

### STAP guidelines for screening GEF projects

Part I: Project Information	Response
<b>GEF ID</b>	10725
<b>Project Title</b>	Implementing Ecosystem Based Management approaches in the Black Sea LME
<b>Date of Screening</b>	May 28 2021
<b>STAP member screener</b>	Blake Ratner
<b>STAP secretariat screener</b>	Virginia Gorsevski
<b>STAP Overall Assessment and Rating</b>	<p><b>Major.</b></p> <p>The proposed project builds upon prior (2009) SAP for the Black Sea. While ecological trends are clearly unacceptable, the PIF fails to make a convincing case that the envisioned response is well conceived, or will address these trends in new and impactful ways.</p> <p>The assumption is that increased coordination and information and updating of Blue Economy approaches including training on the EBM approach, will lead to enhanced livelihoods from ecosystem services. Lack of detail on the ‘how’ (i.e., the specific mechanisms and incentives) leaves substantial doubt that the overall objective will be achieved. For example, what are the financial and other incentives that will lead people and institutions to engage in non-polluting or otherwise less harmful activities?</p> <p>Assumptions and drivers are poorly articulated. “Maximising ecosystem status and services...” may be considered a motivation of the project (or of certain actors), but how is it a driver of either current trends or shifts in behavior of key actors?</p> <p>Barriers (e.g. insufficient guidance) appear selected to justify the intervention rather than ground the analysis of responses needed.</p>

	<p>Risk analysis is unconvincing with regards to mitigation measures. For example, “lack of support from private sector or civil society” would seem to be a very substantial risk, given the need to shift behaviors to affect ecosystem threats and status. Responses indicated suggest a lack of ambition to address the root causes of current trends.</p>	
<p><b>Part I: Project Information</b>  <b>B. Indicative Project Description Summary</b></p>	<p><b>What STAP looks for</b></p>	<p><b>Response</b></p>
<p>Project Objective</p>	<p>Is the objective clearly defined, and consistently related to the problem diagnosis?</p>	<p>Yes. The project objective is “Enhancing Marine and Coastal Protected Area national and regional management and adoption of Blue Economy approaches in the Black Sea to support long-term sustainable livelihoods derived from ecosystem services.”</p> <p>While the problems are well articulated in terms of impacts of overfishing, pollution, invasive species, etc. a significant shortcoming is that the PIF does not describe specifically how it will support ‘long-term sustainable livelihoods’ despite this being part of the overall project objective.</p> <p>The assumption is that increased coordination and information and updating of Blue Economy approaches (which are not defined) including training on the EBM approach, will lead to enhanced livelihoods from ecosystem services. Lack of detail on the ‘how’ (i.e., the specific mechanisms and incentives) leaves substantial doubt that the overall objective will be achieved.</p>
<p>Project components</p>	<p>A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project’s objectives?</p>	<p>Planned activities include mapping of priority ecosystems, national blue economy strategies, updated information for the BSIS, updated TDA-SAP, improved coordination, etc. All of these activities contribute to the overall objective of</p>

		cooperation between Black Sea states though it is less clear how specifically they will lead to adoption of measures that reduce pressure on the marine and coastal ecosystem and support livelihoods, as indicated in the objective.
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>	<p>Main outcomes are reduced threats to coastal and marine ecosystems and improved livelihoods through EBM, strengthened political and legal commitments, improved regional coordination and information. In this case it seems that the second and third components should contribute to the first.</p> <p>Adaptation benefits are not specified though implied as part of EBM approach.</p>
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	In theory, the TDA-SAP process resulting in increased knowledge, cooperation and information sharing will result in GEBs – in this case, improved environmental quality of the Black Sea marine and coastal conditions through incorporation of the EBM approach.
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>	<p>There are many outputs associated with this project. One source of confusion is mention of Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) though mapping seems to be confined to priority ecosystem sites. How does EBM relate to the MSP? This is not entirely clear.</p> <p>Fundamentally absent is information on how specifically people and sectors will benefit from activities under the umbrella of EBM (ecosystem based management) which is the centerpiece of this project. What are the financial and other incentives that will lead people and institutions to engage in non-polluting or otherwise less harmful activities?</p>
<b>Part II: Project justification</b>	A simple narrative explaining the project's logic, i.e. a theory of change.	
<b>1. Project description.</b> <b>Briefly describe:</b> 1) the global environmental and/or adaptation problems,	Is the problem statement well-defined?	Yes. The project includes extensive information about the threats facing the Black Sea as well as impacts on the environment and key sectors.

root causes and barriers that need to be addressed (systems description)		
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	<p>In the TOC and barriers section, the barriers focus on lack of national capacity, insufficient regional guidance and information and inadequate regional coordination.</p> <p>These may all be valid; however less clear are the specific barriers standing in the way of reducing overfishing, pollution, wastewater discharge, etc. and how specifically they will be overcome through regional cooperation. Presumably, the MSP and EBM and TDA SAP will be more detailed and provide information at the country level. However, more information on general barriers across countries would be helpful. For example, lack of enforcement of fishing quotas? Outdated wastewater technology? Inadequate financial incentives for the tourism sector to discourage industrial waste? Role of local people living in coastal areas?</p>
	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?	Significant detail is provided on the history of Black Sea programs, protocols, strategies, directives, etc.
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits?	Only in terms of baseline projects and activities.
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	Yes, with regards to institutional context. Less so with regard to data on ecosystem status and trends.
	For multiple focal area projects:	N/A

	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?	<p>The TOC is summarized in Figure 2. Assumptions and drivers are poorly articulated. “Maximising ecosystem status and services...” may be considered a motivation of the project (or of certain actors), but how is it a driver of either current trends or shifts in behavior of key actors?</p> <p>Barriers (e.g. insufficient guidance) appear selected to justify the intervention rather than ground the analysis of responses needed.</p>
	What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?	It is not clear how mapping priority sites and updating SAPs and improving coordination and information will necessarily result in reduced threats to coastal and marine ecosystems and improved livelihoods. Many assumptions are either excluded or taken for granted. The underlying assumption is that the SAP will result in improved ecosystem status; however, there is no discussion of how the previous SAP has fared in this regard or what were the lessons learned.
	What is the set of linked activities, outputs, and outcomes to address the project’s objectives?	
	Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions?	Underlying assumptions need to be better defined as well as causal pathways within the TOC.
	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, not explicitly.

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?	If EBM approaches are implemented, in theory they would result in GEBs.
	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?	Plausible but not compelling.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits explicitly defined?	Yes – as per IW Core Indicators
	Are indicators, or methodologies, provided to demonstrate how the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits will be measured and monitored during project implementation?	Indicators to be developed as part of the project (Output 2.1.2)
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project’s resilience to climate change?	EBM incorporates resilience thinking, though this could be better articulated in the PIF.
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?	No. Statement on innovation is exceptionally weak, including “updating of [the 2009] SAP.”
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	No.
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	The 30-year history of coordination in the Black Sea suggests an incremental approach, which this project builds on. Trends indicate progress is inadequate, in which case transformational change is needed.

<p><b>1b. Project Map and Coordinates.</b> Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.</p>		<p>A map is provided which includes lat/long coordinates. A satellite image and/or land cover land use map would be extremely useful.</p>
<p><b>2. Stakeholders.</b> 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 majority of stakeholders are from national governments and institutions. If the objective is to develop an MSP, this will necessitate working with the private sector (including tourism, which is not addressed).</p> <p>The grouping of “Private sector, projects, inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations” as one category suggests poor attention to differentiation of stakeholder roles.</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>See above.</p>
<p><b>3. Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment.</b> 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>Reference made to recent studies and analyses to be integrated in proposed Gender Equality Action Plan.</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>Do gender considerations hinder full participation of an important stakeholder group (or groups)? If so, how will these obstacles be addressed?</p>	<p>Not yet identified.</p>
<p><b>5. Risks.</b> 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? For climate risk, and climate resilience measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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?</li> <li>• Has the sensitivity to climate change, and its impacts, been assessed?</li> <li>• Have resilience practices and measures to address projected climate risks and impacts been considered? How will these be dealt with?</li> <li>• What technical and institutional capacity, and information, will be needed to address</li> </ul>	<p>Risk analysis is unconvincing with regards to mitigation measures. For example, "lack of support from private sector or civil society" would seem to be a very substantial risk, given the need to shift behaviors to affect ecosystem threats and status. If viewed merely from the lens of risks to achieving interstate agreement to complete the TDA-SAP, it is perhaps low risk as stated.</p> <p>A separate climate risk screening is provided. Though insightful – particularly in terms of past warming trends and likely general impacts, it lacks detail, including on a range of possible scenarios. Approaches to addressing climate change are generalized from other areas. However, research gaps are identified in the CRS and the future TDA-SAP should address these shortcomings according</p>

	climate risks and resilience enhancement measures?	to the PIF using the best practices available through IW:LEARN.
<b>6. Coordination.</b> 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?	There have been numerous relevant GEF and non-GEF projects, programs and initiatives in the Black Sea. Project proponents detail these projects and their history and the relationship with this proposed project is clear.
	Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?	No. Despite the listing of these prior and ongoing projects, no attempt is made to describe lessons learned and how these lessons will inform this project's formulation
	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?	There are many mechanisms. The BSC PS seems to be the main mechanism to facilitate the exchange of information.
<b>8. Knowledge management.</b> 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?	Component 3 of the project will implement an IW:LEARN website and develop a communication and knowledge management strategy during PPG phase.  The PIF states that the project "will benefit from the many lessons and experiences derived from earlier regional projects" – this is good and it would be helpful to include some of those in the PIF to indicate that project proponents have considered lesson learned to inform this effort.
	What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?	Unconvincing and generic. "Information will be collected as relevant to the different needs of the various private sector partners... Civil society will be provided with information to inform communities..."

Notes

STAP advisory response	Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed
1. <b>Concur</b>	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 <b><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></b>
2. <b>Minor issues to be considered during project design</b>	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><b>3. Major issues to be considered during project design</b></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>