

# Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel

The Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel, administered by UNEP, advises the Global Environment Facility



## Chairperson' briefing to GEF Council, June 2009

June 22, 2009

1. Chair, CEO/Chairperson, distinguished Council Members and guests: I welcome this opportunity to brief you on the work of the Science Panel at this important point in time when the priorities for replenishment within GEF-5 and beyond are being discussed.
2. In my briefing today I will highlight first the strategic work of the Panel, which is presented to you in Information Paper number 14 (Summary Report and Chairpersons briefing) and then I will move on to brief you on our recommendations to the GEF, as outlined in Working Document 13, *Recommendations for Improved Science and Technology Guidance in the GEF*.

### *Mode of work and cross-focal issues*

3. The recent work of the Panel and its Secretariat, as described in its Work Program (FY09), and reported here, has become much more closely aligned than before to the operational and strategic needs of the GEF, and realigns the STAP more effectively within the GEF partnership. We have also encouraged and participated in the revitalized use of the GEF Task Forces within each focal area. However, we urge the GEF Secretariat to more fully support a cross-focal area integrated mechanism within GEF for minimizing trade-offs, which has concerned Panel Members while working within the Technical Advisory Groups (TAGs) responsible for drafting GEF-5 focal area strategies.

### *Operational advice: Projects and Programs*

4. At operational level, we continue to advise on emerging project and program concepts and over 120 were screened by the STAP Secretariat working with Panel Members within the Work Programs for November 2008, January, April and June 2009. This is still an essential service to the GEF, provided that agencies take our advice into account when they later elaborate on concepts. Evidence is accumulating that they are taking our advice, which encourages us to persist.
5. We do have some concerns. The Project Identification Form (PIF) is capable of conveying only weakly a clear scientific or economic rationale and statement of the expected global environmental benefits. This is why we are also screening or reviewing projects at CEO endorsement stage to see if our earlier stage advice has had impact. One issue arising from our screening and reviews is that the scientific and technical relationship between program framework documents and their subordinate PIFs remains very weak.

### *Towards GEF-5 replenishment*

6. The Science Panel took early action in 2008 to propose a science vision for GEF-5 and this prepared the Panel members, supported with additional external expertise, to participate fully in the work of the focal area strategy Technical Advisory Groups (TAGs) convened by the GEF Secretariat. The Panel acknowledges that, with few exceptions, e.g. omissions in the POPs strategy, its advice is appropriately reflected in the individual draft GEF-5 Focal Area Strategies. However, as I mentioned earlier, cross-focal area collaboration suggestions from STAP also need to be backed up by the GEF Secretariat. We also advise that more clarity and consultation is required in the development of strategy for use of Global and Regional Exclusion funds.

### *Strategic guidance*

7. In addition to our strategic work in the TAGs, the Panel's work in the last few months has resulted in a wide range of advisory products aimed at increasing the strategic impact of our advice. Our guidance on Payments for Environmental Services, provided as an Information Paper to this meeting, is timely and

relevant to a wide range of GEF interventions, and over the next month further strategic products will be released covering experimental project design; energy conservation and releases of unintentionally produced POPs; further advice on biofuels; on the technology innovation / development chain; and on Marine Protected Areas.

#### *Resource Allocation Framework (RAF) and System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR)*

8. The Panel largely supported the findings of the RAF Mid Term Review and suggested clarifications to improve understanding of analysis surrounding one of the two indexes used in the RAF, the GEF Benefits Index (GBI). Subsequently the Panel has been working closely with the GEF Secretariat to review and suggest improvements to the existing biodiversity and climate change indicators. The Panel has also consulted widely to develop further its advice on the options for the GEF Secretariat's proposed new System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR).

#### *STAP interaction with relevant scientific and technical bodies*

9. I am pleased to report that collaborative work has been designed in February-March 2009, between STAP and the secretariats of UNCBD, UNFCCC, UNCCD, Stockholm Convention, Basel Convention, and selected bodies involved in scientific guidance to the work of the GEF. This collaboration has resulted in a work program that will ensure more closely aligned and complementary working between science bodies and the GEF.
10. This liaison was followed up by attendance by a Panel Member, at the invitation of the UNCCD Secretariat, at the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) Bureau meeting (CST 8) in Bonn, in May, at which the status of the GEF's Land Degradation results based management indicator proposals was presented alongside other impact indicators. Further work has been identified in collaboration with the CST members and UNCCD Secretariat. Also the results of the STAP commissioned study on benefits and trade-offs between energy conservation and release of unintentionally produced POPs was presented at the side event organized at the COP-4 meeting of the Stockholm Convention on May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

#### *STAP's Work Program for FY10*

11. Finally I commend to you the STAP Work Program for the coming financial year, provided as an Information Paper, containing details of strategic advisory work that has been agreed with GEF partners and which will advance significantly knowledge and best practice, which if applied by GEF will lead to greater impact.

#### ***Recommendations to the GEF***

12. Coming to the last part of my briefing, I would like to introduce our paper *Recommendations for improved science and technology guidance in the GEF*, which synthesises conclusions from our recent work into key recommendations that I am proposing for your support.

#### *Global Environmental Benefits*

13. While there are many multilateral funds available to support the national development objectives of developing countries, the GEF is unique in focusing on the delivery of Global Environmental Benefits. We call for more emphasis on the GEF's role in facilitating the delivery of Global Environmental Benefits (GEBs) in an integrated way and to maximize synergy of GEBs with sustainable developmental goals. This approach emphasizes taking cross-focal area relationships into account to derive multiple Global Environmental Benefits in a cost-effective way and minimize negative trade-offs between focal areas. For example, in a multi-focal area GEF, agriculture is capable of rolling up a three-fold synergy – Sustainable Land Management, Climate Change mitigation and Biodiversity (primarily below-ground).

### *Climate Change Resilience*

14. Given the growing scientific evidence that Earth's life support systems are approaching thresholds or tipping points indicated by melting of Arctic sea-ice, collapse of the Indian summer monsoon, dieback of the Amazon rainforest and others, we advise the GEF to start removing institutional barriers preventing support for integrating climate adaptation activities in GEF Trust Fund projects and encourage a more climate-resilient approach in strategic programming and to consider building a longer-term vision for climate resilience of GEF investments. STAP also recognizes the need for operational guidelines for the GEF to be able successfully to incorporate and implement mitigation and adaptation synergy, as recommended by the IPCC, and will continue advising the GEF Secretariat on development of tools to assess climate risks in project design.

### *Implementation science and GEF's impact*

15. The Science Panel's recent work on Payments for Environmental Services responded to clear evidence that past PES support may not have been sufficiently evidence-based to be effective, which is a risk noted by the Panel about many recommendations made within GEF programs and projects for actions or interventions intended to generate global environmental benefits. We therefore advise that there is a strategic need for implementation science to be mainstreamed within the GEF's project portfolio, to maximize environmental impacts.

### *Role of STAP in the GEF*

16. The advisory work of STAP has been increasingly effective within GEF-4 and we periodically examine our performance to enable the best possible access to scientific and technical advice by the GEF. Most recently the Panel and its Secretariat went through reforms in 2007, resulting in a more strategic and engaged advisory body, and in the light of our experience in the GEF-4 Project Cycle we are considering how best to balance our work between strategic and operational advice to favour the former. We propose to return to the Council at a later date with a proposal for a better defined mandate for STAP's scientific and technical advisory role.

### *STAP Science Conference for GEF*

17. STAP has made good progress connecting with GEF-related Convention science bodies, and calling upon science networks for advice. While we hold regular biannual meetings with GEF Agencies and focal area specific workshops which deliver valuable results, we also need to work across focal area boundaries, assisted by scientists and technologists drawn from our improved links with Convention science bodies and international networks. Drawing on the valuable experience of the recent GEF Evaluation Office International Conference on Evaluating Climate Change and Development, in which we participated, STAP is developing a proposal to augment its regular meetings for a well-focused STAP Science Conference, to assist us to provide enhanced strategic and cross-cutting advice to the GEF. STAP intends to provide a proposal for consideration by the Council at its next meeting.

### *Recommended Decision*

18. In conclusion, I thank you for your attention and seek your approval of the recommended decision in paper GEF/C.35/13 *Recommendations for Improved Science and Technology Guidance in the GEF*.