

## STAP guidelines for screening GEF projects

Part I: Project Information	Response	
GEF ID	10874	
Project Title	Conserving Biodiversity and Restoring Ecosystem Functions in the Day and Mabila Mountains	
Date of Screening	June 10, 2022	
STAP member screener	Graciela Metternicht	
STAP secretariat screener	Guadalupe Durón	
STAP Overall Assessment and Rating	<p><b>Minor issues to be considered during project design</b></p> <p>STAP welcomes Djibouti's project, "Conserving Biodiversity and Restoring Ecosystem Functions in the Day and Mabila Mountains". The project seeks to restore ecosystem functions, while improving biodiversity and forest conservation and enhancing the livelihoods of communities in targeted degraded landscapes.</p> <p>STAP welcomes the project's focus on behavioral change to address the necessary levers for sustainable land and water management, and biodiversity conservation. The project team may wish to draw on STAP's advice on how to design <a href="#">behavioral change</a> interventions in socio-ecological systems.</p> <p>STAP is also pleased by the integrated approach that is being piloted to address degradation of rangelands, forest, and biodiversity. In scaling-up this innovative approach, it will be necessary to address barriers, and consider enablers of change – which ideally are identified in the theory of change to facilitate their monitoring and the necessary adaptive management.</p> <p>STAP notes that project outcomes align with the concept of land degradation neutrality, and therefore suggests that the LDN conceptual framework may be a useful (integrated) framework to design interventions to avoid, reduce and reverse land degradation, restore ecosystem functions and safeguard biodiversity while increasing</p>	

	<p>resilience of the land and populations dependent on the land. The LDN framework can consider, and accommodate, the socio-ecological, political, and cultural factors identified in the project. The framework can also help deal with the potential moderate and significant social and environmental risks identified in the PIF document.</p> <p>STAP notes that activities of components #2 and #3 related to training, education and capacity building could be co-designed and delivered in collaboration with established national education institutions. Mainstreaming of training and new learning is more durable when embedded in established national education infrastructure (e.g. vocational training and professional programs).</p> <p>Below, STAP details its guidance.</p>	
<b>Part I: Project Information</b> <b>B. Indicative Project Description Summary</b>	<b>What STAP looks for</b>	<b>Response</b>
Project Objective	Is the objective clearly defined, and consistently related to the problem diagnosis?	Yes.
Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project's objectives?	
Outcomes	<p>A description of the expected short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention.</p> <p>Do the planned outcomes encompass important global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits?</p>	Yes, the outcomes focus on biodiversity conservation and achieving land restoration.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	Possibly, if good monitoring and learning is in place, and adaptive management is applied as described in the PIF.
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.
<b>Part II: Project justification</b>	A simple narrative explaining the project's logic, i.e. a theory of change.	
<b>1. Project description. Briefly describe:</b>	Is the problem statement well-defined?	Yes, the problem statement is defined well. The effects of sedentarization of nomadic populations

1) the global environmental and/or adaptation problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed (systems description)		(e.g. increased pressure on water points and pastures), as well as increased frequency of drought periods, have eroded land, and put pressure on water availability. Traditional institutional grazing arrangements (i.e. rotational arrangements) also are being challenged by climate change. Unsustainable rangeland practices have also put pressure on scarce forest resources for grazing and fuelwood purposes.
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	Yes, the barriers and threats are described, and supported with references.
	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?	Yes, the problem analysis requires a two-pronged approach focused on conserving biodiversity, while improving rangeland/land management practices.
2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects	Is the baseline identified clearly?	A narrative baseline is provided about on-going and future initiatives relevant to this project.
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits?	Estimates for the core indicators have been provided.
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	Yes, with good monitoring of the core indicators, and other associated indicators, or metrics, needed to track change, and project performance.
	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;	A baseline for the core indicator on terrestrial protected area is provided for the Mabila Forest, and the Day Forest. Other baselines on core indicators include: forest area restored, and areas of landscape under improved practices.
	are the lessons learned from similar or related past GEF and non-GEF interventions described; and	Yes, some lessons (e.g. setting up KM platforms, or conducting exchanges on SLM; improved pastoral management and climate resilience) from on-going projects are described that can usefully be applied to this initiative.

	how did these lessons inform the design of this project?	Collaboration between agencies (FAO and UNDP) on pastoral management and climate resilience will take place to build on lessons learned from FAO's programming in Djibouti.
3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project	What is the theory of change?	<p>To achieve the project's objective "to protect and restore biodiversity, forests and ecosystem functions and enhance livelihoods in Djibouti", the project's desired change will pursue several impact pathways:</p> <p>The first pathway will focus on biodiversity loss, forest and rangeland degradation as well as rural poverty as they are intrinsically linked. These linkages will be addressed in the target areas through a combination of i) protected area management, ii) climate-resilient reforestation, iii) watershed-level sustainable rangeland management, and iv) rural livelihood support interventions. A new form of intensified livestock management (enclosure, feedstock production) will be introduced to reduce the grazing intensity by free-roaming livestock in the two targeted landscapes. A second pathway will focus on improving vegetation cover to anticipate and mitigate effects from droughts, floods, and reduced water infiltration. A third pathway will focus on achieving long-term by setting in place an enabling framework (e.g. mainstreaming gender, strengthening institutions/governance for sustainable rangeland and land management, and putting in place knowledge and learning systems).</p>
	What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?	See above.
	What is the set of linked activities, outputs, and outcomes to address the project's objectives?	See above.
	Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions?	Yes, the pathways are plausible. The PIF contains a number of risks (e.g. project is exposed and vulnerable to changes in temperature..."), which are labelled as assumptions. Suggest going through this list of 'assumptions' and identifying only

		critical assumptions (positive conditions needed to achieve results) at the outcome, and output level.
	Is there a recognition of what adaptations may be required during project implementation to respond to changing conditions in pursuit of the targeted outcomes?	Yes, the safeguards provide information on possible adaptations in relation to climate change. Suggest considering other non-climate drivers (e.g. conflict) that may influence the need for adaptation.
5) incremental/additional cost reasoning and expected contributions from the baseline, the GEF trust fund, LDCF, SCCF, and co-financing	GEF trust fund: will the proposed incremental activities lead to the delivery of global environmental benefits?	Yes, with good monitoring and learning. Key assumptions also will need to be tested, or validated, and this new learning embedded in the impact pathways.
	LDCF/SCCF: will the proposed incremental activities lead to adaptation which reduces vulnerability, builds adaptive capacity, and increases resilience to climate change?	Non-applicable.
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?	Yes, the expected benefits are of global reach to the environment – i.e. biodiversity conservation, restored forests, and improved rangeland management. The benefits are measurable via the core indicators. The STAP suggests identifying, as needed, additional metrics, or indicators, to track short-term outputs and outcomes.
	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?	Yes, the benefits are explicitly defined.
	Are indicators, or methodologies, provided to demonstrate how the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits will be measured and monitored during project implementation?	Yes, earth observation tools will be used to monitor forest restoration, improved landscapes (rangelands), and tentatively demarcate the protected area (area to be confirmed during PPG). NDVI may not be the best choice given the conditions and amount of vegetation. Recent research suggests time series of Fractional Vegetation Cover (based on the concept of spectral linear unmixing) could prove better alternatives to monitor the condition (and recovery) of vegetation. Further details on the methodologies used to measure and track the global environmental benefits, and the relevant co-benefits, is welcomed

		by STAP. Indicators have been provided for the global environmental benefits.
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project's resilience to climate change?	The project will embed climate change resilience throughout its activities, especially due to drought and flood risks. Suggest also considering other drivers (besides climate) that may undermine the resilience of the targeted social-ecological systems. To understand the system's potential drivers of degradation, barriers, and enablers of change, the project developers could apply a resilience assessment and/or a systems-based theory of change anchored on resilience. <u>STAP's theory of change primer</u> is a valuable resource in this regard.
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?	The project is innovative insofar as it will demarcate two biologically important areas as protected areas. The project also will be innovative by approaching protected area management, forest and land degradation, and climate risks (resulting from droughts and floods) in a holistic manner via watershed, or landscape, management. To ensure the project is generating innovation and sustained outcomes, STAP recommends paying close attention to enablers of change, particularly social structures, e.g. cultural values and norms, gender, often required in scaling processes and ultimately in driving transformative change. In this regard, STAP is pleased the project will focus on behavioral change, and recommends <u>its advice</u> on how to design behavioral change interventions (see page 14) in social-ecological systems, which characterize this project. STAP's commissioned report on " <u>how social and behavioral science can influence project outcomes</u> " may also be of interest to the project developers.
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	Partly. The PIF raises ideas primarily on 'scaling out', or replicating successful approaches through knowledge exchanges. A combination of scaling out, scaling deep (e.g. paying attention to cultural values as mentioned above), and scaling up (e.g. strengthening policy coherence for durable GEBs)

		is likely required to achieve the proposed innovations. STAP suggests describing a scaling pathway so that its barriers enablers can be more easily identified, and dealt with. The following advice from STAP is possibly very useful in thinking through the logic chain for innovative interventions: <u>STAP's theory of change primer</u> , <u>enabling elements</u> , and <u>achieving transformation through GEF investments</u> .
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	It is possible that both incremental adaptation and transformative change will be required. It will be necessary for the project team to assess periodically for resilience to identify opportunities for dealing with significant and moderate risks identified, as well as stressors (climatic and non-climatic). STAP is also developing guidance on <a href="#">plausible future narratives</a> (forthcoming soon) that can help guide the project team on planning for possible future consequences so as not to undermine the GEBs and their durability.
<b>1b. Project Map and Coordinates.</b> Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.		A good map is included in the PIF of the protected areas the project seeks to demarcate. Please consider including a map with the target sites in the final project document.
<b>2. Stakeholders.</b> 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	Have all the key relevant stakeholders been identified to cover the complexity of the problem, and project implementation barriers?	STAP appreciates the comprehensive description of how stakeholders were consulted for conceptualizing the PIF. When designing and implementing the project, it might be necessary to consult different stakeholders, for example, who is necessary for scaling, and in what way? It is recommended to include the University of Djibouti and associated technical institutes; they could be valuable partners in implementing capacity building and training components.

civil society and indigenous peoples, will be engaged in the project preparation, and their respective roles and means of engagement.		
	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?	STAP appreciates the table in the PIF outlining the stakeholders by their roles in the projects. It would be valuable to add a column linking each stakeholder to the expected outcomes.
<b>3. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.</b> 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. 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. Will the project's results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators? yes/no/tbd	Have gender differentiated risks and opportunities been identified, and were preliminary response measures described that would address these differences?	A gender analysis will be conducted during the project development to develop a gender action plan. In addition to this effort, STAP highly recommends viewing gender as a social structure which influences interactions and responses to land management, be it agricultural management, forest management, rangeland management, and/or biodiversity conservation. Thinking about gender as a social structure throughout the components will help identify key questions, or assumptions, on how gender is framed based on the project context. This process can then help further understanding of gender, and assist in identifying barriers, or enablers, of gender power dynamics, gaps in policies/regulations on gender, and other elements that underpin the durability of global environmental outcomes and local benefits.



	Do gender considerations hinder full participation of an important stakeholder group (or groups)? If so, how will these obstacles be addressed?	As the project is designed, consider whether the full participation of an important stakeholder group was hindered when gender was considered.
<b>5. Risks.</b> 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"> <li>• 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?</li> <li>• Has the sensitivity to climate change, and its impacts, been assessed?</li> <li>• Have resilience practices and measures to address projected climate risks and impacts been considered? How will these be dealt with?</li> <li>• What technical and institutional capacity, and information, will be needed to address climate risks and resilience enhancement measures?</li> </ul>	<p>Yes, the risks are comprehensive. STAP suggests identifying the critical risks from the safeguards list, and registering these risks (at outcome and output levels) in the theory of change so they can be continuously monitored.</p> <p>STAP's forthcoming advice on <a href="#">plausible future narratives</a> will likely be valuable in strategizing how to plan for foreseen, and unforeseen risks (climatic and non-climatic).</p>
<b>6. Coordination.</b> 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?	<p>Yes. The coordination section identifies projects that are working in the target areas. STAP recommends the PPG includes a desktop review of projects that pursue similar objectives in geographies of similar socio-ecological conditions (e.g. see the <a href="#">GEF funded PRAGA</a> project that used novel indicators of rangeland conditions, or the Avaclim project aims to create the necessary conditions for the deployment of agroecology in arid areas, funded also by the GEF) <a href="https://avaclim.org/le-projet/">https://avaclim.org/le-projet/</a> These project have developed novel knowledge and learnings that are useful to the proposed project.</p>
	Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?	Yes.
	Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?	Yes, in the coordination section and baseline narrative.
	How have these lessons informed the project's formulation?	Not all lessons have influenced the PIF. Some lessons will be addressed in the project design.

	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, the project has a monitoring and evaluation component focused on adaptive management.
<b>8. Knowledge management.</b> 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?	<p>The project will address knowledge management by building lessons and results from previous projects into this initiative. It also plans to rely on adaptive management to respond to lessons learned.</p> <p>As part of these plans, STAP suggests using the theory of change as a knowledge management tool. Registering assumptions and risks in the theory of change will facilitate their monitoring, and any learning that needs to be reflected in the implementation pathways.</p>
	What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?	The project intends to build on on-going initiatives (e.g. SLM platforms) to disseminate learning and results. STAP welcomes the project team’s plan to build on the knowledge management platform on sustainable land management to be developed by the recently launched MEDD/UNDP/GEF-6 project that links with the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) database.

## Notes

STAP advisory response	Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed
<b>1. Concur</b>	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.
	* 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 <b><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></b>
<b>2. Minor issues to be considered during project design</b>	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:
	(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.
	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.

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