

# 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: @@@@ @@, @@@@ Screener: Thomas Hammond

Panel member validation by: Thomas Lovejoy  
Consultant(s): Brian Huntley

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

**FULL SIZE PROJECT GEF TRUST FUND**

**GEF PROJECT ID:** 4544

**PROJECT DURATION :** 4

**COUNTRIES :** Botswana

**PROJECT TITLE:** Improved Management Effectiveness of the Chobe-Kwando-Linyanti Matrix of Protected Areas

**GEF AGENCIES:** UNDP

**OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:** Department of Wildlife and National Parks, University of Botswana, Department of Environmental Affairs/Ministry of Agriculture/Botswana College of Agriculture

**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):

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### III. Further guidance from STAP

STAP welcomes this initiative to support improvements to the management effectiveness of this important matrix of protected areas in the trans-frontier region of northern Botswana. The Panel agrees that this project will deliver significant global environmental benefits that will be of important value both to Botswana and neighbouring countries.

Observations and comments

While supportive of this project, STAP wishes to suggest a number of areas project developers may wish to consider in the final design. The project concept note indicates that significant threats to biodiversity (among others) include uncontrolled wildfires and unsustainable use of natural resources – such as thatch grasses, firewood, and a variety of other products. Wherever possible STAP urges that the project consider and address the root causes of these threats, rather than focus the majority of efforts on control measures such as fire suppression.

The document underscores the important role this complex plays in the Kavango-Zambezi transfrontier zone. The current GEF Work Program contains similar initiatives under consideration in Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Angola – the latter two of these proposed by UNDP. STAP believes that there is a unique opportunity, currently not addressed in any of these submissions, for lessons and knowledge sharing with these and among similar initiatives that could significantly improve the delivery of global benefits across the sub-region. The Panel urges UNDP to consider the use and/or development of knowledge systems as a component in project delivery.

The perception, possibly correct, of tourist 'congestion' in Chobe is of interest. Is this the perception of the PA managers or of the safari operators? Consultation with the PA managers, of both national parks and private lodges in neighbouring countries, regarding visitor management might be useful.

STAP wishes to caution against what appears to be a simplistic approach to fire management. Recent research reviewing over 100 years of fire management experience in Kruger National Park, where a massive investment was made from 1950 to 2000 in trying to 'manage' fire regimes has resulted in significant management revisions in recent years. Costs and risks have been assessed and the policy now is simply to protect infrastructure from risk, leaving fires to follow their course. It might be useful to consult with other regional PA authorities (such as KNP) in fire-prone savanna systems before finalising fire management policies and practices. A further point, recent work in South Africa and Australia indicates that large-scale wildfires are becoming more prevalent, as conditions for the 'three 30s' (air temperatures above 30 degrees; humidity below 30%, and air speed above 30 km per hour) become more frequent.

Whether this is due to climate change is not yet known, but it has significant implications for the management of large PAs in these types of ecosystems.

Finally, this PIF notes that "[t]he increase in socio-economic benefits to the people of the region will help to ensure that biodiversity conservation efforts are sustainable in the long term . . . ". It would be extremely useful if the final project design could include a methodology for the collection of empirical data which could be used to test the validity of this assumption – which would appear central to assessing the overall success of the project. This project appears to be well suited to test this assumption – and STAP would be willing to assist in this regard.

Note concerning resilience to climate change:

STAP is currently testing a project screening tool to assess the potential risks associated with climate change to project design. The Panel notes that climate risks have not been listed among the potential risks to project success in section B.4. While these threats may not be immediate, as compared to those described, significant changes to annual rainfall regimes and cyclical patterns of drought (expected in the coming decades over much of the Southern Africa region) could significantly impact and perhaps even overwhelm the gains in global environmental benefits this project is expected to deliver. STAP urges the project proponents to actively consider these potential impacts and to consider adaptation measures where possible in project design.

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