

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: October 16, 2012

Screeener: Thomas Hammond

Panel member validation by: Brian Huntley
Consultant(s): Margarita Dyubanova

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

FULL SIZE PROJECT GEF TRUST FUND

GEF PROJECT ID: 4640

PROJECT DURATION : 5

COUNTRIES : Congo DR

PROJECT TITLE: Democratic Republic of Congo Conservation Trust Fund

GEF AGENCIES: World Bank

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: Ministry of Forest, Nature Conservation and Tourism

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 revision required**

III. Further guidance from STAP

1. This proposal is difficult for STAP to screen as it includes very limited information of a scientific or technical nature. However, the project objective 'Enhanced management effectiveness of Democratic Republic of Congo's protected area system' is only weakly referred to in the detail of components, outcomes and outputs, with no indicators or targets being presented. This fundamental aspect of the PIF could be strengthened.

2. While the global importance of the DRC's biodiversity and the threats to this are well described in the scientific and conservation literature, the baseline project is very weakly described, leaving the reader to guess at what specific biodiversity is to be safeguarded, and by what means. Global environmental benefits are similarly very briefly described. The key drivers of biodiversity loss, and their rates of change, are not mentioned. This aspect of the PIF, and subsequent project document, should be improved with some reference to the biodiversity attributes and threats to these, especially of the three target PAs.

3. The proposal is focused on establishing a Conservation Trust Fund, possibly as a Charitable Trust based in the UK. While the financial and legal mechanisms of this undertaking are outside of STAP's area of expertise, the Panel wishes to note that little information is presented on how this fund management instrument will be aligned to legal and governance requirements of the DRC, and whether co-financiers and the DRC government have approved such a mechanism. As the financial mechanism will be a key determinant of resources derived from it, and their subsequent investment in conservation action on the ground (and expected benefits to biodiversity), the importance of having greater clarity on the mechanism is relevant to understanding the GEB's this project expects to deliver. For instance, the relative size of sinking versus endowment funds is not clear, nor is the expected rate of return on investments. These details will impact the delivery of biodiversity conservation benefits on the ground.

4. The project objective is to enhance management effectiveness, possibly in three existing PAs, each of considerable size, and each subject to serious challenges for managers. This issue is not adequately reflected in the risk assessment, which provides general statements of risk and no rating for these risks (high, moderate, low). The second leg of the biodiversity focal area objective 'expanding the PA system by 2 million hectares, is not supported with an outline of the gap-analysis process to be conducted, by whom, or by when. Although reference is made to ongoing GEF and other donor funded projects in the DRC, it would be useful to include a brief synopsis of the results of these, if and where they relate to identifying new priority sites for PAs, as potential areas for such PA system expansion. It might also be indicated what the existing funding gap is for DRC's PA system, and why the establishment of yet more PAs is proposed given the very limited resources currently available to effectively manage existing PAs, a number of which are listed as World Heritage Sites in Peril.

<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
1. Consent	<p>STAP acknowledges that on scientific or technical grounds the concept has merit. However, STAP may state its views on the concept emphasizing any issues where the project could be improved.</p> <p>Follow up: The GEF Agency is invited to approach STAP for advice during the development of the project prior to submission of the final document for CEO endorsement.</p>
2. Minor revision required.	<p>STAP has identified specific scientific or technical challenges, omissions or opportunities that should be addressed by the project proponents during project development.</p> <p>Follow up: One or more options are open to STAP and the GEF Agency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) GEF Agency should discuss the issues with STAP to clarify them and possible solutions. (ii) In its request for CEO endorsement, the GEF Agency will report on actions taken in response to STAP's recommended actions.
3. Major revision required	<p>STAP has identified significant scientific or technical challenges or omissions in the PIF and recommends significant improvements to project design.</p> <p>Follow-up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The Agency should request that the project undergo a STAP review prior to CEO endorsement, at a point in time when the particular scientific or technical issue is sufficiently developed to be reviewed, or as agreed between the Agency and STAP. (ii) In its request for CEO endorsement, the Agency will report on actions taken in response to STAP concerns.