

STAP guidelines for screening GEF projects

Part I: Project Information	Response
GEF ID	10694
Project Title	Integrated Landscape Management for Addressing Land Degradation, Food Security and Climate Resilience Challenges in The Bahamas
Date of Screening	November 27, 2020
STAP member screener	Graciela Metternicht
STAP secretariat screener	Guadalupe Duron
STAP Overall Assessment and Rating	<p>Minor issues to be considered during project design.</p> <p>UNEP’s proposal “Integrated Landscape Management for Addressing Land Degradation, Food Security and Climate Resilience Challenges in The Bahamas” aims to address land degradation, and in tandem, enhance food production through integrated landscape management, climate smart agricultural interventions and nature-based solutions. The project will implement climate resilient measures and develop Land Degradation Neutrality interventions to achieve this objective.</p> <p>The project proposes to demonstrate the application of integrated landscape management approaches through a strengthened planning process, to then translate it to demonstration of good practice within landscape areas that are subject to degradation, supported by strengthened monitoring and assessment tools for decision making. Climate-smart agricultural systems to be piloted will incorporate climate resilient crops and agroforestry systems will generate multiple benefits that will include maintaining and mitigating further biodiversity loss, enhancing carbon sequestration and soil carbon storage along with moisture retention that will contribute to soil health and productivity.</p> <p>STAP is pleased the project identifies the interlinkages between land degradation, food security and healthy ecosystems, that the project will contribute to the Bahamas</p>

identification of LDN targets; and that interventions will explore new business models, will target changes in behavior and will include women and youth as focus for capacity development. STAP congratulates the team for inclusion of academic institutions as agents for knowledge management and sharing.

Given the strong focus on LDN, the project developers may wish to consider STAP's Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) Guidelines and UNCCD's Scientific Conceptual Framework on LDN when designing LDN interventions, and recent literature on market-based instruments for LDN.

STAP also welcomes the theory of change narrative and preliminary diagram. As the project is designed, consider the level of complexity between variables, along with the important assumptions underlying each outcome. These actions will ensure that the causal pathways are not oversimplified, or the reverse – that simple interventions are over-complicated.

Additionally, as the theory of change, and activities, are developed, STAP recommends reflecting on whether the actions are necessary and sufficient to reach the project objective, and deal with long-term changes. These changes include the climate risks and COVID-19 shocks described in the PIF. One, or two, additional simple pathways should be developed to deal with different levels of plausible change.

With many international agencies working with the Government of The Bahamas to address similar environmental issues (as described in the project baseline) a well-planned coordination and co-operation mechanism amongst these actors and agents of change is essential to the success of this project.

Below, STAP offers recommendations for improving 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, the objective is defined clearly, and consistently linked to the problem statement.
Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project's objectives?	Yes, the activities support the project objective.
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, the outcomes focus on global environmental outcomes.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	Yes, potentially. The benefits are likely to be generated with a good theory of change, and careful monitoring of interventions. In preparing the PPG, STAP recommends attention be paid to identifying indicators (and associated metrics) to provide the evidence base of achieving the stated GEBs.
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?	The outputs are likely to contribute to the outcomes to a great extent. It will be important the PPG revises and improves the good theory of change (e.g. Include the risks as external factors, develop alternative pathways to respond to those external factors as they may arise), and the assumptions underlying the causal connections between activities, outputs, and outcomes.
Part II: Project justification	A simple narrative explaining the project's logic, i.e. a theory of change.	The project has a good narrative of the Theory of Change, complemented by a graphic. Pg 17 describes the assumptions that frame the project, and identify critical aspects for those assumptions to hold.
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 problem is well-defined. The PIF describes the socio-economic and policy context of the country; the impact of climate change, including natural hazards (e.g. hurricanes) on livelihoods and agricultural sector; the impact of COVID-19 on livelihoods; the drivers of degradation (e.g. shifting cultivation combined

		with slash and burn; deforestation; unregulated mining; groundwater pollution in part due to increased use of agro-chemicals;
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	Yes, the barriers are well-described. The theory of change, or causal pathway, should include the barriers described in the PIF as well as others that are identified by stakeholders during the project design (e.g. for ‘fragmentation of planning’ identify key ‘agents’ that can need to be engaged in the design and implementation of intervention, when should they be involved, what should they be doing). Barrier on lack of fiscal incentives may require thinking in the ToC on a set of levers around education, behavioral interventions, fines, incentives, etc. Also recommend is to identify the enablers of change in the causal pathways.
	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?	Non-applicable.
2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects	Is the baseline identified clearly?	Yes, the PIF includes a narrative baseline, describing on-going and future initiatives on land management, waste management from agriculture, post-hurricane response measures, climate smart agriculture, among others. CSIDS-SOILCARE
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project’s benefits?	In addition to the GEF core indicators, identify indicators to monitor the sustainability and climate resilience of the targeted livelihoods.
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	Yes, the baseline is sufficiently robust at this stage. However, recommend identifying environmental and social indicators (when developing the theory of change) that complement the GEF’s core indicators, and which track progress towards achieving sustainable landscape management and climate resilient livelihoods.
	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;	Non-applicable.
	are the lessons learned from similar or related past GEF and non-GEF interventions described; and	Yes, some complementary initiatives are described.
	how did these lessons inform the design of this project?	Lessons from past or on-going initiatives need to be described in the baseline section (e.g. describe links to the CSIDS-SOILCARE project). This information appears missing in the PIF.
3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project	What is the theory of change?	A theory of change diagram is provided in Annex E. The preliminary theory of change for the project is: “The project’s theory of change is underpinned by the desired intermediate state of attaining reduced vulnerability to land degradation across productive landscapes in the country through (a) the institution of policy, planning and development processes that foster LDN integration, (b) the reduced potential for land degradation over some 10,000 hectares through the installation of SLM, nature-based solutions and climate resilient agriculture systems and (c) the enhancement of evidence-based decision-making on LDN among stakeholders. In this regard the project seeks to deliver intended outcomes under four project components that will contribute to the desired intermediate state and ultimately the desired impacts of improved and sustainable crop yields and healthy, resilient and productive ecosystems toward improved livelihoods and well-being and expanded global environmental benefits.” Pg 17 describes the assumptions.
	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?	To an extent. The key assumptions that underlie the success of the project are described. During the project design, STAP suggests articulating further the nuanced relationships between the activities, outputs and outcomes. The description should also

		identify the important assumptions that need to be validated to meet each outcome. Links between outcomes should also be identified.
	Is there a recognition of what adaptations may be required during project implementation to respond to changing conditions in pursuit of the targeted outcomes?	<p>The project acknowledges the impact of COVID on the economy, and the impacts of increasing climate-related extremes events. Given the increased frequency of natural disasters in the target area, and the impact of unforeseen (and foreseen) risks and shocks (e.g. COVID-19), STAP recommends building one, or two, simple scenarios for plausible futures. Such exercise (conducted as part of the PPG) will benefit from inputs of ongoing work of FAO with the Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Resources to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Agriculture and Fisheries Sector of the region including the Bahamas, and other relevant assessments (ongoing) related to climate change that are mentioned in the PIF.</p> <p>Building, and accounting for, these scenarios of plausible futures will assist in ensuring that the outcomes endure beyond the project lifetime (anticipate and being ready for external shocks). Several sources for building multiple pathways include STAP’s theory of change primer (table 2), and RAPTA: https://www.stapgef.org/theory-change-primer https://www.stapgef.org/rapta-guidelines</p>
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, with a good theory of change (see earlier comments), careful monitoring (through well defined indicators and associated metrics), and identification of several causal pathways that are necessary and sufficient to reach the project objective.
	LDCF/SCCF: will the proposed incremental activities lead to adaptation which reduces vulnerability, builds adaptive capacity, and increases resilience to climate change?	Not applicable.
6) global environmental benefits (GEF trust fund)	Are the benefits truly global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits, and are they measurable?	Yes, the global environmental benefits are articulated clearly. Indicators will be provided in

<p>and/or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF)</p>		<p>the final project document, and STAF encourages the project team to acquaint with the LDN indicators (see LDN scientific conceptual framework), STAP LDN guidelines, and relevant papers of a special issue on LDN that deal with indicators and metrics for the LDN baseline determination and monitoring LDN.</p> <p>During the project design, STAP recommends addressing the following issues:</p> <p>In component 1, project developers can rely on STAP’s LDN guidelines for developing land use planning interventions based on systems thinking. Trade offs between environmental benefits should be identified in the project document, as well as strategies for managing leakage of deforestation, and shifting agriculture. Additionally, project developers should apply the LDN hierarchy (avoid, reduce, reverse) when designing SLM, rehabilitation and restoration interventions. The STAP guidelines provide steps on how to pursue LDN planning, including conducting preparatory assessments to identify land potential and resilience. Refer to https://www.unccd.int/publications/scientific-conceptual-framework-land-degradation-neutrality-report-science-policy</p> <p>In component 2, pay careful attention to farmers’ values, norms, culture, gender, and other social structures that can influence their motivations, and shifts in behavior towards pro-environmental sustainability. Currently, the project has an inherent assumption that farmers’ behavior will change and be enduring to achieve long-lasting outcomes. This assumption should be defined in the theory of change.</p>
---	--	---

		In addition to monitor and evaluating progress, component 4 should also look to foster reflection and innovation for scaling and transformational change. Refer to STAP’s primer (table 2) for steps on monitoring, evaluation and learning.
	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	Possibly. Recommend developing a theory of change with various causal pathways to encourage adaptability in the face of abrupt and foreseen change. Additionally, monitoring and evaluation of progress, and encouragement of adaptive management as needed, should be undertaken. STAP acknowledges the project’s mention of PPP and encourages the team to explore market based instruments for LDN interventions (see for instance “Synergies between Land Degradation Neutrality goals and existing market-based instruments” https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2019.01.012)
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits explicitly defined?	Yes, the global environmental benefits are defined.
	Are indicators, or methodologies, provided to demonstrate how the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits will be measured and monitored during project implementation?	In addition to the GEF’s core indicators, STAP encourages the use of UNCCD’s three land-based indicators and associated metrics, related to LDN: land cover (assessed as land cover change), land productivity (assessed as NPP) and carbon stocks (assessed as SOC). Moreover, appropriate indicators/metrics for locally-relevant ecosystem services that are not covered by SOC, NPP or land cover change should be identified and included in the proposed monitoring systems.
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project’s resilience to climate change?	The PIF states that landscape restorative measures, such as tree planting, SLM, and nature-based solution will be pursued for climate resilience purposes. STAP recommends defining these activities further in the project document.
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, the project will embed landscape management across policy and planning sectors; it proposes to explore PPPs, and to work in component #1 for an enabling mechanism for LDN that enhances/strengthen governance. A degree of

		<p>innovation is brought in the learning and knowledge management through the consideration of academic institutions as enablers of this. Further innovation in design can be achieved by using participatory <i>spatial</i> land use planning; by considering assessments of resilience and land potential prior to design LDN interventions, and by considering the use of geospatial technologies more broadly in the different project components (e.g. coupling with wireless sensors for collection of data on soil conditions; for building scenarios that are spatially explicit, for target setting). Innovation in financing could be considered through PES, and ‘carbon farming through environmental plantings, and other measures that promote soil carbon sequestration’ initiatives that align very well with the vision and objectives of LDN interventions and climate resilient responses.</p>
	<p>Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?</p>	<p>Partially. There is an assumption that strengthening technical capacity will lead to innovation and scaling. Recommend defining these assumptions in the theory of change. Additionally, STAP recommends relying on the theory of change, and its monitoring, to identifying opportunities for scaling and transformative change. The theory of change also should be used to address barriers, and enablers, of scaling. STAP recommends learning from other projects conducted in SIDS that provide indication of potential and barriers for scaling (e.g. ‘how feasible is the scaling out of livelihood and food system adaptation in AP islands?’)</p>
	<p>Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?</p>	<p>Incremental change is recognized, and it is possible that more transformational change may be needed – especially in relation to continuing impacts from climate change and further effects from COVID-19 on livelihoods and the health of ecosystems of The Bahamas.</p>

<p>1b. Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.</p>		<p>STAP recommends following its guidance on maps in its Earth Observation document as some key elements appear missing from the maps. STAP guidance can be found at: https://www.stagef.org/earth-observation-and-gef</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>Have all the key relevant stakeholders been identified to cover the complexity of the problem, and project implementation barriers?</p>	<p>The key stakeholders have been identified. Suggest reflecting whether there are other stakeholders that need to be involved during the project development, and implementation. STAP also recommends the theory of change identify stakeholders that are relevant to overcome each of the implementation barriers.</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>Suggest elaborating further on stakeholders' roles, particularly at the outcome level.</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</p>	<p>Have gender differentiated risks and opportunities been identified, and were preliminary response measures described that would address these differences?</p>	<p>The project developers will rely on gender planning to identify strategies, tools, approaches, and design interventions. Disaggregated data to monitor the project's progress.</p> <p>STAP acknowledges the project use of the Manual for Gender-Responsive Land Degradation Neutrality Transformative Projects and Programmes that provides guidance on integrating gender issues and promoting gender equality in the design of transformative LDN projects. Other</p>

<p>gaps or promote gender equality and women empowerment? Yes/no/tbd.</p> <p>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>Will the project's results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators? yes/no/tbd</p>		<p>relevant source of knowledge can be on the paper Moving towards a twin-agenda: Gender equality and land degradation neutrality</p>
	<p>Do gender considerations hinder full participation of an important stakeholder group (or groups)? If so, how will these obstacles be addressed?</p>	<p>Unsure as the gender analysis will be done during the project design. STAP recommends considering how a gender analysis may hinder the full participation of an important stakeholder group.</p>
<p>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>	<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?</p> <p>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>The PIF describes a series of risks to the project, including: climate change risks, COVID-19 risks, limited buy-in for policies, limited engagement from the private sector, among others. STAP recommends for these risks to include in a revised theory of change so they are dealt with during the project implementation. Not acknowledging the risks will undermine the causal logic of the interventions.</p> <p>For climate change, STAP recommends taking into account the questions to the left, and relying on its climate risk screening guidance: https://www.stapgef.org/stap-guidance-climate-risk-screening</p>

<p>6. Coordination. Outline the coordination with other relevant GEF-financed and other related initiatives</p>	<p>Are the project proponents tapping into relevant knowledge and learning generated by other projects, including GEF projects?</p>	<p>Yes, the project will build on the knowledge of other projects based on the baseline projects listed in the PIF, and described in the coordination section.</p> <p>The Project will have a Project Steering Committee, and STAP recommends that it also established a ‘Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel or Committee’, with representatives of academic and research institutions that will support the project (e.g. IICA, University of Bahamas, BAMSI, leading government agency). LDN is an evolving theme, with many countries implementing different practices and technologies, and is nature-based solutions. Experts could provide technical briefs that within an operating framework of ‘adaptive management’ could be embraced in design and implementation.</p>
	<p>Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?</p>	<p>See above.</p>
	<p>Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?</p>	<p>Partially. STAP recommends elaborating further on the lessons learned from other projects – GEF and non-GEF that are relevant to this project. For example, ‘mining’ the GEF data base to explore lessons from previous projects in KM and technology transfer to small island development states with a focus on organic waste management (related to barrier #2).</p>
	<p>How have these lessons informed the project’s formulation?</p>	<p>See above.</p>
	<p>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?</p>	<p>Yes, component 4. Additionally, the theory of change should be linked to the monitoring system.</p>
<p>8. Knowledge management. Outline the “Knowledge Management Approach” for the project, and how it will contribute to the project’s overall impact,</p>	<p>What overall approach will be taken, and what knowledge management indicators and metrics will be used?</p>	<p>The PIF identifies several knowledge management efforts and approaches the project will rely on. As the project stakeholders develop the knowledge management plan, consider indicators of success.</p>

<p>including plans to learn from relevant projects, initiatives and evaluations.</p>		<p>Additionally, suggest using component 4 and the theory of change to manage knowledge and learning, and to revise proposed indicators so that evidence of learning (not only of dissemination of information) can be gathered during the project and for the terminal evaluation.</p>
	<p>What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?</p>	<p>The PIF describes several methods for scaling knowledge, including by engaging stakeholders in Universities, disseminating lessons to UNCCD's knowledge portal, WOCAT and Trends.Earth, as well as linking up with other platforms and regional initiatives in the Caribbean.</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>