

STAP guidelines for screening GEF projects

Part I: Project Information	Response
GEF ID	10696
Project Title	Inclusive conservation of sea turtles and seagrass habitats in the north and north-west of Madagascar
Date of Screening	November 18, 2020
STAP member screener	Rosie Cooney
STAP secretariat screener	Virginia Gorsevski
STAP Overall Assessment and Rating	<p>Minor</p> <p>STAP welcomes the project from UNEP to conserve sea turtles and seagrasses in Madagascar. It is well written and well researched and shows a clear understanding of the scientific and technical issues related to seagrasses and sea turtles in this area.</p> <p>While the overall components are sound and interlinked, several critical aspects remain quite general, with important details to be left to be elaborated on during PPG phase. For example, the main assumption behind the success of this project is “that by equitably engaging communities in conservation activities and establishing frameworks that allow them to sustainably manage marine resources, paired with support to households within these communities to sustainably increase their productivity and incomes through net revenues from the sale of sustainably harvested products and PES schemes, will provide sufficient incentive for those communities to continue to invest in the long-term stewardship of these ecosystems beyond the term of the project.” (p. 28). This is an ideal situation; however, details regarding the ‘targeted incentives’ and the type of ‘sustainable financing mechanisms – possible a PES scheme’ are left to be determined during PPG phase.</p> <p>STAP is pleased to see that gender considerations are mainstreamed throughout the project and also that climate change is discussed explicitly – particularly with respect to its impact on sea turtles and seagrasses. The emphasis on data collection and monitoring is welcome; however, as with the financing and incentives mentioned above, there is a lack of</p>

	<p>detail in terms of what type of data, how it will be collected, shared, stored, etc., including for the marine spatial plan and the potentially innovative ‘near real-time alert system.’ Building capacity around this element (science and technology and data sharing) is important to sustain activities after the project has been completed, including if these data are to be used for monitoring and enforcement.</p> <p>In sum, STAP welcomes this project to conserve sea turtles and seagrasses in a biologically diverse area and encourages project proponents to revisit the theory of change in a way that provides more in-depth analysis of the details and underlying assumptions that underpin the project’s ultimate stated outcome.</p>	
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. Sea turtles and sea grasses are threatened, and this project seeks to conserve them through a variety of activities.
Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project’s objectives?	Yes, though detail is lacking.
Outcomes	A description of the expected short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention. Do the planned outcomes encompass important adaptation benefits?	Yes. The monitoring and conservation of habitats is meant to inform adaptation practices.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	Yes – particularly if seagrass is conserved as it stores carbon.
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?	Yes, though there are many frameworks, plans and details yet to be worked out (i.e. potential PES scheme)
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

need to be addressed (systems description)		
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	Yes, very good with many references.
	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?	Good understanding of past and ongoing projects in the area – mainly focused on GEF and GEF Agencies. Would be good to look at bi-lateral donor activities as well – see for example, https://www.usaid.gov/madagascar/environment The baseline situation is also well understood.
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project’s benefits?	Not clear what the METT baseline score is if these areas are meant to be under improved management.
	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 TOC diagram is presented with explanation. Further enhancements would show how specific activities contribute to each of the outputs and the interactions (including sequence) of various outputs. Do they happen all at once? Do they depend upon each other? What needs to happen before a sustainable financing mechanism is implemented, and

		what if it isn't? Does that change the ultimate outcome or does it matter?
	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?	The mechanism are plausible; however, as previously noted, important details are lacking. It seems unlikely that the project will succeed if local communities don't have sufficient incentive to stop hunting sea turtles, for example. What is the balance between "alternative income generation" and enforcement of fines and penalties?
	Is there a recognition of what adaptations may be required during project implementation to respond to changing conditions in pursuit of the targeted outcomes?	Because few details are known about key aspects of the project (i.e. sustainable financing) there will have to be adaptations along the way. This allows for flexibility but also somewhat risky.
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
	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, in hectares of area under improved management. Also the monitoring system (including the observatory) is promising in terms of collecting data that can be monitored over time (hopefully even after the project has ended).
	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	\$3.3 million / 428,134.00 ha under improved management
	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?	More information is needed on methodologies in general, including climate information, data for marine spatial planning, etc. The creation of an Observatory for monitoring and surveillance is promising.
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project's resilience to climate change?	Maintaining seagrass is the primary activity that will increase resilience in the face of climatic change.
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?	Good project but not innovative. A PES scheme might be innovative, but it is only mentioned as a future possibility. Project "could" generate a market based mechanism to trade carbon credits...
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	No. The underlying assumption is "that by equitably engaging communities in conservation activities and establishing frameworks that allow them to sustainably manage marine resources, paired with support to households within these communities to sustainably increase their productivity and incomes through net revenues from the sale of sustainably harvested products and PES schemes, will provide sufficient incentive for those communities to continue to invest in the long-term stewardship of these ecosystems beyond the term of the project." This is the goal of many GEF projects.
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	Transformational change will be needed to end the dependency of conservation on donor-funded projects and become self-sustaining.
1b. Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.		A map is provided along with lat/long points of the centroids of the LMMAs
2. Stakeholders. Select the stakeholders that have participated in consultations during the	Have all the key relevant stakeholders been identified to cover the complexity of the problem, and project implementation barriers?	Yes

<p>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>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>Defined in table (p. 30)</p>
<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. 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-</p>	<p>Have gender differentiated risks and opportunities been identified, and were preliminary response measures described that would address these differences?</p>	<p>Yes, gender is discussed throughout the PIF and is meant to be mainstreamed following analysis, etc.</p>

making; and/or economic benefits or services. Will the project's results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators? yes/no /td		
	Do gender considerations hinder full participation of an important stakeholder group (or groups)? If so, how will these obstacles be addressed?	Gender mainstreaming plan will be developed.
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	<p>Are the identified risks valid and comprehensive? Are the risks specifically for things outside the project's control?</p> <p>Are there social and environmental risks which could affect the project?</p> <p>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? 	Risks are comprehensive. While there is no CRS included in the project, climate change is described in detail in terms of the risk it poses to sea turtles and seagrass.
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. Good understanding of other ongoing GEF and non GEF projects (with the exception of bilateral aid possibly).
	Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?	Yes
	Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?	Yes
	How have these lessons informed the project's formulation?	Yes
	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
8. Knowledge management. Outline the	What overall approach will be taken, and what knowledge management indicators and metrics will be used?	Knowledge management is not a separate component, as is often the case with GEF

<p>“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.</p>		<p>projects. Rather, it is integrated into the various components (i.e. Output 1.4)</p>
	<p>What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?</p>	<p>Standard.</p>

Notes

STAP advisory response	Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed
<p>1. Concur</p>	<p>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.</p>
	<p>* 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></p>
<p>2. Minor issues to be considered during project design</p>	<p>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:</p>
	<p>(i) Open a dialogue with STAP regarding the technical and/or scientific issues raised;</p>
	<p>(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.</p>
	<p>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>

<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>