

# 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: March 16, 2013

Screener: Christine Wellington-Moore

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

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

**FULL SIZE PROJECT**    **GEF TRUST FUND**

**GEF PROJECT ID:** 5137

**PROJECT DURATION :** 5

**COUNTRIES :** India

**PROJECT TITLE:** Mainstreaming Agrobiodiversity Conservation and Utilization in Agricultural Sector to Ensure Ecosystem Services and Reduce Vulnerability

**GEF AGENCIES:** UNEP

**OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:** Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR); Bioversity International, Office for South Asia

**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

PIF Information extract: The objective of the project is to mainstream the conservation and use of agrobiodiversity for resilience agriculture and sustainable production to improve livelihoods and access and benefit sharing capacity of farmer communities across four agro-ecoregions of India.

Further guidance from STAP:

1. STAP welcomes this important project on the in-situ conservation of crop genetic resources. It is not clear, however, how this project will add value to the existing wide diversity of projects on this topic, listed in section B6 of this PIF. This aspect might be more fully elaborated in the project document.
2. The project appears to assume that the conservation of the genetic diversity in the selected 12 crop species will in itself be sufficient incentive for farmers to participate. STAP recommends that the nature and implementation of incentives to participant farmers be more fully described in the project document.
3. The conservation of genetic diversity in high value crop plants has obvious commercial potential. Much of this potential might take many years to realise. It is therefore appropriate that the project gives special emphasis to ABS arrangements for each participating farmer community. It is not clear how the project will link future values of specific traits in the selected crop varieties to immediate needs of participating farmers. The commercial opportunities and financial viability benefits to participating farmers could be more explicitly stated.
4. By looking for potential ways to generate new business in the supply chain, and new demand, the project will be better placed to identify potential financial sustainability mechanisms. Also, for many members of the general public, understanding of financial benefits is far more likely to secure buy-in than being assured of resilience benefits that might result from longer term breeding programmes.
5. The incorporation of "track and trace" to allow one to show provenance of a crop variety (where it originated, when harvested from what field and conditions at each stage to market) might be explored, as this can also add value to a

future high-value agricultural product. Given the rise of wheat, soy and other allergies in the West in particular, many of the crop varieties mentioned in this PIF could be of great commercial value. Traceability of food further adds to the product value. Whilst many of the commercial elements mentioned will not likely be fully recognized with the limited funding, there could be some foundation laid towards such, giving potential for follow-on project work and could be explored during PPG.

<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
1. <b>Consent</b>	<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. <b>Minor revision required.</b>	<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:            (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.</p>
3. <b>Major revision required</b>	<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:            (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.</p>