

STAP guidelines for screening GEF projects

Part I: Project Information	Response
GEF ID	10674
Project Title	Sustainable Integrated Management of Biodiversity in the Indo-Maíz Biological Reserve
Date of Screening	November 12, 2020
STAP member screener	Rosie Cooney
STAP secretariat screener	Virginia Gorsevski
STAP Overall Assessment and Rating	<p>Minor</p> <p>STAP welcomes the project from FAO entitled “Sustainable Integrated Management of Biodiversity in the Indo-Maíz Biological Reserve” (RIBM) and is pleased to see a project that incorporates the important role of indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) into its design and implementation.</p> <p>STAP is also pleased to see that the project – while focused on the RIBM – acknowledges and targets actions focused on the larger “area of influence” which is rapidly encroaching on the reserve to lead to rapid deforestation and degradation in the direction of the Caribbean coastline. It is clear that project developers have a keen understanding of the major threats and drivers that are particular to specific locations within and around the RIBM (as reflected in the theory of change diagram) and STAP is particularly pleased to see the numerous maps that make it easy for reviewers to visualize where the threats are in relation to biodiversity, other projects, etc.</p> <p>There are a few areas where STAP would like to see more detail – perhaps following the PPG phase. For example, irregular enforcement of forestry and natural resource laws is mentioned as a problem (p. 30) but nowhere else is it addressed in the project design. Perhaps the assumption is that this will be incorporated into the management plan; however, it would be helpful to make this explicit since laws and regulations are not helpful if they are not enforced.</p>

	<p>The same is true for the list of potential activities listed in Component 3 regarding implementation of the management plan – particularly the details of “identification and development of community-based tourism products that reflect local culture.” How will these and other activities be financed and sustained – particularly during a period of reduced international tourism due to COVID? One of the problems mentioned was lack of access to finance – in this case, how will these activities be supported and sustained? Similarly, financial sustainability seems unlikely in the absence of a plan beyond “increase in public and private spending, leveraged by participating actors.” (46).</p> <p>These are important details that need to be worked out to ensure that the management plan will be implemented successfully to avoid rapid deforestation including in the RBIM.</p>	
<p>Part I: Project Information B. Indicative Project Description Summary</p>	<p>What STAP looks for</p>	<p>Response</p>
<p>Project Objective</p>	<p>Is the objective clearly defined, and consistently related to the problem diagnosis?</p>	<p>Yes. The project objective is clear, if somewhat general – to conserve globally important biodiversity and enhance ecosystem services in the Indo-Mañz Biological Reserve (RBIM) in partnership with indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs).</p> <p>This corresponds to the main problem identified as deforestation resulting from the expansion of the agriculture and livestock towards the Caribbean coast. Beyond this, the project shows a keen understanding of problems specific to certain areas within the larger region to be able to target interventions accordingly.</p>
<p>Project components</p>	<p>A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project’s objectives?</p>	<p>Four fairly standard components include 1) strengthening the enabling environment, 2) capacity building, 3) management and implementation of activities, and 4) KM and M&E.</p> <p>These activities do support the project’s objectives in a general way.</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 main outcomes are primarily focused on the development of legal, regulatory and institutional instruments that support integrated and inclusive planning, supported by capacity building and some technical assistance. One of the major threats to this area (particularly the center, south and east of the RBIM) is climate change and so assuming that these areas are targeted for restoration then the outcomes would encompass adaptation benefits. Component 3 aims to have 140,000 ha of forest affected by natural disasters with the RBIM to be restored.</p>
	<p>Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?</p>	<p>Yes</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>The outputs will contribute to the outcomes listed in the project and the larger goal of minimizing deforestation and degradation. However, there are some areas where further detail is needed – particularly in Component 3 which lists “improved livelihood opportunities for local communities arising from the implementation of the PMP, including labeling, agroecology, ecotourism, etc.) as the success of the project rests on the implementation of actions contained within the plan.</p>
Part II: Project justification	<p>A simple narrative explaining the project’s logic, i.e. a theory of change.</p>	
<p>1. Project description. Briefly describe: 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>Yes, though the project lists different problems at different scales and for different areas, as well as direct vs. indirect threats/drivers, making the narrative somewhat difficult to follow.</p> <p>Underlying causes of deforestation include limited access to credit as a result of complex value changes among several others (i.e. low price of land and forest goods and services).</p> <p>However, the proposed strategy says “In order to address the aforementioned threats of forest degradation, subsistence-level livelihoods and</p>

		climate change to RBIM's biodiversity and the underlying institutional (including finance), awareness, capacity, ownership and information barriers to the protection of species and functioning of ecosystems that provide goods and services, the project will address the underlying root causes of biodiversity loss, degradation and pollution in an integrated, holistic and multi-sectoral manner that brings together the relevant stakeholders at a landscape scale." And the components are focused on institutions and capacity building and integrated planning; however, will these be enough in the absence of actions targeted the other underlying causes (i.e. lack of access to credit)?
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	Yes
	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?	N/A
2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects	Is the baseline identified clearly?	Yes, in terms of ongoing projects, and funding amounts. The map showing GEF interventions is extremely useful. Also very good information on deforestation rates over time and space.
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits?	Yes
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	Yes
	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;	N/A
	are the lessons learned from similar or related past GEF and non-GEF interventions described; and	N/A
	how did these lessons inform the design of this project?	N/A

3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project	What is the theory of change?	<p>The theory of change is presented as a separate diagram that essentially shows how effective and inclusive management of the PA and surrounding areas and its implementation will lead to reduced deforestation and degradation which are the primary threats to biodiversity. It includes several underlying assumptions, which is helpful.</p> <p>One possible improvement would be to include a column in between barriers and threats as it is unclear what the barriers are specifically responding to. Barriers to reducing deforestation in general? Doing so might show specific barriers standing in the way of preventing deforestation.</p>
	What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?	See above.
	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?	Yes; however, more information could be provided on key elements such as enforcement (is this assumed to be part of the management plan?), enhanced livelihoods (not clear of the feasibility of some proposed activities such as tourism), and financing beyond the life of the GEF project to ensure sustainability and durability of 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?	No.
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, assuming the plans are implemented and deforestation is slowed or reversed (through restoration).
	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)	Are the benefits truly global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits, and are they measurable?	Yes

and/or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF)		
	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	\$3 million for 316,729.60 ha under improved management; 140,000 ha restored and 3,300,000 CO2eq avoided.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits explicitly defined?	Yes
	Are indicators, or methodologies, provided to demonstrate how the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits will be measured and monitored during project implementation?	Yes, there is an M&E plan
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project's resilience to climate change?	Restoration along the coastal area
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 shows some innovation by recognizing that focusing only on the RBIM will not be sufficient if pressures taking place in the buffer and transition zones (the so-called "area of influence") are also not addressed. This landscape approach, which integrates IPLCs is becoming more common and welcome, particularly if accompanied by dynamic spatial analysis and monitoring.
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	There is a plan to scale-up.
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	Both
1b. Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.		STAP is pleased to see so many maps; however, the geo-referenced data is missing.
2. Stakeholders. Select the stakeholders that have participated in consultations during the project identification phase: Indigenous people and local communities; Civil society	Have all the key relevant stakeholders been identified to cover the complexity of the problem, and project implementation barriers?	Yes.

<p>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>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>Role are listed in Table 3 as well as a narrative of past consultations, which is helpful.</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.</p>	<p>Have gender differentiated risks and opportunities been identified, and were preliminary response measures described that would address these differences?</p>	<p>Yes</p>

Will the project's results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators? yes/no /td		
	Do gender considerations hinder full participation of an important stakeholder group (or groups)? If so, how will these obstacles be addressed?	Yes though a gender management plan.
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>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? 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>All of the risks apart from natural hazards are also implicitly or explicitly barriers that will be addressed by the project (mitigation actions).</p> <p>Climate change is acknowledged and incorporated as a specific threat and risk to the project – particularly the coastal area which was damaged several times as a result of hurricanes.</p> <p>A separate climate risk screening is included which addresses these questions sufficiently and more work will be conducted during PPG phase.</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
	Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?	Yes
	Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?	No. This project will share lessons learned; however, does not list lessons from previous projects.
	How have these lessons informed the project's formulation?	Not clear.
	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 – especially since one of the ongoing projects is part of the GEF Impact Program (FOLUR).
8. Knowledge management. Outline the	What overall approach will be taken, and what knowledge management indicators and metrics will be used?	Standard including an M&E plan

<p>“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 plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?</p>	<p>There are plans to scale up the sustainable community enterprises (which are not well defined in the project) as well as the land restoration efforts in the RBIM buffer zone. It would be helpful to include this alongside the existing TOC.</p>

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>