

STAP guidelines for screening GEF projects

Part I: Project Information	Response	
GEF ID	10536	
Project Title	Protecting priority coastal and marine ecosystems to conserve globally significant Endangered, Threatened, and Protected marine wildlife in southern Mindanao, Philippines	
Date of Screening	22 May 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 UNDP entitled “Protecting priority coastal and marine ecosystems to conserve globally significant Endangered, Threatened, and Protected marine wildlife in southern Mindanao, Philippines.” The threats to marine ecosystems in the target areas are numerous and clearly identified, as are the barriers to achieving stated goals.</p> <p>STAP feels this is a comprehensive and well thought out project and includes substantial reference to scientific studies and literature as well as a theory of change to support project design focusing on institutional capacity development, increased coverage and management of critical habitat for endangered, threatened and protected species such as Dugong, and community level activities including efforts to change behavior.</p> <p>STAP feels the project could be further strengthened in the following ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Overall the project is strong in terms of the establishment and improved management of MCAs; it is less convincing with regards to how specifically people will supplement their incomes once fishing options become limited. The TOC assumes that “sustainable livelihoods opportunities will be attractive enough to reduce poaching/fishing”; however, no alternative pathways are considered should this assumption prove false. 	

	<p>2. Some of the key sectors identified as major threats are not adequately addressed in this project (i.e. irresponsible and rapidly growing tourism, energy, mining). These stakeholders should be engaged from the beginning of the project – perhaps through the development of a marine spatial plan.</p> <p>3. Behavior change is a critical component and could lead to long-term positive change if successful. However, the supporting activities are standard (communication, education and public awareness program.). It's not clear that there is evidence that these actions alone are sufficient to change behavior. See (see Rare and The Behavioural Insights Team. (2019). Behavior Change For Nature: A Behavioral Science Toolkit for Practitioners. Arlington, VA: Rare.) for additional guidance.</p>	
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?	<p>The project objective is to “Strengthen management effectiveness and address underrepresentation of Marine Conservation Areas designed to conserve ETP marine wildlife and sustain ecosystem services for human well-being.”</p> <p>The objective highlights the emphasis on protection and management of MCAs; however, while this is important in fact the main threats come from outside of these areas and involve numerous sectors and issues (i.e. unsustainable tourism, mining, energy, etc.).</p> <p>This largely reflects the project itself where focus on the MCAs is strong but may not adequately address underlying drivers such as poverty and lack of alternative sources of income for local communities which are biodiversity friendly or neutral.</p>
Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project's objectives?	Yes

Outcomes	<p>A description of the expected short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention.</p> <p>Do the planned outcomes encompass important adaptation benefits?</p>	Yes in general. Some of the proposed interventions are meant to help communities adapt to climate impacts. For example, vulnerability assessments (see Output 1.1.3) will assess threats, including from climate change, to create an adaptation strategy.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	Yes
Outputs	<p>A description of the products and services which are expected to result from the project.</p> <p>Is the sum of the outputs likely to contribute to the outcomes?</p>	Yes (however, see comment re assumptions on ToC)
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
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	<p>Yes.</p> <p>Threats – underlying is poverty. Immediate include improper solid and liquid waste management, siltation and sedimentation, mining, aquaculture, deforestation, industrial and domestic waste dumping agricultural runoff, and reclamation and development. Coal fired power plant causing pollution. Irresponsible tourism. Poor planning, lack of enforcement. Poaching of ETP marine wildlife, illegal, destructive and unsustainable fishing practices, climate change.</p> <p>The proposed solution is improved management effectiveness of MCAs (okay but doesn't cover everything)</p>

		Barriers are weak enabling conditions (i.e. lack of coordination, enforcement, monitoring and reporting), insufficient coverage and protection and reactionary and sporadic actions, lack of understanding of locals of importance of conservation.
	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?	N/A
2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects	Is the baseline identified clearly?	The project shows extensive knowledge of other related past and ongoing projects.
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits?	Yes – especially in terms of increased area under protection and improved management. However, little baseline information provided on local livelihoods and how indicator of 12,746 persons benefitting from project was derived and what does it mean to benefit?
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	See above.
	For multiple focal area projects:	N/A
	are the multiple baseline analyses presented (supported by data and references), and the multiple benefits specified, including the proposed indicators;	N/A
	are the lessons learned from similar or related past GEF and non-GEF interventions described; and	N/A
	how did these lessons inform the design of this project?	N/A
3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected	What is the theory of change?	A ToC is presented on page 40 which is logical and supports the components. Assumptions are presented; however, it is not clear that the project has considered alternative pathways if the

outcomes and components of the project		<p>assumption prove to be false (for example, sustainable livelihoods opportunities will be attractive enough to reduce poaching/fishing effort). See Theory of Change Primer (Dec 2019) for more guidance.</p> <p>Also need to explain the causal links between outputs and expected outcomes. For example, Component 3.1 pertains to behavior change re biodiversity conservation which will be achieved through a communication, education and public awareness program. This simplistic (and common) connection should be supported by social science research so that specific activities are more likely to yield results (see Rare and The Behavioural Insights Team. (2019). Behavior Change For Nature: A Behavioral Science Toolkit for Practitioners. Arlington, VA: Rare.)</p>
	What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?	Strengthened policy, framework, etc. + establishment of new LCAs and improvement of MPA + increase in sustainable livelihoods/education
	What is the set of linked activities, outputs, and outcomes to address the project's objectives?	See above
	Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions?	<p>Yes except for the assumptions about livelihoods which are somewhat unconvincing.</p> <p>The project itself notes that the diversity of sustainable MCA and MPAN financing options in the country is very limited, and there are few examples of sustainable livelihood activities for local stakeholders based on conservation initiatives (p. 25) and it's not clear that the proposed interventions would be sufficient to overcome this problem.</p>

	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 should be incorporated into the ToC.
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
	LDCF/SCCF: will the proposed incremental activities lead to adaptation which reduces vulnerability, builds adaptive capacity, and increases resilience to climate change?	N/A
6) global environmental benefits (GEF trust fund) and/or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF)	Are the benefits truly global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits, and are they measurable?	Benefits to biodiversity are global and local and measurable in terms of hectares and key marine species identified in the project proposal
	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	GEF funding is relatively small at \$2.6 million whereas total area under improved management is substantial (1,875 km ² under improved management + 1,667 km ² newly created)
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits explicitly defined?	Yes
	Are indicators, or methodologies, provided to demonstrate how the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits will be measured and monitored during project implementation?	GEBs are in ha so relatively simple to measure to satisfy GEF requirements. In addition, the project will monitor wildlife population trends through nestings, sightings, markings, etc. Also the METT/MEAT will be used to measure management effectiveness.
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project's resilience to climate change?	Project will support 'ecosystem-based management strategies' which will result in increased ecosystem and community resilience to climate change impacts (p. 58 in risks)
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?	This project is not exceptionally innovative apart from the possible use of open source software for sharing field information in real time.

	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	General information
	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.		Map and geo-coordinates provided; however, coordinates are for one point. Once the project boundaries have been identified, it would be helpful to show the bounding box (i.e. upper left and bottom right). See Earth Observation and the GEF – Section A1.0 (p. 64) for recommendations on providing geo-referenced information. Map 2 showing municipalities is very helpful.
2. Stakeholders. Select the stakeholders that have participated in consultations during the project identification phase: Indigenous people and local communities; Civil society organizations; Private sector entities. If none of the above, please explain why. In addition, provide indicative information on how stakeholders, including civil society and indigenous peoples, will be engaged in the project preparation, and their respective roles and means of engagement.	Have all the key relevant stakeholders been identified to cover the complexity of the problem, and project implementation barriers?	Stakeholders and their roles are provided for project preparation (assume also for implementation). Notable exceptions include the key contributors to environmental degradation in the immediate area such as representatives from the tourist industry (i.e. hotels) Output 2.1.4 discusses the facilitation of a participatory network-wide marine spatial plan (MSP) to establish zoning mechanisms. Given the number and diversity of stakeholders for each area, this project will benefit greatly from an MSP that is inclusive and comprehensive and is widely used (see F. Douvère (2008). The importance of marine spatial planning in advancing ecosystem-based sea use management, <i>Mar. Policy</i> 32 (2008) 762–771.
	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?	Roles are identified. However, more information could be provided during PPG phase to ensure that processes are structured in a way that

		address potential conflict and which promotes engagement amongst stakeholders.
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
	Do gender considerations hinder full participation of an important stakeholder group (or groups)? If so, how will these obstacles be addressed?	No
5. Risks. Indicate risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that	Are the identified risks valid and comprehensive? Are the risks specifically for things outside the project's control? Are there social and environmental risks which could affect the project? For climate risk, and climate resilience measures:	Risks are well described and researched, as well as mitigation strategies. A major risk has to do with "bias for municipal LGUs towards developing mass tourism in priority habitats of ETP MW" which

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	<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? • 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>underscores the need to engage proactively with the tourism industry. The mitigation measure is unconvincing as presented.</p> <p>The same is true for potential opposition from fishers who stand to lose if previously accessible areas are restricted.</p> <p>Conflict risk is clear and project proponents appear to have a strong understanding of the dynamics and what is needed to effectively mitigate.</p> <p>Climate change impacts (moderate risk) are outlined with some resilience measures put in place as well as an assessment of vulnerability of people and ETP MW. Academic institutions are included as stakeholders but it is unclear if they have expertise in climate change and the impacts on species.</p>
6. Coordination. Outline the coordination with other relevant GEF-financed and other related initiatives	Are the project proponents tapping into relevant knowledge and learning generated by other projects, including GEF projects?	Yes
	Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?	Yes
	Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?	The proposed project will use lessons learned from EcoGov, particularly related to the conservation of ETP MW and MPAs in Davao Gulf, as well as in the capacity building of local stakeholders and long-term desired behavior change. Also the ongoing Sustainable Coral Reef Ecosystem Management Program (SCREMP) and the Coastal and Marine Ecosystems Management Program (CMEMP) and several USAID projects such as FishRight.

	How have these lessons informed the project's formulation?	Yes
	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?	A project management unit (PMU) will serve as coordinating mechanisms, including with other projects. A specific mechanism for how this will be done should be developed during PPG phase.
8. Knowledge management. Outline the "Knowledge Management Approach" for the project, and how it will contribute to the project's overall impact, including plans to learn from relevant projects, initiatives and evaluations.	What overall approach will be taken, and what knowledge management indicators and metrics will be used?	<p>Component 3 addresses behavior change and knowledge management through a 'national knowledge management platform (KMS)' to collect and share best practices, etc. During PPG will explore existing with other KM platforms.</p> <p>Indicator is for data, strategies, and/or lessons learned to be shared with at least 5 MPAs in other areas of the Philippines.</p>
	What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?	See above re platform

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	<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>
	<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.</p>