

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: May 11, 2012

Screener: Douglas Taylor

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

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

FULL SIZE PROJECT **GEF TRUST FUND**

GEF PROJECT ID: 4662

PROJECT DURATION : 5

COUNTRIES : China

PROJECT TITLE: Piloting Provincial-level Wetland Protected Area System in Jiangxi Province

GEF AGENCIES: FAO

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: Forestry Department of Jiangxi Province

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

1. STAP welcomes this PIF which is submitted under the Program (GEF ID 4646) CBPF-MSL Main Streams of Life & Wetland PA System Strengthening for Biodiversity Conservation. The project is well-aligned to the Program and STAP commends the proponents for including in the Project Framework quantitative targets for many of the listed outcomes. STAP wishes to point out a number of issues which may further strengthen this initiative during the design phase.
2. The proposal, in addressing objective 1 of the BD Focal Area Strategy, focuses upon improving management effectiveness of existing and expanded protected areas within a network. This is a viable approach, which if consolidated within a more effective catchment-based framework should result in a more sustainable ecosystem. The project also addresses the complexities of PA conservation across 3 levels of government (national, provincial and county). The aim of the project is to add to the national and provincial baseline by supporting the underfunded and under supported country level Pas.
3. The analysis of threats and barriers to overcome them is well written and provides a clear agenda for the project actions. In many cases the resulting project concept is convincing but in others less so. The system level threat of wetland fragmentation and incoherent watershed scale actions remain relatively weakly addressed, as does the threat from invasive species. The proposed actions do not directly address these more systemic threats, but are addressed more directly to the needs and opportunities within the protected areas identified.
4. With regard to Component 1, consolidation of the wetland PA system; the proposed Landscape Conservation Plan supported by GIS could well result in a coherent candidate area envelope and the associated consultations appear to be well focused and potentially effective. It is helpful that an inter-agency committee is being formed to support the Poyang Lake Wetlands Ecosystem PA (PWEPA) network, and that the findings of related projects will inform the management requirements for the network.
5. It may be that the inter-agency committee for PWEPA will consider all relevant factors; nevertheless STAP advises that the proponents should explicitly mention how the project will elicit the required planning and preferably modelling of the hydrological requirements of the consolidated areas. This is essential in order to drive discussions with responsible agencies to ensure that the water supply, flows and quality are well understood and that water budgets and criteria for management action are specified. Without a water regime that is well understood and adaptable, existing and future wetland PAs will not be sustainable, especially within a changing climate. A practical and well-tested framework for water allocation is available published by the Convention on Wetlands to assist the reconciliation of the

often conflicting interests at national level and below (see Ramsar Convention Secretariat, 2010), based on a synthesis of relevant national experiences.

6. Within Component 2 (and related capacities developed in Component 3), the PIF outlines proposals for co-management including with communities, however, it is not explained what incentives will drive these actions, nor how the parent Program or the present project will assess the value of environmental services or opportunity costs which STAP assumes will be needed as inputs for developing the proposals. Additionally, the conservation outcomes in terms of biodiversity measures are not linked in the PIF to the involvement of communities.

7. The risk table should be amended to include mention of (i) financial risks and sustainability of incentives (medium); (ii) raise the rating of water management risks to high to take account of systemic catchment level risks, (iii) risk of low or no cooperation of communities associated with the wetland PAs or their buffer zones; and (iv) risk that economic development and land reclamation will overtake plans for wetlands and biodiversity protection.

The full project plans should explain how the project achievements will be monitored and evaluated.

Reference

Ramsar Convention Secretariat, 2010. Water allocation and management: Guidelines for the allocation and management of water for maintaining the ecological functions of wetlands. Ramsar handbooks for the wise use of wetlands, 4th edition, vol. 10. Ramsar Convention Secretariat, Gland, Switzerland. (See also relevant water-related Handbooks 8, 9 and 11).

<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.