

## STAP guidelines for screening GEF projects

<b>Part I: Project Information</b>	<b>Response</b>	
<b>GEF ID</b>	10769	
<b>Project Title</b>	Robust sustainable tourism and agriculture sectors in Niue supported by biodiversity mainstreaming and sustainable land management	
<b>Date of Screening</b>	19 May 2021	
<b>STAP member screener</b>	John Donaldson	
<b>STAP secretariat screener</b>	Alessandro Moscuza	
<b>STAP Overall Assessment and Rating</b>	<p><b>Concur</b>            STAP review concluded that this was a strong project proposal, which covered all aspects and requirements in a very thorough and comprehensive fashion. We found that all sections of the proposal were consistently well-written and were pleased to observe a high level of coherence between different sections. We found that the section on the project description was particularly strong and worth of mention for its clarity and linearity in presenting the case for this intervention. The Theory of Change (ToC) was well-structured and clearly articulated; the same could be also be said for the overall structure of the project components, outcomes and the outputs. We found some minor issues with the risk and knowledge management sections, where we made some minor observations/recommendations that could be implemented during the PPG and/or inception phase of the project. Overall, <b>STAP acknowledges</b> the level of attention and diligence that was employed in drafting this proposal. In terms of learning from mainstreaming initiatives, this project offers some unusual opportunities. It is being applied in a small island state with relatively few stakeholders and where all the main actors are known, and their actions can be monitored. <b>STAP encourages</b> the proponents to set up the knowledge management systems and M&amp;E to maximize the learning opportunities offered by such a project.</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, the project proposal presented a very clear and well-defined objective, which was consistent with the problem diagnosis and was also really well-aligned with the

		activities proposed under the project components, as well as the outcomes and outputs.
Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project's objectives?	Yes, the project proposal is structured around three components, which were well-structured and well aligned with the project's objectives. The description of the planned activities was also consistently related to the problem diagnosis.
Outcomes	A description of the expected short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention.  Do the planned outcomes encompass important adaptation benefits?	The outcomes presented in the project proposal provided a strong framing for the project outputs and activities and were well-sequenced. They also supported the logical flow from the project objective through to the outputs. The planned outcomes did not appear to encompass any adaptation benefits, although these were identified and described further down into the project proposal.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	Yes, our review concluded that the current project proposal is underpinned by a robust logic and presents a clear pathway to impact.
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, as noted above, the outputs are really well-aligned with the project outcomes and the project objective. STAP review concluded that the project outputs were well-calibrated and highly likely to contribute to the project outcomes if all project activities are implemented as indicated and all assumptions presented in the ToC hold true.
<b>Part II: Project justification</b>	A simple narrative explaining the project's logic, i.e. a theory of change.	
<b>1. Project description.</b> <b>Briefly describe:</b> 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, this section of the proposal was very strong and covered all aspects that our assessment regarded as necessary for a project of this kind. The assessment of Niue's global environmental problems, root causes and barriers to be addressed was very balanced and supported by a very comprehensive array of well-referenced information and data.
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	Yes, the barriers to be addresses and potential threats to the success of the project were well-described and supported by an extensive array of well-sourced data and references.
	For multiple focal area projects: does the problem statement and analysis identify the drivers of environmental degradation which need to be addressed	Yes, the proposal identified a range of drivers of environmental degradation, which were clearly linked to the socio-economic context and realities of Niue. As noted above, the project objective was well-defined, and

	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?	we concur that it can only be addressed through an intervention covering the two focal areas proposed (i.e. Biodiversity and Land Degradation).
2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects	Is the baseline identified clearly?	Yes, the proposal identified and described a range of pre-existing activities and commitments from the govt of Niue, as well as three GEF-funded project and a further one funded by Global Climate Change Alliance.
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits?	Yes, all of the activities described as part of the baseline include information about their financial value and estimated impact, which provide a strong basis for calculating the additional benefits from this project.
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	Yes, the baseline is sufficiently robust to support the additional investment from this project and demonstrate sufficient absorptive capacity by implementing partners and beneficiaries on the ground. It also supports the case for additional investment at this stage, which is likely to have a much higher impact and lower cost than any deferred action.
	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;	Yes.
	are the lessons learned from similar or related past GEF and non-GEF interventions described; and	Yes, these are described in the baseline section of the PIF, as well as the detailed description of the project components in the "proposed alternative scenario" section of the document.
	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 proposed ToC for this project assumes that tourism and agriculture, if implemented coherently and sustainably, can provide the most appropriate tools to improve biodiversity conservation and integrated landscape management, diversify the economy and enhance livelihoods, while building Niue's resilience to future economic shocks, such as natural disasters and global pandemics. The project's approach is also based on the assumption that mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystem services into tourism and agriculture policy, planning and operations in Niue will require understanding and acceptance of the positive impacts that

		healthy ecosystems and productive landscapes provide for livelihoods.
	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?	Yes, the proposal includes a well-defined ToC, which is underpinned by a strong logic and presents a very clear pathway to impact to be achieved through the delivery of outputs and outcomes. The ToC includes three categories of assumptions, which are linked to outputs, outcomes and intermediate impact. It also illustrates the baseline problem, drivers and barriers that the project aims to address.
	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 theory of change identifies a range of adaptations that may be required, including a shift in behavior to accepting the role of biodiversity and ecosystem services as the basis for sustainable tourism and food production, elements of this aspect are also weaved in the text of the assumptions.
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, as already outlined the proposal presents a clear pathway to impact, which is underpinned by a robust logic. This implies that if the project activities are implemented as indicated in the proposal and the assumptions are realized then the environmental benefits will be realized.
	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 project outlines several GEBs. The focus on animal taxa identified three single island endemics together with a range of other environmental benefits, some of these resulting in benefits to coral reefs and marine habitats that support a range of endangered species (e.g. oceanic whitetip and grey reef shark) The proposal mentioned 56 endemic plant species But this could not be verified-Whistler (1984) cites two endemic plant taxa and the Niue CBD country report 2001 lists no endemic plants.
	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	Yes, the sum of the scale of direct and indirect benefits that can be accrued from this project, presents a strong case in support of the proposed investment.

	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits explicitly defined?	The global environmental benefits are well-defined, the adaptation benefits are not described as explicitly as the GEBs but can be inferred easily from reading the section on the global environmental problems, root causes and barriers to be addressed.
	Are indicators, or methodologies, provided to demonstrate how the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits will be measured and monitored during project implementation?	Not yet, the proposal indicated that targets and indicators will be confirmed during PPG.
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project's resilience to climate change?	Niue is vulnerable to climate change in a variety of ways that are mentioned in various places throughout the project proposal. This provides a clear case showing that implementing the proposed project activities will also improve Niue's resilience to climate change and the adaptative capacity of its inhabitants.
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 involves piloting the use of open-source mobile apps (e.g. iNaturalist and the Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool) for recording and sharing information about sightings of key species and illegal activities. It also introduces some innovative elements around financing, sustainable land management, market access and value chain management. Some of these approaches will also be particularly innovative for the local context of Niue, which may have received less exposure to such practices than other countries in Asia.
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	Yes, the project proposal includes a clear vision for ensuring sustainability (i.e. durability) over time. The potential for scaling up is obviously limited by the physical and geographical constraints imposed by the size and location of Niue, but the project proposal articulated how the scope of the proposed activities can be extended to guide future development of the tourism and agriculture sectors on the island.
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	The current proposal is opting for incremental adaptation by demonstrating that ecological resources such as intact coral reefs and forests, clear coastal waters and pristine beaches have long-term economic value will help to reinforce the 'win-win' relationship between ecological sustainability and sustainable livelihoods. Given the current socio-economic context of Niue, as well as the level and rate of depletion of its natural resources and environment, this approach was deemed to be appropriate.

<p><b>1b. Project Map and Coordinates.</b> Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.</p>		-
<p><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 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>Yes, the proposal included a section that listed a wide range of stakeholders, which we found to be very comprehensive, as it included all key sectors of the government, the economy and society on the island. Moreover, the proposal described clearly and concisely the roles that each stakeholder will play, including how they will contribute to the project activities and how the project is planning to approach them (i.e. the 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><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</p>	<p>Have gender differentiated risks and opportunities been identified, and were preliminary response measures described that would address these differences?</p>	<p>Yes, the proposal included a "<i>Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment</i>", which provided a brief gender analysis of Niue and an outline plan of how the project will aim to mainstream gender issues into its activities and support women's rights. We assessed this to be balanced and appropriate for this stage of the project design but recognized that further details will need to be developed during the inception phase.</p>

<p>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 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>No, this did not appear to be an issue of concern for this project.</p>
<p><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>	<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 proposal includes a risk section, which in our view took into account all the main factors and identified all the relevant risk categories and appropriate mitigation actions. We however disagreed with the risk level assigned to two categories, namely: <i>Low population and low capacities for project implementation</i>; and <i>COVID-19 related travel bans extend till after the start of implementation and/or tourists do not come back</i>, which in our view should have both been rated as <b>high</b>.</p>

<p><b>6. Coordination.</b> Outline the coordination with other relevant GEF-financed and other related initiatives</p>	<p>Are the project proponents tapping into relevant knowledge and learning generated by other projects, including GEF projects?</p>	<p>Yes, the project proposal identified a range of ongoing projects (including some GEF funded) government actors and initiatives, which it is planning to co-ordinate with in order to improve the effectiveness of project activities and its overall results. We found these provisions to be very appropriate and proportionate for a project of this size and scope.</p>
	<p>Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?</p>	<p>Yes, please see previous comments on baseline section.</p>
	<p>Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?</p>	<p>The project proposal identified a number of lessons learned from previous and ongoing projects, which were described in the baseline section and integrated in the ToC.</p>
	<p>How have these lessons informed the project's formulation?</p>	<p>Yes, we found ample evidence that lessons learning was integral to project design and formulation, as it was integrated into some of the project outcomes and outputs, as well as the ToC. Lessons learning was also listed as a means to address some of the barriers identified and was used to identify some of the risk categories and the related mitigation actions.</p>
	<p>Is there an adequate mechanism to feed the lessons learned from earlier projects into this project, and to share lessons learned from it into future projects?</p>	<p>Yes, this was integrated in various key elements of the project proposal and design (above comments refer).</p>
<p><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.</p>	<p>What overall approach will be taken, and what knowledge management indicators and metrics will be used?</p>	<p>The project proposal included a knowledge management section, which covered the basic elements for a project of this scope and size. Whilst this was deemed appropriate for this stage of the project design in light of the above considerations, it would be advisable that a more detailed knowledge management plan is developed during the inception phase of the project. Given the intention to identify good practice and upscale, the knowledge management system (including M&amp;E) will need to clearly map out the types of knowledge and how relevant information is going to be captured. The unique aspects associated with this project make it ideal for improved learning for other mainstreaming initiatives. The proponents are urged to consider this element and ensure that the actions, responses and receiving conditions are appropriately documented.</p>
	<p>What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?</p>	<p>Above comments refer.</p>

Notes

STAP advisory response	Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed
1. <b>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>
2. <b>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.

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