

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 08, 2013

Screener: Paul Grigoriev

Panel member validation by: Sandra Diaz
Consultant(s):

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

FULL SIZE PROJECT GEF TRUST FUND

GEF PROJECT ID: 5559

PROJECT DURATION : 5

COUNTRIES : Russian Federation

PROJECT TITLE: Conservation of Big Cats

GEF AGENCIES: WWF-US

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: Ministry of NR and Environment of Russia;
WWF Russia

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): **Consent**

III. Further guidance from STAP

STAP welcomes the submission of this project concept intended to address the conservation of populations of four species of big cats (Amur tiger, Far Eastern Leopard, Snow leopard, Persian leopard) through the conservation of important habitats in three ecoregions- the Russian Far East, the Altai-Sayan and the Northern Caucasus. Overall, the proposal is well structured and well presented. Specific observations on the proposal that require further attention are presented below.

1. There appears to be some inconsistency between the project title and the wording of the project objective. Whereas in the title the focus is clearly and solely on the big cats, the objective places the focus on the conservation of unique landscapes and ecosystems, while maintaining the big cats as keystone species. In the proposal, the focus is primarily on the conservation of the four cat species and the objective should be reworded to reflect this to be in line with the title. The conservation of the species will be pursued through improvements in landscape level approaches to managing critical habitats and other supporting accompanying measures presented in the proposal.
2. In general, there is overall coherence between the problem definition, the objective, outcomes and outputs. In certain instances, however, more specificity will be required. For example, the wording of Output 2.2 "Decreased human-wildlife conflict and improved local communities livelihoods for conservation of big cats" could be improved upon to make it clearer what is actually expected as an outcome, aside from the fact that these are really two outcomes blended into one.
3. It is noted that there are no proposed outcome indicators. This must be addressed during the PPG. It is also noted that established Tracking Tool indicators are to be developed moving forward.
4. Some clarification is required concerning existing international (transboundary) initiatives. On page 10 it is stated that no international agreements/programs for big cat conservation in transboundary areas exist between Russia, China, Mongolia and Kazakhstan, whereas on page 20 existing bilateral commissions on transboundary cooperation are mentioned. Also on the same page, is it the Caucasus Ecoregional Council, as mentioned, or the Caucasus Biodiversity Council?
5. The general baseline conditions and threats are well presented, for the most part. More details will be required. Barrier 2 can be more clearly explained where it talks about areas of potential vs actual habitat.

6. Regarding the State program "Reproduction and the Use of Nature Resources 2012-2020, it is presumed that its relevance to this project is in improving game populations.
7. The GEBs are well defined and the incremental benefits of GEF support are well presented.
8. On page 16, where is it mentioned that community-managed landscapes will be enhanced through new management tools some more explanation is required.
9. Since the proposal builds upon numerous past and ongoing initiatives, there is no issue with its coordination with other related initiatives. It is also recognized that there high level government support for big cat conservation in the country.
10. While the risks are adequately addressed, consideration should also be given to the potential risks associated with climate change.
11. It is recommended the IUCN/SSC Cat Specialist Group also be involved in the further design and implementation of the proposed project.

<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
1. Consent	<p>STAP acknowledges that on scientific or technical grounds the concept has merit. However, STAP may state its views on the concept emphasizing any issues where the project could be improved.</p> <p>Follow up: The GEF Agency is invited to approach STAP for advice during the development of the project prior to submission of the final document for CEO endorsement.</p>
2. Minor revision required.	<p>STAP has identified specific scientific or technical challenges, omissions or opportunities that should be addressed by the project proponents during project development.</p> <p>Follow up: One or more options are open to STAP and the GEF Agency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) GEF Agency should discuss the issues with STAP to clarify them and possible solutions. (ii) In its request for CEO endorsement, the GEF Agency will report on actions taken in response to STAP's recommended actions.
3. Major revision required	<p>STAP has identified significant scientific or technical challenges or omissions in the PIF and recommends significant improvements to project design.</p> <p>Follow-up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The Agency should request that the project undergo a STAP review prior to CEO endorsement, at a point in time when the particular scientific or technical issue is sufficiently developed to be reviewed, or as agreed between the Agency and STAP. (ii) In its request for CEO endorsement, the Agency will report on actions taken in response to STAP concerns.