

STAP guidelines for screening GEF projects

Part I: Project Information	Response
GEF ID	10684
Project Title	Improving the flow of ecosystem services in biologically-rich watersheds of the Southern region of Haiti
Date of Screening	November 12, 2020
STAP member screener	Rosie Cooney
STAP secretariat screener	Virginia Gorsevski
STAP Overall Assessment and Rating	<p>Minor</p> <p>STAP welcomes this project from UNDP to improve the flow of ecosystem services in biologically-rich watersheds of the Southern region of Haiti. The environmental and socio-economic challenges facing this country are substantial, and this project complements numerous other ongoing activities working to restore degraded lands and build resilience. For this reason, STAP believes that it will be especially important to ensure that activities are well coordinated, including with non-GEF projects (i.e. bilateral assistance such as from USAID), which are not mentioned in the PIF.</p> <p>While the total hectares targeted for restoration and more biodiversity-friendly practices is minimal (250 ha and 5400 ha, respectively), the project acknowledges that poverty is a key underlying factor behind degradation and expressly targets an impressive number of beneficiaries (139,257). Therefore, if a major underlying driver behind biodiversity loss can be effectively addressed through this project, the likelihood of broader, more durable benefits to biodiversity could reasonably be achieved.</p> <p>STAP is pleased to see the use of a multi-criteria approach to select target wetlands with significant levels of biodiversity, high threats, baseline initiatives and community demand.</p> <p>In terms of the Components, Outcomes, and Outputs, STAP believes that the project has many ‘good ingredients,’ but would benefit greatly from simplifying the project to focus its efforts</p>

	<p>where they will be most effective – particularly given the numerous prior and ongoing GEF projects in the country. There are many plans and frameworks and interventions and additional concepts raised without much explanation (i.e. Outcome 3.8 lists the establishment of numerous financial products without much explanation of how it links with other parts of the project). The title suggests that the main focus is on valuation of ecosystem services, but this only appears in Component 4 on M&E and KM without specifying the method that will be used.</p> <p>Overall, STAP is pleased to see this project focus on a few targeted areas and specifically acknowledge the importance of poverty alleviation in order to minimize degradation and further loss of biodiversity. Revisiting the TOC during PPG phase with additional stakeholders (i.e. potential future beneficiaries, creditors, etc.) would perhaps help to sharpen the focus.</p>	
<p>Part I: Project Information B. Indicative Project Description Summary</p>	<p>What STAP looks for</p>	<p>Response</p>
<p>Project Objective</p>	<p>Is the objective clearly defined, and consistently related to the problem diagnosis?</p>	<p>The project objective is “to increase the economic value of ecosystem services provided by restored biological diversity-rich ecosystems in the southern region of Haiti.” This relates to the general problems associated with deforestation and degradation.</p> <p>However, deforestation is so vast and extreme (i.e. reduction of forest cover from 4.4% in 1988 to 0.32% in 2016) it’s not clear that this project to restore and better manage such a small area will make a significant contribution to improving biodiversity and mitigating climate change. Focusing on beneficiaries is important because it targets one of the most important underlying reasons behind widespread degradation (poverty) and this may be the most important part of the project.</p>

		Also the project objective implies that the main focus of the project will be on economic valuation of services; however, this is one of several other components in the project and it is not clear how this valuation will be done. The components are better aligned with the title of the project.
Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project's objectives?	Yes
Outcomes	A description of the expected short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention. Do the planned outcomes encompass important adaptation benefits?	Yes – by enhancing critical ecosystem services through restoration, the project will enhance resilience – particularly in areas threatened by hurricanes, which have become more frequent and extreme due to climate change and which exacerbate degradation and poverty, leading to a vicious downward cycle.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	Yes, though the total hectares restored and under improved management are minimal.
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?	Yes
Part II: Project justification	A simple narrative explaining the project's logic, i.e. a theory of change.	
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
	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?	Baseline information on forest cover is good, and good preliminary information on each of the target areas (pp. 26 – 28). Baseline projects are identified;

		however, does not include bilateral aid such as from USAID, which has a robust program in Haiti. https://www.usaid.gov/documents/1862/usaidhaiti-environment-fact-sheet-january-2020
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project’s benefits?	Output 4.2 will assess the value of ecosystem services before and after restoration. It would be good to know details about the method to be used and it will be important to share this information more widely as it could be used in other GEF and non-GEF projects.
	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?	A TOC is presented (pp. 46 – 47) and while all of the information is there, it is difficult to see how the different outputs are linked to each other. It would benefit from the articulation of causal pathways that clearly indicate how the project is working backwards from the ultimate objective. See Theory of Change Primer: A STAP Document . December 2019. Washington, DC for more information and guidance in constructing TOCs.
	What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?	Planning, frameworks, coordination followed by implementation of 3 main interventions – the restoration of ‘market gardens’ in watersheds, ravine and stream-side areas, and uphill dry forests; the next is establishment of nurseries; and the last is paying farmers (through technical assistance) to maintain tree cover, followed by support for farmers and SMEs through a variety of means (training, certification, capacity building, access to credit, financial strategy development, financial

		products). Supported by M&E, which is where the actual ecosystem services accounting is described.
	What is the set of linked activities, outputs, and outcomes to address the project's objectives?	See above.
	Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions?	Yes; however, there are many risks which are well defined as are the assumptions, and there are so many different activities – it would be good to simplify and link them more clearly.
	Is there a recognition of what adaptations may be required during project implementation to respond to changing conditions in pursuit of the targeted outcomes?	No, though very thorough examination of risks and assumptions.
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?	GEBs are minimal but if the project is durable and scalable, has the potential to deliver significant GEBS.
	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?	Yes
	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	Very small area of ha to be targeted relative to GEF grant.
	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?	No. Unfortunately, methods for ecosystem valuation not described in M&E Component
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project's resilience to climate change?	The entire project (particularly the TA for Component 2) should be helpful in this regard.
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 tracking tool that allows people to geo-locate, identify and retrace a product's history forward (from source to consumer) or backward (from consumer to source) through cloud-based data collection 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?	Very general – based on successful documentation of benefits of ecosystem services.
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	The situation in Haiti is dire. Transformational change will be needed and it must focus on the underlying issues, including poverty and vulnerability to climate change and natural hazards because of the vicious cycle between poverty, natural disasters, and environmental degradation.
1b. Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.		Map is provided but no georeferenced information.
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.	Have all the key relevant stakeholders been identified to cover the complexity of the problem, and project implementation barriers?	Some stakeholders are listed and several more were consulted during the formulation of the PIF but project acknowledges that more work is needed in this area. Missing from the table of stakeholders are the farmers and future beneficiaries, as well as whoever is envisioned to provide access to credit, among others.
	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?	See above.

<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> <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/tbd</p>	<p>Have gender differentiated risks and opportunities been identified, and were preliminary response measures described that would address these differences?</p>	<p>Yes. Gender analyses to be carried out during PPG phase.</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>5. Risks. Indicate risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved, and, if possible,</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>	<p>This project does a good job outlining risks that are not already incorporated into the project design (i.e. lack of capacity, etc.). Civil unrest and vulnerability to the effects of climate change, potential adverse impacts are all outside of the project's control (though if successful the project should help communities adapt to climate change).</p>

propose measures that address these risks to be further developed during the project design	<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? 	With regards to climate change, the project acknowledges the extreme vulnerability of Haitians and this project to its effects. However, the PIF does not present a detailed climate risk assessment.
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?	Yes, with the exception of non-GEF projects (i.e. USAID)
	Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?	Yes
	Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?	Yes
	How have these lessons informed the project’s formulation?	Yes
	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
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?	Communication via a national platform.
	What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?	See above.

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.

<p>3. Major issues to be considered during project design</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>