

Part I: Project Information		Response
GEF ID	10346	
Project Title	El Salvador Integrated Landscape Management and Restoration	
Date of Screening	25-Nov-19	
STAP member Screener	Graciela Metternicht	
STAP secretariat screener	Guadalupe Duron	
STAP Overall Assessment		<p>Minor issues to be considered during project design. STAP acknowledges the World Bank's proposal "El Salvador Integrated Landscape Management and Restoration". The project aims to address environmental degradation by restoring land productivity and ecosystem services. STAP recognises the difficult tasks of balancing productivity with conservation initiatives. The project will work with sugarcane producers as the main stakeholders. The project also will build on El Salvador's land degradation neutrality (LDN) target setting. To strengthen cohesiveness with the UNCCD's LDN efforts, STAP recommends applying the LDN scientific framework and STAP's LDN guidelines. The LDN framework also will be a valuable tool for organizing and planning landscape management activities. In addition, STAP recommends building climate resilience actions into the project design. El Salvador is already experiencing climate stressors (increased temperatures; increased drought and reduced rainfall; or increased frequency of intense precipitation), which are impacting land productivity and ecosystem services. Thus, STAP recommends conducting a climate risk assessment to inform the project development, and assessing for resilience, adaptation and transformational change needs. STAP also recommends the project considers external and internal factors in the theory of change which could require adaptation of project activities to ensure effectiveness in the delivery and durability of the outcomes. STAP congratulates the team for including capacity building for farmers in the form of extension services, and for developing interventions at a landscape scale.</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.
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.	
	Do the planned outcomes encompass important global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits?	Yes, for biodiversity and sustainable land management. The project relates outcomes to the Aichi Targets. STAP recommends this be revised given that these targets expire in June 2020. STAP recommends project outcomes be mapped against other international environmental agreements like the SDGs, the UNCCD, the Paris Agreement, and the post 2020 Biodiversity Framework.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	Yes, with careful monitoring, and the consideration of external and internal factors (political, climatic, economic, social, etc) that may affect intended outputs

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>No. Area with increased Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) is mentioned as a 'key result'. NDVI is an index of greenness, and it can be associated to increased biomass, leaf area, etc, however, the index per se is not indicative of improved landscape management. An increased NDVI has been observed with increased exotic invasive species, with the addition of more fertilisers in agro-ecological systems (e.g. anything positive or negative that makes vegetation 'greener'). STAP Recommends the key results be reformulated to be a proper expression of 'a product' that can be linked to the expected outputs and outcomes envisaged for the project. The key results of Area of restored land in the prioritized Conservation Area, and Area under sustainable landscape management practices cannot be estimated given that the project has not defined intended area of intervention. To use these indicators as key result, a table should be included in the situation analysis with information on current agricultural areas (e.g. sugar cane), current degraded areas, current areas under sustainable land management (or lack of it), etc. STAP recommends the inclusion of the 3 core indicators of LDN, and additional indicators (e.g. revise other projects that have used ROAM) of sustainable land management that are context-specific to La Barra de Santiago y el Imposible.</p>
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, forest loss, livestock and agricultural expansion have contributed to biodiversity loss and land degradation. STAP suggests that problem statement can use national drivers of land degradation, but it also needs to include drivers specific to the selected sub-national project area, as drivers and pressures are context-specific. In this case, there is a very good appraisal of drivers, pressures, state of the environment of THE COUNTRY, though very scarce information on the project area (parque nacional el imposible y la barra de santiago conservation area).
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	Yes, the barriers are attributed mainly to the "the lack of coordination and policy harmonization between environmental sustainability objectives and rural development objectives". For the project area, ongoing tensions between productivity and conservation sectors is an additional barrier.
	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, El Salvador will use its land degradation STAR allocation to improve land use management. The target area is characterized by significant biodiversity loss. El Salvador is committed, therefore, to mainstream biodiversity conservation in its land management practices.
2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects	Is the baseline identified clearly?	Yes, the PID includes a narrative baseline of the country current situation, with an emphasis on the selected project area. A critique of STAP is the lack of land use maps of the project area, a lack of a good map showing the geographic boundaries of the study area; and scarce information on the amount of degraded land 'in the project area'. All significant statistical information provided is at national scale.

	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits?	Draft indicators are mentioned, and will be solidified during project design. STAP suggest researching other projects that have used ROAM as a methodology, as they include good sets of indicators that could be transferred and adapted as needed to this project.
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	For land degradation, LDN indicators (land use, land productivity and soil organic carbon) could be used. See the UNCCD's LDN framework and STAP's LDN guidelines: https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/documents/2019-06/LDN_CF_report_web-english.pdf ; http://www.stagef.org/guidelines-land-degradation-neutrality
	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;	Draft indicators are mentioned, and will be consolidated during project design. STAP suggest researching other projects that have used ROAM as a methodology, as they include good sets of indicators that could be transferred and adapted as needed to this project. The situational analysis of the project area needs improvement. As mentioned above, the literature cited refers mostly to national scale. STAP recommends that indicators of success also include metrics on 'success of extension services'. STAP recommends the team revises the proposed indicators for Outcome for land degradation focal area (LD-2-5), to include indicators proposed in the Checklist for Land Degradation Neutrality Transformative Projects and Programmes (https://www.thegef.org/documents/checklist-land-degradation-neutrality-transformative-projects-and-programmes-draft)
	are the lessons learned from similar or related past GEF and non-GEF interventions described; and	The lessons do not appear to be described. STAP suggests describing projects in the target area which can play a role in scaling-up lessons and best practices.
	how did these lessons inform the design of this project?	See above.

<p>3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project</p>	<p>What is the theory of change?</p>	<p>A preliminary, well written narrative of theory of change is described as: "Expansion of sugar cane crops and unsustainable production practices are degrading land and biodiversity in ecosystems, including mangroves and riparian forests, and are also degrading soil within production farms, which reduces productivity over time. Sugar cane expansion has also resulted in the displacement of traditional crops to higher mountain areas which in turn are also degraded and affect the provision of hydrological services for the overall country's economy, and particularly for sugar cane crops themselves. In addition, coffee agroforestry systems, which constitute an important area of the country's forests, are being degraded or replaced by crops without shade or pasture. The main factors driving this situation are: (i) lack of capacities to manage natural resources and ecosystem services at the landscape scale, including lack of coordination between environmental and agricultural policies; (ii) lack of resources (human and financial) to promote sustainable production practices that mainstream biodiversity conservation and prevent land degradation; and (iii) lack of financial incentives to invest in ecosystem conservation and restoration. To address this issue, the proposed project will work at a landscape scale and use an innovative approach to strengthen governance for natural resource management. It will also engage the private sector to adopt sustainable production practices and invest in the conservation and restoration of ecosystems, working with small farmers and communities." STAP suggests the project identifies early the key stakeholders that can help driving the contribution of the private sector, and the key stakeholders that will support the innovation (that is vaguely stated) the project will apply.</p>
	<p>What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?</p>	<p>See above. In addition to the narrative, STAP recommends adding a figure on the theory of change. The figure is useful to illustrate the causal analysis between variables.</p>
	<p>· What is the set of linked activities, outputs, and outcomes to address the project's objectives?</p>	<p>See above.</p>
	<p>· Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions?</p>	<p>STAP recommends identifying the assumptions required to achieve the outcomes, and on which the theory of change depends on. The latter is of importance for intended activities the project mentions such as : building capacity for integrated land management, and supporting small and mostly poor farmers with extension systems. STAP congratulates the team for including extension systems as a form of building enduring capacity on the ground, though sustainability of such outcome requires clarity in the assumptions.</p>
	<p>· Is there a recognition of what adaptations may be required during project implementation to respond to changing conditions in pursuit of the targeted outcomes?</p>	<p>No. STAP recommends applying systems thinking and developing further the theory of change. STAP recommends to also identify internal and external factors that may affect the intended project outcomes (in a positive or negative manner). These processes will enable to identify the project's needs to adapt.</p>
<p>5) incremental/additional cost reasoning and expected contributions from the baseline, the GEF trust fund, LDCF, SCCF, and co-financing</p>	<p>GEF trust fund: will the proposed incremental activities lead to the delivery of global environmental benefits?</p>	<p>Yes, with careful monitoring.</p>

	LDCF/SCCF: will the proposed incremental activities lead to adaptation which reduces vulnerability, builds adaptive capacity, and increases resilience to climate change?	Does not apply.
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.
	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	Yes.
	Are the global environmental benefits explicitly defined?	Partly. Global environmental outcomes are provided in the description of the components. STAP suggests adding a section on global environmental benefits and link it to the section on "Value added of the GEF". Doing so, will strengthen the project's incremental reasoning rationale.
	Are indicators, or methodologies, provided to demonstrate how the global environmental benefits will be measured and monitored during project implementation?	No. This information will be provided during the project design.
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project's resilience to climate change?	The project does not identify activities to increase its resilience to climate change. Below, STAP offers advice on conducting a climate and resilience risk assessment to inform the project design.
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 on policy by strengthening coordination across government agencies and governance levels. The project also seeks to establish a "restoration roundtable" with a focus on sugar cane production and water management. Financial mechanisms for restoration is another form of innovation the project seeks to implement. STAP encourages the project developers to consider further forms of innovation as they may induce scaling and transformation - elements that influence enduring outcomes and long term sustainability. STAP recommends referring to STAP's paper on enduring outcomes: http://www.stapgef.org/achieving-enduring-outcomes-gef-investment . STAP recommends the team considers market-based instruments such as PES, or similar in the securing of financial resources. Recent publications of the Science Policy Interface of UNCCD contain valuable information on 'enabling environment' to address land degradation (avoid, reduce, reverse) that can enhance the innovation aspects of this project. https://knowledge.unccd.int/publication/creating-enabling-environment-land-degradation-neutrality-and-its-potential
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	Partly. The proposal articulates briefly its vision for scaling - combining technical assistance on natural resource management and biodiversity conservation with restoration incentives, among other factors, at the landscape level. The assumption is that these efforts will generate the financial and institutional conditions to scale across temporal and spatial scales. STAP recommends its paper on durability - where it lists principles that need attention to achieve scaling.
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	It is possible that both adaptation and transformational change will be required due to climate stressors.

<p>1b. Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.</p>		<p>Several geo-referenced maps are provided - all of which have useful information (e.g. protected area information, land use types.) Map 3 is the only project-specific map, and it lacks a representation of areas that are degraded. This information is crucial to understand the level of intervention and proposed indicators to measure outcomes.</p>
<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>Some key stakeholders have been identified while others will be defined once a stakeholder mapping exercise takes place. STAP recommends the project conducts a stakeholder analysis, to define phases where key stakeholders need involvement; a power-influence diagram could also help to ensure equity of representation of stakeholders. STAP also recommends describing the actors' roles in relation to how they will contribute (individually and collectively) to achieving the global environmental outcomes.</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 welcomes the World Bank's efforts to assess gender differentiated risks and opportunities through its Environmental and Social Framework. When it goes through the process of assessing gender issues, STAP recommends considering whether the full participation of an important stakeholder group is hindered as a result, and describing how will the project address these obstacles.</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>The proposal includes a summary of the risks the project may have on the environmental and social sectors. The project plans to deal with these risks through an environmental and social assessment, and through stakeholder dialogue processes. STAP welcomes these planned efforts. However, climate risks to the project appear absent in this preliminary assessment. Based on the World Bank's Climate Change Knowledge Portal, El Salvador has seen a steady increase in extreme events (storms, floods and droughts) during the last 30 years, impacting the population and economy. STAP recommends describing the climate change context influencing the project. This includes describing climatic trends, and providing climate projection data for temperature and rainfall in the target area. If a climate risk assessment will not be conducted as part of the project design, STAP recommends doing so. STAP advises using the questions in this section as part of this assessment. The assessment results should be used to improve project design. For example, the project will need to consider how sugar cane production will be influenced by changes in temperature and rainfall - and what adaptation, or transformations will be required as a result of key climate impacts on agricultural production and biodiversity. In addition to the Climate Change Knowledge Portal, the project developers may wish to use: U.S. AID's Climate Risk and Management tool: https://www.climatelinks.org/resources/climate-risk-screening-management-tool/; STAP's guidance on climate risk assessment: http://www.stapgef.org/stap-guidance-climate-risk-screening/; or World Resource's Institute climate watch data: https://www.climatewatchdata.org/; among other sources.</p>
	<p>Are there social and environmental risks which could affect the project?</p>	<p>See above.</p>
	<p>For climate risk, and climate resilience measures:</p>	<p>See above.</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? 	<p>See above.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the sensitivity to climate change, and its impacts, been assessed? 	<p>See above.</p>
	<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? 	<p>No. Resilience measures have not been considered. STAP recommends applying the durability principles which support resilience measures by asking for systems thinking, a theory of change, an analysis of the barriers, and enablers, of scaling, adaptation, and transformational change. The project developers also may wish to rely on the guidelines for the Resilience, Adaptation Pathways, and Transformation Framework: https://research.csiro.au/eap/rapta/</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What technical and institutional capacity, and information, will be needed to address climate risks and resilience enhancement measures? 	<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>the project will build on knowledge acquired through other current and previous projects that have been implemented by key partners in the region (e.g. REDD+ initiatives; ROAM; green cane harvest). STAP recommends a thorough research to identify and describing other projects (WB-funded, GEF and non-GEF) that are important for the scaling of outcomes, including new knowledge on management of sugarcane crops and innovative financial mechanisms for land restoration and conservation of these production landscapes.</p>
	<p>Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?</p>	<p>See above.</p>
	<p>Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?</p>	<p>See above.</p>
	<p>How have these lessons informed the project's formulation?</p>	<p>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>Yes, the theory of change. STAP recommends developing fully the brief theory of change that is described in the proposal. The theory of change can be used to monitor project outcomes, and it can be revised, or adjusted, to reflect learning during the project implementation. Adaptive management should also feature in the project's third component.</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>STAP welcomes the knowledge strategy the project will develop to systematize lessons learned. As the strategy is developed, STAP recommends considering knowledge management metrics, and specifying how the knowledge generated will influence scaling of results. The knowledge strategy should be linked to component 3, and to the project's theory of change.</p>
	<p>What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?</p>	<p>Information in this regard is very vague. The team states that the project will develop a strategy to systematize and disseminate lessons learned from the project implementation will be developed during the project development stage to ensure ownership and continuity. STAP recommends the team reaches out to global databases such as WOCAT or the UNCCD knowledge Hub to disseminate lessons beyond the project geographic area.</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>Minor issues to be considered during the project design. STAP welcomes an open dialogue to address the issues raised in the review.</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>	