

## TAP guidelines for screening GEF projects

Part I: Project Information	Response
<b>GEF ID</b>	10586
<b>Project Title</b>	Integrated Management of Protected Areas in the Arid Regions of Mauritania (IMPADRA)
<b>Date of Screening</b>	17 May 17, 2021
<b>STAP member screener</b>	John Donaldson
<b>STAP secretariat screener</b>	Alessandro Moscuza
<b>STAP Overall Assessment and Rating</b>	<p><b>Minor issues to be considered during project design.</b></p> <p>Our review concluded that this project proposal is well-presented, carefully thought through and clearly articulated. Overall, we found a coherent narrative, which was supported by a well-constructed and presented set of arguments, which in turn were informed by a good use of the available data, statistics and references. The proposal has had to rely on limited biodiversity data for Mauritania, which means that the GEBs cannot be confirmed at this stage. In our assessment, the PIF together with the ancillary documents provided a solid case for funding this project on the understanding that the GEBs can be more clearly defined and linked to measurable outcomes in the PPG. The PIF included a well-structured Theory of Change section, which illustrated the logical pathway to impact that the project is intending to follow, and we found this to be sound and based on thoroughly thought through arguments. However, we also found a couple of areas in the proposal that could be improved either at the project design stage or during the inception phase of the project. These were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>Be more clear about geographic components and their contribution to the project.</u> It is not always clear whether the outputs and outcomes are focused only on the 200,000ha El Ghallâouîya and landscapes linking up to Guelb er Richat or the entire area of 2 200 000 ha. This seems to be dealt with differently in component 1 (only the ‘new’ PA ) &amp;2 (? entire PA) or at least it is not certain which areas are being referred to. The narrative and TOC identify poor governance across the Waliya as a barrier but the responses imply that the focus on the 200,000ha will solve this. It should be clear throughout whether the focus is only on the 200,000 ha and the 50,000 ha buffer (about 10% of the Guelb er</li> </ul>

Richat reserve) or the entire area. This will be particularly important for the GEBs (see below).

- Provide more measurable outcomes for the expected GEBs from the addition of the 200,000 ha PA. The proposal notes that the inventory of biodiversity at this stage is too limited to provide baselines and targets for specific ecosystems or species that may be under threat. However, the proposed improvement in the status of only 4 unspecified animal species does not represent a significant contribution to GEBs since many of the taxa listed are widespread and not threatened, and a 10% increase in local population size may not provide any meaningful GEB. The PPG will need to provide more precise baselines and targets. If the important water sources and associated vegetation in El Ghallâouïya are critical for the survival of some of the taxa found in the area it should be possible to identify the affected taxa and propose how the improved management of this area will affect conservation in the much bigger combined area of Guelb er Richat and El Ghallâouïya.
- Component structure: our review concluded that for a project of this size, scope and duration three components were imply not enough, also we suggest that component 3 is restructured and rationalized (see comments below).
- Risk assessment: our assessment found that the PIF included a good range of risks an that the analysis of their likelihoods and potential impact on project operations was sound. However, for some reason, this was not translated into what we thought would be the correct risk levels for a number of categories. We also found that some of the mitigations for the risk categories highlighted below could be improved and that risk analysis should stretch beyond the very narrow scope of the project activities to cover project durability and sustainability over time (i.e. beyond the life cycle of GEF initial funding) - (see further comments below).
- Behavior change: The success of this project will be in considerable part tied with the achievement of changes in behavioral patterns by a range of stakeholders on the ground (e.g. around gender issues, which were also identified as one of the risk factors). However, we could find only one mention of this in the ToC. It would be our advice that the implementing agencies develop a

	<p>behavior change strategy or plan during the inception phase of the project to include objectives and/or expectations for the full range of key stakeholders that have been identified. In addition, behavior change will require significant social facilitation given the existence of long-established lifestyles and practices and the importance of the area as a water source for pastoralists and agriculture. Component 2 relies on financial incentives and new biodiversity-based enterprises to drive changes in behavior but seems to require more actions relating to social processes. The proposal refers to other projects focusing on alternative livelihoods and should build on lessons learned from these projects for uptake and acceptance of different lifestyles and livelihoods.</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?	Yes, the project objective is clearly stated, and it is consistent with the problem diagnosis.
Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project's objectives?	The project has three components which include approximately 15 types of activities. These are broadly in line with the project's objectives but could be better structured to offer a more appropriate level of support. More specifically, three components are simply not enough for a project of this size and duration. This is most acutely reflected in component three, which is effectively a repository for a range of corporate activities and requirements (i.e. gender mainstreaming, knowledge management and communications) that appear to have been grouped together without an apparent logic. In order to fix this issue, the project proponent should either add one or two additional components or restructure and better articulate component three.
Outcomes	A description of the expected short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention.	Yes, the PIF includes a description of the expected short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention. However, some of the proposed outcomes should be refined to ensure they are coherent and consistent; Outcome 1.4 <i>Population size of at least 4 animal species is known...</i> should be refined as it is too vague.

	Do the planned outcomes encompass important adaptation benefits?	<p>Outcome 2 currently reads as: <i>Financial Sustainability mechanisms improve the management effectiveness of the PA in Adrar</i>. Financial sustainability does not normally lead to improved management and effectiveness of PAs, rather it leads to their (financial) viability and durability over time. Improved management and effectiveness are normally achieved through implementation and co-ordination of targeted activities on the ground by well-trained and resourced staff, that are informed by good management plans, technical knowledge and data.</p> <p>The planned outcomes did not include any adaptation benefits.</p>
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	Yes, if the proposed activities are implemented correctly on the ground then the global environmental benefits are likely to be generated.
Outputs	<p>A description of the products and services which are expected to result from the project.</p> <p>Is the sum of the outputs likely to contribute to the outcomes?</p>	<p>For outcome 1 yes, although for output 1.1.5 it will be important that the kind of duties that the staff in the regional office will be trained to and expected to perform (i.e. what type of enforcement, using what means etc.) is carefully calibrated to ensure that technical assistance and support are translated into results. This is one of the most important elements of the whole project, which is going to determine the success of the intervention. Ecological monitoring, data collection and TA/capacity building without adequate implementation will quite simply not deliver the results stated in the project objective.</p> <p>In addition, the outputs under components 2 &amp;3 do not seem complete enough to deliver alternative livelihoods and improved capacity to integrated land management and NRM</p>
<b>Part II: Project justification</b>	A simple narrative explaining the project's logic, i.e. a theory of change.	The PIF included a very well written and comprehensive introduction section, which provided a good overview and introduction to the geographical, socio-political and economic context of Mauritania.
<b>1. Project description.</b> <b>Briefly describe:</b> 1) the global environmental and/or adaptation problems, root causes and barriers that	Is the problem statement well-defined?	Yes, the problem statement was presented in a very adequate fashion and was also clearly defined. The relevant section in the PIF presented a clear picture of the country and its environment as well as its geography, ecology and natural resources. Where data was not available (i.e. biological resources and species diversity)

need to be addressed (systems description)		it was said so clearly and provided a good justification of why this was the case.
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	The main PIF document also included a description of what were identified as the main constraints and barriers that could affect the implementation and success of project activities. These were organized into three types (i.e. environmental, institutional & governance, and technical capacity), which corresponded with the general understanding of issues affecting Mauritania more broadly. The section was substantiated by a good use of data but was light on references. Whilst this lack of references is probably not as serious as to warrant a revision on this occasion, in future is recommended that the data used is better referenced, especially as there is a wealth of publications from donor agencies and development banks that can be accessed readily on most of these topics.
	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-defined, and can it only be supported by integrating two, or more focal areas objectives or programs?	N/A
2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects	Is the baseline identified clearly?	Yes, the baseline scenario section of the PIF identified on the one hand the existing strategies and commitments undertaken by the Islamic Republic of Mauritania (IRM) and on the other it identified a total of 8 associated baseline projects, which are already operational in the Adrar region, where this project will also operate.
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits?	The information provided in the baseline section of the PIF provides some basis to identify and define the added benefits of this project. However, it does not go as far as providing the full range of information to quantify these in relation to existing benefits accrued from other interventions. In order to do that, the baseline information should include more detailed data about the expected outputs and outcomes of all the associated baseline projects described within it, as well as those expected from other commitments and investments made by the IRM. If necessary, this can be done during the inception phase of the project.
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	Yes, as outlined above, the baseline provides enough evidence to identify the additional benefits that will be

		provided by this project and thus to justify the additional investment for this project.
	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?	The objective of this project is to enhance the conservation of key species in the arid region of Adrar through the creation and sustainable management of a new (PA) Protected Area (200,000ha) and through sustainable land management in production systems in 50,000 ha adjacent to the new PA. In the proposed alternative scenario, the project aims to create a terrestrial protected area and to build on current efforts by the Government of the IRM to establish the necessary institutional structures, capacity and legal provisions to ensure effectiveness in their management. The project proposes a suite of interventions that address the institutional and policy gaps, financial sustainability, livelihoods and knowledge products to support sharing of lessons, awareness-raising and informing conservation strategic decisions in arid zones beyond the Adrar region.
	What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?	-
	What is the set of linked activities, outputs, and outcomes to address the project's objectives?	-
	Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions?	The project proposal was accompanied by a reasonably well-developed Theory of change (ToC), which included most of the elements that would be expected to be part of it without being too unwieldy. The logical flow connecting the outputs (on the left-hand side) all the way to the long-term impacts and GEBs (on the right-hand side) was smooth and coherent. There was a bit of a mismatch between the 3 barriers identified and the three components developed to address the barriers, especially the strengthening of NRM and integrated management. The mid-term impacts were reasonable and well-proportioned in relation to the long-term ones. The

		assumptions were all based on solid reasoning principles and were included/integrated at several levels of the logical process/low, which was good to see. The illustration aspect was not overly elaborated but was very clear and easy to follow with different colors used for different elements of the ToC, which also included a legend. Overall a very good effort.
	Is there a recognition of what adaptations may be required during project implementation to respond to changing conditions in pursuit of the targeted outcomes?	These were not stated explicitly but could be easily inferred from reading the assumption boxes. However, it should also be questioned whether the ToC is really the place for this type of information, which would be better placed in the (adaptive) management plan or similar document.
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?	Implementation of the proposed activities in an effective fashion should lead to the achievement of env. benefits at the national level/scale, which if aggregated with the (positive) outcomes of other projects could lead to env. benefits on a regional scale. However, the GEBs are still not clear in the PIF and there is no specific justification for improved GEBs through the creation of the PA..
	LDCF/SCCF: will the proposed incremental activities lead to adaptation which reduces vulnerability, builds adaptive capacity, and increases resilience to climate change?	Some of the other projects active in the area, and on which this project builds, deal specifically with adaptation to CC and mitigation of degradation. The component dealing with livelihood is expected to rely on lessons from these other projects. As a result, even though this aspect is not specifically highlighted or discussed in the project proposal, it is likely that the successful outcome of this project would lead to an improvement in the (climate) adaptive capacity and resilience of the beneficiary groups and communities over time. However, lasting climate adaptation and resilience would involve a significantly broader range of factors than those covered in this proposal, therefore a conclusive assessment of this aspect cannot be made based on the evidence provided.
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?	Above comments refer. The available information does not support GEBs. In previous responses the project proponents have referred to additional studies but these were not available. It is possible that the proposed PA could add critical water and habitat for species in the broader area but this is not elaborated on in the PIF..

	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	Yes, especially if considering the amount of actual financial resources invested (i.e. not considering the value of in-kind contributions).
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits explicitly defined?	The GEBs are defined in relation to the KBA but as pointed out elsewhere the area probably does not satisfy KBA standards. The environmental benefits should not really be described as “global” in scale. The adaptation benefits are not defined.
	Are indicators, or methodologies, provided to demonstrate how the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits will be measured and monitored during project implementation?	The PIF include a number of Project Core Indicators, but these were presented in a raw format rather than as part of a coherent M&E framework. The PIF mentioned that the implementing agency will produce a project logical framework, so it is expected this step will be implemented during the inception phase of the project.
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project’s resilience to climate change?	No details about this type of activities could be found.
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?	This assessment could not identify any particularly innovative elements in design, technology, business model, policy, monitoring and evaluation, or learning. The co-financing presented some innovative elements as it included a good mix of in-kind and financial contributions from a variety of sources.
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	No references to this aspect could be found during this review.
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	This review concluded that long term sustainability could be achieved through incremental adaptation, which could be partly achieved as a direct result of implementing this project’s activities.
<b>1b. Project Map and Coordinates.</b> Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.		Yes, the PIF provided these details.
<b>2. Stakeholders.</b> Select the stakeholders that have participated in consultations during the project identification phase:	Have all the key relevant stakeholders been identified to cover the complexity of the problem, and project implementation barriers?	The PIF identified a range of stakeholders and implementation partners on the ground, but as far as it could be ascertained it fell short of developing a detailed stakeholder engagement plan. The scope and range of stakeholders identified was however assessed to be

<p>Indigenous people and local communities; Civil society organizations; Private sector entities.</p> <p>If none of the above, please explain why.</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>sufficiently broad to enable the achievement of the project objective.</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>-</p>
<p><b>3. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>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-</p>	<p>Have gender differentiated risks and opportunities been identified, and were preliminary response measures described that would address these differences?</p>	<p>The PIF made several references to gender and its importance throughout the length of the document, it also made references to the IRM Govt. 2006 National gender strategy and how this could be linked to the delivery of project objectives. However, it fell short of including even an outline gender action plan or strategy, which it said will be developed during the PPG.</p> <p>The references included in the PIFs, were generally quite broad and, in some cases, rather stereotypical but did cover important aspects of gender mainstreaming (i.e. they went beyond disaggregation of data and reporting to include impact on and design of project activities on the ground), which was good to see.</p>

<p>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>-The PIF acknowledges that one of the risks is that a focus on gender participation may conflict with local culture. The plan is to tackle this through capacity building but it is likely to need more nuanced social facilitation.</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>The project PIF includes a risk section, which comprises a risk table and a narrative section with supporting information and data. The choice of risks categories was appropriate and was supported by a very good use of data and information from external sources such as the IPCC. However, we noticed that there was no mention of any potential risk to project operations from terrorism activities in the region. Even though this is <u>currently</u> assessed as being relatively low, we felt this aspect should have been included in the risk section, especially because of its potential to affect tourism, which is an important factor in the medium to long-term success and durability of project activities. In addition, the COVID related risks focused mostly on project level risks such as restrictions on meetings and the need for social distancing. It did not look at the more systematic risks on tourism and how this will impact on ecotourism based enterprises that form part of Component 2.</p> <p>Our analysis also concluded that the risk assessment and related risk levels assigned to a number of risk categories were too optimistic and should be revised accordingly. The mitigation measures for some of these risk categories should also be revised and improved to be more concrete and/or impactful.</p> <p><i>-Lack of technical and institutional capacities... should be <b>medium</b>. -Local socio-cultural practices prevent the inclusion of women... should be <b>high</b> because this is a factor that has a significant potential to effectively derail or hamper the success of project activities for the very</i></p>

		reasons that were identified in the analysis provided in the PIF; <i>COVID-19 pandemic</i> ... should be <b>high</b> , in 2020 the WHO rated Mauritania as a high risk country in terms of Major Infectious Diseases, in addition slow vaccination rates and the emergence of new variants continue to create a very uncertain and risk environment for most countries in SSA ; <i>Climate change</i> ... should be <b>medium-high</b> , especially as IPCC scenario RPC 2.6, which was used in combination with RPC 4.5 to assess climate risk, is now highly unlikely to happen. Higher risk levels <i>per se</i> should not be eschewed or considered to be a negative factor in project design, provided that adequate risk mitigation measures are design and put in place. STAP colleagues would welcome additional discussion on this point if necessary.
<b>6. Coordination.</b> 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, we found good evidence of this in the PIF document. The PIF could have been stronger in providing specific links but there is clearly a lot of other work happening in the area.
	Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?	Yes, as for the above, we found good evidence of this in the PIF document.
	Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?	Yes, in a general form. There could have been more information on insights from other projects linked to CC adaptation, alternative livelihoods and irrigation and pastoralism. These should inform actions aimed at integrated management of NRM and conservation and more biodiversity friendly livelihoods.
	How have these lessons informed the project's formulation?	Yes, as for the above, we found good evidence of this in the PIF document.
	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?	The PIF included a knowledge management section, which covered learning from relevant projects and initiatives in the country and beyond. The modalities for this will only be developed in the PPG.
<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	What overall approach will be taken, and what knowledge management indicators and metrics will be used?	-

from relevant projects, initiatives and evaluations.		
	What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?	-

Notes

STAP advisory response	Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed
<p><b>1. Concur</b></p>	<p>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.</p>
	<p>* 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></p>
<p><b>2. Minor issues to be considered during project design</b></p>	<p>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:</p>
	<p>(i) Open a dialogue with STAP regarding the technical and/or scientific issues raised;</p>
	<p>(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.</p>
	<p>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>

<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>