STAP guidelines for screening GEF projects

Part I: Project Information	Response	
GEF ID	10689	
Project Title	Fostering sustainable, legal and traceable use and trade of wild native species in Mexico	
Date of Screening	November 13 2020	
STAP member screener	Rosie Cooney	
STAP secretariat screener	Virginia Gorsevski	
STAP Overall Assessment and Rating	**Concur** STAP welcomes this well planned and well written intervention from UNDP to address fundamental drivers of biodiversity loss in Mexico through supporting and augmenting the area of land effectively managed by indigenous and local communities, incentivized and financed through sustainable and legal trade in wild species. The project's logic is clearly laid out through a narrative and graphic Theory of Change drawing on STAP's guidance on TOCs, although the graphic TOC could be further developed in subsequent planning to better fulfil its function as a participatory planning tool. There are additional risks/assumptions that should be drawn out in subsequent planning, most clearly around whether suitable markets can be found for wild-sourced products (and whether markets will pay more for sustainably produced/community-supportive products). Lessons from related projects could be more clearly articulated. Overall, however, the initiative has a supportive national policy environment with a clear pathway to change, well reflects lessons from global experience in this field, and offers a high likelihood of achieving large scale and durable biodiversity benefits as well as extensive social co-benefits.	
Part I: Project Information	**What STAP looks for**	**Response**

B. Indicative Project Description Summary		
Project Objective	Is the objective clearly defined, and consistently related to the problem diagnosis?	Yes. The objective is to promote sustainable, legal and traceable use and trade of native species in order to reduce biodiversity loss and improve livelihoods in selected landscapes throughout Mexico. The intervention addresses the root causes of the key threats to biodiversity - that agriculture often has a comparative advantage over wildlife as a land use (thereby driving conversion) and that much wildlife use is unmanaged/illegal (therefore often unsustainable), through establishing/ supporting sustainable wildlife management in a framework that delivers conservation outcomes and supports livelihoods and local capacities.
Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project's objectives?	Yes - these focus around building capacities (across sectors) and the information base to enable sustainable wildlife management. These are well targeted to achieve the objective. Project planners may wish to consult the STAP product "Global Commons for Local Benefits", which deals with supporting IPLC management of wild resources. However, the project already embeds key recommendations from this paper within its planning.
Outcomes	A description of the expected short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention. Do the planned outcomes encompass important adaptation benefits?	These are nicely laid out in the Alternative scenario section and they encompass GEBs.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	Yes, this appears likely.
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?	Yes, the outputs are well articulated and clearly support achievement of the planned outcomes. In Component 2, the broad array of key outputs required to achieve the desired output is very welcome. One element that may need to be strengthened here (reflecting experience with similar efforts elsewhere) is strengthening the governance systems of communities, including

		financial governance systems, in order to avoid elite capture and ensure equitable and transparent distribution of benefits from wildlife use (mentioned without detail in 2.1.4). The emphasis in component 3 on joint work between government agencies and communities in relation to inspection and surveillance is very welcome.
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?	Yes. The key threats are conversion of habitat for agriculture and unmanaged/unsustainable species exploitation, in the context of escalating threats from climate change and invasive species. A major wildlife use pathway (closed cycle breeding), while good for livelihoods, does not contribute to in situ conservation.
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	Yes, although many of the points listed here are really dimensions of the problem rather than barriers to change. Barriers highlighted are gaps of UMA/UMAFORES in managing ecosystems; weak governance, financial mechanisms and market access for sustainably produced biodiversity products (including low capacities in communities and lack of coordination across government sectors relevant for sustainable wild resource management); inadequate government inspection and monitoring systems; and inadequate knowledge on all sides on the potential for sustainable use of wildlife.
	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?	The PIF here sets out the various relevant laws and programs, but what would be useful here would be see a baseline scenario in terms of the social-ecological system: for instance, how are UMAs functioning currently, what is their current coverage, how effectively are they conserving wild

		species/ecosystems, what challenges face them achieving their conservation/social goals, etc. Much of this information is included in other areas, but providing a clear baseline against which one can compare the alternative scenario and its expected biodiversity benefits would be very helpful.
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits?	See above. Not really
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	Yes, this can be clearly determined through integration of information presented throughout.
	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	No, this could be considerably strengthened. The initiative does embed many lessons derived through, for instance, the CITES' "CITES and Livelihoods" case studies and dialogues, but it would be good to see more explicit consideration of learnings from past efforts to support legal and sustainable wildlife trade, and what typically goes wrong. It would be particularly relevant to look at efforts that are currently struggling due to loss of markets due to lobbying by animal protection interests (e.g. trophy hunting, crocodilian trade).
	how did these lessons inform the design of this project?	See above.
3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project	What is the theory of change?	There is a particularly well articulated narrative Theory of Change, with clear causal pathways and related assumptions identified. STAP welcomes the project developers' absorption of key points from STAP's Primer on Theory of Change and the reflection of these in their TOC. The graphic TOC could be further clarified through disaggregating the pathways in the TOC to better show the many linkages and interdependencies among the outputs, and to better articulate the outcomes to be achieved in the pathway to achieving the overall impacts.

		For example, a key outcome is "UMA/UMAFORES systems (better) conserve/sustainably use wild species". But it is not just the outputs in pathway 1 that contribute to this - it is also pathways 2 and 3. Increased/diversified/more robust community benefits from trade (pathway 2) incentivises and makes financially sustainable biodiversity conservation. Likewise, having a robust I&S system leads to an outcome of "Unsustainable/illegal activity detected and stopped" (or similar) which also leads to the same outcome of "UMA/UMAFORES systems (better) conserve etc". The TOC should illustrate these links more clearly to make the logic clearer and enable targeted monitoring of assumptions underlying each step. In terms of linkages, there are many cross-linkages here that could be usefully shown. For instance, an effective I&S system that detects illegal activity contributes to the pathway 2 outcomes of enhancing equitable benefits - because it removes illicit competitors from the marketplace. Note that there is no necessity to show root causes/barriers in the graphic TOC if it is hard to fit everything in.
	What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?	These are well articulated in the narrative.
	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 - the project builds on extensive experience with UMAs in Mexico already, and the model to be pursued here, while always challenging, has had considerable success in various parts of the world. The demonstrated government commitment to this approach provides a welcome and supportive policy context for this project - strengthening and upscaling an approach that is well-embedded. The project reflects extensive learnings through the CITES & Livelihoods dialogues over a number of years. Traceability should be approached carefully

		- it is not a requirement of CITES and can become extremely complex and expensive. I recommend prioritising low-cost, simple approaches that enhance traceability.
	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, this is not clear at this stage, and requires attention at next 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, this appears likely and well-supported.
	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) and/or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF)	Are the benefits truly global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits, and are they measurable?	Yes.
	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	Yes.
	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 are clear metrics for measuring them.
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project's resilience to climate change?	See below re climate change risk.
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?	Yes - countering habitat loss and illegal trade through strengthening communities' abilities and incentives to value and conserve native biodiversity is innovative at global scale, while a longstanding approach in certain countries/regions. It is innovative and transformational in the sense it seeks to fundamentally change communities' relationships with native biodiversity - from (generally) an opportunity cost to an economic asset.

	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	Yes, the pathway to geographic scaling up is clear, and the potential is for scaling up across a very large potential area of current/potential UMA/UMAFORES.
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	See above - this is transformational change, albeit one that is already happening at more limited scale.
1b. Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.		Maps are provided for each of the potential intervention areas.
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?	Yes, these are all identified, although not all appear to have been consulted to date. Private sector stakeholders will be critical to success (as the pif notes) - it would be good to see some specific private sector stakeholders already identified at this stage, and identifying these should be a key priority for the next stage of planning. IPLC consultation will be critical to ensure interventions are well-designed, co-owned by communities, and have a high probability of success.
	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?	These are clearly and adequately identified in the table of stakeholders.
3. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. Please briefly include below any gender dimensions relevant to the project, and	Have gender differentiated risks and opportunities been identified, and were preliminary response measures described that would address these differences?	It would be good to see a clear identification of gender-differentiated risks and opportunities at this stage. For instance, how are women currently participating in and benefiting from existing UMAs/UMAFORES? However, integration of

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-sensitive indicators? yes/no /tbd		gender dimensions into next stages of project planning and monitoring looks substantive and well thought-through.
	Do gender considerations hinder full participation of an important stakeholder group (or groups)? If so, how will these obstacles be addressed?	Potentially – mechanisms to address this are laid out.
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?	In general these are fairly comprehensive. One major assumption is that there are adequate markets for biodiversity products that can be found. Globally there is a strong turn in many production/retail sectors against using wild products e.g. crocodilian trade, trophy hunting. While these moves are generally very poorly informed, they reflect the reality of prevailing conditions, and potential loss of these markets reflects a real risk for the project.

	• 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?	With respect to Risk 3, tensions could arise particularly over access to benefits from biodiversity use/trade - highlighting need for a focus on building equitable/accepted governance mechanisms for distribution of benefits (see above). On Risk 4, the following report from ITC/IUCN may be of assistance in identifying appropriate species https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/2015-014.pdf. Climate risk is identified (Risk 6). Measures to address it remain non-specific at this stage. Impacts are likely to vary considerably across areas and with respect to different species/value chains. Resilience practices and measures are not provided in any detail at this stage, but the specificity and variability of the risks in relation to this package of work mean it is probably not possible to put forward specific measures at this point. The capacity to project climate scenarios for specific regions and species, and determine appropriate responses will be needed. There is reference to an atlas of climate change risks, but it is not clear what sort of information this has, and to what level of specificity.
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?	Not explicitly, although the project design reflects lessons learnt that have been highlighted within CBD and CITES dialogues on sustainable use/wildlife trade.
	Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?	Not explicitly. Many other, clearly related projects are mentioned, but it would be good to have more details on what specific lessons this project has learned from them.
	Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?	No.

	How have these lessons informed the project's formulation?	See above.
	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?	This is quite strong. The MACOVIS system looks like an extremely useful and highly potentially impactful initiative for capturing/disseminating relevant knowledge.
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?	See above. Please also note that this project is strongly related to FAO proposed project 10717 entitled "Green and Inclusive Recovery in Mexico (GreenMex): Making high-value ecosystems and rural livelihoods more resilient and sustainable in a post COVID-19 scenario." This project is under review for the December 2020 Work Program and STAP is please to see that both projects acknowledge each other and have committed to cooperating.
	What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?	A range of different modalities is set out.

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.