

REVISED STAP SCREENING TEMPLATE, OCTOBER 2022

GEF ID	11056
Project title	Managing Biodiversity and Environmental Risks Associated with the Safer Salvage Operation in the Red Sea
Date of screen	07 November 2022
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1. Summary of STAP's views of the project

The proposal makes a strong case for urgent and critical action to support the Safer salvage operation in the Red Sea and avoid loss of biodiversity in the region. In terms of the salvage operation, the proposal is well constructed and provides a clearly defined plan to tackle this specific issue.

The rationale for mainstreaming biodiversity into decisions relating to the oil sector is scientifically and technically sound, and there is a clear benefit to avoided impacts of oil spills. However the proposal does not explain clearly how mainstreaming will actually be integrated into the project activities.

Likewise, there are some other areas of the proposal that are not as clear (i.e. the outputs and outcomes) and some missing elements of good project design. STAP recommends a Theory of Change, particularly in this case, to map out the project logic and to be more clear about the outcomes and assumptions. The proposal is generally very clear regarding assumptions, risks, and stakeholder involvement in the salvage component but not for the mainstreaming and planning component. For example, there seems to be the assumption that developing marine spatial plans and increasing capacity will result in uptake by the Ministry to reduce shipping impacts, but there is a leap from doing spatial planning to having those plans integrated into sector decisions and ultimately altering shipping routes. If the intention of the project is just to get the planning phase completed, then that should be more clearly spelled out.

Other [key elements of good project design](#) are also not covered consistently in the project description, and their inclusion would strengthen the project design. For example, a critical aspect for this project should be to ensure a durable outcome so that the same situation does not arise in 10-20 years' time. To some extent, component 2 addresses this issue, but it is not reflected in this way, and the durability of project outcomes is not dealt with in any other way.

STAP recommends that the project proposal is revised based on the comments provided with specific reference to the Theory of Change, which should be used as a connecting framework for all the other elements.

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 project rationale and description are sound and provide a clear explanation of the issues that the project intends to tackle and how these will be addressed, especially for the urgent actions relating to the salvage operation. The proposed interventions and related actions are clearly sequenced and provide clear pathways of how the two different project phases will be implemented.

The proposal provides a good description of the socio-economic, infrastructure, and environmental elements of the system, which encompasses the decaying oil storage facility that needs to be decommissioned and replaced; it also provides a couple of alternative scenarios that could be realized and how the problem situation may evolve and deteriorate if the project activities are not implemented.

The proposal does not include a theory of change and has some weaknesses in the description of the outputs and outcomes, which in places are not structured logically or sequenced coherently, the latter also being compounded by the lack of a ToC. The relevant institutional factors are discussed and referenced appropriately and the proposal is supported by a very good range of technical data and references, which include academic literature, technical reports from related initiatives, and other projects in the same field.

The project in itself provides a high level of additionality because it aims to address an urgent environmental security issue and avoid an impending environmental catastrophe that would not be addressed otherwise because the full amount of necessary funding has not been made available until now. In STAP's view, the proposed intervention does address policy coherence to a certain extent as it tackles different aspects of the problem (i.e. conflict, instability, political, institutional, economic and environmental), although the proposal does not provide an explicit of how domestic policies will be harmonized, and only provides very scant details on how the project will engage different institutional stakeholders to ensure this is implemented effectively. The information is also more strongly presented for the component focusing on salvage compared to the component focusing on spatial planning and mainstreaming.

Due to the scope of the intervention proposed, the project does not aim to be innovative or transformative, although the spatial planning component could be one step towards transforming the actions of the oil sector to minimize impacts on marine biodiversity. On the other hand, risk management and mitigation are central to the project's core objectives, and the subject of risk is addressed conspicuously throughout the proposal, which describes extensively how to address different types (e.g. environmental and political) and levels of risk. However, STAP also noted that some categories of risk (i.e. operational and technical design) were not addressed as thoroughly as others and overall not sufficiently.

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

STAP recognizes that this is a good proposal, which aims to tackle a pressing problem that needs to be addressed urgently. Overall, the supporting arguments were well constructed, and the proposal made a strong case for intervention. However, our review identified a few areas in the proposal that needed further attention:

1. All of the project outcomes should be fully aligned with the outputs. Outcomes 1.1, 1.2, and 2.1 should be fully aligned with their relevant outputs, and the references to mainstreaming biodiversity should be reflected through the outputs and further explained in the main text of the proposal.
2. Similarly, in Outcome 3.1, the references to adaptive management should be reflected in the related outputs and further explained/discussed in the proposal. Finally project output 3.1.2 should be more coherently aligned with outcome 3.1.

3. The project proposal should include a Theory of Change (ToC), which should ideally also be accompanied by a ToC diagram; this should include all the main elements required of a ToC (e.g. outputs, outcomes and impact), as well as ancillary elements such as assumptions, barriers and enablers.
4. The risk assessment section should include provisions to address operational and technical design risk and be more clear about risks to Component 2. It should also include a dedicated section on climate risk screening and mitigation.

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.)