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 10, 2012 Screener: Thomas Hammond

Panel member validation by: Thomas Lovejoy
Consultant(s): Paul Grigoriev

I. PIF Information *(Copied from the PIF)*
FULL SIZE PROJECT GEF TRUST FUND
GEF PROJECT ID: 4916
PROJECT DURATION : 5
COUNTRIES : Colombia
PROJECT TITLE: Conservation of Biodiversity in Landscapes Impacted by Mining in the Choco Biogeographic Region
GEF AGENCIES: UNDP
OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development (MADS), Ministry of Mining and Energy (MME); National Parks of Colombia; Regional Autonomous Corporations (CARs) and local governments; IIAP and WWF .
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

STAP welcomes this proposal to safeguard the biodiversity of the species rich ChocÃ³ Biogeographic Region from the direct and indirect impacts of gold, silver and platinum mining. This proposal is timely insofar as the threats and pressures are increasing rapidly and the timing appears to be conducive for instituting the changes in the governance of mining operations that this project proposes.

The problem that this project will address is well presented, the main threats are clearly defined, as are the principal barriers to be overcome through the project's outcomes and outputs. The overall coherence and scientific logic is consistent. While mining is clearly the major driving force of economic and social change in the region recently, one other dimension that could be looked at more closely, however, would be the cumulative impacts of other sectors and land uses on biodiversity in addition to mining.

While mention is made of the region's biodiversity's richness and uniqueness as a hotspot (e.g. ChocÃ³ region is considered to harbour the world's most biodiverse forests measured in terms of plant species richness and endemism), it is nevertheless difficult to distill the actual global environmental benefits that this project will specifically produce. For example, stating that "Biodiversity-friendly mining operations in over 4 m ha nationwide" will be a GEB is not sufficient. Neither is "Conservation status of threatened ecosystems and species improved, through better management of mining". While the benefits may be implicit, the anticipated benefits should be articulated in a considerably more explicit manner. The benefits should also be tied to specific locations as much as possible and should also consider the incorporation of ecosystem services and not principally species and area covered.

While the description of relevant baseline initiatives on the part of the government and others such as WWF is adequate, the baseline is weak in relation to the indicators of the project's actual principal elements. Since the project intends to also strengthen the management effectiveness of existing PAs, there should be METT scores for the baseline as a start. The lack of baseline data is recognized in the PIF and will need to be addressed during the project's further preparation.

In the further development of the project, more attention will need to be focused on how some of the proposed challenging reforms and desired results will actually be realized i.e. what the barriers to each may be and what will specifically need to be done to overcome them. For example, revisions are proposed for the Mining Code and the Land and Rural Development Law. REDD+ pilots are of course intriguing and will need to be carefully designed and

monitored with good indicators. How to ensure that the benefits from carbon credits will be equitably distributed will be one case in point.

The description and assessment of risks is adequate for the most part although there is no mention of risks associated with climate change. Also, since the project requires a considerable amount of capacity building, this presents a risk as well and should also be represented in the table.

STAP advisory response	*Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed*
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: (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.