

**STAP guidelines for screening GEF projects**

Part I: Project Information	Response
<b>GEF ID</b>	10390
<b>Project Title</b>	Integrated Forest Landscape Management for Strengthening the Northeastern and Eastern Forest Corridors
<b>Date of Screening</b>	May 22 2020
<b>STAP member screener</b>	Rosie Cooney
<b>STAP secretariat screener</b>	Virginia Gorsevski
<b>STAP Overall Assessment and Rating</b>	<p><b>Minor</b></p> <p>STAP welcomes this project from FAO to strengthen the conservation of globally significant biodiversity in four landscape complexes of Northeastern and Eastern Thailand through improved management of forests between and around protected areas.</p> <p>Overall, this is a comprehensive and ambitious project that addresses habitat loss and degradation outside of protected areas through landscape planning and by mainstreaming biodiversity into forest and land use plans. This is a sound general approach which has been proven effective in past GEF projects (see <a href="#">Biodiversity Mainstreaming in Practice: A Review of GEF Experience</a>).</p> <p>STAP notes, however, that while spatial planning and analysis is a good first step – particularly if used as a means for collaboration among stakeholders – planning is a means to an end and will not guarantee action on the ground. In this respect, more clarity is needed to explain what incentives will be provided to convince people to abandon current practices including those identified as major threats to biodiversity (i.e. forest encroachment, illegal wildlife poaching and trade, unsustainable collection of non-timber forest products) in favor of ‘biodiversity-friendly’ activities.</p> <p>The project identifies numerous outputs intended to mainstream biodiversity, address human-wildlife conflict, connect SMEs to local communities to provide employment, develop SFM certification, etc. However, they are not logically connected in a clear and comprehensive way, including articulation of underlying assumptions. The project would</p>

	<p>benefit greatly from the development of a robust Theory of Change that draws these connections more clearly and clarifies the steps involved in reaching the overall objective. See <a href="#">Theory of Change Primer</a> (Dec 2019) for more guidance.</p> <p>Overall, the focus of this project on areas connecting protected areas is critical and STAP looks forward to seeing how open source tools and spatial planning will contribute to action on the ground and long-term monitoring beyond the life of the project.</p>	
<b>Part I: Project Information</b> <b>B. Indicative Project Description Summary</b>	<b>What STAP looks for</b>	<b>Response</b>
Project Objective	Is the objective clearly defined, and consistently related to the problem diagnosis?	<p>Key threats to biodiversity are: 1) forest loss/encroachment due mainly to agriculture and human settlement; 2) wildlife poaching and illegal trade (including cross-border trade); unsustainable NTFP collection; encroachment by high numbers of domestic livestock; and infrastructure development (highways, road, dam, etc.).</p> <p>The project intends to use a landscape approach to address these threats in general through better planning and biodiversity mainstreaming. This is a good general approach; however, the project offers little detail on how this project will tackle wildlife poaching and infrastructure development. If this is not part of the project, it would be good to offer assurance that these threats are being addressed through another project or that not addressing them won't negate any potential success that accrue from this project.</p>
Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project's objectives?	

Outcomes	A description of the expected short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention. Do the planned outcomes encompass important adaptation benefits?	Outcome 1: enhanced national level government policy and capacity; Outcome 2: BD mainstreaming in national forests; Outcome 3: BD mainstreamed into private land in forest complexes (to reduce HWC?); 4: effective program management, KM, M&E. Planned outcomes.  Outcomes may have adaptation benefits though this is not the stated primary purpose of the project.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	Yes
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?	This is a relatively small project at \$3 million in GEF Funding. Yet there are 17 outputs listed – some of which are clearly outputs (i.e. practical guidance for incorporating BD standards and principles into private forest and agriculture) whereas many others read more like outcomes (i.e. community forestry networks strengthened).
<b>Part II: Project justification</b>	A simple narrative explaining the project's logic, i.e. a theory of change.	
<b>1. Project description.</b> <b>Briefly describe:</b> 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?	The project makes a compelling case for why it is critical not only to safeguard protected areas but also to ensure that actions are taken to ensure that human activities occurring in buffer areas and corridors are managed to reduce impact to habitat and wildlife. This has been proven in numerous scientific studies as well (see DeFries <i>et al.</i> , (2005) Increasing Isolation of Protected Areas in Tropical Forests Over the Past Twenty Years. <i>Ecological Applications</i> 15(1): 19 – 26).
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	Yes
	For multiple focal area projects: does the problem statement and analysis identify the drivers of environmental degradation which need to be addressed through multiple focal areas; and is the objective well-	N/A

	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 scenario discusses various initiatives and programs as well as recommendations from a recent study to address habitat fragmentation in the corridor areas. The project will establish a monitoring system for biodiversity and socio-economic indicators which is hopeful; however, baseline information is not provided for either in the PIF.
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits?	See above.
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	See above.
	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	N/A
	how did these lessons inform the design of this project?	N/A
3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project	What is the theory of change?	<p>No theory of change is presented in this project. A well-designed ToC would be of great value in articulating the overall logic of the project and pathways for achieving stated goals. This project has numerous outputs which could be better linked to outcomes and the ultimate objective by working through a ToC which identifies project assumptions and multiple pathways. See <a href="#">Theory of Change Primer</a> (Dec 2019) for more guidance. The ToC would also highlight underlying assumptions which are not entirely clear in this project.</p> <p>For example, one risk identified in this project is 'resistance towards biodiversity conservation in areas outside of PAs' which is to be addressed in</p>

		Component 3 through “increased awareness and capacity to sustainably utilize local biodiversity benefits for improving livelihoods.” The assumption that increased awareness and capacity will be sufficient to alter behavior should be explicitly highlighted in the ToC. Highlighting key assumptions that underlie steps in the TOC enables them to be monitored and draws attention to the need to consider other alternatives if they do not prove true in practice.
	What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?	Not clear if there is a sequence or if actions are taking place simultaneously.
	What is the set of linked activities, outputs, and outcomes to address the project’s objectives?	Like many GEF projects, this one begins with efforts to strengthen inter-departmental collaboration to develop policies and guidelines on land use planning that incorporates biodiversity benefits. It also seeks to work with community forestry networks and clarify land tenure and assess (and presumably establish) incentives for local communities to benefit from conservation and forest management and adopt SAFE system to address HWC and also develop linkages between producer association and national and international actors. In sum, there are several interesting activities; however, the overall logic and sequence requires considerable strengthening.
	Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions?	Some of the underlying assumptions can be found in the risk section and elsewhere, highlighting lack of coordination and lack of incentives to change existing behavior which threatens habitat (i.e. encroachment, agriculture, poaching, etc.) These should be incorporated into a robust ToC to indicate which assumptions underlie achievement of which planned outputs and outcomes.

	Is there a recognition of what adaptations may be required during project implementation to respond to changing conditions in pursuit of the targeted outcomes?	Component 4 on project management discusses adaptive management following the MTE and analysis of data.
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?	Yes
	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?	Biodiversity and carbon benefits are global – biodiversity benefits are also local and national – particularly wildlife which is a national asset.
	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	GEF funding is minimal (\$3.1 million over four years) and should be adequate to produce outputs listed in the various components.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits explicitly defined?	This project expects to achieve 1,365,000 ha (13,650 km <sup>2</sup> ) of area under improved practices (outside of PAs) and 10,000 ha that meets national or international third-party certification that incorporates BD considerations. Key species are listed.
	Are indicators, or methodologies, provided to demonstrate how the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits will be measured and monitored during project implementation?	A system is proposed under Output 4.3 to monitor biodiversity and socio-economic indicators beyond the lifetime of the project. Toolkits (Open Foris) and systems (SLMS) are proposed but not specific indicators.
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project's resilience to climate change?	In general, the project is anticipated to enhance the resilience of biodiversity and livelihoods to the adverse impacts of climate change through inclusion of climate information into planning.
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?	The project claims to be innovative through the integration of social and economic values of biodiversity into land-use planning and

		<p>management, which the project states is a new concept in Thailand. However, there are several other GEF projects underway in Thailand related to BD mainstreaming (GEF ID 10409, 3940) and natural capital accounting (GEF ID 9542).</p> <p>However, the use of Open Foris tools for environmental monitoring is innovative for a GEF project and specific information on which tools and how they will be applied for long-term monitoring would be helpful prior to CEO Endorsement.</p>
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	The project envisions that success in these sites will be replicated in other wildlife corridors in Thailand in in neighboring Cambodia and Lao PDR. Institutional capacity resulting from this project will make that possible.
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	
<b>1b. Project Map and Coordinates.</b> Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.		A map is provided in Section 1b, albeit very poor resolution. No geo-coordinates are given. See <a href="#">Earth Observation and the GEF</a> – Section A1.0 (p. 64) for recommendations on providing geo-referenced information.
<b>2. Stakeholders.</b> 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.	Have all the key relevant stakeholders been identified to cover the complexity of the problem, and project implementation barriers?	<p>Stakeholders identified and roles explained. Most stakeholders are national government agencies. Local communities and CSOs are identified including academic institutions – though none specifically mentioned by name. Same for private sector entities apart from the PFPC.</p> <p>Beyond identifying stakeholders, the project did not identify (or assess) any concerns around levels of conflict among stakeholders' values with respect to the intended interventions.</p>

<p>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>Key to success in this project is the role of the private sector in supporting biodiversity-friendly enterprises that will allow individuals to alter current practices while still maintaining their livelihoods. However, the section on Private Sector Engagement focusing on the support for SMEs to provide local employment opportunities is devoid of detail and merely states that the project will “...engage with private sector stakeholders from sectors that can contribute to the project outcomes...with a view to establishing public-private partnerships that demonstrate economically viable biodiversity-friendly and sustainable livelihood models.”</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>Stakeholder roles and responsibilities are outlined in a table (pp. 51-52) and will be consulted during PPG phase through participatory approaches and (presumably) throughout the lifetime of the project.</p>
<p><b>3. Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment.</b> 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 empowerment? Yes/no/tbd. If possible, indicate in which results area(s) the project is expected to contribute to gender equality: access to</p>	<p>Have gender differentiated risks and opportunities been identified, and were preliminary response measures described that would address these differences?</p>	<p>Yes. A detailed gender assessment will be undertaken during PPG phase, as well as a gender action plan.</p>

<p>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 /td</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>See above.</p>
<p><b>5. Risks.</b> 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"> <li>• 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?</li> <li>• Has the sensitivity to climate change, and its impacts, been assessed?</li> <li>• Have resilience practices and measures to address projected climate risks and impacts been considered? How will these be dealt with?</li> <li>• What technical and institutional capacity, and information, will be needed to address climate risks and resilience enhancement measures?</li> </ul>	<p>All of the risks are ranged "moderate" and are generally mitigated through the various components so that they are in fact within the project's control (i.e. lack of coordination, resistance towards BD conservation, limited impact from sustainable utilization of biodiversity benefits to incentivize behavior change at the local level). The one exception is climate variability and climate change, which will be addressed through a detailed climate risk screening during PPG phase with proposed mitigation measures to be built into the final project design.</p>
<p><b>6. Coordination.</b> Outline the coordination with other relevant GEF-financed and other related initiatives</p>	<p>Are the project proponents tapping into relevant knowledge and learning generated by other projects, including GEF projects?</p>	<p>This proposed project is one of many GEF-funded projects in Thailand. Some but not all are mentioned in the PIF. This project would be well served by reviewing MTEs and TEs from prior projects for lessons that could be applied to this project.</p>
	<p>Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?</p>	<p>There is some recognition of other related projects (i.e. GEF ID 5726) and an intent to liaise with and apply lessons to this proposed project.</p>

	Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?	Partially.
	How have these lessons informed the project's formulation?	Not really though the project will draw on knowledge and tools from GEF/UNDP project on Natural Capital Accounting (GEF ID 9542) for this proposed project. Also the project will consult with the FAO-EU FLEGT programme to build upon the lessons learnt from past projects on promoting the legal timber trade and improving forest governance
	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 – mainly through the Project Management Unit (PMU)
<b>8. Knowledge management.</b> 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?	A general knowledge management strategy for the project will be developed during the PPG stage. Will use existing platforms to share information. Spatial analyses will provide baseline information that can be monitored over time.
	What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?	Will use existing platforms to share information.

## Notes

STAP advisory response	Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed
1. <b>Concur</b>	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 <b><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></b>
2. <b>Minor issues to be considered during project design</b>	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><b>3. Major issues to be considered during project design</b></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>