

STAP guidelines for screening GEF projects

Part I: Project Information	Response	
GEF ID	10990	
Project Title	Conservation of biodiversity and sustainable use of a lowland forest mosaic landscape in Ogun, Edo, Delta and Ondo States	
Date of Screening	30 May 2022	
STAP member screener	John Donaldson	
STAP secretariat screener	Alessandro Moscuza	
STAP Overall Assessment and Rating	<p>Minor issues to be considered during project design. Our assessment concluded that this proposal addresses important issues for conservation of biodiversity and has sufficient justification and information for this stage of project development. It could be strengthened by addressing several -issues outlined under the relevant topics below. In summary, these include: a clearer identification of the barriers and how they are addressed by the project; better use of existing published information on threats, conservation challenges and possible solutions as there seems to be have been quite a bit of research in the area over the past decade; more detailed analysis of the baseline so that it is possible to measure the impacts of the project; a clearer identification of assumptions in the theory of change so that these can be adequately dealt with in project design; and greater clarity regarding innovations (e.g. innovative financing) in order to manage the relative risks-rewards and to plan for scaling.</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 clear and aligned to the problem diagnosis.
Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project's objectives?	The project comprises four components <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integrated landscape planning 2. Biodiversity conservation and restoration within protected areas and buffer zones

		<p>3. Sustainable production practices and nature-based tourism in productive landscapes</p> <p>4. Knowledge Management M&E</p> <p>These components all support the overall objective, and this comes across reasonably well in the Theory of Change diagram.</p>
Outcomes	<p>A description of the expected short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention.</p> <p>Do the planned outcomes encompass important adaptation benefits?</p>	<p>The components are expected to produce four outcomes: An integrated landscape management system; the protection of remaining core biodiversity areas; reduced pressure on biodiversity due to better production practices and value chains; diffusion of knowledge. These are all aligned with the overall objective.</p>
	<p>Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?</p>	<p>Yes. The main intended benefit is better management of the national park and restoration/ better management of surrounding forested areas to create linkages in the landscape and reduce pressures on the park. These benefits are likely to be achieved.</p>
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>	<p>For the most part, the activities and outputs should support the outcomes.</p>
Part II: Project justification	<p>A simple narrative explaining the project's logic, i.e. a theory of change.</p>	<p>The narrative and diagram relating to the theory of change present a plausible logic flow.</p>
<p>1. Project description.</p> <p>Briefly describe:</p> <p>1) the global environmental and/or adaptation problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed (systems description)</p>	<p>Is the problem statement well-defined?</p>	<p>The problem statement provides a good overall description of the main problems affecting the forest reserve. The outline of the problem uses relevant literature although, as expanded in the section below, there seems to be a considerable amount of relevant literature that has not been referenced to better understand the problem. This is unfortunate as the problem statement would be strengthened by using data from these studies, such as the extent, nature and trends of incursions into the national park (Olaleru Egonmwan 2014), the budget and capacity constraints experienced in the park (Nchor & Ogogo 2012), perceptions of surrounding communities, and opportunities and challenges for ecotourism (several references). STAP recommends that the evidence from the available studies is used to inform the project proposal during the next stage of development.</p>
	<p>Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?</p>	<p>The description of the threats and barriers is plausible, but the supporting data and references are weak. It may be that the information does not exist (the proposal states that survey data is out of date) but some of the narrative</p>

		<p>implies the existence of some data, e.g. the threat of illegal logging refers to factors that were ‘..widespread during the study period’. There does seem to be other available literature that is not referenced (A brief search for information on Okomu National Park yielded at least 10 relatively recent papers- see list appended to the screening document). Several are particularly relevant to this proposal because they deal with threats, barriers, drivers and community perceptions, and they research possible solutions such as ecotourism which is a proposed solution. As it stands, the barriers are not fully described and substantiated to a level that is possible to determine whether the proposed interventions will be sufficient to overcome the barriers. For example, under financial barriers, it is implied that funding exists and that the main constraint is limited awareness of financial needs and the importance of conservation. This does not seem to align with the proposed solution to secure innovative financing as part of the project. A recent statement by the Society for Conservation Biology (March 2022: Salvaging Okomu National Park from Ruin: Proposals for Sustainability in Critical Times) also listed additional barriers such as land tenure and user rights and it is important to be clear about whether these are addressed by the project or at least won’t undermine the intended outcomes of the project. STAP recommends that the project team strengthen the identification and circumscription of barriers to ensure that the activities and outputs being planned will adequately address the barriers and reduce threats.</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>The project primarily focuses on biodiversity with an acknowledgment that there are co-benefits for land degradation and climate change. Aspects of the project are aligned with REDD+ objectives. Since a major part of the project focuses on integrated land management, it would strengthen the project if it was clear how the co-benefits might influence cooperation from other sectors such as agriculture and forestry.</p>
<p>2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects</p>	<p>Is the baseline identified clearly?</p>	<p>The baseline is reasonably well identified, at least in broad terms. The current institutional arrangements and existing projects are identified and these provide a solid baseline especially for Component 1 of the project. What is less clear is the baseline for the other three components: the current condition of degraded lands (as a baseline for</p>

		restoration); agricultural productivity (to measure changes in intensification); levels of legal and illegal hunting and logging; livelihood data (to measure improved livelihoods); current knowledge management systems. It seems that some of these metrics may emerge from the FOLUR project and some are planned during the PPG stage but they will be crucial in order to measure the impact of the project. STAP recommends that the baseline situation is more clearly spelt out in the next phase of project development.
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits?	See above.
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	Yes, despite limited baseline metrics, the incremental reasoning can be supported given that there is currently very little additional project activity occurring in the area.
	For multiple focal area projects:	N/A
	are the multiple baseline analyses presented (supported by data and references), and the multiple benefits specified, including the proposed indicators;	N/A
	are the lessons learned from similar or related past GEF and non-GEF interventions described; and	The main linkage is to the FOLUR project. This project is still being implemented so the lessons learned will only be available later in project development. What is missing is any reference to other GEF projects trying to achieve similar outcomes. The GEF has supported numerous projects on integrated land management, restoration and alternative livelihoods and these could better inform aspects of this project. STAP recommends that the proponents look at other similar GEF projects to identify possible lessons and particularly to interrogate some of the assumptions relevant to this project.
	how did these lessons inform the design of this project?	See above.
3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project	What is the theory of change?	In essence, the TOC is that durable GEBs can be achieved by an integrated land management approach, combined with better protection (enforcement) and restoration of forest, the provision of alternative livelihoods to local communities and dissemination of knowledge
	What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?	The project proposes a logical sequence from planning and improving enforcement to restoration and

		livelihoods. As proposed, some of these can be developed concurrently.
	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?	The mechanisms of change do seem plausible as long as the assumptions are understood and the project is designed to address them. The assumptions listed in the Theory of Change focus on the commitment of stakeholders and the adoption of knowledge, which are important. The TOC would be strengthened by including some of the more fundamental assumptions relating to the project, e.g. that an integrated planning framework will result in more biodiversity friendly land use patterns; that small-scale producers can and will intensify production rather than convert new areas; that ecotourism livelihoods can displace livelihoods based on hunting or logging; that disseminating knowledge is sufficient to change behavior. The benefit of properly identifying these assumptions is that it is then possible to determine how successfully they have been addressed in other projects and how this project can be designed to ensure good outcomes.
	Is there a recognition of what adaptations may be required during project implementation to respond to changing conditions in pursuit of the targeted outcomes?	There is mention of the need to be adaptive but there is no specific attempt to identify parts of the project where a more adaptive approach will be required. Usually this would be associated with those components with the greatest uncertainty.
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 in that the project provides greater durability for an established protected area that is listed as an Important Bird Area and critical habitat for at least two globally endangered species.
	LDCF/SCCF: will the proposed incremental activities lead to adaptation which reduces vulnerability, builds adaptive capacity, and increases resilience to climate change?	N/A
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?	The GEBs are consistent with the GEF's intended impact, They include improved conservation of threatened forest vegetation types and an Important Bird Area, at least two species of globally threatened mammals, sustainable use of biodiversity, and improved forest ecosystem goods and services.

	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	The scale is plausible.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits explicitly defined?	The GEBs are well defined in the problem statement. For clarity, they should be repeated in the section under GEBs. What is missing is an explanation of how GEBs would be affected if the project did not go ahead, e.g what would the impact be on forest elephant populations or the white throated guenon.
	Are indicators, or methodologies, provided to demonstrate how the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits will be measured and monitored during project implementation?	The indicators are provided at a high level, e.g. ha under Integrated land management, ha restored. The proposal does not mention specific methods to demonstrate improvement in GEBs. STAP recommends that the full project proposal provides relevant information on methods to measure change in GEBs.
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project's resilience to climate change?	The project outlines several mechanisms to increase resilience to climate change including use of forest management tools that have been successfully applied in Colombia and Peru and will be adapted to African conditions.
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 self identifies as innovative. It refers to innovative financing, but no detail of the proposed financing is mentioned. In terms of understanding the possible gains and what innovations might be tested in this project, more details of innovative mechanisms should be provided.
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	No. the mention of financial innovations does not provide further detail of the nature of the innovation, nor how it can be scaled. The proposal also considers some of the aspects of integrated land management as transformative but does not specify how this will be achieved.
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	The more fundamental change that is envisaged in this project is the integration of activities across ministries and sectors. This implies transformation of existing systems. The FOLUR project should provide critical information to support this aspect of the project. STAP recommends that the project proponent refers to relevant STAP papers on integration, e.g. multi-stakeholder dialogue, policy coherence, and transformational change and draws lessons from other GEF projects where similar change has been achieved.
1b. Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide geo-referenced information		

<p>and map where the project interventions will take place.</p>		
<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>	<p>Have all the key relevant stakeholders been identified to cover the complexity of the problem, and project implementation barriers?</p>	<p>A wide range of stakeholders have been identified for the PPG phase of the project. It is unfortunate the engagements during the PIF stage did not include local communities or the private sector given that the success of several key components of the project depend on their participation. Stakeholder groups can be used to test some of the assumptions that underpin the success of the project, e.g. whether the development of possible alternative livelihoods will change land use behavior.</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>The proposal identifies a wide range of relevant stakeholder and their potential roles.</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</p>	<p>Have gender differentiated risks and opportunities been identified, and were preliminary response measures described that would address these differences?</p>	<p>The proposal acknowledges the generally low levels of gender equality in the project area and proposes several ways to address this. No preliminary analysis of differentiated risks or opportunities has yet been undertaken.</p>

<p>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 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>Do gender considerations hinder full participation of an important stakeholder group (or groups)? If so, how will these obstacles be addressed?</p>	<p>There is insufficient information to fully answer this question.</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 risks are broadly identified. Some of these should be within the control of the project or even be preconditions for the project, e.g. support from central government and local government.</p> <p>Climate related risks are identified to a sufficient level for this stage of project development. This includes use of climate projections for the project area.</p> <p>This part of Nigeria, and the country as a whole will be subject to significant climate impacts, therefore STAP recommends that a detailed climate risk screening be carried out for the project, and mitigation measure for identified risk be put in place during the implementation phase.</p>
<p>6. Coordination. Outline the coordination with other</p>	<p>Are the project proponents tapping into relevant knowledge and learning generated by other projects, including GEF projects?</p>	<p>The proposal does not reference many other projects except the FOLUR project which is being implemented in part of the geographic area of this project. STAP</p>

relevant GEF-financed and other related initiatives		recommends that the project team look at other GEF projects relating to the main components (integrated land management, restoration, livelihoods) in order to distill lessons learned and to strengthen the current project design.
	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?	No.
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?	Knowledge management forms a specific component of the project. The proposed approach comprises development of knowledge products and tools relating to land management, capacity building and M&E. At this stage there is little detail of the intended mechanisms. The intention to track the conditions under which interventions have worked is an important contribution.
	What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?	The intention is to share results and lessons across the wider area in Nigeria and encourage uptake in these areas where the project was not active. If this is intended to be one of the main options for scaling out then it will be important to provide more detail on how this is expected to happen and what information stakeholders will require in order to replicate successes from the project.

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>

References relevant to Okomu National Park and Okomu Forest Reserve

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Olaniyi, Oluwatobi Emmanuel, Shadrach Olufemi Akindele, and Babafemi George Ogunjemite. "Ecotourism Suitability of Okomu and Pendjari National Parks." *Anatolia* 29, no. 4 (October 2, 2018): 593–604. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13032917.2018.1486329>.

