

STAP guidelines for screening GEF projects

Part I: Project Information	Response
GEF ID	10718
Project Title	Restoration of biodiversity and ecosystem services at the landscape scale on productive agroforestry areas and their natural environment
Date of Screening	11/27/2020
STAP member screener	Mark Stafford Smith
STAP secretariat screener	Guadalupe Duron
STAP Overall Assessment and Rating	<p>Minor issues to be considered during project design:</p> <p>STAP welcomes the proposal to restore biodiversity and ecosystem services on agroforestry production landscapes in central Chile.</p> <p>Whilst STAP appreciates the outline of a theory of change (ToC) at this stage, which should help to show the proposed project logic quickly, here the presentation is more of a logframe. and it is hard to be confident that a backwards logical process was undertaken to devise this set of component actions. It would help to make the expected relationship between different component actions and intended long-term objectives clearer by adding (even if simply) outputs and shorter and longer-term outcomes in between. Without this it is difficult to consider whether the components are necessary AND sufficient to achieve the outcomes, and whether there can be confidence in the durability of the outcomes once the GEF investment finishes. As a consequence the sustainability section, whilst using the right terms, is not convincing. In fact Chile's commitments to LDN provide one opportunity to ensure leakage of benefits does not occur. But the treatment of climate risk is weak.</p> <p>Therefore, during project design, STAP particularly urges proponents to (i) enhance the ToC by laying out the component activity-to-outcome logic more clearly, working back from the outcomes to ensure the components</p>

	<p>are not only necessary but also sufficient to achieve the outcomes, and looking closely at the assumptions that are built into the project design; (ii) consider developing a separate ToC aimed specifically at scaling and durability; (iii) ensure ToC assumptions are being formally monitored and evaluated over time to allow learning about these; and (iv) pay more attention to issues that might undermine project durability, including climate change and the potential for increasing demand or population to overwhelm improved management in this region or cause damage to leak from here to surrounding areas.</p> <p>STAP describes further its advice below.</p>	
Part I: Project Information B. Indicative Project Description Summary	What STAP looks for	Response
Project Objective	Is the objective clearly defined, and consistently related to the problem diagnosis?	<p>Yes (though it is hard to see which version of objective is intended to be authoritative).</p> <p>However, the project needs to do more than ‘<i>trigger</i> processes’ – it needs to ensure they have impact – this is no doubt intended, but might be better worded.</p> <p>It may also be helpful to highlight the need for benefits to the local population as well as GEBs in the objective from the start – e.g. “...whilst delivering enduring improvements in local livelihoods” or similar – to recall the need for local support to maintain the environmental benefits.</p>
Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project’s objectives?	<p>These encompass institutional design, planning and monitoring; public and private investment for sustainable production practices, with demonstration of benefits; and related KM/M&E. Subject to the comment above, these appear <i>necessary</i> to the objectives; it is less clear whether they are strictly <i>sufficient</i> to achieving them, as discussed below (ToC).</p>

Outcomes	A description of the expected short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention. Do the planned outcomes encompass important global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits?	Yes
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	Plausible; attention needs to be paid to ensuring they are durable.
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?	Plausibly <i>necessary</i> but see following comments on whether they are fully <i>sufficient</i> .
Part II: Project justification	A simple narrative explaining the project's logic, i.e. a theory of change.	We appreciate the intention to present a ToC in the PIF, and the diagram usefully highlights key barriers and problems to be addressed. But it does not spell out (even simply) how the components will add up to delivering the objective and hence neither the diagram nor the associated text addresses the question of whether the set of comments is sufficient to achieve the outcomes; we are not confident that a systematic (even if simple) ToC process has been undertaken that works back from the objectives to critically test this (e.g. see STAP ToC Primer). It would help to do this to provide more insight into whether the components are truly sufficient to achieve the outcomes.
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?	Yes, including noting forest loss from the expansion of agriculture and grazing in the past, coupled with forest fires and illegal use of firewood for heating today, as well as rising impacts of climate change and overexploitation of available water resources. Some of these may present challenges to the durability of project outcomes that should be addressed further (see below). It is not clear whether population pressures in the region are still rising, nor whether agricultural resource use and land area are still increasing – if so, these are pressures that should be taken account of to ensure any restoration benefits are not lost due to damage

		<p>outside the project area. A brief mention of these matters would improve the reader's confidence, and could link to the mobilisation of Chile's LDN commitments to ensure leakage does not occur. Refer to STAP's guidance on LDN, and to UNCCD's Scientific LDN framework: https://stapgef.org/guidelines-land-degradation-neutrality https://www.unccd.int/publications/scientific-conceptual-framework-land-degradation-neutrality-report-science-policy</p>
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	<p>Three key barriers are identified – limited institutional capabilities, low level of funding for better practices, and limited regional and national information. These lead to a lack of integrated planning and limited institutional arrangements to engage societal participation in planning and commitment to the resulting responsibilities; as well as engaging women and indigenous people.</p> <p>These issues do imply the need for a significant preparedness on behalf of government agencies to share rights and responsibilities for planning and implementation. It would be good to ensure that necessary actions are taken to affirm that this devolution of power is both real and durable.</p>
	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?	Yes, clear links between biodiversity and land degradation (and probably other areas).
2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects	Is the baseline identified clearly?	Yes.
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits?	Plausibly
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	Probably

	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;	
	are the lessons learned from similar or related past GEF and non-GEF interventions described; and	Yes usefully.
	how did these lessons inform the design of this project?	Good potential.
3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project	What is the theory of change?	<p>It is good that the proposal provides a ToC; however, even in a simple form (which is fine) it needs more detail on how the component outputs add up to lead to desirable outcomes. Whilst the components are plausibly <i>necessary</i> for the outcomes, at present it is hard to see any critical appraisal of whether they are <i>sufficient</i>.</p> <p>In essence, the proposal is that better institutional arrangements and integrated planning coupled with scaled up funding for forest restoration and sustainable production practices, coupled with M&E will achieve the outcomes. The second element is core and is well-elaborated, and builds on other activities. Nevertheless, it is important to consider the extent to which government agencies will allow sharing of rights and responsibilities. Other key issues to consider include: Do local stakeholders (particularly women and Indigenous peoples) actually want to take on the proposed activities? Will the funding benefits realistically exceed the drivers of illegal fuelwood harvesting? Even if these are so in the short term, what are the prospects of this continuing long-term if population rises and the climate changes? There are a variety of assumptions such as these and others that need to be made more explicit, and then tested through M&E through the project; and a critical assessment is needed of why these components are likely to be <i>sufficient</i> to achieve the outcomes.</p>

		It is useful to have a ToC so as to be able to ask these sorts of questions of the logic.
	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?	As above
	Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions?	<p>Notwithstanding comments above, these are broadly plausible. However, as noted, the ToC lacks a critical appraisal of underlying or implicit assumptions in the logic, so STAP recommends that the guidelines for ToCs in STAP's Primer are followed more directly to document these assumptions, and to re-assess '<i>necessary and sufficient</i>'.</p> <p>There are many implicit assumptions which it would help to make clear and then target with some monitoring to test whether they hold up as the project unfolds – e.g. do the sustainable practices ultimately deliver better livelihoods, etc.</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>This would be greatly enhanced by monitoring and evaluation aimed explicitly at testing the assumptions in the ToC (as amended, see above), in order that implementation flexibility can learn as the project proceeds. STAP's ToC Primer discusses this process of adaptive MEL. Refer to: https://www.stapgef.org/theory-change-primer</p> <p>Component 3 is vital for several aspects, including scaling but rather passive. Here it would help to draft a simple ToC for scaling and ask, what activities in this project would set it up to be more likely to scale afterwards? For example, it may be useful to include monitoring of changes in local livelihoods, both to test assumptions that these will improve, but also to provide evidence to encourage wider uptake.</p>
5) incremental/additional cost reasoning and expected contributions from the	GEF trust fund: will the proposed incremental activities lead to the delivery of global environmental benefits?	Plausible, but dependent on having confidence that the components are sufficient.

baseline, the GEF trust fund, LDCF, SCCF, and co-financing		
	LDCF/SCCF: will the proposed incremental activities lead to adaptation which reduces vulnerability, builds adaptive capacity, and increases resilience to climate change?	
6) global environmental benefits (GEF trust fund) and/or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF)	Are the benefits truly global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits, and are they measurable?	Yes, potentially
	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	Yes, though more compelling if eventually scales out beyond the targeted examples.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits explicitly defined?	Yes
	Are indicators, or methodologies, provided to demonstrate how the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits will be measured and monitored during project implementation?	MEL needs more development – some of what might be measured is indicated, but how it will be tracked is not made clear.
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project's resilience to climate change?	<i>(See Risk section below)</i>
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?	Not in a global sense, but in context possibly. However, greater attention should be paid to durability and scaling in the ToC process (see below), and to whether there are other barriers, such as cultural norms, that might impede scaling.
	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 does address the issue of scaling explicitly in Component 2 especially, which is good; however, the 'replicability' section – taking the whole approach out to more places – is unconvincing, suggesting that merely producing practices and models will mean they 'can be adopted by new users in other communities'. This information push model for scaling rarely works. STAP recommends that a part of the ToC (or a separate ToC) is explicitly developed to deal with this wider scaling as there are likely to be other barriers and needs for this. (STAP's guide on Durability and its ToC Primer provide more advice on these issues.) Refer to:

		https://www.stapgef.org/achieving-enduring-outcomes-gef-investment https://www.stapgef.org/theory-change-primer
	<p>Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?</p>	<p>With scaling, transformational impact is possible, but attention is needed to how this might occur. The treatment of durability (sustainability) is currently vague and superficial. In particular, Component 3 is currently the main hope for creating enduring financial incentives for better management, but will this be enough in the face of the acknowledged longer-term development pressures and climate change?</p> <p>Durability of benefits could also be undermined by leakage, where pressures are displaced from the target regions to surrounding areas; Chile's commitment to LDN would be an opportunity to reduce the risk of this, inasmuch as LDN implies net reductions in degradation in a particular land type, so gains under this project in principle should be monitored as part of the LDN commitment and not allowed to be offset by damage in other areas of the same land type.</p>
<p>1b. Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.</p>		OK
<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.</p>	<p>Have all the key relevant stakeholders been identified to cover the complexity of the problem, and project implementation barriers?</p>	<p>Acknowledging constraints from COVID, a good range of stakeholders have been engaged, including an encouraging range of private sector stakeholders; however, engagement is weak at the local community level.</p>

<p>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>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>OK</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 empowerment? Yes/no/tbd. 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. Will the project's results framework or logical framework include gender-</p>	<p>Have gender differentiated risks and opportunities been identified, and were preliminary response measures described that would address these differences?</p>	<p>It is good that gender issues appear throughout the proposal, though more insights on modes of participation would be good. The planned gender analysis is an important early action.</p>

sensitive indicators? yes/no /td		
	Do gender considerations hinder full participation of an important stakeholder group (or groups)? If so, how will these obstacles be addressed?	An analysis of this is proposed, and should be progressed very early.
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>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? • What technical and institutional capacity, and information, will be needed to address climate risks and resilience enhancement measures? 	<p>Overall important risks seem reasonably considered.</p> <p>The separate climate risk screening is provided; the recommendations of this are not reflected very well in the PIF, where the treatment of climate risks is simplistic.</p> <p>In the more sophisticated, separate Climate Risk screening, greater attention is urged to climate risks in the institutional arrangements, and specific practices are promoted as more climate appropriate. These are good, but further consideration of <i>processes</i> that would help avoid maladaptation (for example, engaging with local communities about what is likely to work in the face of climate change) would be useful.</p> <p>Given uncertainty in the rate and level of some aspects of climate change (not very well elaborated in the screening) it would also help to ask whether proposed actions are <i>robust</i> – that is, work reasonably in any future, rather than optimized to one future scenario and likely to fail in others.</p>
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?	<p>Seems so.</p> <p>The proposed Technical Committee is huge and seems likely to thin down rapidly; ensuring that key community and private sector actors remain engaged with a strong sense of ownership should be given high attention. Maybe a representative of each should be involved in the PSC also to keep the institutional members on their toes.</p>
	Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?	Yes, but developing a coordination process with other projects (Table 3) would seem desirable.

	Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?	
	How have these lessons informed the project's formulation?	
	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?	
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?	This seems fairly superficial and not tightly linked to learning within the project, nor to proactive processes of scaling. These issues would be helped by alignment with actions already suggested above.
	What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?	The KM plans are unimaginative and not tailored to the context. STAP suggests that a scaling ToC would include more active engagement of other regions in visits to/observing the successes here, to develop champions for scaling during the course of this project. Tracking and demonstrating the livelihood benefits and the success of other incentives would be other examples of explicit actions more likely to create fertile ground for scaling out.

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>