

STAP guidelines for screening GEF projects

Part I: Project Information	Response
GEF ID	10797
Project Title	GEF Sustainable Groundwater management in SADC member states – Phase 2
Date of Screening	21 May 2021
STAP member screener	Blake Ratner
STAP secretariat screener	Virginia Gorsevski
STAP Overall Assessment and Rating	<p>Minor issues to be considered during project design.</p> <p>STAP acknowledges this project from the World Bank to promote sustainable groundwater management in the SADC region.</p> <p>The project focuses on capacity and knowledge for inclusive groundwater management in the SADC region at the national and transboundary levels. It is a very modest objective in relation to the severity of the problems addressed (likely to intensify with land use and future climate change). The project would benefit from making use of readily available data on climate scenarios for this region to better inform and support each of the components.</p> <p>Project description section (1a) missing, thus difficult to assess innovation and potential for scaling. The TOC diagram is merely a visual graphic of the various outcomes, outputs, etc. but it doesn't include underlying assumptions, causal pathways, barriers, etc. which could also help explain why past efforts have not been successful or need to be bolstered.</p> <p>Gender equality dimensions are well specified, with attention to multiple aspects including policy, capacity building approach, community engagement and communications. This is a strength and could indeed be an area of substantial innovation and learning.</p>

Part I: Project Information B. Indicative Project Description Summary	What STAP looks for	Response
Project Objective	Is the objective clearly defined, and consistently related to the problem diagnosis?	<p>Yes. The objective of this project is to develop capacity and knowledge for inclusive groundwater management in the SADC region at the national and transboundary levels. This responds to the problem of water insecurity in the region and the need for transboundary cooperation.</p> <p>However, it is a very modest objective in relation to the severity of the problems addressed (likely to intensify with land use and future climate change).</p>
Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project's objectives?	<p>Yes.</p> <p>Component 1 aims to build institutional capacity at the national and regional level.</p> <p>Component 2 focus on supporting research on regional groundwater issues and developing monitoring capacity.</p> <p>Component 3 will support pilot projects through grant funding.</p> <p>These components – while note particularly innovative – are standard and necessary and support the overall objective.</p>
Outcomes	<p>A description of the expected short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention.</p> <p>Do the planned outcomes encompass important adaptation benefits?</p>	<p>The TOC is presented in a separate annex. There are numerous outputs, which together should contribute to the stated outcomes of improved groundwater management through institutional capacity building, data and pilots.</p> <p>Project developers could take advantage of recent advances in big data for groundwater management to fill in important knowledge gaps. See Gaffoor et al. (2020). Big Data Analytics and its Role to Support Groundwater Management in the Southern African Development Community.” Water. 12(10).</p>

		This project could also be much improved by making explicit the potential climate change adaptation benefits and how this project could be enhanced by incorporating information on future climate scenarios – particularly given the focus on information and knowledge.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	If capacity building investments lead to institutional capabilities that are durable over time, there is reasonable likelihood of benefits.
Outputs	A description of the products and services which are expected to result from the project. Is the sum of the outputs likely to contribute to the outcomes?	Reasonable likelihood, though much depends on contextual factors.
Part II: Project justification	A simple narrative explaining the project’s logic, i.e. a theory of change.	
1. Project description. Briefly describe: 1) the global environmental and/or adaptation problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed (systems description)	Is the problem statement well-defined?	Yes – though in separate Project Information Document, not in PIF. Part II, section 1a is missing from the PIF.
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	The overarching problems are well understood. However, the project would benefit from a discussion on the barriers to achieving transboundary water security and explaining how, specifically, each of the components will help to overcome these barriers. The TOC diagram is merely a visual graphic of the various outcomes, outputs, etc. but it doesn’t include underlying assumptions, causal pathways, barriers, etc. which could also help explain why past efforts have not been successful or need to be bolstered.
	For multiple focal area projects: does the problem statement and analysis identify the drivers of environmental degradation which need to be addressed	n/a

	through multiple focal areas; and is the objective well-defined, and can it only be supported by integrating two, or more focal areas objectives or programs?	
2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects	Is the baseline identified clearly?	The Baseline is identified as the ongoing SADC-SGWMP.
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits?	Adequate with reference to institutional context but lacking data on ecological aspects. Project aims to address this data gap.
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	Adequate with reference to institutional context
	For multiple focal area projects:	
	are the multiple baseline analyses presented (supported by data and references), and the multiple benefits specified, including the proposed indicators;	n/a
	are the lessons learned from similar or related past GEF and non-GEF interventions described; and	No. This is a shortcoming. The project would be much improved by incorporating lessons learned from past projects to explain in greater detail how these proposed interventions will add value.
	how did these lessons inform the design of this project?	See above.
3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project	What is the theory of change?	A TOC is provided in a separate document. It is a graphic depiction of the outcomes and outputs. It could be much improved by incorporating underlying assumptions and alternative pathways, etc.
	What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?	Approach combines institutional capacity building, knowledge development / awareness building, and livelihood support with pilot interventions.
	What is the set of linked activities, outputs, and outcomes to address the project's objectives?	Clearly described.
	Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions?	See above – assumptions not clearly articulated
	Is there a recognition of what adaptations may be required during project implementation to respond to changing conditions in pursuit of the targeted outcomes?	Not explicitly addressed

5) incremental/additional cost reasoning and expected contributions from the baseline, the GEF trust fund, LDCF, SCCF, and co-financing	GEF trust fund: will the proposed incremental activities lead to the delivery of global environmental benefits?	Reasonable likelihood of benefits, though depth of impact is difficult to predict.
	LDCF/SCCF: will the proposed incremental activities lead to adaptation which reduces vulnerability, builds adaptive capacity, and increases resilience to climate change?	n/a
6) global environmental benefits (GEF trust fund) and/or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF)	Are the benefits truly global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits, and are they measurable?	Yes
	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	Plausible but not compelling – defined uniquely in terms of standard IW core indicators
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits explicitly defined?	Yes
	Are indicators, or methodologies, provided to demonstrate how the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits will be measured and monitored during project implementation?	
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project’s resilience to climate change?	
7) innovative, sustainability and potential for scaling-up	Is the project innovative, for example, in its design, method of financing, technology, business model, policy, monitoring and evaluation, or learning?	Overall, the project is not innovative in design; however, there is potential for innovative ‘sub projects’ under Component 3 through grant making.
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	There is reference to “importation” of innovations and research “on regional GW challenges and innovations” (component 2) including economic valuation and “challenges unique to island/coastal states” but these are not well specified.
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	Difficult to assess on the basis of information provided; groundwater data should generate better understanding. Yet, need for transformational change likely over the coming decades, given land use and climate scenarios.
1b. Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide geo-referenced information		A map of the SADC region including transboundary aquifers is provided, which is helpful.

and map where the project interventions will take place.		
<p>2. Stakeholders. Select the stakeholders that have participated in consultations during the project identification phase: Indigenous people and local communities; Civil society organizations; Private sector entities. If none of the above, please explain why. In addition, provide indicative information on how stakeholders, including civil society and indigenous peoples, will be engaged in the project preparation, and their respective roles and means of engagement.</p>	<p>Have all the key relevant stakeholders been identified to cover the complexity of the problem, and project implementation barriers?</p>	<p>Stakeholders have been identified and is inclusive of all the major organizations. However, private sector and community partners are not included in the table though mentioned elsewhere in the project (including private drilling companies). NGOs included in “National Focal Groups”.</p> <p>The ESS document states that “SADC-GMI will prepare a Stakeholder Engagement Plan” which will include a mapping and analysis of stakeholders at PPG phase.”</p>
	<p>What are the stakeholders’ roles, and how will their combined roles contribute to robust project design, to achieving global environmental outcomes, and to lessons learned and knowledge?</p>	<p>See above.</p>
<p>3. Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment. Please briefly include below any gender dimensions relevant to the project, and any plans to address gender in project design (e.g. gender analysis). Does the project expect to include any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women</p>	<p>Have gender differentiated risks and opportunities been identified, and were preliminary response measures described that would address these differences?</p>	<p>Yes. These are well specified, with attention to multiple dimensions including policy, capacity building approach, community engagement and communications. This is a strength and could indeed be an area of substantial innovation and learning.</p>

<p>empowerment? Yes/no/tbd. If possible, indicate in which results area(s) the project is expected to contribute to gender equality: access to and control over resources; participation and decision-making; and/or economic benefits or services. Will the project’s results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators? yes/no/tbd</p>		
	<p>Do gender considerations hinder full participation of an important stakeholder group (or groups)? If so, how will these obstacles be addressed?</p>	<p>Yes – with additional research plans noted to better understand and address these.</p>
<p>5. Risks. Indicate risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved, and, if possible, propose measures that address these risks to be further developed during the project design</p>	<p>Are the identified risks valid and comprehensive? Are the risks specifically for things outside the project’s control? Are there social and environmental risks which could affect the project? For climate risk, and climate resilience measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will the project’s objectives or outputs be affected by climate risks over the period 2020 to 2050, and have the impact of these risks been addressed adequately? • Has the sensitivity to climate change, and its impacts, been assessed? • Have resilience practices and measures to address projected climate risks and impacts been considered? How will these be dealt with? • What technical and institutional capacity, and information, will be needed to address climate risks and resilience enhancement measures? 	<p>An environmental and social review summary (ESRS) is included in the project documents. Environment and social risks are considered ‘moderate’ Climate risk is one of many that will be assessed during PPG phase.</p> <p>Climate risk is not assessed at this stage. The project would benefit from making use of readily available data on climate scenarios for this region to better inform and support each of the various components.</p> <p>The ESRS notes that “future investment which may result from the policy reforms and piloting of innovative infrastructure under this project, may have a negative impact on the environment of which the magnitude is not know at this stage. Therefore, all future investments will require adequate assessments of environmental implications...”</p>

6. Coordination. Outline the coordination with other relevant GEF-financed and other related initiatives	Are the project proponents tapping into relevant knowledge and learning generated by other projects, including GEF projects?	Yes. This project builds on the achievements of the ongoing SADC-SGWMP and states that it will take into account ‘lessons learned’ though they are not specified.
	Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?	No
	Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?	No
	How have these lessons informed the project’s formulation?	
	Is there an adequate mechanism to feed the lessons learned from earlier projects into this project, and to share lessons learned from it into future projects?	Yes – through the SADC-GMI.
8. Knowledge management. Outline the “Knowledge Management Approach” for the project, and how it will contribute to the project’s overall impact, including plans to learn from relevant projects, initiatives and evaluations.	What overall approach will be taken, and what knowledge management indicators and metrics will be used?	Component 2 focuses on knowledge development, dissemination and advocacy. Includes support to real-time monitoring capacity, shared databases, and research.
	What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?	Dissemination and advocacy are emphasized, with recognition that most actions are local-level and decentralized. Includes IW:LEARN sharing.

Notes

STAP advisory response	Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed
1. Concur	STAP acknowledges that on scientific or technical grounds the concept has merit. The proponent is invited to approach STAP for advice at any time during the development of the project brief prior to submission for CEO endorsement.
	* In cases where the STAP acknowledges the project has merit on scientific and technical grounds, the STAP will recognize this in the screen by stating that <i>“STAP is satisfied with the scientific and technical quality of the proposal and encourages the proponent to develop it with same rigor. At any time during the development of the project, the proponent is invited to approach STAP to consult on the design.”</i>
2. Minor issues to be considered during project design	STAP has identified specific scientific /technical suggestions or opportunities that should be discussed with the project proponent as early as possible during development of the project brief. The proponent may wish to:
	(i) Open a dialogue with STAP regarding the technical and/or scientific issues raised;
	(ii) Set a review point at an early stage during project development, and possibly agreeing to terms of reference for an independent expert to be appointed to conduct this review.
	The proponent should provide a report of the action agreed and taken, at the time of submission of the full project brief for CEO endorsement.

<p>3. Major issues to be considered during project design</p>	<p>STAP proposes significant improvements or has concerns on the grounds of specified major scientific/technical methodological issues, barriers, or omissions in the project concept. If STAP provides this advisory response, a full explanation would also be provided. The proponent is strongly encouraged to:</p>
	<p>(i) Open a dialogue with STAP regarding the technical and/or scientific issues raised; (ii) Set a review point at an early stage during project development including an independent expert as required. The proponent should provide a report of the action agreed and taken, at the time of submission of the full project brief for CEO endorsement.</p>