

Part I: Project Information		Response
GEF ID		10187
Project Title		Climate Smart Agriculture alternatives for upland production systems in Lao PDR
Date of Screening		24-May-19
STAP member Screener		Toth, F.
STAP secretariat screener		Zommers, Z.
STAP Overall Assessment		Minor Issues
		<p>This project aims to enhance the resilience of vulnerable upland communities to climate change, focusing on climate smart agriculture. The project proposes to tackle simultaneously several production systems plagued with similar socioeconomic and environmental (climate) problems in a region. The project also seeks to strengthen policies, inter-sectoral coordination, transfer innovative technologies, increase the capacity of extension services, land managers and others. This integrated treatment allows the consideration and implementation of a broader range of management alternatives that might support and complement each other and is likely to lead to economically more efficient and environmentally more effective outcomes.</p> <p>The proposed project structure is solid: it provides a good framework for building on baseline projects and for implementing new activities and investments. Most items are well-argued and clearly presented. However, some items require improvement to make the project design more robust and its implementation smoother. These (see also below) include: developing a theory of change with related contingency planning, specifying results in the form of more quantitative indicators, strengthening innovations (their nature, sources, complementarity), and knowledge management. Specific elements related to resilience building should be further elaborated during the project preparation phase to truly distinguish this project as an adaptation project rather than an agriculture project. This should include a focus on absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities. Activities should seek to strengthen these. (See for example research by Frankenberger et al. "Current approaches to resilience programming among nongovernmental organizations" (2014) http://www.ifpri.org/publication/current-approaches-resilience-programming-among-nongovernmental-organizations) Additionally ways to layer and integrate activities within this project and between other projects should be articulated to ensure synergies and reduce unintended overlaps.</p>
Part I: Project Information	What STAP looks for	Response
B. Indicative Project Description Summary		
Project Objective	Is the objective clearly defined, and consistently related to the problem diagnosis?	Yes
Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project's objectives?	Activities properly described; they support the objectives.
Outcomes	A description of the expected short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention.	Clearly presented.
	Do the planned outcomes encompass important global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits?	Yes

	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	Reasonable likelihood
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?	Well described
Part II: Project justification	A simple narrative explaining the project's logic, i.e. a theory of change.	No proper theory of change presented. STAP recommends that one is developed.
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?	Yes
2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects	Is the baseline identified clearly?	Yes
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits?	Baseline is a feasible basis but no data is provided for quantifying benefits.
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	Yes
	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;	Yes
	are the lessons learned from similar or related past GEF and non-GEF interventions described; and	Yes
	how did these lessons inform the design of this project?	Thorough information gathering and utilization.
3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project	What is the theory of change?	No explicit theory of change is presented.
	What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?	The planned outputs can be expected to lead to the intended outcomes and thus achieve the aims specified for the individual components. Taken together, these components constitute a plausible logical framework, although not as valuable as a full-blown theory of change would be.
	What is the set of linked activities, outputs, and outcomes to address the project's objectives?	

	· Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions?	Yes
	· 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 such concerns are presented. They should be considered and proper fallbacks developed. Tying the specified sequence of actions and events together in a theory of change would also enable this kind of contingency planning.
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
	LDCF/SCCF: will the proposed incremental activities lead to adaptation which reduces vulnerability, builds adaptive capacity, and increases resilience to climate change?	Yes
6) global environmental benefits (GEF trust fund) and/or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF)	Are the benefits truly global environmental benefits, and are they measurable?	Yes, some GEBs are conceivable, although main focus is on local and regional benefits.
	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	Yes
	Are the global environmental benefits explicitly defined?	Not really; GEB are mostly just indicated. Outputs are supported by mostly regional indicators, but not a single core indicator is specified, let alone quantified.
	Are indicators, or methodologies, provided to demonstrate how the global environmental benefits will be measured and monitored during project implementation?	No
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project's resilience to climate change?	Various kinds, ranging from local/regional actions and investments to broadening income sources to diversify support of livelihood.
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 design combines various aspects and levels of climate change adaptation. The introduction of climate smart agricultural techniques and processes counts as innovation in this region but is not in itself innovative. The project team is encouraged to further reflect on ways in improve innovations. STAP recommends applying the guidance in its document "Innovation in the GEF", which spells out elements to consider when designing innovative activities. The paper can be accessed at: http://stapgef.org/sites/default/files/publications/STAP%20Innovation%20report_WEB.PDF
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	The project itself intends to scale up existing and working adaptation solutions; no vision beyond this.
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	Incremental adaptation would be useful in itself, but the integrative approach has the potential to achieve more profound transformational change with better prospects for long-term sustainability.

1b. Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.		
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?	Yes
	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?	Stakeholders' roles meaningfully defined, their combinations constitute a promising project design. Stakeholders from other development projects could be included, given that there are many donor supported initiatives that are relevant.
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	Have gender differentiated risks and opportunities been identified, and were preliminary response measures described that would address these differences?	Improving gender equality is mentioned several times as an objective of the project. Gender risks and opportunities are identified, possible response measures mentioned, but not much information is provided about them.
	Do gender considerations hinder full participation of an important stakeholder group (or groups)? If so, how will these obstacles be addressed?	No such hinderances are mentioned.
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	Are the identified risks valid and comprehensive? Are the risks specifically for things outside the project's control?	The identified risks are valid. STAP appreciated seeing both an impact and probability rating in the risk table. However a scale was not provided with which to interpret these ratings. STAP also encourages further elaboration of the risks that economic returns from climate smart agriculture will be insufficient to maintain incomes. Economic and social cost benefit analysis will be useful to ensure durability of interventions.
	Are there social and environmental risks which could affect the project?	Yes
	For climate risk, and climate resilience measures:	

	· 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?	Climate risks are severe, but the central objective is to reduce vulnerability to them.
	· Has the sensitivity to climate change, and its impacts, been assessed?	Yes, a sensible initial impact assessment is presented, but more would be desirable in the next project development step.
	· Have resilience practices and measures to address projected climate risks and impacts been considered? How will these be dealt with?	Yes, they serve as starting point.
	· What technical and institutional capacity, and information, will be needed to address climate risks and resilience enhancement measures?	A promising plan is presented to address these issues
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
	Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?	Yes. Many other donor-supported initiatives are listed. STAP invites the project team to further elaborate lessons learnt and how this project fills a gap in other work. Some of the partners (e.g. GIZ) could be included in list of stakeholders and should certainly be invited to participate in project steering group.
	Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?	Yes
	How have these lessons informed the project's formulation?	
	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?	One of the deficiencies identified in the diagnosis is missing pathways and instruments for preserving and spreading knowledge. Yet, this PIF does not provide an overall KM plan either. The ideas presented under Point 8 are useful but they are rather poor and need substantial improvement to allow all results and benefits of the project to spread and scale up. A web-based knowledge platform is mentioned but it is unclear all stakeholders, particularly any community members, will be able to use such platforms.
	What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?	
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.	

	<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>	
2. Minor issues to be considered during project design	<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>	
3. Major issues to be considered during project design	<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>	