

STAP guidelines for screening GEF projects

Part I: Project Information	Response
GEF ID	10554
Project Title	Transboundary cooperation for the conservation, sustainable development and integrated management of the Pantanal - Upper Paraguay River Basin
Date of Screening	16 May 2020
STAP member screener	Blake Ratner
STAP secretariat screener	Virginia Gorsevski
STAP Overall Assessment and Rating	<p>Concur</p> <p>STAP welcomes the project from IADB/UNEP entitled “Transboundary cooperation for the conservation, sustainable development and integrated management of the Pantanal - Upper Paraguay River Basin.”</p> <p>Overall, the components are well structured, including division of main agency responsibilities at output level. Component 5 on awareness building and stakeholder involvement is especially noteworthy, providing investment in important scaling mechanisms. Focus on sustainable financing strategy is also laudable. The project includes very good treatment of proximate drivers and root causes.</p> <p>The logic is clear but would benefit from deeper treatment of how barriers to change will be addressed. Benefits are plausible, provided appropriate attention is given to political / institutional barriers to change. The scaling approach remains vague at this stage; it would benefit from additional specification of key barriers that will be addressed, demonstrating recognition of likely institutional and political constraints beyond financing.</p> <p>Reference to “divergent stakeholder interests” is rated low risk. There seems to be unstated assumptions about</p>

	the ease of achieving “consensual decision-making.” This needs to be probed more deeply to identify relevant barriers and strategies to address these.	
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.
Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project’s objectives?	Yes, well structured, including division of main agency responsibilities at output level. Component 5 on awareness building and stakeholder involvement is especially noteworthy, providing investment in important scaling mechanisms. Focus on sustainable financing strategy (component 3.4) is also laudable.
Outcomes	A description of the expected short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention. Do the planned outcomes encompass important adaptation benefits?	Yes, transboundary water cooperation is an important adaptation measure.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	Good summary of methodology for estimating magnitude of benefits. Ramsar sites include world’s largest tropical wetland – clear global importance.
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?	
Part II: Project justification	A simple narrative explaining the project’s logic, i.e. a theory of change.	Explicit theory of change provided in text and visual form.
1. Project description. Briefly describe: 1) the global environmental and/or adaptation problems, root causes and barriers that need to be	Is the problem statement well-defined?	Yes.

addressed (systems description)		
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	Yes, very good treatment of proximate drivers and root causes.
	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, though strong biodiversity benefits noted
2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects	Is the baseline identified clearly?	Solid description of historical, institutional context and related initiatives.
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits?	Clearly identified gaps addressed.
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	Yes, though incorporating baseline data on resource status indicators would enhance this.
	For multiple focal area projects:	n/a
	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?	Logic is clear but would benefit from deeper treatment of how barriers to change will be addressed. These, along with assumptions, are absent from the theory of change diagram. Much of this content is implicit in the description of project components.
	What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?	Clearly outlined.

	What is the set of linked activities, outputs, and outcomes to address the project's objectives?	Clearly outlined.
	Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions?	Underlying assumptions are not explicit.
	Is there a recognition of what adaptations may be required during project implementation to respond to changing conditions in pursuit of the targeted outcomes?	Appropriate recognition of adaptive planning is noted, including flexibility in identifying appropriate focus of financing for local innovation.
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?	Sound design and expectation of flexibility in implementation indicates good potential for delivering benefits. Requires effective coordination to ensure components supported by different agencies are well integrated.
	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/adaptation benefits, and are they measurable?	Yes, global importance of target ecosystems is well justified.
	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	Yes, benefits are plausible, provided appropriate attention is given to political / institutional barriers to change.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits explicitly defined?	Yes.
	Are indicators, or methodologies, provided to demonstrate how the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits will be measured and monitored during project implementation?	Requires further specification of measurable indicators, beyond the general IW indicators provided.
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project's resilience to climate change?	Linkages between ecosystem functions and livelihood resilience are well noted.
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?	Reference is made to financial and governance innovations, as well as adoption of improved technologies and management practices, but these are difficult to assess in the general terms described. There is reference to "fiscal incentives

		for sustainable projects” and “green-resilience bonds,” and relevant capacity in innovative finance from IDB.
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	The scaling approach remains vague at this stage; it would benefit from additional specification of key barriers that will be addressed, demonstrating recognition of likely institutional and political constraints beyond financing.
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	Given current trends, transformational change is needed.
1b. Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.		
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?	A preliminary list of stakeholders by country is provided, with the expectation that a fuller stakeholder engagement and communication plan will be developed during implementation. By CEO endorsement stage, there should be a more specific indication of anticipated roles and how these relate to barriers to scaling.

	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?	Not yet specified.
<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>	Have gender differentiated risks and opportunities been identified, and were preliminary response measures described that would address these differences?	Good description of elements planned for integrating gender dimensions into project activities, including use of appropriate toolkits such as WWAP Gender and Water Toolkit. Good linkages identified as well to related projects with strong women's empowerment focus.
	Do gender considerations hinder full participation of an important stakeholder group (or groups)? If so, how will these obstacles be addressed?	Barriers to gender equality should be clearly identified in relation to achievement of project objectives.
5. Risks. Indicate risks, including climate change,	Are the identified risks valid and comprehensive? Are the risks specifically for things outside the project's control?	Reference to "divergent stakeholder interests" is rated low risk, with mitigating actions focused on

<p>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 there social and environmental risks which could affect the project? 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? • 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>partner identification and implementation arrangements. While these are no doubt important, there seems to be unstated assumptions about the ease of achieving “consensual decision-making.” This needs to be probed more deeply to identify relevant barriers and strategies to address these.</p> <p>Climate risk is noted very cursorily. This needs to be assessed in relation to credible future scenarios.</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>Good complementarity of strengths noted between IADB and UNEP.</p>
	<p>Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
	<p>Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?</p>	<p>Not specific lessons, but focus of lessons exchange is identified for multiple prior and ongoing projects.</p>
	<p>How have these lessons informed the project’s formulation?</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>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</p>	<p>What overall approach will be taken, and what knowledge management indicators and metrics will be used?</p>	<p>Links to several partners in the region and globally are noted for KM purposes. KM is embedded within several identified components, and linked appropriately to capacity building. KM indicators and metrics need to be specified.</p>

projects, initiatives and evaluations.		
	What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?	

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.

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.