

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 08, 2012

Screener: Thomas Hammond

Panel member validation by: Thomas Lovejoy
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I. PIF Information *(Copied from the PIF)*

FULL SIZE PROJECT GEF TRUST FUND

GEF PROJECT ID: 4835

PROJECT DURATION :

COUNTRIES : Georgia

PROJECT TITLE: Expansion and Improved Management Effectiveness of the Adjara Region's Protected Areas

GEF AGENCIES: UNDP

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: Agency of Protected Areas (APA)

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 initiative to help conserve the Adjara region's globally significant biodiversity values. This project will make a good contribution to securing them at a time in which the region is experiencing rapid land use changes and increasing associated pressures on biodiversity.

These global environmental values and benefits to be gained are clearly high and well described for the country but less so for the region and the proposed project sites. The baseline on these values specific to project sites needs improvement in later stages of project development. The project objective, as it is phrased, may be too narrowly focused on forest ecosystem conservation since the project overall has a broader thrust, including PA system expansion though the establishment of Machakhela National Park, improving the management effectiveness of targeted PAs, as well as their connectivity, ecological and financial sustainability and resilience.

While the description of threats is adequate, they are nevertheless presented in a general manner and not tied very clearly to the specific proposed project locations. This is a deficiency in information concerning the baseline conditions in each of the targeted areas. This should be addressed during project development. Concerning barriers, the second one is presented as being biogeographical deficiencies, referring to the fact that forest is under-represented in the national PA system at 9.7% and specifically the Colchic Forest Type (3% of national system). It is difficult to see this as nothing more than a statement of fact and not a barrier as such. The barrier would be the underlying reasons for preventing this coverage of forest from being higher. Further clarification is also required concerning the statement that these figures are also below the CBD COP10 agreed to target of 17%. Thus figure refers to the target for total terrestrial PA coverage and not forest exclusively.

Under Component 1, the development and implementation of an intelligence gathering system, using incentives to promote local communities' reporting on illegal activities, is proposed as one means of combatting them. Reliance on this mechanism is questionable for reasons that are too well known.

The definition and assessment of risks is adequate and it is encouraging to see particular attention being given to the risks associated with climate change, given the mountainous context of the project. The rating of this risk nevertheless is presented as being low. Under the circumstances, it likely should be rated higher. The proposed management strategy to address this risk in particular is generally non-specific and thus somewhat unconvincing. Informing PA personnel, representatives of the private sector and local communities of the impacts of climate change does not necessarily automatically translate into the development and implementation of improved and effective adaptation and management strategies and practices.

Considering the relatively long-standing history of relevant donor involvement in the country, coordination mechanisms with the other ongoing programmes and projects will be of great importance to maximize efficiencies and draw benefits from past experiences.

<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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.