

STAP guidelines for screening GEF projects

Part I: Project Information	Response
GEF ID	10777
Project Title	Transformational Adaptation for Climate Resilience in Lake Chilwa Basin of Malawi
Date of Screening	10 November 2021
STAP member screener	Ed Carr
STAP secretariat screener	Virginia Gorsevski
STAP Overall Assessment and Rating	<p>Minor.</p> <p>STAP acknowledges the project “Transformational Adaptation for Climate Resilience in Lake Chilwa Basin of Malawi.” This is a focused project that builds on/complements the multitude of past and ongoing related projects in Malawi. The PIF contains a good acknowledgement of lessons learned from past projects, though it is not a complete list.</p> <p>The project aims to build adaptive capacity as well as reduce sensitivity to impacts of climate change by encouraging ‘alternative livelihoods’ as well as increasing access to finance for EbA through a newly created fund.</p> <p>These alternative livelihoods are critical to reduce pressure on the lake and natural resources; however, the details are lacking on what these are and how they will be connected to the lucrative value chains also mentioned in the project.</p> <p>The TOC lays out the various components but not the causal pathways and assumptions necessary to see how each and all of the pieces fit together.</p> <p>Much of the focus of the project is on local communities and the private sector; however, the main stakeholders are listed as national and local governments. Given the gravity of the situation, all stakeholders are needed but it is not very clear how they will interact.</p>

For example, the burden of enforcement appears to be with the local community whereas it seems that this is an area where local officials could and should play a greater role.

There is little attention to how the communities will participate in the project, except as recipients of benefits, which creates the risk of problem misidentification and the selection and implementation of maladaptive or otherwise appropriate interventions.

STAP strongly suggests the project clearly define what it means by resilience, particularly in the context of the project focus on transformational adaptation. There are many framings of resilience circulating in climate change circles, and they are not interchangeable. There is a somewhat older, more simplistic framing of resilience that treats it as the capacity to “bounce back” from a shock or stress. While this first framing is pervasive in practice, it is now out of step with framings in the literature, including recent IPCC reports. A more recent framing of resilience sees it as the ability to deal with shocks and stressors in a variety of constructive ways that range from bouncing back to system transformation, depending on what is necessary to preserve what people see as essential parts of their lives and the systems in which they participate. These are quite different framings with real implications for the project:

- 1) The use of the term resilience will shape the expected outcomes of the project and thus any efforts to monitor, evaluate, and learn from those efforts. If the project means “respond in a variety of constructive ways” it will need to be able to define and identify a constructive response and recognize when bouncing back might not be constructive (for example by perpetuating problematic activities or decisions).
- 2) How one defines resilience shapes the possible relationships between resilience-building efforts and adaptation efforts. These are not inherently linked

	<p>concepts and, depending on their framing, they can even result in contradictory outcomes through implementation. For example, a bounce-back framing can work against resilience if it leads people to believe that they do not have to adapt because they have adequate coping mechanisms.</p>	
<p>Part I: Project Information B. Indicative Project Description Summary</p>	<p>What STAP looks for</p>	<p>Response</p>
<p>Project Objective</p>	<p>Is the objective clearly defined, and consistently related to the problem diagnosis?</p>	<p>The objective of this project is “To reduce the vulnerability of communities surrounding Lake Chilwa to the adverse effects of climate change by strengthening the resilience of livelihoods through Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) and financing of climate-resilient enterprises.”</p> <p>This is clear and related to the problem. While climate change is and will have an impact on Malawi and this particular area, other factors such as overfishing, overharvesting, etc. currently play a greater direct and immediate role in degradation of the region. EbA can presumably address both (if successful and sustainable).</p>
<p>Project components</p>	<p>A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project’s objectives?</p>	<p>The components appear to support the project’s objectives.</p>
<p>Outcomes</p>	<p>A description of the expected short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention.</p> <p>Do the planned outcomes encompass important adaptation benefits?</p>	<p>Yes. EbA, by definition, encompasses adaptation benefits.</p>
	<p>Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p>Outputs</p>	<p>A description of the products and services which are expected to result from the project.</p>	<p>Yes, however despite there being 4 outputs under Component/Outcome 2, it is not clear what specific EbA interventions or ‘alternative livelihoods’ will be implemented to reduce vulnerability in communities.</p>

	Is the sum of the outputs likely to contribute to the outcomes?	
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. Good understanding and articulation of the problems facing Malawi and Lake Chilwa in particular, including underlying drivers.
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	Yes. Barriers include: Limited technical and financial capacity among communities for the adoption of alternative livelihoods; Limited knowledge and skills among subsistence farmers and fisherfolk of value-addition practices for agricultural and fisheries products; Limited social accountability systems and community capacity to enforce environmental regulations; Limited technical and institutional capacity among communities for environmental and natural resource management, as well as implementing EbA measures; Limited access to finance and markets for climate-resilient products by MSMEs and the informal sector; Limited investment and support from private sector and other value chain actors towards adaptation, as well as generally limited private sector engagement with small-scale producers. However, it is not clear why the burden of enforcement seems to rest entirely on community capacity to enforce regulations (barrier 3).
	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?	N/A

2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects	Is the baseline identified clearly?	<p>The baseline scenario lays out four ongoing projects in the country that are related to this one, with one of them also funded by LDCF. It also suggests that, without building integrated resilience across these efforts and others (i.e. private sector, other government priorities, etc.) there will be a continuing negative feedback loop of increasing vulnerability of local communities, greater reliance on the declining natural resource base and the exacerbation of the impacts of climate change in the Lake Chilwa basin as well as in Malawi as a whole.</p> <p>It would be helpful to have a more complete list of the many other related projects supported bilaterally by donors (e.g. USAID) or via other funds (e.g. Adaptation Fund).</p> <p>While the baseline is plausible, it is to some extent distressing, as it suggests that current investments aimed at the issues covered by this PIF, including another LDCF investment, were inadequately designed and/or implemented to address root causes and therefore produce effective, durable solutions.</p>
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits?	No, it does not
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	Conceptually, the baseline provides a robust justification for the project. However, it is very difficult to assess the magnitude of the value added by this project, even in the incremental/additional cost reasoning section of the PIF.
	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;	N/A
	are the lessons learned from similar or related past GEF and non-GEF interventions described; and	N/A
	how did these lessons inform the design of this project?	Although this project is not an MFA project, it is worth noting that there is acknowledgement of the

		<p>numerous prior and ongoing related projects including lessons learned such as the need for upscaling of best practices, as well as further development of i) lucrative value chains; ii) integrated water supply systems; iii) renewable energy technologies iv) natural regeneration and restoration of ecosystems; v) integrated agriculture and infrastructure development; and vi) mechanisms to catalyze financial resources for livelihood development</p>
<p>3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project</p>	<p>What is the theory of change?</p>	<p>The TOC is provided in a separate document and clearly depicts the various components/outcomes/ outputs, etc. including how they are linked to the various barriers outlined in the PIF. At the broadest level, the theory of change is that</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Enhanced market linkages will address the limited access to finance and markets for MSMEs and the informal sector, creating opportunities for climate-resilient enterprises and improved incomes. 2) Implementing EbA and sustainable climate-resilient livelihoods will address limited access to finance and markets, limited knowledge and skills in the population for value-added livelihoods activities, limited capacity to enforce environmental regulations, and limited technical and institutional capacity among communities for natural resource management and EbA. This will reduce the vulnerability of communities in target districts to climate change through the implementation of EbA interventions and the introduction of sustainable climate-resilient livelihoods. 3) Strengthening the environment for upscaling of climate resilient development initiatives will contribute to reducing the climate vulnerability of local communities by addressing limited

		<p>knowledge and skills in the population for value-added livelihoods activities</p> <p>Missing are the underlying assumptions and since this project stresses the scaling of successful outcomes it would be good to have a separate but linked TOC for scaling. See STAP Theory of Change Primer.</p>
	What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?	1. Creation of an adaptation fund (SCFF) and associated TA; 2. EbA plans and interventions (though the latter are TBD); and 3. KM hub and other capacity building activities, as well as monitoring and reporting.
	What is the set of linked activities, outputs, and outcomes to address the project’s objectives?	<p>Activity: Enhancing market linkages for private sector investment in adaptation options and climate-resilient enterprises</p> <p>Output: A new sustainable finance facility</p> <p>Output: Partnerships to increase access to and strengthen high-value markets</p> <p>Output: Technical assistance to allow the Malawi National Climate Change fund to manage the Sustainable Climate Finance Facility</p> <p>Outcome: opportunities for climate-resilient enterprises and improved incomes</p> <p>Activity: Implement EbA and sustainable climate resilient livelihoods</p> <p>Output: EbA plan and management framework for the Lake Chilwa Basin</p> <p>Output: Community-based ecosystem monitoring and reporting system</p> <p>Output: Increased technical capacity of communities and other stakeholders to identify and prepare viable climate resilient business plans and project packages</p> <p>Output: Training, inputs, and partnership facilitate the implementation of sustainable climate-resilient livelihoods</p>

		<p>Outcome: Reduced vulnerability of communities in target districts to climate change through the implementation of EbA interventions and the introduction of sustainable climate-resilient livelihoods.</p> <p>Activity: Strengthen the enabling environment for upscaling of initiatives aimed at climate resilient development across Malawi</p> <p>Output: Knowledge management hub for best practices on EbA, livelihoods diversification, and market and product information</p> <p>Output: National awareness program on EbA and climate resilient investment opportunities</p> <p>Outcome: Strengthened enabling environment for district- and community-level institutions to plan, implement and monitor EbA</p>
	Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions?	They are plausible but there is a lack of underlying assumptions. In addition, the PIF states that prior initiatives to strengthen entrepreneurship and SME's have been unsuccessful but it is not entirely clear how this project will succeed when past attempts have failed.
	Is there a recognition of what adaptations may be required during project implementation to respond to changing conditions in pursuit of the targeted outcomes?	Yes – but in the risks section of the PIF.
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?	N/A
	LDCF/SCCF: will the proposed incremental activities lead to adaptation which reduces vulnerability, builds adaptive capacity, and increases resilience to climate change?	Yes.
6) global environmental benefits (GEF trust fund)	Are the benefits truly global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits, and are they measurable?	The listing of the assumed number of participating households in the stakeholder section of the PIF

and/or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF)		suggests that it may be possible to measure the number of people or households who benefit from this project, which is one of the GEF indicators.
	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	Yes. The scale of the benefits is largely unmeasured and unstated, but they appear to range from local populations in the Lake Chilwa basin (approximately 10k households according to the PIF) for some activities, while others could provide benefits nationally. If this were purely focused on the Lake Chilwa basin, the 10k households would seem a bit thin for the size of the investment, but there are components of this work that will have much larger reach within Malawi.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits explicitly defined?	Yes, in terms of beneficiaries.
	Are indicators, or methodologies, provided to demonstrate how the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits will be measured and monitored during project implementation?	Component 3 will include the development of community-based ecosystem monitoring and reporting of ‘natural resources, degradation, threats, etc.
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project’s resilience to climate change?	The project will ensure that infrastructure can withstand extreme events and will use climate information and early-warning systems to time farming activities around any shocks. The wider project is structured around EbA interventions and therefore should also increase resilience to climate change.
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?	The SCFF has the potential to be innovative though the details are not yet worked out. In addition, the role of the private sector is not well defined, nor are the ‘market-based mechanisms that will connect local-level MSMEs to lucrative value chains across the Lake Chilwa basin.’ What are the lucrative value chains?
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	According to the PIF the project has potential for upscaling. Component three is central to this effort, and there is mention of working with the SFAD-WM project on further knowledge management. It would be helpful to articulate this through a theory of change that links to the project TOC as it is unclear how this will occur.

	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	The PIF is pointing toward transformational adaptation at everything from the individual to the regional level.
1b. Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.		A map of Malawi is provided, including detailed land cover and land use maps. It would be helpful to know the scale of the LCLU maps and how the classifications were derived (which satellite sensor, etc.).
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?	<p>The list of stakeholders is long and impressive, as would be expected from a project seeking benefits from the household to the national level. Interestingly, the project focuses on the role of the private sector and communities; however, the main stakeholders listed in the table are from the national and local government. Since much of the project focuses on helping communities to develop alternative livelihoods it would be useful to have a sense of what livelihoods will be promoted (bee keeping?) and who are the relevant stakeholders to help support this transformation.</p> <p>STAP notes that within the local population, there is no mention of social differentiation – that is, it is not clear if the project designers have taken time to distinguish relevant social factors that might impact project uptake and outcomes, such as gender. While the project clearly recognizes that fisherfolk and farmers are distinct populations, that might be a bit coarse if there are important gender, age, or other social divisions within those broad groups that shape decision-making ability, opportunity, or well-being.</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?	National government ministries will implement or support the implementation of various parts of the project. District councils will be the main implementers. UN Agencies to coordinate this project with their activities. Various NGOs and CBOs will help with technical contributions. Other international development actors are listed here,

		<p>but their roles are not clear. Similarly, agricultural input suppliers and micro finance institutions are listed as collaborators, but the collaboration is vague.</p> <p>Interestingly, project beneficiaries are seen as beneficiaries, not as implementers or designers of the project. This could result in problematic identifications of problems and challenges, and therefore the selection of inappropriate interventions.</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-sensitive indicators? yes/no/tbd</p>	<p>Have gender differentiated risks and opportunities been identified, and were preliminary response measures described that would address these differences?</p>	<p>Yes, they have been identified. The PIF lists five activities that present opportunities for increasing and ensuring the participation of women.</p> <p>The project is expected to contribute to gender equality in terms of participation and decision-making and/ economic benefits or services.</p> <p>The project’s results framework includes gender-sensitive indicators</p>

	Do gender considerations hinder full participation of an important stakeholder group (or groups)? If so, how will these obstacles be addressed?	Yes. The project will develop a gender action plan to address obstacles.
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>Yes. The risks are for things out of the project's control.</p> <p>There is no climate risk screen in this PIF. There is a general mention of the risks posed by variability and extreme weather.</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?	The PIF demonstrates an in-depth knowledge of several related programs. However, it appears that the projects cited are either in design or newly implemented and may not have produced many results
	Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?	There is recognition of previous projects and some lessons learned.
	Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?	Yes. These are the need for upscaling of best practices, as well as further development of i) lucrative value chains; ii) integrated water supply systems; iii) renewable energy technologies iv) natural regeneration and restoration of ecosystems; v) integrated agriculture and infrastructure development; and vi) mechanisms to catalyze financial resources for livelihood development.
	How have these lessons informed the project's formulation?	Yes.

	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?	Yes.
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?	The proposed project will establish a knowledge management hub to improve access by communities and the private sector to knowledge and information on: i) climate resilient natural resources management; ii) best practices on the implementation of diversified livelihoods and ecosystems- based adaptation (EbA) interventions; and iii) market information while allowing for the storage of lessons learned and knowledge generated from other projects in the Lake Chilwa Basin. There are no metrics mentioned in the PIF.
	What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?	See above.

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>