

Part I: Project Information		Response
GEF ID		10206
Project Title		Sustainable Forest Management Impact Program on Dryland Sustainable Landscapes
Date of Screening		
STAP member Screener		29-May-19
STAP secretariat screener		Graciela Metternicht, Mark Stafford Smith
STAP Overall Assessment		Guadalupe Duron
		<p>STAP's overall assessment: Minor issues to be considered during the project design</p> <p>STAP welcomes FAO's Impact Program "Sustainable Forest Management Impact Program on Dryland Sustainable Landscapes". The program aims to improve management of dryland production landscapes by applying the concept of Land Degradation Neutrality and its hierarchy to avoid, reduce, and reverse land degradation, desertification, and deforestation of land and ecosystems. The various citations to recent papers support the problem analysis, and the context underlying the global environmental challenges drylands and their inhabitants face.</p> <p>STAP welcomes the establishment of a Program Steering Committee, for inter-agency coordination and governance, given the diversity of stakeholders, sectors, financing and investment mechanisms, and co-financers. STAP would be willing to contribute to the technical steering committee advising on the design and implementation of the global coordination project. STAP welcomes the program's aim to build on the science of dryland management, especially on the notion that drylands are non-equilibrium systems that will require assessing resilience to manage risks, for example, a changing climate, which could exacerbate the extent and severity of current trends, and reduce the effectiveness and sustainability of restoration. STAP recommends for the program to build questions into the theory of change by interrogating the rationale and assumptions that underlie the hypothesized sequence of outcomes. For instance, it would be useful for the program to turn these assumptions (defined in the program document) into questions, and contribute to the evidence on drylands: 1) "They (drylands) must be resilient, adaptive and biologically functional; and; 2)their management must be responsive to landscape configurations and trends over time and capable of generating food, income and services in a sustainable manner."</p> <p>STAP recommends that the global coordination project should develop its own theory of change focusing on the scaling and transformative aspects of the program, through multi-stakeholder engagement, with appropriate governance arrangements; this will help to reinforce connections between the program's stakeholders, and build the trust necessary to embrace the program's vision – going beyond the exchange of information.</p> <p>Additionally, applying resilience thinking will benefit the analysis of trade-offs, and help identify options for adapting, and/or transforming, the program's impact pathways. STAP recommends two approaches for resilience thinking: 1) Resilience, Adaptation Pathway Transformation Assessment; and, 2) the Scientific Conceptual Framework on Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN-CF). Both approaches will also be useful in assessing potential inter-country or cross-border leakages that may arise from tailored interventions (pg 36). Like the Drylands IP, the LDN-CF is managed at the landscape scale: it relies on multi-stakeholder engagement and planning across scales and sectors, supported by national-scale coordination that should work with and incorporate existing local and regional governance structures. The LDN-CF considers all land types in a geographic intervention area, and their interactions and ecological trajectories. This will allow interventions that avoid land degradation and/or restore/reverse land degradation to be optimized, and unintended outcomes minimized. Finally, STAP recommends that the project team apply the Checklist for Land</p>

		Degradation Neutrality Transformative Projects and Programmes; this was developed to help country-level project developers and their technical and financial partners, to design effective and innovative interventions, while ensuring consistency and completeness in the implementation of LDN, and the application of the fundamental features of the LDN framework. STAP provides further details below about how the program can be strengthened, particularly through the global coordination project.
<b>Part I: Project Information</b>	<b>What STAP looks for</b>	<b>Response</b>
<b>B. Indicative Project Description Summary</b>		
Project Objective	Is the objective clearly defined, and consistently related to the problem diagnosis?	Clear objective linked to the goal of LDN.
Project components	A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project's objectives?	Yes, the project components support the project objective. However, STAP would have supported greater detail in the theory of change to substantiate the rationale underlying the proposed component – such as detailing the preconditions necessary to reach each outcome. While STAP acknowledges the excellent description of global drivers of land degradation, it is also true that pressures and mechanisms of land degradation are context/geography based (e.g. differing political factors, differing forms of land governance, differing national land use planning systems, and environmental factors). For example, Box 2 of the project exemplifies climate-related pressures that vary according to country. Therefore, STAP strongly encourages the development of a theory of change for each of the child projects. Such TOC should follow the underlying assumptions of the global Dryland IP (e.g. a common vision of what the future would look like, para 66), but be tailored to the political, social, economic, legal and environmental circumstances (e.g. pressures on State Change of Land) of each child project. A TOC for each child project will support delivery of a Component #2, for instance, that focuses on 'creating country specific conditions and capacities for scaling up'. A Theory of Change for each country would also enable effective identification of the tailored, relevant and innovative solutions that the project aims to implement (pg 36 of the project)
Outcomes	A description of the expected short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention.	See comment above on theory of change.
	Do the planned outcomes encompass important global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits?	
	Are the global environmental benefits/adaptation benefits likely to be generated?	
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?	See comment above on theory of change.
Part II: Project justification	A simple narrative explaining the project's logic, i.e. a theory of change.	
<b>1. Project description. 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?	<p>Problem statement is defined comprehensively. Several documents are cited, including on status and trends of dryland degradation at the global and regional levels.</p> <p>Please the PFD recognizes that lack of “implementing integration” across sectors is a barrier for managing drylands sustainably.</p> <p>Note that Kenya is omitted from the description in Box 1, p.6. The rationale for ‘presumed drylands’ in Fig.2 might benefit from more explanation – why does seasonal severe aridity warrant treating under drylands given that only one country is included on this basis?</p>
	Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?	
	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?	Yes, the program builds on several initiatives.
	Does it provide a feasible basis for quantifying the project’s benefits?	
	Is the baseline sufficiently robust to support the incremental (additional cost) reasoning for the project?	
	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	
	how did these lessons inform the design of this project?	

<p>3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project</p>	<p>What is the theory of change?</p>	<p>The theory of change is that by developing capacities on landscape management, and strengthening knowledge exchange across scales, it will be possible to avoid, reduce, and reverse further degradation, desertification, and deforestation of land and ecosystems in drylands.</p> <p>Suggest that each country develops their theory of change with context-specific stakeholders (see justification above). See the table on the STAP criteria for IPs for further comments on the theory of change.</p> <p>In component 1, STAP recommends that countries apply LDN methods for landscape planning. LDN is a participatory land use planning process to avoid land degradation, reduce land degradation, and reverse the productive potential of land.</p> <p>In component 2, there is an assumption that enhancing farmer’s capacities through farmer field schools will result in transformative change. STAP recommends testing this assumption in the theory of change. STAP also suggests testing the impact of behavioral change on pro-environment behavior by embedding contextual interventions (e.g. norms, sensory cues) in the project. Influencing behavior may result in more durable effects than training farmers (Byerly, 2018).</p> <p>When the country projects are designed and implemented, it is important to remain cognizant that transformational change can be delivered through a series of adaptation interventions that are responsive to change – and not necessarily only through large-scale interventions.</p> <p>For component 3 and in the global coordination project, STAP recommends applying a planning process to specify further the platform’s objectives, define how to monitor the platform’s progress including building-in adaptive management, and describe methods for assessing the quality of multi-stakeholder dialogue-engagement within the platform. These processes will enable the program to identify the platform’s priorities and outcomes, assess to what extent the priorities were met, and determine the quality of the multi-stakeholder process within the platform. If the quality of the multi-stakeholder engagement is robust, the platform is likely to meet its objectives on scaling and transformational change. FAO and the program agencies may wish to consider the following paper: <a href="https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2Fs00267-017-0847-y.pdf">https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2Fs00267-017-0847-y.pdf</a> . In addition, the GCP should plan for how the set of stakeholders may need to change during the course of the program.</p>
	<p>What is the sequence of events (required or expected) that will lead to the desired outcomes?</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· What is the set of linked activities, outputs, and outcomes to address the project’s objectives?</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Are the mechanisms of change plausible, and is there a well-informed identification of the underlying assumptions?</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Is there a recognition of what adaptations may be required during project implementation to respond to changing conditions in pursuit of the targeted outcomes?</li> </ul>	
<p>5) incremental/additional cost reasoning and expected contributions from the baseline, the GEF trust fund, LDCF, SCCF, and co-financing</p>	<p>GEF trust fund: will the proposed incremental activities lead to the delivery of global environmental benefits?</p>	<p>The program identifies key contributions it will make to add value to large-scale programming: innovation and integration; moving to scale; and working effectively. STAP suggests that the country projects should keep these contributions in mind when developing the theory of change, and to assign indicators to monitor whether progress is being made on these conditions.</p>

	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) and/or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF)	Are the benefits truly global environmental benefits, and are they measurable?	<p>STAP welcomes the GEB table, explaining the baseline scenario, the GEF scenario, and the value of projects being part of the IP. It will be important to identify the assumptions and barriers to scaling and transformation in the child projects to reach the stated incremental value. A planning and monitoring process for the stakeholder platform is recommended to continuously track its progress in delivering on knowledge management, capacity, and scaling.</p> <p>Although the GEBs are stated, the program document does not state the methods that will be used to monitor the GEBs, or to implement adaptive management. Suggest that the country projects should detail the methods that will be used to monitor GEBs, and implement adaptive management as necessary.</p>
	Is the scale of projected benefits both plausible and compelling in relation to the proposed investment?	
	Are the global environmental benefits explicitly defined?	
	Are indicators, or methodologies, provided to demonstrate how the global environmental 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?	<p>Barriers to scaling-up need to be built into the theory of change. It is hard to gauge whether the program will be sustainable, or if there is potential for scaling-up. STAP recommends that the IP develop a separate ToC that focuses on how the impacts will be scaled; although this overlaps with the existing ToC, it will help clarify what is to be achieved in the child projects as opposed to how the value add of the GCP project needs to be activated.</p> <p>The program is not innovative in its current iteration. It is unclear whether the assumptions that were identified at the beginning of the document will be tested in the theory of change. The list also is missing critical assumptions about how scaling and transformation are achieved.</p>
	Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?	
	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.		

<p><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 the project preparation, and their respective roles and means of engagement.</p>	<p>Have all the key relevant stakeholders been identified to cover the complexity of the problem, and project implementation barriers?</p>	<p>The relevant stakeholders should be involved in the design of the theory of change, at least as the ToCs are elaborated further during the next design phase (see RAPTA Guidelines).</p>
	<p>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?</p>	
<p><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</p>	<p>Have gender differentiated risks and opportunities been identified, and were preliminary response measures described that would address these differences?</p>	<p>Yes – to a point. However, suggest for the country projects to consult a gender specialist when developing the project document, and to mainstream gender into the theory of change. Where culturally appropriate, the program may wish to look at the Family Farm Teams approach from Papua New Guinea as a possible elaboration to the FFS approach, that specifically addresses bringing women and youth into the decision-making processes of farming families (e.g. see <a href="https://co-lab.aciar.gov.au/genderequity/sites/_co-lab.aciar.gov.au/genderequity/files/2019-02/mn_194_family_teams-web-updated_4-10-2016.pdf">https://co-lab.aciar.gov.au/genderequity/sites/_co-lab.aciar.gov.au/genderequity/files/2019-02/mn_194_family_teams-web-updated_4-10-2016.pdf</a>).</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><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?</p>	<p>Suggest that countries should embed these questions to address risks to climate, when developing the project:</p> <p>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>Note: it is logically problematic to assess the risks arising from climate change (or other long-term changes such as population and demography, market demand, technologies, etc) in a conventional risk management sense after establishing the project, since these 'risks' are certain to happen in some fashion and should be part of the initial design rather than post hoc risk treatment. Otherwise the solution space is not open to creating a project that is likely to be robust in the first place. For example, if climate change may undermine local farming practices, then it may be better to promote different practices from the start. Consequently climate risk in particular should be considered in establishing the ToC, not in this risk management section, especially in child projects.</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"> <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> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the sensitivity to climate change, and its impacts, been assessed?</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have resilience practices and measures to address projected climate risks and impacts been considered? How will these be dealt with?</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What technical and institutional capacity, and information, will be needed to address climate risks and resilience enhancement measures?</li> </ul>	
<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>The program does a good job of identifying initiatives that it can leverage upon. Suggest doing the same in the country projects.</p>
	<p>Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?</p>	
	<p>Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?</p>	
	<p>How have these lessons informed the project's formulation?</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?	
<b>8. Knowledge management.</b> 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?	Suggest identifying indicators for monitoring and assessing the effectiveness of the knowledge platform itself in component 3.
	What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?	
<b>STAP advisory response</b>	<b>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</b>	
<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>	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>(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>	
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