

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 20, 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:	9282
PROJECT DURATION:	2.5
COUNTRIES:	Ecuador
PROJECT TITLE:	Safeguarding Biodiversity in the Galapagos Islands by Enhancing Biosecurity and Creating the Enabling Environment for the Restoration of Galapagos Island Ecosystems.
GEF AGENCIES:	CI
OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:	Island Conservation IC
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 the proposal from Conservation International entitled "Safeguarding biodiversity in the Galapagos Islands by enhancing biosecurity and creating the enabling environment for the restoration of Galapagos Island ecosystems." According to the PIF, the greatest threat to biodiversity in the Galapagos Islands is biological invasion, which is consistent with the project objective to "safeguard biodiversity in the Galapagos Islands by enhancing biosecurity and creating the enabling environment for the restoration of Galapagos Island ecosystems." STAP agrees that this proposal is timely and relevant in its focus on the very important issue of alien invasive species on the Galapagos Islands. STAP appreciates the inclusion of maps, figures, tables and reference to scientific studies and data.

However, the document is overly long (69 pages), while devoting only three pages to listing the interventions, and the serious weakness that there is little or no technical description of what the project will actually do. It is only with background and support of GEFSEC that STAP considers this to be MINOR rather than MAJOR. Therefore, STAP would like serious consideration given to the following in the PPG:

In general, the PPG should assess the return on investment for proposed activities, relative to alternatives. For example, Component 1 appears reasonable, with a budget of \$1m (plus \$6.3m co-financing) to establish a biosecurity system. However, the budget for Component 2 seems excessive. It comprises three plans (a council declaration, an operation plan for eradication, and a risk management plan), and environmental and social impact study (of what?), and improved farming practices (with no specification of the area to be covered, which can't be that large). This requires a GEF budget of \$1.144 m plus matching funds of \$7.865 million. If this seems exorbitant, the budget for translocating Giant tortoises to Sante Fe Island is \$1m GEF plus \$4.145 co-financing. The return on investment from this activity seem to be very low, compared to

other options in the Galapagos (e.g. sustainable financing arrangements, community-based tourism, sustainable tourism management) and elsewhere.

With regards to the specific Components, STAP raises the following concerns:

1. Component 1 of this project is focused on prevention of invasive alien species (IAS) into the Galapagos Islands through technology, protocols and training. The PPF must specify in technical detail the methods for the prevention of IAS.

2. Component 2 seeks to establish "social infrastructure" at Floreana Island in order to eradicate remaining pests (rodents and cats). This Component needs far greater analysis and imagination, with the consideration of additional alternatives. Especially it needs to address the question of why is the rapidly growing tourism sector not (1) funding biodiversity protection and (2) providing bio-sustainable alternative livelihoods. The proposal states specifically that tourism arrivals to Galapagos increased 48% from 145,000 in 2006 to 216,000 in 2014, and that the majority of Ecuador's \$1 billion tourism economy is attributable to the Galapagos. If this is the case (1) the key problem is that the value of the sector is not being tapped to finance conservation (providing the odd situation that external funding required to protect a resource that is the foundation of a huge industry), and (2) why are the residents of Galapagos not highly attuned to tourism and nature, given that this should or could be the core of their livelihoods? In terms of enabling environment, it would seem logical that the key to resolving this disjuncture is aligning the industry to its costs (e.g. taxing and organizing the massive and growing tourism economy as a sustainable economy that pays for nature conservation, and is able to expand and provide sustainability to invasive species eradication). It should also be harnessed to enable people to shift from low-input agriculture to the bio-experience economy. Overall, STAP feels that a major weakness of the project is that it is highly technical and bio-centric. For example, how many people live on Galapagos, how inter-linked are their livelihoods with biodiversity and tourism, and why are they not clamoring to sustain the biodiversity that underpins a major tourism industry? In terms of sustainability, the PPG must seriously consider integrating these two issues into Component 2.

3. Component 3 seeks to restore ecosystems on Santa Fe island through the reintroduction of giant tortoises. This Component appears to be a large budget for a relatively simple task. The PPG needs to assess whether this is a sound financial and biological return on investment. In terms of knowledge management, STAP is encouraged to see that project proponents reviewed past GEF projects to learn what worked and what didn't in the Galapagos and tailor this proposed project accordingly. (see para. 34/Section 17). However, very little consideration is given to the many GEF projects that deal with sustainable financing, community participation, and even IAS.

Overall, STAP believes that this project addresses a very important problem for biodiversity in the Galapagos Islands. However, STAP is concerned about the return on investment in the project given (1) very limited deliverables and (2) almost no consideration of alternative approaches, such as tapping the economy of the tourism industry to provide biodiversity-friendly local livelihoods, and/or to pay for its own externalities in the form of the cost of alien invasive species. Unfortunately, the highly detailed biological description of invasive species and their eradication is not matched by a similar level of detail in the operationalization of the project.

<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: (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, and possibly agreeing to terms of reference for an independent expert to be appointed to conduct this review.

	<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>
<p>3. Major issues to be considered during project design</p>	<p>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> <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 full project brief for CEO endorsement.</p>