STAP Screen: 11522

GEF ID	11522
Project title	Increased Access to Water Supply for Resilience in Comoros (IAWASuR)
Date of screen	30 May 2024
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1. Summary of STAP's views of the project

STAP acknowledges the project "Increased Access to Water Supply for Resilience in Comoros (IAWASuR)". The project is aimed at addressing a climate stress on Comoros' water supply and system.

STAP notes that the project targets a climate stress that is likely to create significant human well-being challenges in the medium term, and therefore has the potential to deliver needed adaptation benefits.

However, the PIF's linking of climate impacts to water stress is uneven. Further, the futures presented in the PIF lack discussion of critical drivers of water system stress such as population growth or economic growth that might be exacerbated by climate change (or which might render Comoros more resilient to climate impacts). The selection criteria for the project sites are unclear, making it difficult to assess the potential impact or value of lessons learned from this project.

Overall, STAP finds that the project has the potential to deliver important adaptation benefits but should clarify the futures (climate/social/economic/demographic) it is trying to address and the climate component of the stresses it seeks to alleviate to increase the likelihood of success.

STAP provides additional observations and recommendations below.

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 overall rationale and description of this project appear to be sound. STAP appreciates that the PIF includes a range of futures for the climate and effectively integrates those data with the likely impacts on erosion. Having said that, a clearer connection could be made between erosion and the water system to clarify how increased erosion impacts the water system, and how proposed interventions will address this challenge. A good example of how this was done well can be found in the explanation of how salt water intrusion can have a range of impacts on the water system.

- Likewise, the PIF does not offer any data on the net impact to aquifers of projected changes in rainfall. While there will be longer, dryer seasons, the annual net precipitation appears to be fairly stable over time. Will recharge rates change, or will there be other factors that compromise these aquifers or surface water sources as a result of the changing climate? STAP suggests that a range of impacts be considered rather than what often becomes a single future of impacts in order to select/design interventions that are robust across a range of plausible futures. See STAP's Simple Future Narratives Brief and Primer for more guidance.

- No explanation is given regarding the selection of proposed project sites except as sites where other projects are already underway. The project sites are not described, nor are the challenges they face. It is not clear from the PIF how these sites might provide a range of lessons that might be scaled up to larger impact in the country, though this appears to be a goal of this project.

- The main issue with the project rationale and description is that the climate future is not integrated into any other process or trend – for example, expected population trends, expected economic growth, any expected changes in the economy. The PIF does offer some discussion of structural issues that produce vulnerability in the present, but this is not well-integrated into the climate discussion. As a result:

    1) There is no coherent baseline scenario that extends business as usual into the future so the reader can see where the water system is headed and the challenges that are likely to emerge.

    2) There is no integrated set of future narratives that lay out what the future might look like, capturing some different climate, demographic, and economic possibilities. This is essential to be able to assess the value and robustness of the proposed interventions.

Given these shortcomings, it is unclear if the proposed interventions will be robust enough to different plausible futures and needs.

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

Based on the issues identified above, STAP recommends the following specific points to be addressed:

1. Clearly link specific climate impacts (i.e. changes in the seasonality of precipitation, increased erosion, etc.) to specific challenges for the water system. This is done well for sea level rise and salt water intrusion and should be extended to other challenges.

2. Develop a simple integrated narratives of the future. These future narratives should capture a range of climate, demographic, economic, and other futures (i.e. one with high ranges of climate change and demographic growth with low economic growth, and one with lower climate change and demographic change and greater growth). This will allow for the assessment of the robustness of proposed interventions across a range of futures and help project designers select those most likely to generate impacts given future uncertainty.

3. Provide a detailed description of the project areas, identifying any characteristics that differentiate them, and present opportunities for broader learning.

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.)