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: 3 March 2008 Screener: Guadalupe Duron

Panel member validation by: Paul Ferraro

I. PIF Information

GEF AGENCY PROJECT ID: 3883
COUNTRY: Colombia
PROJECT TITLE: Mainstreaming traditional knowledge associated with agrobiodiversity in Colombian agroecosystems
GEF AGENCY: UNDP
OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: Ministry of Environment, Humboldt Institute, Ministry of Agriculture
GEF FOCAL AREAS: Biodiversity
GEF-4 STRATEGIC PROGRAM: Biodiversity - SO2 (To mainstream biodiversity in production landscapes/seascapes and sectors), SP4 (Strengthening the policy and regulatory framework for mainstreaming biodiversity) and SP5 (Fostering markets for BD goods and services).
NAME OF PARENT PROGRAM/UMBRELLA PROJECT:

Full size project GEF Trust Fund

II. STAP Advisory Response *(see table below for explanation)*

1. Based on this PIF screening, STAP's advisory response to the GEF Secretariat and GEF Agency(ies): **Minor revision required**

III. Further guidance from STAP

2. While welcoming the proposal, STAP suggests that a project that proposes to invest in the in situ conservation of agrobiodiversity and indigenous knowledge should justify why such investments are more cost-effective than investments in ex situ conservation. Might not ex situ conservation (in or outside of Colombia) with documentation of local knowledge be a more cost-effective means to secure global environmental benefits when the loss of agrobiodiversity and knowledge are largely a result of market forces that the GEF investment is unlikely to change? What is the evidence base for the effectiveness of outside investments to bolster in situ agrobiodiversity conservation on a scale large enough to justify the investments? In what way is this proposal different from the failed investment proposals of the 1980s and 1990s to create brands and markets for eco-friendly wild product harvests? The proposal seems to take as self-evident the causal connection between its investments and its goals. Even if the pilot projects (components 2 and 3) were successful, what evidence do the proponents have that such an initiative could be scaled up – is there evidence of a large demand for certified local Colombian cultivars or an example of a successful program elsewhere that is similar to the one proposed here? Perhaps just a few communities protecting their agrobiodiversity is sufficient for global environmental benefits, and thus no scaling up is needed. The proposal is not clear. STAP encourages the proponents to consider the evidence base for what they are proposing. If the base is weak (as STAP believes it is), STAP encourages the proponents to consider formally testing components 2 and 3 through the use of appropriately selected control communities who have valuable agrobiodiversity but do not participate in the project. STAP would be willing to advise in the design of such a test. One potential unstated risk of the project comes from the proposal to create "new protocols of prior informed consent to implement projects in agricultural systems." Although such protocols can prevent undesirable projects, they may also reduce incentives for anyone to invest in a project because of the increased costs associated with protocol compliance. This could have negative effects on local welfare. STAP acknowledges that a baseline and monitoring system for the demonstration activities on agrobiodiversity conservation and traditional knowledge will be developed during the first year of the project. STAP is available to provide advice on these aspects if UNDP would like to consult STAP. On component two, STAP encourages UNDP to define explicitly a market-based strategy based on the selection criteria (stated in the PIF), as well as take into accout food security systems. On component three, collective

action could also play a role in faciliting knowledge exchange and awareness about agro-ecosystems, and marketing activities (http://econpapers.repec.org/paper/fprworpps/71.htm). The project may wish to consider facilitating organized collective action among farmer groups.

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.