

Part I: Project Information		Response
GEF ID	10178	
Project Title	Watershed approaches for climate resilience in agro-pastoral landscapes	
Date of Screening	24-Nov-19	
STAP member Screener	Mark Stafford Smith	
STAP secretariat screener	Guadalupe Duron	
STAP Overall Assessment		<p>Minor issues to be considered during project design. STAP acknowledges UNDP's and UNIDO's project "Watershed approaches for climate resilience in agro-pastoral landscapes". STAP welcomes South Sudan's efforts to combine its land degradation STAR allocation with efforts to mainstream climate resilience across policy sectors, and in agro-pastoral and agro-forestry activities in the Aweil State and Aweil East State. STAP is pleased with the context description of the problem, in particular the recognition that climate and conflict are interlinked and affecting the target sites. However, STAP encourages applying systems thinking to fully understand the social-ecological system and account for all types of stressors - climate and non-climate. This careful systems analysis is important for achieving climate resilience of agro-pastoral and agro-forestry practices, while reducing the communities' vulnerabilities to climate change. This analysis will be facilitated by a significant effort to define a good Theory of Change which should ensure that the proposed activities are robust to future changes, and do not create any conditions of maladaptation to climate and other on-going changes (e.g. population growth, changes in demand, etc) in the region. STAP welcomes the climate context and the climate information provided. Despite the lack of climate data, as acknowledged by the project developers, STAP believes there is plenty of information to outline the potential rates of change and consequent uncertainties that people face, which could be combined with other uncertain trends, in population for example. STAP is readily available to engage with the project proponents on how to analyze future trajectories to work through a justification of robustness on the interventions. STAP also would like for the knowledge management strategy to be strengthened and linked to a theory of change, and to scaling.</p>
Part I: Project Information		
B. Indicative Project Description Summary		
Project Objective	Is the objective clearly defined, and consistently related to the problem diagnosis?	Yes, clear but broad in scope ('building resilience to climate change risks') such that a careful analysis is needed of how well understood and certain the climate change risks are
Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project's objectives?	Yes, broadly, but a theory of change and critical assessment of how necessary and sufficient they are as a set is needed
Outcomes	A description of the expected short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention.	
	Do the planned outcomes encompass important global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits?	Yes.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	Yes, with careful monitoring
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, the problem statement is defined well. STAP is pleased with the context description, and the links identified between climate change and conflict. STAP recommends using systems analysis to understand the dynamics that are at play. For example, socio-economic elements, conflict, seasonal migration of agro-pastoralists are important features of the social-ecological system that the project will target. Considering both climate, and non-climate stressors, is important for a full understanding of the social-ecological system, and design of climate adaptation strategies. The project developers may wish to examine the following paper for the project design: Conway, D., Nicholls, R. J., Brown, S., Tebboth, M. G., Adger, W. N., Ahmad, B., ... & Said, M. (2019). The need for bottom-up assessments of climate risks and adaptation in climate-sensitive regions. <i>Nature Climate Change</i> , 9(7), 503-511. Another paper that may be useful for describing the problem context based on the evidence between climate change and conflict is: Mach, K. J., Kraan, C. M., Adger, W. N., Buhaug, H., Burke, M., Fearon, J. D., ... & Roessler, P. (2019). Climate as a risk factor for armed conflict. <i>Nature</i> , 1.
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	Yes, the barriers are described well - barriers on adaptive capacity to climate change, and barriers on land management. STAP encourages the use of citations in the project document to support the statements on barriers. In addition to barriers, the description notes the opportunities from the low level of agricultural development in the region; this could suggest the desirability of a closer consideration of whether there are opportunities to leapfrog some of the standard development pathways to achieve forward looking sustainable development in less conventional ways, especially acknowledging the low level of financial investment available through government sources.
	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?	Yes, the problem statement identified climate change as a driver of degradation. This supports LDCF and GEF investments.
2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects	Is the baseline identified clearly?	Yes, baseline projects were identified.
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits?	Not yet - indicators and methods will be identified during the project design. For example, South Sudan is presently establishing its LDN baseline. These values will be available during the project design.
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	Partly. STAP would like to see an equal emphasis on adaptation benefits and global environmental benefits in the baseline description.
	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;	See above and below.
	are the lessons learned from similar or related past GEF and non-GEF interventions described; and	Yes, the PIF identifies several baseline projects on value chains, agro-pastoral systems, and climate resilience. The PIF states it will build on the lessons learned from these projects to address climate risks. STAP encourages the project developers to equally emphasize lessons that will help generate global environmental outcomes.
	how did these lessons inform the design of this project?	In the project document, STAP suggests adding more on progress and lessons from the baseline projects listed, and describing how these lessons were or could be used to design this initiative. (Some are mentioned much later, on p.36, so it would be helpful to consolidate them here.)

3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project	What is the theory of change?	<p>"The proposal will strengthen and build institutional capacities at the national, sub-national and community level to design and adopt climate change resilience and adaptation measures in agriculture and natural resource management. The primary stakeholders of the project are subsistence farmers, agro-pastoralists and pastoral communities amongst whom women comprise a substantial proportion. The project will undertake multi-stakeholder consultations to identify select sites falling within the Aweil and Aweil East states (formerly Northern Bahr el Ghazal) which lies in the Western Flood Plain agro-ecological zone and is one of the most food insecure regions with the highest rate of malnutrition in the country .</p> <p>Through this project, gaps in capacities for climate-smart agriculture, food value chain and NRM will be identified and addressed through policy and grass-roots level action. In water-stressed areas, pastoralist communities are forced to search for better alternative pastures, often leading to conflicts with local populations. This will be taken into account for site selection and the project will undertake or update existing value chain strategies to identify food systems and products that can generate multiple benefits such as enhancing food security, reducing pressure on resources including watersheds, and mitigating post-harvest losses. By increasing the adaptive capacity of populations, the project will also reduce risks of conflicts over resources, provide various livelihood options and contribute to peace and stability in the intervention area."</p>
	What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?	See above.
	What is the set of linked activities, outputs, and outcomes to address the project's objectives?	See above. The proposal suggests these outcomes will be achieved by integrating climate change adaptation into NRM and Value chain policies and supporting the extension of these; encouraging the adoption of climate smart farming practices through farmer field schools, support to small scale agribusinesses, and identifying alternative livelihoods to communities; and developing and implementing microcatchment restoration plans and new water boreholes. A more comprehensive theory of change is needed to ensure that these activities and necessary and sufficient and can add up to the intended outcomes. In addition attention should be paid to the question of whether the plausible rates of improvements in livelihoods and resilience will exceed additional pressures arising from likely rates of climate change and from growing populations and food insecurity. For this it would be helpful to have a more scenario-based appreciation of possible future conditions for the region, including climate but also other changes, in order that this strategy can be tested for robustness against the uncertainty in these scenarios (ie., will it work reasonably well in all scenarios, or work well in some and fail badly in others?).
	Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions?	STAP encourages the project developers to develop a theory of change (narrative and figure) using the draft description provided for the alternative scenario. The description should identify the assumptions necessary to achieve the adaptation and global environmental outcomes, and test whether the proposed interventions are necessary and sufficient to achieve the outcomes. Some current actions make significant assumptions, e.g. p.19 "provisions for CCA...will be presented to the concerned ministries..." (which this assure uptake/implementntation? perhas co-design with them would work better); p.21 "no local community based microwatershed restoration projects" (seems a good topic but what is the justification that it is the most important, necessary and sufficient?); p.22 "build resilience to flooding and resulting loss of crops..." (will this plausibly build it faster than the changing climate (or clearing elsewhere) undermines this?). STAP's primer on the theory of change is a helpful resource: http://www.stagef.org/publications
	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. STAP recommends below applying systems thinking and conducting an assessment of resilience, adaptation and transformational change.
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?	Yes, with careful monitoring of LDN. STAP suggests applying the UNCCD LDN framework and its accompanying guidelines developed by STAP: http://www.stagef.org/guidelines-land-degradation-neutrality
	LDCF/SCCF: will the proposed incremental activities lead to adaptation which reduces vulnerability, builds adaptive capacity, and increases resilience to climate change?	Yes, with careful monitoring.

6) global environmental benefits (GEF trust fund) and/or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF)	Are the benefits truly global environmental benefits, and are they measurable?	STAP encourages to use UNCCD's LDN indicators on land use, land productivity, and soil organic carbon, and applying LDN to measure these indicators. For climate adaptation, STAP advises to define explicitly the development context in section 1, project description, to support the additional cost reasoning. NB LDN requires no 'leakage' - that is, there must be no net degradation of a land type, so assuring LDN benefits means tracking that the same land type isn't being degraded elsewhere.
	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	Yes. However, there are many assertions - "is expected", "will ensure", "will strengthen" and STAP recommends developing a theory of change that encompasses these and defines indicators to be able to monitor progress on reaching the outcomes, and adapting the project as needed to meet these outcomes and the project objective.
	Are the global environmental benefits explicitly defined?	Partly. The PIF mentions that South Sudan is in the process of establishing its LDN baseline. STAP suggests using the UNCCD LDN indicators (land use, land productivity and soil carbon) as global environmental benefits. STAP's guidelines on LDN can assist in applying UNCCD's framework. In addition, Trends.Earth can be used to monitor South Sudan's LDN indicators: http://trends.earth/docs/en/ Similar to the section on adaptation benefits, STAP recommends adding a section on global environmental benefits.
	Are indicators, or methodologies, provided to demonstrate how the global environmental benefits will be measured and monitored during project implementation?	See above for global environmental benefits. For adaptation benefits, STAP also suggests identifying indicators and describing the methods that will be used to measure and monitor the adaptation outcomes.
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project's resilience to climate change?	The project aims to mainstream climate adaptation strategies across policy levels. It also seeks to implement watershed management and sustainable agriculture, and building climate adaptation actions into these plans. The project also seeks to develop value chains that are climate resilient, and reduce communities' vulnerabilities to climate change. As noted above, further analysis is needed to ensure these strategies towards resilience are robust in the face of uncertainty about trends. To identify the climate resilient needs, STAP encourages a systems analysis for understanding the problem, identifying stressors (climate and non-climate) to assess for resilience, adaptation or transformational change. Project proponents are encouraged to rely on STAP's durability principles, and the Resilience, Adaptation Pathways and Transformation Guidelines http://www.stagef.org/achieving-enduring-outcomes-gef-investment https://research.csiro.au/eap/rapta/
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 project is innovative in its design to embed climate adaptation actions in land and water management strategies. Project proponents are encouraged to think of additional forms of innovation as transformational change is likely to require it. Once more, the project developers are encouraged to refer to STAP's paper on durability: http://www.stagef.org/achieving-enduring-outcomes-gef-investment
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	See above. The "potential for scaling up of this project is very high" is asserted (p.23-24) on the basis of other similar areas and availability of results; this is very unlikely to be the necessary and sufficient set of conditions for such scaling, which should be addressed in a Theory of Change.
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	Acknowledging that South Sudan may need significant incremental application of existing approaches at this point in time, STAP recommends nonetheless that the potential for more transformational changes should be further analysed, by explicitly considering enablers of scaling and transformation, and the opportunities to leapfrog conventional pathways; as noted above, the low level of agricultural development may be an opportunity as well as a challenge in this regard. STAP refers the project proponents to STAP's paper on durability and to the RAPTA guidelines mentioned above.
1b. Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.		Please provide the geocoordinates of the project sites.

<p>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.</p>	<p>Have all the key relevant stakeholders been identified to cover the complexity of the problem, and project implementation barriers?</p>	<p>Initial stakeholders have been identified. As the project is developed, STAP recommends describing the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder in relation to achieving the adaptation and global environmental benefits. Additionally, STAP suggests developing a stakeholder plan to ensure the key stakeholders are involved in the project throughout the different phases of design and implementation.</p>
	<p>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?</p>	<p>See above.</p>
<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. 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. 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>STAP is pleased that a gender specialist will be involved in the design of the project; however, it may be advisable to hire them in time to be part of the co-design of the project rather than just to implement pre-defined activities that might have benefitted from a more gendered design view. Considerations to keep in mind during the project design include: 1) have the gendered risks and opportunities been identified, and response measures described?; and, 2) do gender considerations hinder the full participation of an important stakeholder group?</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, propose measures that address these risks to be further developed during the project design</p>	<p>Are the identified risks valid and comprehensive? Are the risks specifically for things outside the project's control?</p>	<p>STAP recommends considering the questions below in the project design. Additionally, STAP would like for the project developers to consider conducting a climate risk assessment that accounts for the climate risks (temperature and rainfall) and stressors (drought or floods) in the target sites, and apply the results to developing the components. A climate risk and vulnerability assessment will be valuable in planning agro-pastoral and agro-forestry strategies. In addition, and as mentioned above, STAP highly encourages the project developers to complement climate projection data with bottom-up assessments of the system involving the key stakeholders. A systems analysis done with stakeholders will help identify non-climate stressors and risks (e.g. migration, conflict, and other socio-economic elements) that are important for meeting the project's objective. As noted above, addressing the uncertainties inherent in the level and rate of climate impacts is important, as is robustness in project design as a consequence.</p>
	<p>Are there social and environmental risks which could affect the project?</p>	<p>Yes, some of these risks are mentioned in the PIF. To obtain a thorough perspective of the risks, STAP recommends applying systems thinking. See above for further comments.</p>
	<p>For climate risk, and climate resilience measures:</p>	
	<p>· 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?</p>	<p>See above.</p>
	<p>· Has the sensitivity to climate change, and its impacts, been assessed?</p>	<p>See above.</p>
	<p>· Have resilience practices and measures to address projected climate risks and impacts been considered? How will these be dealt with?</p>	<p>See above.</p>
	<p>· What technical and institutional capacity, and information, will be needed to address climate risks and resilience enhancement measures?</p>	<p>See above.</p>

<p>6. Coordination. Outline the coordination with other relevant GEF-financed and other related initiatives</p>	<p>Are the project proponents tapping into relevant knowledge and learning generated by other projects, including GEF projects?</p>	<p>Yes. STAP encourages the project proponents to elaborate further on the lessons of other projects, and how they will be used by this GEF-LDCF initiative.</p>
	<p>Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?</p>	<p>Yes. See above.</p>
	<p>Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?</p>	<p>Yes. See above.</p>
	<p>How have these lessons informed the project's formulation?</p>	<p>Yes. See above.</p>
	<p>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?</p>	<p>Unclear. STAP recommends developing a theory of change and using it as an adaptive learning tool.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>What overall approach will be taken, and what knowledge management indicators and metrics will be used?</p>	<p>In addition to strengthening data and information on climate resilience and socio-economic traits, STAP recommends using the knowledge management plan to compile lessons learned, from both successes and failures, and systematically apply them in the project design and implementation.</p>
	<p>What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling up results, lessons and experience?</p>	<p>See above. At present any theory of change for how results will reach others, let alone be scaled, is very weak.</p>
<p>STAP advisory response</p>	<p>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</p>	
<p>1. Concur</p>	<p>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.</p>	
	<p>* 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></p>	
<p>2. Minor issues to be considered during project design</p>	<p>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:</p>	
	<p>(i) Open a dialogue with STAP regarding the technical and/or scientific issues raised;</p>	
	<p>(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.</p>	
	<p>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>	
<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>	
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