

STAP SCREENING TEMPLATE

GEF ID	11729
Project title	Integrated Collaborative Approaches for Sustainable Tourism (iCOAST)
Date of screen	23 November 2024
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1. Summary of STAP's views of the project

This large and ambitious program is intended to “Drive change in the tourism sector by creating an enabling policy and regulatory environment – supported by financial mechanisms and products”. The targeted tourism sector is “high-end” at the national level and particularly in coast zones. The goal, practically expressed by delivering GEBs in 10 of 11 indicators, will be achieved through 4 components of which each has numerous outputs. The measures being proposed range from increasing policy coherence and policy incentives, perhaps implementing regulatory measures (“sticks), to increasing access to a range of financial instruments (“carrots”), providing information for actors in the tourism sector to make informed choices on more sustainable practices that aim to reduce energy, water and material consumption, minimize ecosystem disruption and promote the protection of biodiversity, and minimize waste produced.

This project is intended to have ripple effects on associated sectors such as food and agriculture, plastics, construction and electronics. Numerous implementation agencies are involved, including development banks. The program aims to coordinate with existing multistakeholder initiatives relevant to the intended goal such as for climate action, reducing plastic pollution and protecting biodiversity. The proposal briefly mentions how its design has been informed by “lessons learned” from ISLANDs and other GEF projects on sustainable tourism.

The project is well conceived, organized and promises to deliver substantial benefits. The proponents are encouraged to resolve inconsistencies regarding the focus of the project: is the project aimed at high-end SMEs? If so, are there implications that could adversely impact lower-end SMEs such as a shift in available financing? As noted below, the calculation of GEBs was too brief to assess their veracity. However, the assumptions regarding reductions in POPs and pesticides seem overly optimistic and thus require more explanation.

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*

- 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.

1. **Systems thinking** is used with one example being consideration of ripple effects from intervening with the tourism sector to associated sectors such as food, building and construction and textiles and furnishings.
2. **Baseline, barriers and enablers.** The baseline is very well described. Barriers include policy incoherence between tourism and environmental domains, subsidies, lack of science-based targets, lack of market incentives/financing, inadequate sustainable local supply chains, and behaviour change for both demand and supply.

3. **Uncertain futures** are not discussed but could be useful when considering measures to mitigate possible outcomes should drivers change and assumptions not hold up. For example, an extreme but possible future scenario is the outbreak of another pandemic that could dramatically reduce tourism, as was described for the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Another uncertain future arising from climate change is implicitly considered under the risk analysis but different project outcomes due to climate change are not considered.

4. **Theory of Change (ToC)** includes all major components except for a clear articulation of enabling elements and drivers. The causal pathways are logical.

Assumptions. Five assumptions are listed and addressed through causal pathways (policy, private sector adoption if environmental and economic benefits accrue and that they meet regulatory requirements, competitive financing, local supply chains, receptive tourists).

- Is the assumption realistic that the private sector will adopt sustainable practices based on economic and environmental benefits, or are regulatory requirements needed?
- The proposal targets high-end tourism with the assumption that high-end tourists are likely more willing to pay a premium and they have high consumption rates. This assumption should have been backed by appropriate data and references. Furthermore, is there an implicit assumption of a “trickle-down effect” that sustainable practices started in the high-end tourist sector will lead to their adoption by the entire tourism sector? If so, is this assumption reasonable?
- Overall, for all of the assumptions, it is essential that the proposal considers what happens if the assumptions do not hold true. What will be the alternative options for ensuring delivery of targeted benefits?

Barriers and enablers. Although barriers are listed, enabling elements are not listed or come under assumptions, e.g., private sector adoption of sustainable practices. Tourists with an appetite for sustainable practices could be an enabler – the background information indicates that 45% of people believe that sustainable travel is important (from Booking.com) which is a very large segment of the travelling population.

5. **Project Components.**

1. *Policy and regulations* through developed/ revised policies, regulations and voluntary measures developed at the country level. Presumably sustainability standards and eco-labels will be global or at least widely applicable so as not to create a complex and fragmented landscape for service and commodity providers. Given that the interventions in the proposal will cut across diverse economic sectors, it is essential that the program priorities actions to ensure policy coherence across all of the sector. It is essential that interventions that aim to achieve coherence policies are included in the project activities. Please see [the STAP paper on policy coherence in the GEF](#) for more guidance on this.

2. *Finance and investment* outcome is increasing access to financing that will promote sustainable practices. Outputs under this component are aimed at SMEs but the project as a whole seems to be aimed at high-end tourism – this should be clarified.

3. *Technical assistance and introduction of alternative practices, technologies and business models.* Baseline information obtained from inventories is needed to prioritize activities and evaluate the effectiveness of the program. Will the Global Child Project need to develop protocols to guide and standardize information gathering or will existing protocols be used?

4. *Global coordination & knowledge dissemination.* The program should be commended for promoting open-source tools and resources that could benefit tourism operators beyond the countries covered by the Child projects. While appealing to a global audience, the proposal is mindful of the need for locally accessible information. The KM strategy includes linkages with other initiatives within and outside of the GEF partnerships.

6. **Sectors and stakeholders.** The program specifically targets the tourism sector but as noted above, is intended to have positive spill-over effects for related sectors. Will stakeholder consultations include these other sectors?

The program is mindful of the need to engage with women, youth and IPLCs where, for example, women have a high representation among those employed in the sector.

7. **Contribution to GEBs.** The proposal lists GEBs arising from 10 out of 11 core indicators. The explanation of methods used to calculate these GEBs is too brief to judge the veracity of the estimates. However, it seems unrealistic to assume that “the full weight of the pesticide use will be avoided over the project”. No details are provided to judge POPs reduction for the construction of new hotels since new materials should not include any POPs.

8. The lack of **policy coherence** is identified as a barrier with Component 1 directed to mitigating this incoherence. The program could expand on how the program can support Child projects in addressing policy incoherence between national ministries. See paragraph 6.1 above for STAP’s suggestion on prioritizing policy coherence.

9. **Alignment with current GEF investments.** The program intends to coordinate with other IPs (e.g., plastics, supply chain, FARM) and other UN initiatives (e.g., Hotel energy solutions). The project fulfils goals in the GEF focal areas of Chemicals & Waste (although this requires a better explanation) and International Waters (also requires a better explanation) and Climate Change (presumably through improving energy efficiencies).

10. **Innovation and scalability.** The program has the potential to foster innovation by, for example, promoting the adoption of “green” technologies (e.g., heating and cooling) and supply chains by promoting a range of financial instruments. The program is mindful of the need for scaling up and replicating effective sustainable practices. Given that innovation by nature tend to be more risky, STAP encourage the proponent to carryout a risk assessment in line with the new GEF Risk Appetite Framework to put in place appropriate measure to address the risk of failure. Also, the proponent should consider how the innovation will be scaled if successful. Along this line, it is recommended that the proponent consider developing a theory of change for innovation and scaling of the interventions.

12. **Monitoring and evaluation** will involve tracking GEBs and an agreed set of result indicators (how will the indicators be chosen?). Since the proposal lists ambitious GEB targets for pesticides and POPs, specific attention is needed on monitoring these outcomes. Efforts to build inventories to establish a baseline should be included in monitoring and evaluation activities. The program alludes to adaptive management by using monitoring information to identify underperforming activities. How will the program balance the effort required to track performance and undertake inventory development vs the presumed resultant benefit of allowing for “course correction”?

13. **Risks.** As noted above, climate risks are discussed but mitigation is minimally addressed. Should social risks include the lack of, or slow behavioural change within the tourism industry and/or tourists?

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

The proposal is generally strong. However, several parts of the proposal require further explanation and/or justification, as noted above, e.g., measurement of GEBs and lack of discussion of uncertain futures.

STAP recommends that the points raised in Section 2 of this review be addressed, including the following points requiring attention:

1. Several issues are associated with focusing on the high-end segment. The proposal should address whether increasing access to finance for high-end tourism establishments could adversely impact SMEs in the tourism sector. Although this is stated in the project description, Output 2.1 is aimed at SMEs, youth-, women- and IPLC-led initiatives.

2. The proposal mentions that an innovation is de-risking the adoption of sustainable policies (to minimize that tourism “adopters” would become uncompetitive). Is the de-risking strategy of providing active communication sufficient to deliver this de-risking? (p 38)

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

Project rationale

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.)