

# 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: October 03, 2011

Screeners: Guadalupe Duron

Panel member validation by: Michael Anthony Stocking  
Consultant(s):

### I. PIF Information *(Copied from the PIF)*

**FULL SIZE PROJECT**    **GEF TRUST FUND**

**GEF PROJECT ID:** 4630

**PROJECT DURATION :** 4

**COUNTRIES :** Moldova

**PROJECT TITLE:** Agriculture Competitiveness Project

**GEF AGENCIES:** World Bank

**OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:** Ministry of Environment; Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry

**GEF FOCAL AREA:** Land Degradation

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

Based on this PIF screening, STAP's advisory response to the GEF Secretariat and GEF Agency(ies): **Consent**

### III. Further guidance from STAP

STAP welcomes the World Bank proposal entitled "Agriculture Competitiveness Project" in Moldova. Moldova's environmental legacy, like that of many other former Soviet republics, is one of environmental degradation. Agricultural practices such as overuse of pesticides, herbicides, and artificial fertilizers were intended to increase agricultural output at all costs, without regard for the consequences. This proposal is essentially fostering a paradigm shift in national thinking that modernization in the agricultural sector can be "and should be" consistent with environmental conservation. Component 3 of the proposal "soil conservation and climate resilience" addresses directly the LD-FA expected outcomes, with a commendable focus on enhancing cross-sectoral collaboration and integration in landscape management. The linkage on delivery of global environmental benefits in Component 3 with actions to increase agricultural competitiveness through food security and local people's access to markets is innovative and to be warmly welcomed. However, that linkage may have some dangers, which STAP's comments below seek to address in order to reduce the risks and strengthen the proposal:

1. The emphasis of the project objective and the project framework is on enhancing the agro-food sector, modernizing food safety, and lastly, enhancing agro-ecosystem resilience. Nonetheless, the project component that will generate the most direct global environmental outcomes is the third component "soil conservation and climate resilience". The activities in Components 1 and 2 have often traditionally been undertaken without reference to environmental degradation and especially without thought to building climate resilience. STAP suggests, therefore, to emphasize further agro-ecosystem resilience in the project objective, and build further sustainable land management/soil conservation interventions in the expected outcomes and outputs for components 1 and 2. Indeed STAP wonders whether the project objective might not be better adjusted to, "contribute to enhancing agro-ecosystem resilience by building agro-food sector competitiveness through the modernization of food safety and quality management systems, facilitating market access, and addressing issues of climate change".

2. STAP questions the statement in Section B3: "Gender issues are not an acute subject in Moldova as economic opportunities and benefit sharing are generally gender indifferent." While gender differentiation may not be widely perceived as a problem in Moldova by some agencies, and the inheritance rights of men and women are the same, women have been the main victims of the country's on-going economic crisis, and two-thirds of them are reportedly unemployed. Violence against women, including domestic violence, is widespread. Moldovan women are also reported to account for a large share of prostitutes in Eastern Europe, the Balkans and the Middle East. These women are often beaten and reduced to a form of slavery. Gender issues should perhaps be included in among the risk factors in Section B4. STAP believes that the project needs to be much more gender-sensitive than is apparent in the PIF "a particular example is noted in the point below.

3. STAP also suggests defining explicitly the competitive grants. For example, what criteria will be used to select the beneficiaries, and what measures will be used to target women farmers who may be less likely to participate if the grant information/communication does not specifically focus on their land management needs and their role in the community and household.
4. STAP further suggests that in a project such as this, NGOs, producer groups and other local stakeholders need to be defined more explicitly and be identified for their critical role in implementation (Section B5).
5. The anticipated global environmental benefits and the parameters that will be used to monitor the interventions are clear. However, STAP suggests specifying how the project intends to strengthen the beneficiaries' capacities to monitor and evaluate the expected global environmental benefits. Also, the World Bank may wish to use the online tools developed by the Carbon Benefits Project (UNEP-GEF) to measure and monitor carbon stocks (Please refer to the GEF Secretariat for information on when the tools will be available.).
6. The description of incremental financing per component is useful and clear. STAP would add that further details are needed on climate resilience for component 3 – for example, how incremental financing will support agricultural soil carbon mitigation interventions that are expected to lead to climate resilience.
7. STAP also recommends detailing how the project will build upon local knowledge to define the sustainable land management technologies proposed in component 3.

<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: <ul 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> </ul> 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.