

## REVISED STAP SCREENING TEMPLATE, OCTOBER 2022

GEF ID	11552
Project title	Sao Tome e Principe – Development of the Transport and Coastal Protection Sector
Date of screen	31 May 2024
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### 1. Summary of STAP's views of the project

This is a reasonable proposal, which included some good elements such as a thorough (if repetitive) analysis of the underlying problems and issues the project is aiming to tackle, and a good description of projected climate change impacts for the target country of São Tomé and Príncipe. However, STAP also identified a significant number of issues that need to be revised and rectified.

On balance, none of these issues are significant enough to raise major concerns, but cumulatively they could have an impact on the effectiveness of the project and will therefore need to be addressed during PPG phase. Among these should be noted:

- i) The theory of change (ToC), which missed some important elements that are usually recommended;
- ii) The description of the components, which was not always clear or to the point;
- iii) The need for component 1 to be clear about the intended time period over which the measures are supposed to be effective, and the consequences of this for design and other actions;
- iv) The focus of component 2, was not always primarily on tackling climate change adaptation issues, which should be a requirement for this type of GEF-funded projects.

Further details on all of these issues have been provided below in section 2 and 3 of this document; STAP is available to discuss any of the comments made herewith if required.

*Note to STAP screeners: a summary of STAP's view of the project (not of the project itself), covering both strengths and weaknesses.*

#### STAP's assessment\*

- Concur - STAP acknowledges that the concept has scientific and technical merit
- Minor** - STAP has identified some scientific and technical points to be addressed in project design
- Major - STAP has identified significant concerns to be addressed in project design

Please contact the STAP Secretariat if you would like to discuss.

### 2. Project rationale, and project description – are they sound?

See annex on STAP's screening guidelines.

**The project summary** gives a comprehensive overview of the underlying problems and associated issues that the project is aiming to address. The analysis is quite thorough, if also rather repetitive, and is supported by a reasonable amount of data and evidence, which is however inconsistently referenced. The focus of the analysis is centered around several topics that include economic development, transport and related infrastructure, social development issues with a focus on gender, and financing, which are all underpinned by the common theme of climate change impacts. The description is repetitive in places and could be streamlined by reducing the number of sub-sections and consolidating some of them into fewer common themes, but it does the job of setting the context for the project objective. Moreover, the sub-section on climate projections is using the original version of the Representative Concentration Pathways (RCP), which were developed by the IPCC for the Fifth Assessment Report (AR5). These have now been largely supplanted by a more recent version, which was developed for (AR6)

and is often used in conjunction with the Shared Socio-economic Pathways (SSPs) that were developed to describe alternative socio-economic development scenarios. Another aspect that is completely missing is any analysis of how climate scenarios might interact with other drivers of change, such as population, economic conditions, possible conflict, etc. STAP recommends the use of “simple future narratives” to develop some quick alternative pictures of the future to help ensure that the proposed interventions will be robust across future uncertainty.

The **project objective** is oddly placed a lot further down in the proposal than it normally is and after the sections on project description and ToC, which is quite ineffective in terms of structuring the proposal and can be quite confusing for the reader. Furthermore, the objective asserts that the ultimate aim is “*to enhance coastal resilience through climate resilient transport infrastructure, improved road safety and connectivity, facilitating access to markets, schools and services*”, but other sections of the proposal appear to advocate the enhancement of climate resilient transport infrastructure, improved road safety and connectivity (in order to facilitate access to markets, schools and services, and thereby improved national resilience to climate change) through improved coastal resilience. If the objective was strictly ‘coastal resilience’ then a quite different project might be designed. This is important as it frames what the theory of change is really trying to achieve. STAP encourages project proponents to be very clear about the objective for this reason.

The **Theory of Change (ToC)** for the project consists exclusively of the diagram and does not include a narrative section, a “hypothesis statement”, or a description of the logical pathways that explains how the proposed intervention is supposed to lead to the desired change, drawing on a causal analysis of available evidence. The ToC diagram presented most of the basic elements that would be expected but did not include some of the additional key elements (e.g. assumptions, barriers, enabling factors) that normally add strength and clarity to underlying argument(s) supporting the case for any project. In fact, the proposal does not even include separate narrative sections that describe either the assumptions that underpin the ToC or the barriers that can affect the implementation of project activities. As a consequence, STAP is not convinced that a good theory of change *process* (as opposed to providing a diagram) has been undertaken, preferably involving local stakeholders. Furthermore, the **assumptions** attached to the ToC are very inadequate: (i) “*project interventions not overwhelmed by future climate change*” should be a design criterion, not an assumption’. (ii) “*limited capacity and finances adequately addressed*” should also be a design criterion, otherwise there is no point making the investment. There are other assumptions in the logic that should be identified, and then monitored to ensure they are justified (and to allow adaptive management if not). These include issues such as whether the road maintenance alone is sufficient to improve economic connectivity and resilience (e.g. other countries like PNG find fuel shortages or other sources of input costs are just as important), whether girls being able to get to school improves their education given other pressures (noting the question below of whether this should be in scope), and so on. The theory of change should identify these, explain why they are legitimate assumptions but where there is any uncertainty proceeded to monitor them during implementation.

The description of **subcomponent 1.1. and 1.2** repeated a lot of the information about the local context and problem(s) to be addressed that had already been provided in previous sections of the proposal. When it finally got to the substance of what the project is planning to do the description of activities was rather generic and did not always provide a clear idea of everything the project is planning to do. For example, in subcomponent 1.1, when it mentions Nature-based Solutions (NbS) to stabilize slopes it does not provide any examples of the type of solutions that may be used (e.g. restoration and rehabilitation of beaches and sand dunes, mangroves, mixed wetlands and salt marshes ecosystems), which would have been important to see in order to evaluate/assess the effectiveness of the solutions being proposed. Also, the related output (output 1.1) mentions a mix of green and gray solutions, which STAP does not oppose, whilst the description of the component only mentions NbS. Also missing is any assessment of how long into the future these measures will be effective (i.e. 5 years, 20 years or 100 years?) – especially given that sea level rise is continuing, and that most measures will be overwhelmed at some stage. In addition, some measures could endure (e.g. increased community capacity under Component 2) whereas measures such as beach nourishment require on-going (and increasing) work and funding to achieve in the face of change – how will these be enduring?

**Sub-components 2.3 and 2.5** propose to tackle some very important and worthwhile issues around road safety for girls and women and road safety more generally, which are surely needed in the context of São Tomé and Príncipe (STP) and will also generate important socio-economic co-benefits such as improved school attendance and education for women and girls and improved mobility patterns. However, STAP could not help but notice that the majority of activities proposed under this sub-component (e.g. deploying GBV communication campaigns and security measures for women and girls) should really be financed under different type of projects that focus on social and economic development issues as opposed to climate change adaptation such as this one. It should be clear that STAP is fully supportive of this type of activity, but do they fit in the scope of LDCF?

The proposal includes the standard section on **key risks**. However, these description should focus on the residual operational risks after the project has been implemented – that is, expected levels of climate change should be planned for in the project, and this should consider residual risks resulting either from the project having too low an ambition, or due to disruptions to project implementation, such as a cyclone hitting the coast halfway through project works, etc. The description of proposed mitigation measures is weak across the board and does not provide a solid reassurance that the project has a plan in place to deal with the consequences of any of the risks coming to fruition.

Page 28 asserts that the project description includes a clear KM&L component, but this was not visible.

*Note: provide a general appraisal, asking whether relevant screening guideline questions have been addressed adequately – not all the questions will be relevant to all proposals; no need to comment on every question, only those needing more attention, noting any done very well, but ensure that all are considered. Comments should be helpful, evaluative, and qualitative, rather than yes/no.*

### **3. Specific points to be addressed, and suggestions**

- 1) Provide full references to acknowledge and verify the sources of the quantitative data and information used throughout the proposal.
- 2) Consider revising the project 'summary' section of the proposal (which is really the Project Rationale), with the aim of streamlining and reducing its overall length, possibly by merging and condensing the content of some of the sub-sections. Please also follow the PIF instructions and provide a short overarching summary at the front to orient readers.
- 3) Given the nature of this project, STAP would recommend revising the projection in the proposal using the latest iteration of the RPCs and the SSPs. However, additional detail is not really needed to justify the proposal from the climate perspective. What should be added are some simple future narratives in order to analyze how the climate scenarios might interact with other drivers of change, such as population, economic conditions, possible conflict, etc. With these then used to help ensure that the proposed interventions will be robust across future uncertainty (see STAP's advice on [Simple Future Narratives](#))
- 4) Move the project objective to the place it normally occupies in all other PIFs (i.e. after the project summary and before the project outline/rationale).
- 5) Provide clearer demarcations between different sections of the proposal making use of titles and subtitles as needed.
- 6) Add a narrative section for the ToC that describes clearly the logical pathways to impact for the project.
- 7) Add distinct narrative sections for the assumptions that underpin the ToC or the barriers that can affect the implementation of project activities and identify which of these assumptions needs monitoring for possible adaptive management (thereby creating a real monitoring and knowledge management element to justify the assertion on p.28).

- 8) Add visual elements to the TOC diagram illustrating the assumptions and barriers.
- 9) The proposal should provide a more accurate and detailed description of the proposed NBSs it intends to adopt and provide an explanation of why these are being chosen, which should ideally be supported by a technical assessment and SWOT analysis for different options that evaluates factors such as: overall cost and financing requirements (particularly where on-going), durability, effectiveness, maintenance requirements, time needed for each to be completed and become effective. In particular this should be clear regarding what timeframe the measures are expected to be effective for, and what consequences of this there are for other actions (such as planning for beyond that time).
- 10) The focus of component 2 and all its sub-components should be revised, as should the scope of the proposed activities, to ensure that project resources are primarily used to fund climate change adaptation (CCA) activities as opposed to social and/or economic development ones. If by doing that, the project can also generate socio-economic benefits that would certainly add value to its proposition, which should nevertheless focus primarily on addressing CCA issues.
- 11) The description of risk mitigating measures should be revised and improved for all categories, ensuring that this includes clear plans and/or actions that are tailored to this project can be implemented rapidly and effectively if any of the risks identified is actually verified.

*Note: number key points clearly and provide useful information or suggestions, including key literature where relevant. Completed screens should be no more than two or three pages in length.*

#### **ANNEX: STAP'S SCREENING GUIDELINES**

1. How well does the proposal explain the problem and issues to be addressed in the context of the **system** within which the problem sits and its drivers (e.g. population growth, economic development, climate change, sociocultural and political factors, and technological changes), including how the various components of the system interact?
2. Does the project indicate how **uncertain futures** could unfold (e.g. using simple **narratives**), based on an understanding of the trends and interactions between the key elements of the system and its drivers?
3. Does the project describe the **baseline** problem and how it may evolve in the future in the absence of the project; and then identify the outcomes that the project seeks to achieve, how these outcomes will change the baseline, and what the key **barriers** and **enablers** are to achieving those outcomes?
4. Are the project's **objectives** well formulated and justified in relation to this system context? Is there a convincing explanation as to **why this particular project** has been selected in preference to other options, in the light of how the future may unfold?
5. How well does the **theory of change** provide an "explicit account of how and why the proposed interventions would achieve their intended outcomes and goal, based on outlining a set of key causal pathways arising from the activities and outputs of the interventions and the assumptions underlying these causal connections".

- Does the project logic show how the project would ensure that expected outcomes are **enduring** and resilient to possible future changes identified in question 2 above, and to the effects of any conflicting policies (see question 9 below).
  - Is the theory of change grounded on a solid scientific foundation, and is it aligned with current scientific knowledge?
  - Does it explicitly consider how any necessary **institutional and behavioral** changes are to be achieved?
  - Does the theory of change diagram convincingly show the overall project logic, including causal pathways and outcomes?
6. Are the project **components** (interventions and activities) identified in the theory of change each described in sufficient detail to discern the main thrust and basis (including scientific) of the proposed solutions, how they address the problem, their justification as a robust solution, and the critical assumptions and risks to achieving them?
7. How likely is the project to generate global environmental benefits which would not have accrued without the GEF project (**additionality**)?
8. Does the project convincingly identify the relevant **stakeholders**, and their anticipated roles and responsibilities? is there an adequate explanation of how stakeholders will contribute to the development and implementation of the project, and how they will benefit from the project to ensure enduring global environmental benefits, e.g. through co-benefits?
9. Does the description adequately explain:
- how the project will build on prior investments and complement current investments, both GEF and non-GEF,
  - how the project incorporates **lessons learned** from previous projects in the country and region, and more widely from projects addressing similar issues elsewhere; and
  - how country policies that are contradictory to the intended outcomes of the project (identified in section C) will be addressed (**policy coherence**)?
10. How adequate is the project's approach to generating, managing and exchanging **knowledge**, and how will lessons learned be captured for adaptive management and for the benefit of future projects?
- 11. Innovation and transformation:**
- If the project is intended to be **innovative**: to what degree is it innovative, how will this ambition be achieved, how will barriers and enablers be addressed, and how might scaling be achieved?
  - If the project is intended to be **transformative**: how well do the project's objectives contribute to transformative change, and are they sufficient to contribute to enduring, transformational change at a sufficient scale to deliver a step improvement in one or more GEBs? Is the proposed logic to achieve the goal credible, addressing necessary changes in

institutions, social or cultural norms? Are barriers and enablers to scaling be addressed? And how will enduring scaling be achieved?

12. Have **risks** to the project design and implementation been identified appropriately in the risk table in section B, and have suitable mitigation measures been incorporated? (NB: risks to the durability of project outcomes from future changes in drivers should have been reflected in the theory of change and in project design, not in this table.)