

STAP guidelines for screening GEF projects

Part I: Project Information	Response	
GEF ID	10518	
Project Title	Implementation of the Fanga'uta Lagoon Stewardship Plan and Replication of Lessons Learned to Priority Areas in Vava'u (Tonga R2R Phase 2)	
Date of Screening	05 November 2021	
STAP member screener	John Donaldson	
STAP secretariat screener	Alessandro Moscuza	
STAP Overall Assessment and Rating	<p>Minor issues to be considered during project design: Our review concluded that this project proposal is sufficiently well-articulated to provide a satisfactory picture of the activities that will be implemented and the rationale that will be employed to achieve the project outcomes. The PIF is disjointed in places and the language is not always very clear but most of the required elements are sufficiently well-articulated. The current version of the PIF does not include a theory of change or a clear description of all of the Global Environmental Benefits that may be realized through this project, although our review concluded that a number will be realized if the project activities are successfully implemented. The project builds on previous interventions in Tonga and has strong references to these projects and should be further strengthened by learning from other projects which also include activities relating to alternative livelihoods, mangrove rehabilitation, and knowledge exchange.</p>	
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, the project objective, which in the PIF is referred to as the project's overall aim, is clearly defined and articulated in a manner that is consistent with the problem diagnosis.
Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project's objectives?	The project components are described clearly, and they are well aligned with the project's overall aim.

Outcomes	<p>A description of the expected short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention.</p> <p>Do the planned outcomes encompass important adaptation benefits?</p>	<p>The project outcomes are described clearly, and they are nested consistently into a structured hierarchical order consisting of the following elements: Components, Outcomes and Outputs, which fit well with and complement one another. The project is not set up specifically to address adaptation but it identifies the benefits associated with the protection and rehabilitation of mangrove ecosystems which are an important aspect of adaptation for SIDS</p>
	<p>Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?</p>	<p>The environmental benefits that will be generated by this project at the national level are well-defined and articulated reasonably enough (i.e. this section of the proposal is written in poor language, almost as if it was the result of a poor cut and paste job) that they can be identified clearly. The GEBs are not articulated as clearly and cannot be identified directly from reading the relevant section of the PIF, but they can be extrapolated from reading the proposal as a whole, viz rehabilitation of a small area of unique mangrove assemblages, improved coral reef (50ha) and marine protected area.</p> <p>STAP recommends that the implementing agency reviews this aspect of the proposal with the aim of providing a clearer explanation of how the environmental benefits to be delivered by this project can be classified as GEBs as defined by the GEF. (https://www.thegef.org/documents/global-environmental-benefits). STAP also recommends that, where relevant, GEBs are listed separately from environmental benefits that are local in nature and that the synergies and causal relationship between the two type of environmental benefits are described where relevant.</p>
Outputs	<p>A description of the products and services which are expected to result from the project.</p> <p>Is the sum of the outputs likely to contribute to the outcomes?</p>	<p>Yes, the project outputs are described clearly and they are nested consistently into a structured hierarchical order consisting of Components, Outcomes and outputs, which fit well with and complement one another, (above comments on outcomes also refers).</p>
Part II: Project justification	<p>A simple narrative explaining the project's logic, i.e. a theory of change.</p>	<p>The narrative description provides a reasonable logic for the project</p>
1. Project description. Briefly describe:	<p>Is the problem statement well-defined?</p>	<p>Yes, the PIF for this project includes an extensive and detailed explanation of the problems to be addressed by the project activities. It builds on past projects and addresses barriers to sustainability as well as the</p>

1) the global environmental and/or adaptation problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed (systems description)		recommendations arising from these projects. As a result, it includes a number of very thorough and detailed sections describing a range of environmental issues and thematics that project aims to tackle, including a description of root causes and historical trends that have led to these.
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	Yes, the PIF includes a section dedicated to describing a number of barriers that continue to constrain the implementation of the Fanga'uta Stewardship Plan (FSP) and the replication of lessons learnt into priority areas on Tongatapu. These include: i) Limited appreciation of the biodiversity values; ii) Lack of financial capacity; iii) a fragmented legal and policy framework leading to weak enforcement and compliance; and iv) excessive dependence on marine resources for 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?	N/A
2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects	Is the baseline identified clearly?	Yes, the PIF includes a section, which lists and describes a number of pre-existing projects and the lessons learned from all of them. The description of the lessons learned is not quite as thorough as the descriptions of the actual projects themselves but is still just about adequate for the purpose it needs to serve.
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits?	Yes, the project benefits can be extrapolated by comparing the baseline with the proposed activities for this phase of the FSP and Ridge to Reef (R2R) project. The main outputs also provide a reasonable basis for quantifying benefits: new conservation areas can be measured (ha); improvement in the main lagoon can be measured through water quality, fish stocks, area of recovered mangroves and status of associated coral reefs; management improvements can be measured by existence of management committees, effectiveness of policy review, and increased capacity.
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	Yes, the description and analysis of the baseline provides enough evidence and reasoning to support this additional intervention and investment.

	For multiple focal area projects:	N/A
	are the multiple baseline analyses presented (supported by data and references), and the multiple benefits specified, including the proposed indicators;	N/A
	are the lessons learned from similar or related past GEF and non-GEF interventions described; and	N/A
	how did these lessons inform the design of this project?	N/A
3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project	What is the theory of change?	The published PIF for the project does <u>not</u> include a Theory of Change (ToC) section and the additional project documents uploaded on the GEF portal do not appear to include a separate ToC either. A previous version had a narrative description of the TOC in the main text and a diagrammatic representation of the TOC as Annex E. STAP strongly recommends: that the implementing agency includes a ToC section into the next version of the PIF for this project and welcomes the opportunity to review this further down the line if it were to be asked to do so. The draft TOC in the previous version identified the main barriers and provided a sequencing of events and the only weakness seemed to be some conflating of outputs, inputs and impacts.
	What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?	Above comment refers.
	What is the set of linked activities, outputs, and outcomes to address the project's objectives?	Above comment refers.
	Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions?	Above comment refers. There is no explicit attempt to identify underlying assumptions
	Is there a recognition of what adaptations may be required during project implementation to respond to changing conditions in pursuit of the targeted outcomes?	Above comment refers.
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?	The proposed incremental activities will certainly ensure the continuation of delivery for some Global Environmental Benefits (GEBs) such as the continuing protection and conservation of the Nukuhetulu mangrove forest, which has been designated by the IUCN Red list as a priority for conservation. In addition, this phase of the project will support the creation of additional marine protected areas in the Vaipua Channel and around the Lualoli protected areas, as well as the rehabilitation of

		some mangrove ecosystems. However, it is not entirely clear from reading the PIF how these additional environmental benefits would translate into GEBs.
	LDCF/SCCF: will the proposed incremental activities lead to adaptation which reduces vulnerability, builds adaptive capacity, and increases resilience to climate change?	N/A
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 environmental benefits that will be delivered through this project will be measurable as they involve tangible outcomes such as the protection and creation of protected areas. It is however less clear whether all of the environmental benefits will be GEBs (please see previous comments on GEBs for additional details).
	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	Yes, the scale of the environmental benefits to be accrued from this project as a whole is proportionate to the proposed investment and justifies the investment of allocated resources.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits explicitly defined?	See previous comments on GEBs.
	Are indicators, or methodologies, provided to demonstrate how the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits will be measured and monitored during project implementation?	The PIF includes a suite of indicators to measure various aspects of project performance, including environmental benefits. There is less focus on the methodologies that will be used to measure progress, although the PIF provides a broad sense of how activities will be monitored and evaluated. The PIF also includes a short section on adaptation co-benefits arising from the management of coastal vegetation and mangrove forests.
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project's resilience to climate change?	The PIF did not include a section that covered this specific aspect, although it did include ample references to how the project activities will improve the climate resilience and adaptation capacity of the areas where it will operate. A scanning of additional document did not reveal any additional provisions in this specific field.
7) innovative, sustainability and potential for scaling-up	Is the project innovative, for example, in its design, method of financing, technology, business model, policy, monitoring and evaluation, or learning?	The project design and proposed activities include some innovative elements and aspects. The project is expected to develop the first land-use spatial plan in Tonga and is proposing to do so using innovative modelling approaches involving an integrated water quality assessment of the lagoon catchment using a groundwater numerical model to improve understanding of the behavior of lagoon side aquifers and transport of pollutants through groundwater. It will also try to assess

		<p>various rehabilitation options using a coupled hydrodynamic-ecological model.</p> <p>There is also some potential for innovation in delivering economic development outcomes by establishing alternative livelihoods to mitigate the impact of the fishing restrictions in the protected areas and the protection of mangroves which might otherwise be used for firewood or dye for tapa cloth. An example of alternative livelihood strategies involve the production of woven pandanus leaf containers to provide an alternative to single use plastics.</p>
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	Yes, this phase (Phase II) of Tonga R2R project is already an attempt to upscale by applying the lessons learned from Fanga'uta lagoon to Vava'u. The PIF proposes that the lessons learned may be replicated in other island groups within Tonga. Output 3.1.4, which focuses on South-South co-operation and knowledge exchange will also contribute to sharing knowledge gained from this project not only nationally but also regionally in the Pacific and potentially to Small Island States in other regions of the world.
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	It was STAP assessment that this project will require incremental adaptation to achieve long-term sustainability, as opposed to fundamental transformational change. The same view seems to have been espoused by the implementing agency in the PIF.
1b. Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.		The PIF includes comprehensive project maps which are also geo-referenced.
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.	Have all the key relevant stakeholders been identified to cover the complexity of the problem, and project implementation barriers?	The PIF includes clear provisions to deal with this aspect including the establishment of a multi-stakeholder Community Management Committee, which will be implemented through output 2.1.2 a range of local stakeholder from various areas where the project will have a presence have also been identified in the proposal.

<p>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>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>Different stakeholders have been assigned various roles ranging from contributing to establishing the governance framework for portions of the project to representing district-wide interests, local NGOs or discussing the views and interests of local communities for consideration in decision making on issues relating to the stewardship of protected areas.</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.</p>	<p>Have gender differentiated risks and opportunities been identified, and were preliminary response measures described that would address these differences?</p>	<p>The PIF includes a gender analysis section, as well as ample references to gender and social equality issues, which are well-integrated throughout the PIF.</p> <p>Some of the measures listed in the PIF include: connecting with additional established women's groups such as the Tonga Community Development Trust and the Women's Council for Tonga and involving the country's aspiring young leaders from the Tongan Youth Parliament in addition to the Tonga National Youth Congress.</p> <p>Gender sensitive indicators will also be included in the project design,</p>

<p>Will the project's results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators? yes/no /td</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>Our review did not uncover any specific gender considerations that may hinder the participation of any stakeholder groups in the project activities.</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? Are there social and environmental risks which could affect the project?</p> <p>For climate risk, and climate resilience measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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? • 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? 	<p>The PIF includes a section on risk assessment, which comprises an analysis and rating of a number of broad risk categories, as well as ratings and mitigation measures for each of those. The risk categories include climate related risks such as extreme weather events and climate anomalies and how these may affect the success of specific aspects of the project activities such as mangrove and seagrass planting in coastal sites. The current set of risks focuses on several aspects that should be under the control of the project (e.g. impacts of alternative livelihoods, or that SMAs could restrict access to resources). The only identified risk associated with climate change is the effect of extreme weather events on mangrove rehabilitation. SIDS are particularly vulnerable to climate change and the social and environmental risks would be expected to be far greater than just the effect of storms on mangrove sites, particularly on the durability of outcomes for the project. STAP recommends that the implementing agency reviews the risks during the next phase.</p>
<p>6. Coordination. Outline the coordination with other relevant GEF-financed and other related initiatives</p>	<p>Are the project proponents tapping into relevant knowledge and learning generated by other projects, including GEF projects?</p>	<p>In a broad sense, yes. The PIF provides quite specific lessons learnt from previous GEF projects in Tonga but very limited lessons from projects in other SIDS and elsewhere. Learning from previous projects is essential because</p>

		<p>several proposed activities and outputs can be problematic.</p> <p>The three areas where it will be important to learn from other projects and subsequent analyses of these projects is (i) alternative livelihoods- the success of different interventions has been extensively debated; (ii) mangrove rehabilitation – Elison (2020) noted that ‘most mangrove restoration and rehabilitation projects have failed’ and it will be important to consider the social and ecological lessons learnt from previous projects; and (iii) knowledge management – the intention of this project is to upscale to other SIDS and this will require learning from previous projects in terms of the types of information and knowledge, how it is codified and the institutional arrangements for governing it. There are guidelines for replication and upscaling that should be taken into consideration.</p>
	Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?	Yes, the PIF aims to build from the lessons of previous projects and involves the establishment and development of an interactive learning facility to share lessons accumulated from this and other projects.
	Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?	Yes, for previous projects on Tonga. Citations for broader reference to projects dealing with alternative livelihoods and rehabilitation of mangroves are lacking
	How have these lessons informed the project’s formulation?	-
	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, this project involves the establishment and development of an interactive learning facility to share lessons accumulated from this and other projects.
8. Knowledge management. Outline the “Knowledge Management Approach” for the project, and how it will contribute to the project’s overall impact,	What overall approach will be taken, and what knowledge management indicators and metrics will be used?	The Phase II project will build on the successes of Phase I by expanding and continuing the national education and awareness programs for promoting lagoon ecosystem services and marine litter reduction to stakeholders and the public using a range of media.

<p>including plans to learn from relevant projects, initiatives and evaluations.</p>		<p>As previously outlined, the current phase of the project is also proposing to develop an interactive learning facility to identify and highlight the benefits provided by the lagoon ecosystems that can be used for awareness raising and potentially as a tourist attraction.</p> <p>The success of the public awareness programs will be measured by establishing periodic monitoring (at least annual) through household surveys of representative samples from within the lagoon catchment.</p>
	<p>What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?</p>	<p>The intention is to share experiences and knowledge through South South KE especially with other SIDS. In preparing the full proposal the proponents should give careful thought to what the purpose of the KE is as this will determine what information is critical, what forms of knowledge are useful, how this should be codified and shared, and what institutional arrangements are optimal for curating and sharing knowledge.</p>

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 <i>“STAP is satisfied with the scientific and technical quality of the proposal and encourages the proponent to develop it with same rigor. At any time during the development of the project, the proponent is invited to approach STAP to consult on the design.”</i>
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.

<p>3. Major issues to be considered during project design</p>	<p>STAP proposes significant improvements or has concerns on the grounds of specified major scientific/technical methodological issues, barriers, or omissions in the project concept. If STAP provides this advisory response, a full explanation would also be provided. The proponent is strongly encouraged to:</p>
	<p>(i) Open a dialogue with STAP regarding the technical and/or scientific issues raised; (ii) Set a review point at an early stage during project development including an independent expert as required. The proponent should provide a report of the action agreed and taken, at the time of submission of the full project brief for CEO endorsement.</p>