STAP SCREENING TEMPLATE

GEF ID	**11696**
Project title	**Fostering water security and catchment resilience in Uganda's Cattle Corridor**
Date of screen	**30 November 2024**
STAP Panel Member	**Blake Ratner**
STAP Secretariat	**Guadalupe Duron**

1. Summary of STAP's views of the project

STAP appreciates the proposed project's focus on climate resilience and water security, as the rationale for climate vulnerability in the Cattle Corridor is well established, and communities' climate adaptation capacities need to be strengthened. STAP also supports focusing on climate-resilient technologies and infrastructure to improve water management and storage, and welcomes the clear attention to gender dynamics of climate vulnerability and adaptation. These efforts are essential, as is the focus on policy coherence and governance, to strengthen communities' adaptive capacities. The intention to promote linkages between GEF and GCF finance (including leveraging blended finance) is also welcome.

Nonetheless, as currently written, the proposal's LDCF additionality is weak. While the adaptation benefits are plausible given the project components and outcome indicators, additionality does not specify with sufficient clarity how the proposed interventions will reduce communities' vulnerabilities to climate change impacts or strengthen their capacities to adapt to climate change impacts. The theory of change (including the figure) notes a range of environmental problems along with climate change but does not adequately illustrate the connections between expected climate change, its effects on targeted communities, and how the proposed actions enable adaptation to reduce or adapt to those effects.

Although the components establish some links between improved environmental management and reduced vulnerabilities, it is necessary to strengthen the project logic and the components by identifying how non-climate factors (social, economic, political) can affect (ameliorate or exacerbate) vulnerabilities. This mapping would be most beneficial in imagining and narrating plausible futures to help identify robust interventions more likely to result in enduring outcomes for the Cattle Corridor.

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
- □ X 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 communities' vulnerabilities to climate change are explained as being caused by a combination of climatic impacts (water scarcity, drought, erratic rainfall), environmental degradation (land degradation caused by overgrazing and deforestation, loss of biodiversity affecting the provision of ecosystem services), which also aggravate social issues such as conflict between farmers and pastoralists, and gender-based violence. More attention is necessary to these interactions, particularly how non-climate factors influence vulnerability to climate change impacts.

Furthermore, STAP notes that the additionality (or the incremental reasoning as written in the PIF) is not strongly framed around capturing climate adaptation benefits (e.g., how strengthened water management infrastructure will reduce the magnitude or frequency of climate impacts on the targeted communities). Careful attention will need to be paid to the climate adaptation rationale (additionality reasoning) to ensure the LDCF investment achieves and successfully measures adaptation benefits.

The rationale suggests that the project can have global environmental outcomes, which seems plausible. Designing the project to capture these benefits and monitor their progress will be important. Furthermore, developing a set of simple future narratives will help envision how key driver trends (e.g., climate change, land degradation, increased pressure on resources leading to conflict) are likely to interact in the future, and what alternative interventions can help strengthen the design, and subsequently the durability of project outcomes to unwanted changes.

The theory of change figure is helpful, but as noted in the following section, it could be strengthened by giving greater attention to specifying how the design addresses key risks in the project context (which STAP, in its newly released guidance note suggests to label as "challenges"). Stronger attention to adaptation benefits is also necessary. Furthermore, developing simple future narratives, as mentioned above, would also strengthen the logic presented in the theory of change. Finally, the articulation of innovations would be more convincing if further focused, and the specific risks to these innovations delivering intended outcomes at scale. Below, STAP provides further advice on these issues.

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

STAP offers the following recommendations to strengthen the design of the proposed project:

1. While the project aims to deliver LDCF core indicators, STAP recommends strengthening the climate adaptation rationale, or additionality, and reflecting this climate adaptation focus in the overall logic of the project. Specific recommendations include:
    a. Describe the additionality reasoning (pages 13-14) by analyzing how the interventions will produce outcomes that: i) reduce communities' vulnerabilities to climate change impacts (exposure and sensitivity); and/or, ii) increase communities' potential to adapt to climate change impacts. In its typology of climate adaptation benefits, STAP offers guidance on describing and characterizing these.
    b. While the proposal identifies social, economic, environmental, and political factors that can influence communities' vulnerabilities to climate change impacts, STAP recommends that the project rationale demonstrate more clearly how these factors intersect with climate change to understand how these issues exacerbate or reduce vulnerabilities.
    c. The project description, including the theory of change, should then build on this analysis of interconnections. This should help to explain how the components are intended to interact. For example, component 3 aims to strengthen policy coherence at the local level. Understanding how policies influence land management (agricultural and livestock) decisions can provide insights into sources of vulnerability. For example, are there policies in place that support livestock intensification or that incentivize unsustainable use of groundwater or vegetative cover? How might this exacerbate water insecurity, drought, or soil degradation? How does this affect communities' capacity to cope with climate change, and what are the implications for livelihood responses? STAP outlines the importance of non-climate factors in its advisory document, "A decision tree for adaptation rationale".

2. Additionally, the theory of change needs to be strengthened by clarifying the relationship between assumptions and outcomes. Currently, it is not obvious how the assumptions listed underpin the logic of achieving each outcome.

3. Focus and justify the claimed innovations. The PIF lists 10 design elements deemed innovative, without justifying what is distinctive or novel in the country or regional context. Several of these (e.g., diversity and inclusion, exit and sustainability strategy) appear to be fairly routine expectations for GEF project design. Others (e.g., integrated water resources management, nature based solutions) appear to be simple descriptions of the general approach. How is the approach to policy coherence, integration of traditional ecological knowledge, blended finance or private sector engagement different that what has been attempted previously?

4. Revisit the risk table. The risk table currently describes several underlying drivers of change that should form part of the basic project logic — e.g., climate change risks and potential unintended consequences from policy coherence (e.g., leakage from deforestation). Attention should also be paid to the interactions between risks, and their compounding effects, on vulnerabilities – e.g. interactions between climate risks and strong vested interests (despite designing the project to account for cultural and gender norms and values, and other social structures) that resist climate adaptation from being mainstreamed across environmental, agricultural, livestock, and socioeconomic policies. For innovation risks in particular, take care to focus on the risk that the innovations incorporated in the design fail to deliver. Refer to STAP's new guidance note "Clarifying risks in GEF projects, with a focus on innovation risks" for advice.

5. In component 1, STAP recommends defining and validating the assumption that climate-resilient technologies and infrastructure will improve agricultural productivity and socioeconomic conditions of communities, ameliorating their vulnerabilities to climate change impacts. As mentioned above, climate change challenges should be integral to the project logic. This may influence the outputs and outcomes associated with this component – for example, persistent, hotter temperatures may affect micro-irrigation, or lead to conflicting demands between farmers and pastoralists for stored water.

6. In component 2, STAP notes that switching to alternative livelihoods may not always be easy for communities. Thinking through the logic, including assumptions and enabling factors, that produce outcomes supporting alternative livelihoods will be necessary. STAP offers advice in its background note on alternative livelihoods.

7. In component 3 on policy coherence, it might be helpful to undertake a policy analysis to identify synergies and conflicts across governance levels (catchment, district, national level) with regards to the purpose of each policy (agriculture, livestock, improved water storage). STAP's advisory document on policy coherence offers suggestions for such analysis. Careful attention should also be paid to cultural and gender norms and values when working to influence multi-stakeholder governance structures.

8. The five target catchment areas are defined in the map near the end of the PIF. It would be helpful to describe the target areas earlier and explicitly link the components (1,2,and 3) to the appropriate target areas.

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.)