

# Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel



The Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel, administered by UNEP, advises the Global Environment Facility (Version 5)

## STAP Scientific and Technical screening of the Project Identification Form (PIF)

Date of screening: 9 February 2010

Screener: David Cunningham

Panel member validation by: Brian Huntley

### I. PIF Information

**Full size project**

**GEF Trust Fund**

**GEF PROJECT ID:** 3951 **PROJECT DURATION:** 48 months

**COUNTRIES:** Chile, Indonesia, Nepal, Vietnam

**PROJECT TITLE:** Expanding FSC Certification at Landscape-level through Incorporating Additional Eco-system Services.

**GEF AGENCY:** UNEP

**OTHER EXECUTING PARTNER:** lead: Forest Stewardship Council (FSC International Center, Germany); CIFOR, RECOFTC, LEI, Pustanling-MOF, WARSI, Tropical Forest Trust – in Indonesia; ANSAB – in Nepal; FSC National Initiative – in Chile; MARD – in Vietnam.

**GEF FOCAL AREA:** Biodiversity

**GEF-4 STRATEGIC PROGRAMS:** BD-SP5 'fostering markets for biodiversity goods and services', BD-SP4 'strengthening the policy and regulatory framework for mainstreaming biodiversity in production sectors', and partly BD-SP8 'building capacity on access & benefit sharing' & CC –SP 6 'management of LULUCF'

**NAME OF PARENT PROGRAM/UMBRELLA PROJECT:** Related to, but not part of, GEF- Sustainable Forest Management

### II. STAP Advisory Response (see table below for explanation)

1. Based on this PIF screening, STAP's advisory response to the GEF Secretariat and GEF Agency:  
**Minor revision required**

### III. Further guidance from STAP

2. STAP welcomes this proposal to make science-based improvements to Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification. It is particularly important given that the scientific literature reveals that the relationship between biodiversity conservation outcomes and forest certification remains poorly understood, even after more than 15 years of implementation. Furthermore, the effectiveness of certification in generating biodiversity benefits has been identified as a learning objective for GEF-5 and the results of this project could thus make a significant contribution to the broader GEF portfolio. FSC is also specifically mentioned in the GEF-5 results based frameworks for Biodiversity and for Sustainable Forest Management, in which the number of hectares under FSC certification is considered to be an indicator of "Increase in sustainably managed landscapes and seascapes that integrate biodiversity conservation" and "Good management practices developed and applied in existing forests"<sup>1</sup>.
3. STAP has responded with a "minor revision" request to ensure that the full proposal, by the time of CEO endorsement, addresses the issues cited below and includes a record of the necessary consultation with STAP.
4. STAP will be able to contribute to the outputs of Component 1 through provision of its own study on environmental certification<sup>2</sup>, currently in peer review. Another recent study by *Tropenbos International* focussing solely on forest certification found too little evidence to make any conclusions regarding biodiversity outcomes in certified forest compared to non-certified forests<sup>3</sup>. By broadening the scope of their study to include "management practices associated with forest certification" they found that:

<sup>1</sup> GEF/R.5/Inf.21, November 02, 2009

<sup>2</sup> See STAP work program at

[http://stapgef.unep.org/docs/Activities/STAPWPDocs/GEF\\_C.35\\_Inf.11%20STAP%20Work%20Program%20FY10.pdf](http://stapgef.unep.org/docs/Activities/STAPWPDocs/GEF_C.35_Inf.11%20STAP%20Work%20Program%20FY10.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Tropenbos International (2009) Effects of Forest Certification on Biodiversity.

<http://www.tropenbos.org/index.php/news/forestcertificationbiodiversity>

- a. “in spite of a very large variety in responses between species, the forest management practices associated with forest certification appear to benefit biodiversity in managed forests”; but
  - b. “there is very high variation ... there is little quantitative evidence ... [and] there are few data on which to base the conclusion that certified forest management is *sustainable* in terms of biodiversity conservation at the level of populations and communities – we simply don’t know.”
5. Another useful source of references is the report of the CBD’s *International Workshop on the Removal or Mitigation of Perverse, and the Promotion of Positive, Incentive Measures*<sup>4</sup>. This report highlights a number of issues that need to be addressed in certification and PES systems based on developed and developing country experiences. The report identifies additional risks to those listed at part G of the PIF and which should be addressed in the full proposal, for example leakage of harmful effects to non-certified areas<sup>5</sup>.
  6. A challenge for this project will be to address the uncertainty of achieving conservation outcomes through any additional components added to FSC certification, given the uncertainty of conservation outcomes of current certification systems. The Panel welcomes the science-based approach for the development of credible certification models (Component 1) and is ready to advise on appropriate designs to allow for the evaluation of impacts of the proposed “sustainable and responsible forest practices”.
  7. The project anticipates adding other environmental services to FSC, to support Payment for Environmental/Ecosystem Services (PES) schemes such as REDD. The Panel refers UNEP to its advisory document on PES<sup>6</sup>, for use in developing the full proposal.
  8. The PIF refers to SP-8 of the Biodiversity Focal Area Strategy, ‘building capacity on access and benefit sharing’ for genetic resources (ABS). However, it is unclear from Section A which outputs or outcomes will contribute to this strategic program. Is it in relation to the Nepal national forest document which includes a related program on “genetic resource development” (Part B)? Or are genetic resources considered one of the environmental/ecosystem, services which could be certified? The Panel supports ABS capacity building but is concerned that if references to it remain weak in the full proposal, it could weaken the proposal and even detract from more focussed efforts on ABS in the GEF.

<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
<b>1. Consent</b>	STAP acknowledges that on scientific/technical grounds the concept has merit. However, STAP may state its views on the concept emphasising any issues that could be improved and 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.
<b>2. Minor revision required.</b>	STAP has identified specific scientific/technical suggestions or opportunities that should be discussed with the proponent as early as possible during development of the project brief. One or more options that remain open to STAP include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Opening a dialogue between STAP and the proponent to clarify issues</li> <li>(ii) Setting a review point during early stage project development and agreeing terms of reference for an independent expert to be appointed to conduct this review</li> </ol> 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 revision required</b>	STAP proposes significant improvements or has concerns on the grounds of specified major scientific/technical omissions in the concept. If STAP provides this advisory response, a full explanation would also be provided. Normally, a STAP approved review will be mandatory prior to submission of the project brief for CEO endorsement. 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.

<sup>4</sup> Held in October 2009, see <https://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=WSIM-03> and <https://www.cbd.int/incentives/workshop.shtml>.

<sup>5</sup> Also addressed in the STAP advisory document on PES.

<sup>6</sup> See <http://stapgef.unep.org/resources/sg/PES> and additional notes provided to Council at [http://www.thegef.org/uploadedFiles/Documents/Council\\_Documents\\_\(PDF\\_DOC\)/GEF\\_35/C.35.Inf.12\\_STAP\\_Guidance\\_on\\_PES.pdf](http://www.thegef.org/uploadedFiles/Documents/Council_Documents_(PDF_DOC)/GEF_35/C.35.Inf.12_STAP_Guidance_on_PES.pdf)