



GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY
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GEF/STAP/C.61/Inf.01
November 27, 2021

61st GEF Council Meeting
December 06 – 09, 2021
Virtual Meeting

**REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL ADVISORY PANEL TO THE
61ST GEF COUNCIL**

STAP Chair's Report to the GEF – 61st Council Meeting

Introduction

This report provides an update on STAP's work since the last Council Meeting in June 2021.

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1. Understanding South-South Cooperation for Knowledge Exchange

South-South Cooperation (SSC) for Knowledge Exchange (KE) is not new to the GEF. The GEF's experience provides emerging evidence that SSC for KE is important to scaling, but also that simply creating and accumulating more knowledge does not necessarily translate into good practice, and knowledge generated is often underexploited. This [paper](#) looks at the experience of SSC for KE in the GEF and its Agencies and in other institutions to elucidate what has been learned and what are the challenges and, at the CEO's request, to make recommendations for GEF-8 programming. Data collected, particularly from Integrated Approach Pilots (IAPs) and the Impact Programs (IPs), show that while not all KE activities in these programs can be equated to being SSC for KE, a number of good examples were identified.

South-South Cooperation (SSC) and KE are important considerations in GEF-8 programming, for example, in the Country Support Programs, the GEF Knowledge and Learning Strategy, as well as in the IAPs and IPs. Enhancing this element of programming in GEF-8 can serve to promote innovation, cooperation, and delivery of more durable solutions.

STAP recommends that the GEF should:

- (i) Organise knowledge in a coherent manner. Knowledge should be organized from the perspective of potential users, easy to access and search, and codified in terms of best practices and approaches, rather than by project or program;
- (ii) Harvest the lessons learned in developing and implementing the current crop of integrated programs and apply these in the formulation of the next generation of integrated programming;

- (iii) Develop a database on lessons learned from projects in the Small Grants Program that have involved SSC for KE. These should be codified and easily accessible to the GEF partnership and available for deployment in developing medium- and full-sized projects;
- (iv) Empower GEF Operational Focal Points with the right skills and understanding of how to define KE needs and help develop, implement, measure, and report knowledge exchange results; and
- (v) Consider a partnership with global IT companies to develop a platform to support virtual SSC for KE events and activities across the new GEF-8 IPs.

Ideally, any effort to enhance SSC for KE in GEF programming should be deeply embedded within the GEF's wider knowledge management architecture. Much of the advice above on SSC for KE will be applicable to the GEF's efforts to build an overall framework for knowledge exchange, knowledge development, and learning within a knowledge management structure. STAP stands ready to work with the GEF Secretariat as it develops a new KM strategy for GEF-8.

2. Enabling Elements for Good Project Design

The GEF seeks to maximise the achievement of durable global environmental benefits (GEBs) from its investments, scaling outcomes to achieve transformational change. Over the last five years, recognizing the importance of project and program design to achieve these ends, STAP has focused on approaches, drawing on the scientific community, and in partnership with the GEF Secretariat and Agencies to clarify and simplify how good design can be incorporated into GEF projects.

The main elements of STAP's composite advice are synthesised in this [new report](#) (see Figure 1). Taken together, this advice provides eight "enabling elements" to help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of GEF investments and illustrates how adopting them will 'de-risk' project and program design, thereby increasing the likelihood of delivering durable outcomes that contribute to transformational change.

The enabling elements are presented sequentially in Figure 1, but all the elements are interrelated. For example, systems thinking and using a theory of change (#1) underpin all areas of effective project and program design. Addressing interconnected and interacting environmental and social challenges requires systems thinking in developing a theory of change that determines what are likely to be the necessary and sufficient actions or outputs to make a difference within a system. This is fundamental to achieving better-integrated outcomes, and doing this well requires engaging stakeholders and considering each of the enabling elements during the design phase.

Efficient use of GEF funding to achieve as much as possible with the resources invested requires taking an integrated approach that delivers multiple benefits. Engaging the right stakeholders (#2) and accessing existing knowledge is essential to correctly identifying the challenge to address, and the leverage points where intervention can lead to behavioural and other significant system change, as well as imaginable future changes that might derail progress. Proper stakeholder engagement will also build shared ownership and co-financing of solutions, which in turn enhances the chance of scaling to achieve systems transformation (#7). Effective investments in outcomes with up-front buy-in lead to benefits that, once achieved, are more durable in the face of future change (#3). Innovation (#5) can result in better solutions; analysing incentives helps to drive behavioural change (#4); and effective learning through knowledge management (#8) facilitates adaptation to changing circumstances (#3). Knowledge

management also provides the evidence to support access to future finance and stakeholder support (#2).



Figure 1: Eight enabling elements to maximise enduring GEBs from GEF investments

GEB = global environmental benefit

MEL = monitoring, evaluation, and learning

STAP’s observations of project design documents indicate that a consistent application of the enabling elements can actually reduce the complexity of the design process, making it easier to document and communicate the planning. It is also likely to lead to better results and less need for later adaptive management because it greatly reduces the risks of poor design and implementation. Consequently, a systematic application of these enabling elements when designing and implementing projects makes it more probable that GEF investments will be rated as successful or highly successful at exit. The targeted changes and outcomes are more likely to be achieved because the risks and barriers and the enablers for implementation will have been explicitly identified.

Given the complexity, speed, and uncertainty of global environmental challenges, higher levels of impact and transformational outcomes are vital in the GEF strategy. If these elements are not considered upfront, it will be harder to manage them adaptively later, and changes that were not planned for may undermine the intended outcomes. This synthesis of eight enabling elements distils the enormous depth of experience across the GEF partnership over its 30-year history into comprehensive advice on key aspects of good project design, underpinning the durability of outcomes and contributing to transformational change.

3. How to Design Circular Economy Projects

Many of the planet’s most pressing environmental problems stem from current linear production and consumption models, which contribute to greenhouse gas emissions, biodiversity loss, land degradation, and chemical and water pollution.

A circular economy approach is an alternative to this "take, make, use, dispose" model, which seeks to keep resources in use for as long as possible, extract the maximum value from them while in use, and recover and regenerate products and materials at the end of their service life. In effect, this promotes a production and consumption model based on reuse and recycling of materials by design. A circular economy approach endeavours to ensure that products, materials, and resources are maintained at the highest utility and value for as long as possible while minimising waste generation and use of hazardous materials.

At the last GEF Assembly, STAP recommended that the GEF consider incorporating circular economy approaches in GEF-7, as one of an important set of emerging tools to advance GEBs. Since then, STAP has produced three circular economy reports. The [plastics production, use, and management](#) report showed how a circular approach could reduce plastic pollution and deliver benefits in many areas such as biodiversity, chemicals and waste, climate change, international waters, and land degradation. The report on a future [food system](#) elaborated how a circular economy approach could improve resource efficiency in food production and consumption and avoid adverse impacts of the agri-food system on land, water, and climate. And STAP's advice on [circular economy and climate change mitigation](#) showed how a circular economy approach could support more ambitious climate action and deliver other local environmental and socio-economic benefits. Together, these three reports provide a comprehensive scientific and technical underpinning for the circular economy approach. The GEF is already implementing a number of exemplary circular economy projects including some recent examples from the plastics and textiles sectors (e.g., GEF projects 10683; 10543; 10547; and 10546).

This "how to" [guide](#) builds on STAP's previous reports to offer practical advice on designing circular economy projects. It also draws extensively from STAP's paper on enabling elements, applying the eight enabling elements to the design of circular economy projects.

STEPS FOR CIRCULAR ECONOMY PROJECT DESIGN	
	<p>IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM</p> <p>What material processing activities are of interest? For example, food, plastics, textiles, electronics.</p> <p>What are the problems? For example, use of non-renewable resources, use of harmful chemicals, adverse impacts of production on ecosystems or the environment.</p> <p>Within what system boundaries are the problems occurring? For example, e-waste transported to third countries for recycling, food waste deposited in landfills.</p>
	<p>ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS</p> <p>Who are the relevant stakeholders? For example, manufacturers, retailers, the waste management industry, investors, government, civil society, consumers.</p> <p>What are their interests? For example, governments may seek to promote sustainable development, investors may prioritize profit over environmental gains, citizens may prefer traditional linear materials use over circular approaches.</p> <p>How are the stakeholders related to one another? For example, which stakeholders have the power to change, or resist, outcomes?</p>
	<p>DECIDE ON THE OBJECTIVE</p> <p>How should the resource system function ideally (i.e. in a circular economy)? For example, harmful substances are avoided to enhance recyclability; business models support the return of products for reuse, repair, remanufacturing, and recycling; government provides an enabling environment to support circularity.</p> <p>In an ideal system, what outcomes and impacts are expected? For example, more efficient resource use, reduced greenhouse gas emissions and biodiversity loss, reduced harmful health effects, improved food security, better economic opportunities.</p>
	<p>ANALYSE THE SYSTEM</p> <p>Use systems analysis tools to analyse the system. For example, life cycle analysis, material flow accounting, input-output analysis.</p> <p>What are the system's components and the interactions between them? For example, the food system comprises natural resources like soil and water and is influenced by technology, governance and policies, economics and market factors, and sociocultural factors (e.g. consumer behaviour).</p> <p>How do relevant stakeholders influence the system?</p> <p>Provide a narrative description of the system, ideally with diagrams. For example, systems map, causal loop diagram, concept map, problem diagram.</p>
	<p>IDENTIFY LEVERAGE POINTS</p> <p>Identify leverage points where interventions can lead to significant system change.</p> <p>Leverage points are usually connected to the major drivers of the problems. For example, electronics manufacturing is an important leverage point in e-waste management, and it is connected to important drivers such as demand, planned obsolescence, and natural resources (see Box 1).</p>
	<p>DEVELOP INTERVENTIONS</p> <p>Engage stakeholders in developing interventions, explaining the rationale, and making clear on what assumptions each of the interventions is based.</p> <p>Support bio-based solutions that promote regenerative resources over non-regenerative. For example, agroecology over conventional farming solutions; plastics from bio-based sources over improvement of fossil fuel-based plastics production.</p> <p>Consider STAP's enabling elements (see the Annex). In particular, incorporate innovation (e.g. technology, finance, business model, institutional change) and explicitly address the need for behavioural change.</p> <p>Seek integrated solutions that can deliver multiple global environmental benefits. Consider whether there are opportunities for scaling and transformational change.</p>
	<p>IDENTIFY AND SELECT METRICS AND INDICATORS</p> <p>Use the GEF's results framework to identify relevant indicators to assess global environmental benefits.</p> <p>Consider appropriate metrics for local environmental and socioeconomic co-benefits. For example, reduced air and water pollution, more efficient use of resource (increased recycling rate), increased crop yield, job creation.</p>
	<p>IMPLEMENT, MONITOR, EVALUATE, LEARN AND ADAPT</p> <p>Monitor and evaluate to determine whether the project is on track to achieve the intended outcomes.</p> <p>Learn from monitoring and evaluation and adapt the intervention, as necessary.</p> <p>Use the knowledge gained to increase impact and to achieve scaling and transformation.</p>

Figure 2: A step-by-step guide to designing circular economy projects, with summaries of specific questions and actions required at each stage.

Ongoing work and other activities

4. Replenishment

In September, the STAP Chair and Panel Members participated in technical briefing sessions organized in advance of the 2nd Replenishment Meeting on the STAR, integrated programming, the GEF's results measurement framework, and the concentration of funding among Agencies. At the session on integration, the STAP Chair made a presentation setting out STAP's advice on the benefits of [integration](#) along with STAP's review of the program framework documents for some of the IPs.

The STAP Chair participated in the 2nd Replenishment Meeting, 29 September to 1 October, prior to which STAP had provided written comments on a number of the meeting's discussion papers: the strategic positioning framework, operationalizing the IPs, programming directions, and policy directions.

5. Blue Economy

National commitments to ocean conservation are rising fast, and many high-profile initiatives such as the [High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy](#) have raised the collective international ambition for a sustainable blue economy.

STAP considers the GEF's comparative advantage to include:

- The opportunity to be integrative across a range of environmental issues relevant to the Blue Economy, for example, toxic pollution, biodiversity conservation, climate mitigation, and adaptation, freshwater and marine ecosystems;
- The sustained relationship with a wide range of developing country governments; and
- The long record of investment in the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis/Strategic Action Programme (TDA/SAP) linking national action to regional commitments and institutional frameworks, for example, International Waters investments in Large Marine Ecosystems.

STAP consultations with GEF Agencies and outside experts have underscored a key niche for the GEF in helping translate high-level Blue Economy commitments into practical policy and implementation measures at the national level. Only a small percentage of national action plans to protect the marine environment have been implemented, however, so the economic argument needs to be made stronger: how is leveraging Blue Economy opportunities pivotal to national prosperity? In many SIDS, for example, the 'sustainable blue economy agenda' is essentially the whole national development agenda.

To strengthen the coherence and added-value of GEF investment in the Blue Economy, STAP is developing an advisory document which will propose criteria for investments in this area to be *integrated*, *transformative* and *durable*. These criteria are structured around the four GEF-8 transformation levers (i.e., governance and policy, financial leverage, innovation, and multi-stakeholder dialogue) so that investments in governance and policy, financial leverage, innovation, and learning, and multi-stakeholder dialogue are mutually reinforcing. In addition to the guidance document, STAP will hold a workshop bringing together relevant GEF Agencies, GEF Secretariat staff, and external experts on the Blue Economy in the first quarter of 2022. The workshop will draw on the criteria identified for what constitutes robust Blue Economy investments, based on expert consultations and recent science, along with an analysis of ongoing regulatory processes. The workshop will consider these observations and provide a consolidated final guidance document.

6. Adaptation

STAP participated in the preparatory Technical Dialogue, and in the first meeting on the draft LDCF/SCCF Strategy. In addition, STAP is working on two papers intended to help sharpen the rationale and focus of LDCF projects. The first is a decision-tree tool to help clarify which projects are appropriate for LDCF funding and ensure that LDCF interventions meet an agreed adaptation objective, while at the same time achieving effective adaptation outcomes to maximise benefits for people and the environment. The second paper will review previous LDCF projects to identify what aspects of adaptation these projects specifically addressed (for example: reduced exposure, reduced sensitivity, and/or enhanced adaptive capacity) along with the rationales of these projects and adaptation outcomes. The ultimate aim of this work will be to help refine our thinking on the unique niche of GEF investments in adaptation. It is expected that the results of this work will be completed and presented at the June Council.

7. Scenario planning

The GEF-8 Strategic Framework points to the need to design for resilience in the face of multiple plausible futures. However, STAP's observation is that while projects often identify trends in drivers like climate change, population, migration, conflict, or the economy, they are less good at incorporating these trends into project design to ensure that *maladaptation* (adaptation that turns out to fail) is avoided, and enduring benefits are created.

A solution to this challenge is to introduce possible scenarios of the future early in the design process and look for solutions that are robust across future uncertainty. STAP believes that a very simple application of exploratory scenarios requires minimal resources yet can have great benefits. It can widen the options considered by designers for dealing with multiple sources of future uncertainty. As scenario planning can incorporate climate risk screening, it is expected that this process will actually reduce design load and level of effort in the long run. In addition, this effort can also improve how the assumptions are addressed in developing the project theory of change.

STAP is exploring the role scenario planning can play within the GEF partnership and has examined the existing use of scenario planning in some Agencies (within or outside of GEF projects). Various GEF Agencies already have scenario planning embedded in the project design processes within their organizations and have applied this approach occasionally in some of their GEF project submissions. STAP intends to carry out additional work on this subject and plans to produce a report in time for the June GEF Council. A workshop is also planned in the first quarter of 2022.

8. Co-benefits

The GEF-8 draft policy directions argue for better tracking of co-benefits in the results measurement framework for several reasons: improving the tracking of the GEF's contribution to system change; better measuring of co-benefits towards improving human well-being; deepening the assessment of GEF operations' impact on the economy; strengthening the monitoring and evaluation frameworks of projects and programs; and supporting the implementation of the GEF's delivery model.

STAP's paper on enabling elements notes that integration can deliver significant co-benefits, such as local environmental benefits (for example, air and water quality) as well as socioeconomic benefits such as health and livelihoods improvements. STAP draws a clear distinction between *incidental* co-benefits which may demonstrate significant added value of the GEF portfolio and increase the overall rate of return of these investments, and *pre-requisite* co-benefits which are essential in providing incentives for stakeholders to maintain their support and ensure the durability of GEBs.

STAP is discussing this with the GEF Secretariat, and a STAP briefing note on co-benefits is being prepared.

9. Natural capital

In the draft GEF-8 programming directions document, the proposed biodiversity focal area strategy includes a focus on natural capital accounting and assessment (NCAA) to make progress on mainstreaming biodiversity, by using NCAA to respond to specific target decisions and policy questions. The strategy goes on to say that mainstreaming can support domestic resource mobilization using NCAA to inform the development of policy and regulatory frameworks. In addition, the proposed Blue and Green Islands IP would provide technical support for NCAA as part of the remit for the global coordination function.

STAP is working on a note which will: review a number of recent GEF projects which include NCAA; examine the experience of other institutions with NCAA, including multilateral development banks; explore further the benefits of more extensive use of NCAA in GEF programming; look at the reasons for the relatively few GEF NCAA projects; and consider what more the GEF could do to encourage greater take-up of NCAA.

10. Looking ahead

In addition to completing work on the tasks outlined above STAP is working with the GEF Secretariat on metrics for transformational change, and a possible workshop.

STAP will develop and deliver training modules on how to develop a project Theory of Change (already presented to the GEF Agencies), and on promoting effective multi-stakeholder dialogues in projects and programs, building on STAP's previous work (see [Theory of Change Primer](#) and [Multi-stakeholder dialogue for transformational change](#)). The intention is that STAP will present these training modules at forthcoming Extended Constituency Workshops, in consultation with the GEF Secretariat.

STAP will also submit a report to the GEF Assembly.

11. Other STAP activities

In addition to the activities noted under section 4 “Replenishment” and section 6 “Adaptation” above, Panel Members have been involved in numerous activities of relevance to the GEF over the past six months. STAP participated in the preparatory Technical Dialogue meeting for the LDCF/SCCF Strategy on September 16. The STAP Chair, Dr. Rosina Bierbaum, provided introductory remarks, noting that the LDCF is critical to meeting the adaptation financing gap, and that the GEF has a unique responsibility given its role as financial mechanism for multilateral environmental agreements. STAP also participated in the first meeting to review and discuss the draft Strategy and provided written comments on the draft.

Dr. Rosina Bierbaum, Dr. John Donaldson, Panel Member for Biodiversity, and Dr. Tom Lovejoy, Senior Advisor to the Chair, participated in a GEF scoping exercise on the 30x30 Initiative, represented in Target 3 of the draft CBD Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), which aims to ensure 30% of global land and marine areas are conserved by 2030. Key challenges include defining target sites and estimates of costs. STAP has been supporting the GEF Secretariat in thinking about how best to develop blueprints in a few pilot countries, that can serve as examples of how to achieve this global target through national implementation.

Dr. Bierbaum co-chaired Room 15 (Life on Land) of the 17 Rooms Project convened by Rockefeller/Brookings over the last year. Dr. Lovejoy and STAP Panel Member for Land Degradation, Dr. Graciela Metternicht, also participated. Room 15 floated the idea of a “Natural Security Initiative” (NSI) to catalyse investment in nature to protect and benefit people where they live. Room 13 (climate action) and Room 14 (oceans) offered strong support and joined the effort. The NSI proposal is continuing to evolve, but it has begun with a concerted campaign to put people and equity at the centre of global climate and biodiversity agendas in key high-level meetings in 2021 (e.g., the COP26 climate summit) and 2022 (e.g., the COP15 biodiversity summit and COP27 climate summit). https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/2021-Room-documents_Room15.pdf.

Dr. Bierbaum briefed the Wildlife Conservation Society on June 24 on the role of intact ecosystems in climate mitigation, adaptation, and biodiversity preservation. She recently moderated a [Congressional discussion](#) between Sir Bob Watson and Christiana Figueres on Creating Policies, Coalitions, and Actions for Global Sustainable Development. She was also a panelist in a climate justice session at the Morgan Stanley Sustainability Summit on October 12 with fellow panelists, Rey Ramsey, CEO of Centri Capital, and Harish Hande, director of SELCO-India.

Senior Advisor to the Chair, Dr. Mark Stafford Smith, was involved as co-author with the Global Center on Adaptation of a publication focused on adaptation in Africa, which was launched ahead of COP26. Dr. Stafford Smith co-wrote the chapter on drylands, addressing the challenge that successful adaptation must be integrated with a positive vision for development, which entails recognising how drylands social-ecological systems function differently from other systems. The full State and Trends in Adaptation Report can be found [here](#).

Dr. Lovejoy co-authored a recent opinion piece in the New York Times addressing the issue of deforestation and the importance of tackling this issue as a means of achieving global climate goals, which may be accessed [here](#). Dr. Lovejoy also recently received an honorary doctorate from the College of William and Mary. Other recipients of this award were Dr. Anthony Fauci and Donald Patten, former chair of the W&M Board of Visitors.

Dr. Saleem Ali, Panel Member for Climate Change Mitigation, was invited to speak on the topic “mainstreaming sustainability indicators in chemicals and wastes across supply chains” at the workshop *Anchoring Sustainable Chemistry in Chemicals Management: Development of Milestones and Indicators for International Chemicals Management Beyond 2020*. The workshop was organised on behalf of the Umweltbundesamt (German Environment Agency) as part of a project aimed at a future-oriented contribution to the Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste. In addition, Professor Ali moderated a bipartisan U.S. Congressional Briefing on Science Diplomacy co-hosted by the offices of Senators Chris Coons (D – Delaware) and Lisa Murkowski (R – Alaska).

In early September, Dr. Edward Carr, Panel Member for Climate Adaptation, completed the writing portion of his work as a Lead Author for Working Group II of the IPCC’s 6th Assessment Report, which is due out early next year. In addition, on July 30th he gave a talk to the US Millennium Challenge Corporation on the subject of Equity and Climate Change.

Dr. Donaldson continued as co-chair of the IPBES assessment for the Sustainable Use of Wild Species. The assessment involves 88 social and natural science experts from 37 countries and takes into account multiple world views and knowledge systems that operate within different socio-ecological contexts. The aim of the assessment is to identify challenges and opportunities to establish (or strengthen) measures and enabling conditions that support sustainable use of wild species. The assessment, together with the first draft of the Summary for Policy makers, has now been through the review process and the final draft will be presented to the IPBES plenary in 2022.

Dr. Blake Ratner, Panel Member for International Waters, contributed on behalf of Collaborating for Resilience (CoRe) as co-lead in facilitating dialogue on design of a global action network to enhance knowledge sharing among innovators and funders within the 1000 Landscapes for 1 Billion People initiative. The work of CoRe was also featured in the Stanford Social Innovation Review [“change for the commons”](#). Focused on protecting India’s 200 million acres of community lands, the effort builds platforms to ensure that different stakeholders act systematically, intentionally, and inclusively, and begins locally by building from the ground up – rather than trying to promote quick technical fixes.

12. Observations on the December work program

STAP formally received the Work Program on November 3 and completed the screening process in 2 weeks. A total of 28 projects were screened, which also included 2 LDCF projects. The cumulative STAP ratings on the projects reviewed were as follows: Concur - 8; and Minor revisions - 20.

STAP highlights a few of the exemplars of good project design in this work program below, for using a theory of change, multi-stakeholder engagement, and other STAP enabling elements.

GEF ID 10858 UNDP International Waters, Land Degradation MFA – Securing Climate-Resilient Sustainable Land Management and Progress Towards Land Degradation Neutrality in the Federated States of Micronesia

Micronesia will use this project to develop its National Action Programme on land degradation: it will tackle land and forest degradation, and generate multiple benefits in restoration, and avoided emissions from agriculture, forests, and other land uses. Coastal ecosystems also will be included, especially,

mangroves (to increase their resilience as a nature-based solution) and coral reefs (to reduce mining of limestone).

The project applies a Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) methodology, drawing on STAP's guidelines. The problem analysis is robust, comprehensively identifying root causes of degradation and challenges to livelihoods. For example, declining soil fertility is reducing agricultural productivity; and unsustainable land clearance for agricultural production, and unsustainable timber harvesting, have reduced biodiversity and the quality of ecosystem services.

Economic development is the main driver of biodiversity loss, land, and marine degradation. The project establishes clear links between ecosystem health and services, biodiversity, and livelihoods. A strong problem analysis leads to a well-articulated and logical justification for the project's main components. Causal pathways are outlined which will be validated as the project is designed and implemented. Satellite imagery will be used in designing the project to establish the baseline for LDN indicators on land cover, land productivity, and carbon stocks. FAO's EX-ACT tool also will be used to complement the climate risk assessment and form the basis for monitoring carbon stocks.

GEF ID 10872 UNEP/ADB Chemicals and Waste – Financing Agrochemical Reduction and Management (FARM)

The FARM program will coordinate projects globally to reduce the use of agrochemicals usage and their waste streams. It builds on previous GEF investments, presents a good problem analysis and a well-developed theory of change. The links are drawn out between chemicals and waste and loss of biodiversity loss (the Convention on Biological Diversity has set a target to reduce the use of pesticides by 2/3), land degradation, and water pollution.

The design will investigate circular economy approaches to manage the waste from pesticide containers. STAP commends the focus on agricultural plastics, e.g. mulch film, hothouse film, seed trays, and irrigation drip tape: waste from conventional agricultural practices is usually less well addressed than pesticide use, and has significant potential impacts on soil quality, food quality, and food safety.

GEF ID 10863 FAO Land Degradation – Towards Land Degradation Neutrality for Improved Equity, Sustainability, and Resilience

This project will mainstream sustainable land management into national planning to achieve Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN): it will also generate co-benefits - improved food security and nutrition, livelihoods, and better system resilience, including to climate change. The LDN methodology is well articulated, and will contribute to delivering Sustainable Development Goals 2, 13 and 15.

The project applies the LDN conceptual framework (avoid, reduce and reverse land degradation) in a well-developed theory of change. Baseline studies have assessed the potential of land in targeted landscapes, underscored the analysis of policy options, and articulated the causal linkages between GEBs and co-benefits which support the project rationale. STAP recommends that the project team should consider how to measure and report these co-benefits.

STAP appreciates the planned analysis of behavioural change in designing the project, given that dryland crops like maize and beans are often cultivated more for their cultural rather than economic value – an important consideration when considering LDN.