

STAP SCREENING TEMPLATE, OCTOBER 2022

GEF ID	11743
Project title	Sahel RESILAND Program: Building Resilience through Sustainable Natural Resource Management
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1. Summary of STAP's views of the project

STAP acknowledges Chad's and Mali's Sahel Resiland Program: Building resilience through sustainable resource management. The proposal aligns well with GEF priorities and objectives, and adds value to existing initiatives in Chad, Mali, and in the Sahel. It is grounded in a good understanding of climate risks and the social drivers of vulnerability. The program has three complementary objectives that support the program outcomes on resilience and livelihoods. The program is also attentive to the role of regional and local institutions, and seeks to mitigate risks to peace and livelihoods from climate change.

However, the program can further strengthen its overall logic and adaptation reasoning. A more explicit articulation of how the program builds on existing adaptation efforts via land restoration would strengthen the adaptation rationale and additionality. STAP also encourages the project to be designed to address challenges in the project logic, such as climate change risks and potential policy coherence challenges. This will require thinking more carefully about the risk table, which currently includes challenges that should be best addressed in the project design.

In addition, the program does not appear to consider national policies that align with or work against its goals. There is also no discussion of stakeholders who have been consulted in its development.

Below, STAP details its comments.

STAP's assessment*

X Minor - STAP has identified some scientific and technical points 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 program is based on a good understanding of the context and the problem, particularly the intersection of social (poverty, economic losses due to climate change) and climatic drivers, and how these have differentiated outcomes for disadvantaged groups. Further details about how these drivers intersect and affect communities on each project site would be valuable.

The program explains the business-as-usual scenario, and its benefits are clear, particularly for strengthening land restoration and increasing the availability of climate information. In this regard, the adaptation rationale seems to be based on the premise that climate change is worsening climate hazards (e.g., drought), which are affecting agricultural production and livelihoods. Thus, the program's additionality is focused on complementing, or building on, existing adaptation efforts in land restoration, better access to climate

information, and transboundary cooperation, which will strengthen resilience and livelihoods. The project could benefit from stating explicitly the adaptation reasoning, and developing the project logic based on it.

The document presents an initial theory of change, which STAP expects will be developed as described below.

The core indicators seem appropriate for this LDCF investment. Nonetheless, additional metrics are strongly recommended to complement the core indicators, which can assess whether and how resilience and improved community livelihoods are occurring (long-term outcome).

Relevant stakeholders are identified, and there is good detail regarding gender equality and women's empowerment. Developing and implementing the program based on gender norms will be necessary to achieve durable outcomes. In this regard, the project team is encouraged to adopt good design practices, which include relying on the social structures that characterize the project site. Doing so, will help inform the design, implementation, and adaptive learning the program may require.

Existing and prior baseline investments are mentioned, though much more detail on these would be helpful, as would some consideration of lessons learned. It is also unclear whether the program will leverage knowledge from other non-World Bank projects in the target countries. Currently, all the baseline investments listed appear to be World Bank interventions.

Some of the risks described in the risk table can be foreseen (e.g. climate change), and will need to be part of the project logic rather than treated as risk. Further details about risks, and suggestions for completing the risk table, are described below.

3. Specific points to be addressed, and suggestions

STAP recommends addressing the points below as the program is developed.

1. Detail further the interactions between social, economic, and other social issues (e.g., land tenure, market conditions) and vulnerability in each project site. (The current description does not appear to be specific to the project sites.) This analysis will help in designing effective climate adaptation interventions, as it will help to understand how these interactions ameliorate or exacerbate vulnerability.
2. To strengthen the adaptation rationale and the additionality, which are not explicitly described, STAP strongly recommends detailing whether and how the program will affect existing adaptation efforts. In this regard, more explicit evidence should be provided on how the program will complement, or build on, current land restoration efforts for adaptation purposes – e.g., land restoration activities are designed, monitored and assessed specifically to target resilience to drought.
3. Additionally, as stated above, the program team is strongly encouraged to complement the core indicators with metrics that track how, and whether, land restoration is reducing communities' biophysical exposure to climate change (e.g. increased ground cover is improving soil moisture); modifying their sensitivity to climate change (e.g. land restoration's impact on enhanced ecosystem functioning); and, or, how climate information and capacity building is helping communities to adapt (e.g. uptake of climate information and capacity building to pursue climate adaptation). In essence, the adaptation benefits need to be explicitly defined, along with the adaptation rationale. Refer to [STAP's decision tree for adaptation rationale](#) to develop a more robust adaptation reasoning, and [STAP's typology of climate change adaptation benefits](#) to identify clearly the expected adaptation benefits, and metrics to track their progress.

4. STAP recommends strengthening the theory of change with the appropriate stakeholders. This includes identifying the barriers in the project logic. Attention to assumptions is also necessary. At the moment, there are several assumptions (not described) associated with each outcome (e.g. readily adoption and use of climate information is assumed; scaling learning via platforms is assumed; market stability for value chains on crops, fisheries, and non-timber forest products), which need to be explicitly defined and validated. On scaling learning via the platforms, the World Bank is encouraged to consider developing a separate theory of change on scaling, so that these scaling challenges are addressed in design rather than being left as residual risks.

In addition, a narrative describing the logic presented in the theory of change is missing. The description of the causal logic in the theory of change, along with the theory of change figure, provides a logical structure to the proposal, which helps to visualize the desired change. The narrative and figure also reinforce each other, and are helpful in directing the next steps the project team should take, such as more substantive engagement with stakeholders, and carrying out the necessary analysis and testing of assumptions.

5. As noted above, the components appear necessary. The next step is for the program team to consider whether these activities are sufficient to achieve the program objective, and the expected adaptation benefits. This entails identifying actions that complement this program, such as mapping potential policy changes in Niger (located between Chad and Mali) that support the transboundary landscape restoration objective of the Program. Hence after the theory of change has been fully developed, consider what partnerships in Niger, or in other neighboring countries, complement the Program's efforts on transboundary cooperation for land restoration. This step will help confirm the project logic's sufficiency, and plausibility.
6. The program often provides good detail about outputs, though these are missing from the discussion of component 2 on page 31. To be consistent with the rest of the program structure, add outputs to component 2.
7. The full proposal would need more detail on the means of implementation, for example, about ways in which the various capacities will be enhanced, the means of communicating knowledge, and improving access to finance.
8. The risk table is not completed appropriately. For example, the challenges that undermine the project logic, such as climate change, should not be listed in the risk table. These risks will undermine the project logic; therefore, the project should be designed so that the proposed adaptation activities (e.g. land restoration practices) are resilient to climate risks. For instance, careful attention is recommended to the impact of climate risks on nature-based solution interventions (component 3) – i.e. increased temperatures and drought will affect the effectiveness of nature-based solutions. The same principle holds true for environmental and social risks (e.g. climate change risks and fluctuating market conditions on value chains, which in turn will affect communities' livelihoods and incomes). On institutional and policy risks, STAP notes that several of these risks (e.g., competing interests between ministries) should form part of the project design. If risks remain after the project is designed, then these risks should be described in the table. STAP recommends consulting its advisory note on [clarifying risks in GEF projects, with a focus on innovation risks](#).
9. On climate risks, STAP is pleased the World Bank will undertake a climate risk screening during the project development. If the World Bank climate risk screening tool does not have a module to develop simple [future narratives, STAP recommends its advice](#) on this process. Developing future narratives is necessary to avoid maladaptations.

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.)