

Part I: Project Information		Response
GEF ID	10415	
Project Title	Adaptation to Climate Change in the Coastal Zone in Vanuatu – Phase II (VCAP II)	
Date of Screening	21-Nov-19	
STAP member Screener	Mark Stafford Smith	
STAP secretariat screener	Guadalupe Duron	
STAP Overall Assessment		<p>Minor issues to be considered during project design. STAP welcomes UNDP's multi-trust GEF and LDCF project "Adaptation to Climate Change in the Coastal Zone in Vanuatu – Phase II (VCAP II)". Drawing from the priorities identified in its National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA), Vanuatu seeks to strengthen its adaptation to climate change, address land degradation, and improve its biodiversity conservation. STAP is pleased with the project's problem analysis, including the use of climate projection data to describe the climate context and the interventions. The project developers are cognizant of the communities' knowledge and experience in developing coping strategies for climate change. They are equally aware that these coping strategies may need to be strengthened in light of the projected climate trends. STAP encourages the project developers to describe the global environmental benefits more clearly, especially the benefits resulting from sustainable land management which are defined less clearly. In this regard, the project developers may wish use UNCCD's indicators for land degradation neutrality (land cover, land productivity, and soil organic carbon), and apply STAP's guidelines on LDN. Additionally, STAP welcomes the focus on community-based resource management and the importance of analyzing institutional, social, and governance issues in order to have impact across scales. STAP wishes to refer the project developers to the work of the Stockholm Resilience Center on adaptive governance: https://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/research-streams/stewardship/adaptive-governance-.html An adaptive governance framework would be valuable to apply to increase Vanuatu's resilience to abrupt and undesired change.</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.
Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project's objectives?	Yes. Activities are planned to strengthen climate resilience, protected area management, and sustainable land management. These efforts will seek to improve livelihoods, biodiversity conservation, and land management for ecosystem services.
Outcomes	A description of the expected short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention.	
	Do the planned outcomes encompass important global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits?	Yes, the outcomes reflect climate adaptation benefits (e.g. climate resilience), and global environmental benefits (e.g. protected areas established).

	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	Yes, with a good monitoring plan.
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?	Yes.
Part II: Project justification	A simple narrative explaining the project's logic, i.e. a theory of change.	
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, the problem is well defined. The PIF provides valuable information about the development and adaptation context (useful for additional cost reasoning - LDCF), and biodiversity conservation and land degradation (useful for incremental reasoning - GEF). The PIF cites a number of sources for Vanuatu's climate data, its vulnerability index, and provides information about an in-depth climate assessment for Vanuatu. This level of detail is valuable, though the climate analysis notes uncertainties in some variables (e.g. even in direction with rainfall, and rates of sea level rise, which NB have been increased since the PCCSP was completed); these uncertainties, coupled with those in other drivers such as population growth, resource use demands, and community perceptions about moving, should be the basis for a much stronger consideration of alternative future scenarios through this proposal, in order to ensure that the proposed response activities are robust in the face of this uncertainty (ie, responses work reasonably in all futures rather than working well in one but failing badly in others). In addition, the project developers may wish to draw from the following paper for the problem analysis: Komugabe-Dixon, Aimée F., et al. "Environmental change, urbanisation, and socio-ecological resilience in the Pacific: Community narratives from Port Vila, Vanuatu." <i>Ecosystem Services</i> 39 (2019): 100973. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecoser.2019.100973
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	Yes, the barriers are described well for climate monitoring (of coral reefs), biodiversity conservation, and, land management. However, barriers/challenges such as the growing rural population (p.41) are not subsequently addressed in terms of considering whether the plausible rate at which the proposal and others may increase resilience can keep pace with plausible rates of climate change and population pressure, etc. Similarly, will a focus on sustainable land management achieve enough to offset growing pressures from the growing population? These issues need addressing as, if the answer is 'possibly no', then different approaches may need considering. For example, although the dispersed nature of the islands is noted as a challenge, it also offers opportunities, such as spreading risks, especially with respect to acute events such as cyclones.

	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 and yes. The document explains well how LDCF and the GEF funds are needed to address the multiple drivers of environmental degradation, and strengthen capacity building for embedding climate change into policy planning across sectors and scales.
2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects	Is the baseline identified clearly?	Yes, a baseline narrative is provided.
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits?	Not yet as indicators will be identified in the PPG phase. STAP proposes to define the methodologies used to measure and track the indicators.
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	Yes, the baseline is identified as existing government and community measures. The incremental (GEF) and additional cost (LDCF) reasoning are justified as strengthening the baseline by improving resilience to climate change and livelihoods, and enhancing biodiversity conservation. STAP recommends adding land degradation to this incremental reasoning.
	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;	Partly. The indicators will be added during the PPG phase. STAP expects indicators to be identified for land degradation, biodiversity conservation, and climate adaptation benefits. For land degradation, Vanuatu may consider establishing an LDN baseline using national data and/or the global default data on land cover and land cover change, land productivity, and soil organic carbon. Trends.Earth (http://trends.earth/docs/en/about/general_info.html) may be helpful in helping to establish and monitor LDN baselines. In addition, STAP's guidelines on LDN (http://www.stapgef.org/guidelines-land-degradation-neutrality) can help the project developers design LDN interventions.
	are the lessons learned from similar or related past GEF and non-GEF interventions described; and	Yes, this project will build-on a previous phase. The project identifies a number of ways it will use knowledge from the first phase to design current interventions.
	how did these lessons inform the design of this project?	See above.

<p>3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project</p>	<p>What is the theory of change?</p>	<p>The preliminary theory of change can be described as "V-CAP II will comprehensively address four of eleven priorities identified in the NAPA. These include i) Land use planning and management (integrating community conservation areas), ii) community-based marine resources management; iii) integrated coastal zone management; and iv) mainstreaming climate change into policy and national planning as outlined in the table below. Further, the NAPA places particular emphasis on the need for community-based marine resource management, embracing both traditional and modern practices, in enhancing the resilience of vulnerable coastal communities. In addition, it will complement NAPA priority in scaling up and distributing results of climate proofing agriculture and will enhance approaches to water management as identified as NAPA priority. To address these priorities, V-CAP II will target a number of adaptation options outlined in the NAPA including: development of local adaptation plans, climate proofing of infrastructure, development of an efficient early warning system, awareness raising and capacity building, and coastal re-vegetation and rehabilitation. Such adaptation activities will help to promote food security, which the NAPA defines as an overarching goal of all adaptation activities. V-CAP II adopts cross-sector and participatory approaches to promote action and learning at multiple levels. These approaches are also important in accounting for interaction between human activities, ecosystems, and biophysical processes." The NAPA focus is laudable, but a fuller Theory of Change needs elaborating to ensure that the activities proposed are necessary and sufficient to achieve the outcomes intended, and to more critically appraise some of the causal logic implied above.</p>
	<p>What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?</p>	<p>See above.</p>
	<p>· What is the set of linked activities, outputs, and outcomes to address the project's objectives?</p>	<p>See above.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well informed identification of the underlying assumptions? 	<p>The theory of change needs to be developed further by identifying the assumptions that need to be tested, or validated, to meet the outcomes. This would help ensure the activities are likely to lead to the outcomes - for example, Outcome 2.1 is about reduced exposure, yet most of the outputs are about technical aspects and skills to deliver early warnings, without addressing how the community will act on them to reduce exposure and whether the warnings are in the right form for this (this may be understood from phase 1 but is not clear here if so); here a detailed ToC (challenged with some community stakeholders) might suggest a further co-design activity with local communities, etc. Similarly output 3.2.2 focuses on a DSS for LDN, yet really identifying targets first may shape the nature of any DSS needed - this seems one technocratic step, not the comprehensive elements of integration of LDN into decision-making processes as intended in the outcome. And Output 3.3.1 says 'Communities will be empowered to develop...local strategies...for planning' - but research shows communities are very un-empowered if such planning is not followed up by the resources and rights to implement it - a ToC should ensure all 3 elements (responsibilities from planning but also resources and rights) are addressed to achieve the outcome of action. Outcome 4 aims at scaling, but is based on information push and awareness, which by themselves are not usually enough to trigger action; considering how early engagement (that is intended) can be leveraged systematically for example might help, and could be elucidated in the ToC. STAP's primer on theory of change will be helpful in developing a theory of change: http://www.stapgef.org/publications</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a recognition of what adaptations may be required during project implementation to respond to changing conditions in pursuit of the targeted outcomes? 	<p>Yes. The project recognizes that as population growths and the effects of climate change intensify, new approaches and technologies may be required to complement short-term coping strategies. However, this could be better informed by a scenario-based approach to assessing the range of uncertainties to be considered, and by ensuring that maladaptive path dependencies are avoided in any investments - the goal of adaptation pathways approaches (see RAPTA) which would be useful to consider here.</p>
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 with careful monitoring. The incremental reasoning (GEF) and additional cost (LDCF) are focused on strength
	LDCF/SCCF: will the proposed incremental activities lead to adaptation which reduces vulnerability, builds adaptive capacity, and increases resilience to climate change?	Yes with careful monitoring.
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, however, indicators will be provided in the PPG. Also, STAP expects indicators to be identified for each of the expected global environmental benefits, and for the adaptation benefits. Note that the LDN benefits depend on no net loss of condition for any land type, so need to be accompanied with tracking to confirm the same land types are not degraded elsewhere; this is especially true given the assertion (p.56) that "Better land practices will ...require less land...ensure additional land in PAs" - this may be hoped for but with growing population demands could easily be lost through leakage unless additional measures are considered.

	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	Yes. STAP notes that vetiver grasses or pineapple hedgerows will be grown to help restore soil. The following paper may assist the project developers describe further the drivers of land degradation, including mining, and how vetiver grass can also play a role in phytoremediation of contaminated soils and water in Vanuatu. Wairiu, Morgan. "Land degradation and sustainable land management practices in Pacific Island Countries." Regional Environmental Change 17.4 (2017): 1053-1064.
	Are the global environmental benefits explicitly defined?	Yes. In addition to ecosystem services, STAP encourages the project proponents to consider one of the indicators used by UNCCD to monitor LDN: soil organic carbon, land cover, or land productivity. Trends.Earth can be used to establish a baseline.
	Are indicators, or methodologies, provided to demonstrate how the global environmental benefits will be measured and monitored during project implementation?	Not yet as indicators will be identified in the PPG phase. STAP proposes to define the methodologies used to measure and track the indicators.
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project's resilience to climate change?	A series of activities on climate change will be applied (see theory of change section above) to strengthen adaptive capacity, and increase the project's resilience to climate change.
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?	Yes, the project is innovative in policy (e.g. working on governance across scales on land use planning and enacting climate change policies and activities); monitoring, evaluation and learning (develop "ecosystem health baselines including climate change resilience indicators for each of the target V-CAP II sites".) It is good to see (p.57) consideration of short and long-term strategies; further innovation could arise from more formally structuring this sort of thinking throughout the intervention using adaptation pathways thinking to identify when short term solutions become maladaptive and mapping a further pathway towards alternatives, so that early investments do not cut off such options later. This would be straightforwardly based on the scenarios mentioned above. See RAPTA and sources therein; such approaches has been tested with community contexts in Indonesia (e.g. see Butler et al. (2016) Building capacity for adaptation pathways in eastern Indonesian islands: Synthesis and lessons learned. Climate Risk Management 12:A1-A10. DOI 10.1016/j.crm.2016.05.002. and related special issue papers).
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	Yes, the project considers carefully governance in terms of policy implementation, and planning for adaptive capacity and land use management.
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	Based on the weak adaptive capacity, and the need to improve adaptive capacity to cope with abrupt change, and uncertainty, transformational change will be required.
1b. Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.		

<p>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.</p>	<p>Have all the key relevant stakeholders been identified to cover the complexity of the problem, and project implementation barriers?</p>	<p>Yes, and as the project is developed, STAP recommends to think about: 1) Have all the key relevant stakeholders been identified to cover the complexity of the problem, and project implementation barriers? And, 2) 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?</p>
	<p>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?</p>	<p>See above.</p>
<p>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</p>	<p>Have gender differentiated risks and opportunities been identified, and were preliminary response measures described that would address these differences?</p>	<p>Yes, and they will be further assessed during the project design. STAP is pleased that a gender plan will be developed.</p>
	<p>Do gender considerations hinder full participation of an important stakeholder group (or groups)? If so, how will these obstacles be addressed?</p>	<p>STAP recommends addressing these issues during the project design.</p>
<p>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</p>	<p>Are the identified risks valid and comprehensive? Are the risks specifically for things outside the project's control?</p>	<p>Yes, the risks are valid, and comprehensive - especially climate risks and risks on weak adaptive capacity.</p>
	<p>Are there social and environmental risks which could affect the project?</p>	<p>Yes, the project identifies these risks, which include governance.</p>

	For climate risk, and climate resilience measures:	STAP recommends addressing the issues listed in this section during the project design. In addition, STAP recommends carrying out a climate risk assessment, annexing the results of this assessment to the project, and developing the project based on the assessment. Key questions the project developers should ask during the project design are listed below. Additionally, STAP recommends for the project developers to consider: 1) the period of time the intervention is expected to contribute to global environmental benefits and adaptation benefits, and how the (GEBs) activities may be affected by climate change; 2) how each intervention will be impacted by climate variability, or weather-related disasters (e.g. droughts); 3) how might climate, and non-climate stressors (e.g. population growth), interact to exacerbate climate risks; and, 4) how do uncertainties in all of these within the period of time above affect the choice of response options, particularly with respect to robustness? The project developers may wish to refer to U.S. AID's Climate Risk and Management tool: https://www.climatelinks.org/resources/climate-risk-screening-management-tool ; STAP's guidance on climate risk assessment: http://www.stapgef.org/stap-guidance-climate-risk-screening ; or World Resource's Institute climate watch data: https://www.climatewatchdata.org/ ; among other sources.
	· 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?	See above.
	· Has the sensitivity to climate change, and its impacts, been assessed?	See above.
	· Have resilience practices and measures to address projected climate risks and impacts been considered? How will these be dealt with?	See above.
	· What technical and institutional capacity, and information, will be needed to address climate risks and resilience enhancement measures?	See above.
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. The project will use experiences from its first phase. For example, the site selection criteria is based on lessons learned from the first phase project.
	Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?	See above.
	Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?	See above.
	How have these lessons informed the project's formulation?	In addition to the lessons from the project's first phase, STAP recommends identifying lessons from other key projects (GEF and non-GEF).
	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, through the project's knowledge management plan.
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.	What overall approach will be taken, and what knowledge management indicators and metrics will be used?	The knowledge management plan will draw from the project's first phase's terminal evaluation. STAP is pleased this will be done, and encourages the project developers to identify opportunities for scaling-up results, and lessons from the first phase. These opportunities should be described in the project - at present (as noted above) this important aspect of the proposal is weak in terms of mechanisms for achieving real mainstreaming.

	What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?	See above.
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.	
	<i>* 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."</i>	
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.	