

STAP Scientific and Technical screening of the Project Identification Form (PIF)

Date of screening: 30 October 2013

Screeners: Guadalupe Duron

Panel member validation by: Anand Patwardhan

I. PIF Information - 5489

Climate Adaptation in Wetland Areas (CAWA) in Lao PDR

II. STAP Advisory Response *(see table below for explanation)*

Based on this PIF screening, STAP's advisory response to the GEF Secretariat and GEF Agency(ies):

Consent

III. Further guidance from STAP

STAP welcomes FAO's proposal on "Climate Adaptation in Wetland Areas (CAWA) in Lao PDR. The problem statement is defined explicitly, and the proposed interventions address the barriers described in the proposal. STAP appreciates the detailed descriptions of the components and their adaptation alternative (additional cost reasoning). The identification of the target sites on the basis of Ramsar wetland criteria is valuable in supporting the project's focus on ecosystems. Additionally, it seems land users were consulted during the preparation of the proposal, which is welcomed since engaging stakeholders early-on, and throughout the project implementation, provides opportunities for local knowledge to be applied in defining adaptation responses. The STAP looks forward to receiving the full proposal, and learning further about these efforts to reduce climate change vulnerability in wetland ecosystems.

To strengthen the proposal further, STAP recommends addressing the following points during the proposal development:

1. STAP appreciates the output indicators provided in the project framework. STAP suggests also providing outcome indicators by identifying what will be measured (e.g. percentage of adaptive practices adopted by communities – component 1).
2. The project description includes useful information on the climate risks the country will likely face. STAP recommends detailing further this information with climate projection, or trend, data available from one of the tools in the Climate Change Knowledge Portal – <http://sdwebx.worldbank.org/climateportal/index.cfm>
3. Under the project description, STAP similarly suggests describing the socio-economic characteristics of the population in the target sites. This information appears missing in the proposal. This information will be useful in detailing the social and economic characteristics of the communities vulnerable to climate risks.
4. In component 1 and component 2, STAP encourages the project developers to consider social and economic factors in the climate vulnerability assessments (component 1), and in strengthening coping mechanisms to address the resilience of wetlands and agricultural management (component 2). The project developers could rely on the following paper (and its references) to acquire further information on ecosystem assessments that account for social and economic dimensions: Spalding, M. et al "The role of ecosystems in coastal protection: Adapting to climate change and coastal hazards". Ocean & Coastal Management. 2013 (In press).

5. Additionally, STAP recommends defining further the following aspects in these two components: i) identifying what ecosystems (wetlands and land based ecosystems) and services vulnerable populations depend on, and which will help decrease their vulnerability to climate risks; ii) define to what extent the target populations depend on these ecosystems; iii) define an explicit link between the target communities and the ecosystems – that is, demonstrate that communities depend directly on these ecosystems; iv) establish monitoring and evaluation systems that assess the project effectiveness through indicators that measure ecosystem health, and indicators that measure ecosystem services delivered to vulnerable populations. It may be difficult to identify some of these indicators; therefore, the project proponents should regard this element as helping to build the evidence base on how ecosystem conservation (or restoration) is contributing to the provision of ecosystem services, and reduced vulnerability on climate risks. These four steps, and other aspects of ecosystem based adaptation, are detailed further in the GEF’s “Operational Guidelines on Ecosystem-Based Approaches to Adaptation”, 2012. GEF/LDCF.SCC.13/Inf.06.

6. In component 4, STAP wonders if an opportunity exists for the project to contribute to the Mekong’s River Commission’s “Climate Change Adaptation Initiative” (MRC/CCAI). The knowledge generated from the project could contribute to the Mekong Basin’s climate adaptation plans – for example, sharing data and best practices that contribute to enhancing regional cooperation on adaptation management. FAO may wish to consider the following paper on climate change adaptation strategies in the Mekong Basin: Kranz, N. et al “Climate Change adaptation strategies in the Mekong and Orange-Senqu basins: What determines the state-of-play”? Environmental Science & Policy 13, pages 648-659. 2010.