

### STAP guidelines for screening GEF projects

<b>Part I: Project Information</b>	<b>Response</b>	
<b>GEF ID</b>	10961	
<b>Project Title</b>	Accelerating investment in nature-based solutions (NBS) to help address climate adaptation in Least Developed Countries (LDCs)	
<b>Date of Screening</b>	4 June 2022	
<b>STAP member screener</b>	Ed Carr	
<b>STAP secretariat screener</b>	Virginia Gorsevski	
<b>STAP Overall Assessment and Rating</b>	<p><b>Minor.</b></p> <p>STAP acknowledges the project “Accelerating investment in nature-based solutions (NBS) to help address climate adaptation in Least Developed Countries (LDCs).” STAP welcomes the effort to promote NbS for adaptation across LDCs.</p> <p>Given the global and general nature of this project, it is difficult to offer specific comments at country or project level.</p> <p>Overall, however, STAP notes that this project can contribute to overcoming the barriers to adopting NbS – mainly lack of finance – and can also contribute to the growing knowledge base on NbS, including building a business case – to encourage further uptake and scaling.</p> <p>For this reason, knowledge management and learning will be essential – not only for this project but for the broader community of practitioners. There is broad recognition of the challenges associated with KML related to NbS and the concept note offers several options for addressing this, including the use of existing platforms, rather than duplicating them.</p>	
<b>Part I: Project Information</b>	<b>What STAP looks for</b>	<b>Response</b>

<b>B. Indicative Project Description Summary</b>		
Project Objective	Is the objective clearly defined, and consistently related to the problem diagnosis?	Yes – though at a very high level. Actual project activities will become more tailored and specific to address their contexts.
Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project's objectives?	Yes.
Outcomes	A description of the expected short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention.  Do the planned outcomes encompass important adaptation benefits?	Yes.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	Yes.
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.
<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, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed (systems description)	Is the problem statement well-defined?	The problem statement is very broad, reflecting the goal of the project to cover all LDCs. This broad goal makes enumerating the specific problems faced in different countries and regions impractical, but also creates the risk of an overgeneralized problem statement that overlooks national and regional differences, as well as opportunities that might arise.
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	They are well-described, but the document includes no references for these barriers. While these are general barriers, it is not clear how these would have local manifestations. STAP particularly appreciates the note that NbS tend to be implemented through an ecological restoration approach, which places limits on the benefits to people from such actions.

	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?	No. There is no real measured baseline, and even the narrative baseline is very vague. STAP does not doubt the need for this project, or the fact it might deliver adaptation benefits, but measuring those benefits and justifying the additionality of this project is very difficult.
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits?	No.
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	No.
	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?	The project proposes causal intervention pathways through improved capacity, policies, knowledge and investment to achieve greater adoption of NBS by LDCs and the realization of simultaneous impact for climate adaptation and global environmental benefits.
	What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?	See below
	What is the set of linked activities, outputs, and outcomes to address the project's objectives?	The project has only proposed indicative outputs at this point under its pillars. This makes this aspect of the PIF challenging to evaluate. The indicative outputs and outcomes seem reasonable.

		<p>Pillar 1 – Building a business case for NBS investment</p> <p>Pillar 2 – Technical assistance and capacity building for NBS programming</p> <p>Pillar 3 – Coordination, knowledge exchange, outreach and M&amp;E.</p>
	Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions?	The mechanisms of change, while only provisional because of the provisional nature of the activities, seem plausible. There is a well-defined set of seven assumptions in the theory of change. All seem reasonable and testable. STAP notes that assumption A4 may not hold up, as the barriers to the adoption of adaptation and other environmental interventions can emerge at the local level and will not be addressed through technical support. These issues can only be addressed through context-sensitive design and engagement.
	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, but this project is generally focused on providing tools to address the need for NbS, not implementing specific NbS that could be affected by climate change.
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?	n/a
	LDCF/SCCF: will the proposed incremental activities lead to adaptation which reduces vulnerability, builds adaptive capacity, and increases resilience to climate change?	It seems likely the project will deliver adaptation benefits. The scale of those benefits and their character is very uncertain.
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?	Yes.
	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?	There are no real baseline indicators at this time, though the PIF has proposed project-end indicators that should allow for the measurement of impact if a baseline is established.
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project's resilience to climate change?	There is no discussion of this in the PIF, but this is largely a capacity-building project and therefore its activities are not as vulnerable to climate change as one implementing interventions on the ground.
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?	Nature based solutions, though perhaps more rare than grey or other infrastructure, are not necessarily more innovative. There is potential for innovation in financing and other areas; however, until the specific projects are developed in LDCs it is not possible to comment on this.
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	The project itself is essentially about scaling up nature-based solutions globally.
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	Widespread adoption of NbS has the potential to be transformative and this project can offer an important contribution.
<b>1b.</b> Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.		The project map identifies the LDCs.
<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	Have all the key relevant stakeholders been identified to cover the complexity of the problem, and project implementation barriers?	There is a long list of stakeholders and their roles laid out on pages 12-20 of the PIF. This list appears appropriate.  STAP notes that while this project sees local communities as indirect beneficiaries of the project, the ultimate impact of NbS will 1) rely heavily on local communities and 2) be felt most directly by these communities. STAP suggests that these stakeholders are central to project success and should be engaged as such.

how stakeholders, including civil society and indigenous peoples, will be engaged in the project preparation, and their respective roles and means of engagement.		
	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?	The long list of stakeholders enumerates roles.
<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 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-making; and/or economic benefits or services. Will the project's results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators? yes/no/tbd	Have gender differentiated risks and opportunities been identified, and were preliminary response measures described that would address these differences?	Yes, they have. These are quite general but reflect the very broad scope of the project. STAP appreciates that the project, by way of preliminary responses, "will target the three critical gender gaps identified by the GEF Guidance to Advance Gender Equality in GEF Projects and Programs: unequal access to and control over natural resources; unbalanced participation and decision-making in environmental planning and governance; uneven access to socio- economic benefits and services." Further, the project will develop a gender mainstreaming strategy.

	Do gender considerations hinder full participation of an important stakeholder group (or groups)? If so, how will these obstacles be addressed?	See above – there are no specific considerations described in the project document but the project seems prepared to identify and address them through a gender analysis
<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>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?</p> <p>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 climate risks and resilience enhancement measures?</li> </ul>	<p>There are a wide range of risks listed. As the project is proposing preliminary actions and activities, it is difficult to assess if these are comprehensive. STAP notes there is no mention of the risk of low uptake of NbS undermining overall project goals. Further, STAP notes that there is no assessment of likelihood or importance of these risks.</p> <p>The project document makes no reference to climate risk to the project. This may be fine in this case, as the project is about building capacity and creating an enabling environment for specific implementation actions, but is not helpful in terms of implementing interventions on the ground. A climate risk assessment should be carried out for individual projects.</p>
<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?	The document refers to a wide number of resources and actors. Many of these are internal to the World Bank, but others extend beyond the Bank. These are described in general terms.
	Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?	No. There is little specific mention of previous projects and lessons learned. There is a general reference to learning from ongoing efforts to promote NbS.
	Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?	No.
	How have these lessons informed the project's formulation?	Unclear.
	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?	Unclear.
<b>8. Knowledge management.</b> Outline the "Knowledge Management	What overall approach will be taken, and what knowledge management indicators and metrics will be used?	KM will be developed under one of the project pillars, with a strategy to be developed in the PPG stage.

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 plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?	The project “will put in place knowledge sharing mechanisms to support effective networking and exchange among LDCs on the use of NBS for climate adaptation. It will use a range of measures (e.g. website/resources library, newsletters, webinars, technical knowledge exchange events, high-level sessions) to disseminate project materials, and to share experiences in NBS implementation, broadening the knowledge base to close gaps that relate to LDC settings.” STAP appreciates that the project will try to use existing platforms, rather than duplicating them, to ensure that project efforts build on those from other projects.



## Notes

STAP advisory response	Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed
<b>1. 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>
<b>2. 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.

<b>3. Major issues to be considered during project design</b>	<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>