

## REVISED STAP SCREENING TEMPLATE, OCTOBER 2022

<b>GEF ID</b>	11052
<b>Project title</b>	Conservation of the Atlantic Forest through the sustainable management of cocoa agroforestry landscapes
<b>Date of screen</b>	November 14, 2022
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### 1. Summary of STAP's views of the project

STAP welcomes Brazil's project "Conservation of the Atlantic Forest through the sustainable management of cocoa agroforestry landscapes". The project aims to reduce deforestation and biodiversity loss in the Southern Bahia State.

STAP notes the technical soundness of the project, and encourages FAO and Brazil to continue developing the project with the same rigor. In section 3, STAP suggests specific points to address during the project design to strengthen its technical quality, and ability to generate resilient, and durable, outcomes. In particular, more attention could be paid explicitly to assessing the impacts of future system drivers and ensuring the project as chosen is robust in the face of uncertainty as to how these may play out; and to ensuring that the logic laid out in the theory of change is confident that the impact pathways described are both *necessary* and *sufficient* to achieve the intended outcomes.

STAP rates the project as requiring minor revisions, which are, nonetheless, critical to achieving enduring global environmental outcomes.

*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
- X** 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 problem statement was mostly well-defined, though wordy in places (e.g. details on the 6 biogeographic regions are probably unnecessary to convince the reader of the acknowledged importance of Atlantic Forest). The description elaborated on key issues that are driving degradation of biodiversity and ecosystem services. The inter-relationships between key issues were defined – although further elaboration of the links between key variables, and drivers (i.e. a full blown systems analysis) would be helpful in the full project.

Key variables focused on how policy incoherence can drive degradation (legal policies supporting deforestation of natural vegetation (shrubs and forests) and replaced by other land uses); how out-migration from the project area is impacting (agro)biodiversity related to cocoa production; how ageing farmers are impacting labor shortages for cocoa production, and for carrying out cabruca agroforestry systems that are essential to cocoa productivity (pruning of shrubs to maintain shade at optimal levels). Market prices also were discussed briefly, as well as how cocoa production is under-valued because of low market values (domestically and internationally) for cocoa. Climate change was not sufficiently discussed as a threat, unfortunately.

The proposal would benefit from a more critical analysis of which of these drivers is most important, and of how they may play out in the future – for example, market prices for cocoa, climate change, demographic changes and the role of youth, etc; some of these are probably quite uncertain, regardless of what the project itself does, so there is a need to ensure that the approach of the project will work, which ever future eventuates.

Despite cocoa production being a traditional socio-economic activity in the region, the project describes a lack of interest, or motivation, from farmers to engage in cocoa production. The PIF cites some of the reasons as being lack of access to loans and technology, crop pests, and low market prices for cocoa. These reasons ought to be confirmed during the development of the project, when a more robust stakeholder engagement is carried out, and social-cultural conditions influencing stakeholders’ decisions become known.

The PIF cites recent literature describing trends in deforestation, as well as recent research about the environmental and social (e.g. increased income) benefits of cabruca agroforestry system. This information helps support the project rationale and description.

Section B, Project description, leaps straight to ‘the’ project – would be good to have brief discussion of what options there might be to tackle these issues and why this is selected as the best one.

The PIF outlines the causal connections between the objective, outcomes, and three components. Several assumptions are listed in the theory of change diagram, and described in the PIF. However, it would be good if the assumptions were more context specific, and linked to the outcomes – i.e. how might the assumptions affect the proposed four outcomes? Furthermore, there is a mixture of assumptions – (i) those related to the logic of the project, which are needed to underpin the logic chain, and (ii) assumptions that are due to external factors of the project (e.g. assumption #3 in the diagram – “technologies...good quality plant material are available at affordable prices.”) that may not be as helpful to include until they are explored further and are made more project specific.

Risks affecting the logic chain do not appear in the theory of change – in the diagram, or narrative. The theory of change also does not include narratives of how an uncertain future could unfold, based on an understanding of trends (eg low market prices for cocoa; out-migration of younger population, increased pests and drought risk). The project would benefit by describing simple narratives of plausible futures to help develop outcomes that are robust to climate, and non-climate risks. This suggestion is detailed below.

The PIF provides a preliminary description of how the project will contribute to incrementality (transforming national benefits to GEBs) in the “baseline activities section”. Incrementality is further discussed (i.e. how GEF funding will be used in each component to drive incrementality) in the incremental reasoning section. The PIF also touches on how the project will build on lessons learned from other non-GEF initiatives.

*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**

1. The project suggests that forestry legislation is a major driver of deforestation in privately-owned land, which includes a significant portion of remaining forest fragments. The PIF (section on Alignment with National Priorities, p.35) discusses *aligned* policies, but does not (as specifically requested) identify *non-aligned* policies, and what might be done about them. Are there no relevant incentives for clearing forest, or increased use of possible pollutants such as pesticides? Is there no competition for water or building materials from urban users or industries? Or tourism pressures? Significant drivers of degradation appear

to be driven in part by policy incoherence such as these in some areas of the Atlantic Forest, at least towards Sao Paulo. Hence, STAP recommends that an analysis of synergistic and antagonistic policies be carried out to support component 1. STAP recommends relying on its guidance on policy coherence, which suggests ways to operationalize policy coherence in projects. The paper also lists various tools for implementing policy coherence.

2. When designing the project, develop simple narratives of plausible futures to help ensure the outcomes are resilient to future changes. The PIF mentions several drivers of threat (e.g. outmigration, pests, droughts, low market prices) whose long-term impact, and uncertainty, needs to be considered during the project design. This process will allow for robust interventions to be developed based on the plausible challenges (and opportunities) posed by the priority drivers. Additionally, explore the various interactions between the drivers (including policy incoherence) when the system is analyzed fully and described. Reflect this systems thinking, including plausible futures, in a further developed theory of change. Refer to STAP's simple narratives brief and to STAP's theory of change primer for guidance.
3. Risks that may undermine the project logic and outcomes need to be embedded in the theory of change. For example, the cabruca agroforestry system will probably need to manage for *increasing* drought risk, not just manage the current static level better (as maintaining the overstorey seems to do).
4. As the theory of change is further developed, STAP recommends detailing how gender, and other social structures (cultural norms and values associated with individuals' interests to continue engaging in cocoa production) influence the desired outcomes. The gender section of the PIF, and the theory of change, can usefully unpack how women's *and* men's cultural differences are relevant to the outcomes.
5. In general it is good to state the project premise (p.15), but then this needs unpicking a bit more to determine whether the actions being proposed are likely to be both *necessary* (as is justified) but also *sufficient* (not justified) to fulfill this premise. For example (p.16), is addressing the technical barriers *enough* to incentivize action? And is this robust to market vagaries? (p.17) what *will* ensure a higher than otherwise chance of continued support in government for legal/planning/etc aspects?; (p.18) how to assure that integrated planning toolkit *will* support decision making? If it creates capacities, how to assure that these *will* result in more money? (p.19) how to guarantee markets *will* provide enough incentives to justify extra effort/inputs etc by farmers? (p.20) how to ensure 'proposed improvements to forest code' *will* be implemented? Some of these things are addressed, but the theory of change should be systematic about this.
6. Additionally, the theory of change can usefully help identify measurable indicators of change through the pathways, as well as identify points where the logic might need to be reviewed; the list of issues in the previous paragraph may suggest a series of topics that need to be monitored. This exercise is necessary to underpin the project's intention, or hypothesis, which can be described as: supporting cocoa production, through improved forestry legislation and landscape management, will improve incomes and livelihoods and conservation (i.e. reduced deforestation). Indicators to monitor and assess the desired change also will be helpful for identifying what additional data (besides core indicator data) is needed to support the incremental reasoning of the project.
7. Reflect knowledge and learning (intentions of component 4) in the theory of change. The theory of change can be a powerful tool for monitoring, learning, and adaptive management – including managing for adaptive governance of the project. At present p.20 on KM&L is quite weak, but this may legitimately be extended and made context specific (e.g. what groups to engage in sharing knowledge?) in the next phase of project development. The indicator noted on p.8 for component 4 – “% strategies of communication and KM applied” is extremely weak, vague, and at best an early lead indicator (ie. please consider the question “Does applying these strategies actually achieve outcomes?”).

8. Incrementality – p.22 notes that there has been no previous GEF project here; but this is not a rationale for additionality. *Why* will a GEF project here now do better than all the other work noted?
9. p.31: Risk table – climate change needs to be embedded in the theory of change as a driver, assuming there is significant change expected, probably with uncertainties involved – there is no point choosing a project that is not robust to this change and uncertainty and then trying to fine tune it to deal with a major uncertain driver – this must be designed into the project. Of course there may also be implementation risks from climate, such as drought in a year when the project is encouraging forest planting, etc, and those should be dealt with here. The same probably applies to demographic change – would the project be the same if all youth leave the area as if improving economics meant they stayed? This sort of issue should be designed into the theory of change. By contrast, the risk that key staff might leave during the project would be appropriately dealt with here. In addition:
  - (row 3) Nested political interests seem well managed here.
  - (row 4) – cocoa demand noted – is this robust – do you need to allow for a case where demand for cocoa actually drops? (if not, fine). In terms of scaling, if everyone in the Atlantic Forest successfully took on the outcomes of this project, would that produce enough cocoa to cause a drop in prices, or is the supply from the region too small to affect price elasticity?
  - (row 5) How to ensure high level political support for reducing bureaucracy in the Brazilian Forest Code – or step around it? I would think this is a driver as noted earlier and should be designed into the stakeholder engagement and ownership of the project rather than dealing with it as a post hoc risk.

*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.)