

STAP guidelines for screening GEF projects

PIF	What STAP looks for	Response
<p>GEF ID: 10872 Project Title: Financing Agrochemical Reduction and Management (FARM) Date of Screening: November 11, 2021 STAP member screener: Saleem Ali STAP secretariat screener: Sunday Leonard STAP's overall assessment: Concur</p> <p>This FARM program is a global effort to coordinate projects that facilitate the reduction of agrochemical usage and their accompanying waste streams. The project builds on a range of past GEF projects and presents a good problem analysis and a theory of change. The theory of change diagram could be further improved by including the underlying assumption that will lead to achieving the desired objectives and impacts.</p> <p>The project also links chemical and waste areas of work with biodiversity loss (considering that the CBD has set a 2/3 reduction in pesticide usage as a target to mitigate harm to threatened and endangered species), land degradation, and water pollution.</p> <p>Overall, the project is well-considered and has a variety of partnerships noted in the public and private sectors. The nexus with traditional farming practices as well as the leveraging of the organic farming industry's growth is also well-considered.</p> <p>The risk analysis is presented collectively, including climate change risks. The PIF highlights the potential impact of climate change on pesticide and plastic use and has proposed mitigation measures. Given that this is an agricultural project seeking to promote new practices that can be susceptible to climate change impacts, we encourage the proponent to conduct a more detailed climate risk assessment following STAP guidance on climate risk screening (https://stapgef.org/resources/advisory-documents/stap-guidance-climate-risk-screening and https://stapgef.org/resources/advisory-documents/stap-chairs-report-gef-agency-retreat-1-april-2020).</p> <p>There is also a recognition that pesticides plastic containers are also an additional waste challenge. Thus, there is a linkage offered to circular economy approaches for managing the full material flow of impacts.</p> <p>The project's title as "Agrochemical" reductions is perhaps more expansive than the core operational work presented. The term "agrochemical" encompasses fertilizers as well. However, the project is largely focused on pesticides, and there is only a passing reference to fertilizers. Perhaps the proponent may consider incorporating fertilizer management into the activities as this is a significant aspect of agroecology, which the project seeks to promote. More so, incorporating fertilizer management could deliver further GEBs related to international waters (reduced pollution and hypoxia) and land degradation (landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems).</p> <p>Fertilizer usage presents a separate set of ecological challenges which are more linked to energy delivery and eutrophication. Future projects in fertilizer usage reduction could also consider climate change mitigation benefits since the Haber process for nitrate production is one of the most carbon-intensive industrial processes. Refer to Rosa, L., Rulli, M. C., Ali, S., Chiarelli, D. D., Dell'Angelo, J., Mueller, N. D., Scheidel, A., Siciliano,</p>		

PIF	What STAP looks for	Response
G., & D'Odorico, P. (2021). Energy implications of the 21st-century agrarian transition. <i>Nature Communications</i> , 12(1), 2319. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-021-22581-7		
The PIF cited an alarming fact that a significant proportion of development disbursement and climate finance earmarked for agriculture supports projects focused on conventional agriculture. However, the project activities related to this issue mainly focus on addressing the public sector (government subsidies), private sector (chemical industry Extended Producer Responsibility, commodity certification schemes), and the financial sector (investment, banking, and insurance). We think some form of activities directly focused on addressing this concern should be included in this project. This could be stakeholder meetings to address this concern, awareness-raising campaigns, knowledge creation and dissemination efforts, etc.		
<p>We commend the proponent for including agricultural plastics (mulch film, hothouse film, seed trays, irrigation drip tape, etc.) in the project, as this is an aspect that is largely less studied or addressed but with significant impact on soil quality, food quality and safety (Steinmetz et al., 2016. Plastic mulching in agriculture. Trading short-term agronomic benefits for long-term soil degradation? https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2016.01.153; Grossman 2015: https://ensia.com/features/the-biggest-source-of-plastic-trash-youve-never-heard-of/; Browne, https://www.bbc.com/future/bespoke/follow-the-food/why-foods-plastic-problem-is-bigger-than-we-realise.html). We would like to refer the proponent to articles related to alternatives to agricultural plastics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Minnesota Extension, 2021. Exploring alternatives to plastic mulch. https://blog.fruit-vegetable.ipm.extension.umn.edu/2021/01/exploring-alternatives-to-plastic-mulch.html • Miles et al., 2015. Alternatives to Plastic Mulch in Vegetable Production Systems. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/296111767_Alternatives_to_Plastic_Mulch_in_Vegetable_Production_Systems 		
Part I: Project Information B. Indicative Project Description Summary		
Project Objective	Is the objective clearly defined, and consistently related to the problem diagnosis?	Yes – these are clearly defined across all operational countries.
Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project's objectives?	Yes
Outcomes	A description of the expected short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention. Do the planned outcomes encompass important global environmental benefits? Are the global environmental benefits likely to be generated?	Yes – clear metrics of GEB calculations for pesticide reduction benefits and methods are provided though it would be helpful to have some footnoting and backup of how they were calculated.

PIF	What STAP looks for	Response
Outputs	<p>A description of the products and services which are expected to result from the project.</p> <p>Is the sum of the outputs likely to contribute to the outcomes?</p>	Yes, there are a series of outputs listed along with each outcome
Part II: Project justification	A simple narrative explaining the project's logic, i.e. a theory of change.	
1. Project description. Briefly describe: 1) the global environmental and/or adaptation problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed (systems description)	<p>Is the problem statement well-defined? Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?</p> <p>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?</p>	<p>Very good – provides rationale and country context</p> <p>The multiple focal areas and the linkages and synergies are also presented.</p>
2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects	<p>Is the baseline identified clearly? Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits? Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?</p> <p>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;</p> <p>are the lessons learned from similar or related past GEF and non-GEF interventions described; and how did these lessons inform the design of this project?</p>	Yes, and the outcomes are benchmarked with the baseline very well.

PIF	What STAP looks for	Response
3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project	<p>What is the theory of change? What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the set of linked activities, outputs, and outcomes to address the project's objectives? • Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions? • Is there a recognition of what adaptations may be required during project implementation to respond to changing conditions in pursuit of the targeted outcomes? 	Theory of change document is provided in congruence with suggested STAP guidelines. A problem analysis diagram is also provided before the TOC, which is helpful. The theory of change can be further improved by including underlying assumptions leading to expected outcomes and impacts.
5) incremental/additional cost reasoning and expected contributions from the baseline, the GEF trust fund, LDCF, SCCF, and co-financing	<p>GEF trust fund: will the proposed incremental activities lead to the delivery of global environmental benefits?</p> <p>LDCF/SCCF: will the proposed incremental activities lead to adaptation which reduces vulnerability, builds adaptive capacity, and increases resilience to climate change?</p>	Noted
6) global environmental benefits (GEF trust fund) and/or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF)	<p>Are the benefits truly global environmental benefits, and are they measurable?</p> <p>Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?</p> <p>Are the global environmental benefits explicitly defined?</p> <p>Are indicators, or methodologies, provided to demonstrate how the global environmental benefits will be measured and monitored during project implementation?</p>	Yes,

PIF	What STAP looks for	Response
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project's resilience to climate change?	
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? Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors? Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	Yes,
1b. Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.		Provided
<p>2. Stakeholders. 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.</p>	Have all the key relevant stakeholders been identified to cover the complexity of the problem, and project implementation barriers? 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?	Stakeholder mapping is included in project design and stakeholder satisfaction also in outcome goals though a formal map is not presented since this is a global project. Each case will have different stakeholder maps.
<p>3. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. Please briefly include below any gender dimensions relevant to the project, and 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>	Have gender differentiated risks and opportunities been identified, and were preliminary response measures described that would address these differences? Do gender considerations hinder full participation of an important	Gender equity plan with clear set of question to be addressed and linkages with policies are provided.

PIF	What STAP looks for	Response
<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>stakeholder group (or groups)? If so, how will these obstacles be addressed?</p>	
<p>5. Risks. 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"> • 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? • Has the sensitivity to climate change, and its impacts, been assessed? • Have resilience practices and measures to address projected climate risks and impacts been considered? How will these be dealt with? • What technical and institutional capacity, and information, will be needed to address climate risks and resilience enhancement measures? 	<p>Risk management table is also included</p> <p>Climate risk screening provided. More detailed climate risk assessment is encouraged.</p>
<p>6. Coordination. Outline the coordination with other relevant GEF-financed and other related initiatives</p>	<p>Are the project proponents tapping into relevant knowledge and learning generated by other projects, including GEF projects?</p>	<p>Yes – there is listing of coordination prospects provided with public and private sector and donors.</p>

PIF	What STAP looks for	Response
	<p>Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?</p> <p>Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?</p> <p>How have these lessons informed the project's formulation?</p> <p>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?</p>	
<p>8. Knowledge management. 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.</p>	<p>What overall approach will be taken, and what knowledge management indicators and metrics will be used?</p> <p>What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?</p>	<p>Yes adequately provided</p>

STAP's advisory response

<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
1. Concur	<p>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.</p> <p>* 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 <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></p>
2. Minor issues to be considered during project design	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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. <p>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>
3. Major issues to be considered during project design	<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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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.