

REVISED STAP SCREENING TEMPLATE, OCTOBER 2022

GEF ID	11883
Project title	Inclusive and Resilient Agricultural and Rural Entrepreneurship in the Democratic Republic of Congo (AVENIR)
Date of screen	10 May 2026
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1. Summary of STAP's views of the project

STAP welcomes this well-prepared proposal, which presents a clear, evidence-based, and technically robust justification for the proposed interventions. The project summary, rationale, and indicative project overview are particularly strong, providing a coherent explanation of the proposed interventions, the DRC context, and the underlying system drivers. The recognition of governance challenges is honest, and the responses to address them are thoughtful.

The theory of change is well developed, with three convincing pathways to change, strong use of evidence and climate scenarios, and a clear logic linking activities to outcomes. The project components are described thoroughly and provide a high level of technical detail for this stage. The stakeholder consultation process appears substantive, with the consultation findings visibly reflected in the project design, especially in Component 3.

STAP has some minor suggestions regarding sharpening the project objective, numbering the M&E component, and reproducing the ToC diagram at a higher resolution. The main area requiring further attention is the risk analysis, particularly for conflict, governance, fiduciary, institutional, and policy risks, where mitigation measures should be significantly strengthened to account for the challenging country's context.

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

STAP's assessment*

Concur - STAP acknowledges that the concept has scientific and technical merit

- ☐ Minor - STAP has identified some scientific and technical points to be addressed in project design
- ☐ Major - STAP has identified significant concerns to be addressed in project design

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

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

See annex on STAP's screening guidelines.

The "**Project Summary**" was well written and informative. It presented a very clear picture of what the project will do, where, and why. It was also dense with technical details, which were supported by well-referenced evidence and data.

The **project objective** is clear and concise, but could be sharpened by including more direct references to climate-resilient agriculture, since this constitutes the core of the proposed project activities.

The "**Indicative Project Overview**" section is outstanding and provides an excellent overview of the project components. STAP particularly appreciated the clarity of the information provided, as well as the coherence and consistency of the components' structure, which was impeccable. The only suggestion would be to number the M&E component, which is currently unnumbered, as (component 4).

The **"project rationale"** is also remarkably good and provides an impressive analysis of the current situation in DRC from a system analysis perspective. As for the previous section, the analysis of various factors and underlying conditions is supported by a wide range of data and evidence, which is also well referenced.

The **Theory of Change (ToC)** for the project is built on solid foundations that follow a clear theoretical approach. The ToC structure follows three well-developed, thought-through pathways for change. They collectively provide a strong justification for this project, along with a robust project rationale and underlying logic. These are also supported by a considerable amount of evidence and data, including two evidence-based **climate scenarios** based on IPCC data and projections. The proposal does not apply the **"simple narratives"** recommended by STAP, and could consider weaving demographic and social factors into the climate scenarios. The **ToC diagram** follows a clear linear structure and well-defined pathways. However, it is also not fully readable and should be reproduced in higher definition.

The description of the **project components** is very thorough and rich in technical details. Overall, these provide strong justification for the proposed solutions. STAP welcomes the evidence of lessons from previous projects and the way these have informed this project. STAP also welcomes the way gender is woven throughout the project rationale and design, as well as the explicit focus on youth. More detail on the means by which value chains will be developed, and the challenges this faces, will be necessary for the full proposal.

The proposal provided a good amount of verifiable evidence that the project development team has conducted **stakeholder consultations** and that lessons learned from this process (e.g., the failure of previous alternative livelihoods interventions and the insufficient level of community ownership) were recorded and used to inform the development of this PIF. STAP found that the outcome of the process was fully adequate and the consultations were conducted in line with the expected standards. Our review also corroborated that the outcomes of the consultations were actually used to shape the design of project components (especially component 3). STAP would also like to suggest that the project development team consult its guidance on [Community-Based Approaches](#) and [Alternative Livelihoods](#) for insights on addressing some of the issues that were identified during the consultation process.

The **risk section** provides an acceptable level of analysis for this stage of project development, but will need to be revised during the PPG stage to ensure that all risks have been carefully and sufficiently considered, and especially those in the conflict and security, fiduciary, governance, and institutional categories. The proposed mitigation actions will also need to be thoroughly revised and strengthened to ensure they match the scale and seriousness of the risks and include additional measures to minimize residual risk. STAP was particularly concerned about the measures currently proposed to mitigate risks under the Political & Governance and Institutional & Policy categories, which were deemed to be inadequate for the DRC context. STAP would be happy to discuss this point further and provide advice if needed. One suggestion is to consider integrating principles of environmental peacebuilding into component 2. For an introduction, see STAP's Policy Brief on ["Achieving Durable Outcomes in Fragile and Conflict-affected Situations."](#)

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

- Number the M&E component as component 4.
- Develop a risk management plan that provides a more detailed analysis of the potential impact of various risk categories on project activities and outcomes. Conduct a thorough review of mitigation measures and strengthen these by putting in place context-specific risk control and management mechanisms that go beyond the base standard provisions included in project activities, especially with regard to the Political & Governance, Institutional & Policy, and Fiduciary categories. (See STAP guidance on: [Clarifying risks in GEF projects](#)).

- More detail on the means by which value chains will be developed, and the challenges this faces, will be necessary for the full proposal.
- Consider if there is value in adopting environmental peacebuilding approaches in the conduct of component 2.

Note: number key points clearly and provide useful information or suggestions, including key literature where relevant.

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.)