

REVISED STAP SCREENING TEMPLATE, OCTOBER 2022

GEF ID	11268
Project title	Biodiversity Wildlife Territories
Date of screen	8 June 2023
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1. Summary of STAP's views of the project

There are substantive issues that need to be addressed in the design of this project. STAP considered scoring this as a 'major' but the most important shortcomings can be overcome by addressing weak areas in the PIF. These include the following. Providing a more comprehensive definition of the main barriers the project is intending to overcome. Currently, this is only vaguely articulated. It does not provide a sound basis for the intended interventions or the consideration of the assumptions that underlie a species-based approach to conservation, including likely trade-offs between management options for different species. Several components need to be reviewed to make sure they properly identify the scope and scale of the intended interventions, for example the control of invasive species and the sustainable use of wild species, which are included as subcomponents but could be standalone projects in their own right.

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.

In general, the **project rationale** is that assembling more information on threatened species outside of the Amazon, and developing species-based management plans for their conservation both within and outside protected areas, will improve the overall conservation outcomes and the effectiveness of protected areas as a conservation tool. Although this is potentially a solid rationale, the PIF is deficient in setting out a clear logic and a pathway for achieving the intended outcomes.

The only **barrier** that is identified is loosely defined as the fact that species conservation is facing an unprecedented challenge and habitat loss is the most important driver. While this is generally true, it is not clear what the more specific barriers are to achieving better species conservation. Typically conservation measures first focus on securing representative areas (e.g. PAs) with additional actions when species occur predominantly in modified landscapes, outside protected areas, or where there are additional threats not linked to habitat protection (e.g. from direct use).

As a corollary, the **theory of change** also does not identify or consider the assumptions that underlie the anticipated outcomes. And yet, the intended outcomes are not a foregone conclusion if the different activities are carried out. As one example, the project does not seem to consider trade-offs between the management of different threatened species, although this is likely to be a common problem. The assumption seems to be that a compilation of species-based management plans will all be complementary. This is unlikely to be true. For example, managing fire frequency and intensity will have different outcomes for different species. Will park management focus on the collective best result for threatened species, or will it be driven by the outcomes for

better known or charismatic species? The project should also consider the often considerable uncertainty about what management actions are best for any species, given that ecological knowledge for many, and probably most, species will be lacking.

The **components** vary in the level of detail provided and there are several areas where further consideration should be given to the scope and scale of the intended activities and outcomes. **Component 2.2.** includes the control of biological invasions. This seems to be considered as one aspect of ecological management in PAs (like fire control) but this greatly underestimates these biological invasions as a systems problem and the challenges faced in managing them. The proposal should be clear about whether the intention is to manage all invasive species in protected areas (likely very unrealistic as a subcomponent of this project) or only to manage specific impacts when invasive species directly effect the conservation outcome for a targeted threatened species. The activities should then be designed to align with the objective.

Similarly, under **component 2.3**, sustainable use is included as a general activity but this is also a substantial activity in its own right and could be a project all by itself. The proposal should give greater clarity regarding the intention and scope for the work on sustainable use, including whether it relates only to specific threatened species and whether it is only intended for activities where sustainable use will improve the conservation outcomes for the species being used.

Component 3 implies that repeat Red List assessments will be used to monitor the effectiveness of conservation actions. This section should further elaborate whether this will refer to all species or to a selection of indicator taxa. Repeat Red List assessments are notoriously difficult to sustain across large groups of taxa, and the value of repeat assessments could be compromised by a lack of data. Moreover, the value of repeat assessments for monitoring will depend on the criteria used to make the Red List Assessment. Aspects such as decline criteria or population numbers will likely be more responsive to change compared to geographical range, which may not change at all even if the status of the species does improve. Therefore choosing appropriate species will be an important consideration for effective monitoring.

The outline of **knowledge management** aspects is adequate for this stage of project development.

The project does not self-identify any areas of **innovation** but notes that innovative approaches will be considered during the PPG phase.

The **risks** to the project are adequately identified in the PIF. What should also be considered in the PPG phase is factors that affect the durability of outcomes from the project. For example, will species-based outcomes be compromised if the PAs cannot sustain ongoing monitoring of select taxa?

.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

1. The project needs a much clearer articulation of the main barriers that the project interventions will overcome and how these barriers relate to the different project activities.
2. The project rationale needs to specify whether: there is insufficient information to inform the development of PAs (i.e. why have a component on additional Red Lists); the current system of PAs does not adequately include representative populations of threatened species; the management of PAs is not appropriate to support threatened species (i.e. to support the proposal that species management plans are important); or that activities adjacent to PAs (e.g. use) have negative impacts on populations.
3. There should be a much clearer outline of how species information will be used to create protected areas. Is the intention to use additional species-level information to improve spatial conservation planning or is the intention to set up reserves specifically to cater for targeted threatened species. In

either case, the project should define what information is required and how it will be used as these are crucial aspects of component 2 of the project.

4. The scope and scale of management issues (notably management of invasive species and sustainable use) need to be more clearly defined. The project does not outline the current scale of either of these issues in the background information but usually these are both substantive issues with a large draw on resources and expertise. It is therefore essential to be more specific about what is actually intended.

Note: number key points A clearly and provide useful information or suggestions, including key literature where relevant. Completed screens should be no more than two or three pages in length.

*categories under review, subject to future revision

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.)