

### STAP guidelines for screening GEF projects

Part I: Project Information	Response	
GEF ID	10542	
Project Title	Conservation of Atoll Ecosystems through an effectively managed national protected area estate (CATENATE)	
Date of Screening	May 18, 2020	
STAP member screener	Rosie Cooney	
STAP secretariat screener	Virginia Gorsevski	
STAP Overall Assessment and Rating	<p><b>Concur</b></p> <p>STAP welcomes this project from IUCN entitled “Conservation of Atoll Ecosystems through an effectively managed national protected area Estate (CATENATE)” which seeks to “...safeguard nationally and globally significant coral reef biodiversity and associated ecosystems through a resilient network of equitably and effectively managed protected and conserved areas in the Maldives.”</p> <p>Overall STAP finds this project to be a well-written and timely project given the problem of “paper parks” and new opportunities for decentralization. The use of the IUCN Green List is a welcome innovation.</p> <p>The project would benefit from a theory of change that includes assumptions and potential alternative pathways if the assumptions prove false to allow for adaptive management. See <a href="#">STAP’s guidance</a> on developing a ToC for GEF projects.</p> <p>Also, while this project builds on past and ongoing climate adaptation projects, more information should be provided regarding climate projections for target areas from 2020 to 2050 given the country’s high level of vulnerability. See STAP document on <a href="#">climate risk screening</a>.</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?	The objective of this project is “to safeguard nationally and globally significant coral reef

		<p>biodiversity and associated ecosystems through a resilient network of equitably and effectively managed protected and conserved areas in the Maldives.”</p> <p>This responds to the main problem identified, which is that the majority of legally protected areas in the Maldives are “paper parks” due to lack of technical capacity and resources. Other problems include unregulated tourism and poor solid waste management and while these sectors and issues are not reflected in the objective, they are included as project stakeholders.</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>	While this project is not explicitly a CCA project, it will build on and complement other adaptation activities such as REGENERATE. Also building a resilient network of PAs will have adaptation benefits.
	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
<b>Part II: Project justification</b>	A simple narrative explaining the project’s logic, i.e. a theory of change.	
<b>1. Project description.</b> <b>Briefly describe:</b> 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?	Three main barriers are insufficient institutional and financial capacity for PA management and biodiversity conservation, inadequate policy and

		regulatory framework to support systematic governance of natural resources, and weak KM and gender mainstreaming. Reference is made to the Decentralization Act.
	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?	Baseline information given with regards to the METT score and a table is provided that shows scenario without and with the GEF project.
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project's benefits?	Yes, re the METT score and existing and target area (ha) of PA and MPA
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	Yes
	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;	
	are the lessons learned from similar or related past GEF and non-GEF interventions described; and	
	how did these lessons inform the design of this project?	
3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project	What is the theory of change?	Unfortunately, a theory of change is not presented in this project. However, the logic is clear. The project will support the decentralization of PA management through legal frameworks, capacity building and financial planning.
	What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?	See above
	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?	Not clear without a formal ToC to make explicit the underlying assumptions and the various causal

		pathways. See <a href="#">STAP's guidance</a> on developing a ToC for GEF projects.
	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. A major justification for doing this project is the recent ratification of the 8 <sup>th</sup> amendment to the Decentralization Act in 2019. However, ratification alone may not guarantee success as there may be additional issues/complexities that could prevent positive change, which are not addressed by this project. See " <a href="#">Review of the decentralization framework in the Maldives</a> " – note that main challenges are financial and capacity which are covered by this project.
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?	Yes – high levels of coral reef biodiversity despite small overall area.
	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	Yes, with 4.42 km <sup>2</sup> of terrestrial PA under improved management, 88.67 km <sup>2</sup> of new MPA, and 35.22 km <sup>2</sup> of MPA under improved management. These areas are small but high biodiversity and reasonable funding level.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits explicitly defined?	Only in terms of total ha of PA and MPA
	Are indicators, or methodologies, provided to demonstrate how the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits will be measured and monitored during project implementation?	Yes
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project's resilience to climate change?	This project will build on and complement other adaptation activities such as REGENERATE. Also

		building a resilient network of PAs will have adaptation benefits.
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 for Maldives in that it will be the first PA which will ultimately not rely of ODA and government funds for management and will benefit from new legislation devolving decision making to local councils. Also the use of the IUCN Green List standard is innovative for a GEF project.
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	Somewhat. If successful it will be scaled up across atolls in the Maldives and possibly beyond.
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	Transformational change will be required to support a bottom up approach to PA management.
<b>1b.</b> Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.		The project provides a good map where the PAs are clearly depicted; however, no bounding information for geo-referencing. See Page A1-1 in <a href="#">Earth Observation and the GEF</a> for guidance.
<b>2. Stakeholders.</b> 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	Have all the key relevant stakeholders been identified to cover the complexity of the problem, and project implementation barriers?	Yes.  The project might consider using the Governance Assessment of Protected Areas ( <a href="#">GAPA</a> ) developed by the International Institute of Environment and Development (IIED) which “... uses a multi-stakeholder approach to ensure that the key rightsholders and stakeholders are fully engaged in the design of the assessment, the collection of information, interpretation of the results, and the development of recommendations.” Under Component 1.

the project preparation, and their respective roles and means of engagement.		
	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 clearly articulated
<b>3. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.</b> 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?	Yes. Gender analysis and action plans

<p><b>5. Risks.</b> 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</p>	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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?</li> <li>• Has the sensitivity to climate change, and its impacts, been assessed?</li> <li>• Have resilience practices and measures to address projected climate risks and impacts been considered? How will these be dealt with?</li> <li>• What technical and institutional capacity, and information, will be needed to address climate risks and resilience enhancement measures?</li> </ul>	<p>Risks are comprehensive, with a major one identified as continued uncontrolled exploitation of marine ecosystems by island communities. This will be addressed through multi-stakeholder engagement, with the underlying assumption that bringing people together will solve the problem. This may be part of the solution but without clear alternatives or incentives for communities it doesn't seem like a plausible mitigation measure.</p> <p>Maldives is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and this information is presented in general in the introduction; however, no scientific data is presented regarding specific projected impacts from 2020 to 2050 and it is not listed as a risk to the project itself. Robust climate risk screening is strongly recommended.</p>
<p><b>6. Coordination.</b> Outline the coordination with other relevant GEF-financed and other related initiatives</p>	<p>Are the project proponents tapping into relevant knowledge and learning generated by other projects, including GEF projects?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
	<p>Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?</p>	<p>There is adequate recognition of previous projects; however, the project notes lack of reliable practical examples on how sustainable resource uses can deliver economic outcomes.</p>
	<p>Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?</p>	<p>This project will build on lessons learned from two projects (GEF project AEC and WB project CCAP) and has good understanding of key components; however, does not list specific lessons learned.</p>
	<p>How have these lessons informed the project's formulation?</p>	<p>See above</p>
	<p>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?</p>	<p>Yes through the KM component of the project and clear coordination with other past and ongoing projects (p. 51)</p>
<p><b>8. Knowledge management.</b> Outline the "Knowledge Management Approach" for the project,</p>	<p>What overall approach will be taken, and what knowledge management indicators and metrics will be used?</p>	<p>Component 3 includes knowledge management which centers on a knowledge repository that includes information from Components 1 and 2. Will use existing portals and websites.</p>

and how it will contribute to the project's overall impact, including plans to learn from relevant projects, initiatives and evaluations.		
	What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?	See activities under Component 3 on KM above.



## Notes

STAP advisory response	Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed
<b>1. Concur</b>	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 <b>"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."</b></i>
<b>2. Minor issues to be considered during project design</b>	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.

<b>3. Major issues to be considered during project design</b>	<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>