

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 08, 2013

Screener: Paul Grigoriev

Panel member validation by: Sandra Diaz
Consultant(s):

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

FULL SIZE PROJECT **GEF TRUST FUND**

GEF PROJECT ID: 5351

PROJECT DURATION : 4

COUNTRIES : Madagascar

PROJECT TITLE: Strengthening the Network of "New Protected Areas" in Madagascar

GEF AGENCIES: UNEP

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: The Department for Biodiversity Conservation and Protected Area System (DCBSAP) of the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MEF)

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 the submission of this important and timely proposal to strengthen the country's protected area system at both the system and site levels. The proposed full-size project should make an important contribution to helping safeguard the country's well documented and threatened globally significant biodiversity values.

1. The proposal is well presented overall. The structure is well thought through and demonstrates logical consistency among the levels. The baseline description is adequate for establishing a basis to track and assess positive global outcomes. The anticipated global environmental benefits are presented in a well documented manner. The following points are offered for consideration to help further develop the proposal during the PPG stage.
2. The project's title could perhaps be simplified and made more precise. As it stands now, it may lead to some confusion. Because the project's intent is to strengthen the system of protected areas overall, including at the site level and through the establishment of NPAs, perhaps the title should simply reflect this.
3. The project objective is stated as: "The system of New Protected Areas (NPAs) is effective, it adequately represents marine/coastal, freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems (including the previously under-represented mangrove ecosystems), and it supports good site management, the sustainable exploitation of site resources, improved lifestyles for people around sites, and the ability of economic actors to obtain sustainable benefits from sites." This reads something akin to a catalogue of wishes. While these are all elements of the project, the objective is very broad and could be made more precise, particularly since multiple sites are involved with varying conditions characterizing them, and there are inherent challenges in attempting to reconcile and realize all of these at any particular site, let alone in all of them, and at the systemic level as well.
4. In the discussion of barriers (page 5), "too little coverage of mangroves and other coastal and marine ecosystems" is presented as a barrier. This really is not a barrier but rather a description of the current baseline situation concerning the lack of representativeness of the network that this project is intending to rectify in part.
5. On page 7, the last sentence of the paragraph describing Outcome 3 needs rewording to end with "à€commitment to the sustainable conservation of mangroves".

6. It is of concern that there does not appear to be provision made for including community representatives as key stakeholders. The listing of key stakeholders is rather comprehensive but is comprised of government and NGO reps essentially. On page 9, it states that community representatives will be consulted. Unless this is some misunderstanding, this is considered to be wholly inadequate should provision should be made to ensure their inclusion from the start, and not just for consultation.

7. The alternative income/livelihood alternatives that will be explored in relation to the PAs are mentioned in a rather sketchy way. Considering the poverty level of some of the communities, it would be good to do at least a preliminary analysis/discussion of whether these could indeed compensate the lost income/ecosystem services that will result from the establishment of the PAs.

8. Considering that a number of new PAs will be established in close proximity of rural communities in poverty, this is an excellent opportunity to build a quasi-experimental design to monitor the well-being effects of the PAs on human well-being. The proponents are encouraged to consider the STAP publication "Experimental Project Designs in the Global Environmental Facility" (<http://www.stapgef.org/experimental-project-designs-in-the-global-environment-facility/>) and interact with STAP in this respect).

9. While the risks are identified and preliminarily assessed, including those related to climate change, two of the risks are perhaps being underestimated. One is related to the presence of political stability and the second, likely more important one, pertains to the sustainability of the project's outcomes. Considering the current state of the NPAs, the severe current underfunding for the system due to other priorities in part, the added costs of maintaining an expanded and more effectively managed system of protected areas, the latter is seen as a "soft spot" in the proposal. It will undoubtedly be a challenge to mobilize funding from "sustainable sources". How this could be done will require considerable thought and effort through later project preparation, as will alternative sustainable financing mechanisms, revenue sharing options for local communities etc. In short, balancing conservation and sustainable use may prove to be more challenging than presented. For this reason, it is suggested that more thought be given to somewhat narrowing the focus of the project. It would be better to do a good job on something that's achievable and has a high degree of being sustainable, rather than dilute the effort and resources. The PPG should focus on the risks to a greater extent and use that as a basis for deciding upon the scope of the proposal moving forward.

10. The Annex presents a good description of the sites, their biodiversity values, threats etc. Granted that additional information will need to be collected during the PPG. Nonetheless, even at the PIF stage some additional information would be useful concerning the global significance of some of the selected sites, such as the Morondava Delta. Stating that it provides "habitat for many mammals, birds and reptiles" raises the question of why it was selected in the first place.

<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.