

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 14, 2013

Screeener: Lev Neretin

Panel member validation by: Jakob Granit
Consultant(s): Stephen B. Olsen

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

FULL SIZE PROJECT **GEF TRUST FUND**

GEF PROJECT ID: 5401

PROJECT DURATION : 4

COUNTRIES : Regional (Indonesia, Cambodia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam)

PROJECT TITLE: Establishment and Operation of a Regional System of Fisheries Refugia in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand

GEF AGENCIES: UNEP

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: Departments of Fisheries in the participating countries; Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC)

GEF FOCAL AREA: International Waters

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. The STAP welcomes this project as a follow-on to the multi-lateral, intergovernmental project "Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand" and builds upon the collaborative relations among fisheries agencies achieved through that earlier investment.
2. Specifically STAP welcomes that the project is well anchored in the regional body SEAFDEC, as the project's regional executing agency, with its links to ASEAN. Project lessons learned can through this organizational set up continue to be captured beyond the project lifetime.
3. This project recognizes that the creation of Marine Protected Areas, in which all forms of fishing are typically excluded, has proved ineffective since local people do not support them and do not comply with such wholesale restrictions on fishing. The Refugia strategy was developed as an alternative approach through the former program during 2003 to 2008. Reference is made to initial successes in implementing the Refugia in the Philippines. This suggests that the proposed program builds on experience and will help sustain collaborative relations among fisheries institutions in the region.
4. The detailed design should encompass the criteria used to select the 14 Refugia sites selected for this project and establish baselines for the governance conditions in each. This should allow for comparative analysis of the governance dimensions of the effort to complement the natural science undertaken to better understand linkages between fish stocks and habitats. Differences in the enabling conditions at the 14 sites may suggest that the successful implementation of management plans in all the sites may not be achievable with the four year life of this project. Gradations in the degree of success across the 14 sites should not be interpreted as failure but rather as the source for a fuller understanding of the governance dynamics within Refugia. The detailed design criteria for refugia selection and impact evaluations accounted for during project preparation should provide for such comparative analysis.
5. The project lays the groundwork for mainstreaming the Refugia concept through the preparation of one regional, 15 national action plans, five national web portals and a range of networking mechanisms. This a strength in the design.

6. The risk assessment analysis draws upon previous experience with MPAs and the more positive response of fishing communities and fisheries managers to the Refugia concept. The three risks identified appear to address the major challenges in a measured and well informed manner that draws upon specific examples of progress in the region.

7. STAP recommends that a fourth project component addressing project management becomes an integral part of the full project. There are multiple partners and stakeholders in the project which will demand strong project management skills and capacity.

<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
<p>1. Consent</p>	<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>
<p>2. Minor revision required.</p>	<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: (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.</p>
<p>3. Major revision required</p>	<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: (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.</p>