

## STAP SCREEN

<b>GEF ID</b>	11410
<b>Project title</b>	Strengthening integrated transboundary source-to-sea management of the Ruvuma River Basin and its coastal zones to ensure ecosystem health and livelihood security
<b>Date of screen</b>	7 January 2024
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### 1. Summary of STAP's views of the project

STAP acknowledges the project entitled "Strengthening integrated transboundary source-to-sea (S2S) management of the Ruvuma River Basin and its coastal zones to ensure ecosystem health and livelihood security." This project aims to address the lack of cross-sectoral, multi-state cooperation in transboundary water resource management through a S2S approach across this shared river basin.

Overall, STAP finds that the project has merit and significant potential; however, more effort is needed to clearly articulate how the S2S approach will be implemented in practice to improve not only land and freshwater resources, but also marine health.

STAP recommends shortening and summarizing the problems (with the exception of climate change, which requires additional data to support statements regarding impact) and better articulating the flow of the ToC. This entails beginning with the overall objective, to the barriers preventing achievement of the objective and then articulating how each of the components will address these barriers using a S2S approach. Additional specific suggestions are provided below.

*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\*

- 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.

STAP finds that this is a well conceived project that addresses an important transboundary area through S2S management with great potential for innovation and transformation. However, STAP has several suggestions for improvement that focus mainly on the details underlying the implementation of the S2S approach.

Overall, the project design is mainly focused on activities aimed at improving the management of freshwater and land areas, which will certainly contribute to better environmental health of marine areas; however, the specific mechanisms are not well articulated throughout the project design. In this respect, the S2S approach should be strengthened with regards to 1) what the problem is, 2) what root causes underlie it and 3) which barriers in relation to effective S2S management need to be addressed.

The problems facing each of the countries and the region as a whole are well described; however, more work is needed to connect these problems to the proposed project. Specifically, there is not a very clear differentiation between the problems vs. the root causes, and which barriers stand in the way of effectively addressing either. For instance, the document describes the challenges of effective transboundary water management through the JWC in length in the problem description, but then mentions them again as a root cause (limited capacity of JWC to do transboundary water cooperation). This makes it difficult to understand what the project will focus on and in which context it will operate.

Having a S2S approach offers great potential for achieving multiple GEBs as mentioned in this project. However, more detail is needed in the project description about how this will be achieved. For instance, there is limited mention of coastal zones in the outcomes and outputs, and it remains unclear whether marine areas are included or not (e.g. Outcome 1.1. leaves open whether institutional capacity is also being built for coastal zone management and sea approaches within S2S and whether e.g. the JWC is expected to take over related responsibilities). Related, more detail is needed in the theory of change (ToC) to clearly explain how each of the barriers will be addressed by the project components as this critical link is quite weak. For example, if the JWC has weak governance capacity, will it be able to effectively develop and implement partnerships with e.g. the Nairobi Convention?

There are other areas where the information provided in the PIF is somewhat vague and should be explored in depth and more clearly articulated at CEO endorsement. For example, reference is made to engaging the private sector and to developing innovative financing mechanisms to ensure long-term sustainability. However, with little detail (some tourism operators are identified), this feels largely aspirational. Another concern is the extent to which non-water and non-environmental ministries will be engaged, given the economic importance of future planned natural gas and mining in the area. In the stakeholder's section, the industry will be represented by private sectors and cooperatives working in mining, fisheries and other sectors. What will be their incentive to engage in such a way that promotes environmental health and shared resources over profit?

Information provided in the PIF indicates that project designers have a strong understanding of other relevant projects underway and while 'lessons learned' are mentioned throughout, it is not clear that any of the lessons from these projects have been applied to the design of this one. In particular, it would be useful to focus on lessons learned from other GEF and non-GEF S2S projects since this is the approach being taken here. Also, please note that because of the focus on several protected areas, it would be good to consult with the Global Wildlife Program (GWP) which is very likely supporting projects in these areas and could be a helpful partner.

Finally, STAP is encouraged to see mention of both the use of remote sensing and citizen science as part of the knowledge management component and suggests that designers consult with STAP documents on each of these topics: [Earth Observation and the GEF](#) and [Citizen Science](#).

*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

The following recommendations are based on STAP's observations:

1. Sharpen the ToC through clearer articulation of the logic behind each of the causal pathways (i.e., linkages between objectives, outcomes and outputs). For instance, output 1.1.1 specifically focusing on gender only partly corresponds to outcome 1.1 on institutional capacity, as the gaps in institutional capacity probably concern issues other than gender as well (output 1.1.2 mentions financial capacity, but then 1.1.3 focuses on gender again, same as 1.1.4, 1.1.5).
2. Clearly articulate and strengthen the S2S dimension of this project, with a focus on implementation. Specifically:
  - Component 1 re institutional capacity: outcome 1.1 on institutional capacity focuses on transboundary management from a freshwater perspective and related outputs do not incorporate any coastal zone/sea aspects either (and it is unclear whether e.g. the JWC is meant to also take coastal zone management responsibilities). Only outcome 1.2 mentions coastal zone management, without really explaining whether and it is connected to freshwater and which institutional capacity specifically needs to be built for it. Likewise, it remains open whether outcome 1.3 on a transboundary management agreement will include coastal areas/the sea and thus combine international freshwater law principles and law of the sea/marine law (which would be ideal in terms of having true transformative power, but the outputs under 1.3 do not support this).
  - Component 2: It is important to see how a TDA can truly take a S2S approach (and thus also go beyond what was done for the Okavango, which is mentioned as a model/learning case). A source-to-sea TDA would have true transformative power.
3. Revise the numerical order of components in the proper order (3 before 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.)