

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: March 13, 2009

Screener: Douglas Taylor, STAP Secretary

Panel member validation by: Meryl Williams

I. PIF Information

Full size project GEF Trust Fund

GEFSEC PROJECT ID: 3619

GEF AGENCY PROJECT ID: 604958

COUNTRY(IES): Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand

PROJECT TITLE: Strategies for Fisheries Bycatch Management

GEF AGENCY(IES): FAO

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNER(S): National fisheries authorities, Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC)

GEF FOCAL AREA (S): International Waters

GEF-4 STRATEGIC PROGRAM(S): SP1 Marine Fisheries (Restoring and Sustaining Coastal and Marine Fish Stocks and Associated Biological Diversity)

NAME OF PARENT PROGRAM/UMBRELLA PROJECT: Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI)

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

1. 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

2. This project needs much greater clarity in its objectives and design if it is to succeed. The Panel recommends that the following points are addressed during project formulation and therefore the FAO is requested to contact the Panel at an early stage and well before the full project brief is submitted for CEO endorsement, in order to agree a suitable review point.
3. Clarity is needed in specifying the bycatch priorities, the fishing methods to be addressed and how. Bycatch species priorities, which can differ with country and fishing area, will largely determine which fishing methods are of greatest concern. Are the bycatch priorities to be the large species (turtles, mammals, whale sharks, etc) or small prey species and juveniles of higher value fish? In part, the PIF infers that trawl fisheries will be the main ones targeted. This is logical given that this form of fishing is generally less selective than purse seine and gillnet fishing. However, depending on species priorities, other types of fishing may also be very important, e.g., bottom set gillnets can be highly effective in catching sea turtles. The focus on trawl fishing and the reasons for it should be made clearer. Clarity is also needed in specifying the retail and consumer organizations likely to help. For example, does the project intend to work with the growing power of the supermarket chains, with the often government-linked wet markets or the many variants of private and family companies that take product from the fishing vessels, process and market it? What incentives will drive these different types of buyers? How will the consumers be reached? The PIF does not address these points.
4. Strictly speaking, this project will not "protect" aquatic resources and stocks as is asserted in the project objective. The project may achieve the promotion of conservation outcomes through reduction in bycatch provided that the expected project outcomes are achieved, thus rewording of the project objective is necessary.
5. The fundamental thesis of the project appears to be that through working with the fishing community whether private or public, that (unintended) bycatch can be reduced through a mix of technical and awareness raising means. The matter of economic incentives (and disincentives) is not directly addressed and yet is likely to be an important factor. Today, most of the catch has an economic value and to reduce landing of some of it may reduce fishing profits unless fishing efficiency can be improved by reducing less valuable catch. As needs for fish as feed in aquaculture has grown in the region, 'bycatch' or incidental catch of species discarded at sea is now minimal (Kelleher, K. 2005. Discards in the World's Marine Fisheries: An Update. *FAO Fisheries Technical Paper* 470). Further, low-value fish is

seen as critical to the livelihoods of many people in Asian fishing communities (Funge-Smith *et al* 2005. Asian fisheries today: The production and use of low value/trash fish from marine fisheries in the Asia-Pacific region. *FAO RAP Publication* 2005/16).

6. Moving from reduction of shrimp bycatch to reduction of bycatch across the entire fishing industry is both commendable and exceedingly hard. Defining bycatch will be more difficult than for the shrimp industry, where the target and hence 'bycatch' species may be more defined and may be somewhat more amenable to market incentives for good practices. However, in all Southeast Asian fisheries, including those that catch shrimp in season, widely varying definitions or expectations of which species are target catch species and which are bycatch will impede agreement on bycatch avoidance priorities, excepting well publicized groups of species, e.g. turtles, marine mammals.

7. The lack of possible Indicators and their monitoring is a current weakness of the proposed project. The previous GEF project referred to from the PIF published a useful guidance manual 'A Guide to Bycatch Reduction in Tropical Shrimp-Trawl Fisheries', however, this did not deal with how to select or monitor indicators of reduced bycatch, and the present proposal appears essentially to be an input driven, rather than a results based approach. Further, the national fisheries agencies and the regional fisheries management organizations in the Coral Triangle generally lack the capacity to collect and monitor progress

<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: <ol 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 revision required	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.