

REVISED STAP SCREENING TEMPLATE, OCTOBER 2022

GEF ID	11677
Project title	NBS Invest: Accelerating Investments in Nature-Based Solutions to help address climate adaptation in Least Developed Countries
Date of screen	21 November 2024
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1. Summary of STAP's views of the project

This is a global project that seeks to enhance the World Bank's capacity to facilitate the application of Nature Based Solutions for climate change adaptation through increasing blended finance. The project is well justified, it clearly aligns with GEF 8 strategies, and it clearly seeks to engage with the private sector.

The global scale of the project means it cannot provide details around Gender Equality, Environmental and Social Safeguards, risks to policy coherence, and whole of society approaches, as these arise in applications in specific places.

Key information about this project is provided in a separate Concept Note document, which included a Theory of Change as well as other additional information relating to stakeholders and beneficiaries and proposed coordinating actions)

STAP overall assessment concluded that this proposal provided enough evidence to justify investment in Phase 2 of the project, but presented a number of issues that should be addressed and clarified during 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 a good description of the problem and issues to be addressed and a well-referenced step-by-step analysis of the rationale behind the project, which covers: the threats and challenges faced by least developed countries (LDCs); the merits of using nature-based solutions (NBS); the barriers that are limiting the funding, implementation and scaling of NBS; and how this project can contribute to alleviating some of those challenges. Some of the sub-sections included (e.g. on the role that the World Bank (WB) has played in advancing climate adaptation in LDCs) are unnecessary and could be removed in an effort to streamline the project summary.

The **project description** provides a clear and informative description of how NBS Invest Phase 2 will expand and bring additionality to the first phase. The **project components** are well explained, whilst the **proposed activities** are rather circumlocutory but disappointingly generic (e.g. *this activity will be developed in collaboration with the Health, Nutrition, and Population unit to develop a report and guidelines to identify, prioritize, and design NBS investments to reduce the spread of disease... or this activity will provide technical assistance and analytics to*

incorporate NBS investments into IDA and IBRD operations in LDCs, including in FCV and SIDS , as well as regional projects...) and often fail to provide a clear sense of who is doing exactly what, with whom, where, how and why.

Strengthening the link to the Health Nutrition and Population Unit of the World Bank is a good idea, though it would be good to read an explanation of how this will be done, and the **barriers** to achieving this in Phase 1. **Barriers** to scaling finance from the private sector to NBS are described, yet these are not linked to the ways the proposed project seeks to overcome these.

Lessons learned from 10961 are provided but do not directly feed into this proposal. One response is to continue the collaboration in Guinea, though how is not explained, and noting Guinea is neither an Asia-Pacific country nor on the World Bank's list of FCS countries (which is a rationale for this new project – see below).

The assessment of **risks** is reasonable given the project is much more focussed on improving the World Bank's capacity than that of LDCs.

The **theory of change (ToC)** was well designed and the diagram presented an effective illustration of the causal pathways and logic underpinning the concept for this intervention. The main elements that STAP identifies as indicators of a robust ToC (e.g. activities, outputs, outcomes assumptions) were also all included

The questions asked about **stakeholder consultations** during project identification phase are not answered in the PIF. Where asked to provide a 'summary and list of names and dates of consultations' what is supplied is text copied and pasted verbatim from the answer to gender (compare the text on page 24 to page 25).

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

These recommendations refer specifically to actions that should be undertaken in order to improve the quality of the PIF and/or the final project proposal.

1. Stronger **feedback of learnings** from the existing 10961 Phase 1 project into the design of this project is necessary, to this end a table comparing objectives and specific activities between projects could be considered.
2. Provide a more detailed description of how this phase of the project will deliver additional benefits. Para 24 (pg.9) of the PIF describes these as:
 - *“reaching into Asia Pacific, which suggests there was a barrier or limit to this in Phase 1, so it would be good to explain this and how Phase 2 will overcome that”*. If the added value of this proposal is a focus on Asia-Pacific, then this could be a regional project that is endorsed by the region;
 - *“broadening the scope to new sectors”*, which could be better justified through juxtaposition of those that are the focus of Phase 1;
 - *“increased support for SIDS and FCV LDCs”*. These comprise over half of LDCs so it would be helpful to provide a discussion of the barriers to support for these countries in Phase 1 and how phase 2 will overcome these;
 - *“Continue to build up a pipeline of blended NBS investments into the World Bank operations by providing targeted support to blended projects and connecting grant opportunities with World Bank strategies guiding future investments”*. This is an outcome of Phase I as well, and therefore differentiation and additionality is required;

- *“Further leveraging impact through collaborations and partnerships”*. This is also very similar to Phase I, therefore an explanation of the lessons learned and point of difference in this project is required.

3. **A plan to consult** with leaders from LDCs should also be provided.

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.)