

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: November 07, 2017
Screener: Virginia Gorsevski
Panel member validation by: Brian Child
Consultant(s):

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

FULL-SIZED PROJECT	GEF TRUST FUND
GEF PROJECT ID:	9913
PROJECT DURATION:	6
COUNTRIES:	Bangladesh
PROJECT TITLE:	Implementing Ecosystem-based Management in Ecologically Critical Areas in Bangladesh
GEF AGENCIES:	UNDP
OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:	UNDP, Ministry of Environment & Forests
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):
Minor issues to be considered during project design

III. Further guidance from STAP

STAP welcomes this project from UNDP entitled, "Implementing Ecosystem-based Management in Ecologically Critical Areas in Bangladesh." The project would be much improved by the simple act of including maps depicting the location and extent of potential target areas as well as a list of acronyms because there are many within the project which are not well defined, or at all. For example, the entire project centers around the notion of an "ecosystem-based framework"; however, this concept is not explained anywhere in the project document. Similarly, the PIF discusses "sustainable financing mechanisms" with no description of what these are, and how sustainable financing will be achieved (discussed below). Beyond these general comments, STAP believes this project raises minor concerns for the following reasons:

Overall, STAP feels that the project logic is incomplete, with confusion between and within Outputs and Outcomes, and a project objective that is more ambitious than what the project actually sets out to do. In fact, there is a significant risk that Outputs will not add up to Outcomes. Specific comments on the various Components include the following:

- Note monitoring systems occur under Components 2 and 3;
- Raising ECA profile, plus website, plus modular training program (not described) is also unlikely to lead to institutional capacity;
- The list of pilot activities (2.2.3) is not likely to add up to either GEBs or sustainable livelihoods as claimed in the project title;
- Another claim with no technical backing at all is "sustainable financing mechanisms", as mentioned above. There is no information provided on how this will be achieved.

The feasibility of tackling twelve discrete outputs under such challenging circumstances needs to be carefully assessed. STAP recommends that during the PPG phase efforts focus on scaling the project down to what is achievable, and on developing the following core elements:

- Performance criteria for protected areas including (1) ecosystem health and diversity, (2) financial viability, (3) socio-economic indicators, and (4) management indicators;
- Institutional arrangements for tracking these criteria and holding land managers to account, including financial arrangements where possible;
- A limited number of pilot activities in a manageable pilot site/s.

That said, the project's emphasis on developing monitoring systems and holding people accountable to them is an excellent approach for what is a small project tackling a huge issue. However, even this needs to be significantly clarified.

In addition, there is little accurate site level information on the number of people who will be affected. While the project builds on earlier UNDP experience in Bangladesh, there is no direct reference in the document to knowledge and learning from other projects, including from GEF projects.

In sum, STAP feels that the project objective is very broad (ecosystem based framework x Ecologically Critical Areas = conservation of GEBs + local livelihoods) and could fit virtually any problem issue. It is also grandiose compared to the size of the project. The project objective would be more accurate if it focused on developing an effective biodiversity monitoring system and accountability/transparency for ECAs. A well-targeted and discrete project would have a higher likelihood of success than suggested by the current overly ambitious title.

<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
1. Concur	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.
2. Minor issues to be considered during project design	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: <p>(i) Open a dialogue with STAP regarding the technical and/or scientific issues raised.</p> <p>(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.</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>
3. Major issues to be considered during project design	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: <p>(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> <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</p>

	full project brief for CEO endorsement.
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