

Part I: Project Information		Response
GEF ID	10170	
Project Title	Integrated forest and biodiversity management for sustainable development in the Biban mountain range.	
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 project entitled "Integrated forest and biodiversity management for sustainable development in the Biban mountain range" from FAO. Overall, STAP feels that the project clearly articulates the problem, drivers, and barriers associated with this project. There is a narrative theory of change set out, although it remains very broad-brush and does not identify key assumptions underlying the logical sequence of steps to achieve the objective, and certain of these are questionable. In particular, issues around building local buy-in, participation in governance and management capacity are insufficiently addressed. Lessons learnt from other experiences could also be considerably strengthened. However, overall the project appears well-designed to target the problems and overcome barriers.
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 given is "To conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and forest ecosystems, and improve the management of natural resources of the Biban mountain range". This is clear and related to the problem diagnosis. Note that later a differently worded objective is given "to protect biodiversity and forest ecosystems, and improve the management of natural resources of the Biban mountain range" - this should be made consistent.
Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project's objectives?	Yes these are clear, although separating out the project M&E from component two, into its own component, would be clearer.
Outcomes	A description of the expected short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention.	These are clear.
	Do the planned outcomes encompass important global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits?	Yes.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	Yes, if project successful.
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?	Yes, generally clear. The description of biodiversity of the area would be strengthened by clarifying the threat status of the various species/ecosystems, if possible. Clarification of specialised terms like Matorral or wilaya would be welcome. "The Biban mountain range is characterized by high sensitivity to land erosion which affects 70% of the area." Does this mean 70% is eroded, or 70% is sensitive to erosion? Re the discussion of fire, presumably these forests are fire-adapted like most Mediterranean forests, so would it be more appropriate to characterise the problem as one of too-frequent/too-hot fires, rather than presence of fire itself?

	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	Threats are clear. Barriers are poverty, limited livelihood opportunities, limited local knowledge of sustainable management, under-valuation of ecosystem goods and services, low national technical knowledge, outdated understanding of threats and approaches to management, lack of local models for integrated, participatory management. The characterisation of the current official approach to forestry is insightful and helpful. The characterisation of local attitudes toward the forests, as ignoring a whole range of benefits, appears somewhat dismissive - presumably this simply reflects individual direct costs. It is not surprising that long-term shared costs of degradation are not taken into account, if this is a tragedy of the commons situation and the institutions for long-term collective management are not present.
	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?	Yes.
2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects	Is the baseline identified clearly?	Reasonably - other ongoing and planned interventions are listed. It would be good to know if the other interventions are designed so as to avoid worsening the problem i.e. the expansion of olives and carob will not come at the cost of forest loss, for example.
	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?	
	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;	No, not beyond the problem description earlier.
	are the lessons learned from similar or related past GEF and non GEF interventions described; and	No, this is a clear gap. For example, the project includes exploration of idea of setting up a protected areas, and highlights others nearby - what lessons can be learnt from the effectiveness of those parks? The project does reference a number of studies on biodiversity-friendly business (see p 32) but no detail is given about what lessons have been learnt from these.
	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?	A narrative TOC is set out, although it is very broad-brush and doesn't include any identification of pathways within the broad logic, or key assumptions underlying these pathways. There are major assumptions underlying this TOC, such as that there will be strong local buy-in and support to the PICs. Articulating these clearly, and testing these assumptions at suitable points of the project, should increase the likelihood of project success.
	What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?	
	What is the set of linked activities, outputs, and outcomes to address the project's objectives?	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions? 	<p>The text on component 1 in this section (p29) is questionable - it assumes that attitudes of local people can be simply changed by telling people about ecosystem values. Is there any evidence to support this? In general, such changes may be promoted by local people actually holding stewardship/management responsibilities along with the capacity and resources to exercise them, and gaining actual benefits from ecosystems. It would be clearer to have this increase of local support for conservation among local people as a standalone output, that could be assessed and monitored in the project. Currently these actions (i.e. "The knowledge available on i) the species and ecosystems of the Biban mountain range, as well as the sources of degradation and their effects and on ii) the social, economic and culture value of biodiversity, land and ecosystems will first be increased" just sit alone and are not tied to any output. Also, there is no focus in outputs or outcomes on building (institutional and technical) capacity among local people for management -see Output 1.1.1 where only government officials are mentioned. Given that the project seeks to emphasise participatory management, should not the building of local management capacity be explicitly recognised in the outputs? To whom is the funding in output 1.1.5 actually going? If its participatory management, presumably part of this will be going to local management institutions? Can more detail be added on these institutional and funding arrangements?</p>
		<p>The actual governance model for forest/NR management is insufficiently addressed in the proposal - it is not clear what sort of power-sharing model is being proposed. Who will actually make decisions, and how, about management practices? Will local institutions for monitoring and enforcement be established/strengthened, or will this be a government responsibility? Re Output 3.1.1, would be useful to include peer to peer visits, as an effective way to disseminate learning. The emphasis on "guidelines" in output 3.1.4. seems to assume there will be one right way to do things, rather than this being highly context-specific, so it may be worth considering whether sharing successes, best-practices, principles, local learnings (in a variety of formats adapted to various audiences) may be a more effective way to build knowledge.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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>None explicit.</p>
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?	<p>Yes</p>
	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?	<p>Yes</p>
	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	<p>Yes</p>
	Are the global environmental benefits explicitly defined?	<p>Yes</p>
	Are indicators, or methodologies, provided to demonstrate how the global environmental benefits will be measured and monitored during project implementation?	<p>One question here: it is not entirely clear how the 10,000ha of agricultural land and 6,000ha of grazing land will "will benefit from improved management practices which will promote biodiversity". How exactly will biodiversity on these lands be benefited? It would be helpful to clarify this.</p>
	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?	One innovative element is the mechanism to fund promising sustainable business proposals. Taking a cross-sectoral and participatory approach and an ecosystem approach appears to be innovative in the country, although arguably this has been recognised good practice for many years.
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	Yes.
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	In terms of sustainability, the proposal talks about empowering communities and building their capacity, but the emphasis and details regarding local empowerment in management and capacity building (including institutional capacity-building, which is crucial) are quite weak. Details on how communities are to be resourced to carry out management are also quite unclear.
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?	The table is really clear and helpful. It would be helpful to have more details on how local institutions have provided input to this proposal and in particular whether they've agreed to participate in and support it. Consultations have clearly been held, but what were the key things that came out of these? Given that community buy-in is essential for the success of this project, this would be good to know.
	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.
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?	While gender has been thought about carefully, the specific gender-based barriers to participation and benefit from the project have not been articulated and addressed clearly. What might prevent women from participating in and benefiting from this project, and how will these potential barriers be addressed?
	Do gender considerations hinder full participation of an important stakeholder group (or groups)? If so, how will these obstacles be addressed?	See 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?	The list appears reasonably comprehensive.

	Are there social and environmental risks which could affect the project?	
	For climate risk, and climate resilience measures:	
	<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? 	The climate-related risks would appear to be acute for the region, and the project does not address these in any detail. The PIF says "Current and future climate conditions will be taken into account when designing the on-the-ground interventions as it is a condition for the sustainability of the project inputs. As an example of this integration of climate resilience in the project, a key selection criteria for the species to be promoted by the project will be their resilience to current and future climate scenarios." But it would be good to see more explicit focus on e.g. likely impacts of more severe fire risks on the opportunities for e.g. SFM and sustainable enterprises.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the sensitivity to climate change, and its impacts, been assessed? 	Not in any detail
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have resilience practices and measures to address projected climate risks and impacts been considered? How will these be dealt with? 	Only in general terms - see above.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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?	The proposal says it will be coordinated with other GEF projects, but not how. And it is not clear if and how there will be coordination with the several other closely related non-GEF projects described earlier in the proposal.
	Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?	No, there is very little learning from previous projects highlighted in the proposal. It would be good to have a clear assessment of lessons learned, what has worked, and what has not, in previous projects on related subject matter.
	Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?	No.
	How have these lessons informed the project's formulation?	Not stated.
	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?	For earlier projects, it does not appear so, but mechanisms for sharing lessons from this project are described.
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?	
	What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?	These appear clear and well thought-through.
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.	

	<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>	
2. Minor issues to be considered during project design	<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>	
	(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	<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>	
	(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.	