

## REVISED STAP SCREENING TEMPLATE, OCTOBER 2022

<b>GEF ID</b>	11051
<b>Project title</b>	Climate Resilience Enhancement for Building Adaptive Capacity in Agri-Value Chains in Cambodia (CREA)
<b>Date of screen</b>	10 November 2022
<b>STAP Panel Member</b>	Ed Carr
<b>STAP Secretariat</b>	Virginia Gorsevski

### 1. Summary of STAP's views of the project

This project seeks to scale up climate resilient technologies (examples skew heavily to renewable energy tech) and innovative finance solutions to support agriculture and food security in rural Cambodia while simultaneously increasing farmer competitiveness, diversify farm and food processing revenues, minimize dependence on fossil fuels and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

**Strengths** – If climate impacts on farming can be clearly articulated in a reasonable timeframe, the proposed technologies could further climate resilient development by both mitigating GHGs and minimizing sensitivity to climate change and other disruptions through diversification and reduced dependence on fossil fuels, though not innovative necessarily as claimed. The theory of change is robust, but only if one assumes that the climate risk analysis will demonstrate the need for adaptation. The focus on both production and post-harvest is logical – STAP appreciates the project's implicit systems approach.

**Weaknesses** – The project does not establish either current/near future climate trends or impacts. The climate trends are presented using the RCP8.5 climate scenario and typically reference expected impacts in 2100. This RCP is an extreme scenario – higher even than business as usual and not used for serious planning – but it often shows up in project documents because it is the only one where there is a meaningful difference in climate impacts in a relatively short timeframe. Further, establishing an impact 75 years in the future is fraught with uncertainty and does not indicate whether ongoing changes are having a material effect on agriculture. In short, the entire theory of change for the project rests on the idea that climate change will impose meaningful impacts that require adaptation, but it has not established the changes or any meaningful impacts. Instead, the theory of change seems to suggest this will be the first step in the project. The goal of increasing installation and use of renewable energy technologies in developing country rural areas, including addressing barriers to finance, has a long history with many lessons learned that could be applied to this project in addition to S-RET. The lesson from this project – mainly that technology alone is not enough and should be accompanied by supporting services (extension services, finance, installation, maintenance, etc.) is important, but again – not new. This is also true for lessons regarding high up front costs and barriers to financing.

Piecemeal projects on their own are not innovative, nor will they transform Cambodia from a climate mitigation or adaptation point of view. However, if they could be scaled up significantly or somehow also address the lack of financial incentives at the national level that disadvantage these technologies, that would provide greater confidence that this effort would lead to enduring positive change.

*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 lacks a coherent adaptation rationale. The PIF, as written, does not establish the changes in the climate that have already been experienced (references are vague and unquantified), instead pointing to possible future outcomes of the most extreme RCP in 2100. Further, the PIF does not link specific changes in the climate, including the amount of change, to explicit impacts on farming. It is therefore difficult to assess the agricultural impacts of changes that have already been experienced, or which are likely to be experienced over the next 10-20 years. References to such impacts are vague at best. Without clear framings of both prior and ongoing change, and the specific pathways through which that change impacts agriculture, it is impossible to frame a project rationale that can address these impacts.

As a result, while the project includes a detailed theory of change, that entire ToC rests upon the assumption that there are or will be meaningful impacts. It appears that the project will attempt to gather the information needed to validate this assumption as the first output in the ToC, a climate risk and vulnerability analysis – thus risking a project that might find there are few risks or vulnerabilities clearly exacerbated by climate change. This begs the question: what happens if the analysis does not uncover meaningful impacts, or if the impacts uncovered do not align with the activities proposed in the project?

Further, good project design practice involves identifying multiple plausible futures (in this case, multiple plausible climate futures) and considering how proposed interventions would function across those futures to assess the robustness of project design. This project is framed around only one climate future, one that is very unlikely to be realized. See [STAP paper](#) on using simple narratives to ensure durability of GEF investments.

Even if the project is correct about current and likely future impacts, it does not align with STAP guidance regarding [engagement with stakeholders](#). While the PIF contains many references to activities with farmers, there is no evidence that the project designers consulted with these beneficiaries in constructing the PIF. Further, there is no evidence regarding farmers' perceptions of specific impacts, whether they are already adapting to them, and what they are currently doing to adapt to them. Instead, the project makes top-down assumptions about farmer needs based on vague framings of impacts associated with the changes proceeding from an extreme RCP and then meets these needs with various interventions. Though it includes several interesting components, the project feels hastily assembled and disjointed - focusing at times on specific crops, other times on different technologies, many different climate scenarios (on the country, on crops) and without clearly defined project locations.

*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

STAP recommends two major actions to improve this proposed project. First, to address the major concerns that the project has not established if adaptation is required, STAP recommends that project designers rework their framing of the climate and the impacts of any changes on people using scenarios associated with at least two RCPs. RCP 8.5 can define an upper bound of possible changes and impacts, while a lower RCP, such as RCP 2.6, can define a lower or lower-middle pathway. This will help designers select interventions robust across a range of futures. To translate these scenarios into effective interventions, STAP suggests the project designers work with in-country partners to utilize the [STAP decision tree tool](#) to refine the project theory of change, particularly by ensuring that interventions 1) meet an adaptation need; 2) complement current efforts to manage climate variability and hazards; and 3) maximize synergies and trade-offs between adaptation benefits

and other GEBs. The last point is particularly important given that agriculture is one of the main causes of deforestation in the country, according to the PIF.

*Note: number key points 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.)