

STAP guidelines for screening GEF projects

Part I: Project Information	Response
GEF ID	10775
Project Title	Securing Kiribati's Natural Heritage: Protected areas for community, atoll, and island climate resilience (Securing Kiribati)
Date of Screening	20 May 20, 2021
STAP member screener	John Donaldson
STAP secretariat screener	Alessandro Moscuza
STAP Overall Assessment and Rating	<p>Minor issues to be considered during project design.</p> <p>Our review assessed this project proposal to be of an adequate standard to allow it to proceed to the next stage of design and development but found a number of substantial issues, which should be addressed as early as possible in the next stage of project development. The main concerns that our review identified regarded the structuring of the components and the framing of the outcomes and outputs, which in a number of cases were phrased using ambiguous wording and terminology. Components 1 and 2 follow a consistent logic whereas Component 3 seems less well integrated and the outputs of Component 4 do not seem adequate to deliver the capacity for adaptation to climate change. Overall, the logical flow of the Theory of Change (ToC) was found to be weak and displayed some critical gaps in the causal link between the proposed actions/activities and the outputs level, although the actual structure of the ToC (involving actions, outputs, outcomes and a goal) was deemed to be robust. The description of the environmental and adaptation problems, as well as the barriers that need to be addressed was very detailed and comprehensive, it was also weaved effectively throughout various sections of the project proposal. Although we found that issues surrounding marine ecosystems (e.g. tuna fisheries and illegal fisheries) could have been covered in more detail. Our review concluded that the evidence provided did not directly support the case for achieving GEBs as a result of implementing the proposed activities, although some GEBs could be inferred as an indirect result of this or by aggregating the expected results from this project with those of other interventions. We found some interesting evidence about the proposed use of innovative techniques and technologies, such as the use of drones to deliver rat bait, but little evidence of how lessons from previous projects have informed the design of</p>

	<p>this one. STAP recommends that the project proponents review the comments made in the following sections of this document carefully and would be happy to be approached for advice at any time during the development of the project.</p>	
<p>Part I: Project Information B. Indicative Project Description Summary</p>	<p>What STAP looks for</p>	<p>Response</p>
<p>Project Objective</p>	<p>Is the objective clearly defined, and consistently related to the problem diagnosis?</p>	<p>Yes, the project objective is clearly defined, and it is consistently related to the problems and issues that have been identified in the project description section of the proposal, which are grouped into four main categories: developmental, climate change, biodiversity, and land-degradation.</p>
<p>Project components</p>	<p>A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project’s objectives?</p>	<p>As a whole, the planned activities do support the project objectives, however we noted that the components were consistently phrased in an incorrect manner, which made them sound more like outcomes than actual project components. Components 1 &2 follow a clear logic that aligns with the project objectives. Component 3 could provide the link between policy/ regulation, set up and management of PAs and the actual integration of practices linked to EBA and NBS, but this link is weakly developed. This means that the GEBs cannot be easily identified, e.g. will a shift to aquaculture of sea cucumbers take harvest pressure off the MPAs or reduce illegal harvests. STAP recommends the project proponent to refine this aspect of the project design. The same applies to the outcomes and outputs sections, which were consistently affected by the very same issue.</p>
<p>Outcomes</p>	<p>A description of the expected short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention.</p> <p>Do the planned outcomes encompass important adaptation benefits?</p>	<p>Please refer to comments on the project components, which also apply to this element of the project design.</p> <p>Yes, the project proposal tackles climate adaptation as one of its main aspects and areas of impact. Adaptation benefits are also included in two of the four outcomes.</p>
	<p>Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?</p>	<p>As noted above the outputs and outcomes for this project are described using a phraseology that is not consistent with widely applied standards. This can create a degree of confusion when trying to ascertain exactly what the environmental benefits that are being proposed would be.</p>

		However, using a ‘rule of thumb’ approach in interpreting the above, we were able to conclude with a reasonable degree of confidence that the intended environmental and adaptation benefits are likely to be generated.
Outputs	A description of the products and services which are expected to result from the project. Is the sum of the outputs likely to contribute to the outcomes?	Please refer to comments on the project components, which also apply to this element of the project design.
Part II: Project justification	A simple narrative explaining the project’s logic, i.e. a theory of change.	-
1. Project description. Briefly describe: 1) the global environmental and/or adaptation problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed (systems description)	Is the problem statement well-defined?	The problem(s) that the project is trying to address are well-defined and are reiterated in several places throughout the proposal (including the ToC diagram), which provides a very clear and ample explanation of the issues and barriers affecting the country.
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	The proposal included also a good section describing the barriers that the project activities are proposing to tackle, which have also been integrated into the ToC diagram logical flow.
	For multiple focal area projects: does the problem statement and analysis identify the drivers of environmental degradation which need to be addressed through multiple focal areas; and is the objective well-defined, and can it only be supported by integrating two, or more focal areas objectives or programs?	The problem statement identifies the drivers of environmental degradation that need to be addressed and these span across multiple focal areas. However, the description of the proposed actions and solutions, in our view do not provide sufficient cover to all focal areas and do not adequately explain how they would lead to better adaptation to climate change.
2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects	Is the baseline identified clearly?	Yes, the proposal provides a good description of the baseline scenario in Kiribati, which covers both a number of initiatives and policies from the Government of Kiribati and a number of ongoing projects funded by the GEF and other international donors.
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project’s benefits?	The baseline provides some of the information, such as the financial value of existing projects and government policies, which would help quantify the project’s benefits. However, there are a number of gaps and, in our view, the amount of information provided as a whole does not provide a solid enough basis to quantify the project benefits in full.

	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	Even though there are gaps in the baseline information provided, we were able to ascertain from reading the full proposal that there is a need for further intervention and investment in Kiribati.
	For multiple focal area projects:	
	are the multiple baseline analyses presented (supported by data and references), and the multiple benefits specified, including the proposed indicators;	The baseline information provides some level of analysis of pre-existing interventions, but this is not supported by an extensive use of data and references.
	are the lessons learned from similar or related past GEF and non-GEF interventions described; and	There are some references to lessons learning in a few places throughout the document, including the outcomes and outputs and the baseline section. However, we could not find a section in the proposal that was dedicated to analyzing the lessons learned from other projects, nor a plan on how to do so.
	how did these lessons inform the design of this project?	-
3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project	What is the theory of change?	Securing Kiribati recognizes that Kiribati's future depends on its capacity to adapt to a changing climate. The project will mainstream natural resource management and integrate it into climate change adaptation, particularly through protected and conserved areas, in both formal protected areas or community-based conservation areas.
	What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?	-
	What is the set of linked activities, outputs, and outcomes to address the project's objectives?	-
	Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions?	The project proposal does include a Theory of Change (ToC) as a separate document. This is built around a sound structure, which includes a goal, several outcomes outputs and activities, as well as a number of barriers. However, we found that the causal link between the activities and the outputs was weak and left a number of gaps in the logical flow between the problems and issues to be addressed (i.e. what needs to be done) and the solutions that are being proposed to address these (i.e. how the problems will be solved). The narrative description of the project provides a compelling storyline, but the sum of the components, outcomes and outputs does not add up. In component 3, there is a strong focus on nature-based solutions but these are not explained in sufficient detail to fully assess the plausibility of change

		<p>or the underlying assumptions. In Component 4, the underlying assumption seems to be that increased awareness and an improved curriculum will drive behavior change but this does not seem plausible unless it is supported by knowledge products and deeper understanding of the social issues, which may come from other projects or other components. In the background narrative, there is mention of conflicts between user groups (commercial and subsistence fishers) which points to potentially complex social issues. This is likely to be significant for MPAs and the management of coastal resources but there is no output relating to these issues. STAP strongly advises the project proponents to review these aspects of the ToC. Doing this would, in our view, also help address the issues identified above with regard to the project outcomes and outputs.</p>
	<p>Is there a recognition of what adaptations may be required during project implementation to respond to changing conditions in pursuit of the targeted outcomes?</p>	<p>We found this section of the ToC to be on the weak side. (see comments above).</p>
<p>5) incremental/additional cost reasoning and expected contributions from the baseline, the GEF trust fund, LDCF, SCCF, and co-financing</p>	<p>GEF trust fund: will the proposed incremental activities lead to the delivery of global environmental benefits?</p>	<p>The information presented in the proposal should provide stronger support for the achievement of GEBs as a direct result of implementing project activities. It is possible that GEBs may be accrue indirectly as a result of this and as a cumulative effect of this and other interventions in Kiribati, but this is not elaborated on in the PIF which provides evidence of environmental benefits at the local level.</p>
	<p>LDCF/SCCF: will the proposed incremental activities lead to adaptation which reduces vulnerability, builds adaptive capacity, and increases resilience to climate change?</p>	<p>This could be deducted from reading the proposal as a whole. However, as already outlined, this presented a number of gaps in the causal link and logical flow of the ToC, which made it difficult to ascertain how the proposed incremental activities would lead to increased adaptation.</p>
<p>6) global environmental benefits (GEF trust fund) and/or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF)</p>	<p>Are the benefits truly global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits, and are they measurable?</p>	<p>The information presented in the proposal does not support the achievement of GEBs as a direct result of implementing project activities. The area is globally important for biodiversity, but the proposal provides only vague descriptions of GEB, which in some cases even seem to undermine the proposal, e.g. pointing out that Kiribati's MPAs already exceed Aichi targets without any motivation for the added value of additional MPAs.</p>

		The GEBs associated with changes in agriculture and aquaculture are not clearly identified. It is possible that GEBs may accrue indirectly as a result of this project and as a cumulative effect of this and other interventions in Kiribati, but this is not elaborated on in the PIF which provides evidence of environmental benefits at the local level.
	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	Our review concluded that the scale of projected benefits would be plausible in relation to the proposed investment.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits explicitly defined?	The environmental and adaptation benefits are broadly defined but could be described more explicitly and precisely. For example, it is assumed that the additional PAs will add to GEBs but this cannot be confirmed due to lack of adequate information provided and indicators
	Are indicators, or methodologies, provided to demonstrate how the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits will be measured and monitored during project implementation?	This is insufficient. Some outputs and outcomes have verifiable indicators, such as the eradication of rats from Enderbury, but we could not find any evidence of this in others.
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project's resilience to climate change?	-
7) innovative, sustainability and potential for scaling-up	Is the project innovative, for example, in its design, method of financing, technology, business model, policy, monitoring and evaluation, or learning?	The proposal listed some innovative approaches, which included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the integration of ecosystem and community resilience, using traditional knowledge and practices, which was defined as new in Kiribati; ▪ the use of biodiversity, ecosystem and community resilience aspects that have not been integrated before in Kiribati; ▪ the use of newly developed techniques for applying rat bait with drones.
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	The proposal contains a section that covers scaling-up and durability more broadly across the project activities but is not specifically focused on the innovation element of it.
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	Our assessment is that, in order to achieve the best results, this project will require incremental adaptation over time.
1b. Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide		-

<p>geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.</p>		
<p>2. Stakeholders. Select the stakeholders that have participated in consultations during the project identification phase: Indigenous people and local communities; Civil society organizations; Private sector entities. If none of the above, please explain why. In addition, provide indicative information on how stakeholders, including civil society and indigenous peoples, will be engaged in the project preparation, and their respective roles and means of engagement.</p>	<p>Have all the key relevant stakeholders been identified to cover the complexity of the problem, and project implementation barriers?</p>	<p>Yes, the proposal included a section that listed a wide range of stakeholders, which we found to be adequately comprehensive. This also described clearly and concisely the roles that each stakeholder will play, including how they will contribute to the project activities and how the project is planning to approach them (i.e. the means of engagement).</p>
	<p>What are the stakeholders' roles, and how will their combined roles contribute to robust project design, to achieving global environmental outcomes, and to lessons learned and knowledge?</p>	<p>-</p>
<p>3. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. Please briefly include below any gender dimensions relevant to the project, and any plans to address gender in project design (e.g. gender analysis). Does the project expect to include any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women</p>	<p>Have gender differentiated risks and opportunities been identified, and were preliminary response measures described that would address these differences?</p>	<p>Yes, the proposal included a "<i>Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment</i>" section, which provided a brief gender analysis of Kiribati and an outline plan of how the project will aim to mainstream gender issues into its activities and support women's rights. We assessed this to be balanced and appropriate for this stage of the project design but recognized that further details will need to be developed during the inception phase.</p>

<p>empowerment? Yes/no/tbd.</p> <p>If possible, indicate in which results area(s) the project is expected to contribute to gender equality: access to and control over resources; participation and decision-making; and/or economic benefits or services.</p> <p>Will the project's results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators? yes/no/tbd</p>		
	<p>Do gender considerations hinder full participation of an important stakeholder group (or groups)? If so, how will these obstacles be addressed?</p>	<p>Gender consideration may hinder the participation of some stakeholder groups in project activities, because of existing patriarchal structures and systems (e.g. the <i>Unimwane</i> council of elder men on and the <i>Maneaba</i> system followed on the Outer Islands). The proposal includes some provisions on how to deal with these issues, but as already noted above these are quite broad and preliminary in nature. As such, they will probably need to be developed further during the inception phase of the project.</p>
<p>5. Risks. Indicate risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved, and, if possible, propose measures that address these risks to be further developed during the project design</p>	<p>Are the identified risks valid and comprehensive? Are the risks specifically for things outside the project's control? Are there social and environmental risks which could affect the project?</p> <p>For climate risk, and climate resilience measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will the project's objectives or outputs be affected by climate risks over the period 2020 to 2050, and have the impact of these risks been addressed adequately? • Has the sensitivity to climate change, and its impacts, been assessed? • Have resilience practices and measures to address projected climate risks and impacts been considered? How will these be dealt with? 	<p>Yes, the proposal includes a risk section, which in our view took into account all the main factors and identified all the relevant risk categories and appropriate mitigation actions.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What technical and institutional capacity, and information, will be needed to address climate risks and resilience enhancement measures? 	
6. Coordination. Outline the coordination with other relevant GEF-financed and other related initiatives	Are the project proponents tapping into relevant knowledge and learning generated by other projects, including GEF projects?	Yes, our review found enough evidence of this. A number of currently ongoing projects in Kiribati involve the same government agencies and actors as this one. The project proposal recognizes that coordination with other GEF projects, such as “Whole of Islands” project funded under GEF 6, will be critical for the success of Securing Kiribati. The project plans to achieve this by including members of other project management bodies, as observers in the steering committee for this one.
	Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?	Please see previous comments on baseline section.
	Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?	We found no specific evidence of this.
	How have these lessons informed the project’s formulation?	We found no specific evidence of this.
	Is there an adequate mechanism to feed the lessons learned from earlier projects into this project, and to share lessons learned from it into future projects?	Yes, this is described briefly in the knowledge management section of the PIF.
8. Knowledge management. Outline the “Knowledge Management Approach” for the project, and how it will contribute to the project’s overall impact, including plans to learn from relevant projects, initiatives and evaluations.	What overall approach will be taken, and what knowledge management indicators and metrics will be used?	<p>The PIF recognizes that knowledge management and sharing of lessons is critical for the success of this project.</p> <p>The overall KM approach will include publishing manuals and process guidelines on specific topics, which will be shared among key stakeholders. Another key aspect we noticed was the proposed mapping, documenting, and employing of traditional knowledge on climate change adaptation and natural resources management in Kiribati, which will be printed and published in appropriate languages to share with communities and other stakeholders.</p> <p>We found no specific evidence of any KM indicators or metrics being developed at this stage. This is an important area for further development given the intention to effect behavior change.</p>
	What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?	Above comments refer.

Notes

STAP advisory response	Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed
1. Concur	STAP acknowledges that on scientific or technical grounds the concept has merit. The proponent is invited to approach STAP for advice at any time during the development of the project brief prior to submission for CEO endorsement.
	* In cases where the STAP acknowledges the project has merit on scientific and technical grounds, the STAP will recognize this in the screen by stating that <i>“STAP is satisfied with the scientific and technical quality of the proposal and encourages the proponent to develop it with same rigor. At any time during the development of the project, the proponent is invited to approach STAP to consult on the design.”</i>
2. Minor issues to be considered during project design	STAP has identified specific scientific /technical suggestions or opportunities that should be discussed with the project proponent as early as possible during development of the project brief. The proponent may wish to:
	(i) Open a dialogue with STAP regarding the technical and/or scientific issues raised;
	(ii) Set a review point at an early stage during project development, and possibly agreeing to terms of reference for an independent expert to be appointed to conduct this review.
	The proponent should provide a report of the action agreed and taken, at the time of submission of the full project brief for CEO endorsement.

<p>3. Major issues to be considered during project design</p>	<p>STAP proposes significant improvements or has concerns on the grounds of specified major scientific/technical methodological issues, barriers, or omissions in the project concept. If STAP provides this advisory response, a full explanation would also be provided. The proponent is strongly encouraged to:</p>
	<p>(i) Open a dialogue with STAP regarding the technical and/or scientific issues raised; (ii) Set a review point at an early stage during project development including an independent expert as required. The proponent should provide a report of the action agreed and taken, at the time of submission of the full project brief for CEO endorsement.</p>