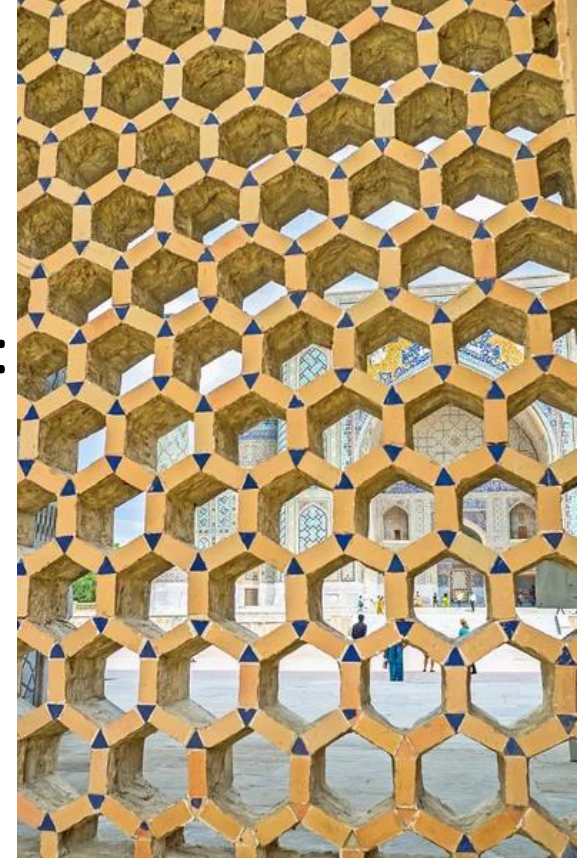# What STAP will look for in good project design in GEF-8

Briefing session
4 April 2023

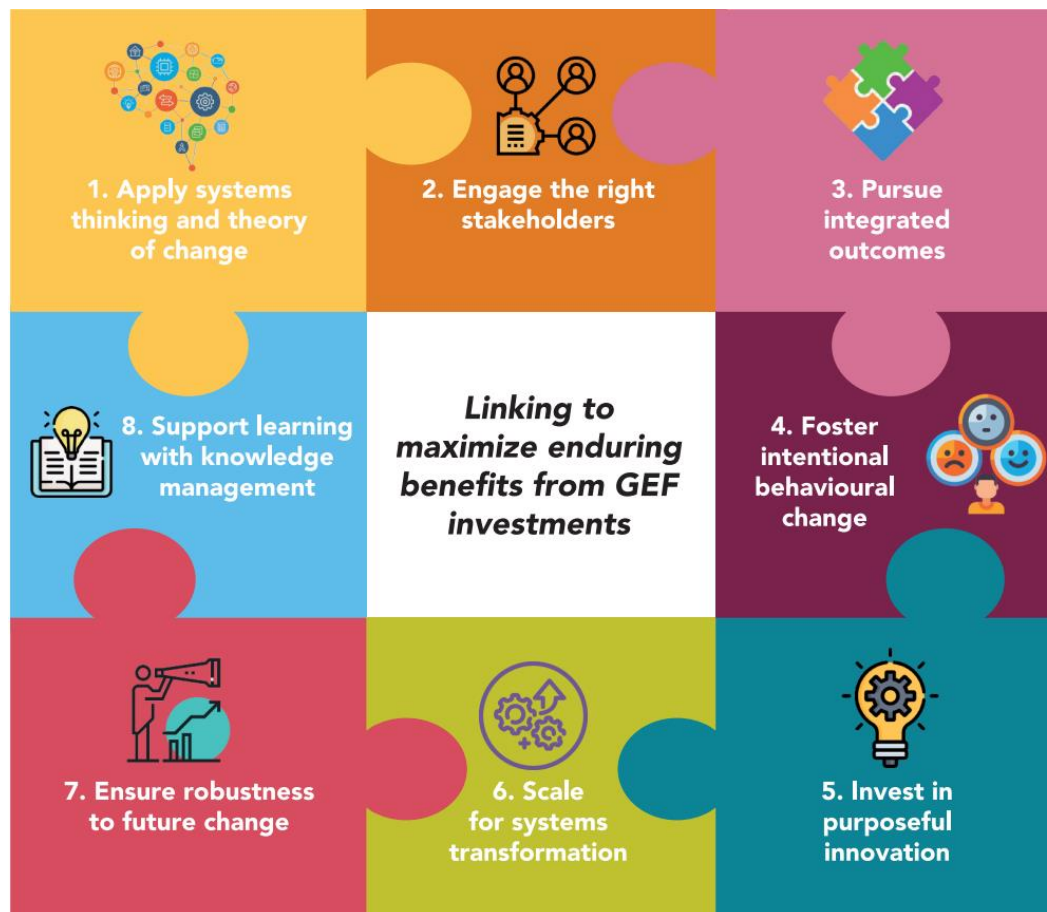*Mark Stafford Smith
on behalf of STAP*

Role of STAP in screening PIFs

- Screening proposals for the GEF Council to:
  - Apply evidence-based principles for good project design
  - Assess scientific rigour of proposals
  - Help the GEF to validate aspirations for innovation and transformation
  - ➢ Using STAP's formal [screening template](#)

- Evolving landscape of leading practice in design
  - ➢ Key concerns for GEF-8: STAP's '[Enabling Elements](#)'

  - *We really want to help to obtain maximum return-on-effort*

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Eight enabling elements

STAP seeking these applied consistently but lightly at the PIF stage, in the joined-up narrative of the *Project Rationale* and *Project Description*

1. Apply systems thinking and theory of change

2. Engage the right stakeholders

3. Pursue integrated outcomes

8. Support learning with knowledge management

Linking to maximize enduring benefits from GEF investments

4. Foster intentional behavioural change

7. Ensure robustness to future change

6. Scale for systems transformation

5. Invest in purposeful innovation

Then developed more fully by CEO endorsement (and through implementation)

https://www.stapgef.org/resources

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Apply systems thinking approaches and theory of change

☞ **STAP** *ToC Primer*

Support learning with knowledge management *(test the ToC)*

Engage the right stakeholders *(in the right way)*
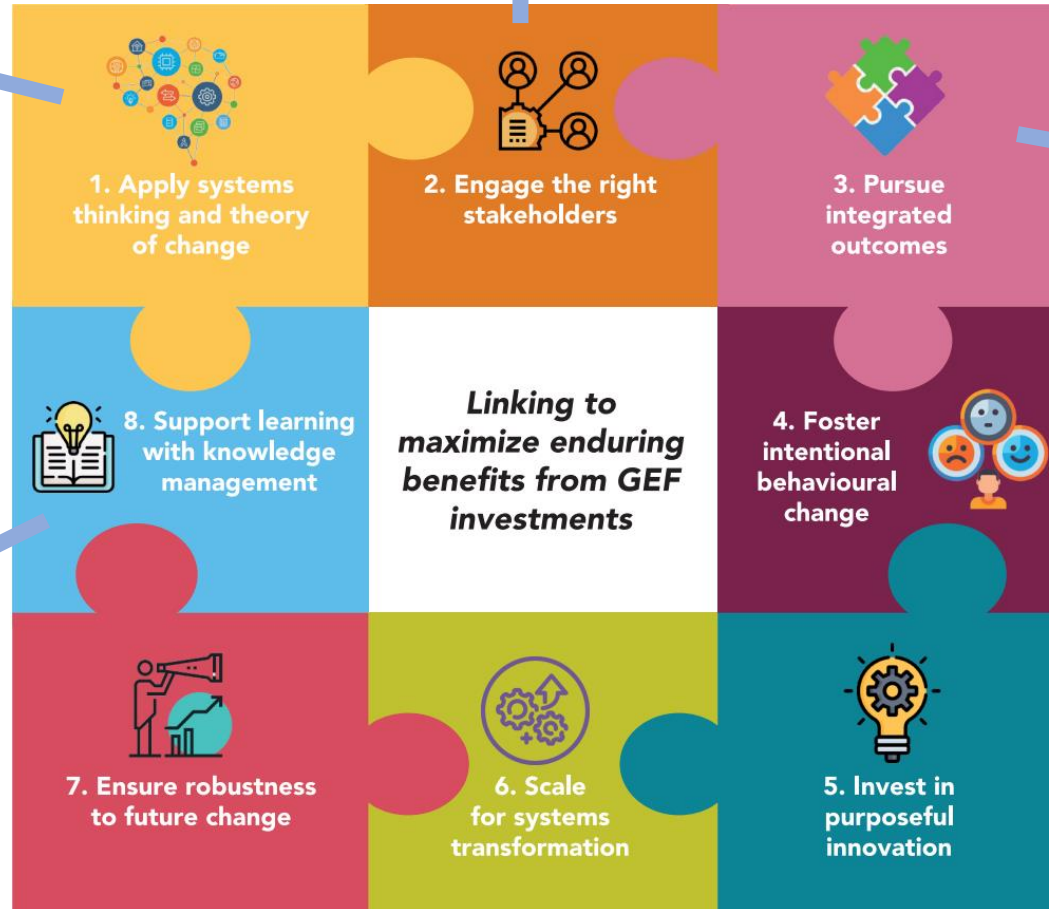
Pursue integrated outcomes *(and relevant co-benefits)*

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Linking to maximize enduring benefits from GEF investments

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Ensure robustness to future change *(and other durability concerns, e.g. policy coherence)*
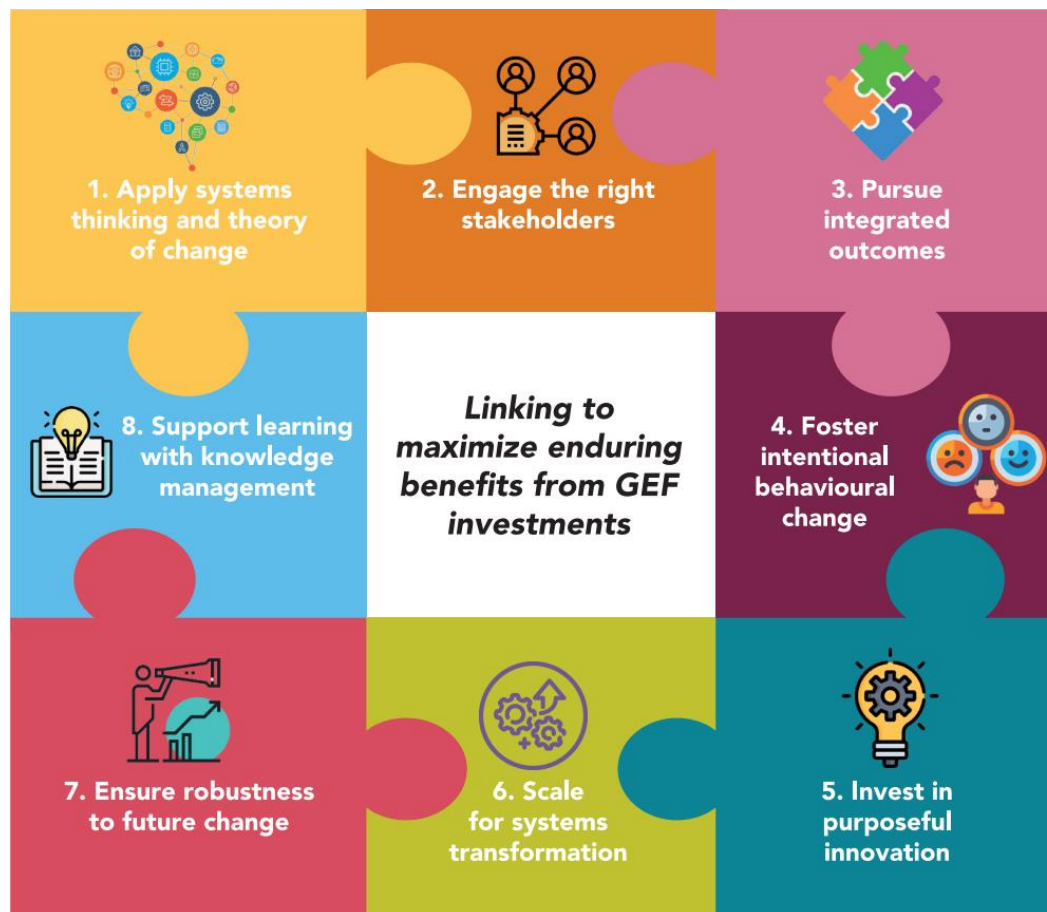
Be explicit about behavioural change *(and changes to institutions)*

☞ *STAP* *Behavioural Change*

Invest in innovation *(taking calibrated risks)*

Scale for systems transformation *(where aspired to)*

1. Apply systems thinking and theory of change

2. Engage the right stakeholders

3. Pursue integrated outcomes

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Linking to maximize enduring benefits from GEF investments

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Linking to maximize enduring benefits from GEF investments

Aspects of a convincing Project Rationale and Description

Project Rationale

1. Define the problem and resulting objectives

- Apply systems thinking to provide a succinct system context and baseline, and identify what long-term outcomes are needed to address the problem.

2. Plan for the future, choose an enduring response

- Show convincingly that you've thought about the future conditions that the project must prepare for, choosing a response that is resilient, and long-term.

Project Description

3. Empower your stakeholders

- Show how you have engaged with relevant parties, including women, youth, Indigenous peoples, other less dominant groups, to test and refine the proposal iteratively, and to define their roles.

4. Provide a theory of change, justify the project components

- Provide a good theory of change narrative, with key causal pathways that justify the project components and how they lead to the intended outcomes.

5. Innovate, scale and transform

- Explain how your project is innovative, and how this will be scaled to contribute towards eventual system transformation.

6. Monitor and learn, manage the knowledge

- Identify what you will monitor to learn and adapt during the project, and how new knowledge from the project will be managed and exchanged.

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Some concluding key insights

1. Define the problem and resulting objectives

2. Plan for the future, choose an enduring response

3. Empower your stakeholders

4. Provide a theory of change, justify the project components

5. Innovate, scale and transform

6. Monitor and learn, manage the knowledge

- **Planning for enduring outcomes isn't an add-on**: it should influence the choices about what interventions make sense

- **Stakeholder engagement** isn't just to define roles in implementation; before that, it's **about having a say in defining the problem** and appropriate responses, and **needs to come in early**

- **Don't begin by defining the project's components** then try to fit your outcomes and theory of change around them (the theory of change should be the basis for determining project components, not vice versa)

- **Meaningful change is often contentious**: expect barriers, including behaviours/ norms/power relationships/institutions, etc; and plan to address them

- **Innovation** needs to make sense in context; if the proposal is a different approach to addressing long-standing barriers, explain how

- **Transformation** happens at different scales; how will the outcomes of this project contribute to the longer (and wider) processes of change that GEF needs to drive?

- **Knowledge management and learning** isn't just about how the project runs; it's **a pathway to achieving enduring outcomes** beyond the life of the project

STAP's advisory documents *(as at Aug 2022)*

Topical reports

1. GEF and the Blue Economy
2. Framing **policy coherence** for the GEF
3. Risk Appetite and the GEF
4. Natural capital approaches
5. Refining the tracking of **co-benefits** in future GEF investments
6. The Circular Economy and Climate Mitigation
7. Why **behavioural change** matters to the GEF and what to do about it
8. Nature-based Solutions and the GEF
9. Delivering Multiple Benefits through the Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste
10. Technology Critical Elements
11. Earth Observation and the GEF
12. Harnessing Blockchain Technology for the Delivery of Global Environmental Benefits
13. Local commons for global benefits: indigenous and community-based management of wild species, forests, and drylands
14. Guidelines for Land Degradation Neutrality
15. Novel entities
16. Environmental security: dimensions and priorities
17. Circular economy: A future food system for healthy human beings and a healthy planet
18. Plastics and the circular economy

Process-oriented reports

1. A decision tree for adaptation
2. Achieving **transformation** through GEF investments
3. **Knowledge Management** and Learning
4. Using **simple narratives** to help ensure the durability of GEF investments
5. **Enabling Elements** of Good Project Design: A synthesis of STAP's guidance for GEF project investment
6. How to design Circular Economy projects
7. Understanding South-South Cooperation for **Knowledge Exchange**
8. Making GEF investments **resilient**
9. **Multi-stakeholder dialogue** for transformational change
10. **Theory of Change** Primer
11. Achieving **enduring outcomes** from GEF investment
12. STAP's guidance on climate risk screening
13. **Innovation** and the GEF
14. **Managing knowledge** for a sustainable future
15. **Integration**: to solve complex environmental problems

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