STAP SCREENING TEMPLATE

GEF ID	11414
Project title	Conserving terrestrial and marine biodiversity and restoring ecosystem services in globally relevant and vulnerable sites in Somalia
Date of screen	June 13, 2024
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1. **Summary of STAP's views of the project**

STAP acknowledges Somalia's project, "Conserving terrestrial and marine biodiversity and restoring ecosystem services in globally relevant and vulnerable sites". The project aims to improve biodiversity conservation and ecosystem resilience through the effective management of eleven newly designed terrestrial and marine protected areas. STAP also notes the project will apply integrated land use management, and recommends relying on the principles of this integrated approach which include cross-sectoral governance.

The project acknowledges that success will require greater cooperation between the Federal Government of Somalia and the Federal Member States as their governance systems continue to evolve. Collaboration with national-level organisations that understand livelihood vulnerabilities is recommended, particularly to design solutions that account for the evolving legal and policy frameworks of the Federal Government of Somalia, and the strongly observed customary laws in the Federal Member States. Explicitly recognizing this context across the components is necessary to achieve environmental governance to support biodiversity conservation and landscape management. STAP expects for this context to be significantly considered in the PPG phase, when the project is designed. STAP also recommends applying integrated land use planning principles and that the project outputs consider Somalia's land tenure systems and policies relevant to land governance.

As the project is designed, STAP recommends carefully examining two substantial drivers: conflict and climate change. Both of these issues have significant potential to undermine the expected outcomes if resilience thinking is not applied throughout the interventions. The project also aims to replicate best practices and successful outcomes from approaches it intends to apply. STAP is pleased to see component four aims to capture learning for monitoring and adaptive management purposes necessary for scaling. STAP proposes identifying and validating key assumptions tied to the delivery of outcomes as they are an important mechanism for innovating and scaling.

Below, STAP provides details of its screening.

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

☐   X 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 is well described, explaining the key drivers affecting land degradation, deforestation, and loss of coral reefs. Drivers include unsustainable land and forest management, coupled with climate change, that have led to biodiversity loss, and degradation of natural resources. Additionally, weak institutional and regulatory frameworks, affected by decades of conflict, have further led to environmental degradation.

Environmental governance will be a key pillar of this project (emphasized in component 1), particularly as the governance systems continue to evolve between the Federal Government of Somalia and the Federal Member States. Leveraging knowledge from past, or ongoing, projects is expected. For example, knowledge gained from other initiatives on sustainable land and water management will be leveraged to tackle unsustainable charcoal production, biodiversity loss, and deforestation. Building this experience into the project (e.g. context and in the theory of change) will be necessary so it is clear how this project will build on the baseline, while leveraging learning.

Although a substantial description is provided of the effects of conflict and weak governance, the proposal does not consider measures for ensuring the outcomes will remain resilient to future trends involving conflict. The same applies to climate change, as Somalia is already being impacted by droughts and floods. Developing simple narratives of plausible futures, to better understand how future trends could impact outcomes, is a necessity to develop robust interventions. A revised project rationale and description will need to account for this future planning.

These narratives will also influence the development of impact pathways in the theory of change. Establishing explicit connections between conflict, climate change, and other key drivers and environmental management, will result in a more robust theory of change. Defining critical assumptions, or hypotheses, influencing each impact pathway also seems missing. If assumptions are not identified and validated, the project faces the risk of not developing appropriate interventions. For example, generating livelihood opportunities through tourism needs careful design to ensure that benefits eventually return to the community.

Additionally, more thorough descriptions of each components is necessary to justify the proposed activities. This includes a description of the problem, its causes, and the enabling factors (i.e., the change desired), will help support the intervention. For example, component 2 lists several activities that will be pursued to strengthen protected area management without describing, even miminally, the socioecological characteristics of the eleven proposed protected areas. Component 3 is better articulated, however, as it proposes to conduct an assessment of degradation before deciding on the interventions.

STAP is pleased that component 4 on knowledge management is focused on addressing information gaps, monitoring, and adaptive management. STAP recommends the project consider regional platforms such as Digital Earth Africa for data collection, processing, and dissemination. As the proposal states, generating learning will benefit the project and its stakeholders. Furthermore, STAP recommends reviewing relevant projects in conflict-prone zones to learn from successful interventions, as well as failures (See references at end of the screen).

In 2020 Somalia completed a LDN Target Setting Program. The PIF uses a map citing that report, and the components could contribute to advance the LDN targets, yet this national commitment is not mentioned at all. The LDN conceptual framework - which is designed under the principles of systems thinking, the centrality of integrated land use planning, and the connection between Drivers-Pressure-State-Impact-Response - could be used to better frame the proposed components. The LDN conceptual framework relies on 19 principles that include embedding the design and implementation of actions to avoid (e.g. PAs) reduce and reverse (e.g. SLM, NbS, EbA, etc) land degradation.   The use of this type of framework can help generate a project that is more 'context' based, attending to the limitations of the current socio-cultural and political context, in addition to the ecological context.

Below, STAP provides further advice on these issues.

3. Specific points to be addressed, and suggestions

STAP recommends addressing the following points during the project design:

1. The project rationale discusses at length the weak governance and conflict situation of Somalia, yet these two issues do not form part of the theory of change. These are risks, in addition to climate change risks, that can undermine achieving the proposed outcomes. STAP recommends thinking of how to achieve resilience through the project, so that outcomes are achieved and long-lasting. This includes considering alternative pathways influenced by a short description of how key drivers, and their interactions, could affect the outcomes. Climate change and conflict are two risks certain to continue undermining the durability of the project, including affecting value chains proposed in component 3. STAP recommends two sources for describing the narratives, and considering alternative pathways: STAP's future narratives guidance and STAP's brief on environmental security. An additional resource is the World Bank's resilience methodology.

2. The project raises the importance of incorporating customary laws into activities (component 1) that strengthen protected areas' regulatory and institutional frameworks. STAP recommends engaging meaningfully communities' and key stakeholders' throughout the project design and implementation. Co-designing and co-implementing (inclusive of building capacity for co-monitoring by communities) should feature as a key strategy. This will ensure that cultural norms and values support the design of all interventions.

3. To assist with the design of component 1, STAP recommends its advisory document on policy coherence. The document details six steps that can be applied at the project level to help with a policy analysis and repurpose conflicting actions. As this project is working in concert with other initiatives to influence environmental governance in Somalia, the document's eight steps on applying a policy cycle at the national level could also be helpful in designing component 1.

4. As component 2 and 3 are designed, a thorough description of the socioecological systems influencing protected area management and sustainable land and forest management, is highly encouraged. Doing this analysis will uncover a host of social aspects (gender, power dynamics, values) that will help determine the problems (e.g. deforestation, socioeconomic traits of the communities/individuals, conflict, biophysical/ecological traits), their causes, as well as underpin the necessary interventions. Currently, the systems descriptions for each of the protected areas is missing in component 2; hence, it is difficult to understand the rationale for the proposed measures.

5. As for component 3, STAP welcomes the Integrated Land Use Planning (ILUP) application. The approach can facilitate systems thinking, helpfully assess land uses, and determine sustainable landscape management needs. STAP notes the project plans to conduct degradation assessments to determine sustainable land management interventions across different types of landscapes. STAP highly encourages determining the potential of the land and monitoring changes over time as part of this assessment. STAP's Land Degradation Neutrality can be a useful resource for this land potential assessment, as well as LandPKS – a mobile application.

6. STAP is also pleased with the emphasis of component 4 on managing information and data for monitoring and adaptive management purposes. It also notes the component will identify best practices to scale, as well as define opportunities for testing conservation and restoration practices to generate learning for replication purposes. STAP would argue that a first and critical step is to identify

the assumptions, or hypotheseis, associated with achieving each outcome. Assumptions will be illustrative of the research gaps, and innovation that is required to scale. There is a strong connection, therefore, that needs to be established between the theory of change and component 4.

7.   STAP appreciates the detailed response in the gender section. STAP recommends embedding gender as a relevant aspect throughout the project rationale, and project description. This process will help ensure gender is considered throughout the project logic.

8.   STAP encourages the project designers to think innovatively in how to address drivers of land degradation such as deforestation. A combination of education and technology (e.g. the Solar Women of Totogalpa in Nicaragua using solar cookers) that understands the socio-cultural context has demonstrated that it is possible to tackle drivers rather than pressures of land degradation.

9.   STAP recommends a thorough literature review be conducted prior to the PPG to improve the scientific basis of this project. Recent doctoral dissertations and peer-review papers provided below are examples to consider.

Anisa, H. (2021). *The Influence of Political Instabilty on Environmental Governance at the Horn of Africa: a Case Study of Somalia* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nairobi). http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/handle/11295/160399

Farah, Q. H. (2016). The Stability/Sustainability Dynamics: The Case of Marine Environmental Management in Somalia. https://yorkspace.library.yorku.ca/server/api/core/bitstreams/e970f139-0439-4acf-97c8-55f9e4e744b6/content

Jama, O. M., Liu, G., Diriye, A. W., Yousaf, B., Basiru, I., & Abdi, A. M. (2020). Participation of civil society in decisions to mitigate environmental degradation in post-conflict societies: evidence from Somalia. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, *63*(9), 1695-1715
Abdishakur W. Diriye, Osman M. Jama, Ren Chong & Abdulhakim M. Abdi. (2022) Value of cultural worldviews and message framing for the acceptability of sustainable land use zoning policies in post-conflict Somalia. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management* 65:14, pages 2587-2608.

Warsame, A. A., Sheik-Ali, I. A., Mohamed, J., & Sarkodie, S. A. (2022). Renewables and institutional quality mitigate environmental degradation in Somalia. *Renewable Energy*, *194*, 1184-1191.

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.

Project rationale

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.)