REVISED STAP SCREENING TEMPLATE, OCTOBER 2022

GEF ID	11423
Project title	Enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity to meet India's commitment to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework targets by 2030
Date of screen	28 May 2024
STAP Panel Member	John Donaldson
STAP Secretariat	Alessandro Moscuzza

1. **Summary of STAP's views of the project**

This is a relatively strong project which proposes a credible way for India to achieve the protection of 30% of landscapes and seascapes, one of the most ambitious targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework. It is supported by a consideration of future narratives and provides a clear rationale for achieving this target through other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) and contributions from private landowners and communities. Other strengths comprise a solid theory of change (ToC) that outlines logical pathways to achieve the target and includes innovations in institutional support and the development of suitable knowledge management architecture to support OECMs and ensure they effectively deliver global environmental benefits.

STAP has identified several issues for further consideration during the next stage of project development, such as better alignment between Outcome 2 and Output 2.3. and the consistent use of terminology relating to nature-positive activities, nature based solutions and OECMS (see Sections 2 & 3).

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

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 description** gives a good explanation of the protected area system in India and what is required to achieve an increase from 27% to 30% of Indian landscapes and seascapes. This particular intervention is designed to facilitate additional contributions from private and community-based conservation areas together with other effective area based conservation measures (OECMS).

It is encouraging to see the consideration of three **future narratives**. The background to these narratives identifies several uncertainties that can affect the establishment and effectiveness of protected areas and the motivation for specific interventions is strengthened through this consideration of different possible futures. The baseline situation is also well described and there appears to be a good understanding of the barriers and enablers affecting the expansion of OECMs.

The **project's objectives** are clear and well formulated and the **theory of change (ToC)** identifies the levers of change that are required to accelerate the adoption of additional PAs, particularly the alternative modalities required for OECMs. The narrative description and diagram provide a good understanding of the overall logic and the pathways for achieving the objectives.

The **project components** are generally clearly described and aligned with the objectives. STAP has identified the following areas where more consistent use of terminology or clarity on actual outcomes would strengthen the project.

- In Fig. 1 describing the ToC, one of the immediate impacts is that people relying on natural resources will receive sustainable benefits, increased food security and reliability. However, none of outputs under any of the components appear to be designed to achieve this impact at an appropriate scale. The description of Output 2.3. is mostly about identifying funders, scoping and support but relatively little actual investment that will achieve sustainable benefits or increase food security. The output or outcome should be revised so that there is consistency between them.
- The project uses terms such as nature-friendly activities, nature-based-solutions and OECMs in such a way that they seem interchangeable. While these activities may share common features, they do not technically have the same meaning and it is therefore not always clear what is being intended. For example, one indicator under Component 4 states that at least 20 good practices of nature-based solutions will be codified whereas the outcomes and description refer to OECMs. The project should ensure that the correct terminology is used to describe particular activities and outcomes so that everyone is clear on what is expected.
- Under Component 4, dealing with **knowledge management**, the emphasis is on developing a suitable information architecture for reporting on the effectiveness of conservation outcomes (Output 4.3). This is very important but seems to only partially support the other aspects of the project, most notably Outputs 4.1 and 4.2 which make a strong case for the importance of data and messaging relating to co-benefits from OECMs (e.g. to Sustainable Development Goals and Nationally Determined Contributions). The proposed information architecture should be designed to support all the outputs and outcomes.

The project identifies a range of **stakeholders**, which seems to include the main groups who need to participate in the development and execution of the project, with a spread of government agencies, IP and LC representatives, NGOs, CBOs and private sector. There is no mention of any specific engagement during the development of the proposal but the importance of stakeholder engagement is acknowledged under several components and the relevant actors are included in the table for future engagement. The project recognises the need for a cross sectoral approach and identifies the lack of policy coherence across sectors as one of the barriers to achieving the 30x30 target. As a result, the enabling framework under Component 1 is designed to create a more coherent policy environment to support OECMs.

While OECMs are not new, designing appropriate policies, developing institutional capacities and codifying knowledge to support them are all innovations that can contribute to the expansion of protected areas and achievement of 30x30 targets both in India and globally.

The project provides a reasonable preliminary outline of **risks** but without a full assessment of risks or mitigation measures. Some of the risks are assessed as substantial and the project will need to demonstrate how the residual risks can be decreased through effective design and implementation.

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

Suggestions for consideration during further project development are as follows.
1. Ensure that Output 2.3. is aligned with the higher level outcomes if the project intends to achieve a material improvement in the benefits to communities who rely on the use of natural resources.
2. Review the use of the terms 'nature-friendly practices', 'nature-based solutions' and OECMs to ensure that they are used appropriately and consistently and so that the proposed activity is not ambiguous.

3. Ensure that Component 4 on knowledge management supports all components and particularly Outputs 4.1. and 4.2.
4. Ensure that the stakeholder engagement plan and the risk section are fully developed.

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.