

Terms of Reference of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP)

March 2012

MANDATE

1. The STAP is established as an advisory body to the GEF. STAP shall provide objective, strategic scientific and technical advice on GEF policies, operational strategies, programs and on projects and programmatic approaches; and, maintain a database of institutions, networks and individual scientists to provide the necessary expertise and advice for the GEF. STAP's activities shall be coordinated with the activities of the GEF Secretariat and the Implementing and Executing Agencies (GEF Agencies¹) and be consistent with GEF processes and procedures approved by the Council.
2. The STAP shall interact in a complementary manner with other relevant scientific and technical bodies, particularly with the subsidiary bodies of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention to Combat Desertification and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. For focal areas in which the GEF is not operating as a convention's financial mechanism, the STAP shall advise on the development of scientific and technical criteria and provide scientific and technical advice on priorities for GEF funding. The STAP shall provide expert scientific advice to inter-agency task forces and bodies handling other GEF processes, when such advice is requested.
3. Pursuant to this mandate, STAP shall report to each regular meeting of the GEF Council and, if requested, to the GEF Assembly on the status of its activities.
4. UNEP shall provide STAP's Secretariat and operate as its liaison with the GEF.

PERFORMANCE

5. UNEP shall monitor the STAP's performance, which shall be measured against agreed deliverables, targets and indicators to be specified in the STAP's program work.

COMPOSITION

6. The Executive Director of UNEP, in consultation with UNDP, the World Bank, the Executing Agencies and the GEF Secretariat, upon approval of the GEF Council shall appoint six members of STAP and shall also appoint a Chairperson. The members shall ordinarily be appointed for a term of two years renewable for a further two years. Members may be removed by the Executive Director of UNEP only for cause.
7. The STAP shall provide scientific and technical advice relevant to the GEF and the Trust Funds it manages, including GEF Trust Fund, the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF), the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF), and other trust funds as approved by the GEF Council. The composition of STAP shall reflect:
 - (a) Recognized leadership in specific relevant fields in the GEF focal areas of Biological Diversity, Climate Change Mitigation, Climate Change Adaptation, International Waters, Ozone Depletion, Persistent Organic Pollutants, and Land Degradation and with an ability to bridge scientific, technological, economic, social and policy issues;
 - (b) Geographical and gender balance;
 - (c) Experience in the management of science and with knowledge of issues in the implementation of complex international initiatives;

¹ The Implementing Agencies consist of UNEP, UNDP and the World Bank. Executing Agencies include the FAO, UNIDO, IDB, ADB, AfDB, EBRD, IFAD. Beginning in GEF-4, all agencies are allowed access to GEF resources

- (d) An understanding of the organizational and operational setting of the Implementing and Executing Agencies, particularly the context of program and project development and implementation; and
 - (e) Knowledge about the scientific processes required for the implementation of relevant conventions in developing countries and familiarity with relevant international assessments.
8. To avoid any potential conflicts of interest, members who hold positions in Government, non-governmental organizations, or who are working in, or have any contractual arrangement, as consultants or otherwise, with an Implementing or Executing Agency or the GEF Secretariat, shall disclose this information to the Executive Director of UNEP. Potential conflicts of interest with agencies or individuals involved in individual projects should be disclosed to the Chairperson of STAP. At the discretion of the Chairperson, members may be excluded from attending Panel discussions in which he/she has a personal interest or has had significant involvement in any capacity.
 9. Panel Members will work collaboratively on issues of relevance to multiple focal areas. Panel Members will help keep other Panel Members abreast of emerging science as it relates to their areas of engagement.
 10. Concerning the Panel's work on issues of climate change adaptation, the Climate Change Adaptation Panel Member will provide operational and strategic advice on the GEF's adaptation project portfolio that is funded through the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF). Other STAP Panel Members will also provide advice on such projects as they relate to their focal areas and areas of expertise. In the context of climate change adaptation and resilience in projects and programs in focal areas funded by the GEF Trust Fund, the Climate Change Adaptation Panel Member will provide input to other STAP Panel Members and identify possible areas of synergies.
 11. STAP may convene ad-hoc working groups to address particular issues or questions which arise and to obtain specialized technical opinions as needed. The ad-hoc working groups may also be designed as resource groups for the GEF Agencies on specific technical aspects of project design and provide advice on technological options, cost-effectiveness and related social issues.
 12. The Chairperson of STAP shall act as the spokesperson in various meetings, and may assign members to represent STAP at meetings. The Chairperson shall be provided adequate financial support in carrying out these responsibilities.

STRATEGIC ADVICE

13. STAP shall advise the GEF Council regarding contemporary issues of the global environment and how to address them; provide a forum for integrating expertise on science and technology, including their social, economic and institutional aspects; function as an important conduit between the GEF and the natural and social science communities and relevant technologists, and, synthesize, promote and galvanize relevant and up to date contributions from them. In carrying out this role, STAP's advice will complement ongoing activities within the GEF-related conventions.
14. STAP's role in providing strategic advice to the GEF and the trust funds that it manages shall be as follows:
 - (a) Advise on the state of scientific, technical and technological knowledge related to each focal area, or area of engagement of the GEF, highlighting policy and operational implications for the GEF;
 - (b) Advise on the scientific and technical aspects of specific strategic matters such as cross-cutting issues; scientific coherence of GEF operational strategies and programs, and their

consistency with GEF policies and objectives; and integration of national and global benefits in GEF interventions;

- (c) Advise on research by identifying applied/targeted research which would improve the design and implementation of GEF programs and projects, and by reviewing the research work of the GEF Agencies and the GEF Secretariat.
15. As part of its strategic role, STAP shall provide a number of specific products on a regular basis, including:
- (a) Thematic Briefing Documents that summarize the available scientific knowledge and technological know-how within selected specific themes, and translates this knowledge into actionable advice for the GEF. The Briefing Documents also identify controversies and knowledge gaps, and suggest needs for further research, technology development and capacity development.;
 - (b) Triennial reports to the GEF Assembly on the broad scientific and technical issues that emerged during the preceding phase of the GEF and on emerging issues and gaps as an outlook for the subsequent replenishment period of the GEF;
 - (c) Reviews of the scientific and technical aspects of GEF operational and focal area strategies and programs;
 - (d) Papers of a scientific and technical nature relevant to GEF strategies and programs; and
 - (e) A STAP Annual Work Program information paper for the GEF Council.

OPERATIONAL ADVICE

16. STAP will contribute to the identification of, their design, structure and periodic review of programming strategies in all areas of engagement, in consultation with the GEF Secretariat and the GEF agencies. STAP will commission reports on scientific needs and demands in the program being considered, including recommended indicators and targets. These reports will include sections on the scientific literature supporting the need for a Strategic Program, scientific assessments of geographic locations identified for assistance, advice on appropriate scientific approaches and methodologies, advice on analytical techniques including scientific aspects of M&E, and scientific dissemination and communication strategies.
17. STAP will contribute to ensuring the scientific soundness and technical quality of GEF projects through the provision of tools to the GEF Secretariat to apply in screening project concepts, enabling independent reviews and provision of objective scientific and technical advice, including responding to requests, from the GEF Secretariat and the GEF Agencies, to enhance the quality of projects at any stage during project development. STAP's activities shall be integrated into the processes and timing set out in the GEF Project Cycle, conducted in close cooperation with the GEF Agencies and the GEF Secretariat, and based on the standard documentation provided by the GEF Agencies during various phases of the GEF Project Cycle. Decisions regarding project clearance, approval or endorsement at various steps in the project shall be consistent with procedures approved by the Council.
18. STAP, after identifying and documenting a need, may propose to a GEF Agency in consultation with the GEF Secretariat, the development of a specific Programmatic Approach, to be entered into the Project Cycle as a concept for evaluation under the Programmatic Approach.
19. STAP shall convene a Research Committee to advise the GEF CEO on each Targeted Research proposal received.
20. STAP shall maintain a database of institutions and networks, to enable access to internationally-recognized specialists which will be quality assured by STAP Panel members

in the scientific and technical areas relevant to the GEF operations, and STAP will assure independence of project reviews, through STAP selection of reviewers.

21. STAP shall standardize the types of information needed in the technical review process and establish generic guidelines for the terms of reference for external technical reviewers, in consultation with GEF Secretariat and the GEF Agencies. STAP shall continuously update its networks and shall advise the GEF Council on GEF technical review procedures.
22. STAP shall develop and keep under review criteria, which will be reviewed and approved by the Council, for the Panel to initiate additional reviews of projects on a selective basis. STAP shall have the discretion and initiative to selectively review, in accordance with the criteria approved by the Council, any project proposal, after notifying the Chief Executive Officer.
23. STAP shall inform the GEF Agencies of its requirements for minimum documentation to be made available to its members for all projects throughout the project cycle so that it has a complete perspective on GEF operations. These requirements shall be based on the GEF Agencies' standard documentation as it applies throughout the GEF Project Cycle

EVALUATION

24. STAP will provide timely and relevant advice on scientific and technical matters related to monitoring and evaluation activities. The Chairperson of STAP takes part in relevant meetings and consultations on monitoring and evaluation in the GEF.
25. STAP will provide advice on the work program of the GEF Evaluation Office related to evaluations with components on science and technology, and suggestions on such subjects to evaluate. It may also provide opinions on the evaluability of scientific aspects and related methodologies for measuring global environmental impacts, in response to evaluation approach papers, Terms of Reference or reports. STAP members may also be called upon to support directly an evaluation, while respecting the independence of both STAP and the GEF Evaluation Office.
26. The Panel will also support, on request, monitoring of scientific and technical aspects of the GEF, through knowledge management and information sharing; for scientific and technical evaluation of the portfolio. STAP supports the GEF Secretariat in the development and use of scientific indicators to measure impact at national and portfolio levels.

SECRETARIAT

27. STAP and its ad-hoc working groups shall be served by a Secretariat. This Secretariat shall be provided by UNEP. The Secretary of STAP shall be responsible for the Secretariat functions. Under the guidance of the Chairperson, these functions shall include:
 - (a) Making arrangements for sessions of STAP and its working groups and providing them with services as required;
 - (b) Preparing the budget and reporting on its status;
 - (c) Ensuring the necessary coordination, liaison and involvement with the GEF Secretariat, the GEF Evaluation Office, Implementing and Executing Agencies, Conventions, subsidiary bodies and other relevant bodies;
 - (d) Ensuring the necessary coordination, liaison and involvement with UNEP's Management Team, and UNEP's scientific and technical focal points.
 - (e) Entering, in accordance with the Rules and Regulations of UNEP, into such administrative and contractual arrangements as may be required by STAP for the effective discharge of its functions;

- (f) Maintaining, keeping under review and constantly updating the database of institutions and independent experts;
 - (g) Drafting policy, strategy and operational papers for Panel Members and assisting in their timely transmission to the GEF Council and other bodies of the GEF;
 - (h) Preparation of documents, reviews and reports, including reports on the performance of STAP and its Secretariat; and
 - (i) Performing such other support functions as may be assigned by STAP.
28. Appropriate budgetary procedures shall be instituted to ensure the independence of the operations of STAP

COOPERATION WITH SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL BODIES OF THE CONVENTIONS AND OTHER SCIENTIFIC BODIES

29. STAP's activities shall be considered complementary to and take into account the work done by the subsidiary bodies on scientific, technical and technological advice of the Conventions on Biological Diversity, Climate Change, Desertification and Persistent Organic Pollutants, and the Panels of Inter-governmental Assessments. STAP will contribute especially in cross-cutting issues, through its ability to review and synthesize scientific and technical information relevant to the objectives and strategies of the GEF. In carrying out its mandate, STAP shall interact with these bodies in a collaborative and cooperative manner reflecting their relative mandates and roles.
30. Cooperation and coordination between STAP and these bodies may be enhanced through a variety of arrangements, including reciprocal participation in meetings and other activities including in working groups. The Chairpersons of the subsidiary bodies and assessment panels may be invited to participate in meetings of STAP and/or its working groups.
31. STAP shall establish practical working arrangements for meeting and consulting with the subsidiary bodies of the Conventions, advisory and assessment panels as well as with relevant research bodies.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS

32. The disclosure of information related to STAP's activities shall be conducted according to the Policy Procedures related to Public Availability of Documentary Information on GEF Operations of UNEP

AMENDMENTS

33. The GEF Council may approve amendments to the present arrangements.