

STAP SCREENING TEMPLATE

GEF ID	11676
Project title	CVAR Inclusive and Resilient Cities Project
Date of screen	21 Nov 2024
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1. Summary of STAP's views of the project

This project seeks to address a critical nexus of vulnerability, and it aligns well with the GEF 8 strategy on adaptation to climate change.

Some elements of the proposal (i.e. the **project rationale** and **project objectives**) are well-described and provide adequate amounts of evidence and information, whilst others such as the theory of change will need to be further developed during the next stage of project development.

There are also a number of technical issues that will need to be better defined during the PPG stage, these include: the added (and global environmental) benefit of LDCF funding; coordination between this project and other investments; applying knowledge and key considerations from previous studies; and ensuring the sustainability of investments and activities after the project has ended.

STAP overall assessment concluded that this proposal provided sufficient evidence to justify the funding of the project. However, although STAP is rating this project as minor, the proposal presents a number of significant issues that will require substantial revisions (in line with comments above and Sections 2 and 3 of this screen) and will need to be addressed during PPG phase.

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?

The **rationale** for the project is good, if a bit repetitive, and the alternative (no project) scenario is well explained. The analysis of climate-related issues and impacts was convincing and was substantiated by a good amount of data from reputable sources, although the proposal did not include references to those sources, which would be helpful.

The **project objectives** are clearly described, and the proposal is clear about its locations and sectors of intervention and has built-in a good degree of flexibility. This is done mostly by identifying potential alternative locations to implement project activities if circumstances change, particularly in terms of security, displacement, and natural disasters risks. In a fragile context such as that of the CAR this was good to see.

The **theory of change** (ToC) is quite basic and presents several gaps. The main issues identified by STAP and which should be rectified during PPG stage are as follows: i) Component 3 is not mapped in the ToC diagram and there is no explanation of how the knowledge management and learning functions will be integrated into project operations to drive results; ii) the causal pathways between the activities and intended outputs are not well-explained, although the diagram does this to some degree; iii) even though the description for component 3 provides some indication of how the development of case studies and other learning materials may support the continuation of some project activities after the project is finalized, there is no description of any activities to achieve this in practice or how these may be funded and/or supported. As a result, it is difficult to see how the

outcomes of this project may be *enduring* and *resilient*; iv) the assumptions are quite broad and, in some cases, (e.g. local suppliers of goods, works and services can meet the demands of the proposed investments or security environment safe enough to allow implementation) appear to lack verification (i.e. a project proposal of any kind in any location should not really proceed unless this kind of concerns are resolved beforehand).

The issue of **gender** is covered adequately in this proposal, including ensuring women's meaningful participation in decision-making and planning and ensuring that urban public spaces, infrastructure and services are designed in a safe and gender-sensitive manner. On pg. 23 the proposal mentions that a Gender action plan was developed by the parent project and will be updated as needed before the GEF/LDCF endorsement stage. It would have been useful to have this attached to the current proposal and STAP would like to reiterate the importance of following up gender analysis with relevant implementation plans and activities during the project implementation phase.

The proposal does not appear to make use of **existing knowledge** about urban resilience and nature-based solutions (e.g. Kiribou et al. 2024; Thorn et al. 2021), which is a somewhat concerning. There is also no reference to the involvement of the **private sector**, which STAP noted was also not consulted during project identification phase.

The project does not make any detailed references to **existing policies and plans** and how this intervention would complement any existing ones whilst avoiding any duplication of efforts, which does increase the potential risk for **policy incoherence**. However, STAP acknowledges that different line ministries are involved in this project (i.e. Ministries of Environment and of Water and Forestry, Economy, Public Works, Humanitarian Action, Interior and Decentralization and Energy and Hydraulic Resources, among others, as well as the municipalities of Bangui and Berberati) which should mitigate this type of concerns.

The development of the IDA (parent) proposal has involved good levels of consultation, however proposals for **community engagement** could be more informative. Furthermore, even though the project seeks to supplement GEF Funding with IDA resources (supposedly grants as opposed to concessional rates loans, although this is not specified) the proposal does not seem to explain how these funds will be integrated, which would be useful to see.

The proposal describes the **key risks**, though the nature of these risks is not explained (except for Financial and business Model, and Capacity), and this is a requirement of the proposal, and necessary for the mitigation measures to make sense. Mitigation measures for Financial and Business Model risks are lacking.

3. Specific points to be addressed, and suggestions

STAP has identified several key areas that should be further developed during PPG stage:

1. The **rationale** for additional funding from LDCF should be explained. It is not clear when the IDA project commenced, and how it is progressing. It is not possible to assess the extent to which this project meets GEF-8 priorities, and may deliver global environmental benefits, as the discrete contribution of LDCF funding to the overall (combined IDA and LDCF funded) projects' activities is not clear.
2. Given that this project plans to implement its activities in one of the most fragile countries in the world, during PPG phase, and especially when preparing the final proposal for this project, the design team should refer to the [STAP's guidance on developing projects in fragile and conflict-affected situations](#).
3. The means of **coordination** between the project and other investments needs describing, particularly other investments in the project locations. If they exist, a table showing other investments, their focus, and how the project will work to avoid duplication and maximize synergies is necessary.
4. Inclusion of findings from **previous knowledge** about implementing infrastructure in urban areas, including implementing nature-based solutions.
5. Other key considerations that could be included relate to: **gender** – what are the risks and potential benefits to women?; **Social marginalization** – as the project notes there are IDPs in Bangui, what are the

risks and potential benefits to them?; **property rights** – who claims to own the land?; **governance** – who has the authority to make plans and approve works?; and the **sustainability** of works – who is responsible for maintenance?

6. The **theory of change** should be improved so it explains how the outcomes will be **enduring** and sustainable, this links to the previous concern about property rights, governance, and maintenance.
7. The project should identify **existing policies and plans**, without which it risks causing policy incoherence. Most importantly, it could identify existing urban or other plans for the two sites (assuming they exist), and what these seek to do and how the project works with or at cross purposes to them. It could also identify relevant national plans and policies and explain how it works with or at cross purposes to them, this would help ensure that the project aligns with national priorities. The Central African Republic has, for example, a National Adaptation Plan submitted to the UNFCCC.
8. The project is required to provide an answer to the questions on the **private sector** (page 24), better still would be some explanation of the private sector context and how the project might engage with it.
9. The **key risks** table needs to explain the nature of risks and mitigation measures for each risk identified.
10. More information should be provided on **knowledge management**, and in particular about communication and sharing of findings: who will be the audiences for these, and how will they be communicated?
11. Proposals for **community engagement** should be more informative, and particularly concerning the roles and responsibilities of the Community Consultative Committees, and how often they will meet.
12. **Missing information.** The proposal does not include additional information referred to in the text, which may help alleviate many of the above concerns. It refers repeatedly to ‘Section IV: Technical Analysis’ but there does not seem to be such a section. It also refers to a climate risk assessment tool in the roadmap, but this seems to be missing. It would also be very helpful to see the approved proposal of the parent IDA project.

References

- Kiribou, R., Djene, S., Bedadi, B., Ntirenganya, E., Ndemere, J. and Dimobe, K., 2024. Urban climate resilience in Africa: a review of nature-based solution in African cities' adaptation plans. *Discover Sustainability*, 5(1), p.94.
- Thorn, J.P., Aleu, R.B., Wijesinghe, A., Mdongwe, M., Marchant, R.A. and Shackleton, S., 2021. Mainstreaming nature-based solutions for climate resilient infrastructure in peri-urban sub-Saharan Africa. *Landscape and urban planning*, 216, p.104235