

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: May 18, 2012

Screeener: Thomas Hammond

Panel member validation by: Meryl Williams; Thomas Lovejoy
Consultant(s): Margarita Dyubanova

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

FULL SIZE PROJECT GEF TRUST FUND

GEF PROJECT ID: 4930

PROJECT DURATION : 4

COUNTRIES : Global (Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mozambique, Timor Leste, Vanuatu)

PROJECT TITLE: Enhancing The Conservation Effectiveness of Seagrass Ecosystems Supporting Globally Significant Populations of Dugong Across the Indian and Pacific Oceans Basins (Short Title: The Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project).

GEF AGENCIES: UNEP

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: The overall Executing Agency will be the Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund because of its close proximity and relationship with the UNEP/CMS Dugong MoU Secretariat who will provide technical oversight of the project.

Technical Partners include: the UNEP/CMS Dugong MoU Secretariat and its Technical Advisory Team, UNEP-DEPI, Blue Ventures, GRID-arendal & Forest Trends.

The key National Partners¹ are:

Indonesia: Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, Ministry of Environment.

Madagascar: Ministry of Environment and Forests

Malaysia: Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment

Mozambique: Ministry for Coordination of Environmental Affairs (MICOA), Natural History Museum / Eduardo Mondlane University.

Sri Lanka: Department of Wildlife Conservation, Ministry of the Environment

Timor Leste: Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Vanuatu: Department of Environment and Conservation

GEF FOCAL AREA: Biodiversity

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): **Major revision required**

III. Further guidance from STAP

1. Dugong populations and seagrass beds are under severe both globally and in the Indian/Pacific Ocean Basins. STAP welcomes this important regional initiative with the overall objective of enhancing the conservation effectiveness of protected and non-protected areas hosting significant populations of dugong through sustainable community led stewardship and socio-economic activities. The project proposes to support Indonesia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mozambique, Vanuatu, Sri Lanka and Timor Leste in their national dugong conservation plans and to support the important international/regional activities under the UNEP/CMS Dugong MOU. While STAP believes that this initiative is highly valuable and important, the Panel wishes to highlight the following considerations as important for the successful implementation of the project and achievement of quantifiable global environmental benefits.

2. At this stage in development, STAP acknowledges that additional information and analysis will be forthcoming during the PPG stage. At present, however, strategies to address the defined objective are only described in general terms in the body of the proposal, and as such it is difficult for STAP to assess the scientific and technical aspects of expected project outcomes.

3. The PIF describes well the national and international actions that have been underway to protect the dugong, a red-listed species "vulnerable to extinction," and gives confidence that it is well connected to the existing (but still too thin) knowledge base. Despite this obvious awareness of current knowledge, the present proposal lacks at the very least a preliminary assessment of data and information on the current status of dugong populations and sea grass ecosystems, along with that of existing MPAs. With respect to MPA data, reasonably accurate data on existing marine and coastal protected areas in the countries identified is available and as such reasonably good information on existing conservation status is currently known. The PIF suggests that existing protected sea grass ecosystems will be extended by 15% in each participating country. STAP would be interested to see the analysis upon which this estimate is based, as only a very preliminary assessment is currently provided in section B.2. In addition, STAP assumes that the many expert meetings conducted by the international and national agencies under the UNEP/CMS Dugong MOU and its activities would have begun already to distinguish the priority seagrass beds for dugong populations.

4. The PIF notes (under overview of baseline activities) that data from Dugong Catch/Incidental Catch surveys exists, although no analysis or assessment of this existing data is provided. Moreover, it is unclear in this proposal whether estimates of Dugong populations and distributions will be used as indicators of achievement of global environmental benefits. STAP acknowledges that at this stage some needed information is unavailable and will be collected during the PPG stage. However, given existing data the Panel believes proponents should be able to provide a preliminary indication of quantifiable baselines and GEBs.

5. STAP is pleased to see the research component in the project on the status and distribution of the dugong and seagrass habitats. A description of how this research will be designed and methodologies to be used is unavailable. STAP therefore wishes to be consulted on this aspect of project design in advance of CEO endorsement.

6. STAP is also pleased to see included in this initiative an open repository of data to be collected during the project as this will be an important legacy of this initiative and will be instrumental in both guiding and assessing the success of conservation efforts and delivery of GEBs. The proponents should provide greater clarity, however, on any differences in data availability with respect to the proposed public, private, and academic interfaces proposed. In addition, STAP urges proponents to adopt existing data standards and take the necessary steps to ensure this repository remains active beyond the conclusion of the project.

7. Although STAP assumes that the project will be well connected to good scientific expertise on dugongs and seagrasses, despite the lack of detail provided in the PIF, STAP is not as confident that the project will be as well founded in the area of conservation solutions. The proposal identified a number of potential financial incentives that could be adopted in the regions but did not indicate which conservation means would be most appropriate to which countries. It would be useful to conduct a comparative analysis of the approaches proposed based on the specific understanding of relevant regional/local parameters with regard to each sub-project. Some of the potential conservation methods mentioned briefly, such as use of Blue Forest approaches to protect seagrasses, are unlikely to be immediate solutions, How will such innovative means be developed and their effectiveness measured and monitored?

8. In B3 (socio-economic benefits), the benefits and steps to be taken to measure and achieve them are covered in a general way. If the proponents engage appropriate methods and experts in gathering the baseline information during the PPG stage, the socio-economic side will be progressing in the right direction.

9. With respect to the risk assessments, the proponents should also consider the risk (especially to seagrass beds) of destruction from outside interests, such as land reclamation and coastal construction. This is a risk normally occurring from outside the communities that will typically be directly participating in the project.

<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
1. Consent	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.
2. Minor revision required.	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"> (i) Opening a dialogue between STAP and the proponent to clarify issues (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 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	STAP proposes significant improvements or has concerns on the grounds of specified major

revision required	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.
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