

REVISED STAP SCREENING TEMPLATE, OCTOBER 2022

GEF ID	11269
Project title	Empowering Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) to manage biodiversity data and information as a strategy to conserve their territories, safeguard traditional knowledge, and promote integrated biodiversity management
Date of screen	09 June 2023
STAP Panel Member	John Donaldson
STAP Secretariat	Alessandro Moscuza

1. Summary of STAP's views of the project

This project aims to address an important aspect related to the systematization, access, and application of indigenous knowledge (IK) as a strategy to conserve territories managed by IPLC. The importance of IK and IPLC for achieving GEBs have gained prominence in the academic literature (Fernandez-Llamazares, 2020; Hill et al. 2020; McElwee, 2020; Brondizio et al. 2021) and among policy-makers and international donor agencies.

There is a tension in the proposal between an apparent top down national agenda to capture and document IK versus the bottom up needs of IPLC to document and systematize their own knowledge and thereby support better management of biodiversity and take advantage of economic opportunities. This leads to uncertainty about the proposed pathways for change, raises questions about some of the underlying assumptions, and requires greater clarity on what level of buy-in there is from indigenous communities and what safeguards are in place to ensure that indigenous rights are upheld and that any perception of potentially inappropriate activities by the GEF is avoided. STAP found the proposal recognizes in places the importance of ensuring that IPLCs have the right to decide if and how their IK is accessed and used, and acknowledges the risks of them not agreeing to the project doing so. However, STAP also found that there is no explicit acknowledgement that the proposed interventions are being driven by IPLC needs and sections of the proposal appear to imply that IPLC consensus is a given, without providing any concrete evidence that consensus has been reached through an appropriate consultation and engagement process.

STAP initially concluded that there were several major issues relating to the project. However, STAP has discussed these issues with the two project leads in the GEF Secretariat and they confirmed that the project is indeed responding to needs identified by IPLCs and has been developed with the strong involvement and even leadership from IPLC organizations. Although the proposal does not adequately reflect this situation, and needs improving, there is compelling evidence that the major concerns identified by STAP were being addressed or were already resolved.

STAP's advice and recommendation is that this project should be advanced to the next stage of development, especially as it has the clear potential to be transformational and advance important priorities related to the management of lands by IPLCs and the use of ILK in the target region. STAP and GEF Sec. agreed that the implementing agency should prepare an addendum that addresses all of the issues highlighted in this screening to be submitted before the project receives final CEO approval.

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
- 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.

Project rationale: The project rationale set out a causal logic that improving information on species distributions and associated IK, involving IPLC in regional decision making around the use of biodiversity, and providing access to technologies to manage IK data will result in better management of biodiversity and facilitate sharing of benefits from the use of biodiversity. It is envisaged that the intended outcome will be achieved through a series of activities, including some innovative ideas on the integration of IK and other knowledge systems. In this context, the overall logic is weakened by a lack of clarity about how this need has been identified and therefore whether the intended pathways for change are likely to be effective.

The proposal does not specify whether the need to document, systematize and database IK has been identified as a problem by IPLCs or whether this is seen as a way to strengthen higher level policies relating to the management of indigenous lands. If it is the first, there is likely to be greater buy-in and the project logic makes sense. If it is the latter, then there are likely to be more obstacles and certainly more assumptions about whether the project logic will achieve the desired outcomes. The proposal provided an adequate description of the current situation and background issues affecting the environmental and socio-economic conditions in the target area. The information provided was quite detailed and was supported by a good amount of data, statistics and academic references. The description of issues affecting IPLCs was also accurate and informative.

The description of the barriers was adequate and focused on issues that affect the participation and meaningful engagement of IPLCs in management and decision-making processes related to biodiversity conservation in the target regions of the Amazon and Cerrado biomes also known as the Cerrado-Amazon Transition (TCA). These include lack of access to available technologies, limited capacity in admin management and IT skills and limited access to the necessary training to build capacity and skills in key areas that can enable a higher degree of participation in activities funded by GoB ministries and agencies, as well as other donors.

The description of the baseline of previous policies and interventions was also very adequate and included initiatives funded by UNEP, the Brazilian Ministries of Environment, Science Technology and Innovation and initiatives implemented by research organizations such as the Biodiversity Research Program (PPBio), which is implemented by the National Institute for Research in the Amazon (INPA).

An important element of the project rationale was the commitment to enable IPLCs to choose how and if they want their knowledge, information, and data to be assessed and made publicly available. However, STAP found contradictory elements in the project, for example under output 1.1.1 (*define gender-sensitive strategies for data collection by third parties*), 1.1.2 (*enable data gathering by third parties*), and outcome 3.1 where it is explicitly stated that: "*IPLCs, relevant stakeholders and the general public can access open data and information on biodiversity associated with IPLC culture and knowledge.*"

Project description: the description of the drivers is slightly convoluted and could be simplified. Furthermore it is not entirely clear how they fit in the overall framework of the ToC as they appear (on pg. 17 of the PIF) to be corresponding with the project intervention and activities, which is somewhat confusing (i.e. drivers are usually implied to be external factors that influence project activities and outcomes).

The ToC involves three key assumptions, which are sound in terms of their actual content, although their description is in places a bit convoluted and could be shortened and simplified (i.e. assumption 'b': *outcomes to intermediate state*). The ToC diagram covers all the basics but could be improved in a few places. The ToC comprises three logical pathways, which are meant to be implemented and followed in parallel to achieve the project outcomes and objectives. Pathways 1 and 2 are fine but pathway 3 presents a potentially significant weakness as it states that: "*if the knowledge, data and information collected by this project is duly captured and*

made publicly available in the Brazilian Biodiversity Information System (SiBBR) then huge contribution to promoting traditional knowledge and adequate sharing of benefits from the use of genetic resources will have been made". This does not really describe a pathway and appears to overlook or minimize the risk that IPLCs may not want to share their IK using those means or indeed at all, as was noted on pg. 14 and 16 of the proposal, where it is stated clearly that: "IPLCs may wish to maintain confidentiality on several aspects, or strategically disclose information when appropriate" and that "a commitment to enable IPLCs to choose how and if they want their knowledge, information, and data to be assessed and made publicly available".

The description of the components and related outcomes is for the most part clear and adequate but in some cases presents contradictions between the proposed activities and the project's commitment and principle to respect IPLCs rights, and some components seem to underplay possible limitations. More specifically: component 1 aims to set the conditions for data gathering by third parties, which in itself assumes that the IPLCs participating in this project will give their consensus to have third parties gathering data involving their IK. Similarly, component 3 proposes the integration of IK into the Brazilian Biodiversity Information System (SiBBR) platform, which assumes the predetermined consensus and agreement by the concerned IPLCs. It also assumes that the SiBBR is the most appropriate tool to organize IK data and make it accessible to IPLCs. The description of the components also does not explain how a project focusing on the documentation of IK in a few pilot sites will enable benefit sharing agreements for all appropriate knowledge holders.

There seems to be a real risk that allocating benefits to specific communities based on limited information risks excluding legitimate claims by other groups who have undocumented knowledge of the same species and uses. Some of these inconsistencies are further highlighted in the **risk section** of the proposal, which states clearly that a substantial risk to the project is related to Stakeholder Engagement and more specifically the risk of IPLCs not agreeing to the sharing of relevant data and information. STAP was pleased to see that the risk of IPLCs lack of engagement and participation and/or willingness to share IK is acknowledged and given the necessary importance but STAP does not concur that the proposed mitigating measures are enough to guarantee the success of the project.

The proposal presented a project **stakeholder list** that described the mission/objective of each of the stakeholders included and their proposed roles in the PPG phase. As far as the institutional aspect is concerned (i.e. line ministries, research institutions, universities etc.) this was assessed to be sufficient at this stage of project design and development on condition that further consultation and a stakeholder engagement plan will be developed at PPG stage as mentioned in the proposal. However, STAP also noted the absence of indigenous organizations and groups from the list provided, which further compounds the concerns raised above.

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 recommends the following steps to address the concerns raised above:

1. That the seemingly contradictory statements and provisions around the **access, use and sharing of indigenous knowledge and practices** be addressed and resolved as a matter of priority, it also recommends that the language in output 1.1.1, 1.1.2, and outcome 3.1 be revised to ensure that none of these commit the project to deliver activities, results and/or outcomes that contravene the commitment stated here and the principle of 'pertinence' described on page 13 of this proposal.
2. That the **ToC diagram** be revised as follows: the **assumptions** should be included and plotted against the output to outcome and outcome to intermediate state stages. These should also replace the three brown boxes at the bottom of the diagram, which is not clear what they are. The **drivers** should be re-labeled

as activities and linked more clearly to the outputs. The description of the **project objective** should be shortened.

3. That the project considers additional **assumptions** that are not addressed. For example, the assumption that a focus on a few communities and localities will provide sufficient information to allocate benefits from use of genetic resources without excluding groups who continue to have undocumented IK related to the same species.
4. The proposal includes a definition or description of what is meant by *'open information'* in relation to making IK publicly accessible.
5. The description of the **mitigating measures** related to the potential non-sharing of data and information by IPLCs should be revised and strengthened. Given that the risk of lack of engagement by IPLCs is seen as a real possibility with significant consequences, the mitigating actions should include alternative options for the implementation of activities that would see the participation of IPLCs and guarantee a certain acceptable level of results. This may lead to results that are not optimal but still acceptable.
6. The project **stakeholder list** should be revised to include suitable indigenous organizations and groups. A robust stakeholder engagement plan should also be developed as a matter of priority during the PPG phase. This should explain in detail how IPLCs will be engaged and how the principles described in this proposal (e.g. Free Prior and Informed Consent, Right of self determination, right to determine if and how IK will be accessed and shared/disseminated) will be applied to ensure equitable outcomes.
7. STAP has agreed with the GEF Sec. that the implementing partners for this project should prepare an **addendum** that addresses all of the issues highlighted in this screening to be submitted before the project receives final CEO approval.

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

References:

Brondízio, E.S, Yildiz Aumeeruddy-Thomas, Peter Bates, Joji Carino, Álvaro Fernández-Llamazares, Maurizio Farhan Ferrari, Kathleen Galvin, Victoria Reyes-García, Pam McElwee, Zsolt Molnar, Aibek Samakov, and Uttam Babu Shrestha (2021): Locally Based, Regionally Manifested, and Globally Relevant: Indigenous and Local Knowledge, Values, and Practices for Nature. *Annu. Rev. Environ. Resour.* 2021. 46:16.1–16.29

Fernández-Llamazares, Á., P. K. Virtanen, Game masters and Amazonian Indigenous views on sustainability. *Curr. Opin. Environ. Sustain.* 43, 21–27 (2020).

Hill R, Adem Ç, Alangui WV, Molnár Z, Aumeeruddy-Thomas Y, Bridgewater P, Tengö M, Thaman R, Adou Yao CY, Berkes F and others. (2020) Working with Indigenous, local and scientific knowledge in assessments of nature and nature's linkages with people. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability* 43:8-20. DOI 10.1016/j.cosust.2019.12.006.

McElwee, P, Fernández-Llamazares, Á, Aumeeruddy-Thomas, Y, et al. (2020) Working with Indigenous and local knowledge (ILK) in large-scale ecological assessments: Reviewing the experience of the IPBES Global Assessment. *J Appl Ecol.* 2020; 57: 1666– 1676. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1365-2664.13705>

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.)