

## STAP SCREEN

GEF ID	11397
Project title	Scaling up Nature-Based Solutions for Climate Resilience and Land Restoration across Burundi's fragile colline landscapes
Date of screen	9 January 2024
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### 1. Summary of STAP's views of the project

STAP acknowledges the "Scaling up Nature-Based Solutions for Climate Resilience and Land Restoration across Burundi's fragile colline landscapes" project. The project clearly documents a significant land degradation challenge that compromises the well-being of vulnerable, rural communities beset by conflict and fragility. However, while the technical design of the project is sound in many respects, importantly, it does not make a clear connection between land degradation and climate change. Such a connection is critical to ensure that project interventions address both current climate drivers of degradation and any future drivers that might emerge as the climate changes. The project, therefore, requires significant revision.

STAP suggests that project designers 1) conduct an in-depth review of future climate trends in relation to land degradation and rural populations in targeted sites; 2) make clear connections between climate drivers and land degradation, and 3) consult STAP's [decision tree for adaptation rationale](#) to ensure that selected interventions are appropriate (i.e. not maladaptive). Having a clear and compelling climate rationale will help improve project quality and durability.

STAP has communicated its concerns about the project to the GEF Secretariat and efforts are being made to address the concerns, and this will continue as the project is developed further at the PPG phase. STAP is available to engage on improving the project design as needed.

*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.

The proposed project seeks to scale up landscape management and enhance the livelihood resilience of communities threatened by intensifying climate and land degradation risks across the country. STAP finds that the PIF/PID clearly articulates the multidimensional, systemic character of the linked land degradation/climate change adaptation challenge the project seeks to address.

The core challenge for Burundi is described as "The current lack of coordination, capacity, resources, awareness, expertise, and integrated management of land and climate risks in Burundi adversely affect the livelihoods and resilience of rural communities affected by climate change." While the theory of change (ToC) responds to these

challenges, each of the causal pathways are not clearly reflected in the diagram in terms of connecting the barriers to the proposed components. Rather, they are implicit. Furthermore, while several assumptions are included in the ToC diagram, risks to the project are not. In fact, a risk table appears to be missing from the PIF and from the PID.

Importantly, while there is a clear discussion of the current climate situation (i.e. the past 3-5 years) in the PID that clearly identifies current stresses, neither the PIF nor the PID clearly connect the climate stress to processes of land degradation. Further, neither document offers any discussion of climate futures or potential future trends in nearly all of the dimensions of the land degradation challenge discussed in the PIF/PID (the one exception being a discussion of potential future trends in land degradation itself in the PID). Understanding potential future trends is critical to identifying the need for climate change adaptation and appropriate intervention points that might address climate stresses that drive the land degradation problem.

While the discussion of future land degradation trends is useful, it does not clarify the principal drivers of that trend: to what extent is land degradation a function of different drivers such as a growing population, reduced swidden time, extensification, or changes in rainfall amount and distribution? This will clarify the extent to which the proposed project is a land degradation project or requires an adaptation component. Based on data from the World Bank [Climate Change Knowledge Portal \(CCKN\)](#), between 2040 and 2060, Burundi is likely to see declines in total precipitation relative to the present in its southern and western provinces, with very little change in the rest of the country. Average maximum temperatures could increase by 1.3 degrees C across the country in the same period, speeding evaporation. Further, there is no indication that the precipitation that falls will do so in more intense, concentrated events. Overall, this suggests less available precipitation and groundwater, which might be a countervailing force in the degradation trends and could indicate that human behavior on the land is the principal driver of the challenges laid out in the PIF/PID, not climate change (this is based on RCP 4.5, currently the most plausible future scenario, though the variance is not large across scenarios).

A clear understanding of future trends, should they indicate the need for adaptation, can help improve adaptation efficacy and justify the value of the proposed project. Adapting to only the current context, particularly in a country seeing 3% annual rates of economic growth and a population growth rate of just under 3%, presents a significant risk of maladaptation. [STAP guidance](#) calls for the development of at least two, and ideally more future narratives that take the baseline scenario and extend it into the future. These narratives can adopt different climate futures (i.e. different trends emerging from different RCP scenarios), different assumptions about population growth, economic growth, political stability, etc., to create a range of plausible futures to which this project will contribute. That range of plausible futures becomes a means of managing future uncertainty in project design, as interventions and initiatives that deliver benefits under all of these future narratives are more robust to future uncertainty than those that might work under only one future narrative.

In this sense, the PIF and PID do not make the case for an adaptation investment as much as they do a land degradation investment, and it is difficult to assess the potential efficacy of the proposed project and its interventions without an understanding of the trends they are supposed to change. Additional efforts to examine climate trends and land degradation in Burundi may be helpful for uncovering these linkages in order to clarify the climate rationale for this project and also support selected interventions. Another helpful resource is STAP's [decision tree for climate adaptation rationale](#), which helps ensure that proposed interventions meet a need that is recognized by people facing the hazard, complements existing efforts, and maximizes synergies and minimizes the trade-offs between adaptation benefits and the achievement of global environmental benefits.

The summary of the current World Bank portfolio of cross-sector investments in Burundi is interesting – particularly information on the ongoing WB-GEF project on landscape restoration. However, STAP notes that while it is mentioned that project successes will be scaled up, it is not clear what those successes were specifically, and *how* they will be scaled. STAP recommends developing a separate causal pathway on scaling as part of the ToC that incorporates lessons learned from this project as well as the multiple other GEF-funded

projects in Burundi that were not mentioned but which should be consulted given cross-cutting themes (see, for example [GEF ID 9178](#), [GEF ID 8010](#), [GEF ID 4990](#), and [GEF ID 3701](#)).

STAP appreciates the inclusion of the maps of Burundi in Annex C. However, it is unclear how these areas have been prioritized (or will be) – in particular given the lack of climate data but it is also curious that the maps would not include a digital elevation model (DEM) since the project is targeting collines. It would be interesting to see how these factors intersect (collines, degradation, climate, population, conflict, other?) to prioritize target areas for intervention.

Finally, while the conflict/fragility aspect of this project is well understood and articulated, STAP recommends that project designers consult the recently published STAP document on [achieving durable global environmental benefits in FCS](#) to learn more about specific entry points for incorporating FCS concerns into GEF projects, informed in part by the World Bank [Defueling Conflict](#) publication. On that note, STAP was pleased to see the integration of IDPs and other vulnerable populations into the project's design.

*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**

As a preliminary step, STAP met with the GEF Secretariat to convey key concerns outlined above. To further clarify the need for an adaptation investment and to make explicit the potential value of the proposed project and its interventions, STAP recommends the following:

- 1) Clearly account for the role of climate change in the land degradation trends depicted in the PIF/PFD, and illustrate clearly how a changing climate will contribute to changes in those trends. At this time, it is not clear that the climate is a driver of change for this challenge.
- 2) Assuming that climate change *is*, in fact, a significant driver of those trends, develop two or more future narratives, as discussed above. These narratives should account for the current drivers of degradation and human well-being outcomes described in both the PIF and PID, and offer different plausible projections of this system in the medium term (i.e. to perhaps 2050). This will further justify the need for an adaptation investment, while allowing project designers to assess which interventions might be most robust across a range of possible future scenarios in Burundi.
- 3) To ensure that the overall project and selected interventions are as effective as possible and to avoid maladaptation, STAP recommends that project designers consult the [decision tree for climate adaptation rationale](#).
- 4) Include barriers and risks in the causal pathways depicted by the ToC and if possible, include a separate pathway for scaling that is informed by lessons learned from the current WB project in Burundi and potentially other relevant GEF and non-GEF projects.

*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.)