STAP SCREEN

GEF ID	11349
Project title	Clean and Healthy Ocean Integrated Program (CHO-IP)
Date of screen	24 January
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1. **Summary of STAP's views of the project**

STAP acknowledges the Clean and Healthy Oceans Integrated Program which aims to reduce coastal pollution resulting in harmful marine hypoxic zones. This program addresses a crucial environmental concern of global relevance and has very high potential for achieving global environmental benefits (GEBs). While STAP has minor concerns regarding program design related to risks and assumptions in the theory of change (ToC), overall this is a well conceived and well designed program.

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*

X   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 objective of the Clean and Healthy Oceans Integrated Program (CHO-IP) is to address marine hypoxic zones by curbing coastal pollution from agriculture, industrial, and municipal sources through policy and regulatory measures and infrastructure investments combined with nature-based solutions (NbS). GEBs and other expected results are clearly described, including contributions to the GEF 8 Core Indicator Targets. The sectors that need to engage/change their behavior in order to achieve the objectives – especially in light of the barriers – are vast, complex and diverse, requiring a range of different interventions (e.g. between agriculture and industry), creating a potential risk of the program being spread quite thinly. This requires a clear prioritization of actions.

Overall, the project document (PFD) is well written and clearly structured. The problem is clearly described, including all the contributing factors. The barriers are also clear, noting that knowledge/awareness, policy/regulation and innovation are significant challenges to be tackled, especially across as many countries (with high diversity) as the program intends to work in. This is clearly acknowledged in the PFD.

Similarly, the program design is well conceived and articulated. However, a key challenge, which the PFD addresses but could potentially strengthen, is the translation of stakeholder awareness (through advocacy, knowledge, etc. under Component 1) into concrete action, especially as changing behavior will not be in the interest of all relevant actors and stakeholders given potential economic losses, etc. It will not be sufficient for relevant actors to know and to be aware of hypoxia challenges and their contribution to them. Rather, a mix of incentives and enforcement will most likely be needed to induce real and lasting change. While Component 2

addresses this to some extent (with a focus on policy, regulations and investment), there are some potential gaps, especially on the legal side at the national and local level (including their implementation and potential enforcement), with only 2 outputs partially focusing on this challenging aspect. More involvement in national legislation and enforcement might not be possible for this program – this should be clearly stated as a limiting factor in the PFD.

The knowledge sharing component of this program that links child projects is convincingly presented; however, more information should be provided regarding potential differences in progress, and how these differences may impact the larger program. This will require leadership from the Global Coordination Project as well as strong commitment by all child projects and related stakeholders.

The program includes a comprehensive accounting of relevant stakeholders, with the possible exception of the gender dimension. Specifically, while the challenges relating to gender issues such as power structures, voice, etc. are well described, more information is needed to understand *how* they will be addressed, especially in light of various economic, societal and cultural barriers.

Finally, STAP appreciates that the program design is linked to other existing and newly developing initiatives globally and in some of the targeted regions. In the future, it would be beneficial to consider whether more riparian countries to the LMEs, currently not part of the CHO IP, could be included, given that pollutant inflows do not come from the included countries only (e.g. not only Moldova in the Black Sea or Vietnam in the South China Sea).

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 these observations, STAP suggests the following:

1. Clarify how additional knowledge will lead to behavior change and action beyond merely the assumption that better knowledge and better access to it/improved awareness will automatically result in necessary behavior change. This should also be reflected in the ToC.

2. Elaborate on how potential unwillingness/lack of incentives/lack of regulation and enforcement are being addressed in the program, understanding that greater knowledge and more awareness and improved technologies alone will likely not be sufficient to change behavior. What are the associated risks and how will they be addressed by the program?

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.)