STAP guidelines for screening GEF projects

Part I: Project Information	Response	
GEF ID	10687	
Project Title	Climate security and sustainable management of natural resources in the central regions of Mali for peacebuilding	
Date of Screening	28 November 2020	
STAP member screener	Edward Carr	
STAP secretariat screener	Guadalupe Duron	
STAP Overall Assessment and Rating	Minor issues to be considered in project design STAP welcomes the project "Climate security and sustainable management of natural resources in the central regions of Mali for peacebuilding." STAP appreciates the robust problem statement, and suggests that with some elaboration of different plausible climate futures the project will be well-positioned to maximize and accurately measure its benefits. STAP suggests that the baseline scenario be better quantified or otherwise measured to allow for the clear measurement of project benefits going forward. This may include the development of locally-appropriate indicators of impact. STAP recognizes that Mopti is a very challenging implementation environment that has limited the ability of the project to engage communities in the process of developing the PIF. STAP recommends the project review existing studies of livelihoods and adaptation in the area, as these will point to important barriers and opportunities for engagement with the project. By identifying these in the literature, the project will have the opportunity to design effective strategies for what are likely to be limited opportunities to engage with beneficiaries during the PPG phase. This includes carefully considering what is already known about the barriers to participation that gender and seniority present in this part of Mali.	

	STAP also recommends that the project develop a process for extracting relevant lessons from the many parallel or related projects taking place in Mali, and in Mopti more specifically, and that it organize and employ these lessons to shape project design. Below, STAP offers recommendations on how to improve the project design.	
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, it is.
Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project's objectives?	Yes, they do.
Outcomes	A description of the expected short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention. Do the planned outcomes encompass important global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits?	Yes, they do.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	Possibly, pending project design that engages with local communities and favorable conditions in Mopti.
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?	Assuming the outcomes can be generated, the outputs are likely to contribute to the outcomes.
Part II: Project justification	A simple narrative explaining the project's logic, i.e. a theory of change.	
1. Project description. Briefly describe: 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?	The problem statement is well defined. STAP appreciates the complexity of the challenges in the project context and the project's efforts to identify and substantiate the various pressures and challenges that are together threatening the long-term sustainability of productive landscapes in central Mali. STAP also appreciates the problem statement's inclusion of different plausible climate futures for the region, and suggests the following: 1) where possible, develop two or three plausible

		future climate scenarios that integrate trends in temperature, precipitation, and evapotranspiration from the various data included in the problem statement. This will allow for the identification of interventions that can produce robust results across a range of plausible futures. 2) When developing these scenarios, focus on what is clearly known without overstating the trends in the data. For example, the problem statement in the main text overstates the change in precipitation across Mali by selecting for the last 50 years while burying in a footnote the fact that the precipitation in Mali rebounded significantly after the droughts of the early 1980s. The information in the footnote should simply be included in the main text, as it speaks to the complexity of the situation this project seeks to address. 3) The project design phase should localize these climate and environmental trends to the project area, as national trends obscure substantial regional variability (which is captured at times in the problem statement in the PIF). If this project is to be implemented in Mopti, the environmental trends should focus on Mopti. Such data is available through the IRI/LDEO Climate Data Library: https://iridl.ldeo.columbia.edu/index.html?Set-Language=en
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	Yes. STAP appreciates the project's efforts to provide references even for discussions of institutional capacity, where such references are often difficult to find.
	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?	Yes, they do identify the drivers of environmental degradation, the objective is well-defined, and the objective requires integrating multiple focal areas.

2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects	Is the baseline identified clearly?	Yes. STAP appreciates that the baseline scenario is projected into the future, thus providing a baseline against which to measure project benefits. STAP recommends quantifying aspects of this baseline (land area degraded, agricultural losses, etc.) to allow for the quantification of project benefits.
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits?	The baseline provides a framework for comparison, but does not provide quantification for the baseline. STAP recommends quantifying aspects of this baseline (land area degraded, agricultural losses, etc.) to allow for the quantification of project benefits.
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	Possibly. This will depend on the quantification of the baseline scenario requested above.
	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;	The project presents a single baseline analysis. However, that baseline incorporates factors ranging from climate change to the drivers of land degradation, thus constructing a plausible baseline. Multiple benefits are specified: STAP suggests the project develop project-specific indicators to track benefits, such as land degradation avoided, in the project design phase to more robustly capture project benefits.
	are the lessons learned from similar or related past GEF and non-GEF interventions described; and	No, they are not. The PIF notes a large number of related projects taking place in Mali, but does not describe any lessons learned. STAP suggests the project explore these parallel projects and extract lessons from them at the design stage.
	how did these lessons inform the design of this project?	These lessons did not inform the design of the PIF. STAP suggests the project look for lessons from these parallel projects and apply them at the design stage.
3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project	What is the theory of change?	STAP appreciates the inclusion of a theory of change diagram with the PIF and recommends that the theory of change be elaborated in narrative form at the design stage to more clearly articulate assumptions, barriers, and opportunities as specific interventions are designed. The theory of change is that by enhancing coordination and monitoring to

		achieve land degradation neutrality and climate security, restoring degraded production landscapes, and promoting resilient and sustainable livelihoods, the project will reduce conflict and vulnerability, increase adaptive capacity and productive capacity, increasing food availability, diversifying livelihoods, and therefore building more resilient communities in Mopti.
	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?	To enhance coordination and monitoring to achieve LDN and climate security, the project will develop and action plan for LDN targets and conduct a conflict sensitive vulnerability assessment. To restore degraded production landscapes, the project will develop community natural resource management committees while building adaptation into local development plans, provide training and inputs to farmers for assisted natural regeneration, provide capacity development for climate-smart agriculture, and work on the communal restoration of degraded wood/shrub/wetlands. To promote resilient and sustainable livelihoods, the project will build cooperative businesses supporting adaptation by providing and adding value to CSA inputs while spreading household risk by providing entrepreneurship training and business incubation of ideas for youth businesses. Together, these components will reduce conflict and vulnerability while enhancing adaptive capacity, particularly by increasing the productivity of agro-ecological systems, diversifying nature-based income streams, and improving market access. These outcomes will, in turn, increase food availability and incomes, rendering communities more resilient.
	Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions?	The mechanisms of change are plausible. The project clearly articulates four assumptions. Some

		of these assumptions are a bit broad. For example, "local authorities (in particular mayors) and communities are interested in the project and willing to get involved" captures a great deal, including the various sociocultural factors that might shape the uptake of project interventions. This is particularly important because the project outcomes rest in part on the uptake of climate-smart agricultural interventions. The uptake of such interventions has been very low, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa in part because the interventions are poorly aligned with the local socio-ecological system and socio-cultural expectations. STAP recommends clearly elaboration assumptions about the uptake of different interventions and the diversification of livelihoods to ensure that interventions that are selected and designed are appropriate for the context. Potentially useful resources to consider when elaborating assumptions and mechanisms of change: https://issuu.com/integrallc/docs/adoption_of_climate_smart_agricultu http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4396e.pdf https://www.uncclearn.org/wp-content/uploads/library/a-be879e.pdf Substantial work on the livelihoods and social context of Mali have been undertaken by USAID as part of climate adaptation work that can help identify aspects of the sociocultural context that might shape uptake:

		https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/USAID%2FMALI-CLIMATE-CHANGE-ADAPTATION-ACTIVITY-FINAL-Diarra/29e92e94ea6c5075e98742e88c39114978ab616e https://dec.usaid.gov/dec/content/Detail_Presto.aspx?ctID=ODVhZjk4NWQtM2YyMi00YjRmLTkxNjktZTcxMjM2NDBmY2Uy&rID=MjA1MDkx
	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 an overall understanding, articulated in the risks section, that this is a high-risk project and that a many different risks coiuld compromise the project. The project plans in-depth work on this at the PPG stage.
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, they will.
	LDCF/SCCF: will the proposed incremental activities lead to adaptation which reduces vulnerability, builds adaptive capacity, and increases resilience to climate change?	Yes, they will.
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?	Yes, they are. The project has identified some indicatyors for the purpose of measurement. STAP suggests (see above) articulating more site-specific indicators at the PPG stage to better capture benefits of the project.
	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	Yes, they are.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits explicitly defined?	Yes, they are.
	Are indicators, or methodologies, provided to demonstrate how the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits will be measured and monitored during project implementation?	Yes, indicators are provided. As noted above, STAP suggests these be expanded by the project at the PPG stage to ensure a multidimensional understanding of project benefits.

	What activities will be implemented to increase the project's resilience to climate change?	The PIF notes that much of this planning will take place at the PPG stage. The project is, itself, aimed at addressing some of these risks through its interventions, and the PIF notes there are significant investments in place to address the impacts of climate-induced disasters.
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 PIF suggests that the project is innovative in that it will position two Malian research institutes to support multi-stakeholder and intragovernmental coordination, though at least IER already plays some part in projects that cross parts of the Malian government. It also suggests that entrepreneurship training for youth as a means of building climate-resilient livelihoods is innovative.
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	The plan for scaling up within Mopti rests on establishing multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms in target Cercles and also in Mopti Region, while national scale-up revolves around extending the climate vulnerability assessment and mapping process to the rest of Mali. Plan to scale up beyond Mali are not clear.
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	While the project incrementally advances the country's work on land degradation neutrality targets, the project rests at least in part on transformational adaptation at the local level via the introduction of new agricultural practices and livelihoods activities. As noted above, STAP suggests the project carefully consider the factors shaping the uptake of such transformational activities.
1b. Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.		The PIF provides several maps of Mali which are interesting, but does not provide a map of the project area relative to things like climate risk. STAP suggests the project develop such a map in the PPG stage. STAP recommends following its guidance on maps in its Earth Observation document – see page A1: https://www.stapgef.org/earth-observation-and-gef

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.	Have all the key relevant stakeholders been identified to cover the complexity of the problem, and project implementation barriers?	Not yet. The PIF reflects a reasonably comprehensive consultation with governmental, civil society, and NGO actors. However, as the PIF notes, conditions on the ground in Mopti have not yet allowed for stakeholder engagement among the intended beneficiaries of the project. This consultation will be absolutely critical, as noted above in the discussion of project assumptions. STAP notes that the project plans for such engagement in the PPG phase of the project.
	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?	Cabinet of MEADD will be responsible for implementation and intra-governmental linkages. AEDD will be the national project director. The Ministries of Agriculture, Decentralization, Civil Protection, Fisheries, Animal Production and Industries, Civil Protection and Youth will participate on the project steering committee. The National Directorate of Water and Forests will monitor the application and integration of sector policies in the components of the project. The Planning and Statistics Unit will be responsible for capacity building and coordination of producer training. UNCCD focal point will contribute to the development and implementation of the project, as well as monitoring the implementation of land degradation management and LDN standards. Mali Météo will conduct an annual climate vulnerability assessment and provide information on hydrometeorological data and forecasts and monitoring of early warning. A steering cell from the Planning and Statistics Unit of the Sectors:

		Water, Environment, Urban Planning and State Domain (SPC / SEUDDE) MEADD will manage M&E and KM. Several other national government entities. A wide range of District and local government structures, as well as regional associations, are responsible for implementing and planning at the local level. Universities and research institutes will provide analyses for various aspects of the project. Private sector actors will be partners in developing alternative livelihoods opportunities. Civil society organizations will also support implementation.
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. Will the project's results framework or logical framework include gender-	Have gender differentiated risks and opportunities been identified, and were preliminary response measures described that would address these differences?	Some gender-differentiated risks and opportunities have been identified, but this identification is greatly limited at this stage by conditions on the ground in Mopti. Critically, however, gender is a key marker of social difference shaping what is seen as appropriate activities across different ethnicities living in Mopti. Interventions will need to take this complexity into account if they are to produce gender-equitable outcomes. As noted above, there is Mopti-specific work on gender and livelihoods available that can inform project design at the next stage: https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/USAID%2FMALI-CLIMATE-CHANGE-ADAPTATION-ACTIVITY-FINAL-Diarra/29e92e94ea6c5075e98742e88c39114978ab616e https://dec.usaid.gov/dec/content/Detail_Presto.aspx?ctID=ODVhZjk4NWQtM2YyMi00YjRmLTkxNjktZTcxMjM2NDBmY2Uy&rID=MjA1MDkx

sensitive indicators? yes/no /tbd		
	Do gender considerations hinder full participation of an important stakeholder group (or groups)? If so, how will these obstacles be addressed?	The PIF acknowledges this is possible, and the reports linked above demonstrate that there are such barriers. However, the project has not yet been able to conduct community-level consultations for design. STAP recommends the project keep these considerations in mind when conducting community engagement during the PPG phase.
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	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: • 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?	Yes, the risks are valid and comprehensive. These risks all are principally outside project control, but could be exacerbated by project design. There are both social and environmental risks that could affect the project. The PIF does not seriously address the climate risk questions here. STAP recommends the project answer all of these questions in the PPG phase of the project to ensure that risks are well-understood and all reasonable measures are taken to mitigate those risks.
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?	No, not yet. There appears to be plans to do so in the next phase of project design, but it is not clear why more was not done at the PIF stage.
	Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?	Yes, the PIF acknowledges a wide range of previous and contemporary projects, but it does not elaborate on the learning derived from them. STAP recommends the project identify and incorporate such lessons at the PPG phase.
	Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?	No, they have not.

	How have these lessons informed the project's formulation?	This is 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?	No, there is not.
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?	The knowledge management plan will be developed during the project preparation phase. The project plans to make resources available for KM and M&E activities at commune, cercle, region, national and international levels.
	What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?	These plans will be developed in the project preparation phase.

Notes

STAP advisory response	**Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed**
1. Concur	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 ***"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."***
2. Minor issues to be considered during project design	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.

3. Major issues to be considered during project design	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:
	(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.