

STAP guidelines for screening GEF projects

Part I: Project Information	Response
GEF ID	10562
Project Title	Resilient and sustainable livelihoods for rural Yemen
Date of Screening	11 May 2020
STAP member screener	Ed Carr & Mark Stafford Smith
STAP secretariat screener	Guadalupe Duron
STAP Overall Assessment and Rating	<p>Minor issues to be considered during project design:</p> <p>STAP welcomes this project in Yemen that aims to bolster community resource management processes and their governance context despite a situation of on-going conflict and uncertain governance, noting the realistic timeframes proposed.</p> <p>The basic logic outlined herein is plausible. However, to ensure successful outcomes, STAP strongly urges that attention is given to a more formal theory of change as a matter of urgency in the next design phase, probably separately for the major regions, recognizing that a key issue is to be able to justify that the intervention components (with other activities going on) are both <i>necessary</i> but also <i>sufficient</i> to achieve the outcomes. We note below a number of areas where this is not clear so far, even though there is a great deal of implicit logic hidden in this proposal. In particular some issues around behavior and power dynamics are poorly addressed.</p> <p>A strong ToC would also provide the basis for identifying assumptions that need monitoring through the project, to help guide adaptive implementation. Design should also address any risk of maladaptation and leakage that would reduce the durability of the benefits achieved. The LDN checklist is useful in this regard, but could be reflected in the project design more explicitly.</p> <p>Below, STAP specifies its guidance.</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: this emphasizes mainstreaming, which suggests the importance of addressing scaling.
Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project's objectives?	Broadly; as noted below, however, whilst these are probably necessary, it is not clear as stated that these are sufficient to achieve the objectives.
Outcomes	A description of the expected short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention. Do the planned outcomes encompass important adaptation benefits?	Yes, potentially.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	Yes, potentially
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?	As above, probably necessary but not clearly sufficient: in particular, the top down aspects are over-emphasised over some key bottom up issues, see below.
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 problem statement is well-defined, and includes linkages between socio-economic and environmental drivers of degradation the project seeks to address.
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	Changing threats are mostly discussed in terms of hazards, mentioning exposure and vulnerability (or adaptive capacity) as relatively static issues; it would be useful for consider possible change in these too – clearly conflict may drive increased vulnerabilities and reduced adaptive capacity at least (as acknowledged on p.73). e.g. the analysis of khat farming is strong, and is changing vulnerabilities - what are possible trends in this?

		<p>The barriers are well-described. While the PIF describes the state of environmental policy and planning in Yemen clearly, it does so at a generic level (with the exception of the Socotra Conservation Zoning Plan). It would be useful for the barriers section to reference more specific policies and processes to illustrate the character of the broad challenges being described. In addition, barrier 1 notes that existing promulgated plans have not been operationalised as the “capacity of government has been outpaced by ...development”. At some point later in the proposal it would be good to return to argue why the interventions proposed will actually reverse this rather than just slightly reduce the gap, else benefits are unlikely to be durable.</p>
	<p>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?</p>	<p>Does not apply</p>
<p>2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects</p>	<p>Is the baseline identified clearly?</p>	<p>The baseline is clear with regard to governmental structure, policy framework, civil society, private enterprise, and international investments. It also explains the underpinning tools to be scaled, in the form of CBOs like the WUAs. However, there is no environmental baseline data in the baseline scenario, and therefore no way of tracking the current state of the environment. Further, there is no socioeconomic data in the baseline that allows for the measurement of the sustainability and resilience of rural Yemeni livelihoods. STAP suggests that the baseline scenario include such data to allow for the measurement of project impact on its stated goals.</p>
	<p>Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project’s benefits?</p>	<p>The baseline provides a feasible basis for quantifying change in governmental structure, policy framework, civil society, and private enterprise. It does not provide a basis for</p>

		quantifying the benefits to livelihoods or the environment. STAP suggests that such data is critical to an effective baseline, and should be added.
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	It is not, as it does not provide a means of measuring progress toward the stated project goals. See 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;	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
3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project	What is the theory of change?	<p>There is no explicitly stated theory of change, but one can infer that the project assumes that the land degradation, biodiversity, and climate change adaptation challenges that negatively impact both the global environment and Yemeni well-being is a product of open access resource management and limited capacity at levels from the producers of agricultural goods and livestock to the national government. By improving the capacity for spatial planning within resource management, increasing access to tools and knowledge for the identification and uptake of sustainable practices at the producer level, and building an enabling environment (including policy frameworks) to support informed decision-making and provide incentives for the uptake of improved practices, this project will address the root cause of this linked environmental/human well-being challenge.</p> <p>STAP urges the proponents to develop a proper ToC in the next stage (STAP's ToC Primer may be of help here) - probably for both the agriculture and fisheries aspects though there will be some common elements. Furthermore, the project is</p>

		<p>mostly based on scaling <i>out</i> and <i>up</i> the CBO success stories, spreading them more widely and ensuring that the regulatory environment supports them. Developing a ToC that focuses on this scaling (and associated barriers) would help to ensure the interventions are both necessary and <i>sufficient</i> (see below).</p> <p>The proposal contains many references which suggest most of these issues have in fact been considered, but in the absence of a formally outlined ToC (i) it is hard to be sure they are recognised and given appropriate priority, (ii) they may in fact be missed in the final design, and (iii) explicit attention to monitoring related assumptions as part of adaptive project implementation is missing.</p> <p>STAP's theory of change primer can be accessed at: https://stapgef.org/theory-change-primer</p>
	What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?	<p>A spatial planning exercise will prioritize conservation and sustainable production practices across project areas. Resource user groups will be organized to develop binding spatial planning to guide sustainable production with conservation benefits. Agriculture, livestock, and fisheries producers will be provided with the training, capacity building and tangible incentives needed to access and adopt improved production practices. The project will monitor impacts to inform decision-making, and improve policy and regulatory frameworks to allow these lessons to be taken up to support enduring results.</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>The mechanisms for change are limited to the described project activities. This suggests that the project assumes that farmers, livestock producers, and fishermen and women will willingly participate in the planning exercises and take up</p>

		<p>the interventions identified through those exercises. This could be a problematic assumption. Most existing behavior comes with its own incentives. STAP suggests the project clearly articulate these existing incentives, and how participation in this planning process and uptake of identified interventions will overcome these incentives and produce changed behaviors and conservation outcomes. For example, the PIF discusses a shift from coffee to khat production that appears to be problematic environmentally and, from a livelihoods perspective, weakens the negotiating position of the producers. However, the PIF also notes that this switch occurred because farmers perceived greater cash returns from khat. The project would be well-served by an effort to articulate in a ToC the assumptions about the intervention that would overcome this incentive, such as engaging with the coffee value chain (which is mentioned as a stakeholder and on p.61 & p.85 but not given prominence in the ToC logic). While the PIF uses language like “the project will work with stakeholders to generate planning guidelines covering issues of responsible parties, administration, process and stakeholder engagement strategies” at various points, this assumption and incentive identification should be an explicit part of participant engagement. Similarly, there are evident possible power dynamics associated with commercial fishers around Socotra; the proposal indicates the intent to support better policing capacity but does not address how to ensure these powerful players are not motivated to overrule this given the context of disrupted governance.</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>Under the risks section, the PIF discusses the potential for natural resource constraints, including climate change, drought, and food insecurity, to impact the project. The PIF says that the project</p>

		will design a final results framework that integrates these risks. As there are no specific adaptations suggested in the PIF, it is not clear how the project would adapt to changes in any of these risks. STAP recommends that these issues are mainly picked up through a good ToC which identifies assumptions that should be monitored during the project implementation, to provide evidence of the need to amend the project plan (e.g. if key assumptions are that better community-based management will make coffee more profitable or reliable than khat, or that commercial fishing will cease in community managed waters, then whether these are being achieved should be monitored).
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?	If the planning process is inclusive of a wide range of stakeholders, and the interventions provide greater incentives for participation than current activities and practices, the proposed incremental activities will lead to adaptation.
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, they are global adaptation benefits, but the target indicators are not weighed against a quantitative baseline, and therefore cannot be measured in terms of change. For example, under the effort to stimulate agriculture, livestock, and fisheries practices to improve livelihoods and mainstream conservation, one indicator is number of small-scale private enterprises adopting productive practices that deliver biodiversity conservation, benefits, with the target being 90,000 agriculture producers (45,000 female/45,000 male). What we do not know at this time is how many agriculture producers are already adopting these practices. STAP suggests that when the project identifies the practices it wishes to promote in

		agriculture, fisheries, and livestock production it capture baseline numbers of individuals already participating in these practices to allow for the capture of data about change over time, and therefore the size of the adaptation benefit. In general, STAP suggests that indicators have baseline measurements against which target numbers can be compared, and achieved numbers can be measured.
	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	Yes
	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?	No – see discussion of indicators above
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project’s resilience to climate change?	Nearly all activities in this project are aimed at improving the resilience of people and places to climate change impacts – whether through on-the-ground activities or through changes in institutions that might facilitate effective planning of such activities. However, the risk of maladaptation is not addressed explicitly; for example, though coffee uses less water than khat, will even this use be incompatible with climate change or rising population pressures on demand and land use? in the latter case should coffee actually be promoted as a stepping stone to a more diversified economy, etc? Similar issues arise in fisheries.
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 in its reach across three distinct ecosystems/livelihoods zones in Yemen. The general approach of the project, framed so that it can be tailored to these different places, will facilitate learning about the efficacy of specific activities and their outcomes in different places, while allowing for data collection and advice to be aggregated to influence national policy discussions.

	<p>Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?</p>	<p>Yes, the project is aimed at working across scales and influencing national policy structures, specifically to scale the community level of organization. The theory of change should recognise and address barriers to scaling more explicitly than at present</p>
	<p>Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?</p>	<p>Most of the work proposed in the PIF is incremental adaptation, although if scaled well the establishment of an effective CBO layer of organization could be transformative for Yemen.</p> <p>Durability of the outcomes is crucial; acknowledging the conflict context, explicitly addressing the durability of government regulatory intervention needs continued attention. Further guidance from STAP on enduring outcomes is available at: https://www.stapgef.org/achieving-enduring-outcomes-gef-investment</p> <p>In addition, it would be easy to predict ‘leakage’ of benefits from improved land and fisheries management, with pressures being transferred from the project target areas to others. In the case of land degradation, there is a good framework for avoiding this, in Yemen’s commitment to LDN – the issue of leakage is specifically mentioned in the checklist on p.60, which is good, though the assertion that “community based approaches [will ensure there re no tradeoffs of leakage”]: is naive as stated – the leakage will occur to other areas that where the community activity is working. This requires addressing at a higher level of governance such as Yemen’s national commitment to LDN. the ToC should address how this can be reinforced (e.g. at the least, all successes under this project should be formally listed as part of the nation’s LDN commitment, thus at least making any leakage visible).</p>
<p>1b. Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide</p>		<p>There is a reasonably clear map and georeferenced coordinates for the proposed activity areas.</p>

<p>geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.</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>The PIF identifies a wide range of relevant institutional stakeholders, from government offices to multilateral organizations to farmers, fishers, and herders (private producers). This list appears to cover the complexity of the problem.</p> <p>However, STAP suggests this should be continually reviewed with regard to the barriers to scaling, particularly those that arise due to erratic governance and power dynamics among actors who may see themselves as losers from an effective community layer of resources management (e.g. khat value chain, commercial fishing interests, as well as those that are important to some implicit assumptions noted above (e.g. the coffee value chain actors).</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>Governmental stakeholders appear to have a central role in the implementation of interventions and the mainstreaming of lessons learned. Civil society organizations are largely envisioned as contributing to conservation planning and stakeholder awareness. The role of private producers appears to be heavily confined to receiving the interventions, with less attention given to the ways in which they might participate in or guide project design and implementation to ensure effective, impactful interventions. STAP suggests that the role of private producers be expanded in the spatial planning, intervention selection, and intervention implementation activities of the project such that they have a clear voice in the design of the project, as this is likely to</p>

		result in more locally-appropriate activities and more impactful project outcomes.
<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>While the PIF is not specific about the challenges that women face in Yemen, STAP welcomes the fact that the project clearly acknowledges that Yemeni women have “substantially lower opportunities to engage meaningfully in economic, social and political sectors.” Further, STAP appreciates that the project “will acknowledge gender differences, it will assess and comprehensively understand them, and it will then design and implement activities that promote women’s empowerment and gender equality.” STAP also appreciates that the PIF goes beyond gender to consider ways to address the impacts of climate change “on women and other particularly vulnerable groups.”</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</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>	<p>The identified risks are valid and comprehensive. STAP particularly appreciates the attention the PIF pays to conflict, and the GEF IEO guidance on the evaluation of GEF engagement in fragile and conflict-affected situations. STAP is pleased to see</p>

<p>objectives from being achieved, and, if possible, propose measures that address these risks to be further developed during the project design</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>the project consider its adaptation and conservation efforts as opportunities to enhance cooperation.</p> <p>The project has undertaken a climate risk screen, and considered the results in its design. STAP suggests that the project team consider developing more than one future scenario for climate change, and weigh how different scenarios might impact the project’s outcomes over this time period, looking for actions that are robust to the uncertainty about the future. Such scenarios could also address any uncertainty in changes in population, market demand, and conflict.</p> <p>The project is aimed at addressing the sensitivity of various livelihoods activities and resource management practices to climate change through resilience-building efforts. Further, it seeks to build the technical and institutional capacity necessary to address climate risk and render its resilience work durable.</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>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>Yes</p>
	<p>How have these lessons informed the project’s formulation?</p>	<p>Yes</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</p>
<p>8. Knowledge management. Outline the “Knowledge Management Approach” for the project, and how it will contribute to the project’s overall impact,</p>	<p>What overall approach will be taken, and what knowledge management indicators and metrics will be used?</p>	<p>The overall approach is to embed specific knowledge management activities in project components, which makes sense given the disparate character of the project sites and the potential for one or more of the sites to be disrupted by conflict or other stressors.</p>

<p>including plans to learn from relevant projects, initiatives and evaluations.</p>		<p>Component-specific knowledge is expected to facilitate learning and improvement at the project component level, while producing opportunities for synthetic learning that will allow for the up-scaling of lessons learned and best practices.</p> <p>As noted previously, what is missing is an explicit plan to monitor some simple indicators relevant to critical assumptions, that might help adapt project implementation. STAP recommends this issue be considered during the next stage of design.</p> <p>STAP also notes that some of the indicators listed in section 1 (e.g. “number of enterprises adopting productive practices” p.7 or “number of enterprises incentivised” p.9) are useful immediate indicators but do not measure outcomes: for this, whether income variability has reduced, or more food is available or whether enterprises are actually doing anything as a result of the incentives, would also be useful.</p>
	<p>What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?</p>	<p>The project will work with national and regional technical and education institutions, work through South-South cooperation channels to disseminate experiences and lessons regionally and internationally, and will work with the FAO to disseminate knowledge products regionally and internationally.</p>

Notes

STAP advisory response	Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed
<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>(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>