REVISED STAP SCREENING TEMPLATE, OCTOBER 2022

GEF ID	11167
Project title	Restoration of Wetlands and other important Amazonian Ecosystems Capacity-building, innovation, development and technological transfer for ecological restoration and climate change mitigation
Date of screen	18 January 2024
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1. Summary of STAP's views of the project

STAP assessment of this project proposal concluded that it provided a well-reasoned set of arguments to justify the required investment of resources, which were supported by adequate evidence. The proposal included a number of good elements (e.g. the overall structure of the proposal, the underlying argument to justify the investment of resources associated with it, the description of the components and the theory of change) but also several areas that will need further revision and attention during the next stage of project development (e.g. the use of terminology around co-benefits, the description of baseline initiatives, and the risk identification and management framework). Further details about all these areas have been provided in the section immediately below, which is followed by several recommendations to address the key issues and concerns that were identified. STAP's assessment concluded that this proposal has merit but includes several scientific and technical points that should be addressed during the Project Preparation Grant (PPG) phase.

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 **project summary** provides an adequate description of the underlying rationale and the proposed activities.

The project rationale followed a pre-determined structure, which involved describing each type of ecosystem where the project will be operating, and then describing the "environmental problems" affecting it. STAP found this approach to be adequate, if slightly repetitive, but found that the analysis of any socio-economic aspects was quite light.

The proposal provided a good description of the **barriers** the project will need to address to be successful. A strong point was the way this section was organized using different categories of barriers (i.e. scientific and technological, human resources and economic). However, STAP also noted a lack of proportionality between the three categories, with the scientific and technological being considerably more detailed than the other two. When dealing with restoration activities, socio-economic and human resources issues (including capacity) are crucial to the success of any intervention. This is specifically so in the geographical context of the Amazon Forest, where socio-economic factors (e.g. Unchecked Agricultural Expansion · Illegal and Unmitigated Gold Mining · Illegal

Logging ; Poor-Planning, weak enforcement of laws and regulations and lack of policy coherence) are key drivers of deforestation, biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation.

The project **stakeholders** section covered the standard categories (e.g. Govt. Institutions, civil society, private sector) but STAP was pleased to see the inclusion of IPLCs as a separate self-standing category. The description provided was adequate and covered all the main basic requirements. However, given the socio-economic and socio- political contexts of the region, which can be volatile, STAP would have liked to see more analysis of the power dynamics between different categories of stakeholders.

The description of **baseline initiatives** provided a good amount of information about current and pre-existing government initiatives but nothing about international agencies' interventions, private sector investments or civil society initiatives. This was a noticeable blind spot, which should be rectified in the next version of the proposal, as this information should inform the planning of specific project activities and interventions.

STAP noted that the proposal included ample details about planned coordination and cooperation with a number of ongoing GEF projects. STAP considered this information to be fully adequate for the intended purpose.

The logical reasoning underpinning the **theory of change (ToC)** was sound and supported by an adequate amount of evidence. The structure of the ToC was clear, straightforward and built on solid theoretical framework. The various elements of the ToC (e.g. outputs, outcomes and components) were all well aligned and it was possible to identify clear causal pathways linking activities and inputs to outputs, outcomes and impacts, even though these were not described explicitly. The assumptions were, however, too few and simplistic in their formulation.

The identification of **risk** categories was adequate as were the ratings applied to each category. The analysis of risks is relatively superficial, and the mitigation measures are either missing or inadequate.

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

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3. Specific points to be addressed, and suggestions

Based on this assessment, STAP makes the following recommendations:

- The socio-economic aspect of the analysis underpinning the project rationale should be expanded to provide additional details of how the existing environmental problems are affecting socio-economic conditions and vice-versa.
- The description of the barriers should be revised to ensure that the description of human resources and economic barriers provides a sufficient amount of information that is also comparable to the level provided for the scientific and technological barriers. It should also focus specifically on issues arising from socio-economic activities and factors that are prominent drivers of deforestation, biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation in the Amazon region (e.g. Unchecked Agricultural Expansion, Illegal and informal gold mining, Illegal Logging, Poorly-Planned Infrastructure; Lack of appropriate natural resource management and governance, and Lack of Law Enforcement).
- The next iteration of this proposal should include an analysis of the key power dynamics and relationships between different categories of stakeholders. This should aim to focus particularly on interactions and power relationships/dynamics between Govt. Agencies and IPLCs, private land-owners and IPLCs, govt and civil society, and govt. vs private sector.
- The description of baseline initiatives, interventions and investments should cover all relevant initiatives including from international agencies, private sector, civil society, and any other relevant actors, as well as an analysis of how these could be leveraged to enhance project outcomes and results, improve chances of success and deliver longer term durable impacts.

- The assumptions should be revised to ensure they identify the assumptions that underpin the project logic and that could therefore affect the implementation and success of the project if they prove to be untrue.
- During PPG phase, the risk section should be reviewed and the analysis of potential risks expanded with the aim of providing additional details on how these may take place and/or affect the implementation and success of project activities. The revised risk profile should also include proposed mitigation measures for all risk categories.

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

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.)