STAP guidelines for screening GEF projects

Part I: Project Information	Response	
GEF ID	10312	
Project Title	Community-based Climate-responsive Livelihoods and Forestry (CCLF)	
Date of Screening	November 27 2020	
STAP member screener	Edward Carr	
STAP secretariat screener	Guadalupe Duron	
STAP Overall Assessment and Rating	**Concur** STAP welcomes UNDP's project "Community-based Climate-responsive Livelihoods and Forestry (CCLF)". The project seeks to strengthen Afghanistan's climate resilience, and improve local livelihoods. The project will target four provinces prioritized by stakeholders: Ghazni, Samangan, Kunar and Paktia. It will complement existing initiatives on disaster risk management, community forest management, and sustainable agriculture and water management. To make clearer the distinct ways in which ongoing initiatives will complement and contribute learning to this LDCF project, STAP proposes arranging the information in a table. Additionally, STAP recommends developing a theory of change during the project design. The proposed logic between the components, and between the outcomes needs to be strengthened. Describing the causal pathways (through a backwards mapping) between project objective, outcomes, outputs, activities and validating the assumptions - dealing with barriers, and enablers, of change, - will strengthen the planning required to reach the project objective. The project developers are also encouraged to develop one or two additional trajectories in the theory of change to deal with the complexity and uncertainty described in the PIF, which includes facing long term changes brought about by drought, flood,	

	conflict, population changes, market fluctuations, and COVID – 19. Below, STAP offers recommendations on how to improve the project design.	
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?	Yes
Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project's objectives?	Partly. The activities support the project objective, but it is unclear how the components are related to each other. For example, links between components and outcomes 2 (land restoration) and 3 (community forest management and alternative livelihoods) need to be strengthened.
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
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	Possibly. The benefits are likely to be generated with a good theory of change, and careful monitoring of interventions.
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	Is the problem statement well-defined?	The problem statement is extremely well-defined. STAP appreciates that the project recognizes a range of possible climate futures and suggests that this inform project design by selecting two or three plausible climate futures. These different futures will provide a context for concrete planning,

need to be addressed (systems description)		assessment of climate risk, and assessment of likelihood of success achieving its goals.
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	Somewhat. The barriers and threats are well-described, but are lacking in data and references. Some supporting data for the barriers is found in the problem statement, but could be amplified here. Additionally, STAP recommends defining the barriers and enablers of change in the causal pathway (theory of change). This includes identifying and validating assumptions that communities will adopt the proposed water management strategies and that this adoption will lead to climate resilient livelihoods.
	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?	
2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects	Is the baseline identified clearly?	The baseline is very well articulated. STAP recommends developing a table that lists each of the initiatives, their objective, and how the (emerging) lessons from each will be used to inform this LDCF project.
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits?	Somewhat. As with the barriers discussion, the baseline would benefit from some quantification of the environmental situation, both at present and in the future, that will be changed through the proposed project. In addition to the GEF results-based indicators for the LDCF strategy, STAP suggests identifying indicators to monitor water stress, climate resilient livelihoods, and other environmental and social indicators.
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	Yes. Though lacking in concrete environmental data, the baseline is very robust with regard to its description of existing projects and the relationship

		of the different project components to those projects. STAP recommends identifying environmental and social indicators (including when developing the theory of change) that complement the LDCF's indicators, and which track progress towards achieving climate-resilient livelihoods in the target sites.
	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;	Non-applicable.
	are the lessons learned from similar or related past GEF and non-GEF interventions described; and	Yes, lessons on community forest management from ADB's project are described, and they will be used to design the LDCF project. STAP recommends describing lessons from other baseline projects that are relevant for this LDCF project.
	how did these lessons inform the design of this project?	This information is missing in the PIF. STAP suggests describing the lessons from baseline projects, and those projects listed in the coordination section in a table.
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 formally-articulated theory of change. The project expects that strengthening the capacity of government at the national and sub-national level will improve community development plans by increasing their attention to climate change and its impacts. In addition, STAP suggests developing a theory of change diagram, and writing a narrative that explains the context, the logic (or causal pathways), and how success will be measured. Refer to STAP's theory of change primer for guidance: https://www.stapgef.org/theory-change-primer
	What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?	The project will work with ministries and several local communities to design and implement climate change interventions. The project will work on capacity-strengthening around gender-responsive

		climate change adaptation planning. It will also develop and introduce information to communities that will allow them to adapt to climate-related shocks while gathering data about climate that is currently lacking. It will then introduce appropriate small-scale climate resilient water technologies and infrastructure at the community level, and involve communities in forest management to meet community needs and improve the quality of forests and woodlands.
	What is the set of linked activities, outputs, and outcomes to address the project's objectives?	1) Strengthening the capacities of national and sub-national governments and communities to address climate change impacts. This will improve the inclusion of climate change and gender issues in community development plans, which in turn will result in both gender-sensitive climate change risk and vulnerability assessments and gender-responsive risk reduction solutions which will then be integrated into community and sub-national climate change adaptation planning and budgeting. It will also provide training to communities in climate risk assessment and vulnerability to facilitate autonomous adaptation. 2) Implementing proven approaches along with new innovations in building climate-resilient livelihoods will lead to the adoption of community-based land restoration, water management, and climate resilient livelihoods activities. This will, in turn, yield scalable approaches for land restoration, facilitate the introduction of small-scale water infrastructure at the community level, and establish diverse and climate-resilient livelihoods. 3) By extending and complementing government work on sustainable forest management with attention to climate change risks and vulnerabilities and adaptation options, the project will facilitate the adoption of climate-

		resilient sustainable management practices in forests and woodlands across the targeted province. This will allow for the establishment of forest maps and information management systems, the development of provincial climate-smart forestry plans, and a situation where community-based forestry contributes to resilient forest management.
	Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions?	The mechanisms are plausible, but the underlying assumptions are not made transparent. This includes the assumption that gender-responsive planning will be acceptable at the community level, where there will be many who feel women have no role in such decision-making. This assumption should be addressed explicitly in project design.
	Is there a recognition of what adaptations may be required during project implementation to respond to changing conditions in pursuit of the targeted outcomes?	While the project does not explicitly discuss adaptations that might be required, it does explicitly recognize improved adaptive management as a goal of the M&E component of this work. This suggests an awareness that there will be adaptations needed during implementation to respond to changing conditions. In addition to using the M&E component for adaptive management, STAP recommends developing one, or two, additional pathways in the theory of change to plan for plausible futures. This process entails having stakeholders think through whether any long-term changes (e.g. climate change [increased water stress], population changes, conflict, COVID-19) pose risks to the project, and what adaptive management might be needed to ensure the outcomes are met and endure. Refer to STAP's theory of change primer (table 2) and RAPTA for guidance on developing pathways, and more than one scenario: https://www.stapgef.org/theory-change-primer

		https://www.stapgef.org/rapta-guidelines
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?	
	LDCF/SCCF: will the proposed incremental activities lead to adaptation which reduces vulnerability, builds adaptive capacity, and increases resilience to climate change?	Yes.
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?	The adaptation benefits are clear, if weakly quantified. To strengthen the project's potential to achieve adaptation benefits, STAP suggests the following: In component 1, project developers are encouraged to identify what other social structures, in addition to gender, underpins communities' decisions to adopt climate resilient development plans. Also recommend identifying what are the barriers, or enablers of, the structures – which could underpin decisions. These structures include culture, power dynamics, values, norms, and other social factors that influence farmers' and communities' choices to adopt climate resilience strategies. The project team may wish to refer to the following paper outlining the importance of developing interventions based on the unique characteristics of communities in Afghanistan. The paper also provides useful information that can be used for describing further the project context: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolind.2020.106781 In component 2, STAP recommends applying a land potential assessment during the PPG phase to identify opportunities to rehabilitate and reverse land degradation. Refer to STAP's LDN

		Guidelines and to the UNCCD Scientific Conceptual Framework for LDN: https://www.stapgef.org/guidelines-land-degradation-neutrality https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/documents/2019-06/LDN_CF_report_web-english.pdf Also, the project document (and theory of change) should identify barriers to scaling land restoration activities. Given that drought is increasing in the target areas, STAP recommends planning for climate-resilient measures in the project design. This includes identifying drought risks in the theory of change, supporting these risks (and the water strategies in component 2) with data and references. The project developers also may wish to refer to UNCCD's drought and flood assessment toolbox to develop water and drought management plans. https://knowledge.unccd.int/drought-toolbox/page/monitoring-and-early-warning For component 3, STAP also recommends carrying out a drought assessment plan. This drought data will assist in developing the community forest plans to analyze the relationships between vegetation cover and drought stress in the targeted sites: https://www.flooddroughtmonitor.com/home?ugredirect=true&ug=unccd This analysis can be done using geo-referencing methods and data, which possibly can be done with the geo-referencing methods being considered by the project team. This paper may be a useful reference for the project team: https://www.mdpi.com/2072-4292/12/15/2433

		The project team also should consider a climate and disaster screening to plan effectively for risks that may hinder reaching the project objective. The World Bank's water tool is one option for this screening: https://climatescreeningtools.worldbank.org/wtr/water-welcome In addition to monitoring and evaluating progress, and generating knowledge, component 4 should also look to foster reflection and innovation for scaling and transformational change. Refer to STAP's primer (table 2) for guidance on addressing barriers and enablers of change, including scaling, and for guidance on learning. Also, the theory of change should be linked to the monitoring system described in component 4.
	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	Possibly. STAP recommends developing a theory of change with various causal pathways to encourage adaptability to change, including long-term drivers such as drought, population changes and other long-term changes influencing the target areas.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits explicitly defined?	Adaptation benefits are not explicitly defined as global adaptation benefits. STAP suggests the project clearly define the benefits and justify them as such.
	Are indicators, or methodologies, provided to demonstrate how the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits will be measured and monitored during project implementation?	Not directly. Because the global benefits of the project are not articulated, it is not clear how these benefits will be measured and monitored. STAP suggests the project clearly identify and justify its global benefits, and develop indicators and methodologies to demonstrate these benefits.
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project's resilience to climate change?	In the risks section, the PIF mentions placing project activities in low-risk areas to avoid disruption by extreme events. However, if extreme events are part of the environment that local livelihoods must adapt to, such placement is

		problematic and might be counterproductive to project goals. STAP encourages the project to explicitly consider a broader set of ways the project activities might be challenged by climate change in the course of project implementation, and how the project might manage such challenges that do not compromise the goals of the project.
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?	There is potential for innovation if the project can build bridges across DRR and adaptation, as this is a long-standing challenge in development work. It appears that the introduction of the technologies proposed, and the incorporation of local government and communities in adaptation planning, will be innovative within Afghanistan.
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	Partially. While the project suggests some pathways by which innovations will be scaled up over time, these are presented in a notional way. For example, there is information sharing through known processes, but the expected scale-up from such sharing is not described in detail. The PIF also notes that dissemination of results might catalyze further investments for scaling up project activities, but does not describe the possible funders or mechanisms by which this might be happening. In general, there is an assumption that diversifying income-generating opportunities will lead to better increased income and better livelihoods. Additionally, the PIF assumes that improving planning and implementation of disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation will strengthen communities' capacities to cope with climate change in the long-term. It is further assumed that these interventions will lead to innovation and scaling. STAP recommends defining the important assumptions behind the adoption of alternative livelihood options, disaster risk reduction measures, and climate adaptation strategies. For

		example, will behavior change be required? If so, how does the project intend to shift behaviors based on stakeholders' social structures? (e.g. values, norms, culture, agency, power dynamics, among other) Additionally, STAP recommends relying on the theory of change, and its monitoring, to identifying opportunities for, and barriers to scaling and transformative change.
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	It appears that the project expects the incremental changes associated with the proposed adaptation work to be enough to ensure the sustainability of project impacts. For example, the livelihoods component of the project is aimed at reducing costs and improving incomes, thus allowing for greater livelihoods diversification over time. It is likely that incremental adaptation and/or transformational change may be needed due to climate stressors (e.g. drought), other long-term changes (population and market fluctuations), and from COVID-19. STAP suggests developing several pathways to reach the project goal, testing their assumptions, and asking which pathway will be necessary and sufficient to address long-term changes resulting from climate, COVID-19 and other long-term changes.
1b. Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.		The map adequately describes the project activity locations. STAP recommends following its guidance on maps in its Earth Observation document as some key elements appear missing from the maps. STAP guidance can be found at: https://www.stapgef.org/earth-observation-and-gef
2. Stakeholders. Select the stakeholders that have participated in consultations during the project identification phase:	Have all the key relevant stakeholders been identified to cover the complexity of the problem, and project implementation barriers?	Yes

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.		
	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?	The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock will be the implementing partner for the project. The National Environmental Protection Agency will be the operational focal point. The Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development will also support project implementation. Local governance organizations will help to prioritize areas for project activities. Communities and individual land-users will be consulted to align project activities with community needs. The project will also draw on local universities for support in the design and implementation phases of the project. Several government ministries are listed along with their responsibilities, but their role in the project is not clear. These ministries appear to have been consulted in the PIF process. Overall, the description of responsibilities is a bit vague and does not yet clearly connect roles to robust outcomes. STAP recommends these roles be more clearly articulated and linked to activities, outputs, and outcomes in the project design phase.
3. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. Please briefly include below any gender dimensions relevant to the project, and	Have gender differentiated risks and opportunities been identified, and were preliminary response measures described that would address these differences?	The PIF notes that women's empowerment in Afghanistan has been challenging historically. The PIF identifies avenues for the engagement of women through their social associations to ensure they are included in the project design process as

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		well as during implementation. While the PIF suggests that the project will focus on women's needs in a variety of ways, including building capacity, access to information, setting targets for women's involvement in activities, focusing on gender differences in capabilities to cope with climate change adaptation project and ensuring that risk assessments are informed by gender analysis and any other aspects of gender equality and women empowerment to maximize effectiveness of gender involvement, these are just listed. In a context where gender empowerment is not merely challenging, but can introduce new risks for women's well-being, STAP strongly recommends that the project carefully consider and plan for the safeguards women will need to participate in any of the project activities.
	Do gender considerations hinder full participation of an important stakeholder group (or groups)? If so, how will these obstacles be addressed?	Yes, women will have difficulty participating in the project. The PIF lists a long set of activities that might address women's exclusion from the project, but it does not carefully consider the safeguards women will need to ensure that this project does not introduce new risks or harms to women during implementation.
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	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	The risks are valid but not quite comprehensive. Again, while the PIF notes that women, youth, and marginal groups could be excluded from project activities, it does not discuss or address the potential harms that could come to members of these groups from participation in this project. STAP strongly recommends these be identified and addressed.

address these risks to be further developed during the project design	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?	Many of the risks are outside the project's control, but designing gender-sensitive activities that do not produce harm falls within the project's control. The PIF makes almost no mention of climate risk to the project, except for extreme climate events. As discussed above, the current means of addressing these risks, which include siting project work in low-risk areas, might compromise critical learning from project implementation. STAP suggests the project carefully consider the specific extreme events that might be experienced and the ways in which implementation in such events might provide opportunities for learning to decide which hazards to avoid in implementation, and which should be addressed by other means. The project does not describe how its objectives our outputs will be affected by climate risks over the next thirty years, and therefore does not address the sensitivity of the project to such risks, their impacts, or the practices and information needed to mitigate such risks. STAP suggests the project consider such risks carefully, ideally through more than one plausible future climate scenario, during project design.
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. STAP suggests identifying non-GEF initiatives in the target areas, if applicable. In addition, STAP recommends describing how each project's knowledge will contribute to achieving the objective of this LDCF project.
	Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?	Yes
	Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?	Yes, but in some cases those lessons are still being gleaned and could not be elaborated in the PIF. Many lessons are elaborated under the baseline scenario.

	How have these lessons informed the project's formulation?	The project was designed around the activities and findings of several projects, and clearly builds upon their activities and lessons.
	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?	The PIF does not elaborate such a mechanism. STAP suggests the project consider making any such mechanisms explicit in the project design process to ensure that lessons learned from earlier projects are considered.
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?	In the PIF, knowledge management appears to be focused on the documentation of processes, best practices, lessons learnt, and impact stories describing the theory of change, but offers few clear statements about how this will be done. It also mentions the production of knowledge dissemination products including sustainable forest management and sustainable livelihoods interventions guides, learning/training modules, policy briefs, technical notes, and learning events for communities, students, local government officials, and subject-area practitioners. The PIF says that lessons from other communities and best practice guidelines "will be developed and disseminated to local communities." It is silent on how this dissemination will work, or how it will be designed to ensure communities can act on this information. The PIF does not describe any knowledge management indicators or metrics. STAP suggests that the project carefully select both indicators and metrics to ensure it can track its knowledge management efforts to ensure impact both within the project as it is implemented, and beyond the project implementation area. Additionally, STAP suggests linking the theory of change to component 4 as both will be needed to manage knowledge and learning.

	What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?	As noted above, most plans are about documentation of activities, processes, and lessons, and the dissemination and scale-up plans are somewhat vague, though the PIF does reference communications through platforms like the COP. STAP recommends the project carefully design sharing and dissemination materials to ensure the scale up of results, lessons, and experience.

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.