

STAP SCREENING TEMPLATE

GEF ID	11117
Project title	Community-based Wildfire Risk Management in Lebanon's Vulnerable Landscapes
Date of screen	June 13, 2023
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1. Summary of STAP's views of the project

The project "Community-based Wildfire Risk Management in Lebanon's Vulnerable Landscapes" draws from a Risk and Resilience Assessment for Lebanon to identify appropriate responses, key stakeholders, and to ascertain system drivers and critical challenges project proponents will face in delivering proposed global environmental benefits.

As the project is further designed and gears towards implementation, STAP encourages project developers' early engagement with universities and other key stakeholders essential to M&E and knowledge management and learning (component 3).

In its current format, the logic appears to stem mainly from the Risk and Resilience Assessment, although resilience is less emphasized – that is, there is less accounting of the possibility of unexpected impacts, or uncertainties, from risks and stressors influencing improved wildfire management, as well as restoring and reducing forest degradation in the project sites. STAP recommends designing interventions with resilience in mind; the project outcomes might be undermined by the effects of long-term drivers, including a changing climate. An appraisal of policy coherence and inclusion of integrated land use planning principles in components 1 and 2, all related to the conceptual framework for Land Degradation Neutrality mentioned in the PIF is recommended. This will assist in strengthening project rationale, and planned interventions related to outputs and expected outcomes. Further recommendations follow.

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
- X 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.

Based on the PIF and PID, STAP finds the project rationale and description well formulated. The World Bank provides an extensive description of the socio-political context and drivers of the problem identified that this project seeks to address for achieving outcomes of GEBs. Extensive details are provided on the underlying root causes of the problem, or factors influencing it – e.g. economic

shocks, fuel shortages, disasters, urbanization, overgrazing, climate change, and influx of war refugees from Syria. All these factors have placed pressure on forest resources. Descriptions of how some of the drivers interact (e.g. urbanization, overgrazing, climate change) is also provided.

The problem analysis has also benefitted from the World Bank's risk and resilience assessment (RRA), whose results informed project activities influencing a political shift, or strengthening of the enabling environment, for sustainable forest landscape management in selected fire hotspots. It is less clear, however, how the proposal benefitted from the World Bank's climate risk screening – that is, how the results of the screening informed the problem analysis and description of the context surrounding the problem, as well as helped inform the interventions.

Besides the extensive definition of the problem, the project will benefit from a more robust logic based on integrated land use planning, and the principles of LDN. This would strengthen the project rationale and the causal connections between components to inform landscape restoration, which is a key thrust of the project. It is also unclear whether the key barriers, or opportunities (enablers) to achieving each of the three pathways in the theory of change are identified. Similarly, the assumptions underlying each of the outcomes appear missing.

Below, STAP provides recommendations to address these issues.

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

STAP offers the following recommendations to strengthen the project:

1. Given the expected outcomes, frame the project based on an integrated land use planning framework, or logic model – for example, the UNCCD's LDN framework (See scientific conceptual framework for LDN, page 66), or a more robust theory of change. For instance, the problems and issues that require GEF intervention have been initially defined – e.g. component 1 is focused on addressing weak coordination between government ministries to tackle fire management through integrated planning. Working backwards from the expected outcome of component 1, would prompt to ask what are the necessary and sufficient steps to achieve coherence, or a coordinated national planning between ministries?

STAP considers that one of these steps would be to map where the different policies that emanate from (e.g. provincial, national, international), the conflicts and synergies in policies across governance levels, and their place-based context – i.e. how they are justified in that place (e.g. for economic development priority, social protection, enhancing tourism, conservation, infrastructure development, industry development, international commitments, or other purposes.) Furthermore, STAP would recommend designing with the intent to achieve resilience – i.e. resilience (to climate and non-climate risks) of and through the project as spelled out in the World Bank's report on climate resilience. See the references below for UNCCD's conceptual framework for LDN, STAP's paper on policy coherence, and the World Bank's methodology for climate resilience.

2. Embed LDN strategically into project design considerations. Currently, LDN is not well embedded in the logic of the project -only appears briefly in the description of component 2. STAP considers, as mentioned above, that the project could usefully apply LDN as an approach to organize logically the project outputs, to have coherent interventions that address forest and wildfire management in the target sites. Furthermore, a more comprehensive view of LDN is required for the project to address the LDN mechanism for neutrality. How will the project estimate anticipated losses and proposed gains from the targetted natural capital (forest and land) to subsequently inform actions on avoiding, reducing, and reversing land degradation? Answering these questions will be useful in identifying the best use of the LDN tools described in component 3.
3. Embed the results of the climate risk analysis in the project design. It is unclear how the climate risk screening results form part of the problem analysis, context, and identification of solutions.
4. Ask whether any long-term changes such as population changes, economic changes, or even new technology, for example, technology surveillance for wildfires, are risks or opportunities for delivering the GEB and socioeconomic outcomes.
5. Consider developing a small number of simple future scenarios based on the analysis of long-term changes – that is, create up to four simple plausible futures (e.g. one paragraph length), based on the most critical long-term drivers. Subsequently, reconsider the project activities based on these plausible futures – are they formulated in such a manner that they are necessary and sufficient to address the project objective? Refer to STAP’s guide on simple narratives cited below.
6. Revisit the theory of change in the PID by asking whether the three pathways are necessary and sufficient to achieve the outcomes. As mentioned above, STAP argues in favor of revisiting the theory of change to strengthen the logic of integrated planning/LDN – key approaches and outcomes of the project. Additionally, identify explicitly the 2-3 key assumptions that undermine the outcomes, which will assist in identifying knowledge gaps – and whether the activities are necessary and sufficient to reach the project objective. This includes assumptions about the social aspects underpinning the system (e.g. cultural norms and values) that are necessary to achieve the outcomes, such as strengthened capacity and awareness to improve forest management and fire prevention. Furthermore, commit to testing or validating the assumptions to pursue adaptive learning – a key aspect of the project. Suggest referring to the theory of change resources cited below.

UNCCD’s Scientific Conceptual Framework on Land Degradation Neutrality:

<https://www.unccd.int/resources/reports/scientific-conceptual-framework-land-degradation-neutrality-report-science-policy#:~:text=The%20Scientific%20Conceptual%20Framework%20for,defining%20LDN%20in%20operational%20terms.>

UNCCD The contribution of integrated land use planning and integrated 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>

Framing policy coherence for the GEF: <https://stapgef.org/resources/policy-briefs/framing-policy-coherence-gef>

World Bank Resilience rating system: [file:///C:/Users/MDURON/Downloads/Resilience-Rating-System-A-Methodology-for-Building-and-Tracking-Resilience-to-Climate-Change%20\(9\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/MDURON/Downloads/Resilience-Rating-System-A-Methodology-for-Building-and-Tracking-Resilience-to-Climate-Change%20(9).pdf)

Using simple narratives to ensure durability of GEF investments: <https://stapgef.org/resources/policy-briefs/using-simple-narratives-ensure-durability-gef-investments>

World Bank's dimewiki webpage on theory of change:

https://dimewiki.worldbank.org/Theory_of_Change

Theory of change primer: <https://stapgef.org/resources/advisory-documents/theory-change-primer>

Enabling elements of good project design: <https://stapgef.org/resources/advisory-documents/enabling-elements-good-project-design-synthesis-stap-guidance-gef>

Framing policy coherence for the GEF: <https://stapgef.org/resources/policy-briefs/framing-policy-coherence-gef>

Other literature sources on forest and wildfire risk management in Lebanon:

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12517-022-11103-4>

Mitri, G. H. (2022). The Use of Earth Observation Data in Wildfire Risk Management: A Case Study from Lebanon. In *Applications of Space Techniques on the Natural Hazards in the MENA Region* (pp. 513-531). Cham: Springer International Publishing. https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-88874-9_22

Note: number key points clearly and provide useful information or suggestions, including key literature where relevant. Completed screens should be no more than two or three pages in length.

*categories under review, subject to future revision

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.)