

STAP guidelines for screening GEF projects

Part I: Project Information	Response	
GEF ID	10545	
Project Title	Managing Peatlands in Mongolia and Enhancing the Resilience of Pastoral Ecosystems and Livelihoods of Nomadic Herders	
Date of Screening	May 5, 2020	
STAP member screener	Graciela Metternicht	
STAP secretariat screener	Guadalupe Duron	
STAP Overall Assessment and Rating	<p>Minor issues to be considered during project design.</p> <p>STAP acknowledges Mongolia’s project “Managing Peatlands in Mongolia and Enhancing the Resilience of Pastoral Ecosystems and Livelihoods of Nomadic Herders”. The project seeks to achieve sustainable land management, with a focus on peatlands. It aims to strengthen current policy by improving data and knowledge of peatland management in targeted sites through monitoring, reporting and verification methods.</p> <p>Herder communities will be critical actors in implementing landscape management of rangelands and peatlands. STAP is pleased with the focus on traditional knowledge, and values having further information in the project document on how traditional herding knowledge will be used to design, implement, and assess interventions – while building capacity and agency.</p> <p>Bringing together stakeholders in appropriate ways will be essential to achieving the project objective, building capacity, and enabling agency. To this end, STAP recommends a thorough mapping of relevant stakeholders, followed by analysis (e.g. who will be affected by interventions, who needs to be involved, what forms of knowledge are required to reach the objective, what do</p>	

stakeholders value) as part of the theory of change. A theory of change is essential for the project team to validate consistently the causal links between outcomes, especially as the interventions seek to generate learning on peatland restoration. Furthermore, STAP recommends that the LDN guidelines be considered in the project design phase, as the project seeks to reduce land degradation and to build capacity for enhancing ecosystem services. Of note is the need to undertake a good appraisal of the enabling environment, with a focus on issues related to land tenure.

STAP is pleased that climate information will be used to identify risks in the medium and long-term to inform rangeland management. STAP recommends specifying in the project document that managing for climate risks (e.g. drought) will require adaptations to the project, which is likely to involve different scenarios (or impact pathways) than what is originally conceived. These impact pathways can be identified when developing the theory of change.

Planning for climate risks in the theory of change, and embedding adaptation measures in the project can help ameliorate the impacts of climate change. This includes planning for better pasture management, designing water conservation strategies, considering diversifying livelihoods, and possibly developing early warning systems.

Below, STAP offers recommendations on how to improve the project design, including the setting of a methodological framework that can account for the multiple objectives pursued for enhancing resilience of pastoral ecosystems and livelihoods of nomadic herders in selected peatlands of Mongolia.

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?	Yes, the objective is defined clearly, and consistently linked to the problem statement.
Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project's objectives?	Yes, the activities support the project objective. STAP Recommends the team re-assess the sequence of the project component; activities currently under Component #3 should contribute to baseline assessment, which is needed for current component #1 and #2. STAP suggests the team get acquainted with the LDN guidelines , and use the LDN Conceptual framework (which is underpinned by the DPSIR logical framework) to design a methodological framework that is coherent and it properly accounts for the drivers, pressures, institutional setting, and socio-economic factors of the region. It is also important that the designed options consider 'land potential' (which is different from the concepts of land capability)
Outcomes	A description of the expected short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention. Do the planned outcomes encompass important global environmental benefits?	Yes, the outcomes focus on global environmental outcomes.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	The benefits are likely to be generated with careful monitoring.
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, outputs are likely to contribute to outcomes. STAP suggests the theory of change identifies activities and stakeholders to be involved in capturing local traditional knowledge and in designing tools that contribute to advancing knowledge for decision making. Early engagement of the nomadic herder communities, for co-design and co-production of those outputs is essential for reaching the desired outcomes. Pg 42 states that "A second risk related to community participation is language barriers

		and cultural understanding, which threatens the ability of the project to assess conditions and generate new knowledge, and replication within and across borders”. In developing the Theory of change the project team needs to think on effective ways to anticipate and address these risks. The project needs better description of the processes envisaged to overcome barrier #3 (which is also related to the aforementioned risk).
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, the problem is well-defined. The drivers of land degradation affecting peatland’s ability to generate global benefits (carbon sequestration), and provide local benefits (ecosystem services for the reindeer herding communities) is under threat. The problem is further compounded by the lack of understanding about the impact of hydrological regimes of rivers and catchments on peatlands in the targeted basins.
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	Yes, the barriers are described thoroughly, and consistently relate to the problem analysis.
	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?	Does not apply.
2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects	Is the baseline identified clearly?	Yes, the PIF includes a narrative baseline, describing on-going, and past initiatives. The baseline will be detailed further during the project design.
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project’s benefits?	Core indicators will be assigned during the project design. Of note is the mention that the project will cover 5 basins that amount to about 200,000 sq. km; yet the project appears to be able to benefit only 200 sq. km (or 0.01%) of the project area (indicator 4) in regards to areas of landscapes under improved

		practice and under improved management. It is understood that this rather conservative figure comes from the LDN TSP of Mongolia (pg 28), however, the total funding received and the planned may be able to exceed that area.
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	Yes, the baseline is sufficiently robust at this stage.
	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;	Does not apply.
	are the lessons learned from similar or related past GEF and non-GEF interventions described; and	Partly. In addition to the description of the associated baseline projects, it would be valuable to specify how learning from designing and implementing these projects will contribute to this GEF project.
	how did these lessons inform the design of this project?	The PIF states that three broad lessons influenced the design of this project:” i) Scaling up of a watershed/landscape approach, rather than a focus on communities to take into account both lowlands (irrigated rice) and uplands (rain fed crops) and to reduce run off and siltation leading to low soil productivity of both categories; ii) Promote new alternatives in terms of incomes; iii) Contribute to improved knowledge management on LDN and SLM.”
3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project	What is the theory of change?	The PIF includes the following theory of change: “The main premise of the project is that in order to sustain ecosystem services of peatlands and reduce land degradation, sustainable peatland management should be mainstreamed into policy frameworks and sectoral policies, and nomadic herders capacitated to contribute to sustainable land management. This premise can only be achieved if knowledge and data on peatlands are used by national authorities in identification of peatland-based mitigation and adaptation options so that these options can be part of national plans so that

		<p>sustainable peatland management based activities can be implemented, reported and monitored.</p> <p>Sustainable peatland management can be achieved if other sectoral plans and strategies incorporate peatland management solutions into sectoral policy formulations. Finally, nomadic herder communities' capacities will be enhanced so that nomadic pastoralist communities participate in rangeland management processes so that indigenous knowledge will be part of sustainable landscape management approaches.</p> <p>Cross-community exchanges at global scale will further facilitate dissemination of project's good practices, lessons learned on herders' contribution to sustainable landscape management globally so that project's best practices will be replicated at global scale."</p>
	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?	<p>Unsure. STAP recommends developing a theory of change, and defining the barriers, risks, and assumptions in meeting the short-term outcomes. STAP's primer on the theory of change is a helpful resource for the project developers to use:</p> <p>https://www.stapgef.org/theory-change-primer</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?	<p>In the risk section, the project recognizes that adaptive management may be needed to respond to climate change.</p> <p>In addition to this text, STAP recommends specifying in the project document that managing for climate risks (e.g. drought) will require adaptations to the project, which is likely to involve different scenarios (or impact pathways) than what is originally conceived. These impact</p>

		pathways can be identified when developing the theory of change.
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 and a good theory of change.
	LDCF/SCCF: will the proposed incremental activities lead to adaptation which reduces vulnerability, builds adaptive capacity, and increases resilience to climate change?	Does not apply.
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?	<p>Yes, the global environmental benefits are described clearly. While designing the project, STAP recommends the following:</p> <p>In component 1, STAP recommends drawing the boundaries around the catchment. Equally important, in component 2, climate smart practices should target the landscape. As the PIF mentions peatland systems influence an array of ecosystem functions and services (e.g. regulates microclimates, regulates adjacent hydrological systems) and biodiversity at the landscape level. The following resources on peatland restoration and management can be useful to the project team:</p> <p>Joosten, H, et al. Peatlands: guidance for climate change mitigation through conservation, rehabilitation and sustainable use. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2012. http://www.gret-perg.ulaval.ca/fileadmin/fichiers/fichiersGRET/pdf/Doc_generale/Joosten_2012_Peatlands-guidance_for_climate_change.pdf</p> <p>Minayeva, T. et al “Towards ecosystem-based restoration of peatland biodiversity” (2017) Mires and Peat, Volume 19 (2017), Article 01, 1–36, http://www.mires-and-peat.net/;</p>

		<p>Minayeva, T. et al “Highland Peatlands of Mongolia” (2016) The Wetland Book. Springer, Dordrecht, 2016. 1-19.</p> <p>In addition, STAP recommends detailing climate trends and projections for Mongolia, or the project site if this information is available. This data can facilitate building climate risk mitigation strategies into the project components. Drought is expected to occur in the project sites: refer to https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/mongolia/vulnerability</p> <p>Planning for climate risks in the theory of change, and embedding adaptation measures in the project can help ameliorate the effects to climate change. This includes planning for better pasture management, designing water conservation strategies, considering diversifying livelihoods, and possible development of early warning systems.</p>
	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	Unclear. Suggest developing a theory of change, and identifying the barriers and enablers to scaling in the theory of change.
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits explicitly defined?	Yes, global environmental benefits are defined.
	Are indicators, or methodologies, provided to demonstrate how the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits will be measured and monitored during project implementation?	Indicators will be provided in the final project document. In addition to listing the GEF core indicators related to sustainable land management and greenhouse gas mitigation, STAP suggests identifying indicators to monitor and track progress of the causal links in the theory of change. STAP’s theory of change primer can assist with this process.
	What activities will be implemented to increase the project’s resilience to climate change?	The project plans to carry out medium to long-range forecasts, and use temperature models to plan for adaptation and resilience strategies in the nomadic pastoral sites.

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?	<p>The project is innovative in focusing on peatland restoration in Mongolia to achieve climate change mitigation and support ecosystem services integral to pastoral systems.</p> <p>The assumption is that peatland restoration and improved rangeland management, combined with capacity building in these practices, will generate the knowledge and institutional conditions to scale across temporal and spatial scales. STAP recommends its paper on durability and theory of change - where it lists principles that need attention to achieve scaling: https://www.stapgef.org/achieving-enduring-outcomes-gef-investment; https://www.stapgef.org/theory-change-primer</p>
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	<p>In addition to scaling up (impacting policies and NDC reporting on land use change, and scaling out (impacting greater numbers), STAP recommends thinking how to influence rules, decisions, values (among other factors) in the targeted social-ecological systems.</p> <p>To achieve the desired change, this will involve influencing the complexity and variety that characterizes the social systems. This includes working with herders and land users to address competing interests. Thus, considering how to scale deep will be important. The project team can refer to STAP's durability paper and the theory of change primer for guidance.</p>
	Will incremental adaptation be required, or more fundamental transformational change to achieve long term sustainability?	<p>It is possible that both adaptation and transformational change will be required due to the climate risks (drought) the project sites face.</p> <p>STAP encourages the project team to consider uncertainty to cope with the level of change that may take place. This requires considering</p>

		<p>systematically time scales and spatial scales when planning the interventions.</p> <p>The theory of change can do this if it is designed to assess how the targeted social-ecological system functions across scales, while focusing on what is “necessary and sufficient” to achieve the project objective. Refer to STAP’s theory of change primer, which is a good resource for developing a theory of change based on systems analysis: https://www.stapgef.org/theory-change-primer</p>
<p>1b. Project Map and Coordinates. Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.</p>		<p>A map of the target sites is provided. Suggest adding the project coordinates by specifying the location with stakeholders during the project design. Also, it would be valuable to use earth observation systems to map land uses, as well as work with stakeholders to verify this information. STAP’s guidance on earth observation systems can assist during project preparation in delineating boundaries and using remote sensing data for monitoring rangeland monitoring (component 3): https://stapgef.org/sites/default/files/publications/Earth%20Observation%20and%20the%20GEF%20primer_0_0.pdf</p>
<p>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</p>	<p>Have all the key relevant stakeholders been identified to cover the complexity of the problem, and project implementation barriers?</p>	<p>Yes, the relevant stakeholders have been identified to address the problem, and potential barriers. STAP recommends developing a stakeholder mapping and analysis to answer: who will be affected by interventions and who needs to be involved (recognizing this will change as more is learned during project implementation).</p> <p>Particular attention should be paid to values (even if they conflict between stakeholders), governance, formal and informal arrangements, different types of knowledge, gender, and agents of change – those individuals that can drive the desired change (objective). A stakeholder mapping and engagement analysis will be needed to develop a</p>

peoples, will be engaged in the project preparation, and their respective roles and means of engagement.		theory of change. STAP's primer on the theory of change, and RAPTA are useful resources that identify steps on stakeholder mapping: https://research.csiro.au/eap/rapta/
	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?	Suggest conducting a stakeholder mapping during the project design as described 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?	The project will conduct a gender analysis during the project development. STAP suggests focusing the gender analysis on peatland management at the landscape level, and on pastoral systems. Currently, the gender description is focused solely on peatland management. In addition, STAP recommends identifying gender barriers (and enablers) in the theory of change, as well as other gender constraints that inhibit reaching the project objective, and scaling.

	Do gender considerations hinder full participation of an important stakeholder group (or groups)? If so, how will these obstacles be addressed?	Unsure. During the process of assessing gender issues, STAP recommends considering whether the full participation of an important stakeholder group is hindered as a result, and describing how will the project address these obstacles.
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	<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?</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? • 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>The PIF summarizes the risks the project may face, including risks from climate change, obstacles in legislation protecting peatland management, barriers to community participation, among others.</p> <p>STAP is pleased the project intends to develop medium to long-range forecasts to plan for adaptation and resilience strategies for pastoral management. The questions to the left may assist the project team in focusing this scenario building.</p> <p>When developing the project, STAP encourages the project developers to continually test causal links by building in climate risks in the theory of change. This process will enable the project team to assess for the resilience of the system – identify how, and where, the system is weak, or strong, in its capacity to deal with disturbances.</p> <p>Additionally, the project team may find it useful to look at the following climate information and screening resources:</p> <p>World Bank Climate Change Knowledge Portal: https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/ U.S. Agency for International Development Climate Risk Screening and Management Tools: https://www.climate-links.org/resources/climate-risk-screening-management-tool STAP's screening guidelines: https://www.stapgef.org/sites/default/files/documents/GEF%20AGENCY%20RETREAT%20Mar-Apr%202020.pdf</p>

		Of note are the concerns raised UNEP Environmental, Social and Economic Review Note in what regards to economic sustainability and indigenous people- moderate risk. STAP recommends taking into account the recommendation of a social analysis.
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, the project will build on the knowledge of other projects based on the baseline projects listed in the PIF, and described in the coordination section.
	Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?	See above.
	Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?	Yes, lessons from other projects will be used to develop this proposal.
	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?	Partly. The project will enable cross-learning between herders and other stakeholder groups, as well as develop material to replicate lessons. As previously mentioned, suggest developing a theory of change, which can serve as a monitoring tool in addition to tracking the GEF core indicators.
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>The project will rely on participatory approaches to design and implement the project. It also will disseminate material through printed and online tools, including through training courses.</p> <p>In particular, the project will develop a knowledge foundation on measuring, reporting and verifying and use change, land use change and forestry emissions from peatlands.</p> <p>STAP recommends considering knowledge management metrics, and specifying how the knowledge generated will influence scaling of results. In addition, it would be valuable to link the knowledge strategy to the theory of change.</p>
	What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?	The project describes several methods to disseminate results and lessons. Detailed plans will

		be described in the project document. STAP reminds the project team on the importance of building upon knowledge platforms that already exists from other programs or projects.
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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>