

REVISED STAP SCREENING TEMPLATE, OCTOBER 2022

GEF ID	12055
Project title	Community Access and Urban Services Enhancement Project II (CAUSE II)
Date of screen	14 May 2026
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1. Summary of STAP's views of the project

This proposal is to extend an existing successful World Bank-funded project (CAUSE) to improve the resilience of urban areas in the Solomon Islands. This leads to a well-informed, detailed proposal with scientific and technical merit.

As a whole, the proposal is well developed and presents a clear rationale for additional LDCF financing. The proposal is particularly strong in explaining gender-differentiated vulnerability and in showing how the project builds on the successful CAUSE I model. The additionality of the LDCF financing is also clearly articulated, although it could be strengthened by giving greater prominence to the specific adaptation benefits expected from the additional LDCF financing.

The Theory of Change is generally coherent and well-structured. However, the proposal would benefit from clearer treatment of barriers, enabling conditions, and assumptions affecting the project's sustainability and outcomes. It should also develop plausible future storylines to clarify the project's adaptation benefits against evolving demographic, climatic, political, and economic baselines.

STAP would particularly like to highlight the very clear and transparent way that this proposal explains the additionality of this proposed project relative to previous and concurrent World Bank-funded activities. It is a model for all projects that seek to complement previous and concurrent agency activities.

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** is well written and provides a clear overview of the main climate and development challenges the project seeks to address, including Honiara's exposure to climate-induced flooding, rapid urbanization, inadequate drainage and waste management, and limited institutional capacity for integrated urban resilience planning. It also usefully explains that CAUSE II builds on the prior REP and CAUSE I operations, which helps establish the rationale for scaling up a tested community-based and infrastructure delivery model. However, this would be stronger if it gave more prominence to the specific adaptation benefits expected from the LDCF additional financing, including reduced flood risk in priority river corridors, improved stormwater and waste management, increased use of nature-based solutions, enhanced community capacity for flood preparedness and maintenance, and stronger institutional capacity for risk-informed urban planning.

The proposal has a clear aim and components that are justified by a very good, detailed analysis of the problem, with a thorough consideration of gender within it. The **project rationale** is well explained in the context of the Solomon Islands' broader development constraints, including geographic fragmentation, limited infrastructure and service coverage, economic volatility, fragility, and persistent institutional capacity constraints. The discussion of rapid urbanization is particularly relevant, as it describes effectively how Honiara and selected provincial towns

are absorbing population growth faster than urban systems can manage, leading to informal expansion into flood-prone, coastal, riverine, and steep-slope areas. This provides a convincing systems-level explanation of how urban growth, inadequate planning, weak service delivery, environmental degradation, and climate risk interact to increase vulnerability. There is also a welcome detail on the types of climate-resilient infrastructure proposed, and while sectors and processes that may enable income-generating activities are identified, more specific examples of micro-enterprises and commodities would help.

The **climate risk analysis** is also well developed. The proposal explains the country's exposure to multiple hazards, including cyclones, floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, sea-level rise, coastal erosion, and more intense rainfall. It links these hazards to specific urban vulnerabilities in Honiara, including inadequate drainage, degraded river corridors, blocked waterways, settlement in high-risk areas, and disruption to transport, markets, water supply, and public services. The discussion of the 2014 floods, recurrent flood events, the exposure of the White River and Vura River/Kukum Highway corridors, and the role of river outlets, drainage bottlenecks, waste, and reduced hydraulic capacity provides a credible basis for the proposed focus on integrated flood mitigation.

Insecure property rights are a potential key barrier that is not tackled directly, and while this minimizes political risk, it may limit the efficacy of the project's outcomes (note 43). Instead, the proposal seeks to implicitly tackle these through modernizing land administration systems and records and spatial data approaches, assuming that better information enables change.

A key omission in the proposal is the absence of **narratives of plausible futures** and **of the project's benefits** against such baselines. Information about future states is provided in the background and rationale, but plausible storylines for how these might unfold based on demographic, climatic and political and economic trends would be very helpful. STAP has provided guidance on these (see STAP advisory document on: [Exploratory Future Narratives Primer and Brief](#) and policy brief on [Using simple narratives to ensure durability of GEF investments](#)).

The **Rationale for Additional Financing and Approach** is clear and makes a convincing case for this additional round of funding by providing a very clear and transparent explanation of the additionality of this proposed project relative to previous and concurrent World Bank funded activities. Table 1 and Table 2 are extremely helpful and set a standard for all World Bank LDCF/SCCF projects that seek to extend existing projects. It is also good and appropriate that implementation be carried out by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Development (MID) and the Honiara City Council (HCC).

The **Theory of Change (ToC)** is good, and its recognition that engineering solutions are less effective in the absence of institutional support is particularly relevant. The underlying logic is generally coherent, linking rapid urban population growth, inadequate urban services, weak drainage and waste management, and limited resilience planning capacity to increased vulnerability to climate and disaster risks. It also shows how the project's components are intended to work together (i.e. resilient infrastructure investments under Component 1, community-level infrastructure and waste management under Component 2, training and work placements under Component 3, and strengthened land administration, revenue systems, and urban management capacity under Component 4). This provides a useful overall framing of the project as an integrated urban resilience intervention rather than a stand-alone infrastructure project.

The **ToC narrative** is particularly strong in explaining the importance of the project's institutional pathway. It recognizes that flood resilience depends not only on drainage, roads, culverts, and nature-based solutions, but also on stronger planning systems, better topographic and geospatial data, improved coordination between the Honiara City Council (HCC), the Ministry of Infrastructure Development (MID), provincial governments and other agencies, as well as more sustainable financing for service delivery and maintenance. This is a welcome strength, because it helps explain how the project could contribute to a shift from reactive, ad hoc flood response toward more proactive, evidence-based, and risk-informed urban management.

The **ToC diagram** is helpful and broadly convincing, though visually dense. It captures the main causal pathways from activities to outputs, outcomes, and the intended objective, as well as the interactions among

infrastructure, community services, skills development, and institutional strengthening. However, the accompanying explanation could do more to spell out the causal logic behind each pathway, especially how short-term training and work placements are expected to lead to sustained income-generating opportunities, and how data, revenue systems and institutional capacity-building will translate into durable improvements in maintenance and risk-informed planning.

There are some **assumptions** that could be better explained, particularly around the sustainability of financing for maintenance, the commitment of communities to project activities, and the feasibility of income-generating activities in the context of market developments in Honiara. In particular, the ToC would benefit from a clearer explanation of the assumptions that local government revenue improvements will be sufficient and timely enough to support long-term maintenance of grey-green infrastructure and nature-based solutions; that communities will have the incentives, time, skills and organizational capacity to maintain community-level flood mitigation and waste management activities; and that the local economy will be able to absorb trainees into viable employment, self-employment or micro-enterprise pathways

Barriers and **enablers** could also be more explicitly considered in the explanation. The proposal identifies several important barriers elsewhere, including weak enforcement, fragmented mandates, poor data availability, limited institutional capacity, inadequate waste management, settlement in high-risk areas, and gendered constraints to participation and livelihoods. These should be more directly reflected in the ToC, alongside the enabling conditions required for success, such as effective inter-agency coordination, accessible geospatial data, community ownership, adequate maintenance financing, inclusive engagement, functioning grievance mechanisms, and continued political support.

Finally, it would be good to develop plans to monitor the performance of Nature-based solutions (NbS) measures for inclusion in the full proposal.

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

-Strengthen the treatment of **barriers, enabling conditions, and sustainability pathways**. The full proposal should provide a clearer account of the main barriers that could affect implementation and the durability of outcomes, particularly the financing of maintenance for nature-based solutions, community demand and ownership, institutional capacity, and the market conditions needed for successful micro-enterprises and income-generating activities.

-Use **simple plausible future narrative** to clarify the project's adaptation benefits and durability. The full proposal should develop a small number of plausible **future narratives** showing how urban flood risk, settlement patterns, infrastructure pressure, service delivery, and livelihood vulnerability may evolve under different drivers such as demographic, climate, political, and economic conditions. The design of the interventions should then ensure robustness to the identified plausible futures.

-Clarify the **assumptions and causal pathways** in the **ToC**. The next iteration of the proposal should make the key assumptions in the Theory of Change more explicit, especially those relating to maintenance financing, institutional coordination, community participation, uptake of waste management, and NbS activities.

-The **ToC** should also explain how data systems, revenue mobilization, and institutional capacity-building are expected to lead to sustained changes in urban planning, flood-risk management, and infrastructure maintenance.

-Provide more concrete details on **livelihood** and **micro-enterprise pathways**. The full proposal should identify more specific examples of the micro-enterprises, services, commodities, and informal market activities expected to benefit from improved access, reduced flooding, training, and work placements. This should include attention

to women, youth, vendors, informal workers, and residents of underserved settlements, and should explain what market conditions, skills, finance, or support services are needed for these livelihood pathways to be viable beyond short-term project employment.

-Strengthen the design, maintenance provisions, and **monitoring framework for nature-based solutions**. The full proposal should provide more detail on the maintenance arrangements and performance monitoring of NbS measures. This should include how NbS will be integrated with grey infrastructure, who will be responsible for maintenance, how community contracts will support long-term upkeep, and what indicators will be used to assess whether NbS are reducing runoff, erosion, sedimentation, drainage blockages, and flood impacts over time.

-Clarify how land administration and spatial data improvements will address **risk-informed planning** constraints. The proposal should explain more clearly how modernized land records, topographic data, and geospatial systems will be translated into practical planning, enforcement, and investment decisions. Since insecure property rights and informal settlement patterns are important structural constraints that the project does not directly address, the full proposal should be realistic about what improved data can and cannot achieve.

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.)