

## STAP guidelines for screening GEF projects

Part I: Project Information	Response
GEF ID	10701
Project Title	Transformational wildlife conservation management in China
Date of Screening	November 30 2020
STAP member screener	Graciela Metternicht
STAP secretariat screener	Virginia Gorsevski
STAP Overall Assessment and Rating	<p><b>Minor</b></p> <p>STAP welcomes this project from UNDP to transform wildlife conservation management in China that aims to safeguard key threatened and iconic wildlife through innovative management technologies, community participation and cross-sectoral engagement approaches.</p> <p>Three components make up the framework that will deliver this vision: 1) pursuing mainstreaming wildlife conservation into integrated landscape planning through enhanced intersectoral coordination and supportive policy environment; 2) demonstrating integrated landscape management approaches and innovative tools in two key endangered globally important wildlife habitats, and 3) deploying technologies and innovative knowledge management solutions for wildlife conservation and landscape planning.</p> <p>The project identifies the root causes of biodiversity decline in production landscapes and insufficient biodiversity mainstreaming in China (population growth, overexploitation, habitat degradation, , climate change, and poor cross sectoral coordination), and barriers that have undermined the efforts to address them.</p> <p>STAP welcomes the preparation of a theory of change that links assumptions, outputs, outcomes and amplifiers, and it acknowledges the 13 risks identified that may impact on the ability of this project to deliver the envisaged outputs and outcomes.</p> <p>Of concern to STAP are ‘moderate’ risks related to: a) insufficient consultation with local communities, who may be affected from</p>

	<p>interventions (e.g. ethnic minorities living in key conservation zones of NPs pilots could be resettled; traditional knowledge could be inadvertently harmed by project activities) and have limited possibilities for exerting influence on project interventions and outcomes that negatively affect them; b) climate change impacting project areas and activities; c) poorly designed or executed project activities, unintentionally damaging critical or sensitive habitats and ecosystems (i.e. Giant Panda PA), resulting from inadequate interventions of land management and restoration; and d) the potential for duplication between this project and the C-PAR initiative that are anticipated to be operational concurrently.</p> <p>Therefore, STAP strongly recommends the PPG include a thorough climate change screening and assessment for climate change vulnerability; that it follow through on all recommendations of the ESS, and that the project maintains close coordination and co-operation with the C-PAR project team, as well as another proposed project for this work program from IUCN in China which similarly overlaps with C-PAR (GEF ID 10710).</p> <p>STAP believes that this project can be strengthened if it considers the <a href="#">principles of Land Degradation Neutrality</a>, <a href="#">international principles and standards for the practice of ecological restoration</a>; good practice of <a href="#">multi-stakeholder dialogue processes</a>, and <a href="#">behavioral insights</a> in the design of project interventions to achieve the desired outcomes while addressing the important risks highlighted.</p> <p>STAP commends the project's holistic approach to biodiversity conservation across multiple-use landscapes, and the inclusion of academia and the private sector as partners that can assist in delivering the vision.</p>	
<b>Part I: Project Information</b> <b>B. Indicative Project Description Summary</b>	<b>What STAP looks for</b>	<b>Response</b>
Project Objective	Is the objective clearly defined, and consistently related to the problem diagnosis?	Yes, the objective of the project is to safeguard key threatened and iconic wildlife in China through innovative management technologies, community participation and cross-sectoral engagement approaches.

Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project's objectives?	Three components (pgs. 41 to 48) are proposed and they contain some description of planned activities. STAP advises careful thinking of planned activities, their linking to the Theory of Change and the consideration of the risks that have been highlighted in the PIF and the EES risk assessment.
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, the 3 project outcomes, and expected short- and mid-term effects of interventions have the potential to deliver important GEBs, and STAP recommends a climate change vulnerability assessment be undertaken in the PPG and to revise if that planned outcomes still hold the perceived GEBs.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	Yes, provided climate change risks are included in the design of interventions, and that interventions' design consider the <a href="#">principles of LDN</a> and the <a href="#">SES</a> ; furthermore, the PPG needs to identify appropriate indicators (and metrics) to enable monitoring and evaluation of the likely GEBs to be generated.
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?	It is highly likely, provided the PPG attends and addresses the risks pointed in the ESS document, and that the theory of change is revised to include the risks as external/internal factors that may derail the achievement to outputs and outcomes. This exercise will facilitate planning ahead alternative pathways of interventions, and 'wind tunnel' assumptions.
<b>Part II: Project justification</b>	A simple narrative explaining the project's logic, i.e. a theory of change.	Yes provided
<b>1. Project description.</b> <b>Briefly describe:</b> 1) the global environmental and/or adaptation problems, root causes and barriers that	Is the problem statement well-defined?	yes

need to be addressed (systems description)		
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	yes
	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?	The baseline is identified, and STAP recommends the PPG considers a step similar to the preparatory assessments that part of the LDN STAP guidelines principles, so that there is a clear understanding of the socio-ecological, economic and legal baseline that can then inform the best set of interventions to deliver the expected outcomes.
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits?	No, the PPG needs to develop a set of indicators (consider SMART principles) to enable tracking progress of expected benefits as the project is implemented, and in the mid- term and final evaluations.
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	Yes, table 6 does a good synthesis of linking the baseline with the incremental cost of reasoning.
	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;	N/A
	are the lessons learned from similar or related past GEF and non-GEF interventions described; and	Yes, the PIF includes a long list of highly related concurrent and past projects, and it identifies lessons that can be taken from those.
	how did these lessons inform the design of this project?	Specified in the PIF
3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief	What is the theory of change?	A theory of change is presented, and STAP acknowledges the team's initial efforts in this

description of expected outcomes and components of the project		<p>regard. However, STAP recommends the revision of the ToC (see STAP Theory of Change Primer), to include clear project outcomes/outputs in the project documentation, clarifying the project pathways for project implementers. STAP recommends ‘wind-tunnelling’ some of the assumptions to ascertain that they are robust enough to underpin coherent interventions that will deliver the set outputs and outcomes.</p> <p>The main technical challenge will be to provide sectors with compelling arguments to elicit compliance and changes in behaviour in a manner that makes economic sense and that they are able to internalize trade-offs based on ecological benefits rather than simply economic ones alone.</p>
	What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?	See comments above, this aspect needs to be improved in the PPG.
	What is the set of linked activities, outputs, and outcomes to address the project’s objectives?	See comments above, this aspect needs to be improved.
	Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions?	See earlier comments, some of the underlying assumptions need to be revised. Furthermore, the ToC should identify targeted behaviors that need to be changed (and ‘who’ are the ‘targets’ of that change, and how – what levers- the changes will be actioned). This comment arises from the PIF observation that “ <i>The main technical challenge will be to provide sectors with compelling arguments to elicit compliance and changes in behaviour in a manner that makes economic sense and that they are able to internalize trade-offs based on ecological benefits rather than simply economic ones alone</i> ”.
	Is there a recognition of what adaptations may be required during project implementation to respond to changing conditions in pursuit of the targeted outcomes?	No, and STAP advises the risks identified be included as internal/external factors that can impact the implementation of activities so

		that alternative pathways be in place to avoid failure of implementation.
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, however, assumptions need to be revised, and risks such as “that the anticipated benefits from the project’s landscape restoration and enhancement interventions do not materialize” need to be addressed carefully in the PPG.
	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 GEBs mentioned are truly global, but the PIF fails to provide a method for their reliable measurement. Progress and/or performance indicators need to be identified.
	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, see earlier comments on the need to identify indicators. In this regard, STAP suggests consideration of the guidelines on LDN, which are based on core set of 3 indicators.
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project’s resilience to climate change?	The PPG needs to conduct a thorough assessment of vulnerability to climate change and then design activities that will be climate-resilient (e.g. drought-resilience, flood-resilient). STAP suggests consulting the UNCCD Knowledge Hub for relevant documents on good practice of sustainable land management interventions that are climate-resilient.
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 describes innovative aspects, and STAP encourages the team to include <a href="#">earth observation and GIS</a> tools for mapping and monitoring, exploring citizen science and the linking of this project to the CAS.Earth initiative of the Chinese Academy of Science.

		<p>The PPG needs to identify business models that can better cater for the socio-economic and political context of area where interventions will occur.</p> <p>The project can add innovation by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) better linking interventions to safeguard biodiversity with the principles of land degradation neutrality;</li> <li>b) including behavioral change (see earlier comments) to ensure sustainability of outcomes (e.g. those activities targeted to awareness raising, education)</li> <li>c) designing participatory approaches to wildlife planning and management, at the national, provincial and local level using participatory <a href="#">spatial land use planning</a> and <a href="#">Ecosystem-based approaches</a>.</li> <li>d) Use <a href="#">big earth</a> data approaches for collection of data and information needed for mapping baselines, design of interventions and indicators of progress.</li> </ul>
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	<p>Yes this aspect is covered in the PIF, and STAP suggests linking with CAS.Earth, the UNEP WCMC, the WOCAT and other global networks that are digital repositories of good practices of land restoration for conservation of biological diversity. STAP recommends a desktop review of recent literature on sustainable land management practices that work on buffer zones of PAs, and the use of geospatial technologies in support of participatory</p>

		approaches for identification of areas that serve as biological corridors
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	The outcomes require transformational change, and the PIF outlines some recent institutional transformations on the Gov of China that provide an enabling environment for this project (see Component #1)
<b>1b. Project Map and Coordinates.</b> Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.		Yes.
<b>2. Stakeholders.</b> Select the stakeholders that have participated in consultations during the project identification phase: 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.	Have all the key relevant stakeholders been identified to cover the complexity of the problem, and project implementation barriers?	Most relevant stakeholders have been identified and the PPG will undertake consultations with local stakeholders.
	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?	Described in the PIF. STAP welcomes the inclusion of academia in this project.
<b>3. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.</b> 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?	Yes. The project's risk register has surfaced a risk (see Risk 3) explicitly about gender noting that "prevailing gender biases in China unintentionally discriminate against women limiting or adversely impacting their



<p>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.</p> <p>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>Will the project's results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators? yes/no/tbd</p>		<p>possibilities for accessing opportunities, benefits from and/or influence on project interventions and outcomes.”</p> <p>To mitigate this, a comprehensive gender assessment is needed to clarify relevant gender concerns and determine how mainstreaming of women into the project interventions can be ensured. It will be underpinned by a thorough needs assessment and focus on how to provide specific trainings for women, how to best facilitate women livelihood operations etc. In this regard during the project development phase, specific consultations with relevant women's groups/leaders will be undertaken by the project's development team but also through consultation coordinated by the NFGA. The project team is committed to ensure that gender indicators and key performance indicators are designed and anchored to discussions on what is possible in the time available.</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>no</p>
<p><b>5. Risks.</b> 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?</p> <p>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"> <li>• 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?</li> <li>• Has the sensitivity to climate change, and its impacts, been assessed?</li> </ul>	<p>The lack of climate change risk screening is a significant shortcoming of this PIF, and it has been identified in the risks and the SSE documentation. STAP recommends the climate change vulnerability assessment as part of the PPG is conducted and in preparing interventions the team responds to the questions posed here on the left.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have resilience practices and measures to address projected climate risks and impacts been considered? How will these be dealt with?</li> <li>• What technical and institutional capacity, and information, will be needed to address climate risks and resilience enhancement measures?</li> </ul>	
<b>6. Coordination.</b> 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, although STAP recommends the GEF database is consulted for lessons from projects with similar objectives conducted in other geographies. STAP notes the risk of overlapping/duplicating activities with the GEF-funded C-PAR and acknowledges the team has identified the importance of coordinating closely with this project. STAP recommends the project includes a Scientific and Technical committee that includes representatives of C-PAR, academia, research centres and the private sector (named in the proposal)
	Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?	Yes,
	Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?	yes
	How have these lessons informed the project's formulation?	Yes, partly see earlier comments.
	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?	To some extent the PIF mentions processes that have been used to identify lessons from previous projects and mainstream them into this PIF.
<b>8. Knowledge management.</b> 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?	The PIF outlines an approach for knowledge management but fails to provide indicators that will be used to assess whether such management is successful.
	What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?	This is provided and the team is encouraged to reach out to global networks of knowledge such as the UNCCD Knowledge Hub, the

		WOCAT, the UNEP WCMC to scale out the lessons and experiences. For China, the team is encourage to cooperate with <a href="#">CAS.Earth</a>
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## Notes

STAP advisory response	Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed
<b>1. Concur</b>	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 <b><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></b>
<b>2. Minor issues to be considered during project design</b>	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.

<b>3. Major issues to be considered during project design</b>	<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>