

# 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 04, 2015

Screener: Virginia Gorsevski

Panel member validation by: Brian Child  
Consultant(s):

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

**FULL SIZE PROJECT GEF TRUST FUND**

**GEF PROJECT ID:** 9071

**PROJECT DURATION :** 6

**COUNTRIES :** Global (Global, Botswana, Congo, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Gabon, Indonesia, India, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia, Congo DR)

**PROJECT TITLE:** Global Partnership on Wildlife Conservation and Crime Prevention for Sustainable Development (PROGRAM)

**GEF AGENCIES:** World Bank, UNDP and UNEP

**OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:** Govs of participating countries, Regional Centers of Excellence

**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):  
**Minor issues to be considered during project design**

### III. Further guidance from STAP

#### Introduction

Given the current crisis, this proposed Global Partnership on Wildlife Conservation and Crime Prevention is an important programmatic addition to the GEF BD portfolio and STAP welcomes this initiative. The program responds to numerous biodiversity objectives in the GEF-6 biodiversity strategy, as well as other focal areas, and reflects an approach that is both integrated and focused on a key direct pressure on wildlife: the illegal wildlife trade which is a critical short term threat, and improving conditions that promote wildlife as a viable land use alternative, which is vital in the long term. As such, the PFD is generally a far sighted document, but the propose approach can and should be sharpened during the PPG state to improve the design of the actual investments to be channeled through the child projects.

#### Overview of the program

The program objective is to: "Promote wildlife conservation, wildlife crime prevention and sustainable development to reduce impacts to known threatened species from poaching and illegal trade".

This important program addresses the current crisis in Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) in the context of sustainable development. It tackles a critical biodiversity and poverty challenge, makes important linkages between wildlife crime and local livelihoods, and is bold and forward thinking in many places. However, the title is unwieldy, and does not directly consider the problem of habitat replacement. An alternative might be: "Promote conservation of threatened wildlife species and sustainable development by addressing illegal trade and habitat replacement"?

#### Comments on Barriers and Root Causes

The PPG should expand the assessment of the root causes and barriers of the loss of wildlife conservation through IWT and habitat replacement (see note 1) including:

1. Underfunded, low-quality protected area (PA) agencies and dysfunctional institutions rather than modern, merit-based bureaucracies capable of providing public goods and services,
2. The lack of ownership/value of wildlife to the people who live with it.

The PPG should be strengthened by including an economic interpretation of the root causes of wildlife loss, including the market failures caused by thinking simplistically about the price of wildlife without considering interactions with wildlife ownership. It should balance short term thinking about the IWT crisis with longer term thinking about species/habitat replacement (see note 2).

In the PPG, the root causes section should also recognize more explicitly the fact that law enforcement approaches tend to disproportionately target low level poachers, which is only partly effective unless high level criminals are also targeted, and often destroys the social foundation necessary for wildlife conservation when handled poorly. For example, anti-poaching operations can lead to human rights abuses in communities that live with or adjacent to wildlife, which only serves to exacerbate their alienation from wild resources or conservation more generally and destroy the social platform necessary for successful wildlife conservation. Women, in particular, are often the targets of this type of abuse, something that should be noted in Section E3 on gender considerations. A good source for this is the statements resulting from the recent international conference "Beyond Enforcement: communities, governance, incentives and sustainable use in combating wildlife crime" (IUCN, SULi et al. 2015).

In this respect, the PPG should also discuss the social foundation for wildlife conservation. Poaching requires a social foundation. This requires careful consideration of wildlife protection laws that may be legal on the one hand, but lack social legitimacy and democratic ratification on the other. We face the serious problem that legitimate livelihood activities such as hunting have been rendered de jure illegal by laws promulgated by bodies that are politically unrepresentative, yet remain de facto legitimate in the eyes of local people. Therefore, before simply "stopping poaching", a key alternative scenario is to recognize and address the complexity of the problem, and to bring legality and legitimacy into closer alignment. This requires that the advances in various law enforcement measures proposed by the PFD need to go hand in hand with advances in local proprietorship and stewardship.

The current PFD has a tendency in places to view IWT/HR from the top-down and as a short term problem that can be solved through law enforcement. The PPG stage would be strengthened by ensuring diversified input, especially from stakeholders that emphasize that IWT/HR is a dual short term crisis and long term problem that also requires bottom-up social benefit/engagement, including an understanding of communities and governance. Such groups include the IUCN-Sustainable Livelihoods Initiative (SULi) and the ICCA Consortium Association who organised multiple sessions on indigenous communities, conservation areas and governance at the recent World Parks Congress.

#### Theory of change

The theory of change as presented in the PFD represents the beginning of a major advance, and should be further strengthened at PPG stage. However, the theory of change illustrated in the diagram in the PFD misrepresents (or only partially represents) the much stronger theory of change that emerges in the narrative. The figure is potentially powerful, and it should therefore not be misleading. The diagram includes only short term IWT measures, and detracts fundamentally from the long term barriers and alternatives stated in the text – especially getting incentives right for landholders to ensure that the high value of wildlife is reflected in land use outcomes, etc. Therefore, the figure and text should be aligned, noting the considerable potential for the PPG to develop the theory of change as a short, very well written and illustrated "vision" to guide the program and child projects (see note 3).

In developing the theory of change to emphasize local proprietorship, benefit, capacity and governance, and institutional change processes, the PPG can call on well-established theory such as Ostrom (who shows that local collective action often outperforms top-down approaches under specified conditions) (Ostrom, 1990) and North and Williamson (who are cognizant of the centrality and challenges of changing entrenched political economic institutions).

#### Alternatives Scenario

In the "alternative scenario" section, the key performance indicators need to be refined (as noted by the PFD). STAP is available to contribute to these future refinements.

The "stopping poaching" section can be strengthened at the PPG stage through a better field-level understanding of anti-poaching measures (see note 4).

The inclusion of a section on "Improving conditions that promote wildlife as a viable land use alternative" is extremely positive as a long term measure to address root causes, and should be further developed in the

PPG. The PFD refers to "stronger incentives for local communities to engage in protecting wildlife and habitats and reduce their poverty levels". This is an important emphasis as an "end" of the programme, but it could/should also become the primary "means" as noted in several of the child projects.

Rather than "stopping demand", the PPG should assess whether a better approach would be to "shift demand from illicit channels to the sustainable and/or legitimate value chains that maximize benefits to landholders/ communities". In this way, the PPG would address both short term IWT and long term systemic issues such as habitat replacement.

The case for "demand reduction" refers to the single example of shark fin trade in Asia (without quoting the evidence, or the counter argument that we still eat millions of sharks in the form of fishsticks or fishfingers). If this is to be a major component of this project, the PPG and associated child projects needs to (1) review the literature on demand reduction including drugs, alcohol, luxury products, etc. (2) make a much stronger case for how demand reduction will be operationalized, and (3) carefully consider the consequences of rendering wildlife valueless to range states and to communities/landholders.

It should be noted that poverty in and of itself does not create wildlife crime; rather the main factor driving wildlife crime is that where communities have no proprietary/benefit at stake, criminals take advantage of poor people's desperation (and anger) to conduct poaching. Where people feel alienated and disenfranchised, it is unlikely that conservation efforts will be successful (Weber et al., 2015).

The membership of the Program Steering Committee shown in Figure 2, and the fourth component on Knowledge, Policy Dialogue and Coordination and the associated global child project, are based on the questionable assumption that learning/innovation happens primarily at the centre. These components would be strengthened by encouraging cross-scale learning, acknowledging that most innovation in fact happens at grassroots or regional scale. Activities such as supporting regional forums should be considered. There are also inherent dangers that such a centralized approach would appear high handed and might alienate potential stakeholders and allies.

The Components are generally well articulated. However, the PPG might reorder and formulate them more strongly to reflect the theory of change (reflecting the chain in note 3):

Component 1: Empower and capacitate private, state and community landholders to benefit from and protect wildlife.

Component 2: Establish effective resource protection (anti-poaching) capacity in landholders, and in legal and police support to landholders. It is important to note (see above) that targeting low level poachers is of course essential (and must be done respectfully), but that this will seldom be effective unless priority is given to tackling criminal syndicates higher up the value chain.

Component 3: Reduce wildlife trafficking

Component 4: Shift demand from illegal and criminal value chains to the sustainable and/or legitimate value chains that maximize benefits to landholders/communities

Component 5: Develop evidence base for combating IWT/HR at local, national and international level. This is reworded because innovation seldom happens at the international levels as proposed. It is far more likely to happen at much lower levels, especially where experience are shared across countries (the emergence of CBNRM in southern Africa is a key example of how national/regional learning resulted in a major shift in the global perception of the links between conservation and communities).

Comments on Child projects

There are currently 11 child projects linked to this program, covering issues that include: transboundary conservation, protected area management, livelihoods and sustainable use, community conservation, combatting IWT, integrated forestry, and learning. Clearly, all of these fit well into the suggestions regarding the theory of change discussed above.

However, these child projects are not yet systematically linked to the programmatic theory of change, and this will evolve further during the PPG phase. We would like to see the PPG laying out more clearly the theory of change, including the key issues that the child projects should consider at a more general level so that they best reflect the Program Framework Document overall theory of change, recognizing the circumstances of each country. As they get resubmitted, they should include explicit linkages to this

program and the emerging theory of change, noting that there will and should be iterative learning between the program and child projects.

Going forward, we believe that there is an opportunity to enhance programmatic learning if the child projects are clearly and explicitly linked to a revised theory of change, and STAP would like to contribute in this regard.

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Note 1: Root causes

Barriers / Root causes = Underfunded, low-quality PA agencies and dysfunctional institutions (which often regulate themselves)

Alternative scenario = Modern, merit-based bureaucracies capable of providing public goods and services

Barriers / Root causes = The lack of ownership/value of wildlife to the people who live with it

Alternative scenario = Devolution to communities and landholders of the rights to use, manage, benefit from, sell and protect wildlife to landholders/communities (i.e. proprietorship (Schlager and Ostrom 1992)). This will:

1. Translate the high value of wildlife into positive land use incentives
2. Ensure that sustainable and legitimate uses outcompete illegitimate uses and displace criminality
3. Maximize the flow of benefits from wildlife to landholders and communities who are ultimately deterministic of land use outcomes.

Note 2: Interactions between the price of wildlife and the underlying property regimes

IWT is strongly associated with unsustainable wildlife use under frontier economy conditions (i.e. where value and markets are expanding, but in the absence of institutional constraints on use such as workable regulations and, critically, effective resource ownership). The current crisis in wildlife (and IWT) can be attributed to frontier economy conditions where:

- rapid economic growth in Asia and, indeed, Africa is driving up the demand for all manner of wild resources (including land)
- the institutions (especially local property rights and benefit retention/sharing) necessary to control offtake and to ensure that part or much of this value is re-invested back into resource sustainability (and the livelihoods of the people who live with wildlife), are missing. The economic institutions governing wildlife have resulted in illegal use replacing use that is potentially legal and sustainable.

This results in two major threats to wildlife: habitat replacement (by domestic species) and over-exploitation through IWT.

One strategy is to ban trade, and undercut this market. However, even if this can be operationalized, removing the value of wildlife is equally (perhaps even more?) devastating as wildlife is no longer a competitive land use option outside protected areas, and will be replaced â€” this is clearly illustrated in the loss of wildlife in the 1960s when IWT was not a problem but wildlife was still rapidly disappearing (IUCN 1963). Thus, the PPG should consider the question not only of the price of wildlife, but also the question of wildlife ownership or proprietorship (as defined by (Schlager and Ostrom 1992)).

Institutionally, the "ownership" of wildlife has been nationalized or even globalized. The national or global owners are unable to exert the basic requisites of "ownership", especially the capacity to exclude non-owners from accessing these resources. Ownership is a socially constructed institution. For wildlife, the social legitimacy of ownership patterns established during the colonial period (and often strengthened in post-Independence socialist periods) without stakeholder consent is often questionable, especially as costs are local and benefits are national or global. Consequently, wildlife has become de facto an un-owned or open-access resource, and this is the root cause of the current IWT/HR crisis.

The international response has seldom addressed this root cause, and has attempted to address the loss of wildlife by removing its value through trade bans, demand reduction, etc. The efficacy of such approaches are called into question by the ineffectiveness of long term bans on trade in rhino and elephant products. The PPG will need to provide guidance on how to balance emergency short term demand reduction

measures to address IWT, with the long term need to increase the potential value of wildlife to landholders and address habitat replacement. It will need to think through how removing value squares up with other initiatives that do the opposite (i.e. increase value of biodiversity) such as REDD+, PES, "making the economic case for protected areas/biodiversity" and so on. This opens up an important opportunity for the PFD to lead conservation in a more effective direction.

A program like this could provide important conceptual leadership by creating new economic rules and norms for wild resources on our increasingly crowded planet, and initiating the replacement of outdated colonial/socialist-era policies that are no longer appropriate. The bottom line may be very simple: resources that are not owned by landholders disappear, especially where owners (including protected area agencies) cannot enforce rights of exclusion. Wildlife is lost partly through IWT, but equally through habitat replacement, or replacement by (domestic) species that are owned. Conversely, resources that are owned by landholders (like domestic species) proliferate.

Thus, the PPG should avoid simplistic solution and address both aspects of the wildlife economy - price and proprietorship. Simple solutions do not address the market failure, and economic irony, that the more valuable wildlife becomes, the faster it disappears. While we have accepted this as normal for wildlife, it is entirely contrary to human experience. For example, for most domestic species and renewable resources, the more valuable a species becomes the more a farmer grows it. Therefore the PPG should consider how the outcome of high wildlife prices is influenced by the underlying "proprietary" status of the resource. There are two primary scenarios.

- Where wildlife is valuable, but locally people are excluded from managing and benefiting from it, wildlife generally disappears.
- By contrast, where wildlife is valuable and policies maximize the value retained by landholders/communities, wildlife prospers.

Southern Africa is a prime example of the latter, with a fivefold increase in wildlife on private land and in some communal lands in the past few decades (MET 2010, Child, Musengezi et al. 2012, P. A. Lindsey, C. P. Havemann et al. 2013). This raises questions of if and how the conditions necessary for wildlife recovery as developed in southern Africa (SASUSG 2003, Martin 2009) can be introduced in states where institutions are much weaker, and if not what are the realistic alternatives?

In other words, the proximate cause of wildlife loss is IWT but the ultimate cause is the exclusion of landholders/communities from a genuine stake in the wildlife with which they live, and for which they bear the costs and opportunity costs. Because, costs and benefits, and roles and responsibilities, are misaligned, and it is common to hear communities say that "if the government owns the wildlife then they must look after it". This quickly flips into a situation where communities are perceived as the "enemy" of wildlife conservation, and are mistreated by the authorities, with the resulting anger creating an ideal seedbed for criminals to exploit. This situation is described concisely and well by the analysis and statements emanating from the international workshop "Beyond Enforcement: Communities, governance, incentives and sustainable use in combating wildlife crime" as well as by paragraphs 10 and 11 in statement from the Kasane Conference.

### Note 3: Theory of Change

The IWT/HR issue is certainly complex (para 16), but can become overwhelmingly (and ineffectually) so if tackled from the top and middle of the hierarchy, with inadequate attention at the local level as systems thinking suggests is more appropriate (Meadows 2008).

At the macro and global level, the baseline situation can be described as follows:

- Many international conferences and declarations
- Strong concern about IWT (but less specifically about habitat loss)
- Increased levels of funding
- Value of wildlife captured by crime syndicates through IWT (not by landholders)

The corresponding theory of change for the macro and global level is as follow:

- Policies that invest in wildlife conservation and encourage trade/use, but where 100% of benefits gets back to communities / landholders

At the meso level, the baseline situation can be described as follows:

- Many piecemeal short term projects contribute, often indirectly, to wildlife conservation

The corresponding theory of change for the meso level is as follow:

- Provide law enforcement and capacity building to support community/PA efforts to benefit from, manage and protect their resources

The baseline situation in terms of action on the land (this element in the PFD should be strengthened at PPG state) is as follows:

- Few or no legal benefits get to communities, so there is little incentive to conserve wildlife.
- Greatest benefits are often from bushmeat or IWT not legitimate and sustainable uses of wildlife
- Few high quality professionals work at this level (hence lack of action and innovation)
- A remarkably small portion of the finance from meso/macro actors or projects trickle down to this level

The corresponding theory of change for action on the land includes the following:

- Strengthen local proprietorship and maximize benefit flows from wildlife, i.e. rights to use, manage, sell, benefit from, protect and exclude others (Schlager and Ostrom 1992).
- Strengthen local PA management
- Provide support to PAs and communities to manage and protect wildlife

The diagram in the PFD suggests a focus on the short term (but serious) crisis of IWT rather than the deeper root causes. Short term efforts will not be sustainable unless they also address the issue of community and landholder ownership, incentives and capacities. This may well be a sensitive issue to deal with especially in post-socialist African countries where the idea of state ownership of wildlife and forests is deeply entrenched, even where non-ownership is a direct cause of the loss of wildlife and forests (Sunderlin 2008, ITTO 2009). However, all other efforts are likely to come to little in the long term unless the issue of resource ownership is carefully addressed.

In sum, wildlife crime/trafficking needs to be dealt with at three levels:

â€“assisting the landholders themselves (including protected areas) to protect their resources, (PFD needs strengthened in this area)

â€“specifically tackling higher level criminals and not just low level poachers at the bottom, and (PFD adequately addresses this issue)

â€“tackling international channels for moving illegal products (PFD adequately addresses this issue)

Finally, as noted below, classical "demand reduction" activities should be complemented by measures that increase demand for sustainable and legitimate wild products (i.e. those that directly benefit producers/ producer communities) and discourage unsustainable and illegitimate uses.

The PFD has begun to articulate a theory of change and the concept of value chains. The PPG should strengthen this theory of change. We have provided suggestions in these comments on how to strengthen this element of the PFD, which could then strengthen the alternative scenario descriptions.

The image of a value chain linking wildlife supply to wildlife demand comes to mind. This chain is always rooted at ground level, and always ends with the consumer, but can switch back and forward along its length to avoid anti-trafficking measures. It is difficult to address the consumption end of the chain because there are so many wildlife products going to so many consumers, and consumer behavior can be difficult to change (if, indeed, we even want to, thus making wildlife valueless). This implies that in order to truly effective we need to be working at the production end of the chain, putting in place conditions so that the communities and landholders that live with wildlife have strong incentives and capabilities to protect it. The PFD mentions this, but should more robustly describe this element of the program designed.

The three outcomes under the alternative scenario (i.e. stopping poaching, stopping trafficking, stopping demand) encapsulate, at best, a partial theory of change, and we should be concerned that all of them are stated in a negative way.

A fuller and more positive theory of change would be:

- Generate a social foundation for conservation/by empowering local stewardship revenue retention and value. Ultimately, the lack of ownership of wildlife is the root cause of its demise, and solutions must steadily advance local proprietorship/ownership (a useful definition of ownership/proprietorship is provided by Schlager and Ostrom, 1992),
- Empower landholders/communities to protect their resources themselves (i.e. rights and capacity of exclusion, motivated by incentives). This is likely to include legal rights, the development of village monitor/scout systems, etc.
- Support them to do so through police support in dealing with arrests and criminals, courts, etc.
- Controlling crime and trafficking at higher levels, with much greater emphasis on targeting kingpins in criminal syndicates as noted in the PFD.
- Shift the trade and benefits from IWT and the hands of criminal organization into legal, regulated and sustainable uses that seeks to maximize benefits to landholders and provide incentives for wildlife-based land use and protection. Rather than being a partial solution, this tackles the linked problems of IWT and HR simultaneously.

#### Note 4: Stopping poaching

Nevertheless, the "stopping poaching" section (p11) might then be strengthened as follows:

- Improve ground coverage and resource protection (equipment, training, and performance based systems for protected areas, communities and even the private sector),
- Strengthen systems to follow up on poaching information (i.e. what wildlife police officers often term "investigations) on the basis that "one poacher leads to 20",
- Measure and improve the efficiency of anti-poaching systems using information management including patrol effort, illegal incident catch effort, prosecution effectiveness, etc.
- Strengthen systems for collecting crime scene data, making arrests, prosecutions, and following up to ensure that poachers are both prosecuted and serve their sentence,
- Focus efforts on crime syndicates (middle men and kingpins), and ensure that dealing with low level poachers (who are often the sons of poor people) is done respectfully and does not lead to human rights abuses and further alienation of people from wildlife,
- Develop national, regional and global crime information systems. We often know who the key criminals are, but they have impunity or are not dealt with.
- Strengthen measures at borders to stop trafficking.

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<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
<b>1. Concur</b>	In cases where STAP is satisfied with the scientific and technical quality of the proposal, a simple “Concur” response will be provided; the STAP may flag specific issues that should be pursued rigorously as the proposal is developed into a full project document. At any time during the development of the project, the proponent is invited to approach STAP to consult on the design prior to submission for CEO endorsement.
<b>2. Minor issues to be considered during project design</b>	STAP has identified specific scientific /technical suggestions or opportunities that should be discussed with the project proponent as early as possible during development of the project brief. The proponent may wish to:  (i) Open a dialogue with STAP regarding the technical and/or scientific issues raised. (ii) Set a review point at an early stage during project development, and possibly agreeing to 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.
<b>3. Major issues to be considered during project design</b>	STAP proposes significant improvements or has concerns on the grounds of specified major scientific/technical methodological issues, barriers, or omissions in the project concept. If STAP provides this advisory response, a full explanation would also be provided. The proponent is strongly encouraged to:  (i) Open a dialogue with STAP regarding the technical and/or scientific issues raised; (ii) Set a review point at an early stage during project development including an independent expert as required.

<p>The GEF Secretariat may, based on this screening outcome, delay the proposal and refer the proposal back to the proponents with STAP's concerns.</p> <p>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.</p>
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