

STAP SCREENING TEMPLATE

GEF ID	11702
Project title	Resilience Enhancement through Adaptation in the Pacific (REAP)
Date of screen	25 November 2024
STAP Panel Member	Jon Barnett
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1. Summary of STAP's views of the project

The concept and underlying case for this project has considerable merit as it responds to country needs.

The project proposal that was reviewed by STAP presents some positive aspects as it provides an adequate description of the global environmental problems that the project will address and is based on consultations at the country level. The overall concept is also broadly aligned with GEF-8 and SCCF objectives.

However, STAP identified a number of aspects that are not well communicated, which in turn create many areas of ambiguity that make it difficult to assess the potential effectiveness of the proposed activities and the strength of the causal links between these, the outputs and the outcomes.

Following its initial screening of this project, STAP has met with staff from GEFSEC and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to discuss the proposal. Based on the outcome of this discussion, STAP now understands that this is for a program of activities, which are yet to be clearly identified, and that these activities are to extend existing ADB investments, which are all yet to be identified. STAP also understands that the development of a full program will entail more detailed strategies for each country, each with a clear objective, analysis of context, and a more detailed theory of change.

STAP supports this course of action and has agreed with the project proponents that the proposal will require significant revisions during PPG phase. These include providing a much clearer explanation of the project's sense of purpose, and a better articulated and clearer theory of change for the overall program, as well as theory of change for each country child projects. The information on the child projects, which was provided separately in an annex, provides some context on understanding of the specific country and site contexts, but this information will also need to be better integrated into the main elements of the final proposal (especially the theory of change) and woven into its overall narrative. The revision should provide a clearer framework of how the child projects come together to form a program in which "the whole is greater than the sum of the parts."

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
 - Minor - STAP has identified some scientific and technical points to be addressed in project design
- X **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.

The project has no clearly defined **objective** and is rather a package of proposed activities across several sectors in several countries, which have their own merits, but lack an overall justification and are underpinned by a weak theory of change.

In the **project rationale** section, the proposal provides an adequate -if very broad- description of all climate change problems in SIDS and the three countries. However, it is not easy to see a clear or direct line of logic (i.e. causal links) between specific problems and this project's proposed solutions. For example, are the "*some atolls inhabited by 40,000 people in Micronesia*" (p. 11), the same atolls the project is targeting? And, to give another example, what is the problem with flooding and early warning systems in the Rewa catchment, and how will the project add to the SPC Rewa Flood Forecasting and Warning System, and more recently rainfall stations, water level stations, and warning posts funded by the Government of Korea?

The proposal's use of **climate data and scenarios** is adequate, as is its reference to the sources of information for these. It's reference to future sea-level conditions would benefit from specifying which of the IPCC scenarios leads to that outcome. It is otherwise **not well-grounded in the state of knowledge** and **policy context** about problems and priorities in either country, about which there is existing information, including in successive National Communications for each country, INDC's, and the Fiji National Adaptation Plan. Furthermore, the information provided in the proposal and the annex does not analyze the non-climate drivers of vulnerability in any of the three countries and study locations.

There are many more regional and national initiatives than those listed on pages 31-33, and some sense of the means of **coordination** with these, and with the ADB initiatives it seeks to supplement would be very helpful. Without this the project risks adding to the already significant problem of duplication, redundancy, and project failure and fatigue.

The **scenarios of future outcomes** (i.e. with and without the project's implementation) are not sufficiently developed, therefore its potential benefits are not well justified. As a result, it is also unclear how this project relates and adds value to the ADB programs it proposes to augment.

The project seeks to be **transformative**, but it is unclear how: to make this claim the proposal needs to define the business-as-usual case recognizing existing activities from other policies and projects, and then explain how this project will affect a radical improvement from that BAU case.

The **theory of change (ToC)** is limited to a diagram with no detailed explanation of the causal pathways through which the activities can overcome the barriers and in turn lead to enduring outcomes. In the ToC diagram, there is also seemingly little logic to the connections between barriers, activities and outcomes, for example:

- how does more impact studies and management plans help overcome the barrier of non-implementation of plans and strategies?
- how does 'climate proofing' follow from impact studies and management plans?
- how does increased female participation result from early warning systems?
- is it community-led DRR, or Disaster Early warning for communities? they are not the same thing.
- how does 'design and implementation of climate proofing of infrastructure and resources' improve capacity?
- what are the barriers to increasing private sector providers of adaptation? What is the link between this and the barrier of demographic change?

When looking at the **assumptions** in the TOC 'weak capacity' is a blanket assumption that does not apply at all levels and across all institutions. It would help to be more specific about the adaptation tasks and sectors in countries where capacity is lacking. For example, is this still the case for nature-based solutions in Fiji given the efforts of the Kiwi initiative, which has implemented nine projects in Fiji? The assumption in the TOC that there is coordination among government agencies and NGOs is questionable.

There is little analysis of the intersection between the three sectors the project seems to focus on (i.e. water, coastal infrastructure, and disaster early warning systems), and little attempt to address potential interlinkages and synergies between them. It therefore seems like a series of discrete activities across these sectors applied across unspecified locations in three countries.

The project uses a lot of jargon, which is not always very clear, some notable examples include: “long-term nature-based approach to infrastructure investment”, and “climate proofing of nature-based solutions to climate change”.

From reading the **risk** section, it was also not entirely clear whether there is a risk to the project if the ADB projects REAP proposes to work alongside are not implemented in time.

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

There are several aspects of the proposal that will need to be communicated and further developed during PPG phase, as presented in Sections 1 and 2 above, and specifically:

1. The overall clarity of the narrative, which should be focused on provided a better explanation of logic underpinning the project;
2. The project objective, which needs to be better defined;
3. The analysis of problems in each sector and country, which needs to provide a stronger justification for the proposed activities;
4. A more detailed analysis of the non-climate drivers of vulnerability in the three countries and study locations;
5. A Theory of Change that is more coherent and justified, that links activities in a joined-up way, and that explains how benefits will be enduring;
6. Developing a set of scenarios of future outcomes with and without the project’s implementation, so that its benefits are clear;
7. Providing an inventory of programs and projects related to the proposed sectors and sites for intervention, and explain how the project will fit with these.

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.)