Part I: Project Information		Response
GEF ID	10162	
Project Title	Landscape Approach to Riverine Forest Restoration, Biodiversity Conservation and Livelihood Improvement -Sudan	
Date of Screening	6-Dec-19	
STAP member Screener	Rosie Cooney	
STAP secretariat screener	Virginia Gorsevski	
STAP Overall Assessment		**Minor issues to be considered during project design:** STAP welcomes the proposal entitled "Landscape Approach to Riverine Forest Restoration, Biodiversity Conservation and Livelihood Improvement" by FAO. Overall, STAP feels that this proposal is not particularly well-written or researched. The problem statement in particular needs considerable work, with updated information from reliable sources. The text is very unclear and hard to follow in many places. There is considerable lack of clarity around the specifics of certain outputs and how they lead to outcomes. The theory of change is not explicitly set out, but there is an implicit theory of change. Underlying assumptions are not clearly articulated and some are questionable. Nevertheless, despite these weaknesses the proposal overall clearly addresses important problems and the approach taken does follow an inherent logic with a strong chance of addressing key drivers of degradation and securing important global environmental benefits.
Part I: Project Information		
B. Indicative Project Description Summary		
Project Objective	Is the objective clearly defined, and consistently related to the problem diagnosis?	The objective is initially stated to be "Restore and sustainably manage globally significant riverine florest landscapes along the River Nile in Sudan in order to maintain critical ecosystem services". More detail on which ecosystem services would make this clearer. But later (p25) it is stated to be "to promote the sustainable and integrated management of Sudanese riverine forest landscapes to restore degraded land, conserve unique biodiversity, promote the integration of different land uses with the active participation of local communities and therefore enhance livelihoods." This should be made consistent.
Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project's objectives?	These aren't clearly written - it is hard to see how component 2 differs from component 1. If the idea is that component 1 is planning and component 2 is implementation, then the project outcome for component 1 should not be "ecosystem services managed sustainably", as this implies a management outcome.
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?	
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.	

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 overall picture is reasonably clear, but this section is very poorly written, hard to follow, and has a lot of unclear or out of date information. This section is poorly referenced and contains statements in relation to fauna lifted directly from other sources. The "animal biodiversity" section appears to be lifted from the Encyclopedia Brittanica entry on "Nile River" (https://www.britannica.com/place/Nile-River/Plant-and-animal-life). There also is a sentence lifted direct, with its references, from Gomiero 2008, (a paper on freshwater ecology in Southeast Brazil with little relevance here) but with its two halves separated by the Brittanica text (the original reads "In oligotrophic streams, the terrestrial matter carried into the water supplies an important food resource for fishes; hence, the riparian integrity is extremely important for the survival of these species (Pusey and Arthington, 2003; Melo et al., 2004)." The following sentence is also lifted direct from Gomiero 2008. This needs completely re-writing with proper updated biodiversity information. Some very unclear text e.g. "The floods basin that provide the main site for Sunut growing in pure stand..." Please explain what "Sunut" is. Are all the riverine forests in reserves? The text seems to imply so. Could some referencing be provided to justify the statement that these riverine forests "comprise some of the world's most productive ecosystems"? Explanation of "gerf" and "karrab" would be welcome. What does this sentence mean: "Using information from the Important Bird Areas in Africa book and other sources, particularly national and sub-regional inventories, these wetland riverine forests have been found to qualifying as Ramsar Sites"? "Potential" Ramsar sites? And which riverine forests are we talking about - all of them? And could we have more information on what was found in national/sub-regional inventories? Sudan only seems to have 3 Ramsar sites (https://www.ramsar.org/wetland/sudan) and not all of these are on the Nile, so this text is unclear and misleading. (Note 7 potential Ramsar sites in Sudan are identified in this 2002 publication https://www.birdlife.org/sites/default/files/attachments/Africa-IBAs-%20%26-Ramsar-sites.pdf but they don't all appear to be in riverine forests either (see map p 116).) 1C (p 18) - which KBA is referred to in the title? These first two paras make no sense - the first does not explain the conclusion in the second. Why would they manage for one species that made up <.1% of the forest? In this whole section it is often very unclear which specific forest areas are being referred to at different times, so it is very unclear. Is it mainly referring to these 22 riverine forest reserves managed by the FNC (and if so why are Ramsar areas and Gezirah being referred to?) The info on Gezirah is very old - is there no more recent information? This fig from BirdLife is from data from the 1960s - is there nothing more recent? If not it is important to say this. Is Gezirah even riverine forest? The BirdLife source seems to indicate that it is intensively cultivated land.
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	No, this is quite weak. p20 on integrated approaches: this basically says lack of integrated approaches is a barrier to adoption of integrated approaches. Needs to specify more clearly what the actual barriers are here - why have these previous approaches been ineffective? Likewise for community involvement - there do seem to be tools, but they are not working - do we know why? This also assumes community involvement will solve the problem of agricultural encroachment/forest degradation - but the rationale for this is not clearly spelt out. Perhaps the key barrier is not lack of community involvement but lack of other sustainable livelihood options? "The lack of tools for community involvement and, consequently, the little private and public financing available for riverine forest landscapes.." The link between these two things is not clear. Why does lack of tools for community involvement lead to lack of financing? "The lack of awareness and knowledge about the importance of riverine forest ecosystems in general and the effects of illegal woodfuel and charcoal production is the main barrier that prevents local communities from choosing legal ways." Why? How is this known? This seems to ignore the whole tragedy of the commons logic - it may be worse for all users if the forest declines, but for any one of them it will still pay to graze their livestock or enroach on the forest. These commons problems are not generally overcome simply with the provision of information, but by building incentives and institutional capacity for collective management.
	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?	A baseline in terms of what other investments are being made in Sudan land/NRM is set out, although it would be helpful to clarify how this project adds to what is already going on, particularly the large SNRLP project which seems to have a very aligned mandate. It is not made clear what would take place in the absence of this project.
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits?	No, not really.
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	
	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?	The TOC is implicit rather than explicit, but does makes sense.
	What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?	It seems to be assumed throughout that participatory, integrated planning will necessarily lead to positive outcomes all round (for biodiversity, ecosystem function, livelihoods) - but there may be fundamental trade-offs between these, and there is no guarantee they can all be fully satisfied. How will such trade offs and potential conflicts be managed? In component one, the governance aspects are quite unclear - much is said about including communities, but are they to actually share power, or will the FNC retain all actual decision-making management authority? These are critical questions for likely sustainability and durability of outcomes, including with respect to the likelihood of illegal encroachment etc continuing. Likewise, component 2 refers to "community-based management", but what is meant by this? Issues around who makes decisions and how (i.e. governance) are not specified here. Failure to devolve meaningful management rights, plus the capacity and resources to exercise those rights, would undermine the approach taken here.
	· What is the set of linked activities, outputs, and outcomes to address the project's objectives?	These are reasonably clear.
	· Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions?	For key assumption see above
	· Is there a recognition of what adaptations may be required during project implementation to respond to changing conditions in pursuit of the targeted outcomes?	Not explicitly.
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, if successful
	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, and are they measurable?	Yes
	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?	No, this is not clear.
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project's 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 proposal states "The project's innovation lies in the enhanced role for and engagement of local communities and producers in the management of unique riverine forest reserves and their buffering production land". However, the form of this enhanced role remains quite unclear - particularly whether there is to be some form of community or co-management or whether they are just being consulted. Introducing NCAA is innovative in this context, although what exact use of NC accounts and how they will affect decisionmaking is not very clear. The proposal also says " finally, innovative land management practices will be introduced integrating sometimes competing land uses (agroforestry, sylvo-pastoral and agro-sylvopastoralsystems)," but again, what this integration actually looks like in practice, and how any trade-offs and conflicts are overcome in this process, is hard to see.
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	
1b. Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.		A clearer map would be helpful, if possible - very blurry.
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?	Identification of stakeholders appears sound and adequate but specification of their roles in the project is quite unclear. The proposal says "The project includes the involvement of associations, local cooperatives and unions at different levels and stages to plan management interventions and monitor progress and biodiversity status.", but there is little further detail throughout the proposal regarding what this means in practice.

		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. With respect to private sector engagement, the added value of engagement is very unclear. The proposal states "The involvement of private nurseries can enchance the awareness about the current status of forest reserves and at the same time increase the interest of local private sector representative", but it is hard to understand what this means.
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?	Yes, this has been well thought through.
		Do gender considerations hinder full participation of an important stakeholder group (or groups)? If so, how will these obstacles be addressed?	
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?	Most risks appear to be identified, although the project does seem to operate on the assumption (as outlined above) that all uses of forests can be reconciled adequately.
		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?	The proposal makes the valid point that it is aimed at increasing resilience to climate change. Beyond this it simply states "In addition the situation will be monitored and the project approach adapted as necessary". It may be helpful to specifically consider the likely impacts of climate change on e.g. forest structure/composition/productivity.
		· 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?	See above.
		· What technical and institutional capacity, and information, will be needed to address climate risks and resilience enhancement measures?	
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?	There is little specific learning from previous projects reflected here, and it would be helpful to see more of this.
		Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?	
		How have these lessons informed the project's formulation?	
		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?	
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?	This lacks much detail.
		What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?	

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.	