

## REVISED STAP SCREENING TEMPLATE, OCTOBER 2022

GEF ID	11408
Project title	Integrated Conservation and Sustainable Development in Socotra Archipelago and Aden Wetlands, Yemen
Date of screen	22 May 2024
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### 1. Summary of STAP's views of the project

This is reasonably sound proposal that aims to tackle several urgent needs for the conservation and sustainable management of ecologically significant biodiversity in Yemen. It is based on an adequate understanding of the problems and the underlying concept is appropriate to address these problems.

The strengths include a good project summary, an honest appraisal of the political and security challenges, the identification of critical assumptions at least at a broad level, and a concise set of objective. The proposed interventions are designed to strengthen institutions and capacity as a buffer against political uncertainty; STAP determined that these will inevitably involve a higher level of operational risk but can also generate the necessary positive impact in terms of Global Environmental Benefits (GEBs) and socioeconomic cobenefits.

STAP's assessment identified several issues that should be clarified or strengthened during the next phase of project development. Recommended actions included: developing a more coherent rationale, where possible providing greater evidence to support analyses, refining the assumptions underpinning the theory of change, providing additional clarity on several components, and providing more detail on stakeholder engagement, gender issues and risks.

*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.

The proposal presents a reasonable argument for funding work in support of improved conservation and sustainable management in two areas of Yemen (i.e. the Aden wetlands and the Socotra Archipelago), which are currently not adequately protected and face numerous threats. The **project summary** provided a broad overview of the needs that the project is proposing to satisfy and the main areas of intervention but did not provide any indication as to whether the project is intended to be transformative.

The **project rationale** provides several facts and background information required and expected but is poorly written, which in several places confuses the narrative and lacks enough clarity to explain the issues that need addressing.

The description of the **barriers** covers all the main aspects that were identified elsewhere in the proposal. The analysis of underlying issues also reflect the reality of the context/situation in Yemen. It was also good to see the description of how various components will address different barriers.

The **project objective** was concise and clear. The description of social and gender-related issues was not specific enough and was limited with reference to generic stereotypes about roles and activities covered by men and women in Yemeni society, which could be applied to any number of countries across different continents.

The project **intervention logic** is adequate and presents a reasonable set of proposed objectives but is based on thin evidence that is also somewhat outdated (i.e. only one source was quoted, dating back to 2003).

The project's **Theory of Change (ToC)** provides a reasonable explanation of the logical pathways to impact that the project is proposing to follow. The ToC diagram covers the expected elements. The proposal identifies critical assumptions although some are quite generalized (e.g. assumption A and B). These critical assumptions will need further refining and the proponents will need to determine how to test some of them during the next phase of project development.

The description of the **project components** varied in the level of detail and information it provided:

- **Component 1** did not include a clear set of outputs or an explanation of how they will be achieved.
- **Component 2** provided a much more comprehensive list and detailed description of outputs, which provided a clearer idea of what the project will do and how. Nevertheless, STAP noted that it includes many substantive activities (ecosystem assessment and valuation, spatial planning, restoration, improved agricultural production, protected area management plans, and alternative livelihoods), which could all be projects in their own right. It is therefore necessary to define the scope of each of these activities and to ensure they are adequately resourced to deliver the necessary outputs.
- **Component 3** was very brief and provided only a few overly generic details of what outputs it will deliver (e.g. gender sensitive knowledge products developed), or how they will be achieved (e.g. Knowledge Management System developed and in operation). There is a misalignment between the outputs and outcome for Outcome 3.1 where the outcome only mentions increased awareness whereas the outputs focus on capacity building and knowledge management systems. This component also listed an indicator (i.e. core indicator 11), which does not match the scope of the component, and provided no explanation of how the numerical target of 5000 people benefiting from GEF-financed investments was arrived at.

The proposal provided a broad list of proposed **stakeholders** grouped by category, which included a reasonable description of how different stakeholder groups will participate in or interact with the project.

The **gender analysis** section was very brief, generic and simplistic.

The **risk** section does not provide any idea or indication of any potential measures that project is planning to apply to minimize and mitigate any of the risks identified.

*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 identified a number of areas that should be revised and/or improved. The following recommendations suggest a number of remedial actions:

1. The project rationale section should be revised to ensure a consistent level of clarity throughout. The text should also be revised to ensure that all information provided is accurate and factual (i.e. based on hard data and evidence). It would also be advisable to provide sub-headers for this section, which at

the moment transitions from global issues to project structure and governance, barriers and stakeholders without any clear demarcations.

2. The analysis underpinning the project intervention logic section should be revised to ensure it is based on recent evidence from reputable sources.
3. The description of the assumptions should be refined to identify critical issues that can affect project delivery if the assumptions do not hold true. They should also be connected to the potential risks, since all of the issues identified in the assumptions pose risks to the implementation of project activities. The proponents should aim to test some of the assumptions during further project development or include forms of testing in the design of the project.
4. The description for component 1 should include a clearer set of outputs explaining what activities will be implemented and what outputs will be achieved.
5. Component 2 should include a clearer description of the scope of all the activities and outputs with an assessment of what is achievable to ensure these activities are adequately resourced.
6. Under component 2, the description for output 2.1.5 should provide a more detailed explanation of what is intended by “gender-based solutions”.
7. Outcome 2.2. should be phrased as an outcome not an objective.
8. The description for output 2.2.6 should provide a clearer explanation of what is intended by “up-scaling lessons learned” and how this will be accomplished.
9. Under component 3, the description of outputs should be revised and expanded to provide more details about what the project will deliver and how.
10. Under output 3.1, core indicator 11 should be revised to match the scope of the component and the output it refers to, and to indicate how the proposed target of 5000 people benefiting from GEF-financed investments was calculated.
11. The gender analysis section should be revised to ensure it provides a more accurate and detailed description of the issues and challenges affecting women and other socially vulnerable groups (especially for issues such as conflict) in Yemeni society and how these may affect the implementation of project activities. The proposal should also aim to include a gender action plan or similar section that explains how the project will aim to address any issues identified, describing proposed measures, activities and outputs.
12. The risk section should be revised to include a set of proposed measures to mitigate and/or minimize the risks that have been identified.

*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.*

#### **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.)