

Part I: Project Information		Response
GEF ID	10362	
Project Title	Resilient, productive and sustainable landscapes in Mali's Kayes Region	
Date of Screening	27-Nov-19	
STAP member Screener	Mark Stafford Smith	
STAP secretariat screener	Guadalupe Duron	
STAP Overall Assessment		<p>Minor issues to be considered during project design. STAP welcomes FAO's GEF-LDCF project "Resilient, productive and sustainable landscapes in Mali's Kayes Region". The project seeks innovations in environmental governance, land management, and agricultural productivity to improve agro-sylvo-pastoral food systems and livelihoods. STAP is pleased the project recognized a comprehensive set of stressors (climate and non-climate - conflict), and their various linkages, which influence the target area; though further analysis of whether the intervention outcomes are sufficient to 'stay ahead' of these would be useful. The theory of change depicts well these drivers and the assumptions, but does not ask critically whether their impact may increase at a rate faster than is ameliorated by the intervention (and aligned actions by others). To accompany the theory of change figure, STAP recommends writing a narrative that describes the feedback loops (positive and negative), the causal pathways necessary to reach the project objective, the assumptions that underlie the success of the theory of change, and why this set of outcomes is necessary & sufficient to achieve the the intervention title/goal. STAP also welcomes the project's recognition to obtain and use climate information, and data, to assess the urgent and long-term adaptation needs of the project. STAP recommends using climate data and information (top-down approaches) combined with stakeholder assessments of climate risks (bottom-up assessments) to identify the key variables the project should address to achieve resilience of the targeted social-ecological system. To identify the key variables and map the causal pathways, STAP recommends applying a systems analysis during the project design (the ToC provides a good start on this), and assessing the needs for resilience, adaptation and transformational change. Given the current climate stressors affecting Mali, it is highly possible that a range of options, adaptation and transformational change, will be required for the project to achieve long-term impact. To assess the needs for resilience, adaptation and transformational change, STAP refers the proponent to STAP's paper on enduring outcomes which describes the elements required for a resilience-adaptation-transformational change assessment as well as the RAPTA guidelines (see http://www.stapgef.org/achieving-enduring-outcomes-gef-investment AND https://research.csiro.au/eap/rapta/). To complement the climate context of the project, STAP wishes to refer the project developers to USAID's Mali's climate risk profile: https://www.climate-links.org/sites/default/files/asset/document/Mali_CRP_Final.pdf)</p>
Part I: Project Information		
B. Indicative Project Description Summary		
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; though component 3 in particular emphasises short-term actions without affirming the intent or mechanisms for these better value chains to actually improve livelihoods on the ground - it would be useful to ensure the logic and actions that will ensure this link are clear, and perhaps shown as an outcome. Similarly, outscaling under Component 4 is unlikely to happen just by dissemination of results and awareness-raising - what complementary activities will ensure (or at least maximise the likelihood of) actual uptake and implementation?
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, with careful monitoring (component 4)
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, with careful monitoring (component 4)
Part II: Project justification		
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. The problem statement is well defined.
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	Yes, a description of the connections between variables is given - e.g. degradation of natural resources, low agricultural productivity, threats to biodiversity, conflicts over natural resources, poverty, and out-migration. STAP recommends applying systems thinking and developing a theory of change to map the feedback loops (positive and negative) between the most important variables, building on the first part of the attached ToC (for which the proponents are to be commended). In addition, STAP recommends analyzing the barriers to, and enablers of, scaling and transformational change. This will assist the project developers to assess the project's resilience to climate and non-climate stressors, and identify challenges and opportunities for adaptation and, or, transformational change. STAP's primer on theory of change can assist in this regard as well as the Resilience, Adaptation Pathways, Transformation guidelines: https://research.csiro.au/eap/rapta/ Please note that uncertainty in the levels and rates of climate change, as well as other changes such as demographic, technological, economic, etc, is not discussed; in fact such uncertainty should lead to a critical assessment of the proposed intervention to ensure it is robust to these changes happening slower or faster or differently to the central assumptions taken here. This might result in some different actions to those proposed here (or it might confirm their robustness in all feasible futures). [Also as a technical note, in a region where both rainfall and temperature are changing, and no doubt rel humidity too, it would be better to report likely changes in a measure of net soil water balance (or 'drought index') rather than just rainfall isohyets as this would integrate what may be interacting changes better.] Note: section 1a.1(b) suggest the desire to reduce "migrations towards cities"; yet the project description raises the potential to engage with 'Diaspora NGOs' in relation to investing remittances. This could come through as a stronger opportunity, see below, rather than seeing it as all negative. For example, the last barrier is 'access to credit', but this might be an explicit route to mitigating and even setting directions with regard to this barrier, implying the Diaspora NGOs and through them the diaspora itself might be engaged with to this end. This idea seems present but not well-articulated with its implications for perhaps running engagement workshops in cities rather than in the country.
	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, the proposal describes the climate stressors and risks to land management and threats to biodiversity.
2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects	Is the baseline identified clearly?	Yes, a baseline narrative is provided identifying projects that will complement this GEF/LDCF project.
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits?	Only a baseline narrative is provided at this time. Though in some places (e.g. value chains) most of the text is about the proposed intervention not the baseline...
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	Yes.
	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;	Yes.
	are the lessons learned from similar or related past GEF and non-GEF interventions described; and	Partly. Projects that will complement this GEF/LDCF investment are described, but the lessons are not obviously highlighted.
	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 proponents provide a useful draft ToC. This could be summarised as: "The project seeks to address the vicious cycle between lack of income-generating options, degradation of natural resources due to the lack of adaptive capacity of rural productive sectors, and low agricultural productivity in the Kayes region of Mali (in specific landscapes/circles). The project will reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss and enhance adaptive capacity to climate change by promoting innovations in governance and productivity of agro-sylvo-pastoral food systems."

	What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?	STAP recommends developing a narrative that accompanies the theory of change figure. The assumptions should be part of this narrative. At present there are too many assertions such as "for a that promote dialog...have the POTENTIAL to...dimish tensions", "APFS...communication and learning..WILL BE a useful stepping stone towards the reduction of conflicts..." etc - we agree generally, but what is the evidence and is this enough in this context? In particular is this set of actions NECESSARY and SUFFICIENT to achieve the desired outcomes?
	What is the set of linked activities, outputs, and outcomes to address the project's objectives?	See above. Also note, Outcome 3, p.38 "Kayes region SUFFERS from rural emigration..." - understood but whilst one alternative is "to incentivize the youth" to stay; another opportunity could be to actively mobilise their remittances to drive local entrepreneurship or even linked across regions per the Youth Incubators. Also Outcome 4 - "lessons widely disseminated" - is dissemination the objective, or really to get resulting changed behaviour? if the correct outcome is specified, the ToC is more likely to identify the right set of actions to achieve it.
	Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions?	See above. Whether this set of actions (together with those undertaken by others) is necessary and sufficient to effect the desired change should be addressed explicitly; as should the question of whether these actions collectively can plausibly achieve improvements faster than the pressures from climate change, demographic change, conflict etc undermine these outcomes. (And if not, are there alternative approaches? Or if so but only in some futures, what monitoring would drive a change of direction at what adaptive decision points?)
	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 project recognizes "...there is need to have information and data on climate change vulnerability of agro-sylvo-pastoral small-holder food systems in order to address urgent and long-term adaptation needs." However, it remains unclear how climate data, or an assessment of resilience, adaptation and, or, transformation needs will be used to design the project. Monitoring and learning needs to be better related to the ToC generally.
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, with careful monitoring (component 4)
	LDCF/SCCF: will the proposed incremental activities lead to adaptation which reduces vulnerability, builds adaptive capacity, and increases resilience to climate change?	Yes, with careful monitoring (component 4)
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. However, STAP encourages the project developers to use the land degradation neutrality baseline and LDN indicators that Mali will be using (if this information will be available for the project design) in addition to the "number of hectares of land under improved management". These LDN indicators, in particular soil organic carbon, is a better representation for land-based global environmental benefit. A key issue for LDN is that of leakage - it is not enough to improve a particular land type on one area; that land type must not then be degraded elsewhere - the totality of LDN objectives may be beyond this intervention but it should at least be observing whether good outcomes are being outweighed by clearing or degradation elsewhere.
	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?	Yes.
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project's resilience to climate change?	The project will embed an array of climate resilient activities to increase its resilience to climate change (e.g. crop diversification, extension of resilient crops, soil and water conservation, integrated pest management). The project also will use early warning systems, and make use of other technologies and approaches. However, a deeper analysis should be undertaken of whether there might be interventions that are more robust to uncertain levels of climate (and other) changes, and a consideration of an adaptation pathways approach (see RAPTA guidelines) to ensure unintended path dependencies do not reduce future adaptativeness. In partiocualr it would be useful to do some simple calcuations to ask whether the plausible rates of improvement in productivity or livelihoods derived from the interventions here are greater or less than plausible rates of deterioration due to climate, increasing demands from population increase (or levels of resource use) or other changes; and are the value chains being supported able to persist/expand in the face of climate chnage, changes in demand, etc? If not in any of these cases, are there completely different solution options?

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?	Yes, the proposal is innovative in its design, particularly for its methods on policy (improving environmental governance), and financing. STAP encourages the project developers to also describe further how it plans to scale these innovations in the context of achieving systems change and durable outcomes. Transformational change and long-term impact may depend on innovation. STAP suggests for the project developers to consult its paper on enduring outcomes: http://www.stapgef.org/achieving-enduring-outcomes-gef-investment
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	No. See above. The most innovative suggestion here is to engage the diaspora in financing and perhaps in Ag Youth incubators, p.46; but this does not appear in the ToC or in any specific actions towards the outcomes, nor is there an analysis of how to scale this (which probably means actions outside the region, not just in it).
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	Given the stressors the project area faces (climatic and non-climatic), adaptation and transformational change are likely to be required. To assess the needs for resilience, adaptation and transformational change, STAP proposes to refer to its enduring outcomes paper which describes the elements required for this type of assessment as well as the RAPTA guidelines: http://www.stapgef.org/achieving-enduring-outcomes-gef-investment https://research.csiro.au/eap/rapta/
1b. Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.		STAP welcomes the maps provided by the project developers, which include scale, geo-coordinates, and land use type.
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?	STAP welcomes the stakeholder consultations that have taken place, and the detailed plans for future engagements to ensure that the drivers of degradation and stressors (climate, conflict, and others) are identified for effective project design. In the final project document, STAP recommends describing how the stakeholders' roles will contribute to achieving the project outcomes.
	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?	STAP welcomes the plan to effectively engage and empower women as a result of the project. While pursuing gender actions, STAP encourages the project developers to think whether gender considerations hinder the full participation of an important stakeholder group (or groups)? If so, how will these obstacles be addressed. And given 60% diaspora remittances are directed to women, there should be sensitivity in any re-alignment of these.
	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?	Yes. STAP is pleased that addressing climate risks is an essential part of this project. STAP recommends making it more clear in the project how climate projection trends (data) will be used to design the interventions, and complement bottom-up stakeholder-led assessments of climate stressors and climate risks. Good practice is to consider more than one possible climate future (preferably integrated into scenarios of other aspects of change) and hence also consider uncertainty and how to be robust to this.
	Are there social and environmental risks which could affect the project?	Yes.

	For climate risk, and climate resilience measures:	During the project design, STAP recommends using these questions to guide the development of climate risk and resilience measures. Additionally, the project developers may wish to refer to U.S. AID's Climate Risk and Management tool: https://www.climatelinks.org/resources/climate-risk-screening-management-tool ; STAP's guidance on climate risk assessment: http://www.stapgef.org/stap-guidance-climate-risk-screening ; or World Resource's Institute climate watch data: https://www.climatewatchdata.org/ ; among other sources.
	· 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?	See above.
	· Has the sensitivity to climate change, and its impacts, been assessed?	See above.
	· 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?	See above.
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. When the theory of change is developed more fully during the project design, the project developers may wish to consider whether they have included the relevant projects to extract learning. And also revisit the range of partners/stakeholders engaged for example, the Diaspora NGOs have disappeared again in this list.
	Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?	Yes, and see above.
	Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?	Partly. Learning from other projects need to be described, and how this experience will add value to this GEF-LDCF project.
	How have these lessons informed the project's formulation?	See above.
	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, through the project's theory of change and component 4.
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?	STAP is pleased the knowledge plan will link to the monitoring and evaluation component of this project. The project developers should regularly check on the progress being made in reaching the outcomes, and adapt the project as necessary.
	What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?	STAP recommends paying closer attention to scaling results in the knowledge management plan. Scaling appears absent in the description of the plan, and plenty of research shows that simple dissemination is unlikely to achieve major behavioural change by itself.
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.	
	<i>* 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."</i>	
2. Minor issues to be considered during project design	STAP has identified specific scientific /technical suggestions or opportunities that should be discussed with the project proponent as early as possible during development of the project brief. The proponent may wish to:	

	(i) Open a dialogue with STAP regarding the technical and/or scientific issues raised;	
	(ii) Set a review point at an early stage during project development, and possibly agreeing to terms of reference for an independent expert to be appointed to conduct this review.	
	The proponent should provide a report of the action agreed and taken, at the time of submission of the full project brief for CEO endorsement.	
3. Major issues to be considered during project design	STAP proposes significant improvements or has concerns on the grounds of specified major scientific/technical methodological issues, barriers, or omissions in the project concept. If STAP provides this advisory response, a full explanation would also be provided. The proponent is strongly encouraged to:	
	(i) Open a dialogue with STAP regarding the technical and/or scientific issues raised; (ii) Set a review point at an early stage during project development including an independent expert as required. The proponent should provide a report of the action agreed and taken, at the time of submission of the full project brief for CEO endorsement.	