

STAP guidelines for screening GEF projects

Part I: Project Information	Response	
GEF ID	10805	
Project Title	Advancing transboundary co-operation and integrated Water Resources Management in the Dniester River Basin through implementation of the Strategic Action Programme (SAP)	
Date of Screening	27 May 2021	
STAP member screener	Blake Ratner	
STAP secretariat screener	Virginia Gorsevski	
STAP Overall Assessment and Rating	<p>Minor.</p> <p>The proposed project is a follow-on investment to recent TDA and newly agreed SAP.</p> <p>A theory of change is presented in a graphic, which is a depiction of the stated barriers, outputs and outcomes. Assumptions and drivers are poorly developed. The only assumption noted refers to “countries accept commitments...” This appears to disregard the incentives and behaviors of non-state actors.</p> <p>Statement of innovation potential indicates moderate ambition. Intention to engage “professional mediators and communication experts” could yield lessons if it helps accelerate collaborative action.</p> <p>A separate climate risk screen was completed for this project that rates the risk as “high.” A very useful visual characterization of possible impacts and adaptation capacity is provided to aid prioritization.</p> <p>KM section is not well articulated and mostly generic, indeed verbatim with GEF 10725 in parts.</p>	
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?	<p>Yes. The stated objective is “to advance Integrated Water Resources Management in the Dniester River basin contributing to sustainable development by supporting the implementation of the Strategic Action Programme priority actions.”</p> <p>The objective is straightforward and broadly responds to the multitude of problems facing the shared body of water – including high levels of pollution from multiple sources.</p> <p>Climate change is discussed throughout the project – sometimes as a ‘root cause’ and other times as an exacerbating factor; there is a wide range of possible future scenarios and general uncertainty regarding impacts.</p>
Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project’s objectives?	Yes.
Outcomes	<p>A description of the expected short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention.</p> <p>Do the planned outcomes encompass important adaptation benefits?</p>	Yes, climate risks are prominent, and adaptation is woven through the project.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	Good likelihood, following recent TDA and newly agreed SAP.
Outputs	<p>A description of the products and services which are expected to result from the project.</p> <p>Is the sum of the outputs likely to contribute to the outcomes?</p>	Structure is clear.
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,	Is the problem statement well-defined?	Yes, the problems are very well described and understood.

root causes and barriers that need to be addressed (systems description)		
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	Yes, based on recent analysis.
	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?	Yes.
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits?	Yes regarding institutional context. Presumably TDA also has quantitative data on ecological trends.
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	Yes.
	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	n/a
	how did these lessons inform the design of this project?	n/a
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 is presented in a graphic, which is a depiction of the stated barriers, outputs and outcomes. Assumptions and drivers are poorly developed. The only assumption noted refers to "countries accept commitments..." This appears to disregard the incentives and behaviors of non-state actors.
	What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?	Structure of components implies a logic of connections between strengthened cooperation,

		regulatory framework and capacities, public awareness, applied research and more local actions.
	What is the set of linked activities, outputs, and outcomes to address the project's objectives?	Adequately described.
	Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions?	Plausible but assumptions are poorly developed.
	Is there a recognition of what adaptations may be required during project implementation to respond to changing conditions in pursuit of the targeted outcomes?	Yes, including M&E plan with regular reviews to adjust project implementation.
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?	Likely, given recent commitments; however, scale of benefits is difficult to anticipate.
	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?	Adequate.
	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?	Needs further development.
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project's resilience to climate change?	Climate risk screening includes specific data and scenarios, suggesting basis for adaptation measures in further design stages.
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?	Statement of innovation potential indicates moderate ambition. Developing synergies between the GEF IW process and EU legislation is useful and necessary, but not necessarily innovative. Similarly, robust hydrological models are interesting but not unique or game changing.

		Intention to engage “professional mediators and communication experts” could yield lessons if it helps accelerate collaborative action.
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	Several suggestions are provided for how innovations could be scaled to other river basins; the most interesting concern stakeholder engagement, including NGO and hydro-energy sector representation.
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	Fundamental transformational change will be necessary to achieve long lasting improvements in the Dniester River basin since this can only occur when actors in key sectors adhere to pollution control regulations and adopt new technologies or change existing practices. Incremental improvements will not be sufficient.
1b. Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.		Provided.
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?	Good description of stakeholder engagement in PIF preparation. In future steps, more information is needed regarding the specific organizations and their roles in this effort and how their participation can help inform specific interventions and help achieve the ultimate objective of improved management of the river basin in order to achieve GEBs.

	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?	See above
<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 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>	Have gender differentiated risks and opportunities been identified, and were preliminary response measures described that would address these differences?	<p>Basic information is provided. Importantly, there is recognition of the risk of conflict over water and its links to social conflict, including gender dimensions.</p> <p>The PIF states that it will 'promote a gender-balanced approach to water governance' – however, it is not clear that inviting more women to participate in activities is sufficient or meaningful. A gender strategy is planned to be developed during PPG phase.</p>
	Do gender considerations hinder full participation of an important stakeholder group (or groups)? If so, how will these obstacles be addressed?	Yes. Responses TBD.
5. Risks. Indicate risks, including climate change, potential social and	Are the identified risks valid and comprehensive? Are the risks specifically for things outside the project's control?	Several risks are identified; however, most of them low and covered by the project components (i.e.

<p>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 there social and environmental risks which could affect the project? 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>coordination with other projects, between national authorities, etc.)</p> <p>A separate climate risk screen was completed for this project that rates the risk as “high.” A very useful visual characterization of possible impacts and adaptation capacity is provided to aid prioritization.</p> <p>The moderate scenario A1B indicates that by 2050, temperatures may rise by 1.0 to 1.2 degrees C and precipitation will not change significantly. Other scenarios are presented using different models.</p> <p>The problem of land-based sources of pollution appears to be most pressing – it would be useful to know more about how climate variability will relate to this issue, including the sectors that are responsible for the most pollution (i.e. agriculture).</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>The PIF identifies the the many regional activities underway and mostly non-GEF projects and initiatives.</p>
	<p>Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?</p>	<p>No</p>
	<p>Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?</p>	<p>No</p>
	<p>How have these lessons informed the project’s formulation?</p>	<p>n/a</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>A project steering committee (PSC) will be established and appears to be the main mechanism for gathering project partners and sharing lessons, in addition to IW:LEARN.</p>
<p>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</p>	<p>What overall approach will be taken, and what knowledge management indicators and metrics will be used?</p>	<p>KM section is not well articulated and mostly generic, indeed verbatim with GEF 10725 in parts, e.g.: “Information will be collected and distributed as relevant to the different needs of the various private sector partners... Civil society will be provided with information to inform communities...”</p>

from relevant projects, initiatives and evaluations.		Knowledge management is mainly addressed in Component 5 that seeks to engage stakeholders and develop communications and outreach strategies. IW:LEARN features prominently.
	What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?	Component 6 usefully outlines plans for scientific networking and applied research.

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 <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>
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.

<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>