

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 11, 2011

Screeener: Douglas Taylor

Panel member validation by: Meryl Williams
Consultant(s):

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

FULL SIZE PROJECT MULTI TRUST FUNDS

GEF PROJECT ID: 4649

PROJECT DURATION : 5

COUNTRIES : Regional (China, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam)

PROJECT TITLE: GMS-FBP Greater Mekong Subregion Forests and Biodiversity Program (PROGRAM)

GEF AGENCIES: ADB and World Bank

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: Participating govt agencies, inter-governmental agencies; non-governmental organizations

GEF FOCAL AREA: Multi Focal Area

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

1. STAP welcomes this Program, which proposes ambitious coordination of existing and future projects at national and other levels guided by a regional project to promote transboundary cooperation. As with all such regional programs the incentives for states to collaborate must be sufficient to outweigh the costs and even disadvantages, namely the increased transaction costs across borders, tempering national interest in the interests of regional interests, dissimilarities in laws and customs, etc. Certainly the evidence base for taking regional action and its context within the national strategies and plans is compellingly presented, along with a clear conceptual framework and a comprehensive presentation of past and existing efforts to conserve the forest and associated natural resources of the region.

2. STAP notes that the Program intends to explore the use of incentive mechanisms including REDD+ and allied payments for environmental services (PES) and to involve communities in self-management of resources, including forests, in order to enhance impact. The proponents are advised to consult the evidence-based GEF advisory documents produced by STAP on Community Forest Management and on PES during the detailed design phase of the Program and its projects in order to maximize the credibility of evaluations of impact (see STAP, 2010a, b).

3. One of the cited advantages of a regional approach is to build a landscape approach to designation and management of protected and conservation areas, and the Program provides a clear indication of the locations and relative scale of these along the in the Greater Mekong region. However, and although connectivity between these areas is mentioned as an important parameter, no mention is made of what formal tools will be used to assess, at a strategic level, the degree of fragmentation and thus the need for connectivity and the scale of adjustments desirable to augment or adjust the protected landscape. Connectivity is crucially important as one foundation for the future resilience of the conservation landscape. Indeed this strategic fragmentation/connectivity assessment is likely to be a key precondition to enable consequent assessment of which communities and local authorities are relevant to the implementation of the site-based actions. STAP requests that when preparing the PIFs under this Program, e.g. for Component 2, the proponents cite the methodological approaches that they plan to use (see for example Connectivity Conservation: International Experience in Planning, Establishment and Management of Biodiversity Corridors, report produced for Government of Vietnam/ADB. http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/070723_bci_international_report_final.pdf)

4. Regionally based capacity building is implied at several points in the PFD, although who would benefit and how this might be delivered is not discussed, therefore the proponents are encouraged to elaborate further including the incentives to be used, the providers envisaged and the sustainability of the arrangements to facilitate exchanges and mutual learning.

5. The gender dimensions of the Program appear wide ranging but STAP notes that the good intentions to help women are not based on a gender diagnosis within countries and below country level. Each of the countries will have different gender challenges and this should be acknowledged and addressed. On the other hand, the intention to be pro-active in seeking gender balance in recruitment is noted and endorsed as an important element of sound program delivery.

6. With respect to risks, the Program does acknowledge the potential risks of political reluctance to collaborate regionally or bilaterally due to unrelated tensions.

Reference:

STAP 2010 a. The Evidence Base for Community Forest Management as a Mechanism for Supplying Global Environmental Benefits and Improving Local Welfare: A STAP advisory document. 2010. Diana Bowler, Lisette Buyung-Ali, John R. Healey, Julia P.G. Jones, Teri Knight and Andrew S. Pullin. Centre for Evidence-Based Conservation, SENRGY, Bangor University.

STAP 2010 b. Payment for Ecosystem Services and the Global Environment Facility. A STAP advisory document.

Both documents available through:

<http://www.unep.org/stap/Publications/AdvisoryProductsofSTAP/tabid/2912/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

<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 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.