

STAP guidelines for screening GEF projects

Part I: Project Information	Response
GEF ID	10862
Project Title	Sustainable food systems and integrated land/seascape management in the Marshall Islands
Date of Screening	November 9, 2021
STAP member screener	Graciela Metternicht
STAP secretariat screener	Guadalupe Durón
STAP Overall Assessment and Rating	<p>Minor issues to be considered during project design</p> <p>STAP welcomes FAO’s project “Sustainable food systems and integrated land/seascape management in the Marshall Islands”. The project will focus on supporting the recognition of the values of traditional food system elements and natural resource management and governance practices and their adaptive dapplication within a context of evolving demographic, cultural, economic and climatic conditions in order to meet present and future nutritional needs in an environmentally sustainable manner. The STAP welcomes the PIF identifies co-benefits associated with project outcomes, the ‘systems thinking’ approach adopted to define goals and objectives, and the emphasis on circular economy, nature-based solutions, and participatory co-development of context-suited solutions.</p> <p>Given the drivers and pressures identified and the responses that the project intends to bring to the population and environment, STAP strongly recommends considering behavioral change in the design of the PPG. The recent STAP guidance and insights into how social and behavioral science influence project outcomes can be a starting point to that end. The STAP also recommends building capacity in spatial land use planning, and to explore an ecosystem-based framework to marine spatial planning (given the planned output 2.1.3). The PIF notes that less than one half of the total land area is considered as potential agricultural area. Housing, infrastructure and</p>

	<p>US military needs compete withcropping in this land area. Therefore, STAP recommends the PPG considers the LDN logical framework as an overarching umbrella. The LDN approach considers such important aspects as land potential, and integrated land use planning as a process to address trade-offs and minimize land use conflicts. The neutrality mechanism for LDN could also accommodate for unavoidable losses and could help designing alternative income (e.g. PES) that would ultimately enhance the adaptive capacity of people and the land.</p> <p>Climate change has been identified as a high risk and therefore the STAP supports all recommendations arising from the climate risk screening, to build resilience and enhance adaptation. STAP also suggests considering the role of behavioral and social science in designing interventions for achieving outcome 3.1. The STAP congratulates the team on the Theory of Change developed for the PIF and encourages to include identified risks such as climate change as one of the ‘external factors’ that could affect outputs and project outcomes. The STAP recommends to tap into the considerable experience, knowledge and learning of other projects undertaken in The Pacific on similar themes (e.g. by the Australian Research Agricultural Centre).</p> <p>Below, STAP provides further details on its guidance.</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.
Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project’s objectives?	Yes.
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, of note is Figure 4 of the PIF. An excellent example of how to connect local benefits to global environmental benefits.

	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	Yes, with careful consideration and inclusion of the recommendations arising from the climate change risk screening document, and provided that behavioral change is made more explicit in the ToC and project design (ie. identify what behaviours need to change, why, and how -as function of the socio-cultural and political context- are those required changes going to be enacted. STAP provided guidance on this aspect, which the project team is encouraged to use. Further STAP advice on behavioral change is also available. c
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, it is likely. For outcome 1.2 the STAP recommends building or strengthening capacity in integrated land use planning (given the conflicts on land use that have been mentioned in the drivers section). It may be worth exploring circular economy for urban waste recycling.
Part II: Project justification	A simple narrative explaining the project's logic, i.e. a theory of change.	The PIF provides a very good figure of the ToC, which STAP recommends includes: risks as external/internal factors that could influence outputs and outcomes.
1. Project description. Briefly describe: 1) the global environmental and/or adaptation problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed (systems description)	Is the problem statement well-defined?	Yes the problem is defined well. Various drivers are described which contribute to land degradation and loss of biodiversity (terrestrial and marine). These drivers include poor soils, scarce, saltwater infiltration to freshwater resources, sea level rise, drought, trade or climate change influencing pests and diseases, among others. On drought, the problem description includes inconsistent information. Paragraph 8 indicates drought is not a problem, while paragraph 22 states that the country has experienced severe drought in the last few years.
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	Yes, well described and barriers are included in the ToC. Unfortunately, there is a total lack of citations of relevant literature (peer reviewed and grey).

	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?	Yes, the baseline scenario is identified, and some relevant projects on which this planned GEF Project will build upon are identified. Please add the two projects identified in the climate risk screening assessment to the list of baseline initiatives. These projects are: Pacific Resilience Project – Phase II (PREP II) funded by the World Bank; and, the Ridge to Reef (R2R) implemented by UNDP.
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits?	Yes. To complement the core indicators, STAP recommends identifying metrics, or indicators, at the local level that can measure and track progress of land and forest restoration, biodiversity conservation (marine and terrestrial), along with indicators on improved food security, improved nutritional health and other co-benefits (social, institutional).
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	Yes at this stage. Suggest complementing core indicators with local indicators as suggested above.
	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;	No, the STAP would expect this exploratory exercise is conducted in the PPG phase. As described above, STAP suggests complementing the core indicators with sub-national indicators that can monitor and track progress on sustainable land management, biodiversity conservation, and the local benefits the project aims to achieve – namely, improved nutritional health, improved food system resilience.
	are the lessons learned from similar or related past GEF and non-GEF interventions described; and	Partly. STAP recommends the team to liaise with other international donors (particularly Australia https://www.aciar.gov.au/) with longstanding

		<p>experience and expertise in providing solutions to address climate change and resilience in The Pacific Islands.</p> <p>STAP recommends the consultation of the paper of Nelles, W (2018): Building the evidence base on the agricultural nutrition nexus: Marshall Islands. CTA Working Paper 18/03. Wageningen: CTA</p>
	how did these lessons inform the design of this project?	Please describe how learning from the baseline initiatives will inform this project.
3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project	What is the theory of change?	<p>STAP welcomes the theory of change figure that is provided in the PIF. Please provide an accompanying narrative describing the theory of change in the final project document. As the project is designed and implemented, consider revisiting the assumptions as the project team anticipates future circumstances which might undermine the causal connections between the outcomes.</p> <p>STAP notes the mention “<i>There is a growing movement in support of organic agriculture in the country , but this still remains at niche level, without a significant scale of insertion into value chains</i>”. Therefore, STAP reiterates exploring behavioural and social sciences for levers that these could provide to address these issues, in addition to a good understanding of value chains that need be developed.</p> <p>Additionally, STAP recommends elaborating one, or two, simple additional pathways that deal with the long-term drivers of population growth, climate change (e.g. sea level rise), and increased pests and disease affecting crop production to ensure the project benefits endure beyond the project’s lifetime. Please refer to STAP’s resilience information note, particularly the section on scenario planning. The following book chapter also can be useful in designing the agricultural</p>

		<p>interventions: Iese V. et al. (2020) Agriculture Under a Changing Climate. In: Kumar L. (eds) Climate Change and Impacts in the Pacific. Springer Climate. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-32878-8_9</p>
	<p>What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?</p>	<p>The project will enhance food systems by through integrated approaches focused on integrated land and water management, and biodiversity conservation of marine and terrestrial resources. Social factors (such as gender and socioeconomic conditions) will be embedded throughout the project components.</p> <p>The project aims to achieve this objective through four pathways: 1) supporting enabling conditions and environment to achieve a sustainable integrated food system; 2) strengthen food production systems; 3) support value-chains; and, 4) knowledge management and scaling.</p> <p>Components 1 to 4 describe vaguely the tasks needed to derive outputs that will result on the desired outcomes. STAP looks forward to an elaborate description of the components in the complete project document. Further suggestions to consider when designing the project include:</p> <p>For outcome 1.2 see STAP earlier recommendation on capacity building on integrated land use planning. For output 4.1.1 STAP recommends considering that ‘knowledge transfer’ will not be enough to reach the desired outcomes. Good principles of South-South Cooperation and Knowledge Exchange should be considered (e.g. the Art of KE of GEF-WB https://www.thegef.org/news/art-knowledge-exchange-results-focused-planning-guide-gef-partnership contains good guidance to that end)</p>

		<p>Output 2.1.3 is about: Community-based natural resource management models including multi-stakeholder dialogues and plans for social development and environmental management, integrating terrestrial, coastal and marine elements. STAP suggests using its guidance on multi-stakeholder dialogues. The plans for social development and environmental management that integrate the marine coasts and terrestrial realms should be underpinned by ‘marine spatial planning’ (which is not mentioned at all in the PIF). See relevant literature:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Domínguez-Tejo, E., Metternicht, G., Johnston, E. and Hedge, L., 2016. Marine Spatial Planning advancing the Ecosystem-Based Approach to coastal zone management: A review. <i>Marine Policy</i>, 72, pp.115-130. ii. Domínguez-Tejo, E., & Metternicht, G. (2018). Poorly-designed goals and objectives in resource management plans: Assessing their impact for an Ecosystem-Based Approach to Marine Spatial Planning. <i>Marine Policy</i>, 88, 122-131. iii. Domínguez-Tejo, E., & Metternicht, G. (2019). An ecosystem-based approach and Bayesian modelling to inform coastal planning: A case study of Manly, Australia. <i>Environmental Science & Policy</i>, 101, 72-86. <p>Outcome 3.1 will benefit from considerations around behavioral change needed (and best instruments to that end) in the project design phase.</p> <p>On circular economy, STAP welcomes Figure 2 depicting the circular economy approach the project intends to apply to enhance an integrated land and seascape food system. During the project</p>
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		<p>design, STAP recommends revisiting the figure with key stakeholders, and making amendments as needed to specify: 1) the system boundaries for each targeted landscape or aquaculture (if aquaculture is decided as option during the PPG); 2) the causal connections between ecology, governance and cultural context, economy, and other systems that influence each targeted landscape (possibly combined with aquaculture) 3) trade-offs and positive synergies between the various types of policies/regulations, environmental management strategies – including those strategies focused on strengthening resilience.</p> <p>The project team may find useful the follow brief to help identify cross-cutting themes and issues that require attention in a circular economy/food system approach. Additional literature resources that can help inform components 1-3, especially a circular economy approach, include:</p> <p>https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-020-15735-6</p> <p>Yates, J., Deeney, M., Rolker, H.B. <i>et al.</i> A systematic scoping review of environmental, food security and health impacts of food system plastics. <i>Nat Food</i> 2, 80–87 (2021). https://doi.org/10.1038/s43016-021-00221-z</p>
	<p>What is the set of linked activities, outputs, and outcomes to address the project’s objectives?</p>	<p>The ToC links assumptions with outputs and outcomes. STAP recommends unpacking the components during the PPG to have a clear description of activities, outputs from the activities and how that map to the major outputs and outcomes described. Associated responsible stakeholders for those activities should be identified during the PPG to facilitate adaptive</p>

		management/modifications as needed during the project implementation.
	Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions?	Underlying assumptions are represented. STAP recommends developing an assumption around climate resilience (how the planned outcomes will contribute to climate resilience and adaptive capacity). Additionally, please consider revisiting the assumptions as described above.
	Is there a recognition of what adaptations may be required during project implementation to respond to changing conditions in pursuit of the targeted outcomes?	The risk section considers some forms of adaptation required, and the recommendations arising from the climate risk screening should be attended to respond to forecasting of changing climate conditions.
5) incremental/additional cost reasoning and expected contributions from the baseline, the GEF trust fund, LDCF, SCCF, and co-financing	GEF trust fund: will the proposed incremental activities lead to the delivery of global environmental benefits?	Yes, see earlier comments.
	LDCF/SCCF: will the proposed incremental activities lead to adaptation which reduces vulnerability, builds adaptive capacity, and increases resilience to climate change?	Non-applicable.
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?	Yes the local benefits build into global environmental benefits. This is one of a few projects that highlight co-benefits, and STAP encourages the project team to think on indicators that could be developed to estimate these co-benefits.
	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	Yes.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits explicitly defined?	Yes.
	Are indicators, or methodologies, provided to demonstrate how the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits will be measured and monitored during project implementation?	No, and STAP expects this aspect be given consideration during the PPG.
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project's resilience to climate change?	The climate risk screening assessment identifies actions per component, which the project will support to strengthen climate resilience. These actions underpin the Marshall Island's resilience

		strategies identified in its Second National Communications.
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?	<p>The project brings innovation in the systems-based approach to linking sustainable production, healthy consumption and sound environmental management via the concept of circular economy, and incorporating NbS as part of the response options. On circular economy, suggest drawing from STAP’s advice. When designing the project, please look at STAP’s website for new advice on how to design projects using circular economy approaches.</p> <p>The project’s intention to combine traditional knowledge, and traditional approaches to food systems and natural resource governance and management is commendable. The PIF is very vague in describing how indigenous and local knowledge will be considered in the components; thus, please describe further how indigenous and local knowledge will be a central thrust of the project..</p>
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	<p>The project does not detail how circular economy or systems-based approaches will be scaled. Please refer to STAP’s circular economy advice (to be submitted at this Council, and forthcoming on STAP’s website.) STAP’s advice on food systems also is a valuable resource available on STAP’s website. Suggest paying close attention to power dynamics, socio-cultural context, and other social structures which are important to scaling, and transformational change.</p> <p>The PIF does state, however, that knowledge exchange will be a tool used to scale learning and results. In addition to knowledge exchange efforts, suggest also detailing who needs to be involved to scale project outcomes, what type of partnerships or stakeholder engagement is needed to scale, what capacity building is required, what resources are</p>

		<p>needed (e.g. financial resources, knowledge repositories and who is to manage these repositories), as well as what are the monitoring and evaluation needs for scaling.</p> <p>Additionally, STAP recommends capitalizing from experience on this area reported by other international donors working in SIDs of The Pacific (e.g. “How Feasible Is the Scaling-Out of Livelihood and Food System Adaptation in Asia-Pacific Islands? By Buttler et al 2020 https://doi.org/10.3389/fsufs.2020.00043</p>
	<p>Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?</p>	<p>Given climatic projections, particularly the projected levels of sea level rise, this project would benefit of thinking alongside ‘transformational change’. There is no time for incremental change in this environment.</p> <p>STAP encourages the project team to consider uncertainty to cope with the level of change that will take place as result of climate change, and population changes. A few pathways could be envisioned that map alternative courses of actions as suggested above. A source that is useful for developing scenarios and sequencing alternative pathways based on systems thinking is Resilience Adaptation Pathways and Transformation Approach along with STAP’s resilience note – i.e. refer to section on scenario planning.</p>
<p>1b. Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.</p>		<p>Provided.</p>
<p>2. Stakeholders. Select the stakeholders that have participated in consultations during the project identification phase:</p>	<p>Have all the key relevant stakeholders been identified to cover the complexity of the problem, and project implementation barriers?</p>	<p>The team highlights limitations faced in consultation with stakeholders for the preparation of the PIF due to the COVID travel bans. STAP is pleased that further consultations will take place with key stakeholders during the project design,</p>

<p>Indigenous people and local communities; Civil society organizations; Private sector entities. If none of the above, please explain why. In addition, provide indicative information on how stakeholders, including civil society and indigenous peoples, will be engaged in the project preparation, and their respective roles and means of engagement.</p>		<p>and that a social engagement specialist will be contracted using PPG funds. Suggest revisiting the theory of change during these consultations to detail further the assumptions, risks and barriers to the project.</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>Suggest adding a column to the stakeholder table describing how the stakeholders will contribute to the outcomes.</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-</p>	<p>Have gender differentiated risks and opportunities been identified, and were preliminary response measures described that would address these differences?</p>	<p>The gender dimensions are vaguely described in the PIF, however, it appears the PPG will consider gender-responsive actions to address gender gaps and empower women. Of note is that Land tenure in the RMI is based on a matrilineal society, and women play a key role in agriculture and fisheries, both production and marketing, and in family nutrition (Neelle 2018 https://cgspace.cgiar.org/bitstream/handle/10568/13400/Pacific_Islands_Ag-Nut_Synthesis.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y). This opens a unique opportunity for the project team to develop gender responsive actions that will be of direct impact to the positive outcomes and aim of this project.</p> <p>Further literature to consider includes:</p> <p>Huyer, S., Partey, S. Weathering the storm or storming the norms? Moving gender equality forward in climate-resilient agriculture. Climatic</p>

<p>making; and/or economic benefits or services. Will the project’s results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators? yes/no /td</p>		<p>Change 158, 1–12 (2020). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-019-02612-5</p> <p>Njuki, Jemimah, et al. "A review of evidence on gender equality, women’s empowerment, and food systems." (2021).</p> <p>Janna Visser, James Wangu, Women's dual centrality in food security solutions: The need for a stronger gender lens in food systems' transformation. Environmental Sustainability, Volume 3, 2021 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.crsust.2021.100094</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>This aspect will be covered in the PPG.</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? 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>Risks are valid and comprehensive. STAP suggests revisiting the risks during the project design, and ensuring they form part of the theory of change. Additionally, STAP recommends developing alternative pathways as suggested previously in this screen. This scenario planning will help the project manage and respond to long-term drivers, including climate change and population changes. Refer to STAP’s advice on resilience and durability for assistance on scenario planning. (STAP is developing further advice on scenario planning in 2022). A climate risk screening is provided by the project team, which STAP welcomes. Please embed the recommendations for climate resilience suggested in the screen. The PIF has not undertaken analysis of impacts of climate change due to sea level rise (scarce mention), or other projected extreme events that the IPCC mentions will affect this region. Therefore, it is primordial that PPG includes all the recommendations on the climate risk screening.</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>The project will designate a steering committee, and it identifies implementing and executing agencies. The STAP recommends that creation of a project ‘scientific, technical and advisory committee’ to ensure that best practice of technology use and transfer, knowledge generation and exchange are included in view of the high risks presented by climate change. See earlier comments on the need to tap into relevant learning from non-GEF projects in the Pacific Islands.</p> <p>The project will have links to the R2R Reimaanlok project; therefore, please add this project to the section as well as other projects suggested in the baseline section. Suggest revisiting during the project design whether additional projects, especially non-GEF can link to this initiative.</p>
	<p>Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?</p>	<p>Partly. Please describe learning from R2R Reimaanlok project, and how it will be used to design this project.</p>
	<p>Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?</p>	<p>Very few. Please consider drawing out lessons from other initiatives.</p>
	<p>How have these lessons informed the project’s formulation?</p>	<p>Have informed baseline project design.</p>
	<p>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?</p>	<p>Component 4 describes this aspect of knowledge exchange and sharing. The theory of change also should capture learning.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>What overall approach will be taken, and what knowledge management indicators and metrics will be used?</p>	<p>It is expected the PPG will present indicators of knowledge management and associated metrics, they are not mentioned in the PIF.</p>
	<p>What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?</p>	<p>Described in component 4 and Section 8. See also forthcoming document of the STAP on SSC for KE. It is also advised the team looks for good</p>

		practice of KE and management in the IAPs/IPs and other non-GEF projects.
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Notes

STAP advisory response	Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed
<p>1. Concur</p>	<p>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.</p>
	<p>* 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></p>
<p>2. Minor issues to be considered during project design</p>	<p>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:</p>
	<p>(i) Open a dialogue with STAP regarding the technical and/or scientific issues raised;</p>
	<p>(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.</p>
	<p>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	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.