

STAP guidelines for screening GEF projects

Part I: Project Information	Response
GEF ID	10439
Project Title	Conservation and Sustainable Management of High-Value Arid Ecosystems in the Lower Amu Darya Basin
Date of Screening	
STAP member screener	Saleem H. Ali
STAP secretariat screener	Guadalupe Duron
STAP Overall Assessment and Rating	<p>Minor issues to be considered during project design</p> <p>STAP acknowledges UNDP’s project “Conservation and Sustainable Management of High-Value Arid Ecosystems in the Lower Amu Darya Basin”.</p> <p>STAP would like to see a more thorough description of the global environmental benefits related to biodiversity, and land management.</p> <p>Linking biodiversity to land degradation concerns in a neglected part of South Asia is a commendable feature of this proposal. It also builds on earlier work that has been done on the tributaries that fed the Aral Sea watershed in Central Asia by a variety of donors. The project has also noted a synergy with the Green Climate Fund’s work in this area. Recent reading worth considering is provided below and a pdf provided in folder.</p> <p>Suggested reading: Jalilov, S.-M., Keskinen, M., Varis, O., Amer, S., & Ward, F. A. (2016). Managing the water–energy–food nexus: Gains and losses from new water development in Amu Darya River Basin. <i>Journal of Hydrology</i>, 539(C), 648–661. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhydrol.2016.05.071</p> <p>Also regarding the Plant Micro Reserves, the following open access article from an academic journal is worth reviewing:</p>

	https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pld.2017.10.002	
Part I: Project Information B. Indicative Project Description Summary	What STAP looks for	Response
Project Objective	Is the objective clearly defined, and consistently related to the problem diagnosis?	Yes – the objectives are clearly stated
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/adaptation benefits?	Noted in nested outcomes quite well
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	
Outputs	A description of the products and services which are expected to result from the project. Is the sum of the outputs likely to contribute to the outcomes?	
Part II: Project justification	A simple narrative explaining the project’s logic, i.e. a theory of change.	Yes – a diagram is provided in Appendix E but the appendix was not included in the document pdf
1. Project description. Briefly describe: 1) the global environmental and/or adaptation problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed (systems description)	Is the problem statement well-defined?	Yes
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	Yes – detailed section provides both local and transboundary barriers to success and references government documents.
	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-	Yes

	defined, and can it only be supported by integrating two, or more focal areas objectives or programs?	
2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects	Is the baseline identified clearly?	Yes
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits?	Yes
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	Yes
	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;	Biodiversity and current land use are noted and numerous earlier outputs from earlier Aral basin projects mentioned which could serve as baseline
	are the lessons learned from similar or related past GEF and non-GEF interventions described; and	UNDP/GEF Project "Sustaining Agricultural Biodiversity in the face of Climate Change in the Aral Basin is noted
	how did these lessons inform the design of this project?	
3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project	What is the theory of change?	The diagram in Annex E is missing – STAP secretariat will evaluate.
	What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?	
	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?	
5) incremental/additional cost reasoning and expected contributions from the	GEF trust fund: will the proposed incremental activities lead to the delivery of global environmental benefits?	The Green Climate Fund and various other projects are referenced

baseline, the GEF trust fund, LDCF, SCCF, and co-financing		
	LDCF/SCCF: will the proposed incremental activities lead to adaptation which reduces vulnerability, builds adaptive capacity, and increases resilience to climate change?	
6) global environmental benefits (GEF trust fund) and/or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF)	Are the benefits truly global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits, and are they measurable?	These are missing in clear form and need to be articulated as part of the minor revision assessment.
	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	Yes
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits explicitly defined?	Not yet
	Are indicators, or methodologies, provided to demonstrate how the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits will be measured and monitored during project implementation?	See above
	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?	Yes – the Plant Micro Reserve idea is quite innovative.
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	Can be used in other lacustrine systems
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	Adaptation is accounted for
1b. Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.		Included
2. Stakeholders. Select the stakeholders that have participated in	Have all the key relevant stakeholders been identified to cover the complexity of the problem, and project implementation barriers?	Yes – all noted in detail, largely through the National Biodiversity and Biosafety Center.

<p>consultations during the project identification phase: Indigenous people and local communities; Civil society organizations; Private sector entities.</p> <p>If none of the above, please explain why.</p> <p>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>		
	<p>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?</p>	
<p>3. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.</p> <p>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> <p>If possible, indicate in which results area(s) the project is expected to contribute to gender equality: access to and</p>	<p>Have gender differentiated risks and opportunities been identified, and were preliminary response measures described that would address these differences?</p>	<p>Yes – noted using UNDP mainstreaming strategy</p>

control over resources; participation and decision-making; and/or economic benefits or services. Will the project's results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators? yes/no /tbd		
	Do gender considerations hinder full participation of an important stakeholder group (or groups)? If so, how will these obstacles be addressed?	No
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>Are the identified risks valid and comprehensive? Are the risks specifically for things outside the project's control? 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? 	There is a comprehensive risk assessment noted.
6. Coordination. Outline the coordination with other relevant GEF-financed and other related initiatives	Are the project proponents tapping into relevant knowledge and learning generated by other projects, including GEF projects?	Yes – noted with a range of prior projects and with GCF
	Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?	Yes
	Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?	Yes
	How have these lessons informed the project's formulation?	Yes

	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?	Yes
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.	What overall approach will be taken, and what knowledge management indicators and metrics will be used?	Noted though in fairly generic terms rather than specifics.
	What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?	Not clearly noted but could be handled by NBBC and NGO partners.

Notes

STAP advisory response	Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed
<p>1. Concur</p>	<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>
<p>2. Minor issues to be considered during project design</p>	<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>
	<p>(i) Open a dialogue with STAP regarding the technical and/or scientific issues raised;</p>
	<p>(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>
	<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>

<p>3. Major issues to be considered during project design</p>	<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>
	<p>(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.</p>