

STAP guidelines for screening GEF projects

Part I: Project Information	Response	
GEF ID	10515	
Project Title	Enabling sustainable production landscapes in Eastern Highlands and Western Highlands Provinces for Biodiversity, Human Livelihoods and Well-being	
Date of Screening	May 18 2020	
STAP member screener	Rosie Cooney	
STAP secretariat screener	Virginia Gorsevski	
STAP Overall Assessment and Rating	<p>Minor</p> <p>STAP welcomes this project from FAO in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea, which aims for improved biodiversity outcomes in this area.</p> <p>However, the project is unclear in several respects and raises a number of concerns. The objective of this project needs clarification – the stated objective is biodiversity mainstreaming, but the main indicators of success are about protected areas.</p> <p>The implications of the stated government push toward increasing agricultural intensification for the target provinces are unclear. This raises the question of leakage – is loss of biodiversity simply shifting to lands that are not covered by the project? Some overall accounting of biodiversity lost/gained should be implemented, analogous to LDN neutrality, to ensure this is not taking place.</p> <p>The role of IPLC empowerment and rights to make their own decisions about land use is under-emphasized or unclear. There is a narrative theory of change (TOC), but it is not well developed (simply 3 numbered paragraphs with no graphic) and does not enable clarity regarding the internal project logic. See STAP Primer on Theory of Change.</p> <p>Indigenous people and local communities (IPLCs) are critical actors and stakeholders in this project but have not been consulted in project development. The problem description in this PIF is weak in terms of describing the political/social/economic context and drivers of</p>	

	environmental degradation. STAP strongly suggest these issues are fully addressed in the next stage of planning.	
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?	The objective is not very clear. It is “to mainstream biodiversity in priority sectors and landscapes” in two provinces. The emphasis on biodiversity mainstreaming is welcome, but mainstreaming is an approach to achieve biodiversity conservation objectives, and these are not specified. Mainstreaming in order to achieve what, exactly? For instance, improving biodiversity conservation and expanding forest cover while boosting local incomes? In any case, however, the project is not all about biodiversity mainstreaming, and the bulk of the benefits gained (in ha) (according to the indicators) appear to be focused on protected areas. It would be good to see this clarified.
Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project’s objectives?	In component 1, who is intended to be using the tools and making investment and land use decisions? Presumably communities should be being empowered to make these decisions themselves about their land, given the land is virtually all communally owned, yet this section reads rather as if others will be making these decisions (albeit “participatorily”). Indeed, at a number of points the need for communities to agree to what happens on their land seems to be highlighted as rather a hindrance (e.g. pp 31, 33). This is particularly concerning in the light of the oil palm plans referred to above. Emphasis needs to be given throughout to strengthening community rights and capacities for sustainable management of their lands and resources, with full respect for and reliance on FPIC throughout – this may be intended by the project, but it does not come through clearly. The STAP paper “Local Commons

		for Global Benefits” provides relevant guidance on building community management of forests and wildlife that could usefully inform project development https://www.stapgef.org/local-commons-global-benefits-indigenous-and-community-based-management-wild-species-forests-and
Outcomes	A description of the expected short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention. Do the planned outcomes encompass important adaptation benefits?	The outcomes are reasonably clear.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	Yes, in the specified areas (see indicators), but it would be good to understand the broader context of deforestation/land use change better. Is it the case that loss of biodiversity/forests in the provinces is expected over coming years, outside of the areas targeted by the project? Or will the project actually expand the extent of forest/biodiversity in the target provinces? This raises the broader issue of “leakage”, and whether interventions may successfully conserve biodiversity in one area, but impacts simply shift elsewhere. Some form of accounting analogous to LDN neutrality would be really important in addressing this problem.
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?	The outputs do appear to add up generally to the outcomes, (although in component 2 much relies on what constitutes “green” value chains).
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	Is the problem statement well-defined?	The problem statement is not particularly clear. There are some unclear aspects of the text: in the root causes section, the pif states that in the focal provinces 96% of cropland is subsistence agriculture, then goes on to state that (in this same area) farmers depend on coffee as a major source of cash income. It is not clear how these

addressed (systems description)		<p>can both be true, subsistence agriculture generally being defined as agriculture to meet farmers' own subsistence needs rather than for sale. The cause of deforestation in the target provinces is indicated to be subsistence agriculture (p30), but then commercial agriculture is flagged as likely to be a future driver, linked to high population growth (p31). What will drive the shift to commercial agriculture that seems about to take place? The root causes do not seem to go very deep. In Table 1, for example, root causes are listed as poverty and unsustainable livelihood activities. But why are people poor and why are their economic activities unsustainable? There is a wealth of scholarship that examines why resource use tends toward unsustainability rather than sustainability, and it could have been usefully applied to understand this social-ecological system in more detail. There is almost no attention to power relations in this analysis, particularly those between local communities, political elites, and large corporations – are these not significant factors in understanding the current situation? It is hard to gain a clear picture of the operation of political/economic forces (historic/current) in explaining patterns of biodiversity degradation/resource extraction etc. It would be helpful to know more about, for example, the rights communities have to control their lands in situations where these are valuable to commercial interests for logging/mining/agriculture. Is the declaration of SABLs done with local agreement or without it?</p> <p>Note figure 1 is missing.</p>
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	The barriers listed as “Information and knowledge barriers” appear to be barriers to successful businesses, rather than successful biodiversity conservation that also improves livelihoods. How

		are these necessarily linked to biodiversity conservation outcomes? Otherwise the barriers are fine.
	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 given clearly and comprehensively summarises other projects that will be operating over the same period. However, it does not give a baseline in the sense of a scenario that can be contrasted with the alternative scenario – the one intended to be achieved through the intervention.
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits?	Not really.
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	This is not particularly robust.
	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	No, no specific lessons from similar or related interventions are described. There is reference to drawing lessons from some other projects (eg. USAID on p42) but the pif does not make clear what has been learnt – either re what works or (possibly more importantly) what doesn't - in these PNG systems.
	how did these lessons inform the design of this project?	See above.
3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project	What is the theory of change?	There is reference to a theory of change (p40), but the stated TOC consists simply of three numbered paragraphs, and does not adequately illustrate the project's logic (including how a number of outputs may add up to or be necessary for achieving another output or an outcome (in the same or another component)). There is no clarity on how

		these fit together (e.g. any sequencing that may need to be followed – like the CCA establishment of component 2 being dependent on the mapping of appropriate areas for CCAs in component 1) and no identification of critical assumptions – a good TOC enables all these things to be simply illustrated. The TOC set out in components 1 and 3 is quite clear, but the TOC of component 2 is not. It is not clear why support to PA management is in this component, which is mainly about incentive-based approaches to support greener forms of agriculture. A good TOC would also enable identification of critical assumptions that underlie each step in moving toward the overall objective (e.g. that markets for biodiversity-friendly products can be established). The STAP primer on TOCs would be very helpful in improving this.
	What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?	See below.
	What is the set of linked activities, outputs, and outcomes to address the project's objectives?	Only a list of outputs and outcomes is provided, with little narrative explanation. In component 1, it is hard to understand how decisions on land use will be made. At some points the pif indicates priority areas for conservation, agriculture etc will be established through a participatory planning process (eg output 1.1.4, 1.1.5). At other points it seems the decision support system, based on spatial data, will inform identification of these. The emphasis on CCAs is welcome, but there is no analysis of how current CCAs are functioning and how customary landowners wish these to be supported. For component 3, this is described as building a regulatory/policy framework that provides incentives for biodiversity-positive land use (eg p43), but what are these incentives? Are we actually talking about incentivising biodiversity conservation on these lands, or just encouraging farming/extraction/harvesting practices that

		involve less damage to biodiversity than under business as usual? This needs clarification. On p43 the description of component 2 includes reference to payments for environmental services and biodiversity offsets. This does not seem to be well thought through at all, or integrated with/consistent with the rest of the project, where these aren't mentioned. PES and offsets generally require strong governance in place to be effective, and it needs careful consideration how effective these are likely to be in PNG. The description also makes reference to identifying places where development will be positive for biodiversity and forests – given that the developments being referred to are commercial agriculture/forestry and infrastructure it would be good to see some reasoning of how this could be the case.
	Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions?	There is no identification of underlying assumptions. The mechanisms of change may be plausible – it is hard to judge, as there is little narrative to explain how outcomes will be reached and what assumptions are being made.
	Is there a recognition of what adaptations may be required during project implementation to respond to changing conditions in pursuit of the targeted outcomes?	No, this is not discussed.
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. The number of beneficiaries seems rather small for a project of this scale.
	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)	Are the benefits truly global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits, and are they measurable?	Section 1.6 (p44) is rather vague – this requires much clearer identification of the GEBs and how they are to be measured against what baseline.

and/or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF)		
	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	Potentially, but needs clearer explanation.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits explicitly defined?	See above.
	Are indicators, or methodologies, provided to demonstrate how the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits will be measured and monitored during project implementation?	
	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 use of spatial data is not particularly innovative globally, but represents an important innovation locally. There may be innovative elements in incentivising biodiversity-friendly farming/production practices, but as no detail is provided on these it is hard to say. Policy/regulatory changes may be innovative, but again as no detail is given on how these would shift to be more supportive of positive biodiversity outcomes, it is hard to say.
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	No, this remains very high-level and vague (see p45).
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	The pif indicates long-term sustainability (durability) will be achieved through strong involvement of communities and improved livelihoods, but IPLCs have not to date been involved in consultation for this project. It is therefore unclear whether communities are indeed demanding/supportive of the proposed interventions, and how they will be affected by development plans in the area. Gaining clear support and buy-in for the project from IPLCs in the target areas is an essential step to be prioritised in project planning.

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?	As highlighted above, IPLCs have not been consulted in the development of this project. As successful implementation and durability of outcomes relies critically on their support, this is a serious concern. It is good to see FPIC highlighted at this point – it is critical to all the planning of land use referred to throughout the document. They are critical to components 1 and 3 as well as 2, as they will be among primary decision-makers on land use and actors in governance structures.
	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?	IPLCs are framed here as people who just need to agree to activities, while government players are viewed as key actors. In further project development STAP would like to language that rather emphasised the role of IPLCs as rights-holders and key decisionmakers around land use and conservation, to be empowered and supported through rights and capacities in order to make sound decisions regarding their land and resources.
3. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.	Have gender differentiated risks and opportunities been identified, and were preliminary response measures described that would address these differences?	The project has identified gender differentiated dynamics among target communities and highlighted that it will be addressing these,

<p>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>although no specific approaches to address gendered decision-making, access to resources etc are identified at this point.</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>Yes, potentially. The pif indicates these obstacles will be addressed, but with little specificity at this stage.</p>
<p>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</p>	<p>Are the identified risks valid and comprehensive? Are the risks specifically for things outside the project's control?</p> <p>Are there social and environmental risks which could affect the project?</p> <p>For climate risk, and climate resilience measures:</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? 	<p>There appear to be a considerable array of risks that could prevent this project reaching its objectives.</p> <p>Lack of political will appears a fundamental and major risk, as identified in the risk table, particularly given the commitment toward agricultural expansion of the government. It is unclear whether simple awareness-raising is generally enough to generate political will for</p>

<p>further developed during the project design</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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>biodiversity conservation, given often strong political/economic incentives for commercial extraction/development. What will be done if it is not? Will there be strong attention to making the “business case” for biodiversity? Likewise, guidelines do not appear adequate to address the considerable challenges of institutional cooperation – what about communications, networking, building cross-institutional platforms, etc? This one seems to be rated very low at 2. The measures to address gender mainstreaming are non-specific and inadequate. With landholders, again, these are very generic and non-specific measures, that provide little reassurance. There is no reference to risks of tribal conflict and violence in the Highlands, yet media reports at least appear to indicate this is serious and severe in recent years. How will this risk be addressed? No climate risk screening has been carried out at this stage. The pif indicates this will be carried out at PPG stage, and it notes that the project’s impacts should increase resilience to climate change. However, climate risk screening should be carried out early in project design, in order that interventions are designed to respond to projected climate change. Is this the most appropriate project design to achieve these objectives, given likely climate change impacts over the next three decades? Durability of project benefits depends critically on the answer to this question. STAP guidance on climate risk screening should be helpful in guiding this screening https://stapgef.org/sites/default/files/publications/Climate%20Risk%20Screening%20web%20posting.pdf</p>
<p>6. Coordination. Outline the coordination with other</p>	<p>Are the project proponents tapping into relevant knowledge and learning generated by other projects, including GEF projects?</p>	<p>There is little indication of specific learnings from other projects. TNC’s work in New Britain is referred to, but no specific lessons from this are</p>

relevant GEF-financed and other related initiatives		articulated. STAP guidance on biodiversity mainstreaming, and in particular the characteristics of successful mainstreaming projects, should be consulted in further development/revision of this project.
	Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?	See above.
	Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?	See above.
	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?	See below.
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 knowledge management section here remains very general and non-specific, leaving detail to be developed in a communications and knowledge management strategy to be developed by a communications consultant. How learnings from the project will be generated and captured is not clear.
	What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?	

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 <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>
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.
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