STAP guidelines for screening GEF projects

Part I: Project Information	Response
GEF ID	10727
Project Title	Managing Watersheds for Enhanced Resilience to Climate Change in Nepal (MaWRiN)
Date of Screening	November 27, 2020
STAP member screener	Edward Carr
STAP secretariat screener	Guadalupe Duron
STAP Overall Assessment and Rating	Minor issues to be considered during project design. STAP welcomes WWF's project "Managing Watersheds for Enhanced Resilience to Climate Change in Nepal (MaWRiN)". The project seeks to enhance climate resilience of Indigenous people and local communities in the Marin watershed through nature-based solutions and livelihood diversification. STAP welcomes the theory of change provided in the PIF, which demonstrates expected causal relationships across components and beneficiaries. STAP suggests that some of the assumptions in the theory of change will benefit from further exploration within the communities living in the project area to ensure that the widest range of challenges are addressed and opportunities realized. To ensure that the value of the project and its interventions are clearly defined, STAP recommends the project more clearly identify the social, economic, and environmental baseline into the future (as opposed to just for right now) and then consider how the alternate scenario will change outcomes from that baseline. If quantifiable measures of environment or economy are available, STAP recommends incorporating them into this baseline and the alternative scenario.

	STAP also recommends that the project consider more than one plausible future climate scenario to ensure that designed project components will function and have durable impacts across a range of possible climate futures. Such work should include consideration of how current manifestations of climate change might impact project implementation and thus project outcomes. Below, STAP offers recommendations on how to improve project design.	
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.
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.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	Yes, they are.
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.
Part II: Project justification	A simple narrative explaining the project's logic, i.e. a theory of change.	The theory of change is that when stakeholders have the capacity to access and integrate climate change uncertainties and impacts into policies and plans through learning and demonstration, and when nature-based solutions exist to facilitate the sustainable management of vulnerable communities' livelihoods assets, the resilience of communities and ecosystems will improve. STAP greatly appreciates the development and inclusion of a theory of change in the PIF.

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. STAP notes that while the PIF recognizes that the future climate is somewhat uncertain, it largely lays out a single future climate scenario. To ensure that project activities have durable impacts across a range of plausible futures, STAP recommends the project include other plausible climate futures in its planning at the PPG stage to better assess the durability of planned interventions and identify any changes in interventions that might be needed.
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	Yes, they are well-described and reference appropriate sources.
	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?	
2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects	Is the baseline identified clearly?	The baseline lays out the existing program in the project area. However, it does not lay out a baseline expectation for environmental or social change under existing conditions and plans. Such expectations are, to an extent, laid out in the project description but this section of the PIF does not clearly connect expected climate trends to *expected* human impacts, particularly as addressed by the existing program in the project area. STAP strongly suggests that the project develop a clear baseline for environmental and socio-economic trends under business-as-usual in the PPG phase of the project to allow for the identification and measurement of project benefits.
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits?	No.
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	Not currently.
	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;	

	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?	STAP appreciates the inclusion of a formal theory of change in the PIF. The theory of change is that when stakeholders have the capacity to assess and integrate climate change uncertainties and impacts into policies and plans and when sustainable management of the vulnerable communities' livelihood assets is ensured through nature-based solutions, then the resilience of communities and ecosystems will improve.
	What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?	In parallel, capacity building for local government to develop vulnerability assessments and the introduction of climate smart agriculture, local adaptation, and NbS implementation will result in better planning and more resilient livelihoods.
	What is the set of linked activities, outputs, and outcomes to address the project's objectives?	Capacity building for local government to develop vulnerability assessments through both trainings and a multi-stakeholder dialogue and action platform will improve the capacity to mainstream adaptation in municipality plans. This will allow for the integration of climate change into policies and plans around water, agriculture, forestry, and rural development, which in turn will allow these governments to prepare and implement climate change responsive planning that addresses threats from climate change. In parallel, climate smart agriculture, local adaptation, and locally-appropriate NbS will be developed and implemented through stakeholder consultations, improving community knowledge and capacity around such interventions and access to needed technologies for their adoption, will result in addressing climate change threats to people and the environment.

		Together, these two broad sets of activities will create a foundation from which increased agriculture production, mitigated risks of crop failure, better land management, and better floodplain management all result in increased resilience in food production and livelihoods and better protected community infrastructure.
	Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions?	Yes, though several underlying assumptions are not articulated. These include the assumption that the challenges in the project area are best addressed through climate-smart agricultural interventions and NbS. The project also does not differentiate between members of the population in the project area, but their vulnerabilities to climate change impacts (and the potential opportunities they might uncover) can vary widely within communities and households. Thus, some interventions may not have the assumed effect on individual well-being. STAP recommends that the project disaggregate the population of the project area in its consultations, considering gender and other key markers of difference, to ensure that the project has positive impacts for the widest number of beneficiaries possible.
	Is there a recognition of what adaptations may be required during project implementation to respond to changing conditions in pursuit of the targeted outcomes?	The only mention of potential adaptation needs for the project come under project risks, which notes the potential for landslides and other climate-induced disasters to either delay implementation or destroy project work. The project does not discuss adapting activities as much as planning for them and rebuilding after them. It is not clear if this would be possible in a manner that allowed for achievement of some or all targeted outcomes.
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?	

	LDCF/SCCF: will the proposed incremental activities lead to adaptation which reduces vulnerability, builds adaptive capacity, and increases resilience to climate change?	Yes, it appears it will, though the degree to which this is true is difficult to assess over the baseline at this time.
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?	There are adaptation benefits, but they are not easily measured at this time because the baseline is not clear.
	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, they are not. STAP suggests the project develop such methodologies at the PPG stage.
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project's resilience to climate change?	The project goals revolve around enhancing resilience to climate change, but the PIF only references specific climatic risks to the project in the risks section. As noted above, the project does less to implement anticipatory adaptive activities as much as planning for climate impacts and rebuilding after them.
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 connects watershed management and climate change adaptation in a context where such work has been siloed, and it also integrates conservation approaches across forest, freshwater, and agricultural lands where previously such work was conducted in isolation.
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	The PIF does have a plan for scale-up, but it is vague. The project plans to use demonstration of the integrated approach to promote scale-up. The PIF references River Basin Offices and a Watershed office that would presumably learn from and take up lessons from this project. In component 3, the PIF mentions making case studies and research on best practices available on various platforms for organizations beyond Nepal. STAP recommends a more concrete plan be developed at the PPG stage.

	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	The project focuses on incremental innovation, connecting conventional approaches to conservation with the application of NbS adapted to local conditions.
1b. Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.		The project maps in the PIF are helpful.
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. The initial consultations appear to have been broad and made an effort to cover a range of individuals with regard to their identity, position in society, and institutional affiliation. STAP suggests that the project conduct deeper discussions with individuals at the Ward/Village level to ensure it captures the range of challenges and opportunities that exist at this scale.
	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?	The Ministry of Forestry and the Environment will be the executing agency. Other government ministries, local government organizations, representatives from municipalities, and the Chure Conservation and Development Committee will support project implementation. NGOs will be on-the-ground implementation partners. Representatives from other ongoing projects will assist with technology and knowledge transfer. The private sector will promote livelihoods

		opportunities, while natural resource management groups are seen as the beneficiaries of this project. STAP suggests the project consider 1) an expanded role for natural resource management groups in terms of project design and implementation, as they are likely to understand how best to tailor NbS to the Chure context, and 2) to consider community members beyond these groups as explicit stakeholders whose knowledge of their own vulnerabilities and opportunities might inform project design.
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-	Have gender differentiated risks and opportunities been identified, and were preliminary response measures described that would address these differences?	The PIF does identify gender differentiated risks, including women's limited ownership of fixed property and women's relatively low rate of literacy. Preliminary response measures mentioned include undertaking a gender assessment of the differential climate change impacts on men, women, and other vulnerable groups during the project design and development phase, which will be used to create a gender action plan. This plan will also draw from gender lessons from other projects. The project design phase will also plan for addressing women-specific issues like mobolity and financial constraints.

sensitive indicators? yes/no /tbd		
	Do gender considerations hinder full participation of an important stakeholder group (or groups)? If so, how will these obstacles be addressed?	Yes, women are likely to experience challenges in participation because of financial constraints and limited literacy. The project intends to assess these and other constraints and address them in the design phase of the project, as discussed above.
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? Are there social and environmental risks which could affect the project? 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? • 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?	Yes, they appear valid and comprehensive. There are social and environmental risks that could affect the project. The social risks are not beyond the project control entirely, and can be mitigated through effective design (as described in the PIF). Climate risk measures have not been projected against project outputs across the 2020-2050 period, nor is there an explicit discussion of the sensitivity of the project to climate change and its impacts. As a result, there is no real discussion of resilience measures that might address these risks and impacts. Instead, the PIF appears to suggest they will be addressed through preparedness (which is left vague in the PIF) or rebuilding after the event. STAP suggests the project identify near-term and longer-term climate risks to the project, and carefully articulate mitigation and resilience steps that might limit the impacts of such risks on project outcomes.
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?	Yes.
	Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?	Yes.
	Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?	Yes.
	How have these lessons informed the project's formulation?	Yes, generally.

	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?	Yes, though dissemination plans will need to be more fleshed out in the design phase.
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?	The approach is to gather lessons from M&E efforts, coordinated with local communities, around interventions, approaches, and initiatives and use them to inform the adaptive management of project activities while disseminating lessons to inform other projects and initiatives.
	What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?	Specific plans include the dissemination of lessons through cases, documentaries, and social media platforms. The project also expects to conduct peer exchanges of learning with other GEF and non-GEF projects and will circulate lessons through periodic reports. This plan is subject to adaptive management.

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 ***"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."***
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.