

STAP SCREENING TEMPLATE

GEF ID	11446
Project title	Building Community Resilience and Transforming Livelihoods through Systems-based Adaptation and Integrated Resource Management in Rwanda's Southern Province
Date of screen	January 25, 2024
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1. Summary of STAP's views of the project

STAP acknowledges Rwanda's project, "Building community resilience and transforming livelihoods through systems-based adaptation and integrated resource management" in the Southern Province", which is well-written although lengthy. STAP highly encourages the project team to apply comprehensively the climate information (in the rationale section), and its screening (mentioned in the risk section) when developing the project. Although the project's focus is on strengthening climate resilience, the detailed activities need to consider the consequences of climate change and other future drivers for interventions more explicitly. The project also would benefit from a more comprehensive analysis of other drivers of change influencing the outcomes, such as population increase which is relevant to the Southern Province. Using 'simple future narratives' would help for all these drivers.

STAP welcomes the project's focus on strengthening farmers' access to markets via value chains, some of which will be supported by FONERWA, a climate finance instrument. There are various assumptions underlying the effectiveness of this financial instrument, and of other components, that should be made more explicit in the theory of change. Good monitoring of the assumptions and components will be necessary to assist with adaptive project management. For example, this may include good monitoring of climate finance impacts on strengthening resilience and achieving improved land and forest management, which is important to enable scaling and transformation.

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 rationale provides extensive details on climate change trends and projections for Rwanda (much of which could stay in the climate risk assessment so that key salient issues are summarized more accessibly in this section). Some downscaled climate information has also been provided to contextualize the climate risks, and communities' vulnerabilities to climate, in the target sites. A brief description has also been provided on the impacts of climate risks (drought and floods) on agricultural productivity, soil and land condition, and increased incomes. Table 5 is particularly useful in providing an overview of climate hazard's impacts on land and water resources, ecosystems, and the economy. To plan for the future, this climate information can be useful in

helping to describe how outcomes will be affected. Consideration of other drivers of change besides climate, is highly encouraged. For example, non-climate drivers (e.g. unregulated logging) are analyzed well on p.38 under baseline initiatives. The description does not address, however, underlying drivers, such as population increase. Take paragraph 40, for instance, which states that PRISM (a baseline project) is addressing non-climate drivers of land degradation. This description could usefully describe ways in which PRISM is addressing rising demand (consumption) due to population growth.

In addition to climate information, a description of the socioeconomic context for Rwanda and the Southern Province is provided, which will be helpful when describing the targeted socioecological systems. (If socioeconomic data can be provided at the district level, this would be helpful.) Extensive baseline information of past and ongoing projects (climate and non-climate) has been listed although this information can be more valuable if it is tied to the project logic. A logic tree was used to help assess the type of response needed to strengthen adaptive capacity. This assessment supported a climate resilience, systems approach, which STAP supports.

The project description is thorough but can benefit from being made shorter. (The same applies to the project rationale.) For example, the description could be limited to a brief overview of the theory of change, main outcomes, and components. However, assumptions and their monitoring need further attention: those noted in the theory of change diagram (p.45) are about buy-in from government. This 'buy-in' needs to be monitored so the project can be adapted quickly if it is not working. However, there also other assumptions not in the theory of change that should be made more explicit and tracked (see below).

It would greatly help the project to include more explicit targets of sufficient success needed to cause durable positive change – how *much* empowerment (outcome 1), how *much* improvement in water management (outcome 2), how *much* enhancement in land management (Outcome 3), how *much* private sector intervention (Outcome 4), how *much* increased awareness (Outcome 5 – though this is a rather poor measure anyway – it would be better to specify a target of resulting action).

The gender analysis on p.26 is good, and at least reasonably embedded in the description (p.26). It is excellent to see explicit consideration of 3 response options to the challenges (p.29) – this should be standard practice.

To help strengthen the application of these processes, STAP details below its recommendations.

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

STAP recommends addressing the following points during the project design to help strengthen its technical soundness:

- STAP recognizes the project's premise relies on systems-based approaches. When conducting a systems analysis, the project team is highly encouraged to think of how other drivers besides climate are presently affecting current conditions and will also affect the outcomes in the future. For example, population growth (and density) in the Southern Province is high, the PIF states. How will population growth influence climate resilience and improved land and water management, and, in the absence of attention to this driver will the good work of the project be overwhelmed by demand pressures anyway? Other possible drivers may also be important – such as geopolitical conflict, or market fluctuations. STAP advice on developing a systems-based theory of change may be a useful resource when developing the project: <https://stapgef.org/resources/advisory-documents/theory-change-primer>

- To help strategize for future planning, which includes assessing the interactions between key drivers of change, and make project design robust to future changes in drivers, especially where they are uncertain and interact, STAP's guidance on developing simple future narratives when designing the project should be considered: <https://stapgef.org/index.php/resources/advisory-documents/simple-future-narratives-brief-and-primer>
- In addition, consider other social and economic issues that characterize the target sites in addition to those described in the rationale. For example, what is the type of land tenure in each of the target sites, and how will tenure influence improved land management and climate resilience.
- The biophysical characteristics of the land also need to be described for each of the target sites. This information will help support the design and implementation of component 2 and 3.
- In the final project document, consider embedding the baseline projects in the appropriate component description (and in the logic chain). This will strengthen the rationale by describing how the project will leverage knowledge and learning to develop the intervention.
- STAP strongly recommends being explicit about the consequences of climate change for the project logic, and how this initiative plans to ensure interventions are designed to be robust in the face of those changes. Plans to climate change-proof the interventions (mentioned in the risk section) should be a central feature of the project design and description – i.e., the details of the components. Some examples are given in the following.
- Component 1 – for durability the capacity building and technical assistance needs to continue after the GEF funding ends – what are the pathways by which long-term resourcing can be developed, embedding these activities in local organizations for scaling?
- STAP welcomes improved irrigation systems (component 2) to help address water scarcity and vulnerability to climate change. In addition to leveraging experience from baseline projects, consider gender dynamics when designing infrastructure and training for the irrigation systems, and rainwater harvesting techniques. The project team also will need to consider how rainfall variability might impact the ability to irrigate crops, including those proposed for agricultural value chains. The following resource offering a checklist for water issues to take into consideration for climate resilience, and with links to countries' Nationally Determined Contributions: https://climatepromise.undp.org/sites/default/files/research_report_document/water-interaction-checklist-ndc-enhancement_design_v4.pdf
- For component 2, as mentioned above, describing the biophysical traits of the land in each site will be necessary. This information can help assess the land condition, and whether, or to what extent, it can be rehabilitated or restored as planned (e.g. Planting native tree species is a proposed activity in component 2. It is unclear, however, whether the soils are healthy, what water resources and nutrients, the trees will require knowing the project sites face water scarcity.) STAP's guidelines on land degradation neutrality provide useful advice on how to conduct a land potential assessment. The guidelines can be found here: <https://stapgef.org/index.php/resources/advisory-documents/guidelines-land-degradation-neutrality>
- Mining companies are mentioned here in Component 2 (p.48), but this part does not sound well thought through. For example, what are the incentives for mining companies to care about these issues?
- STAP welcomes the opportunities presented to link farmers to markets via value chains, some of which will be supported through FONERWA. Figure 8 could be considered an additional, preliminary theory of change for component 3. Additionally, page 53, (clause 16), contains a good scaling plan for private sector – the project would benefit if this was elaborated in its own theory of change. For the final project document, STAP recommends developing a theory of change using figure 8 to identify explicit assumptions (e.g. finance leads to improved land management and increased incomes that contribute to climate resilience), and risks (environmental, social, and financial) associated with achieving key outcomes from this component on innovative finance. Indicators to monitor the financial innovation of component 3 will be necessary to generate learning.
- Component 4 appears simplistic compared with other parts of the proposal. Outcome 5 needs to be more than increased awareness – for example, consider how *much* increase and what are the desirable resulting actions? Being clearer about this and the scaling will allow a better targeted clause 19.
- In addition to the core indicators, STAP recommends identifying outcome measurements to monitor change. Indicators for social change, complexity, adaptability, as well as a few others, are highly

recommended to achieve the scaling and transformative ambition the project seeks to achieve. STAP's advice on metrics for transformation will be useful in this regard, and can be found here:

<https://stapgef.org/index.php/resources/advisory-documents/achieving-transformation-through-gef-investments>

- The description on knowledge management for scaling is good (p.56). It will be important to devise the proposed knowledge platform in a way that it can be exchanged with other like countries too, instead of it being too Rwanda-specific.

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.)