

Part I: Project Information		Response
GEF ID		10216
Project Title		Integrated productive landscapes through land use planning; restoration; and sustainable intensification of rice crops in the Yaque Norte and Yuna Watersheds
Date of Screening		24-May-19
STAP member Screener		Graciela Metternicht
STAP secretariat screener		Guadalupe Duron
STAP Overall Assessment		<p>STAP rating: minor issues to be considered during project design.</p> <p>STAP welcomes the World Bank's project in the Dominican Republic, "Integrated productive landscapes through land use planning, restoration, and sustainable intensification of rice crops in the Yaque Norte and Yuna Watersheds". The project seeks to strengthen landscape management through better land use planning in the targeted watersheds, maximizing the delivery of ecosystem services and biodiversity conservation, and restoring degraded land. The project will also continue to improve on the Sustainable Rice Intensification (SRI) technology, and consider opportunities for replicating its effects in other landscapes. STAP is pleased the project will identify trade-offs between benefits, while considering stakeholders' needs and recognising the role that cross-sectoral and inter-governmental coordination will play in successful implementation. STAP also welcomes the project's innovation plans, which focus on technology (SRI), policy (supporting rice policies), and institutional (governance for land use planning) initiatives. STAP is pleased the project links expected outputs with the country's commitment towards implementation of internationally agreed goals like land degradation neutrality. STAP encourages the project team to use the checklist for land degradation neutrality transformative projects and programmes developed to help country-level project developers and their technical and financial partners to design effective Land Degradation Neutrality Transformative Projects and Programmes (TPP)(1); and to consult the tools and resources for land degradation neutrality implementation in the UNCCD Knowledge Hub (2).</p> <p>For the transformative changes the project seeks to achieve, STAP emphasizes the importance of developing a theory of change that identifies the assumptions and risks that underly the project's objective, and that clearly maps proposed interventions against expected outputs, and how the latter enable short- and long-term outcomes, which are fundamental to a programme effectiveness. Furthermore, STAP encourages the project to validate the assumptions using the theory of change. Doing so, will contribute to the project's objective, and to the project's sustainability.</p> <p>(1)https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/LDN%20TPP%20checklist%20final%20draft%20040918.pdf (2)https://knowledge.unccd.int/knowledge-products-and-pillars/guide-scientific-conceptual-framework-ldn/tools-and-resources-land</p> <p>Below, STAP provides suggestions to improve the project during its design.</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.	Yes – if the assumptions are identified and built into the theory of change. The proposal of NDVI as an outcome indicator needs to be better justified (ie. PDO ii). For NDVI to fulfill the intended ‘indicator metric’ the project area will need to have a NDVI map as baseline at the beginning of the project, and it must provide evidence that ‘greening in an image’ relates to ‘positive outcomes of integrated landscape management’. A monitoring system will need to be in place then to assess that at T1(e.g. project completion), NDVI has increased, and that evidence (from the field) exists to ‘map’ the increase to landscape management activities (ie. Activities) that the project promoted.
	Do the planned outcomes encompass important global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits?	
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	
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 well-defined. Please provide references to papers (published or unpublished documents) to support the problem analysis. The project identifies drivers and pressures of land degradation and biodiversity loss. It would be great a Driver-Pressure-State of the Watershed-Impacts-Response graphic is developed for multiple stakeholders have a clear appreciation of main drivers that the project outcomes need to tackle for the programme to achieve long-term, effective, outcomes. The graphic should clearly link proposed LUP and SRI as ‘responses’ and how they will address drivers and pressures. That would enable clear identification of barriers.
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	
	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, the baseline is good, and robust to support the incremental reasoning for the project. However, STAP suggests elaborating on the initiatives that the project will complement, specifically those relating to integrating environmental management in productive landscapes (e.g. the country’s REDD+strategy).
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project’s benefits?	
	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	
	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?	STAP appreciates the brief description provided on the theory of change. To strengthen the theory of change, STAP recommends: 1) starting with the project's objective, work backwards and identify the preconditions (or interim outcomes) that need to be achieved to reach the project objective; 2) provide an illustration of the theory of change that represents the interventions, outcomes, impact pathways, and assumptions. The following link provides information on developing a theory of change: 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?	
	· Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions?	
	· 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 – if the theory of change and measurable indicators are used to monitor the project's progress, and the adaptive management needed to reach the project objective.
	LDCF/SCCF: will the proposed incremental activities lead to adaptation which reduces vulnerability, builds adaptive capacity, and increases resilience to climate change?	

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 is pleased that component 1 will strengthen the governance structures for land use management, as well as establish conflict resolution protocols among other elements. STAP recommends identifying a stakeholder engagement approach that is flexible and adaptive. New knowledge and learning along with changes in the social-political, economic, or environmental, context may require adjustments to the project.</p> <p>Component 3 aims to strengthen land productivity while contributing to forest restoration, increased ecosystem services. To complement the forest restoration framework, STAP suggests applying the “Scientific conceptual framework for Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN)”. The framework provides measures on how to conserve, restore, and rehabilitate land in the context of land use planning. The LDN framework is also an approach that “counterbalances the expected loss of productive land with the recovery of degraded areas”. Additionally, the LDN framework can provide the necessary information to assess trade-offs between ecosystem services, biodiversity conservation, and other environmental social, and economic factors – essentially, the multi-dimensional elements within a biophysical domain.</p> <p>The framework is available at: https://knowledge.unccd.int/knowledge-products-and-pillars/guide-scientific-conceptual-framework-land-degradation-neutrality</p> <p>Additionally, STAP suggests building into the theory of change the assumptions that: 1) the project will function as a catalyzer (through component 3) of restoration activities for other projects; and, 2) the outcomes of component 3 will be sustainable, profitable and resilient to climate change based on the coverage of “upfront costs”.</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>STAP welcomes the project’s initiative to advance the Sustainable Rice Intensification (SRI) technology and inform policies to support rice productivity. STAP wishes to encourage the project proponents to rely on the theory of change to guide its SRI demonstration activities. This can be achieved by identifying the assumptions along the impact pathway (sequence of outcomes), and testing these assumptions through formative research and implementation.</p> <p>Additionally, STAP believes that transformation at scale will require multiple forms of innovation. The project will focus mainly on technological innovation, complemented by policy and institutional innovations. STAP recommends linking innovation with scaling – and more importantly with the multi-stakeholder processes, negotiation platforms, the project will set-up. Which forms of innovation to pursue are linked with how to scale and who to engage. The project proponents may wish to consult STAP’s paper on “Innovation and the GEF” for further information: http://www.stapgef.org/innovation-and-gef</p> <p>On scaling, STAP recommends identifying and addressing barriers to scaling and transformation that may exist. These barriers can be related to vested interests, governance and institutional arrangements. Establishing</p>

		stakeholder engagement and governance processes is critical to managing diverse knowledge, building shared understanding, and assigning responsibilities for joint decision making.
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	
	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.		The project coordinates are provided for the project.
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?	<p>STAP appreciates the list of stakeholders provided for the project. However, implementation will benefit from early specific identification of 'civil society organisations' and local communities. At present they are just listed. Effective engagement requires these be identified early to define their relevance in key stages of the project design and implementation.</p> <p>As previously mentioned, STAP highly encourages for the project proponents to apply a multi-stakeholder engagement and governance approach. It will also be equally important to engage the stakeholders in the design of the theory of change, impact pathway, and/or logical framework – and to identify which stakeholders need to be engaged throughout the implementation of the project.</p> <p>Additionally, STAP recommends identifying and addressing barriers and opportunities for engagement and governance. For example, what incentives might encourage participation, and what social or economic constraints might inhibit participation, and how can these be addressed?</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>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 full diagnosis of gender issues will be undertaken during the project preparation.</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>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>The project provides the climate scenarios between 2014-2020 for the agricultural sector. The project also includes climate projections up to 2050, and a description of the climate risks to the project sites. This information is welcomed.</p> <p>When developing the project, STAP highly encourages the project proponents to integrate responses to climate change in the interventions. The project developers are encouraged to apply these questions:</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?
	<p>Are there social and environmental risks which could affect the project?</p>	
	<p>For climate risk, and climate resilience measures:</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? 	
	<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, the project is tapping into relevant knowledge and learning generated by other projects – mainly GEF biodiversity projects, and SRI projects implemented by other entities. There may be other projects (land degradation or multi-focal area projects) that may also be relevant to build on.
	Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?	
	Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?	
	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?	
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?	In addition to the knowledge management plans outlined in the project document, STAP encourages the project developers to define a knowledge management approach, and indicators to monitor its progress. As part of this approach (e.g. theory of change), STAP encourages building in learning and adaptive knowledge management during the project implementation. STAP encourages the project leads to take stock of national platforms that may already exist for knowledge management and sharing and to engage with those, and build upon existing platforms. This can be a component of the strategy to be developed to ensure ownership and data maintenance and use beyond the project lifetime (ie. Durability of the project outcomes).
	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.	
	* 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>	
2. Minor issues to be considered during project design	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:	
	(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, and possibly agreeing to terms of reference for an independent expert to be appointed to conduct this review.	
	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.	
3. Major issues to be considered during project design	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:	
	(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.	