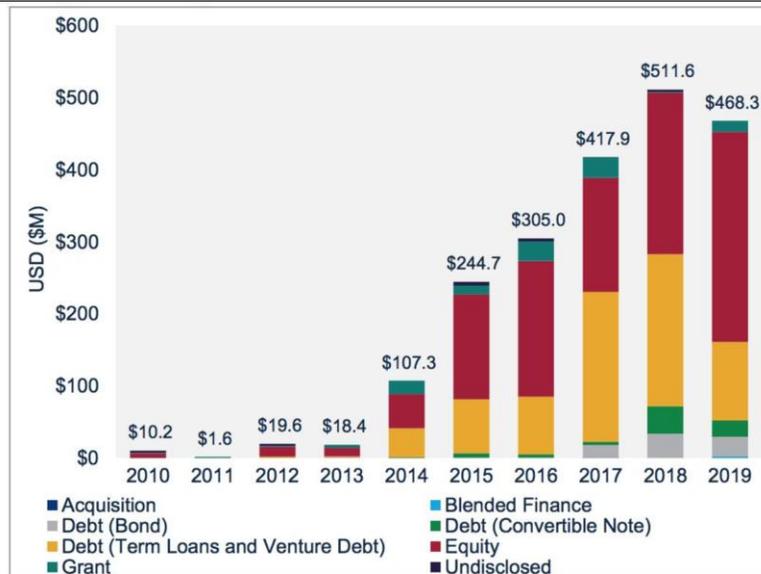


STAP guidelines for screening GEF projects

Part I: Project Information	Response
GEF ID	10667
Project Title	COVID 19 Offgrid recovery platform
Date of Screening	November 17, 2020
STAP member screener	Saleem H. Ali
STAP secretariat screener	Sunday Leonard
STAP Rating	Concur
STAP Overall Assessment of the project proposal	<p>This is a timely project which considers the vulnerabilities of renewable energy markets to major institutional and financial shocks due to the COVID 19 pandemic. The project is professionally presented, and good use has been made of prior GEF and STAP guidance documents, including the climate risk assessment referenced in Section 5.</p> <p>The PIF provides useful and relevant background information and data on why support is needed to overcome the challenges posed by the advent of COVID-19 on energy market solutions in sub-Saharan Africa. It is also very detailed in its methodologies for monitoring the metrics of impact, which is particularly refreshing rather than assuming large benefits without precise process details.</p> <p>An area that the team may want to consider is the existing evaluation of energy assistance funds, and the kind of financing profiles present therein. There is a detailed report which has recently been prepared by Wood Mackenzie related to energy investment funds. A graph from that is provided here as context. The growth in these funds is astonishing, and there are concerns about absorptive capacity and the debt and equity burden, and the "grey swan risk," which should be managed. The risk section of the GEF proposal should note this and consider how to prevent occurrence. See Monyei et al. 2018. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S2214629618300574; and Attia, B; Wood Mackenzie, 2020. https://www.woodmac.com/our-expertise/focus/Power--Renewables/off-grid-renewables-2020s/.</p>



Source: Wood Mackenzie Energy Transitions Off-Grid Renewables Investment Live Dashboard

Limited information was provided on the specifics of the project's technical aspects, such as describing the type of decentralized renewable energy to be deployed. The project indicated that GEF funding would be limited to decentralized renewable energy solutions including Solar Home Systems, Green Mini-Grids, and Small-scale Commercial and Industrial, including decentralized captive renewable energy systems and productive use appliances. STAP encourages the project proponent to adhere to the relevant scientific basis and technical guidance to deploy these technologies to ensure that their benefits are achieved and maximized and trade-off avoided. Relevant literature on these that could be reviewed includes Brown and Casten, 2009

(<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15453660409509037>); Alstone et al., 2015.

(<https://www.nature.com/articles/nclimate2512>); UN, 2018.

(<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/17589PB24.pdf>).

In considering solar power and battery technology, the project proponent should be aware of recent concerns about unintended consequences related to end-of-life management of renewable energy waste and emerging solutions (e.g., IRENA, 2016: <https://www.irena.org/publications/2016/Jun/End-of-life-management-Solar-Photovoltaic-Panels>; Chowdhury et al., 2020: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2211467X19301245>; Tao et al., 2020: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/pip.3316>; ESA, 2020. <https://energystorage.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/ESA-End-of-Life-White-Paper-CRI.pdf>;

	<p>Salim et al., 2019: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0959652618336321). These concerns should be considered in selecting and developing the technical aspects of this project.</p> <p>A preliminary analysis of potential climate risk to the project was presented. It was stated that a risk assessment was conducted in line with STAP's guidance on climate risk assessment, and the findings were included as an annex. This annex was, however, missing. Given Africa's high vulnerability to climate change, we encourage climate risk assessment to be carried out and provided at the PPG stage.</p> <p>While the PIF presents information on the single project component, there is no logical framework for achieving the set-out objective. A theory of change that explains the logical steps, pathways, activities, assumptions, and expect short- and long-term impact can provide this framework and will be useful to guide implementation. The project proponent is requested to develop a project theory of change to be included in the PPG document. For guidance on developing theory of change, please see STAP's theory of change primer at https://stapgef.org/theory-change-primer</p> <p>Overall, an ambitious project but one which has good potential for success as long as the technical aspects, financing risk, and longer-term viability of the energy programs can be maintained.</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?	Yes
Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project's objectives?	The planned activities are framed around deliver of off grid energy that is more resistant to shocks such as the COVID pandemic. The project components are adequately laid out.
Outcomes	A description of the expected short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention. Do the planned outcomes encompass important global environmental benefits?	Yes, the potential for off grid upscaling can have considerable GEB and these have been carefully calculated.
	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.	Yes – these are all linked to the various financing and offgrid delivery infrastructure.

	Is the sum of the outputs likely to contribute to the outcomes?	
Part II: Project justification	A simple narrative explaining the project's logic, i.e. a theory of change.	Not directly but there are two diagrams which show the structure of various components and the overall logic of the project is fairly self-evident.
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
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	Yes except for note in summary evaluation on debt/equity and grey swan risks from the recent report by Wood Mackenzie on this topic
	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?	This project is not focused on degradation.
2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects	Is the baseline identified clearly?	Yes
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits?	Absolutely – much better than many other projects
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	Yes
	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;	There is the pre-COVID baseline and also the broad lack of energy access presented with value of the approach taken by off-grid delivery. The grid interface is not provided and assumed to be far more expensive.

	are the lessons learned from similar or related past GEF and non-GEF interventions described; and	African Development Bank experience is provided.
	how did these lessons inform the design of this project?	Well-incorporated in design.
3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project	What is the theory of change?	Although not clearly presented as such, the theory of change in this case is based on a start-up subsidy for energy delivery infrastructure which would be able to be maintained through energy access companies. The profitability in the long-term of these companies is key to the theory of change and this is where the attached report and lessons and warnings therein should be considered.
	What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?	Presented adequately through various figures in proposal
	What is the set of linked activities, outputs, and outcomes to address the project's objectives?	Much of the activities are to be managed through the various financing steps and the implementation relies on the energy access companies and local government enforcement. Cameroon is noted as a country with clear targets in this regard while others are less clear on policy implementation.
	Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions?	Yes – with careful monitoring
	Is there a recognition of what adaptations may be required during project implementation to respond to changing conditions in pursuit of the targeted outcomes?	Yes

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?	Yes
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?	Yes
	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?	Yes
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project's resilience to climate change?	Yes
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?	Financing mechanism is timely and blended finance is innovative
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	Yes
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	This may be needed in each country case

<p>1b. Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.</p>		Not included
<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>	Have all the key relevant stakeholders been identified to cover the complexity of the problem, and project implementation barriers?	Yes
	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?	Provided in supplementary material
<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 empowerment? Yes/no/ tbd.</p>	Have gender differentiated risks and opportunities been identified, and were preliminary response measures described that would address these differences?	<p>Yes this is provided but there should be a review of some recent research in this regard from South Africa which raises red flags around prior experiences from off-grid projects and social justice.</p> <p>Monyei, C. G., Adewumi, A. O., & Jenkins, K. E. H. (2018). Energy (in)justice in off-grid rural electrification policy: South Africa in focus. <i>Energy Research & Social Science</i>, 44, 152–171. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2018.05.002</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-making; and/or economic benefits or services.</p> <p>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>Accounted for</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>Yes noted</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?	Well-coordinated
	Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?	Yes – from the AfDB side
	Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?	Somewhat but the broader critical material should be considered from the citations provided
	How have these lessons informed the project's formulation?	Described
	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?	
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?	Good coverage in these sections
	What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?	Standard reporting

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.
3. Major issues to be considered during project design	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:
	(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.