

## STAP SCREENING TEMPLATE

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| GEF ID            | 11881   |
| Project title     | Supporting the ratification and phase-down of hydrofluorocarbons in production: A regional initiative for Central Asia and Eastern Europe |
| Date of screen    | 21 May 2025   |
| STAP Panel Member | Miriam Diamond  |
| STAP Secretariat  | Aderiana Mbandi   |

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

This project aims to strengthen the capacity of four countries in Central Asia and Eastern Europe to manage HFCs by working towards energy efficiency improvements in the refrigeration, air conditioning, and heat pumps (RACHP) sector, in line with the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol. The countries included are the last four in the Central Asia and Eastern European regions that have not yet ratified or implemented the Kigali Amendment. Because they are the last four countries, they are markets for equipment using HFCs and presumably, stocks of HFCs for which use is winding down in countries that have adopted the Amendment.

The project proponents should be commended for moving forward with the goal of HFC use reduction despite the countries not having adopted the Kigali Amendment, noting that a project output is providing support to governments for the Amendment's adoption. The question is whether the project can overcome the market and trade drivers of an influx of HFCs to the countries because they have yet to pass the amendment and because these HFCs and HFC-using equipment from other countries will be looking for markets. Can incentives be provided to switch to low global warming potential (low-GWP) alternatives in the absence of countries adopting the amendment?

The project proposal needs to better connect assumptions, barriers, enabling elements, and drivers in the ToC. The proposal also needs to better demonstrate the involvement of the private sector for both finance and also for enabling modernization of the RACHP sector (by replacing low-GWP alternatives). How can the proposal maximize benefits from modernization as an incentive for investment? The proposal should also be more explicit about the need to mesh timelines of data-gathering in order to prioritize efforts, with the roll-out of activities, as such data gathering will be time-consuming.

*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.

1. **Systems thinking** was used to understand the drivers that these four countries are the main markets for equipment using restricted HFCs, because they are the last in the region to ratify the amendment. However, systems thinking can be used more fully to understand the interplay between barriers, enablers, drivers, etc. Also, systems thinking can be used to better identify actors and their interactions at local to national and extra-national scales.

## 2. **Baseline, barriers and enablers**

Baseline was described in terms of legislation and/or policies related to HFCs. The calculation of GEBs cited stocks for HFCs for 2023, but these stocks were not included in the discussion of the baseline.

Barriers were listed including institutional, regulatory, technical, lack of awareness among sectors and stakeholders and financial factors. But these barriers need to be connected within the ToC. Enabling elements require discussion.

3. **Uncertain futures** should be discussed. For example, what are the estimates of capacity, both in terms of personnel and technical facilities, under different scenarios of HFC importation from other countries to meet the demands of a warming climate? Please see [STAP's resources for more details and guidance on the simple future narrative](#).

4. **Theory of Change (ToC)** is comprehensive in listing many barriers and three impact pathways leading from outputs through to expected results and short- to long-term outcomes. The three causal pathways show the logical flow of outputs/activities through to outcomes. However, the ToC is missing connections between specific barriers, assumptions and drivers to specific causal pathways to illustrate how those barriers will be overcome and how drivers are considered. The explicit listing of assumptions should clarify both strengths and weaknesses in the causal pathways in order to exploit enabling elements and to develop alternatives should an assumption not hold. For example, how could institutional barriers slow or prevent the upgrading of pilot cement kilns or other destructive facilities that could be a disincentive for attracting financing? How can the incentive of improved energy efficiency provide an incentive to mobilize finance and loosen institutional barriers?

5. **Project Components.** The project components are sound and logical. However, financing is missing from all the components. The project aims to deliver on HFC safe removal and destruction while modernizing the RACHP sector to reduce GHG emissions. The components could better illustrate outputs and activities that will lead to modernization benefits, especially in Component 3 on capacity building and awareness-raising.

1. Industrial policy development relies on gathering baseline data on HFC consumption according to sector. Is the capacity available for such data collection? Will the assessment of market availability of low-GWPs be conducted according to country or can the project leverage regional information? How can the information gathered under Output 1.1 of baseline assessments help with Output 1.3 of improving institutional capacities under the Kigali Amendment and enforcement under the Montreal Protocol? Would such feedback be hampered by the time needed to gather information while the efforts to improve institutional capacities needs to move forward? The proposal should comment on existing data gathered in 2023 on HFC usage that were used to estimate GEBs, e.g., how will this proposal build on existing capacity and specifically, what improvements are needed in data gathering?

2. Technological Transformation could also benefit from the baseline data being collected under Output 1.1 since one reason for collecting such data is prioritizing sectors. We note that Activities 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 entail data gathering to understand each country's technological needs. What if regulatory or institutional barriers prevent the use of cement kilns or other industrial facilities for destroying HFC waste? Is more institutional capacity required to develop an accreditation system for HFC disposal sites and if so, is that capacity likely to be available? Will the development of destruction capacity follow from efforts conducted under the GEF-5 project on management of ODS and POPs in four countries (including Ukraine, Kazakhstan but not Azerbaijan or Uzbekistan and other related projects?

3. Capacity building and awareness-raising will be conducted for the benefit of the region, which will maximize the capacity for knowledge exchange. Can these activities be more effective if targeted toward priority sectors? Are curricula and training manuals available from other jurisdictions that could then be adapted to regional needs? How can gender equality and empowerment fit into the training goals in the RACHP sector? How will the education sector be involved?

6. **Sectors and stakeholders** include multiple government ministries beyond the environment (e.g., industry, energy, trade), companies that could pilot project activities and the education sector that can conduct training. Gender considerations are mentioned briefly.

7. **Contribution to GEBs** is based on the assumption of 70% reduction of HFCs by 2029 under the Kigali Amendment, and in turn is based on HFC consumption data for 2023. It is difficult to assess the veracity of this estimate since the proposal speaks to a lack of baseline data and yet such data were used to estimate GEBs that could be achieved.

8. **Policy coherence** is implied by the mention of multiple ministries beyond just environment. The proposal could expand on how policy coherence needs to be achieved through different levels of government and how coherence should extend from building codes that are often implemented at a local level (e.g., for building energy efficiency) up to national level policies of HFC management (mandates for removing HFCs).

9. **Alignment with current GEF investments** is good by building on a GEF-5 project and by clearly aligning with GEF-8 program directions. The alignment could be improved by adding 'lessons learned' from previous related GEF investments, and thus, how this proposal incorporates this experience and knowledge.

10. **Knowledge management (KM)** is mentioned and constitutes much of Component 3. A key element of knowledge management is timely updating of plans as data become available and understanding improvements, and tailoring knowledge outreach to different sectors. This component should better explain the involvement of the education sector.

11. **Innovation and scalability.** The project builds on those funded by the GEF and other donors related to reducing the use of ODS and improving waste management (i.e., project in GEF-5).

12. **Monitoring and evaluation** needs to be explained in terms of what will be monitored and how such data will feedback into improving the project's execution.

13. **Risks** are mostly well explained. Substantial risks have been identified with the financial and business model but details are lacking on how to overcome this risk. Why is the risk regarding capacity low while many activities are directed towards developing adequate capacity.

*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 that the proponent address the issues raised in Section 2 above, as well as the specific points below:

1. Improve the ToC to show clear connections between specific barriers, enabling elements, and drivers, with specific causal pathways. This revised ToC should then form the basis of developing clear measures to address barriers that could thwart particular activities and what elements can serve as enabling activities. Also, an improved ToC should illustrate key assumptions that would then lead to consideration of mitigative measures should those assumptions not hold.
2. Better demonstration of the engagement of the private sector in terms of attracting financing through technology innovation and modernization, and the technical capacity needed for the project implementation. Some of these private entities are listed as providing in-kind and grant support but

their roles need to be clarified. The aspect of promoting benefits from sectoral modernization could be better explained.

3. More details are needed on knowledge management, as discussed above.
4. Consideration needs to be given to reconciling the differing timelines for each component, e.g., the need for data to identify priority sectors with the immediate roll-out of the needs assessment within the sub-sectors of the RACHP sector.
5. GEF-8 recognizes the unique challenges conflict-affected states face, which may influence the implementation and the long-term sustainability of projects. In this context, STAP advice that fragile and conflicts-affected situation be considered in the design of the project interventions. The analysis of how this can affect the project should be included in the systems analysis of the project as well as future narrative, with conflicts included as one of the drivers that can influence the project. This may include assessing opportunities to tailor interventions more closely to local considerations and allowing for greater flexibility in project design and implementation to remain alert and responsive to evolving circumstances on the ground. The risk assessment should then address any possible risk that could occur even with good project design, particularly the political and governance dimensions to better reflect the complexities of operating in such environments. Further guidance can on designing projects in conflict situation can be found in STAP's *Information Note on [Environmental Security: Achieving Durable Outcomes in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations](#)* and the *GEF Guidance Note on Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations*. The STAP [paper on clarifying risk](#) provides guidance on preparing the risk table.

*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

## Project rationale

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.)