

STAP SCREENING TEMPLATE

GEF ID	11166
Project title	Plastic Reduction in the Oceans: Sustaining and Enhancing Actions on Sea-based Sources (PRO-SEAS)
Date of screen	June 4, 2023
STAP Panel Member	Blake Ratner
STAP Secretariat	Virginia Gorsevski

1. Summary of STAP's views of the project

The PRO-SEAS project aims to address the problem of sea-based marine plastic litter (SBMPL) in select LMEs by (1) strengthening legal, policy and institutional frameworks; (2) improving systems, facilities, tools and information to effectively manage SBMPL; (3) developing incentives for environmentally sound disposal of SBMPL; and (4) increasing knowledge of solutions to reduce SBMPL. These components respond directly to the barriers identified.

The proposed project addresses a global problem with clearly defined parameters, is succinctly and clearly presented and offers significant scope for innovation and learning. By incorporating pilots in four different large marine ecosystems (LMEs), it provides a compelling platform for cross-regional exchange.

Note to STAP screeners: a summary of STAP's view of the project (not of the project itself), covering both strengths and weaknesses.

STAP's assessment*

- X Concur** - STAP acknowledges that the concept has scientific and technical merit
- Minor - STAP has identified some scientific and technical points to be addressed in project design
 - Major - STAP has identified significant concerns to be addressed in project design

Please contact the STAP Secretariat if you would like to discuss.

2. Project rationale, and project description – are they sound?

See annex on STAP's screening guidelines.

There is good baseline information and explanation of why this project was selected versus other options (e.g. enforcement of regulations through fines, etc.). Refreshingly, the barriers are presented as part of a narrative that helps explain the system context and relationships among different system components.

This proposed project builds on (and incorporates lessons from) related projects such as GloLitter and underscores the underlying drivers behind marine based-plastic pollution; however, it would benefit from considering different potential future scenarios and their impacts on design choices.

The theory of change (ToC) is logical, clearly explained, and includes underlying assumptions and drivers related to particular causal connections and change pathways. Therefore, STAP comments below focus on enhancements, i.e., potential factors to consider in the next phase of project design.

Drivers notably include factors pushing in a 'positive' direction, which is unusual (and welcome) in its identification of emerging opportunities. How do these compare with the primary negative driver of increasing global shipping, which shows no signs of slowing (post-COVID)?

Component 1 focuses on improved legal and policy frameworks to reduce and manage SBMPL in selected countries. Will this include an assessment of policy coherence to identify (and target) potentially conflicting policy objectives within each target country (beyond whether or not there is domestic implementing legislation related to MARPOL)?

Component 2 includes a potentially innovative activity that uses data (in a GIS?) to evaluate whether the locations of existing port reception facilities are optimal and whether the volume of waste delivered by a ship is consistent with the number of days at sea to identify potential illegal discharge at sea. Other activities related to investment mobilization are somewhat vague and less credible given the lack of details on how bankable projects will be developed and what will be the incentive for IFIs and private sector engagement.

The focus on behavioral change in Component 3 is interesting and could result in potentially interesting lessons that could be shared with the GEF Partnership and more broadly regarding incentives supporting gender-responsive, circular economy-type approaches.

Component 4 focuses on sharing lessons through IW:Learn which is important; however, there are aspects of this proposed project that could be useful for a broader range of GEF-funded activities including those related to plastics, circular economy, PES, and biodiversity. For example, there are specific outputs from this project that are potentially interesting to a wider audience and should be shared, e.g. information on the volume and type of SBMPL in relation to biodiversity hotspots. More information could be included about how – if effective – these approaches could be scaled, particularly in countries where there is lower overall receptivity to tackling the issue of sea-based sources of marine pollution.

Note: provide a general appraisal, asking whether relevant screening guideline questions have been addressed adequately – not all the questions will be relevant to all proposals; no need to comment on every question, only those needing more attention, noting any done very well, but ensure that all are considered. Comments should be helpful, evaluative, and qualitative, rather than yes/no.

3. Specific points to be addressed, and suggestions

Because of the already clearly structured and well-substantiated rationale and design, STAP comments focus on potential enhancements and opportunities for clarification during the next phase of design, as summarized above:

1. Address policy coherence within strategy of support to improvement of legal and policy frameworks (component 1).
2. Expand upon strategies for investment mobilization (component 2).
3. Elaborate approach to harvesting lessons and enabling exchange regarding: behavioral change and incentives for adoption of circular economy approaches (component 3), and scaling of successful approaches across regions including in challenging political and economic contexts (component 4).

Note: number key points clearly and provide useful information or suggestions, including key literature where relevant. Completed screens should be no more than two or three pages in length.

*categories under review, subject to future revision

ANNEX: STAP'S SCREENING GUIDELINES

1. How well does the proposal explain the problem and issues to be addressed in the context of the **system** within which the problem sits and its drivers (e.g. population growth, economic development, climate change, sociocultural and political factors, and technological changes), including how the various components of the system interact?
2. Does the project indicate how **uncertain futures** could unfold (e.g. using simple **narratives**), based on an understanding of the trends and interactions between the key elements of the system and its drivers?
3. Does the project describe the **baseline** problem and how it may evolve in the future in the absence of the project; and then identify the outcomes that the project seeks to achieve, how these outcomes will change the baseline, and what the key **barriers** and **enablers** are to achieving those outcomes?
4. Are the project's **objectives** well formulated and justified in relation to this system context? Is there a convincing explanation as to **why this particular project** has been selected in preference to other options, in the light of how the future may unfold?
5. How well does the **theory of change** provide an "explicit account of how and why the proposed interventions would achieve their intended outcomes and goal, based on outlining a set of key causal pathways arising from the activities and outputs of the interventions and the assumptions underlying these causal connections".
 - Does the project logic show how the project would ensure that expected outcomes are **enduring** and resilient to possible future changes identified in question 2 above, and to the effects of any conflicting policies (see question 9 below).
 - Is the theory of change grounded on a solid scientific foundation, and is it aligned with current scientific knowledge?
 - Does it explicitly consider how any necessary **institutional and behavioral** changes are to be achieved?
 - Does the theory of change diagram convincingly show the overall project logic, including causal pathways and outcomes?
6. Are the project **components** (interventions and activities) identified in the theory of change each described in sufficient detail to discern the main thrust and basis (including scientific) of the proposed solutions, how they address the problem, their justification as a robust solution, and the critical assumptions and risks to achieving them?
7. How likely is the project to generate global environmental benefits which would not have accrued without the GEF project (**additionality**)?
8. Does the project convincingly identify the relevant **stakeholders**, and their anticipated roles and responsibilities? is there an adequate explanation of how stakeholders will contribute to the

development and implementation of the project, and how they will benefit from the project to ensure enduring global environmental benefits, e.g. through co-benefits?

9. Does the description adequately explain:

- how the project will build on prior investments and complement current investments, both GEF and non-GEF,
- how the project incorporates **lessons learned** from previous projects in the country and region, and more widely from projects addressing similar issues elsewhere; and
- how country policies that are contradictory to the intended outcomes of the project (identified in section C) will be addressed (**policy coherence**)?

10. How adequate is the project's approach to generating, managing and exchanging **knowledge**, and how will lessons learned be captured for adaptive management and for the benefit of future projects?

11. Innovation and transformation:

- If the project is intended to be **innovative**: to what degree is it innovative, how will this ambition be achieved, how will barriers and enablers be addressed, and how might scaling be achieved?
- If the project is intended to be **transformative**: how well do the project's objectives contribute to transformative change, and are they sufficient to contribute to enduring, transformational change at a sufficient scale to deliver a step improvement in one or more GEBs? Is the proposed logic to achieve the goal credible, addressing necessary changes in institutions, social or cultural norms? Are barriers and enablers to scaling be addressed? And how will enduring scaling be achieved?

12. Have **risks** to the project design and implementation been identified appropriately in the risk table in section B, and have suitable mitigation measures been incorporated? (NB: risks to the durability of project outcomes from future changes in drivers should have been reflected in the theory of change and in project design, not in this table.)