

STAP guidelines for screening GEF projects

Part I: Project Information	Response
GEF ID	10384
Project Title	Land Degradation Neutrality for biodiversity conservation, food security and resilient livelihoods in the Peanut Basin and Eastern Senegal (Dékil Souf)
Date of Screening	May 27, 2021
STAP member screener	Graciela Metternicht
STAP secretariat screener	Guadalupe Duron
STAP Overall Assessment and Rating	<p>Minor issues to be considered during project design</p> <p>STAP welcomes FAO’s project “Land Degradation Neutrality for biodiversity conservation, food security and resilient livelihoods in the Peanut Basin and Eastern Senegal (Dékil Souf)”. The project aims to assist Senegal reach their land degradation neutrality goals by creating the enabling conditions for sustainable land management and biodiversity conservation. In particular, the project will focus on restoring land, enhancing ecosystem functionality, and strengthening resilience to drought. Biodiversity will be strengthened through landscape restoration efforts. The project relies on a strong baseline for land degradation using Senegal’s LDN targets. For biodiversity, a stronger baseline needs to be developed that is linked to the Aichi Targets the project aims to contribute to. The STAP commends the landscape approach and focus on territorial participatory land use planning envisaged for the LDN interventions, and it recommends the project aligns with the CBD post-2020 global biodiversity framework, rather than the Aichi Targets that expired in 2020.</p> <p>As the project is developed, STAP recommends linking the theory of change with component 4 on monitoring and learning to validate the assumptions underpinning the outcomes. Using the theory of change iteratively for monitoring and learning will also be valuable in identifying opportunities on adaptation and</p>

transformational change. Careful attention also should be paid to scaling in the theory of change. This includes identifying barriers, and enablers, of scaling. Achieving change at scale requires alignment between knowledge of potential ‘solutions’, institutional arrangements and rules, and societal values. The project team should, therefore, ask which of these three potential types of barrier – knowledge, rules, values – requires attention for scaling. In addition, the STAP recommends the PPG phase connects envisaged targets with the proposed Theory of Change to ensure the ‘right interventions are designed with the right stakeholders’ to achieve the expected targets.

As the PIF points out, the target areas are being impacted by climate change. Other long-term drivers mentioned in the PIF includes population growth. To ensure the outcomes are enduring, STAP recommends designing components 2 and 3 to work in the face of unknown trends, such as climate, and to be sufficiently robust to deal with uncertainty. This entails considering one, or two, additional, simple scenarios (alternative pathways) to deal with the uncertainties of climate change, population growth, and other unforeseen long-term drivers.

Lastly, the STAP recommends the baseline activities of the PPG include gathering information on land potential so that proposed interventions can deliver the expected results. STAP would like more evidence on the drought vulnerability assessment, and how the assessment outcomes will influence the choice of SLM technologies and practices. At present it is not clear whether drought assessment exists for each crop, or whether the assessments were based on water resource models. The UNCCD’s drought toolbox may also offer tools and information that can enhance the drought assessment. While the STAP commends the emphasis that project activities are well integrated in local planning, it reminds the project team on the importance of aligning

	<p>interventions with national land use planning to avoid potential leakage of unsustainable land use and management areas not covered by the project.</p> <p>Below, STAP discusses these issues further.</p>	
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 objective is clearly defined and relates to the problem analysis.
Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project's objectives?	Yes, the components support the project objective. STAP recommends attention be paid to the aspect of participatory land use planning, and the embedding of LUP for this project into the 'broader' national LUP. In this way Senegal will be able to have a better 'accounting' of the interventions undertaken to achieve the LDN target program. At present the project focus on embedding interventions in local planning; that same emphasis needs to be put for integration at national level. The Scientific Conceptual Framework for LDN and the GEF LDN guidelines provide initial guidance on how to embed project-based LUP into existing national LUP systems.
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?	Yes, the outcomes focus on activities that contribute to global environmental benefits.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	Yes, with careful monitoring. Additionally, suggest describing how scaling will be achieved. STAP offers guidance below on scaling.
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?	Yes, with careful monitoring, and paying attention to devise interventions that satisfy the established targets.

Part II: Project justification	A simple narrative explaining the project’s logic, i.e. a theory of change.	Provided in the PIF and with a good graphic on the ToC.
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?	<p>Yes, the problem statement is defined. The overall context influencing land degradation and poverty are described at the country level, and for the project sites. Drivers of land degradation and biodiversity loss are also defined in the PIF (e.g. unsustainable land practices, increased population pressure leading to over-exploitation of resources, poor soils). Each project site, or landscape, is also described, which provides helpful information on the biophysical aspects of the land.</p> <p>As the project is developed, the STAP suggests complementing the description of each site by describing the socio-cultural and socio-economic contexts. Paying close attention to social structures, such as culture, will support the mainstreaming of SLM practices proposed, and it will contribute to durability of the outcomes. The following study looks at how cultural practices impact the quantity of soil organic carbon, and quality of soil organic matter in the groundnut basin: Oscar Pascal Malou, et. al (2020). The Rock-Eval® signature of soil organic carbon in arenosols of the Senegalese groundnut basin. How do agricultural practices matter? https://doi.org/10.1016/j.agee.2020.107030</p>
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	Yes, the barriers and threats are described. The barriers include weak governance, limited access to finance and markets, poor access to information on SLM, among others. Threats include climate change, and drought – among others.
	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 PIF describes the drivers of biodiversity loss and land degradation. The activities aim to address both types of drives, which are needed to meet the LDN and biodiversity conservation objectives.

2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects	Is the baseline identified clearly?	Yes, the PIF lists Senegal’s LDN voluntary targets, and policies and projects on agriculture, land management and food security. Less clear is whether these policies and projects target biodiversity. Suggest complementing baseline description with baseline indicators on biodiversity, and projects and policies targeting biodiversity loss.
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project’s benefits?	Yes, for land degradation. The PIF lists Senegal’s LDN voluntary targets which are the LDN baseline. The baseline also includes a description of projects in Senegal on agriculture and land management, which target food security and sustainable development. Suggest identifying indicators for biodiversity to strengthen baseline.
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	Partly – the baseline is robust for land degradation, but the baseline for biodiversity is less clear.
	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;	See comments above.
	are the lessons learned from similar or related past GEF and non-GEF interventions described; and	The baseline description lists projects that are relevant to this initiative. STAP commends the inclusion of lessons learned from other GEF projects to make an informed design of M&E, exit and continuation plan, project sustainability and introduction of technology and scaling out. The PPG phase could extend this good analysis to non-GEF projects and focus on biodiversity conservation. The list of projects that make up the baseline scenario could be the focus of such extended analysis.
	how did these lessons inform the design of this project?	Page 38 provides a summary of lessons learned for from previous SLM initiatives funded by GEF
3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project	What is the theory of change?	The project’s theory of change is as follows: “Land Degradation Neutrality is needed to increase the productivity and sustainability of the agriculture sector. Applying an LDN approach can also avoid,

		<p>reduce and reverse land degradation, at scales from individual farms to the watershed level. The project will promote SLM and landscapes restoration to achieve Senegal’s LDN commitments. The project will meet this objective through implementation of four interlinked components that will strengthen the enabling environment for SLM to achieve LDN and scale out successful SLM practices. This will be underpinned by strengthened knowledge management that will facilitate further scaling up and out at the national level of LDN.”</p>
	<p>What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?</p>	<p>The project will focus on enabling the environment for scaling up SLM, including strengthened land governance frameworks and policies on biodiversity conservation and natural resource management. These enabling factors will underpin SLM and biodiversity conservation with a view to scaling up best practices, and impact, in the Peanut Basin and Eastern Senegal. Efforts to strengthen agrosylvopastoral value chains, and other market-incentives, will be pursued to improve local livelihoods.</p> <p>When developing the project, the project team should consider using remote sensing methods to monitor land use changes, including soil salinity, in the target sites. Refer to: Thiam, S., Villamor, G.B., Faye, L.C. <i>et al.</i> Monitoring land use and soil salinity changes in coastal landscape: a case study from Senegal. <i>Environ Monit Assess</i> 193, 259 (2021). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10661-021-08958-7</p>
	<p>What is the set of linked activities, outputs, and outcomes to address the project’s objectives?</p>	<p>See above.</p>
	<p>Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions?</p>	<p>Partly. Suggest enhancing the theory of change during the PPG by articulating more comprehensively the assumptions underlying the</p>

		success of achieving the component outcomes identified in the PIF.
	Is there a recognition of what adaptations may be required during project implementation to respond to changing conditions in pursuit of the targeted outcomes?	Partly. The PIF describes the need for climate adaptation. Given the expected changes in precipitation, adaptation opportunities will be analyzed during the PPG. Additionally, adaptation would be greatly enhanced if the project team linked component 4 (on monitoring and learning) to the theory of change. Therefore, monitoring and learning would be used iteratively to test assumptions, and identify opportunities 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 evaluation, and looking for opportunities to apply knowledge and learning through adaptive management. This process includes identifying indicators to monitor progress along the theory of change (e.g. outcome indicators) that complement the GEF's core indicators.
	LDCF/SCCF: will the proposed incremental activities lead to adaptation which reduces vulnerability, builds adaptive capacity, and increases resilience to climate change?	Not 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 GEBs for land and biodiversity (Aichi Targets) are defined. Given the Aichi Targets will be superseded by the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, the PPG should reconsider outcomes/outputs/targets and associated activities to respond to this new framework. STAP welcomes the description of the socio-economic benefits that the project aims to achieve.
	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	Yes, it is plausible.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits explicitly defined?	Yes, the benefits are defined.
	Are indicators, or methodologies, provided to demonstrate how the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits	Yes, indicators are provided for land. Suggest identifying indicators for biodiversity to measure

	will be measured and monitored during project implementation?	progress against the identified Aichi Targets, which STAP suggests be replaced by the targets of the post 2020 global biodiversity framework of the UN CBD
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project's resilience to climate change?	During the PPG, the project will identify opportunities for climate adaptation/adaptive capacity.
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?	<p>The consideration of the LDN as the framework to scope and plan interventions for sustainable land management and in tandem safeguarding biodiversity makes this project practice-innovative. The focus of component 3 on facilitating the inclusive and sustainable financial investments needed to remove barriers to accessing finance for women and youth is noted as an innovative approach to engage youth in local jobs to avoid forced migration. With careful planning of capacity building, this project could be transformative in developing new business opportunities around SLM. STAP would like to propose the project team explores 'landscape conservation and production cooperatives' as a means to strengthen social capital while maximising the use of financial resources. There are success stories around this form of enterprise in China, Australia, etc. See more at: Jacobson, C. A., & Haubold, E. M. (2014). Landscape conservation cooperatives: building a network to help fulfill public trust obligations. <i>Human dimensions of wildlife</i>, 19(5), 427-436. <i>The George Wright Forum</i> (Vol. 33, No. 2, pp. 149-162). George Wright Society.</p> <p>Pfeiffer, Harriet, Peter Ampt, Alex Baumber, Rebecca Cross, Emily Berry, and Graciela Metternicht. "Lessons and best practice of landholder collaboration for landscape-scale conservation and production." In <i>Proceedings of the 19th Australian Rangeland Society Biennial Conference</i>. 2017.</p>

	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	The project aims to scale-up SLM and biodiversity conservation. When developing the project, the project team should be aware of barriers to scaling, which may include cultural values and norms, access to knowledge on innovation solutions, among other factors. As the project is designed, it might be worth for the project developers to consider a separate theory of change for scaling. STAP's brief on transformation offers guidance on scaling.
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	Need to answered during the PPG phase.
1b. Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.		The PIF provides several valuable maps, including maps of the target sites categorizing types of land degradation, and land cover changes.
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.	Have all the key relevant stakeholders been identified to cover the complexity of the problem, and project implementation barriers?	The relevant stakeholders appear to have been identified. As the project is implemented and the theory of change evolves, it would be valuable to check whether the appropriate stakeholders are being consulted. Stakeholders may vary according to the stages of project implementation, or the needs of theory of change. For example, addressing the four main barriers on LDN identified in the PIF may require different types of stakeholders.

	<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>Yes, the stakeholder roles in the project are described. Suggest describing how their combined roles will contribute to the project outcomes. Given that target 2.1 b is about training by higher degree (10 Masters and 3PhD on SLM / LDN) the STAP recommends a University of Senegal be included as stakeholder to deliver on this target. At present no Higher Education Institution is mentioned in the extensive list of stakeholders.</p>
<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. 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</p>	<p>Have gender differentiated risks and opportunities been identified, and were preliminary response measures described that would address these differences?</p>	<p>Currently, the PIF does not identify gender differentiated risks and opportunities. Suggest assessing the gender risks and opportunities as the theory of change is further developed during the PPG, and enablers, or barriers, to change are discussed.</p>

	<p>Do gender considerations hinder full participation of an important stakeholder group (or groups)? If so, how will these obstacles be addressed?</p>	<p>Please keep in mind whether gender considerations hinder the full participation of an important stakeholder group during the project design and implementation.</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? 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>The identified risks are valid, and should be defined in the theory of change and linked to the appropriate outcome.</p> <p>In terms of social risks, it would be valuable to identify the social risks and barriers associated with behavioral change which is linked to scaling. For example, have barriers to behavioral change focused on social structural issues such as cultural norms and values? Further guidance on behavioral change in GEF projects can be found at: https://www.stagef.org/resources/advisory-documents/why-behavior-change-matters-gef-and-what-do-about-it</p> <p>For climate risks, STAP welcomes FAO’s climate risk screening attached as annex to the PIF. There is a variety of information in the climate screen that would be valuable to integrate into the project as opposed to leaving the information in an annex. For example, it would be useful to integrate the description of the climate trends per target site in the context section. The project objective and the components should also be framed within the context of climate change – that is, the project objective and activities should be credible in the face of climate change, and other long-term drivers, such as population changes. The PIF mentions that population is expected to increase in the project site, while precipitation will decrease; therefore, influencing agricultural productivity.</p> <p>Furthermore, when developing the theory of change, suggest considering a small number of simple scenarios, or alternative pathways, that</p>

		<p>cover the range of uncertainty due to climate change and other long-term drivers. Doing so will enable adaptation options to become more visible, and the adaptation capacity mechanisms (in FAO's climate screening) to be used.</p> <p>In particular, suggest analysing: (i) key trends (in threat and opportunity drivers) relevant to each target site and purpose of the intervention (GEBs); (ii) where these have uncertain timing or magnitude, outlining these uncertainties, and; (iii) design components 2 and 3 to work in the face of known trends and to be robust to the uncertainty in those that are not fully known.</p> <p>Suggest referring to STAP's theory of change primer (https://www.stapgef.org/resources/advisory-documents/theory-change-primer) for further information.</p>
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. Suggest adding the lessons learned from the rapid analysis of past projects in the Groundnut Basin. Currently this valuable information is provided as an annex.
	Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?	See above.
	Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?	See above.
	How have these lessons informed the project's formulation?	See above.
	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 learning component. However, suggest using the theory of change to complement monitoring of outcomes.
8. Knowledge management. Outline the "Knowledge Management Approach" for the project, and how it will contribute to the project's overall impact,	What overall approach will be taken, and what knowledge management indicators and metrics will be used?	The project will manage knowledge through component 4 focused on monitoring and learning. The project also plans to set up knowledge platforms on SLM and biodiversity.

including plans to learn from relevant projects, initiatives and evaluations.		Suggest identifying indicators for knowledge management. This could include indicators for the implementation for the SLM and biodiversity knowledge platforms.
	What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?	<p>In addition to linking the project outcomes to knowledge platforms, the project plans to organize stakeholder forums to present SLM lessons, disseminate lessons and recommendations.</p> <p>Additionally, suggest relying on the theory of change for monitoring, evaluation and learning. As suggested above, a separate theory of change on scaling is recommended.</p>

Notes

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

3. Major issues to be considered during project design	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:
	(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.