatial planning using a landscape approach supported by tools such as ROAM, Diversity4Restoration, and EX-ACT to prioritize areas for restoration improves the likelihood that interventions will be more targeted and achievable. Less clear is how community organizations and small holder farmers will be incentivized to diversify their livelihoods. The project will identify and promote nature-based and sustainable value chains through business plans and marketing assistance and possibly establishing funding windows; however, few details are provided to explain how this will be accomplished. More detail should be provided prior to CEO Endorsement. In this respect, the project would be well served by developing a robust and participatory Theory of Change (ToC) to more clearly identify causal links among outputs and outcomes based on assumptions and connected more directly with the indicators	

Part I: Project Information B. Indicative Project Description Summary	What STAP looks for	Response
	proposed for this project. See Theory of Change Primer (Dec 2019) for more guidance.	
Part I: Project Information B. Indicative Project Description Summary	**What STAP looks for**	**Response**
Project Objective	Is the objective clearly defined, and consistently related to the problem diagnosis?	Improve ecosystems services and productive capacities of the degraded forests, ecological corridors and landscapes in Southern Madagascar through widescale implementation of forest and landscape restoration.
Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project's objectives?	Yes (enabling environment, restoration, SLM, investment in 'livelihoods diversification,' KM)
Outcomes	A description of the expected short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention. Do the planned outcomes encompass important adaptation benefits?	Main outcomes 1.1) BD mainstreaming; 2.1) CBNRM; 3.1 innovative investment; 4.1) KM and M&E Adaptation benefits not discussed explicitly; however, the use of tools (i.e. Diversity4Restoration and ROAM) may be helpful.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	Yes, however, the total number of hectares to be restored as a result of this project is not substantial (i.e. 6,000 ha (60 km^2) under improved practices and 1,500 ha (15 km^2) restored) As reference, Madagascar goal under the Bonn Challenge is 4 million ha by 2030. No discussion of scalability.
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?	Outputs include guidelines, training modules, plans, strategies, etc. for each of the outcomes. This is standard, but most important is how these are developed (who is involved, what is the process, etc.) to ensure that they are implemented and result in sustained action on the ground.
Part II: Project justification	A simple narrative explaining the project's logic, i.e. a theory of change.	
1. **Project description. Briefly describe:**	Is the problem statement well-defined?	Good separation between direct and indirect drivers of deforestation and wildlife overexploitation

1) the global environmental and/or adaptation problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed (systems description)		
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	Yes
	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?	Yes
2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects	Is the baseline identified clearly?	Yes – good understanding of national circumstance and ongoing related projects and initiatives in the country and region and explanations for each how GEF funding would complement them. For example, there is a GCF project in the same area that focuses on climate resilience of smallholder farmer communities. This project would focus more on integrated landscape planning.
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits?	There is detailed general information about the state of forests, etc. based on studies and previous projects. The use of tools such as ROAM and Diversity for Restoration for specific interventions as well as a GIS for the larger landscape at the beginning of the project will help to determine a more specific baseline and fine-tune targets.
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	Baseline information on existing activities is robust and justification for additional cost is provided.
	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;	Yes

	are the lessons learned from similar or related past GEF and non-GEF interventions described; and	No
	how did these lessons inform the design of this project?	None are specifically mentioned in the PIF; however, the project discusses how it will take lessons learned from forest funds and the MEDD's ongoing efforts with REDD+/PES.
3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project	What is the theory of change?	There is no theory of change presented in this project. There are several good components which are fairly standard for GEF projects; however, it is not entirely clear how they are linked with underlying drivers, proximate causes and barriers.
	What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?	Without a theory of change it is unclear if the activities are sequential or concurrent.
	What is the set of linked activities, outputs, and outcomes to address the project's objectives?	The general idea is to develop guidelines for mainstreaming biodiversity in the forestry sector and to work with community organizations to restore and manage landscapes using climate smart ag and other practices. Less clear is the incentive for communities to engage in 'alternative livelihoods' which seems to center on investment mechanisms. These will require additional specificity to better understand the mechanics of the nature-based supply chains and various funds – particularly if there is a drop in demand for products or tourism due to the current global pandemic. The assumptions around being able to find suitable markets for biodiversity-friendly products need to be spelled out – a robust TOC will allow articulation of key assumptions underlying the steps in the TOC.
	Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions?	The components are there (drivers, barriers, proposed outcomes and outputs); however, without a logical framework or theory of change it is not possibly to understand how these relate to each other, what outputs/outcomes are dependent on or contribute to other

		outputs/outcomes, and what are the underlying assumptions.
	Is there a recognition of what adaptations may be required during project implementation to respond to changing conditions in pursuit of the targeted outcomes?	No, apart from the mitigation measures in the risk section. But this falls short of incorporating adaptive management into the project design (preferably as part of a ToC).
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 – the project captures GEF incrementality that builds on existing efforts by AfDB, the GCF and the Madagascar Biodiversity Fund and describes in each case how these actions will contribute to the larger effort.
	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/adaptation benefits, and are they measurable?	Madagascar has high levels of biodiversity endemism and is also highly threatened so projects aiming to restore essential habitat and reduce unsustainable use are of a global (and local) benefit. Similarly, the project aims to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions through AFOLU activities, which similarly has a global benefit.
	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	This is questionable. Total GEF funding is $7.3 m plus an additional $32 m in co-financing. However, total hectares of improved management and restoration is minimal
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits explicitly defined?	Yes
	Are indicators, or methodologies, provided to demonstrate how the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits will be measured and monitored during project implementation?	Tools and methods will be used to prioritize areas of high biodiversity and to estimate carbon benefits (i.e. EX-ACT, now with biodiversity module). It is not clear how the number of direct beneficiaries was determined and how this will be tracked.
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project's resilience to climate change?	The Diversity4Restoration tool incorporates climate projections into the decision support element; however, this is only with regards to

		what species to select for restoration. The human element is missing.
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?	Much of the project has standard components; however the use of tools such as ROAM, is encouraging and appear to contribute to effectiveness in biodiversity mainstreaming projects. There is potential for innovative financing through various funds; however, the information is not developed fully to be able to assess.
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	No – this is lacking. There is no plan for scaling up.
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	
1b. Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.		Map provided. Should include inset to see where this location is in relation to the entire country for perspective. Degradation map is good but no information on data source. Specific location of projects will be available later. See Earth Observation and the GEF – Section A1.0 (p. 64) for recommendations on providing geo-referenced information.
2. Stakeholders. 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.	Have all the key relevant stakeholders been identified to cover the complexity of the problem, and project implementation barriers?	Stakeholders identified and roles explained. Beyond this, no information provided on how specifically the project plans to provide mechanisms for communication and knowledge sharing and did not identify (or even assess) any concerns around levels of conflict among stakeholders' values with respect to the intended interventions. This is problematic given that one of the risks (med) identified is the mistrust between actions in relation to conservation and development goals.

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.		
	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?	
3. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. 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-	Have gender differentiated risks and opportunities been identified, and were preliminary response measures described that would address these differences?	Yes, however the main problem for women is that they are "…disadvantaged by insecure access and property rights to forest, tree and land resources, by discrimination and male bias in service provisions like credit and technology, and by being excluded from policy formulation and decision making at the household, community and national levels." The gender strategy address some of this but does not factor in the issue of property rights, which is likely the most critical. The others are important but it's not clear how many small holder farmers are women to be able to benefit from these interventions. Good that FAO will collect this sex-disaggregated data and hire a part time gender specialist.

	sensitive indicators? yes/no /tbd		

	Do gender considerations hinder full participation of an important stakeholder group (or groups)? If so, how will these obstacles be addressed?	See above.
5. Risks. 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? 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? • Has the sensitivity to climate change, and its impacts, been assessed? • Have resilience practices and measures to address projected climate risks and impacts been considered? How will these be dealt with? • What technical and institutional capacity, and information, will be needed to address climate risks and resilience enhancement measures?	Good table that separates risk of climate change on different land use sectors. Also uses the Diversity4Restoration tool which allows user to select which climate change scenario and projection year (2030, 2050, or 2070) to consider when selecting species for restoration. One of the risks (med) as well as underlying drivers is lack of clear land and resource tenure. The mitigation measures "support the review of tenure models of relevance to restoration…" but as this is a key issue and risk, it might be better to be more specific and also incorporated into the overall strategy and components. See Local Commons for Global Benefits recommendations regarding inclusion of insecure or weak tenure into problem analyses.
6. Coordination. 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
	How have these lessons informed the project's formulation?	Yes
	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 – mainly through the Project Management Unit (PMU)
8. Knowledge management. Outline the "Knowledge Management	What overall approach will be taken, and what knowledge management indicators and metrics will be used?	KM approach is standard. As this project appears to be very familiar with other projects in the region it aims to connect them through sharing of

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.		information and restoration and SLM best practices.
	What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?	Although this project is not formally part of The Restoration Initiative (TRI), given similar objectives it would make sense to connect with that program through the knowledge sharing platform.

Notes

STAP advisory response	Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed
1. Concur	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 *"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."*
2. Minor issues to be considered during project design	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:
	(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, and possibly agreeing to terms of reference for an independent expert to be appointed to conduct this review.
	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.

3. **Major issues to be considered during project design**	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:
	(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.