

STAP guidelines for screening GEF projects

Part I: Project Information	Response
GEF ID	10714
Project Title	Institutionalising transboundary water management between Tajikistan and Afghanistan for the Panj River Sub Basin
Date of Screening	19 November 2020
STAP member screener	Blake Ratner
STAP secretariat screener	Virginia Gorsevski
STAP Overall Assessment and Rating	<p>Minor</p> <p>STAP welcomes this project from FAO to institutionalize transboundary water management between Tajikistan and Afghanistan for the Panj River Sub Basin.</p> <p>The project is innovative in its focus on the water-food-energy-environment nexus, considering multiple benefits and trade-offs. It incorporates multiple considerations including water resources planning, hydropower, irrigation, crop agriculture, agroforestry, and agrochemicals.</p> <p>The project also embraces the Source to Sea approach including integration of chemicals and waste objectives for agrochemicals. The importance of water security to regional stability is well stated. The project has a very good recognition of multiple benefits / co-benefits, including SDG targets.</p> <p>This is an example of a project with relatively high risks but also very high importance. It supports the GEF-7 strategy addressing conflict affected countries in transboundary basins. The context of this project is massive prior ecosystem degradation; the benefits depend upon change in economic drivers, adequate political environment and capacity – all very difficult to achieve in this context.</p>

	Baseline data are not yet adequate, though the project description includes relevant trends and indicators. The project lacks preliminary specification of gender barriers (likely) to be encountered in implementation. These are no doubt considerable! The plan notes that “project will create effective links” with relevant projects, but doesn’t say how, or in reference to which aspects. Knowledge management (KM) indicators are missing.	
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?	Yes
Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project’s objectives?	Yes, well structured
Outcomes	A description of the expected short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention. Do the planned outcomes encompass important adaptation benefits?	Yes, with adaptation aspects integrated
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	Context is massive prior ecosystem degradation; benefits depend upon change in economic drivers, adequate political environment and capacity – all very difficult to achieve in this context.
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?	Yes, well structured, following common TDA-Sap approach
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?	Yes

	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	Yes, with adequate references
	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, linkages well described
2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects	Is the baseline identified clearly?	Good description of policy context and relevant projects
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits?	Descriptive rather than quantified in this section
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	Preliminary, needs quantification
	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;	Not yet adequate, though project description includes relevant trends and indicators. Subsection 3 includes quantification of POP reduction targets.
	are the lessons learned from similar or related past GEF and non-GEF interventions described; and	No lessons explicitly identified; does describe how project builds upon past efforts, particularly through its transboundary scope
	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?	The visual Theory of Change diagram (attachment) simply restates the outputs and outcomes of the log frame, with the addition of assumptions. Figure 1 (Intervention Logic) is more useful in describing the interconnections of the components.
	What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?	Improved evidence base and capacity building efforts jointly contribute to development of transboundary water management strategy and institutional arrangements, complemented by pilot interventions to demonstrate innovations.
	What is the set of linked activities, outputs, and outcomes to address the project's objectives?	Well described

	Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions?	Yes, though ToC assumptions are preliminary and should be further developed by CEO endorsement stage of project development.
	Is there a recognition of what adaptations may be required during project implementation to respond to changing conditions in pursuit of the targeted outcomes?	Some indication of adaptive planning is indicated, including specification of capacity building activities on the basis of assessments, and SAP based on evidence compiled.
5) incremental/additional cost reasoning and expected contributions from the baseline, the GEF trust fund, LDCF, SCCF, and co-financing	GEF trust fund: will the proposed incremental activities lead to the delivery of global environmental benefits?	Depends upon progress regarding change in economic drivers, adequate political environment and capacity – all very difficult to achieve in this context.
	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. Very good recognition of multiple benefits / co-benefits targeted, including SDG targets.
	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	Yes, challenging and compelling.
	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?	Yes, with additional specification anticipated during further project development.
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project's resilience to climate change?	Good recognition of climate-water linkages. Excellent, supplementary climate risk screening document with appropriate references and risks identified.
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?	Focus on water-food-energy-environment nexus, considering multiple benefits and trade-offs. Good incorporation of multiple considerations including water resources planning, hydropower, irrigation, crop agriculture, agroforestry, agrochemicals. Embraces Source to Sea approach; integrates CW objectives for agrochemicals.

		Supports GEF7 strategy addressing conflict affected countries in transboundary basins. This is an example of a project with relatively high risks but also very high importance. Importance of water security to regional stability is well stated.
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	Yes, good ambition in particular regarding pivotal role of success in Panj River basin for subsequent regional cooperation in broader Amu Darya Basin.
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	Fundamental transformation, linking economic, political, technological, social dimensions of change.
1b. Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.		Good maps at 2 scales
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.	Have all the key relevant stakeholders been identified to cover the complexity of the problem, and project implementation barriers?	Good specification of anticipated roles by categories of stakeholders, including some NGOs in both countries, with appropriate additional dialogue & consultation plans indicated for PPG stage.
	What are the stakeholders' roles, and how will their combined roles contribute to robust project design, to	Good initial specification.

	achieving global environmental outcomes, and to lessons learned and knowledge?	
<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.</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>	Have gender differentiated risks and opportunities been identified, and were preliminary response measures described that would address these differences?	Lacks preliminary specification of gender barriers (likely) to be encountered in implementation. These are no doubt considerable! Steps for development of Gender Action Plan and related implementation measures are, however, reasonably specified.
	Do gender considerations hinder full participation of an important stakeholder group (or groups)? If so, how will these obstacles be addressed?	Not indicated; this is a significant oversight.
<p>5. Risks. Indicate risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the project</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>	Well specified, with appropriate mitigation measures. Includes recognition of serious security risks and those related to political commitment and capacity. Good box on Covid-19 risks.

<p>objectives from being achieved, and, if possible, propose measures that address these risks to be further developed during the project design</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>Preliminary climate risk screening is provided, indicating that the project falls into the high risk category.</p> <p>An in-depth climate impact/risk assessment is highly recommended in order to fully understand the impacts that climate risks may have on the project in the Panj River Sub Basin. The project mainstreams climate change issues within its activities.</p>
<p>6. Coordination. Outline the coordination with other relevant GEF-financed and other related initiatives</p>	<p>Are the project proponents tapping into relevant knowledge and learning generated by other projects, including GEF projects?</p>	<p>Good compilation of relevant projects (section 1, baseline). Plan notes that “project will create effective links” with these, but doesn’t say how, or in reference to which aspects.</p>
	<p>Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?</p>	<p>As above. Not explicit.</p>
	<p>Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?</p>	<p>As above. Not explicit.</p>
	<p>How have these lessons informed the project’s formulation?</p>	<p>Not clear</p>
	<p>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?</p>	<p>Not specified.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>What overall approach will be taken, and what knowledge management indicators and metrics will be used?</p>	<p>Appropriate but very preliminary description given. No indicators and metrics for KM provided.</p>
	<p>What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?</p>	

Notes

STAP advisory response	Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed
<p>1. Concur</p>	<p>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.</p>
	<p>* 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></p>
<p>2. Minor issues to be considered during project design</p>	<p>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:</p>
	<p>(i) Open a dialogue with STAP regarding the technical and/or scientific issues raised;</p>
	<p>(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.</p>
	<p>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	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:
	(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.