

Part I: Project Information		Response
GEF ID	10400	
Project Title	Mainstreaming biodiversity into mountain agriculture and pastoral landscapes of relevant ecosystems in Eastern Cuba	
Date of Screening	6-Dec-19	
STAP member Screener	Rosie Cooney	
STAP secretariat screener	Virginia Gorsevski	
STAP Overall Assessment		<p>Minor issues to be considered during project design: STAP welcomes the project from FAO entitled "Mainstreaming biodiversity into mountain agricultural and pastoral landscapes of relevant ecosystems in Eastern Cuba. This proposed project is taking place in highly biodiverse ecosystems which are under threat due to unsustainable agricultural practices. STAP feels that overall the project's 3 pronged approach to 1) encourage improved practices through the Save and Grow programh; mainstream biodiversity into policy, legal and regulatory frameworks; and 3) assess the contribution of biodiversity across the value chain of several key commodities is comprehensive and feasible given the level of investment and other ongoing activities. However, the activities appear somewhat disjointed from each other in the absence of a clear and coherent theory of change. Therefore, STAP recommends that a detailed TOC is developed during PPG phase that clearly links the underlying drivers, threats, trends, objective(s), barriers to the stated objective(s) and specific components addressing these barriers in a way that makes it clear how the project will systematically overcome challenges to achieve the ambitious results outlined in the PIF. In addition, given the risks identified in the project which (apart from climate change) rely on convincing people to work together or change their practices, this project would benefit from an adaptive management approach which would allow for modifications in the event that one or more of these assumptions prove false so that the entire project does not fail. Finally, with regards to Component 3, project proponents may want to consider focusing on just 1 or 2 commodities to do an in-depth analysis and development of standards, certification, etc. rather than spreading too thinly across many different commodities since each will involve different technical issues, stakeholders, etc.</p>
Part I: Project Information		
B. Indicative Project Description Summary		
Project Objective		<p>The project objective is "to reduce pressures on key fragile mountain and pre-mountain ecosystems of Eastern Cuba, by mainstreaming biodiversity in agriculture/livestock production, and implementing integrated landscape management (ILM) and planning." This objective is consistent with the problems identified in this section vis-a-vis habitat loss and fragmentation and pollution due to certain crops and livestock.</p>

Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project's objectives?	Yes. The project Components focus on identifying better practices through technical assistance and mainstreaming BD through revised legal and regulatory frameworks. The third component focuses on strengthening sustainable value chains in key sectors. The first Component is called "Mainstreaming" however, it is mainly about improved practices and capacity which are important but generally not considered mainstreaming by the GEF's definition. Component 2 is more focused on mainstreaming thout this is not reflected in the name of the Component.
Outcomes	A description of the expected short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention.	Outcomes are not separated into short vs. long term but the general logic is that the combination of technical assistance, capacity building, regulatory changes and sustainable value chains will together result in desired project outcome.
	Do the planned outcomes encompass important global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits?	Yes.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	Yes.
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?	See above.
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?	The problems that this project is planning to address are embedded throughout the project description. It would be better if the problem statement were more clearly defined and specifically related to the proposed solution/vision and the barriers to acheiving the stated vision (i.e. log frame).
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	Barriers that impede the sustainable management of mountain landscapes include: 1) low institutional capacity and lack of coordination; 2) limited technical capability; 3) lack of information; 4) unsustainable production practices; and 5) undervalued/appreciated sustainable agricultural practices. Each barrier includes some explanation but not supported by data.
	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?	N/A
2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects	Is the baseline identified clearly?	Baseline information refers to Cuban laws and policies as well as several relevant national programs. It sets the scene in terms of government baseline actions that may be relevant to this project.
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits?	Project will measure cabon benefits using EXACT and GLEAM tools.
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	As above.
	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;	N/A
	are the lessons learned from similar or related past GEF and non-GEF interventions described; and	N/A
	how did these lessons inform the design of this project?	N/A
3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project	What is the theory of change?	TOC is not presented but the idea is that these landscapes will be improved through a 3 prong effort: integrated land management, biodiversity mainstreaming; and sustainable value chains. Each of these are laudable, but it is difficult to see how they related to one another in a coherent, logical way.
	What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?	As above.
	What is the set of linked activities, outputs, and outcomes to address the project's objectives?	As above.
	Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions?	The mechanisms are plausible and the project has a good understanding 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?	No.
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?	N/A
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 - particularly carbon through the exact tool. Biodiversity less so as there are no indicators related to BD mainstreaming or improved value chains.
	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	Yes.
	Are the global environmental benefits explicitly defined?	Yes.
	Are indicators, or methodologies, provided to demonstrate how the global environmental benefits will be measured and monitored during project implementation?	Yes.
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project's resilience to climate change?	Apparently the FAO Save and Grow approach builds 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?	The project claims to be innovative due to its ecosystem based approach and through BD mainstreaming.
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	No.

	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	Incremental adaptation as each of the Components is fairly standard and may require incremental changes and adaptation over time to continue improving the landscapes.
1b. Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.		Map is provided in the Annex. Coordinates are mentioned at the beginning of the project (lat/long).
2. Stakeholders. Select the stakeholders that have participated in consultations during the project identification phase: Indigenous people and local communities; Civil society organizations; Private sector entities. If none of the above, please explain why. In addition, provide indicative information on how stakeholders, including civil society and indigenous peoples, will be engaged in the project preparation, and their respective roles and means of engagement.	Have all the key relevant stakeholders been identified to cover the complexity of the problem, and project implementation barriers?	Yes with the exception of the private sector if that exists in Cuba for coffee and cocoa, for example.
	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?	Most of the stakeholders are government officials or researchers or farmers groups. Each has a specific role to play in terms of decision making, capacity building, etc.
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?	Somewhat.
	Do gender considerations hinder full participation of an important stakeholder group (or groups)? If so, how will these obstacles be addressed?	Gender Action Plan
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?	Four risks are identified - conflicts between production and conservation interests, inter-institutional disagreements, severe climate change, and poor involvement by communities. Each of these except climate change require convincing people to change their practices and behavior and will be addressed through improved capacity and coordination embedded in the project. Climate change impacts are listed as medium but the response measures merely say that they will take it into consideration during project design and implementation (vague).
	Are there social and environmental risks which could affect the project?	Yes.
	For climate risk, and climate resilience measures:	

	· How will the project's objectives or outputs be affected by climate risks over the period 2020 to 2050, and have the impact of these risks been addressed adequately?	Unclear.
	· Has the sensitivity to climate change, and its impacts, been assessed?	No.
	· Have resilience practices and measures to address projected climate risks and impacts been considered? How will these be dealt with?	Yes - will be considered but not clear how they will be dealt with.
	· What technical and institutional capacity, and information, will be needed to address climate risks and resilience enhancement measures?	The project would benefit from greater expertise in climate science, adaptation, etc.
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?	The project describes several GEF and non-GEF projects that it will seek synergies with as this project develops.
	Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?	Previous projects are recognized - no information on lessons learned and how that informs this project.
	Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?	No.
	How have these lessons informed the project's formulation?	N/A
	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?	No.
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?	KM platform, best practices, databases, manuals, etc.
	What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?	As above.
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.	
	<i>* 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 "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.	