REVISED STAP SCREENING TEMPLATE, OCTOBER 2022

GEF ID	11434
Project title	Towards a more circular Uruguay
Date of screen	22 January 2024
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1. Summary of STAP's views of the project

Uruguay, from ministries to the municipal level, has been active in promoting sound environmental management. As such, this project to encourage circularity is framed within Uruguay's legislative commitment to reducing GHG emissions, complying with the Stockholm Convention, and adopting an integrated waste management framework. Uruguay has or is developing broad legislative frameworks and specific regulations to govern a variety of wastes such as End-of-Life tires and vehicles and post-consumer packaging. Instruments being used to reduce mismanaged waste include a public-private agreement to handle waste packaging along with targets for recovery. Multiple actors are involved in waste management, from informal waste pickers, warehouse intermediaries, and haulers to various government ministries.

Some of the strengths of the project are that it builds on several past and ongoing efforts to strengthen waste management provisions, notably the GEF-funded SWAP project being implemented in Montevideo, other projects aimed at achieving climate-related goals, and a project to strengthen pesticide and hazardous pesticide waste and agroplastics as some examples.

The project would use demonstration projects in key sectors such as food, plastics, vehicles, and construction. The project includes measures to target specific barriers, such as creating and strengthening monitoring to address the barrier of a lack of control and enforcement and the use of cost-benefit analysis to guide decisions on processes and/or operations that should be prioritized to decrease POPs.

Expected outcomes of (1) strengthening institutional and legal capacities and financial instruments to enable transitioning to a circular economy, (2) applying instruments to food, plastics, vehicles, and construction value chains, and (3) disseminating information to all stakeholders using a 'whole of society' approach to promote sustainable consumption and production. The project anticipates GEBs of reducing POPs, avoiding uPOPs from handling plastic waste, and reducing GHG emissions.

The proposal includes numerous outputs without a clear plan or indication of whether the capacity needed for each output is available or how some of the impacts would be achieved. The theory of change does not show a clear causal pathway to achieving the stated goals and is missing the assumptions. The proposal would benefit from a better description of activities planned for all components. Currently, the proposal speaks broadly of what it will do regarding activities under Component 2 without specifics on the actions/technologies/solutions that will be applied to achieve desired results. Component 2 contains a combination of mostly downstream interventions (e.g., composting food waste, demonstration project EoL vehicles, and downstream measures). Component 3 lacks details on the structure and capacity needed to accomplish the outcomes, and Component 4 does not identify who will be responsible and involved.

Although STAP is rating the project as a minor because there are some elements of feasibility in the project, the proponent should significantly revise the proposal along the lines of comments presented in Sections 2 and 3 of this review screen.

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.

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1. **Systems thinking**. The proposal describes the issues to be addressed with details of their impacts but does not adequately describe the drivers from a systems thinking perspective. What is the interaction between the drivers of waste management problems in the country, and does the interaction make the challenge more difficult to address?

2. **Uncertain futures** were not discussed but could be useful when considering the wide variety of outputs being proposed and how intended outcomes and impacts could be affected should drivers change and assumptions not hold up. For example, how will the drivers of the waste management challenge (e.g., population, economic growth, sociocultural factors, etc) unfold in the future, and how will these possible changes affect the project's goals? The proposal needs to include a narrative of the future to inform the development of interventions that will be robust to the different plausible futures. Consult STAP's brief on future narratives on how to do this.

3. **Baseline, barriers, and enables.**
- The baseline is outlined (e.g., from waste audits), noting that considerable data are needed for this given the number of sectors considered, from food to vehicle to construction waste.
- Three barriers and root causes are presented, related to policies and plans, policy coherence, and financing and investment.
- The proposal would benefit from a discussion of enabling elements to overcome these barriers since it may be an implicit assumption that proposed outcomes would be those enabling elements. But this logic chain isn't necessarily well developed. As one example, a barrier is insufficient institutional and technical capacities to enable implementation, but descriptions of outcomes don't necessarily address this lack of capacity.

4. The **Theory of Change**
- The theory of change does not show a clear causal pathway to achieving the stated goals. It is more of a copy and paste of the project components in their current form.
- Needs a narrative of how the different activities would result in desired outcomes
- It lacks the assumptions underlying how the interventions would lead to the desired outcomes and impacts.
- See STAP theory of change primer on how to develop and implement a good theory of change

5. **Project Components**
- Component 1 will benefit from undertaking a policy coherence analysis across the different government ministries and levels of government to identify and address any antagonistic policies that could undermine the project objectives. See STAP papers on policy coherence here and here
- The proposal would benefit from better describing activities planned for all components. Currently, the proposal speaks broadly of what it will do regarding activities under Component 2 without specifics on the actions/technologies/solutions that will be applied to achieve desired results. For example, what circular principles will be introduced in the food sector, for plastics, construction, and end-of-life vehicles to achieve the desired results?
- Most activities seem to focus on mid- and downstream activities rather than upstream measures. Outputs related to minimizing POPs lack sufficient detail to understand how impacts will be achieved. Promoting enduring change is discussed in terms of organizing the supply chain of recycled materials but details are lacking in the discussion of this output.
  - Output 2.2 aims to establish a competitive fund to implement projects with a wide array of topics from eco-design to green chemistry. It is unclear how this output, which supports R&D, would deliver results on reducing POP UV-328, a plastic additive.

- Output 2.3 of designing programs to promote the circularity of construction waste is only explicit about devising a method for storing construction waste that could be traded and reused but does not provide details of how the waste would be re-used, which requires a dedicated organization, and how old building insulation containing HBCD will be identified and then disposed of using Environmental Sound Management (ESM) methods.
- Output 2.6 of providing guidance to adopt circular principles based on a demonstration project for EoL vehicles is an ambitious goal but again lacks details on how reductions in PBDEs released to the environment will be achieved (where PBDEs could be in vehicle seat foam and other vehicle plastics).
- Details are lacking on how activities related to plastics will address microplastics and plastic additives (e.g., UV-328).

Component 3,
- For Output 3.3, the proposal needs more details on the necessary infrastructure and capacity to offer grants, funding, and incentives. Establishing dedicated research centers or institutes focusing on circular economy is a very ambitious goal, but the proposal lacks details on how this might be achieved.

Component 4
- The proposal needs to be more explicit on who would deliver the output of raising awareness and generating commitments (Output 3.4) – is the capacity needed for this output now available?

Innovation. The project addresses the issue of innovation through enabling pilot projects to reduce POP-containing waste, uPOP releases, and GHG emissions in food, EoL vehicles, plastics, and construction sectors, but the descriptions of the project components are insufficient to judge the extent of innovation.

Enduring change is also addressed by, for example, strengthening coordination mechanisms between government institutions at various levels, private sector, workers' unions, etc. The development of a monitoring plan to assess program to enforce compliance is sound; however, it is unclear whether existing and planned regulations will allow for enforcement, e.g., are the legal tools for enforcement available?

6. A long list of stakeholders consulted across public, private, and civil society organizations is provided.

7. Estimates of GEBs achieved:
- Difficult to assess for GHG emissions mitigated.
- Details are lacking on GEBs related to the removal or disposal of POPs, notably HBCD from building insulation, PBDEs from vehicles, and UV-328 from plastics. The proposal needs to address how wastes containing these POPs will be identified and how they will be managed when viable economic methods are not readily available.
- A baseline for uPOP emissions wasn't established since most waste appears to be landfilled and not subject to open burning.

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 the following to improve the proposal:

- Analysis of the issues from a systems thinking perspective addressing the interaction between drivers of the change and develop a future narrative. See comment in Section 2.

- Better distinguish initiatives proposed here vs SWAP, a GEF-funded project in Montevideo. For example, early on, the proposal mentions the management of WEEE but later says that SWAP will deal

with WEEE because EEE is mostly available in metropolitan areas (what about cities other than Montevideo?).

- The proposal would benefit from a better description of activities planned for each component. Please address the detailed comments on the component in Section 2 above.

- Revise the theory of change to show the causal pathway to achieving the project objective and present the underlying assumptions. See comment in Section 2 above.

- Clarify the estimates of GEBs with the assumptions behind the estimates.

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.)