

REVISED STAP SCREENING TEMPLATE, OCTOBER 2022

GEF ID	11478
Project title	CoHABITAT – Conservation and sustainable management of wetlands, forest and grasslands to secure the population of Migratory species along Central Asian Flyway in India
Date of screen	29 May 2024
STAP Panel Member	John Donaldson
STAP Secretariat	Alessandro Moscuza

1) Summary of STAP's views of the project

The proposal is well reasoned with a strong motivation to reduce and reverse degradation of critical wetlands for the conservation of migratory birds and other associated wetland species. The proposal gives a comprehensive and well substantiated account of the current situation, the pressures on the system and possible futures linked to land and wetland uses, climate change, and poor international coordination. Other strengths include a theory of change that is underpinned by sound logic and which sets out a credible pathway to change the way wetlands are managed and to involve local communities in the design and implementation of solutions. Overall, the components, outcomes and outputs are well aligned with the ToC to achieve better management and reduce the extinction risk for migratory birds.

STAP's assessment identified a few areas, relating to best practices and scaling, where greater clarity could be provided to ensure that the project's outputs are clearly understood and further recommends reference to recent literature to inform the development of a replication and scaling strategy (see Sections 2 & 3).

STAP's assessment*

Concur - STAP acknowledges that the concept has scientific and technical merit

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 proposal provides a comprehensive **background analysis** to the problems facing the Central Asian Flyway (CAF), noting the significant threats from land use and other human activities and highlighting the importance of the CAF for meeting global and national conservation targets. The inclusion of a section on **resilience to future change** provides good insights into several uncertainties and how these are likely to influence the design of the project to ensure enduring outcomes.

The **theory of change (ToC)** sets out a credible pathway for achieving change in the systems that are driving wetland degradation and that will result in better planning and effective management of wetlands for the benefit of migratory birds and other species associated with wetlands. The narrative and diagram present a well-organized flow from the identification of problems and barriers to how different levers for change can be applied to achieve the desired outcomes. There is also a good understanding of the main assumptions that need to hold true for the project to

The five proposed **components** are well described and align with the ToC. There are a few areas where additional information should be provided to clarify the intention of the outputs or where the proponents should take note of issues raised:

- Under Output 3.1. where there are activities for piloting ‘best practices’, it is not clear how these practices have been identified. The reference to Output 1.2 seems circular since that activity is to develop guidelines, which presumably must be based on some form of analysis of different practices to identify those that qualify as good/best practices. This has important implications for both pilot testing and potential scaling (see comments under Component 4). If good practices need to be identified and validated, that would require additional outputs with adequate resources.
- For Component 3.2. it is not clear how these activities will achieve impact at the intended scale. The indicators mention 60,000 people benefiting through resource use and livelihood opportunities but the section does not map out how this will happen.
- Under Component 4, the activities relating to replication and scaling up seem to be based on a good understanding of what is required for replication and the identification of key factors that define successes (institutional, planning, financial solutions and decision-making). STAP recommends that the proponents also consider insights from academic analyses of replication processes, e.g. (Boulanger and Nagorny 2018) who noted *inter alia* that (i) the information captured from case studies was often not relevant to the situation where the intervention was being replicated, (ii) too many options for good practice were presented to replicants, (iii) that replication of good practice is not always the quickest way to achieve targets if the practices need to be substantially adapted for new situations, and (iv) that lessons from good practice often don’t document failures.

The project has been developed on the basis of engagement with **key stakeholders** and the list of stakeholder roles and responsibilities covers those that would be expected in a project of this nature. In the table, indigenous communities are not listed but this may be a typographical error as local communities are listed twice.

The **risk section** is also assessed as adequate for this stage of project development and the proponents note that the risks will be further evaluated during the PPG phase.

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

In addition to addressing the issues raised in Section 2 above, STAP recommends that the proponent should address the following specific points as the project is further developed:

- 1) Clarify how best practices for wetland management and the sustainable use of resources will be identified and validated.
- 2) Clarify how activities under Component 3.2. will achieve implementation at a scale that will impact 60,000 people.
- 3) Ensure that activities relating to replication (Component 4) are informed by insights from the academic literature on factors that affect the success of replication processes.

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.

References

Boulanger S. & Nagorny N. (2018) Replication vs Mentoring: accelerating the spread of good practices for the low-carbon transition. In: *Sustainable Development Studies* pp. 155–167 WIT Press, Southampton, UK.