

Part I: Project Information		Response
GEF ID		10195
Project Title		CSIDS-SOILCARE Phase1: Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS) multi-country soil management initiative for Integrated Landscape Restoration and climate-resilient food systems
Date of Screening		15-May-19
STAP member Screener		Toth, F., Metternicht, G.
STAP secretariat screener		Duron, G.
STAP Overall Assessment		Minor issues
		<p>Note: in addition to the PIF proper, this screen also considers information provided in the Additional notes and in the Core Indicators Metadata documents.</p> <p>STAP welcomes FAO's project "CSIDS-SOILCARE Phase1: Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS) multi-country soil management initiative for Integrated Landscape Restoration and climate-resilient food systems". The project aims to strengthen the capacity of the Caribbean SIDS in achieving land degradation neutrality (LDN). This initiative will strengthen countries' capacities to measure and monitor soil carbon, as well as apply policies and frameworks that support the implementation of LDN at the national and regional level. STAP is pleased by the innovativeness of the project to establish an LDN regional strategy, and to design 'bankable' land degradation investment projects to mobilise the private sector in support of LDN, as well as the adoption of climate-smart model farms. This is a well-conceived and well-designed project that responds to increasingly severe current problems and considers solutions that will be resilient to emerging future threats.</p> <p>The balance of effort between resolving current and preparing for future challenges is reasonable, but more attention should be paid to restraining drivers of degradation, before embarking on major restoration efforts will be practicable. To ensure fundamental features of LDN are given full consideration in project design, and/or refinement through feedback during implementation of activities, STAP recommends the project team applies the checklist for land degradation neutrality transformative projects and programmes (LDN-TTP). STAP recommends that the project emphasize learning generated by the project to support meeting its objective. This learning can be achieved by linking it to the theory of change, and the impact pathways – aspects which are absent in the proposal. A theory of change needs to be developed. STAP welcomes the partnership between countries, research organizations, private sector, farmers, indigenous groups, and other stakeholders. When establishing, monitoring and implementing the knowledge-hub platform, STAP suggests building on the evidence of multi-actor platforms. This can be done by drawing from the Integrated Approach Pilots (IAPs), and their experience in setting-up and managing social learning in multi-actor coalitions.</p> <p>The two-level design (horizontal across countries/regions, and vertical up to the Caribbean level) includes great potential: cross-fertilization and learning across participating units on the one hand, and better coordination and regional harmonization at the regional level, on the other. Given the multi-country nature of implementation, STAP recommends establishing a project steering committee with relevant sectoral representatives. In addition, STAP recommends that one step in component 5 should be a mapping of 'current knowledge management and communication hubs' in the Region. GEF and other major international donors have invested in knowledge management centres/hubs that could underpin this component, and existing infrastructure and networks should be tapped into to avoid duplication. It is important that the proposed activities do not occur in 'silos' around this project, but are part of ongoing</p>

		<p>initiatives in the Region pursuing complementary outputs. In doing this, the project proponents will ensure long term, 'durable' outcomes, beyond the lifetime of the project.</p> <p>In summary, an excellent example of how to combine solving existing problems with preparing for climate change. Recommendations on how to strengthen the project are further described below.</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?	Yes
Outcomes	A description of the expected short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention.	<p>The outcomes are likely to be generated if there is a robust monitoring of the progress being made, and a learning plan is developed, and a Theory of Change is in place that identifies internal and external factors that can affect implementation and delivery of programmed interventions.</p> <p>Furthermore, elements of the LDN conceptual framework related to 'achieving neutrality (Module D)' would benefit of incorporating in this project so that the cumulative effect of national interventions can be properly accounted towards the claimed global environmental benefits to be generated. See pg 60 to 90 of the LDN conceptual framework (https://www.unccd.int/publications/scientific-conceptual-framework-land-degradation-neutrality-report-science-policy)</p>
	Do the planned outcomes encompass important global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits?	Yes
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	At a reasonable level of probability.
Outputs	<p>A description of the products and services which are expected to result from the project.</p> <p>Is the sum of the outputs likely to contribute to the outcomes?</p>	<p>The description of products and services is done but it lacks evidence/rationale to support the claim of expected outputs and outcomes.</p> <p>The proposal lacks a good map of landcover/land use and hence, STAP wonders the method applied to derive the quantitative outputs and indicators mentioned in the project outcomes (pgs 4-11), pgs 15-18.</p>
Part II: Project justification	A simple narrative explaining the project's logic, i.e. a theory of change.	No explicit theory of change presented. See below.
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?	<p>The problem statement includes problems, trends, their root causes and barriers, but these are intertwined with some baseline type activities and actions intended to be made in this new project.</p> <p>Separating these elements would make the presentation clearer.</p>

	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	When the project is designed, STAP suggests describing in greater detail the context in which the global environmental problems are situated. That is, describe the social, economic, climatic, and environmental conditions that influence the challenges the project is addressing. Some of this information is available in the PIF for some countries, or for the region. However, it would be valuable to standardize the context descriptions at the country level. Additionally, it would be useful to describe the barriers further at the country level in the project document. Currently, the barriers are described minimally.
	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?	
2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects	Is the baseline identified clearly?	Yes, albeit interestingly cut into government and “donor-funded” elements.
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project’s benefits?	Yes, especially the established high-level legal frameworks provide a good starting point.
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	
	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;	
	are the lessons learned from similar or related past GEF and non-GEF interventions described; and	Yes, operational institutional frameworks are in place both at the regional and the national level STAP recommends describing lessons from previous GEF, and non-GEF projects, and identifying how the project will draw from this learning.
	how did these lessons inform the design of this project?	
3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project	What is the theory of change?	Regrettably, no explicit theory of change is presented. STAP would like for the project proponents to develop a theory of change, and describe the impact pathway that will lead to the outcomes – the desired change. It also will be valuable to identify the assumptions required to meet each outcome, validate them, and adapt the theory of change as needed. The following site provides useful information on the theory of change: https://www.theoryofchange.org/
	What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?	
	· What is the set of linked activities, outputs, and outcomes to address the project’s objectives?	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions? 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a recognition of what adaptations may be required during project implementation to respond to changing conditions in pursuit of the targeted outcomes? 	
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. By jointly addressing LDN, SSM and SLM challenges together with climate vulnerability and impact challenges provides opportunities for truly efficient and synergetic solutions.
6) global environmental benefits (GEF trust fund) and/or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF)	Are the benefits truly global environmental benefits, and are they measurable?	<p>STAP recommends describing the methods that will be used to measure and monitor the nine benefits listed in the PIF. Some of the benefits are covered by core indicators, while others do not appear to have an indicator assigned to them. To the list of benefits, the project developers may wish to add soil carbon as this indicator was listed in the project description summary.</p> <p>Additionally, STAP recommends applying UNCCD's "Scientific Conceptual Framework for Land Degradation Neutrality". The framework is a land use planning tool that guides the implementation of LDN based on the hierarchy response of avoid, reduce and reverse land degradation. The framework can be accessed at: https://knowledge.unccd.int/knowledge-products-and-pillars/guide-scientific-conceptual-framework-land-degradation-neutrality</p> <p>Another source that is useful for the project is STAP's advisory document "Managing Soil Organic Carbon for Global Benefits". The paper summarizes the scientific and technical understanding of soil carbon management and how pursuing this practice leads to global environmental benefits. The paper can be accessed at: http://stapgef.org/sites/default/files/stap/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/STAP-SOC-Report-lowres.pdf</p>
	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	
	Are the global environmental benefits explicitly defined?	
	Are indicators, or methodologies, provided to demonstrate how the global environmental benefits will be measured and monitored during project implementation?	
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project's resilience to climate change?	

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?	<p>The project design is innovative by combining Caribbean regional aspects with a range of bio-geo-physically similar yet to some extent varying sub-national regional characteristics. This provides opportunities for cross-fertilization and learning horizontally across partners and vertically from the national to the regional level and back. Specific forms and nature of innovation in the various domains are not indicated, although it would be rather useful to consider at least some types of technological and business model innovations to be pursued in this project.</p> <p>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://stagef.org/sites/default/files/publications/STAP%20Innovation%20report_WEB.PDF</p>
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	<p>Accordingly, there is no indication of scaling innovation whatsoever.</p> <p>Given the nature and severe root causes of the current problems and their expected exacerbation by changing climate in the future, fundamental transformational changes will be required to preserve (and successfully restore) the resource base and ensure its long term sustainable management.</p> <p>Scaling up: the potential exists but its discussion is rather terse. It would deserve a more thoughtful treatment. STAP recommends identifying the barriers to scaling, such as institutional and governance challenges. Recognizing the barriers upfront will improve the scaling potential.</p>
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	
1b. Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.		Provided as Annex A.
<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>	Have all the key relevant stakeholders been identified to cover the complexity of the problem, and project implementation barriers?	<p>STAP appreciates the depth of consultation involved in developing the PIF. As the project is designed and implemented, engaging stakeholders will continue to be essential. In addition to this effort, STAP encourages the project developers to establish governance arrangements. Embedding governance and stakeholder engagement throughout the project will be essential for managing knowledge, and the project’s objective.</p> <p>When developing the knowledge-hub platform (component 5), STAP recommends looking into lessons, or the evidence, of social learning. For example, Garard, J. et al. (2019), concludes there are five elements central to social learning (platforms): “...1) the selection of participants relevant to the topic and conducive to positive interactions; 2) openness as an attitude in both organizers and participants; 3) facilitation of interactions and the role of the facilitator; 4) communication and transparency between organizers and participants; and, 5) fostering dialog between participants through various means.” Investing in the design and monitoring of the platform is essential for achieving social learning among the group.</p> <p>Garard, J. et al (2019) is a useful resource to consider when developing the paper. The complete citation is: Garard, J., Koch, L., & Kowarsch, M. (2018). Elements of success in multi-stakeholder deliberation platforms. Palgrave Communications, 4(1), 129.</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?	
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?	No detailed assessment of gender differentiated risks and opportunities are presented, neither related response measures are described. Women are intended to be one of the major beneficiaries, and women's organizations will be prominently represented in the project's steering groups (national and regional). During project design, STAP suggests elaborating further on the gender analysis and plan the project will implement. STAP recommends the project identifies the type of gender-responsive interventions that can lead to the expected outputs. Good practice of the latter can be obtained from documents like UN Women's 'towards a gender responsive implementation of the UNCCD' http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/2/towards-a-gender-responsive-implementation-of-the-un-convention-to-combat-desertification
	Do gender considerations hinder full participation of an important stakeholder group (or groups)? If so, how will these obstacles be addressed?	
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 plausible but far from comprehensive. Even a naïve outsider could imagine many other factors or events that could go wrong and undermine the aspired results of the project's activities and investments. A thorough risk assessment with well-conceived risk mitigation measures would be important for a robust project design and operation.
	Are there social and environmental risks which could affect the project?	Some social (aversion or reluctance of indigenous people or farmers to participation and change) and environmental (natural disasters) risks are mentions but many more may be looming.
	For climate risk, and climate resilience measures:	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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>Climate risk is not included in the risk table, possibly because climate vulnerability and resilience is a main issue in the project. STAP recommends that the project proponents develop a more systematic assessment of climate risks, their possible impacts on the baseline and the alternative scenarios, conceivable response measures under these scenarios, etc. STAP recommends describing the climate projections (temperature and precipitation) for each country. Information on this and on projections exist through the work of regional institutions like the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (https://www.caribbeanclimate.bz/). In addition, STAP recommends considering the following questions during the project design:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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? Has the sensitivity to climate change, and its impacts, been assessed? Have resilience practices and measures to address projected climate risks and impacts been considered? How will these be dealt with? What technical and institutional capacity, and information, will be needed to address climate risks and resilience enhancement measures?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the sensitivity to climate change, and its impacts, been assessed? 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have resilience practices and measures to address projected climate risks and impacts been considered? How will these be dealt with? 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What technical and institutional capacity, and information, will be needed to address climate risks and resilience enhancement measures? 	
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
	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?	Feeding lessons into this new project is facilitated by overlapping partnership with earlier efforts, but looking for more systematic ways of channeling results from recent projects would be useful.

<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>A key element is to generate new knowledge by preparing / updating soil data (CSIS) that will be the basis of land use planning in subsequent components. Beyond the comprehensive LDN Knowledge Hub, the rest of KM activities seem somewhat fragmented and include various forms of transferring knowledge, including in-field extension services regional cooperation mechanism and consultative platforms. No KM indicators and metrics are mentioned, although thinking in this direction could be useful in order to produce a more systematic synthesis of lessons for sharing within this project and with the rest of the world upon conclusion of the project.</p> <p>STAP recommends for this component to emphasize learning – that is, how the project will implement effective learning by engaging stakeholders and establishing a governance framework for the project. The learning process should put in place mechanisms that gather and manage information to support a continuous feedback learning loop. In this vein, the theory of change can prove to be a useful tool to track and adjust the project’s progress; thereby, manage knowledge.</p> <p>Furthermore STAP recommends that one step within component 5 be a mapping of ‘current knowledge management and communication hubs’ in the Region. GEF and other major international donors have invested in knowledge management centres/hub that could underpin the proposed component 5, tapping into existing infrastructure and networks, and avoiding duplication. It is important that activities proposed do not occur in ‘silos’ around this project, but are part of ongoing initiatives in the Region that pursue complementary outputs. In doing this, the project proponents would ensure long term, ‘durable’ outcomes, beyond the lifetime of the project.</p>
	<p>What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?</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>	