STAP guidelines for screening GEF projects

Part I: Project Information	Response	
GEF ID	10789	
Project Title	Building Community Based Integrated and Climate Resilient Natural Resources Management and Enhancing Sustainable Livelihood in the South-Eastern Escarpments and Adjacent Coastal Areas of Eritrea	
Date of Screening	May 27, 2021	
STAP member screener	Edward Carr	
STAP secretariat screener	Guadalupe Durón	
STAP Overall Assessment and Rating	**Minor issues to be considered during project design** STAP acknowledges FAO's proposal "Building Community Based Integrated and Climate Resilient Natural Resources Management and Enhancing Sustainable Livelihood in the South-Eastern Escarpments and Adjacent Coastal Areas of Eritrea". The project seeks to enhance the resilience of agro-pastoralist and fishing communities in the target areas through integrated approaches. The project also aims to strengthen value chains to incentivize sustainable land management, and improve livelihoods. The project focuses on three sectors: agriculture, livestock and fisheries. As the project is developed, STAP recommends detailing further these three social-ecological systems by specifying the connections and feedbacks between the biophysical (terrestrial and marine), socio-cultural and economic variables; and, the barriers, risks, and assumptions underlying the success of each outcome. With a more detailed description of the socio-ecological systems, the interconnections between variables can be more easily identified, measured and monitored that underlie the resilience of each system. Furthermore, trade-offs between benefits can be analyzed, and interventions prioritized.	

	These connections and feedbacks between variables can be further refined in the theory of change provided in the PIF, which STAP welcomes. In addition, STAP suggests embedding scenario planning for climate adaptation within the theory of change, and decision-making processes. The project mentions the use of spatial planning and vulnerability assessments as approaches to reaching the expected outcomes on climate adaptation, biodiversity conservation and sustainable land management. STAP encourages the project developers to specify these methods, and metrics further. STAP provides further advice below on these issues.	
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 clearly defined.
Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project's objectives?	Yes, the components 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 and adaptation outcomes.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	Possibly, with good monitoring of the outcomes progress and impact.
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?	Possibly, with close monitoring of outcomes, and application of iterative learning and adaptive management.
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	Is the problem statement well-defined?	Yes, the problem is defined. Agricultural production and marine ecosystems (coral reefs and fisheries) are being affected by rainfall and temperature variability, leading to drought and floods. Droughts and increasing rainfall variability

need to be addressed (systems description)		are also affecting pastoralism through reduced animal feed and water availability. Unsustainable practices are also driving land and forest degradation, overgrazing, and biodiversity loss (terrestrial and marine – overfishing).
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	Yes, the barriers and threats are well described. They include lack of capacity to mainstream biodiversity, sustainable land and forest manage and climate adaptation into land use plans; low capacities to adopt sustainable practices; lack of post-harvest technology; STAP suggests that at the PPG stage the project team consider STAP guidance on behavioral change, as addressing Barrier 2 (Low capacities to adopt and sustain CCA, BDC, and SL/SFM practices and technologies at the community level) will require understanding the opportunities for and barriers to the adoption of these technologies and practices found in the social and cultural context. STAP appreciates the well-articulated description of threats, including the use of multiple climate scenarios, to illustrate those threats.
	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, the problem analysis identified multiple drivers that need to be addressed by combining biodiversity, sustainable land management, and climate adaptation efforts. STAP appreciates the systems thinking that marks this PIF and the connections it draws between these different drivers and specific challenges to be addressed.
2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects	Is the baseline identified clearly?	Policies and baseline projects (fisheries, food security, land management, climate resilience, climate adaptation) are described as a baseline narrative.
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits?	Not yet – for land degradation, suggest using soil organic carbon as an indicator and baseline for land as identified in Eritrea's LDN target report. Suggest quantifying the baseline for biodiversity. For climate change, the two climate future projections (RCP2.6 and RCP8.5) described in the

		PIF are useful. The project might want to consider consolidating the climate model forecasts into two plausible future climate scenarios, and then use them for the purposes of anticipating and managing risks, and for selecting and designing specific interventions to ensure they produce robust results across a range of plausible futures.
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	Yes, once the baselines for biodiversity, land degradation, and climate change have been defined.
	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;	See above.
	are the lessons learned from similar or related past GEF and non-GEF interventions described; and	Yes – however, further details on how the lessons will be used to inform the design of this project would be valuable.
	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?	The project's theory of change can be described as: "The project aims to reduce livelihood and unsustainable land/sea change through crop and income diversification, improving the enabling environment, and mainstreaming climate change adaptation, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable land and forest management into priority sectors, including food system-related sector investment plans. The project will promote adaptation technologies and ecosystem-based solutions to strengthen rehabilitation, restoration and resilience in ecosystems and reduce environmental degradation and vulnerability to climate risks and hazards. Further, the project will promote a market-based approach to improve climate resilience

		through the local private sector, scaling up agribusinesses and MSMEs. A comprehensive figure of the theory of change also is provided, which is welcomed by STAP.
	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?	Yes, assumptions are defined in the theory of change figure. As the theory of change is applied, suggest testing the assumptions, and adapting interventions to reflect this learning.
	Is there a recognition of what adaptations may be required during project implementation to respond to changing conditions in pursuit of the targeted outcomes?	Partly. Adaptive management is recognized as potential strategy for the project. Recommend adding scenario planning as described above for climate adaptation in the theory of change to identify opportunities for adaptation, or transformational change.
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 good monitoring and evaluation of progress towards reaching the outcomes. As part of this monitoring and evaluation process, suggest identifying indicators for biodiversity and land change that complement the core indicators. As indicated above, suggest using Eritrea's LDN's soil organic carbon indicator and baseline for global environmental benefits on land.
	LDCF/SCCF: will the proposed incremental activities lead to adaptation which reduces vulnerability, builds adaptive capacity, and increases resilience to climate change?	Yes, with good monitoring and evaluation of progress toward outcomes. STAP suggests some of these benefits could be quantified if the project adopts the climate scenarios suggested above.
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, the benefits are valid. Suggest identifying metrics that complement the core indicators to measure and track change along the impact pathway.
	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	Possibly, with good monitoring and evaluation – including testing of assumptions and adapting theory of change based on learning.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits explicitly defined?	Yes, the benefits are defined, including expected socio-economic benefits.

	Are indicators, or methodologies, provided to demonstrate how the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits will be measured and monitored during project implementation?	No. The project proposes to use spatial planning and vulnerability assessments to target biodiversity, climate adaptation, and land management interventions. Suggest defining the approaches in greater detail in the complete project, including indicators (biophysical, economic, social) the approaches/methods will be monitoring – and at what scale – for example, household, community, watershed levels.
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project's resilience to climate change?	Diversification of value chains, and investments in post-harvest technologies and practices, will be considered as strategies for increasing agro-pastoralists' and fisherfolks' resilience to climate.
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 project is innovative in its own context – that is, the project strives to integrate sectors and policies that generate multiple benefits for land and biodiversity while enhancing climate adaptation. The project is also strengthening value chains for crops, fisheries, and livestock – while using learning and knowledge to scale up impact within this project and other initiatives (e.g. IGREENFIN). Post-harvest technologies also will be upscaled. STAP recommends developing a separate theory of change on scaling. Scaling will depend on the alignment of: 1) improved technology and business models proposed in component 3; 2) institutional arrangements developed within the stakeholder groups; and, 3) cultural rules and values characterizing the stakeholders. Paying close attention to these three aspects and to the barriers of scaling is needed to achieve scaling. Refer to STAP's transformation brief, STAP's advice on behavioral change, and to the theory of change primer.

	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	See above.
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	The project's proposed outcomes are largely incremental but taken together and in the context of continuing drivers of change from root causes beyond the country's borders, these outcomes may catalyze more transformative changes, for example in the character of agribusiness in the country. Both incremental and transformational change will likely be needed to achieve the project's goals of sustainable and resilient food systems and sustainable healthy landscapes and seascapes. STAP recommends monitoring progress toward the outcomes, and adapting the impact pathways accordingly – while identifying opportunities for adaptation and, or, transformational change. This process entails assessing for resilience of the targeted systems (agricultural, livestock, fisheries). Resilience tools that can be applied to this project include: RAPTA, Wayfinder; and, STAP's theory of change.
1b. Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.		Two maps are included in the PIF, which detail the project sites and land uses. As the project is designed, the project team may wish to refer to STAP's advice on project geo-location.
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.	Have all the key relevant stakeholders been identified to cover the complexity of the problem, and project implementation barriers?	Stakeholders were consulted to the extent possible during the pandemic lockdown. As the project is developed and implemented, STAP suggests revisiting the stakeholders being consulted to ensure the appropriate actors are engaged.

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.		
	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?	As the project is designed, STAP suggests the project team describe stakeholders' roles and describe how their combined roles will contribute to achieving the outcomes. This information is possibly best captured in a table format.
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?	A gender assessment of roles and relations will be carried out during the PPG. Suggest paying attention to cultural norms and values, and power dynamics (within the household level, community, and stakeholder groups) when carrying out the assessment. Recommend refining the components based on the gender assessment outcomes.

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?	Recommend assessing whether gender considerations will hinder the full participation of an important stakeholder group. For example, do assumptions about women's roles in agriculture, an attitude that women are a homogenous group, or a perception that women may be more vulnerable to risks (climate and non-climate) hinder the participation of men in some way? Defining gender assumptions in the theory of change and testing these assumptions will avoid unintended and counterproductive gender consequences. Refer to the following paper on addressing gender assumptions in practice: Lau, Jacqueline D., et al. "Gender equality in climate policy and practice hindered by assumptions." *Nature Climate Change* 11.3 (2021): 186-192.
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 comprehensive. Recommend detailing these risks in the theory of change, so they can be dealt with in a logical manner. For climate risks, suggest developing alternative pathways that address the two climate scenarios proposed in the PIF. This planning will assist the project deal with the uncertain impacts of climate change; thus, make the project outcomes more enduring amidst climate change. This scenario planning could be included as part of the theory of change – so that it is an iterative, systems thinking, consultative planning process.
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?	Yes. Suggest revisiting list of initiatives when designing project.

	Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?	Partly – suggest specifying lessons from each of the projects listed in the coordination section, and describing how the lessons will influence this initiative.
	Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?	See above.
	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?	Yes, component 4 and the theory of change.
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 project will rely on component 4 to monitor, evaluate and uptake learning and knowledge that evolves during the project implementation. Suggest using component 4 to adapt the impact pathways in the theory of change according to learning as implementation proceeds.
	What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?	The project will disseminate best practices and knowledge materials through workshops, learning platforms, and other fora. On scaling, suggest considering advice described above.

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.