

STAP SCREENING TEMPLATE

GEF ID	11396
Project title	Sustainable Management of Ecosystems in Miombo Ecoregions of Zambia
Date of screen	January 20, 2024
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1. Summary of STAP's views of the project

STAP acknowledges Zambia's project, "Sustainable management of ecosystems in Miombo ecoregions of Zambia". In addition to the PIF, STAP also considered the Project Information Document (PID) as the PIF did not contain a rationale. The PID also contained further information on the components. After having reviewed the PIF and PID, STAP was able to obtain enough information to screen the project.

STAP considers the project to have sufficient technical merit to rate it as minor. The preliminary theory of change in the PIF suggests the project aims to strengthen the enabling environment to support integrated land use planning for biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services, while reducing land and forest degradation. Vulnerability to the effects of climate change will be reduced, and climate resilience will be strengthened through these efforts on land restoration and biodiversity conservation. STAP recommends that the final project include an appraisal of policy coherence (across environmental sectors, and across governance levels) before embarking on the design of outputs related to component #1 (and to address barrier #1 cited in the PID).

STAP has several recommendations to improve the technical soundness of the project. This includes paying close attention to drivers other than climate change, for example population growth, and a fluctuating economy. Both issues are mentioned briefly in the PIF. Furthermore, it encourages the project team to develop a theory of change, if it has not already done so. A theory of change figure did not accompany the project documents. Only a preliminary narrative of the project logic was provided.

Lastly, STAP congratulates the team for their intention to conduct a socio-cultural diagnoses and trusts that indigenous people and local communities will be involved and empowered as a result of this process.

Below, STAP details its advice.

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 is cognizant that the World Bank has a unique project concept form, which does not always include the information requested in a PIF. For the screening of this project, STAP relied, therefore, on the PIF form and on

the Project Information Document (PID). STAP's views about the project rationale and description are as follows:

The rationale provides good contextual information on the socioeconomic traits of the population, climate information at the national level along with a description of the countries' vulnerability to climate change impact, and a thorough description of the Miombo agroecological system, including the biodiversity it harbors and the ecosystem services it provides to the local population. The problem definition is clear, and described as degradation of land and forest ecosystems, leading to biodiversity loss. Degradation and biodiversity loss are intertwined with local population's capacities to adapt to climate change in a resilient manner. The target areas are Muchinga, Copperbelt and Central Provinces of Zambia. Climate information is not detailed at the province level, which is an aspect the World Bank can address in the project development. The baseline description is good as it details how this project will be different than other on-going GEF and non-GEF projects. For example, this project will work in the Muchinga and Copperbelt provinces, unlike other projects. The baseline also describes the type of knowledge and learning this project will leverage from other initiatives to achieve multiple GEBs, and climate resilience.

The project description includes three interlinked components on strengthening the enabling environment, integrated land use planning, and climate change adaptation. The components appear to support the project objective on restoring the Miombo forest ecosystem, and improving the climate resilience of communities. A preliminary description of the project logic is provided in the summary section, but lacks a description of the critical assumptions that underpin the overall logic. In addition, a theory of change figure is absent in the PIF and PID, which would helpfully complement the logic narrative. Close attention to trade-offs and to other possible drivers of change besides climate will be necessary to achieve resilience.

Below, STAP details its guidance further.

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

Before the project is fully developed, STAP recommends addressing the following points to strengthen the project design:

- While climate drivers are central to this project, STAP recommends also considering other drivers of change, besides climate, on the key outcomes. For example, the PIF describes population changes (rural to urban migration) and the lack of economic opportunities driving local residents to work in urban areas. Thus, we suggest analyzing the challenges and opportunities these key drivers (climate, population changes, fluctuating economy, and others) present to the outcomes when describing the targeted socioecological systems in the three provinces. STAP's guidance on simple future narratives provides advice on how to carry out this analysis. Please see: <https://stapgef.org/resources/advisory-documents/simple-future-narratives-brief-and-primer>
- STAP appreciates the brief description of how climate change and vulnerability pose a challenge to sustainable development in Zambia. To strengthen this description, and the development of the components so they remain resilient to climate risks, STAP recommends the project team draw from the World Bank's resilience methodology. The resource spells out how to design the project so that key outputs and outcomes are resilient to climate risks: <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/701011613082635276/pdf/Summary.pdf>
- Applying this methodology, or conducting a climate resilience assessment, will be particularly useful for achieving outcomes affiliated with component 2 and 3. Land restoration and ecosystem services are likely to be affected by ongoing climate impacts; therefore, compromising efforts to improve

ecosystems and biodiversity management in the target sites. Likewise, component 3 seeks to strengthen agricultural value chains, and the results from a climate risk assessment will point to actions that need to be addressed to plan for climate risks. STAP expects for the World Bank's climate screening tool to have been applied to the design of this project. Here are the climate screening tools: <https://climatescreeningtools.worldbank.org/>

- As mentioned above, climate risks will compromise restoration efforts that are trying to be achieved through integrated land use planning. For this reason, along with the need to avoid further degradation through potential negative spillover effects, STAP recommends the project assesses and manages trade offs between land uses. Here are a few resources on how to apply integrated land use planning to minimize trade offs while maximizing multiple environmental, social and economic benefits: <https://www.unccd.int/resources/reports/contribution-integrated-land-use-planning-and-integrated-landscape-management>
<https://stapgef.org/index.php/resources/advisory-documents/guidelines-land-degradation-neutrality>
- Equally important to assessing for trade offs, STAP highly recommends conducting a land potential assessment as input to integrated land use planning. As written, the project assumes that land can be restored to the degree that it can generate GEBs and ecosystem services. The results of this assessment can contribute to the agroecological zoning (3.1.2). STAP's LDN guidelines provides guidance on how to conduct a land potential assessment: <https://stapgef.org/index.php/resources/advisory-documents/guidelines-land-degradation-neutrality>
- As previously stated, the summary provides a preliminary narrative of the theory of change (figure is missing). STAP recommends to develop this narrative further by identifying critical assumptions, or knowledge gaps that need to be addressed to achieve key outcomes. Validating these assumptions will create knowledge and learning on the intricate relationship between land degradation, biodiversity loss, and climate change impacts, in the Miombo eco-region.
- STAP notes the project mentions local communities, along with the intention to conduct a socio-cultural diagnosis, and the benefits of traditional knowledge. However, the PIF or PID fails to mention indigenous peoples that inhabit the area, nor does it mention how they were consulted. A recent paper 'Local knowledge and practices among Tonga people in Zambia and Zimbabwe: A review' takes stock of the wealth of indigenous knowledge and practice of Tonga people and how it can contribute to the implementation of integrated landscape approaches. The map provided included in the PIF suggests an overlap with areas of Tonga People (figure 2 of the paper). *Malaika P. Yanou, Mirjam Ros-Tonen, James Reed, Terry Sunderland, Local knowledge and practices among Tonga people in Zambia and Zimbabwe: A review. Environmental Science & Policy, Volume 142, 2023, Pages 68-78.*
- STAP suggest the team consider the 2024 STAP publication on "Alternative livelihoods" <https://www.stapgef.org/resources/advisory-documents/alternative-livelihoods> to inform developing Component #1, particularly output 3.1.1. For Component 1a, STAP suggest undertaking policy coherence analysis for outcome 1.1 'Established National and sub-regional legal framework for land use planning for Kabwe and Miombo ecoregion". STAP's advice on policy coherence frames this term for the GEF while providing guidance on how to pursue an alignment of policies across governance levels, and across sectors: <https://stapgef.org/resources/advisory-documents/policy-coherence-gef>
<https://stapgef.org/resources/policy-briefs/framing-policy-coherence-gef>
- The PIF discusses the nexus between land degradation, biodiversity loss and climate change (figure 2 on feedback loops). Therefore, the STAP suggests the project team consider the LDN conceptual and logic framework developed to attain the vision of reducing land degradation while safeguarding biodiversity and addressing the impact of climate change for sustainable livelihoods and healthy ecosystems. This framework can be coupled with national and sub-national land use planning systems, which is vital to the success of Component #1 and Component #2. Relevant documents to guide this process include: The contribution of integrated land use planning and landscape management to implementing Land Degradation Neutrality: Entry points and support tools. <https://www.unccd.int/resources/reports/contribution-integrated-land-use-planning-and-integrated-landscape-management>

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.)