

Part I: Project Information		Response
GEF ID		10411
Project Title		Malawi-climate resilient and sustainable capture fisheries, aquaculture development and watershed management project
Date of Screening		9-Dec-19
STAP member Screener		Mark Stafford Smith
STAP secretariat screener		Guadalupe Duron
STAP Overall Assessment		<p>Minor issues to be considered during project design: This proposal, aimed at improving the resilience of Malawi's inland fisheries and the associate land management in the face of climate change, with a focus on local community engagement, aims to complement and leverage an approved AfDB project focusing more on the enterprise development aspects of the same challenge. The proposal has a pleasing degree of logical coherence, which would benefit from a more formal theory of change exercise but which already has the majority of logic clear in its narrative. STAP notes 2 key issues for further consideration. First, the proposal is aimed at engaging fishing communities in planning and implementing locally appropriate management with the intent of also engaging their support to protect improvements from abuse; however, in passing this latter responsibility to the local communities, it is vital to also ensure sufficient rights and resources for communities to follow up on the intent. Consideration of how to ensure the balancing of these "3 R's" (rights, resources and responsibilities) should be included in the next phase theory of change; there is a brief discussion of traditional authority late in the proposal, but whether this will provide sufficient rights for action is not clear. Secondly, the proposal articulates potential future climate change (and the uncertainty in its rate) very well, as well as mentioning in less detail trends in some other major drivers such as population, food demand, etc; however, there is no analysis of whether the proposed actions will remain viable under all plausible scenarios of change, and hence whether a consideration of robust rather than optimal options would result in changing the proposal. We recommend that the next phase of project development considers the implications of a small number of alternative simple future scenarios (e.g. low/high rates of climate change, levels of population change and demand) for possible adaptation pathways for fishing livelihoods in Malawi. STAP would be happy to contribute further suggestions in this regard if needed.</p>
Part I: Project Information		
B. Indicative Project Description Summary		
Project Objective	Is the objective clearly defined, and consistently related to the problem diagnosis?	Yes, though it may help in maintaining focus to say "to improve the sustainability..."in the face of what key drivers? (e.g. climate change, on-going degradation, etc)
Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project's objectives?	The set of components are coherent, and the outcomes and outputs at a level of disaggregation to see the core intended logic, described in more detail below.
Outcomes	A description of the expected short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention.	The outcomes lead well to the overall objective, with an excellent and consistent focus on participatory approaches; though a comprehensive theory of change may question whether some issues to do with rights and resources are addressed sufficiently to enable the communities to exercise their proposed responsibilities to protect the outcomes of the planning and implementation activities.
	Do the planned outcomes encompass important global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits?	Yes
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	Yes, though further attention needs to be paid as to whether some of these will be durable in the face of on-going change
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?	The outline here is particularly coherent as to sets of outputs likely to work together to achieve the specified outcomes.
Part II: Project justification		
1. Project description. Briefly describe:		
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?
		Yes, very clearly and coherently stated; notably the range of possible rates of climate change is identified, though the implications of this uncertainty are not picked up later.

	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	Yes, and four root causes being addressed are clearly identified, linked to 3 key barriers, with subsequent outputs linked to these explicitly. It would help to mention the governance arrangements within which the communities operate here (some information on this appears much later in the proposal), and whether these create any more barriers to (or opportunities for) the actions proposed.
	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?	Not applicable.
2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects	Is the baseline identified clearly?	The base line, particularly of the AfDB project, approved but starting in 2020, is clear and complementary.
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits?	Yes
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the additional cost reasoning for the project?	Yes, the outcomes of the baseline are clearly distinguished from the present proposal, but have considerable potential to be synergistic and deliver co-benefits, providing coordination among the teams is maintained
	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;	Not applicable.
	are the lessons learned from similar or related past GEF and non-GEF interventions described; and	These are identified later (Section 6) but lessons are not listed very explicitly.
	how did these lessons inform the design of this project?	Clearly the issue of local community engagement is one which is core to this project. However, the path for others to inform is less explicit.
3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project	What is the theory of change?	The ToC is not explicitly stated but implicitly can be precis'd from the proposal (p.27) as: "The project seeks to complement the baseline project by improving the management of the soil and water resources in the vicinity of the lake environs in order to protect the fisheries and ensure maximum utility is drawn from the investments made in the fisheries sector through the baseline project (especially its sub-component 1.2). Recognising that challenges related to sedimentation, pollution, and losses of aquatic biodiversity are better addressed through integrated lake basin planning and management, the proposal aims to integrate land, water, forestry, fisheries and wildlife practice and policy, and to coordinate the use of a range of policy and legislative instruments to achieve integrated management goals, as most existing threats to lake management and fisheries resources are driven by factors exogeneous to the immediate lake environment. Building on efforts already made over the past ten years to organise the communities, the proposed LDCF project seeks to use the community organisation, notably the beach village committees (BVCs), as the entry point for promoting sustainable catchment management around Malawi's lakes so as to protect the lake ecosystems and fish resources against the threats of both climate change and population growth through (i) strengthening the BVCs capacity for lake protection and climate resilience, (ii) strengthening the capacity of local government for watershed planning and management and lake protection, (iii) rehabilitating lake-related ecosystems and (iv) running participatory knowledge management and early warning systems." The logic is very credible as far as it goes, but it would be helpful to make this ToC more explicit, and specifically construct it backwards from objective to outcomes to outputs to ensure there are no critical missing elements (e.g. rights and resources, as noted above) - ie. to address whether the outputs (in conjunction with other investments) are necessary AND sufficient to achieve the objective. In particular, the issue of achieving this durably in the face of climate change and population growth (as stated above) needs addressing.
	What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?	
	What is the set of linked activities, outputs, and outcomes to address the project's objectives?	This is credibly outlined as above. One key issue is to ensure coordination between this proposal and the main baseline AfDB project - given this is many of the same players it may be implicitly assumed that this will be case, but this should be formalised in some way, as there should be many opportunities for each to inform the other (but section 7 does not mention such coordination).

	Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions?	In general, good, subject to points above. Specific note: in output 2.1.1 it is implied that priority watersheds will be the most degraded; this may be true but it may be useful to consider the hierarchy of approaches discussed under Land Degradation Neutrality (but applied to lake catchments here) of "Avoid, Reduce, Reverse", inasmuch as much greater total impact may be obtained by simple interventions to protect watersheds still in good condition, and to reverse conditions in those that are nearing but not at a tipping point, than in costly rehabilitation. This is not suggesting an all-or-nothing strategy, as community engagement etc should be included in the equation, but research suggests that simply going for the worst cases is likely to slow recognition of the benefits of interventions. See more about these principles in STAP's LDN guidelines at: http://www.stapgef.org/guidelines-land-degradation-neutrality
	Is there a recognition of what adaptations may be required during project implementation to respond to changing conditions in pursuit of the targeted outcomes?	Component 4 emphasises a participatory M&E process, which is excellent; Output 2.2.1 also incorporates some key records for learning. However, there is little attention given to how (through what processes, local committees, etc) this will feed into learning and adjustment of priorities in a deliberate way; this should be further considered in project development. In addition, a formal theory of change should be used to (i) develop other key indicators that will be able test whether the causal logic is proceeding as expected, and (ii) through review points in the project to consider whether legitimate flexibility in project implementation should be exercised due to reflexive changes to the theory of change identified from the monitoring
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?	Not applicable.
	LDCF/SCCF: will the proposed incremental activities lead to adaptation which reduces vulnerability, builds adaptive capacity, and increases resilience to climate change?	Strong potential for this, yes
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 adaptation benefits explicitly defined?	Yes
	Are indicators, or methodologies, provided to demonstrate how the adaptation benefits will be measured and monitored during project implementation?	Good approaches are canvassed but need elaboration in the next stage of project development
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project's resilience to climate change?	This is a weak point of the proposal - activities are effectively aimed at general improvement of climate resilience around Malawi's lakes; but, despite outlining the uncertain potential rates of climate change and noting the importance of population increases, the proposal does not analyse the resilience of these changes (i.e. the project impacts) nor of the project implementation process itself (e.g. what if there are severe droughts or floods in the next 5 years?) to these sorts of long-term, uncertain drivers. As a result, more robust options may have been under-emphasised. (For a narrow example, the proposed introduction of floating agriculture (p.40) might be a great idea but also might be disastrous if many more droughts and lower lake levels are a possibility; assessing such suggestions against alternative scenarios as a standard procedure would help determine whether such proposals are robust or not.)
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?	The main innovation of the project (which is not that new globally but perhaps here) is its excellent and coherent emphasis on community engagement, where there is plenty of research evidence for better ownership of outcomes and hence potential durability of impacts. There are other smaller innovations such as actively bringing new technologies and management approaches to these lake systems from other places in the world. In these regards, the project shows appropriate levels of innovation.
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	Component 4 has several good approaches to this, being many elements of a theory of change for scaling within the overall theory of change - it would help to elaborate this as such, to ensure all key aspects have been considered.
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	The major concern here is that the assessment of impact durability over time in the face of on-going medium term climate and population changes has not been factored in - deeper consideration of this may identify a greater need for transformation than currently appears.

1b. Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.		OK
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. 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?	The emphasis on engagement in the proposal is good and is intended to continue through the next design stage.
	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?	as above, considered well.
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-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 issues are given good attention. STAP would urge the project design team to allocate some members to ensure this is given priority throughout the design process when it comes to more detailed discussion that sometimes forget the good intentions. In addition, relevant indicators need development.
	Do gender considerations hinder full participation of an important stakeholder group (or groups)? If so, how will these obstacles be addressed?	Yes. As above, under consideration.
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?	The risk assessment is generally fine for within-project implementation risks.
	Are there social and environmental risks which could affect the project?	Ditto, except there is no attention paid to how climate events during the project implementation might impede its progress - e.g. if there were 5 very dry years in which woodlot establishment failed or lake levels dropped drastically (or massive floods washed all the seedlings out and flooded the shores...), what would be the diversion of efforts? these are clearly real implementation risks to consider in order that in occurring by surprise they do not undermine a good 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?	As noted above this is a weakness of the project proposal - however, it would be better addressed in project design rather than in a post hoc risk assessment, see suggestions above. The approach of applying scenarios can expand to encompass other uncertain trends in key drivers, such as population, food demand, etc.
	· 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?	Inasmuch as these are the focus of the intervention, this aspect is good. So the issue is dealing with uncertainty in the condition that these need to address.
	· What technical and institutional capacity, and information, will be needed to address climate risks and resilience enhancement measures?	ditto

<p>6. Coordination. Outline the coordination with other relevant GEF-financed and other related initiatives</p>	<p>Are the project proponents tapping into relevant knowledge and learning generated by other projects, including GEF projects?</p>	<p>Project identified, but lessons are mostly only implicitly included.</p>
	<p>Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?</p>	<p>ditto</p>
	<p>Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?</p>	<p>In limited ways</p>
	<p>How have these lessons informed the project's formulation?</p>	<p>Yes, especially as far as community engagement is concerned.</p>
	<p>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?</p>	<p>Not clear. Also, a strong mechanism for coordination and bi-directional learning between this and the contemporaneous AfDB project is needed - this may be implicit at present.</p>
<p>8. Knowledge management. 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.</p>	<p>What overall approach will be taken, and what knowledge management indicators and metrics will be used?</p>	<p>As noted, the participatory focus of this is laudable and innovative. More details need to be developed.</p>
	<p>What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?</p>	
<p>STAP advisory response</p>	<p>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</p>	
<p>1. Concur</p>	<p>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.</p>	
	<p>* 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 <i>"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."</i></p>	
<p>2. Minor issues to be considered during project design</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>3. Major issues to be considered during project design</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>	
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