

STAP guidelines for screening GEF projects

Part I: Project Information	Response
GEF ID	10376
Project Title	Enhancing the resilience of vulnerable coastal communities in Sinoe County of Liberia
Date of Screening	April 29, 2020
STAP member screener	Ed Carr
STAP secretariat screener	Guadalupe Duron
STAP Overall Assessment and Rating	<p>Minor issues to be considered during project design.</p> <p>STAP welcomes UNDP’s project “Enhancing the resilience of vulnerable coastal communities in Sinoe County of Liberia”. The project aims to enhance livelihood diversification through the implementation of nature-based solutions, and engineering measures.</p> <p>The problem and its context are well-articulated in the PIF. The problem analysis provides evidence that Liberia, and Sinoe county, are at high risk of flooding, and sea-level rise. To ensure the needs of the targeted social-ecological system are identified, STAP recommends developing a systems-based theory of change. The project is in need of a situation analysis that identifies how the targeted system functions across scales and sectors. This assessment will enable the project team to understand how the system functions – including accounting for stressors and risks (e.g. climate change, poor access to health facilities, migration from neighboring countries due to drought, salinization of drinking water as a result of flooding, and COVID-19 [recognized by the project team]) to assess the system’s cross-scale linkages and opportunities and for resilience, adaptation, and transformation.</p> <p>Furthermore, given the high risk of flooding and sea level rise, and the possibility of other unknown changes, different scenarios will need to be accounted for in the project design. This involves thinking of plausible futures, underpinned by continuous understanding and learning of</p>

	<p>the targeted system, including the testing of assumptions in the theory of change. Iterative learning will help modify the interventions as needed amidst constant change to the system.</p> <p>Mangroves have the potential to generate multiple ecosystem benefits (i.e. water filtration, biodiversity conservation, carbon sequestration) - essential to adaptive capacity - in addition to serving as a coastal management strategy. The project team is encouraged to contribute to the scientific literature by testing the causality between mangroves, ecosystem services, and climate adaptation outcomes.</p>	
Part I: Project Information B. Indicative Project Description Summary	What STAP looks for	Response
Project Objective	Is the objective clearly defined, and consistently related to the problem diagnosis?	Yes, the objective is defined clearly, and consistently linked to the problem statement.
Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project's objectives?	Yes, the activities support the project objective
Outcomes	A description of the expected short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention. Do the planned outcomes encompass important adaptation benefits?	Yes, the outcomes focus on adaptation benefits.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	The benefits are likely to be generated with careful monitoring.
Outputs	A description of the products and services which are expected to result from the project. Is the sum of the outputs likely to contribute to the outcomes?	Yes, outputs are likely to contribute to outcomes.
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	Is the problem statement well-defined?	Yes. The problem, and the context influencing it are well-defined. The following report on Liberia's technical needs assessment for coastal zone management – climate adaptation would be valuable to draw upon if the project team has not done so already: https://ekmsliberia.info/wp-

need to be addressed (systems description)		content/uploads/2020/02/tna-report-coastal-zone-liberia.pdf
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	Yes, the PIF describes the barriers comprehensively.
	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?	Does not apply.
2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects	Is the baseline identified clearly?	Yes, the PIF includes a narrative baseline. However, STAP suggests that the baseline consider more than one future climate scenario to develop an understanding of the different ways in which the baseline might play out, and therefore the different levels of benefit possible from the project.
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits?	Indicators aligned with the LDCF results-based framework will be provided with the final project document.
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	Yes, the baseline is sufficiently robust at this stage. Suggest quantifying the baseline and identifying indicators during the project design. As mentioned above, STAP also suggests considering multiple climate scenarios in the baseline.
	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;	Does not apply.
	are the lessons learned from similar or related past GEF and non-GEF interventions described; and	Does not apply.
	how did these lessons inform the design of this project?	Does not apply.

<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 description of the causal links between the outcomes and outputs is provided below. STAP recommends developing a theory of change and expanding on the impact pathways by identifying the assumptions which underlie the causal connections.</p> <p>“The alternative scenario consists of 4 inter-linked components that address the observed barriers in coastal Liberia, with an emphasis of Sinoe County as the hotspot for coastal protection while contributing to the GEF 7 LDCF programming objectives. It is designed to support the implementation of engineering and natural ecosystem as well as livelihood solutions to strengthen climate resilience for coastal communities and economic assets and activities to the effects of climate change.</p> <p>The project shall introduce new innovative approaches to help strengthen institutional capacity of key Government Agencies to better assess climate change risks and to integrate them into national and county development policies and plans. It shall also introduce new and accessible technologies and innovations to support coastal adaptation, response planning and communication mechanisms in Sinoe County. It will also introduce livelihoods diversification opportunities to the population, with special attention to the needs of women and youth, to address the impacts of climate change on this population and the vulnerabilities it produces. Taken together, these interventions will reduce the vulnerability of Sinoe Country coastal communities to climate change impacts, including sea level rise.</p>
	<p>What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?</p>	<p>See above.</p>

	What is the set of linked activities, outputs, and outcomes to address the project's objectives?	See above.
	Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions?	<p>Unsure as an explicit theory of change and assumptions appear to be lacking in the PIF. STAP suggests developing a theory of change, a figure and accompanying narrative, during the project development to describe the impact pathway and the assumptions. It also will be valuable to use systems analysis to develop the theory of change to identify the cross-scale linkages and connections between the coastal and inland social ecological systems. Systems analysis will assist in understanding how the targeted social-ecological systems function. Refer to STAP's theory of change primer: http://www.stagef.org/theory-change-primer STAP also suggests that in considering mechanisms of change, the project draw on the suggested multiple climate scenarios mentioned above to articulate if those mechanisms are valid in a range of possible future situations.</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>There is some question as to the relative importance of climate change impacts in the overall vulnerability of the population in Sinoe County. Given Sinoe County's high vulnerability to coastal flooding, combined with poor socio-economic conditions (e.g. lack of safe drinking water) and access to health services, it remains unclear how climate data, or other socio-economic indicators, will be used to design, implement, and monitor the interventions; and, thereby, achieve adaptation outcomes.</p> <p>When designing the project, STAP recommends describing the targeted social-ecological systems. This includes identifying stressors, risks and uncertainties (climate, migration from neighboring countries due to drought, poor access to health and poor hygiene, among other factors) that can influence resilience, adaptation and transformation,</p>

		the relative importance of climate impacts and stressors in that broad suite of risks and uncertainties, and identify the most impactful points of intervention. STAP also suggests incorporating a consideration of multiple climate scenarios into the implementation narrative to identify possible necessary adaptations that might emerge under different scenarios.
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?	Does not apply.
	LDCF/SCCF: will the proposed incremental activities lead to adaptation which reduces vulnerability, builds adaptive capacity, and increases resilience to climate change?	Yes, with careful monitoring, and a good theory of change.
6) global environmental benefits (GEF trust fund) and/or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF)	Are the benefits truly global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits, and are they measurable?	<p>Yes, the adaptation benefits are articulated clearly.</p> <p>When developing the project, it would be useful to: i) describe the causal link between the objective of the component (“strengthening policy and institutions for climate change adaptation”), and the proposed activity in this component on “identifying target sites and interventions” (page 37). The logic is unclear.</p> <p>To assist in identifying the climate risks and adaptation priorities (output of component 1), STAP suggests carrying-out a situation analysis using a systems-based theory of change. Developing a systems-based theory of change with stakeholders, will help develop the impact pathways, and assist in reaffirming, or adjusting as needed, the proposed interventions in component 1, 2, 3 and 4. For example, have the implications of sea-level rise on mangroves (e.g. impact on mangrove biology from river or sea flooding) been considered and accounted in the project design?</p>

		<p>ii) in component 3, define how the hybrid solutions (seawalls and nature based measures) will be designed relying on climate change trends and projections (e.g. sea level rise, coastal flooding), and adaptable to deal with uncertainty and continuous change (e.g. height of seawall adjustable).</p> <p>iii) additionally, in component 3, the project team may wish to categorize the nature-based solution interventions and gray technologies by their features and benefits: e.g. mangroves: ecosystem restoration and coastal systems stability. Providing this information will make it clear how the project is contributing to adaptation, environmental, and livelihood benefits. The project team is also encouraged to do</p> <p>Two resources the project team may wish to consult for designing the project are: Feka, Z. et al “Managing mangroves for coastal ecosystems change: A decade and beyond of conservation experiences and lessons for and from west-central Africa” https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Njisuh_Feka/publication/317495906_Journal_of_Ecology_and_The_Natural_Environment_Managing_mangroves_for_coastal_ecosystems_change_A_decade_and_beyond_of_conservation_experiences_and_lessons_for_and_from_west-central_Africa/links/593bf33eaca272c4d9605b80/Journal-of-Ecology-and-The-Natural-Environment-Managing-mangroves-for-coastal-ecosystems-change-A-decade-and-beyond-of-conservation-experiences-and-lessons-for-and-from-west-central-Africa.pdf</p> <p>Sierra-Correa, P. et al (2015) “Ecosystem-based adaptation for improving coastal planning</p>
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		for sea level rise: A systematic review for mangrove coasts”: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2014.09.013
	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	The project aims to scale up best practices on climate-smart technologies, as well as scaling financial innovations. However, it is unclear in the PIF how scaling will be achieved. In the theory of change, STAP suggests framing the expected adaptation outcomes as hypotheses to validate evidence on scaling best practices, and innovative technologies, on adaptation in the targeted sites. Monitoring, adjusting (as needed), and validating the causal links may prove insightful in identifying scaling leverages. Furthermore, STAP suggests identifying the barriers and enablers to scaling in the theory of change.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits explicitly defined?	Yes, adaptation benefits are defined.
	Are indicators, or methodologies, provided to demonstrate how the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits will be measured and monitored during project implementation?	Indicators will be provided in the final project document. In addition to listing the indicators aligned with the results-based framework of the LDCF strategy, STAP suggests identifying indicators to monitor and track progress of the causal links between outputs and outcomes in the theory of change.
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project’s resilience to climate change?	To increase the project’s resilience to climate change, the project will focus on: i) reducing vulnerability and increase resilience through innovation and technology transfer for climate change adaptation; ii) introducing alternative livelihoods less vulnerable to likely climate change impacts, and which might add to the resilience of women and youth in particular and, iii) embedding climate change adaptation and resilience across governance levels, and ministries, using tools and methodologies for planning and implementing adaption measures.

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 is innovative in combining ecosystem-based adaptation strategies with engineering measures in an integrated coastal zone management framework. Additionally, the project seeks to apply financial innovations to spur income diversification through small micro and medium enterprises.</p> <p>The assumption is that these efforts, combined with capacity building for these technologies and approaches, will generate the knowledge and institutional conditions to scale across temporal and spatial scales. STAP recommends its paper on durability and theory of change - where it lists principles that need attention to achieve scaling: http://www.stapgef.org/achieving-enduring-outcomes-gef-investment; http://www.stapgef.org/theory-change-primer</p>
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	It is unclear in the PIF how innovation will be scaled up. In describing the social-ecological systems, STAP recommends working with stakeholders to map how cause and effect may unfold across sectors and scales in different futures, and to identify potential points of intervention.
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	<p>It is possible that both adaptation and transformational change will be required due to climate stressors, and other long-term drives (e.g. population, markets, global environmental change). STAP encourages the project team to consider uncertainty to cope with the level of change that may take place; therefore, consider systematically different time scales, as well as spatial scales.</p> <p>The theory of change can do this if it is designed to assess how the targeted social-ecological system functions across scales. STAP recommends building systems analysis into the theory of change. This will facilitate an analysis of factors</p>

		that inhibit, or facilitate, change. STAP's theory of change primer is a good resource for developing a theory of change based on systems analysis: http://www.stapgef.org/theory-change-primer
1b. Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.		Several geo-referenced maps are provided indicating the target sites. It would be useful also to provide maps indicating flood maps for Liberia, or the targeted river basin, if this information is available. Possible resources for maps are: https://www.wri.org/resources/maps/aqueduct-global-flood-analyzer https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/liberia/vulnerability
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?	Some key stakeholders have been identified while others will be defined once a stakeholder mapping takes place. When a stakeholder mapping, and plan, are developed, STAP recommends describing the actors' roles in relation to how they will contribute (individually and collectively) to achieving the global environmental outcomes.
	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?	See above.

<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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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>The project aims to carry-out gender differentiated vulnerability and risk assessments, which STAP welcomes. During 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,</p>	<p>Are the identified risks valid and comprehensive? Are the risks specifically for things outside the project’s control? 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 	<p>The PIF summarizes the risks the project may face, including risks from climate change, risks to capacity building or stakeholder engagement, and risks to engaging the finance sector – among others. The proposal also recognizes the need to account and respond to underlying drivers that may affect the project outcome, such as COVID-19.</p>

<p>propose measures that address these risks to be further developed during the project design</p>	<p>2050, and have the impact of these risks been addressed adequately?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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>STAP recommends building external, and internal risks, to the targeted social-ecological system in the theory of change. This process will enable the project team to assess for the resilience of the whole system - identify how, and where, the system is weak, or strong, in its capacity to deal with disturbances.</p> <p>In addition to the climate risks identified in the PIF, STAP recommends addressing the climate resilience measures described to the left. The project team may find it useful to look at the following resources: STAP's screening guidelines: http://www.stapgef.org/sites/default/files/document/s/GEF%20AGENCY%20RETREAT%20Mar-Apr%202020.pdf World Bank Climate Change Knowledge Portal: https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/ U.S. Agency for International Development Climate Risk Screening and Management Tools: https://www.climatelinks.org/resources/climate-risk-screening-management-tool</p>
<p>6. Coordination. Outline the coordination with other relevant GEF-financed and other related initiatives</p>	<p>Are the project proponents tapping into relevant knowledge and learning generated by other projects, including GEF projects?</p>	<p>Yes, the project will build on the knowledge of other projects based on the baseline projects listed in the PIF, and described in the coordination section.</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>It is unclear whether lessons from other projects were used to develop this proposal.</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, component 2 will create a knowledge hub to collect and disseminate lessons learned to support integrated coastal zone management at the county level. Climate and risk information also will be made available through the knowledge hub.</p>

		A systems-based the theory of change can also serve as a monitoring and learning tool. See the STAP’s theory of change primer, and RAPTA: http://www.stapgef.org/theory-change-primer https://research.csiro.au/eap/rapta/
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?	STAP welcomes the knowledge efforts outlined in the PIF. To complement these initiatives, STAP recommends using the theory of change to generate knowledge. This includes identifying indicators for each outcome, so that it is known when the next step in the impact pathway can be addressed. Identifying a monitoring, evaluation and learning strategy for the project and the theory of change, will enable iterative learning of the project’s logic – i.e. whether the desired change is being achieved, or what adaptations are necessary to achieve this change.
	What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?	The project describes several methods to disseminate knowledge on community based coastal adaptation practices. This includes creating a knowledge hub at the county level to share best practices and lessons on climate adaptation technologies and strategies. The project also plans to develop guidance documents on the best practices that emerge from component 3 and 4.

Notes

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.

<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>