REVISED STAP SCREENING TEMPLATE, OCTOBER 2022

GEF ID	11890
Project title	Resilient Futures: Safeguarding Guinea-Bissau's Coastlines and Urban Areas from Climate Risks
Date of screen	12 May 2026
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1. Summary of STAP's views of the project

STAP concluded that the project has a sound scientific and technical basis, presenting a well-justified set of climate risks and adaptation needs in Guinea-Bissau's coastal and urban areas. The project has significant and clearly indicated co-financing.

The project description is informed by good evidence about climate risks, including flooding, sea-level rise, erosion, salinization, infrastructure vulnerability, and public health impacts. However, the discussion of local and national context, while seeming sensible and well-informed, does not show the sources of the information provided.

The project would benefit from developing narratives describing how the future could unfold to inform the design of interventions robust to different plausible futures. The Theory of Change narrative should be revised to explain the causal pathways between activities and outcomes, and to distinguish assumptions from implementation risks.

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** provides the basic information needed to understand the climate risks and development challenges the project seeks to address, the geographic scope of the proposed intervention, the main categories of beneficiaries, and the expected adaptation benefits. However, it could be strengthened by explaining more explicitly how the proposed combination of risk-informed spatial planning, climate-resilient infrastructure, disaster risk management, ecosystem restoration, and innovative finance will work together to shift the baseline.

The **project objective** is also adequate and conveys the main purpose of the project. However, its current formulation could be improved for clarity and technical precision. In particular, "adaptive capacity" applies most directly to people, communities, institutions, and systems. Below (Section 3), we propose an alternative objective that better reflects what we understand the project's intentions and activities to be.

The **Indicative Project Overview** is fully adequate and is one of the stronger parts of the proposal. The overview describes the project components in sufficient detail and identifies a good range of expected adaptation benefits and co-benefits, including resilient livelihoods, mangrove rehabilitation, protection of critical infrastructure, and reduced public health risks. The components are clearly structured, coherent, and well aligned with the project objective. The proposed sequencing of the project components is logical and provides a credible framework for moving from risk assessment and planning to implementation and sustainability.

The **Project Rationale** provides a sound explanation of the climate risks, development challenges, and adaptation needs the project seeks to address. However, the whole section would benefit from integrating the drivers of

change into narratives that describe plausible futures that can then inform the design of interventions that will be robust across the identified futures and ensure that the targeted 'adaptation benefits' are durable. STAP has a brief on *Using simple narratives to ensure durability of GEF investments* and *Exploratory Future Narratives* that could inform this aspect.

The sub-section on "National and Local Context" could be improved by citing the sources of the information provided; at present, there is inadequate reference to the science and assessments that inform the discussion. The rationale would also be stronger if it included a more explicit analysis of political and institutional constraints, which would help explain why previous investments and existing policies have not yet been sufficient to shift the baseline. This would also strengthen the justification for the project's emphasis on spatial planning, institutional coordination, disaster risk management, and finance. Reference to the findings of the World Bank's 2024 publication "Guinea-Bissau: Country Climate and Development Report" and the Bissau 2030 Strategic Spatial Development Plan to justify the project's design is good and logical. The project has a good focus on **gender** issues, which are well integrated throughout the project design.

The section is solid in its treatment of **climate risks**, which presents detailed and well-referenced information on a range of aspects (i.e. temperature trends, rainfall variability, sea-level rise, flooding, drought, salinization, coastal erosion, infrastructure vulnerability, and public health risks) and provides a credible basis for the proposed focus on coastal and urban resilience.

The proposal identifies a relevant set of **stakeholders** and notes that consultations were conducted during project preparation. It also states that a robust Stakeholder Engagement Plan will be developed during the PPG phase. However, throughout the proposal, there is limited detail on the consultation process undertaken so far, including who was consulted, how inputs shaped the project design, whether vulnerable groups had meaningful opportunities to influence priorities, and how issues such as benefit sharing, ownership, power dynamics, equity, and participation will be addressed.

The narrative description of the **Theory of Change (ToC)** should be thoroughly revised. The section lists the project components and restates elements of the project objective, long-term solution, enablers, barriers, assumptions, and expected impact, but it does not yet present a coherent account of how these will lead to increased climate resilience and adaptive capacity in Guinea-Bissau's coastal and urban areas. The enablers are really contextual factors rather than elements that will drive change, and they are not mapped to the barriers that the project identified.

The ToC appropriately identifies the **assumptions** that must hold for the project's impact pathways to remain valid, but it then treats their non-realization as "**ToC risks**" in the **risk table**. This is not aligned with good practice. STAP guidance notes that: "*risks to the durability of project outcomes arising from future changes in drivers or failed assumptions should be reflected in the ToC and project design, while the risk table should focus more specifically on risks to project design and implementation*". (**See STAP guidance on:** developing Theories of Change and Clarifying risks in GEF projects). Further, under Outcome **1,** strengthened governance mechanisms are described as leading to enhanced climate-responsive spatial planning and improved institutional capacity, but the causal relationship is not sufficiently explained. In practice, improved spatial planning and capacity are likely to result from a combination of strengthened governance, technical assistance and training, institutional coordination, and planning processes supported by the project. Strengthened governance can provide the mandate and impetus needed to develop spatial plans and build the capacity to implement them, but other aspects are important as well. **Outcomes 2 and 3** are both framed around enhanced community resilience to climate risks/disasters, and there is a risk of overlap between community-led adaptation measures, disaster risk management committees, early warning systems, and resilience-building investments. The proposal should either merge these pathways where appropriate or explain more clearly how Outcome 2 focuses on adaptation investments and climate-resilient infrastructure, while Outcome 3 focuses specifically on disaster preparedness, early warning, and response capacity. Finally, Outcome 4 should better explain the relationship between knowledge management, capacity development, private sector engagement, and long-term sustainability. The

current text presents knowledge management, coordination, innovative finance, and private-sector engagement as a single component, but the causal logic linking these elements remains unclear. The proposal should explain how knowledge products, climate data, lessons learned, and institutional learning will be used to strengthen capacities, inform decisions, mobilize finance, and support replication or scaling beyond the project sites. Claims about transformation change are not strongly justified and would be strengthened by a greater focus and explanation of how the project's activities will lead to substantial, durable changes in institutions, incentives, finance, planning systems, social inclusion, behaviors, and practices.

The **ToC diagram** is dense and seems comprehensive, but it is very hard to read. At present, it does not provide a sufficiently clear or well-structured explanation of the causal logic by which the proposed interventions will achieve their intended outcomes.

3. Specific points to be addressed, and suggestions

STAP encourages the proponents to consider the issues raised in Section 2 above and specifically address the following:

- Reformulate the project objective as follows: *"To strengthen the adaptive capacity of communities and increase the climate resilience of critical infrastructure and ecosystems along Guinea-Bissau's coast by implementing risk-informed spatial planning, climate-resilient infrastructure and ecosystem-based measures, and disaster prevention measures against climate risks such as erosion, coastal flooding, and other climate-induced hazards*."

- Ensure that the next iteration of this proposal does indeed contain a robust stakeholder engagement plan that takes into account all the key elements, including benefits sharing, power dynamics, empowerment, equity, ownership, and participation (**See STAP guidance on:** Multi-stakeholder dialogue for transformational change).

- Show the sources of information for the discussion of the local and national context

- Develop future narratives that explain the futures that may arise and use this to inform the development of interventions that will be robust across the plausible futures. (**See STAP guidance on:** Using simple narratives to ensure durability of GEF investments and Exploratory Future Narratives).

- Revise the Theory of Change narrative to provide a clear causal explanation of the project logic. The revised text should explain how each component contributes to specific outcomes, how these outcomes change the baseline, what assumptions underpin the causal pathways, and how the combined interventions are expected to strengthen adaptive capacity and climate resilience. The narrative should be aligned with the ToC diagram and should avoid simply restating components, barriers, and assumptions (**See STAP guidance on:** Theory of Change Primer and Enabling Elements of Good Project Design).

- Clarify and tighten the outcome pathways in the ToC diagram and accompanying text. In particular, the proposal should explain how strengthened governance mechanisms under Outcome 1 lead to improved planning and capacity; either merge or clearly differentiate Outcomes 2 and 3 to avoid overlap and double-counting; and unpack how knowledge management under Outcome 4 contributes to capacity development, institutional learning, finance mobilization, and sustainability (**See STAP guidance on:** Theory of Change Primer).

- Explain how the project will generate durable changes in institutions, planning systems, finance, stakeholder behavior, and implementation practice beyond standard adaptation programming. (**See STAP guidance on:** Achieving transformation through GEF investments).

- Separate ToC assumptions from implementation risks more clearly. Assumptions related to the durability of outcomes should remain embedded in the ToC and project design, while the risk table should focus on risks to project design and implementation, together with specific mitigation measures (**See STAP guidance on:** Theory of Change and Risk in GEF projects and programs).

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.)