

Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel



Report of the Chairperson of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) to the 47th GEF Council

Introduction

I am pleased to provide an update on STAP's progress in implementing its current Work Program, developing its new Work Program, and highlighting specific recommendations it wishes to bring to the GEF Council's attention. The report covers the period since STAP's last report to the Council in May 2014 until the present, and provides an introduction to planned activities over GEF-6.

This report includes the following:

1. STAP Work Program for GEF 6 – Overview
2. STAP's Contribution to the GEF Project Cycle
3. STAP Contributions to the Integrated Approach Pilots (IAPs)
4. Knowledge Management – Future Steps
5. Updates on the STAP's Ongoing Work
6. STAP's Engagement with GEF-related Conventions

In the 5 months since the Assembly in Cancun, we have worked primarily to refine our plan of action for GEF-6 (outlined further in item 1 below and throughout this report) which supports the CEO's vision for a more integrated, impactful, and transformational GEF. STAP will work to integrate practitioner knowledge and lessons learned into guidance for the delivery of GEF strategies, and will work closely with GEF Agencies, the GEF Secretariat, the Independent Evaluation Office, and the Council to improve development and performance of GEF projects. The GEF's strategy over the next four years is clearly poised, we believe, to significantly enhance the delivery of global environmental benefits. The Panel is keen to contribute to this process, and has worked hard to develop a strategic STAP Work Program focusing on those areas in which we believe we will be able to make the greatest contribution.

1) The STAP Work Program for GEF-6 – Overview

The Provisional¹ Work Program to 2018, presented as a separate information paper, reflects a number of changes from previous STAP Work Programs including:

- Increasing emphasis on strategic deliverables;

¹ STAP is currently discussing its WP for GEF-6 with the GEF partnership with the final version expected shortly after the GEF Council meeting in October 2014.

- Supporting integrated and cross-focal area approaches that leverage the collective strengths of the Panel;
- Knowledge management; and
- Outreach to generate advice for the GEF Partnership and the greater environmental community.

As detailed in STAP's Report to the 5th GEF Assembly, the Panel will concentrate its efforts on addressing higher level drivers of environmental degradation in support of the CEO's strategic focus. As such, STAP proposes a rolling work program during GEF-6 (over a period of 4 years). Annual reviews will allow amendments to the work program to be made. Annual progress reports, along with adjustments and additions to the Work Program, will be provided to Council on a regular basis.

In addition to more "traditional" STAP demand-driven knowledge products, the new Work Program focuses on the GEF Integrated Approach Pilots as well as a small number of key cross-cutting initiatives such as climate resilience, knowledge management, green chemistry, and environmental security. As with previous Work Programs, STAP Panel Members will continue to work on focused thematic activities as identified in consultation with GEF partners, identify long-term issues which may be considered in future GEF Programs, and screen all full-size projects at entry into the GEF Project Cycle.

2) STAP's Contribution to the GEF Project Cycle

Following the rich discussion at the last Council meeting, STAP agrees to continue screening every full-size project and program at entry into the GEF project cycle (e.g., PIF, PFD, IAP or an alternative modality such as, for example, that now used by the World Bank). Each screening report of PIFs, PFDs and IAPs is intended to provide an assessment to the GEF Council regarding the scientific and technical soundness of each major proposal. Going forward, STAP will concentrate its resources on projects that: a) have a major science component (e.g. employ new methodologies or approaches), or b) have significant scientific and/or technical implementation or methodological barriers.

- For projects where the scientific and technical quality of the proposal is clearly evident, a simple "Concur" response will be provided. STAP may flag specific issues that should be carefully considered as the proposal is developed into a full project document.
- For projects where there appears to be greater scope for strengthening the concept during project development, STAP will provide a "Minor" or "Major" response, based on an evaluation of the extent of issues to be addressed. In such situations, STAP will provide details regarding issues to be addressed, and will welcome direct engagement with the proponents for strengthening the project concept.

Regardless of the response provided in the screening report, STAP welcomes the Agencies to approach the Panel at any time during project development to consult on design issues. Annex 1 summarizes the role and responsibilities of STAP in the GEF Project Cycle.

3) STAP's Contributions to the Integrated Approach Pilots (IAPs)

In GEF-6, three integrated approach pilots (IAPs) have been agreed on in areas where GEBs are strongly linked to larger developmental goals - sustainable cities, avoiding deforestation associated with commodity supply chains, and food security in sub-Saharan Africa. STAP believes that these integrated approaches represent good examples of the way in which GEBs and sustainable development can be aligned and further, present a promising new direction for the GEF. STAP's contributions to the IAPs will likely include:

- development of indicators and metrics of success;

- analysis of case studies or examples to provide ideas for program design and intervention; and,
- modeling and analytical support useful for the theory of change that should guide project and program design.

STAP is committed to supporting the IAPs and contributing to their success. In the following section, an update is provided of STAP's role in the IAPs.

a. Taking Deforestation out of the Commodities Supply Chain

STAP participated in the initial inter-agency planning meeting for this IAP which has 3 inter-related objectives:

- Increase the supply of commodities through means which do not lead to deforestation;
- Increase the demand for sustainable commodities (deforestation-free); and
- Improve overall enabling environments, particularly with financial institutions and national governments.

The IAP seeks to leverage the growing public and private sector interest in promoting sustainable commodities through the use of common approaches and pooled investment.

STAP's contributions to the IAP will include active engagement with the development of the programmatic approach; participating in the technical advisory committee; and working with Agency and GEF Secretariat partners to address the research, learning, and knowledge management needs of the Commodities Program.

STAP will also contribute to developing appropriate metrics and indicators for key aspects of the Commodities IAP. For example, the theory of change for the IAP considers that deforestation can be taken out of commodity supply chains if production can be localized in the most appropriate areas and follow best practices. STAP will focus on the scientific and methodological issues associated with identifying areas for sustainable commodity production – an issue that has to address not only the biophysical suitability of land, but also aspects of competition with alternative uses and the infrastructure required to place the land within a production system. Similarly, the issue of production practices needs to consider the appropriate criteria and metrics for assessing their suitability as well as multi-criteria frameworks for evaluating them.

While the IAP considers demand for commodities as exogenous and focuses primarily on enhancing the sustainability of the production system with regard to deforestation, projections of future demand are likely to significantly influence efforts to scale up these interventions. In this respect, STAP believes that the IAP could make a useful contribution towards future scaling up efforts by supporting an applied research component that develops future commodity demand scenarios; STAP proposes to work with the partner agencies leading the coordination component of the IAP as well as efforts by Foundations and the private sector.

b. Sustainable Cities – Harnessing Local Action for Global Commons

With the publishing of its “Sustainable Urbanization Policy Brief”² on the occasion of the 5th GEF Assembly (May, 2014, Cancun), STAP outlined its initial thoughts and advice on the role the GEF might play in supporting work in this area. This advice fed into the subsequent

² <http://www.stapgef.org/sustainable-urbanization-policy-brief-proliferation-of-urban-centres-their-impact-on-the-worlds-environment-and-the-potential-role-of-the-gef/>

Sustainable Cities IAP consultative meeting hosted by the GEF Secretariat in late August 2014 in which STAP participated. As a result of these preliminary discussions, it became clear that STAP's primary contribution will lie in actively assisting the GEF Secretariat to help develop a methodology that will enable the current sustainability status of any selected city to be assessed and tracked over time (e.g. water use per capita, carbon footprint per capita, biodiversity loss) as a result of GEF investments.

One aim of the GEF consultative meeting was to bring together key urbanization expertise, agencies and interests in order to further elaborate the IAP, identify specific roles and encourage the formulation of partnerships. STAP's role will be to help identify a limited number of scientifically sound indicators that can clearly demonstrate whether a city has become more sustainable as a result of GEF investment. In this pursuit, early discussions have been held with:

- the World Council on Cities Data (WCCD) that has helped produce the first ISO Standard on Cities having evolved from the University of Toronto's Global Cities Indicator Facility³;
- Asia Pacific Energy Research Centre (APEREC) and their studies on "Low Carbon Model Towns"⁴ for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC); and
- UN-Habitat covering their EC-funded project 'Promoting Low Emission Urban Development Strategies in Emerging Economy Countries'⁵ and the Siemens "Green City Index"⁶ initiative.
- STAP will continue to work closely with WCCD and other partners in the identification of indicators for the IAP.

c. Sustainability and Resilience for Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa

The GEF will support the IAP on addressing Sustainability and Resilience for Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa. The IAP will focus on improving, or maintaining, ecosystem services for small-holder agriculture that provides food security for more than 70% of the population. STAP will contribute to the IAP by participating at the GEF's consultation workshop in Nairobi, Kenya in October 2014 where the design of the program will be discussed, including the results based management framework.

STAP believes that maintaining and enhancing land productivity is fundamental to food security, and enhancing resilience of productive systems is critical to sustaining productivity in the long term, under the challenges of climate change and land degradation. Sustainable land management can build agro-ecosystem resilience by integrating the management of land, water and biodiversity for the generation of ecosystem services and improved livelihoods. Thus, resilience is an important indicator of food security. However, defining measureable indicators of the resilience of agro-ecosystems remains a significant challenge because of their multi-dimensional nature – both spatially and temporally.

To address this, the STAP, in collaboration with the GEF, the UNCCD and the CBD, will convene an expert workshop immediately following the World Parks Congress in Sydney, Australia, in November 2014 to consider and refine a "procedure-based indicator of agro-

³ <http://sustainablecitiescollective.com/david-thorpe/248121/new-iso-and-world-council-vows-help-smart-data-make-liveable-cities>

⁴ <https://aimp2.apec.org/sites/PDB/Lists/Proposals/DispForm.aspx?ID=360>

⁵ <http://unhabitat.org/initiatives-programmes/urban-low-emission-development-strategies/>

⁶ <http://www.siemens.com/entry/cc/en/greencityindex.htm>

ecosystem resilience”. The approach is under development, and will include: 1) identifying the factors (anthropogenic and natural) that affect resilience in the region being assessed; 2) defining the thresholds for the most vulnerable ecosystem processes and a ‘safe operating zone’; and, 3) characterizing the capacity of the assessed system to adapt or transform.

Defining a conceptual framework and identifying indicators of agro-ecosystem resilience can contribute to the GEF’s monitoring efforts at project and program level by:

- Supporting the development of the IAP involves helping GEF develop and select Program and project level indicators targeting four components (soil health and water conservation; diversification of production systems; integrated natural resources management in agro-pastoral systems; increasing resilience and ecosystem integrity including climate change adaptation) with multiple links to the UNCCD, CBD, and the UNFCCC.
- Identifying a core set of indicators that apply to integrated natural resources management and to reducing vulnerability to climate change could be used for multiple focal area projects, including GEF projects with an adaptation component. As the funding mechanism of the UNCCD and the CBD, and as an operating entity of the financial mechanism for the UNFCCC, the GEF is well-placed to strengthen the integration of environmental priorities influencing land productivity, food security, and ecosystem services. By supporting agriculture and food security, the GEF also is supporting the development priorities of a number of GEF, LDCF/SCCF recipient countries.
- This indicator framework will provide a tool that will assist countries to describe the current state of, and changes to, resilience. It will facilitate interpretation of the data from current/proposed Convention reporting (such as the progress indicators of the UNCCD), and thus inform parties’ decisions on adaptation at the local level. The approach will be able to aggregate information at sub-national level to facilitate national reporting. If applied by the Rio Conventions, it is expected that the approach will further harmonize the indicators used to monitor common objectives related to ecosystem resilience.

STAP will present and discuss its findings at the UNCCD’s Third Scientific Conference in March 2015 and report back at the next Council meeting.

4) Knowledge Management – Future Steps

STAP has long championed the improvement of knowledge systems within the GEF. With over 4000 projects completed or underway, the GEF presides over a potentially enormous untapped resource of data and information. However, the notion of “systematically learning from the experience of GEF operations” has represented an ongoing challenge at the GEF for over a decade. In its Report to the Fifth GEF Assembly, STAP proposed that establishing a system for managing and sharing information and knowledge within the GEF family of agencies and countries will improve the overall design of new projects and programs.

STAP will seek to integrate academic knowledge and practitioner knowledge to develop guidance to improve the performance of GEF projects and learning from them. As a first step towards the development of a GEF knowledge management system, in 2014-2015 STAP plans to undertake the following activities:

- Develop a typology of knowledge products and associated theories of change associated with GEF projects and programs. This will begin with a ‘data mining’ exercise of more than 100

completed projects identified by the Independent Evaluation Office as having strong KM elements;

- Survey knowledge management systems in GEF agencies to identify models and to evaluate best practices. This will involve convening a workshop with Foundations, NGOs, and agencies to compare and learn from existing knowledge management systems and determine the extent to which features of each might be applied to improve KM at the GEF; and
- Collaborate with the GEF IEO on country portfolio evaluations to help determine whether and how knowledge management needs are addressed in the analysis.

STAP plans to present the results of these assessments with some specific recommendations for the GEF knowledge management system and practices at the GEF Council meeting in June 2015

5) Updates on the STAP's Ongoing Work

Climate resilience. In previous work, STAP provided recommendations for enhancing climate resilience of the GEF portfolio (GEF/C.39/Inf.18) and reviewed available climate resilience screening tools (GEF.C.41/Inf.16). Subsequently, STAP's report to the 5th GEF Assembly⁷ outlined a three-level approach towards climate resilience, starting with de-risking GEF projects, progressing to the generation of adaptation co-benefits, and culminating in approaches that generate multiple benefits across focal areas (including climate change adaptation).

STAP continues to encourage the development of a more robust framework for GEF projects to account for and incorporate climate risks in project design as a first step to build climate resilience⁸. The review of tools report (GEF/C.41/Inf.16), which was submitted to Council in November 2011 concluded that GEF agencies already use a range of tools to support consideration of climate risks, which vary from general guidance documents to risk assessment tools and operational screening tools. Since the publication of the STAP review report, some agencies have developed climate screening tools in a more comprehensive manner. One example of this is the "Climate and Disaster Risk Screening Tools" recently adopted by the World Bank for all new operations funded by the International Development Association (IDA) countries. STAP looks forward to working with the GEF Secretariat and the agencies to assist in the operationalization of building climate resilience.

As part of its Work Program in GEF-6, STAP will continue working to improve the understanding of climate resilience in socio-ecological systems, and to enhance synergies between climate resilience and GEF interventions for GEBs. One example of work in this area is STAP's ongoing effort to define a conceptual framework and identify indicators of agro-ecosystem resilience described under the IAP on Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa, above. Additional areas will be identified in consultation with the GEF Secretariat and GEF Partners that could support climate resilience within focal area projects, multi-focal area projects, and IAPs. This should contribute to GEF corporate-level recommendations on how

⁷ Bierbaum, R., Stocking, M., Bouwman, H., Cowie, A., Diaz, S., Granit, J., Patwardhan, A., Sims, R., Duron, G., Gorsevski, V., Hammond, T., Neretin, L., Wellington-Moore, C. (2014). 'Delivering Global Environmental Benefits for Sustainable Development. Report of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) to the 5th GEF Assembly, México 2014'. Global Environment Facility, Washington, DC.

⁸39th GEF Council decision: "The Council, having reviewed documents, Evaluation of the GEF Strategic Priority for Adaptation (GEF/ME/C.39/4) and Management Response to the Evaluation of the GEF Strategic Priority for Adaptation (GEF/ME/C.39/5), requested the Secretariat to develop and implement screening tools. These tools will serve as a first step to ensure the mainstreaming and targeting of adaptation and resilience, to reduce the risks from climate change in GEF focal areas and its activities".

to account for, and enhance climate resilience across the GEF Program. **Biofuels.** STAP initiated this work in GEF-5 to prepare guidance on assessing potential future biofuels initiatives in the GEF Program. Recent reports by the IPCC, UNEP, the IEA, and the Global Energy Assessment highlighted the significant role of biofuels as an energy source for future greenhouse gas mitigation scenarios to stabilize global average warming below 2°C. However, the production of biofuels continues to be a subject of controversial debate within the scientific and policy communities, due in large part to the environmental and socio-economic impacts of associated land use changes. To help address this challenge, STAP has drafted a document entitled “Optimizing the global environmental benefits of transport biofuels”, that will be available online by early 2015. This report uses information from the recent global assessments and tools including the results of the GEF/UNEP/FAO/UNIDO targeted research project “Global Assessments and Guidelines for Sustainable Liquid Biofuels”⁹.

Through an extensive review of the literature, the STAP report concluded that GEF support for biofuel projects should be assessed against several overarching principles including:

- Ensuring that significant levels of greenhouse gas mitigation are achieved;
- Minimizing the risk of negative environmental impacts such as biodiversity loss, reduced water quality, competition for water supplies, and increased air pollution; and
- Enabling positive environmental, economic and social outcomes, such as enhanced food security and local employment opportunities.

If the GEF finances biofuels projects, STAP recommends they promote sustainable production and utilization of both first generation and advanced biofuels that substitute for oil derivatives (e.g., gasoline, diesel, and kerosene) mainly in the transport sector, and meet the GEF/UNEP/FAO/UNIDO sustainability guidelines¹⁰. The GEF could also support projects that assist with the development of national policy frameworks for sustainable production of biofuels, build institutional capacity, and undertake feasibility studies couple with strategic environmental assessments.

Mercury. There are several scientific groups and agencies working on monitoring mercury in the environment). However, there is no single access point to such data. Compared to atmospheric monitoring, relatively little easily accessible global data on biotic mercury exists. In addition, there is consensus that existing monitoring efforts are insufficient to accomplish the Minamata Convention goals and fulfill regulatory requirements¹¹. Further, consultation with the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC) indicates that there has been little to no effort made to standardize data collection protocols, to ensure quality of data.

During a GEF organized retreat with the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm, and Mercury Conventions in January of 2014, as well as the May 2014 STAP meeting, STAP was requested to provide assistance and research associated with Mercury data quality and sharing, with an eye toward improved understanding of the fate and transfer of mercury in the short term, and helping to consolidate data generated by and used

⁹GEF/UNEP/FAO/UNIDO (2013). Global Assessments and Guidelines for Sustainable Liquid Biofuel Production in Developing Countries. Cited as: Franke, B., G., Reinhardt, J., Malavelle, A., Faaij, and U., Fritsche. Global Assessments and Guidelines for Sustainable Liquid Biofuels. A GEF Targeted Research Project. Heidelberg/Paris/Utrecht/Darmstadt, March, 2013.

<http://www.unep.org/bioenergy/Portals/48107/publications/Global%20Assessment%20and%20Guidelines%20for%20Biofuels.pdf>.

¹⁰ *ibid.*

<http://www.unep.org/bioenergy/Portals/48107/publications/Global%20Assessment%20and%20Guidelines%20for%20Biofuels.pdf>.

¹¹ Pirrone N., Wenche A., Cinnirella S., et. Al. (2013). Towards the next generation of air quality monitoring: Mercury. *Atmospheric Environment* 80:599-611.

by GEF projects in the long term. To accomplish this, STAP is working with SETAC to assist them in the design of a targeted research proposal in collaboration with scientific networks and agencies. This initiative aims at streamlining sampling and data protocols (improving data quality and enabling better understanding of mercury transfer in the global environment); and also to develop an open access, geospatial data and information platform to showcase global mercury concentration and fluxes in the environment.

In addition to partnering with database managers and owners, STAP has engaged with the developers of “UNEP Live”, a platform which can collect and share data between providers and users. The aim of UNEP Live includes, *inter alia*,:- (i) to facilitate exchange and share up-to-date data, information, assessments, and knowledge amongst countries, research networks, communities of practice, indigenous peoples and society; (ii) to provide open access to national and regional information and global datasets; and (iii) to provide a range of big-data, visualization, mapping and publishing tools via local and cloud services.¹²

Black Carbon. STAP is in the process of developing an Advisory Document on developing GEF projects that address black carbon. This was an exploratory assessment requested by the GEF Secretariat in order to explore how this issue could be addressed proactively across the GEF Program. It builds on assessments completed by UNEP/WMO¹³, the World Bank¹⁴, and GEF donor countries. It will provide project developers with information on mitigation options in the transport, residential, industrial and agricultural sectors as well as a framework for monitoring and measuring black carbon emissions over time. Black carbon is a short-lived climate pollutant (SLCP), and due to its importance as a climate forcer¹⁵, black carbon is harmful to human health and there are few effective monitoring frameworks in place.

The scientific basis for measuring, monitoring and evaluating adaptation. Climate change adaptation is an emerging area where robust and empirically validated methodologies based on sound science are needed. Measuring, monitoring and evaluating adaptation actions is particularly important for developing countries in order to identify effective, efficient measures and allocate scarce resources to those actions that are most likely to increase resilience to climate risks and also support short- and long-term development objectives. Evidence-based results are required to guide policy responses, design adaptation interventions, and scale up actions. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) methodologies also need to be cost-effective, such that they are viable within budgetary constraints, and operationally implementable. After extensive consultation with the GEF Secretariat, GEF agencies and the UNFCCC, and in collaboration with UNEP’s Programme of Research on Vulnerability, Impacts and Adaptation (PROVIA), STAP is commissioning four technical papers aimed at: 1) M&E for “upstream”, institutional and programmatic interventions – such as support for the National Adaptation Plans (NAPs); 2) ways of connecting project level M&E with more systemic interventions; 3) drawing some lessons from the broader space of development programs that have addressed mainstreaming issues for climate change adaptation; and 4) considering data and information systems to support M&E – and in particular, how one could leverage existing systems and institutions for socio-economic data collection and analysis for this purpose. These papers will be discussed with experts and relevant stakeholders from the GEF family, bilateral agencies and other key stakeholders including the UNFCCC Secretariat and the Green Climate

¹² <http://uneplive.unep.org/Home/aboutus#.VCBHOfldUoQ>

¹³ UNEP/WMO, 2011. *Integrated Assessment of Black Carbon and Tropospheric Ozone: Summary for Decision Makers*. United Nations Environment Programme/World Meteorological Organization. Available at: http://www.wmo.int/pages/prog/arep/gaw/documents/BlackCarbon_SDM.pdf.

¹⁴ The World Bank, 2013. Integration of short-lived climate pollutants in World Bank activities. Akbar, S. *et al.*

¹⁵ Bond, T.C., Doherty, S.J., Fahey, D.W. *et al.*, 2013. Bounding the role of black carbon in the climate system: a scientific assessment. *Journal of Geophysical Research-Atmospheres* 118: 5380-5552.

Fund (GCF) at a workshop to be held in early January 2015. STAP will discuss preliminary findings at the next GEF Council meeting in November 2015.

6) STAP's Engagement with GEF-related Conventions

Cross-Convention work. STAP convened a meeting between the Executive Secretaries of the UNCCD and the CBD in Cancun, Mexico to plan the work described above on agro-ecosystem resilience, in collaboration with the UNFCCC Secretariat. The workshop on agro-ecosystem resilience is in part a response to the UNCCD Secretariat's request to the STAP to assist in identifying a common indicator that could be applied across the Conventions. The UNCCD's Science Policy Interface (SPI) has also identified the need for a common indicator linked to sustainable land management in order to strengthen the linkages between the Conventions. The work programs of the STAP and the SPI are linked closely in this regard. In March 2015, STAP will present and discuss the results of the workshop at the UNCCD's Third Scientific Conference in Cancun, Mexico.

STAP's work on agro-ecosystem resilience is detailed in section 3c above.

CBD Expert Workshop to Provide Consolidated Practical Guidance and a Toolkit for Marine Spatial Planning (9 - 11 September 2014, Montreal, Canada). Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) is growing in popularity as a conceptual framework for adopting an ecosystem approach to sustainable marine resource use and a healthy ocean environment. STAP assisted the CBD Secretariat in its response to COP-10 Decision X/29 para 75 "to compile and synthesize available information in collaboration with Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations on their experiences and use of marine spatial planning, in particular on ecological, economic, social, cultural and other principles used to guide such planning and the use of area-based management tools". The report was published in the CBD Technical Series No. 68 "Marine spatial planning in the context of the Convention on Biological Diversity" in 2012, and launched at the CBD COP-11 held in Hyderabad, India, from 8 to 19 October 2012. Report recommendations were taken into account in developing the CBD SBSTTA 16 Recommendation XVI/6 on marine biodiversity: marine spatial planning and voluntary guidelines for the consideration of biodiversity in environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments in marine and coastal areas¹⁶ that was subsequently adopted by the CBD COP-11 decision XI/18.

The recent collaboration between UNEP, GEF/STAP and the CBD Secretariat - the *Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) in Practice Initiative* resulted in the development of a global survey of MSP processes and outcomes as a response to the CBD COP Decision XI/18. The survey results were used to examine the challenges and enabling factors to successful implementation¹⁷. In particular further work defined include a better understanding of governance issues, such as what are the implication of a lack of a strong legal framework, how to align policies at local, regional and national levels and how to ensure a solid government support when reaching the implementation phases. Good governance arrangements and transparent decision-making were assessed as critical to maintain the trust of those stakeholders involved in the MSP planning and implementation.

¹⁶ <http://www.cbd.int/recommendation/sbstta/?id=13055>

¹⁷ UNEP-GEF/STAP-CBD 'MSP in Practice technical meeting', Cambridge, UK, 6-9 May 2014.

Annex 1: Role and Responsibilities of STAP in the GEF Project Cycle¹⁸

Introduction

1. The Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel's (STAP) mandate is to provide strategic scientific and technical advice to the GEF, and its role is defined in the revised Terms of Reference (TOR) approved by the GEF Council in June 2007 (see GEF/C.31/4: *Proposal of the Executive Director of UNEP on Enhancing the Impact of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel*). STAP's role is unique from any other GEF body as it should assure the scientific and technical quality of GEF investments and enhancing innovation. The Operational Advice section of STAP's TOR (paragraphs 16-23) details STAP's role and responsibilities in the GEF project cycle, which can be summarized as follows:

- a) providing tools for screening project concepts, enabling independent reviews and the provision of objective scientific and technical advice to enhance the quality of projects at any stage during project development;
- b) after identifying a scientific need, proposing courses of action by GEF and its agencies to address the need;
- c) convening a Research Committee to advise the GEF CEO on each Targeted Research proposal received;
- d) maintaining a database of expert institutions and scientific networks available for conducting reviews; and
- e) providing advice on project development on a selective basis.

2. The STAP Secretariat and Panel members screen project concepts (submitted to the GEF on Project Identification Forms [PIFs]) at entry in the project cycle to identify, at an early opportunity, whether a project proposal could benefit from high-level scientific advice in its further preparation and whether the project proponents have demonstrated access to recent advances in the relevant aspects of science and technology. As discussed below, STAP may provide advice on project development between the points of the Council work program approval (for FSP PIFs) and CEO endorsement if it has identified through its PIF screen that a project demonstrates:

- i. major components of scientific and/or technical innovation (e.g., experimental design); and
- ii. significant implementation and/or methodological barriers.

In such cases, and according to the approach outlined below, the STAP may recommend that an independent review take place during project development to ensure that the scientific and technical concerns are properly addressed. STAP's PIF screening reports form part of the official public record of GEF project reviews, are provided to the GEF Council, Agencies, and Secretariat, and are maintained by the STAP Secretariat and the GEF Project Management Information System (PMIS).

¹⁸ This brief is originally described in the GEF document "GEF Project and Programmatic Approach Cycles", October 2010; GEF/C.39/Inf.3. It was modified to reflect changes in the way STAP screens projects.

STAP Screening of PIFs, PFDs, IAPs

3. GEF Agencies are required to submit Project Information Forms (PIFs), Programmatic Framework Document (PFDs), and Integrated Approach Pilot plans (IAPs) to the STAP Secretariat at the same time that they are formally submitted to the GEF Secretariat. STAP is able to provide advice on PIFs, PFDs, and IAPs at the following stage in the project cycle¹⁹:

Post CEO PIF/PFD/IAP Clearance: STAP will screen all PIFs for full-size projects, PFDs, and projects under the IAPs after GEF CEO clearance with the intention of advising the GEF Agency and Council of STAP's concerns and suggested improvements, if any. STAP will report its findings in a screening report, which will be provided to the Secretariat, GEF Agency, and Council, and maintained in GEF's PMIS.

4. In providing advice through PIF screening reports, STAP will concentrate upon projects *with (a) a major component of science and/or technical innovation, (b) and significant scientific and/or technical implementation or methodological barriers*. Following STAP screening, the GEF Secretariat will include STAP's recommendations in the project review sheet for CEO endorsement and ensure that the relevant GEF Agency undertakes the necessary steps identified in the STAP screen to address the issue(s) prior to CEO endorsement.

PIF Screening Report Advisory Responses and Follow-up Actions

5. The intent of the STAP screening report of PIFs is to add value to programs and projects and provide quality assurance to the GEF Council. The PIF screening report will include one of three possible advisory responses, which are explained in Table 1 below together with proposed follow on actions.

6. In cases where STAP is satisfied with the scientific and technical quality of the proposal, *a simple "Concur" response will be provided; the STAP may flag specific issues that should be pursued rigorously as the proposal is developed into a full project document. At any time during the development of the project, the proponent is invited to approach STAP to consult on the design*. STAP will provide detailed screening for projects it believes require further improvements to the design, as outlined in paragraph 4 above. Projects in these cases will receive either a STAP advisory response of 2 or 3, as discussed below. Two types of follow-up action are envisaged

- a) STAP may recommend that the GEF Agency take action to improve aspects of the project design, based on STAP's advice. This advice will originate directly from a Panel member or a designated expert selected and funded by STAP and will be provided as soon as possible following the screening. The lead GEF Agency will be expected to incorporate STAP's advice in its project documentation and provide a report on the actions taken in response to STAP's advice, at the time of submission of the final project document for CEO endorsement.
- b) STAP may additionally recommend that the lead GEF Agency commission and fund an independent review of the project design at an agreed point in time well before submission for CEO endorsement, with the purpose of reviewing the project design and confirming that it meets the standards agreed in advance between STAP and the Agency. The review will also enable the Agency to take further corrective action if necessary well in advance of the submission date. The review should be attached to the final project document with a short report of any action agreed and taken, at the time of submission of the final project document for CEO endorsement.

¹⁹ Note – STAP is also willing on a limited basis to enter into discussion with respective agencies on proposed scientific and technical components of a project prior to formal submission in the project cycle.

Table 1. STAP Screening Report Advisory Response

<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
1. Concur	In cases where STAP is satisfied with the scientific and technical quality of the proposal, a simple “Concur” response will be provided; the STAP may flag specific issues that should be pursued rigorously as the proposal is developed into a full project document. At any time during the development of the project, the proponent is invited to approach STAP to consult on the design prior to submission for CEO endorsement.
2. Minor issues to be considered during project design	<p>STAP has identified specific scientific/technical suggestions or opportunities that should be discussed with the project proponent as early as possible during development of the project brief.</p> <p>The proponent may wish to:</p> <p>(i) Open a dialogue with STAP regarding the technical and/or scientific issues raised; (ii) Set a review point at an early stage during project development, and possibly agreeing to terms of reference for an independent expert to be appointed to conduct this review.</p> <p>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.</p>
3. Major issues to be considered during project design	<p>STAP proposes significant improvements or has concerns on the grounds of specified major scientific/technical methodological issues, barriers, or omissions in the project concept. If STAP provides this advisory response, a full explanation would also be provided. The proponent is strongly encouraged to:</p> <p>(i) Open a dialogue with STAP regarding the technical and/or scientific issues raised; (ii) Set a review point at an early stage during project development including an independent expert as required.</p> <p>The GEF Secretariat may, based on this screening outcome, delay the proposal and refer the proposal back to the proponents with STAP’s concerns.</p> <p>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.</p>

Programmatic Approaches/Integrated Approach Pilots

7. GEF Agencies will copy STAP on all submittals of PFD and IAPs when they are submitted to the GEF Secretariat. STAP may provide comments to the GEF Secretariat so they can be considered by the

Secretariat and CEO as they consider whether to include the PFD, or IAP child project in a GEF Work Program. The intent of the STAP review of programs will be to add value and provide quality assurance. STAP comments will be provided to the GEF Council.

Targeted Research²⁰

8. Targeted Research (TR) is defined as “goal-oriented research that supports the GEF operational strategy by providing information, knowledge and tools that improve the quality and the effectiveness of the development and implementation of GEF projects and programs”. The processes that govern targeted research are set out in GEF Council document (See Council document, *Principles for GEF Financing of Targeted Research*, GEF/C.9/5, 1997), and relevant STAP rules and procedures. (See document GEF/C.23/Inf.11, *Rules of Procedure of The Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) of the Global Environment Facility*). Specifically, after CEO clearance of the PIF, STAP will work in collaboration with the proponent to convene a research committee to review the proposal. STAP may also propose TR projects and, working with the Secretariat and GEF Agencies, assist with the development, execution and monitoring of a project proposal. GEF Agencies are encouraged to contact STAP at an early stage to seek informal advice as it develops TR project ideas.

²⁰ STAP has proposed a new modality and procedures for proposals that include a significant element of research (GEF/STAP/C.43/Inf.02). STAP considers that changes are needed in the current TR modality because of the continuing increase in multi-focal area proposals and new integrated approach pilots which will require considerably more underpinning by science and technical innovation. Discussions with the GEF Secretariat on this specific project modality are on-going.