

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 18, 2016
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:	9536
PROJECT DURATION:	5
COUNTRIES:	Papua New Guinea
PROJECT TITLE:	Sustainable Financing of Papua New Guinea's Protected Area Network
GEF AGENCIES:	UNDP
OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:	Conservation and Environmental Protection Agency (CEPA)
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 this well written and well considered project concept. Establishing a sound PA system in Papua New Guinea (PNG) is also critical. However, as noted at some length below, STAP is concerned with the rather linear and top-down process alluded to in the document, and suggests that a bottom-up approach might well achieve the same objectives with more certainty, higher effectiveness, lower cost and lower risk.

The main objective of the project is to improve the financial sustainability of 2 million ha of protected area, 91% of which comprise Wildlife Management Areas managed by local communities.

The primary mechanism for achieving this objective is to:

- strengthen the capacity of the small existing central protected area agency (CEPA) (Component 1),
- build a second agency to manage a trust fund (Biodiversity Trust Fund) (Component 2) and
- to support six field sites (Component 3).

STAP suggests, however, that the way the project is conceived, and especially the way it is sequenced and structured, may well have unanticipated (negative) consequences.

The project takes a "supply driven" approach in that Component 1 designs a national PA agency and Component 2 designs a Trust fund. It is recommended that this sequencing is reversed. The project should place considerable emphasis on Component 3 (perhaps even renaming it Component 1) because, only once we know what the PAs need can we design the system to support them. This will reduce the considerable design risk of redundancy of functions, inclusion of the wrong functions, and exclusion of critical function in the two central agencies. This does not need to be excessively time consuming or complex.

For example, in the UNDP PA Project, a 10-day workshop was run with the PA managers from the five PAs in the Sinai Peninsula resulting in a 5-page policy/goal document for each PA. This document identified key biodiversity attributes. It then set out PA key performance areas in terms of SMART indicators and requirements for:

1. biodiversity protection and monitoring
2. tourism development
3. community and stakeholders
4. Infrastructure and equipment capitalization and maintenance
5. Financial, staff and performance management

Undertaken in this way, PNG could reduce the risk and improve the design of the central PA agency/s.

STAP also suggests that great care be taken when designing the central PA agency for the following reasons:

1. Care must be taken to separate the functions of PA regulation from that of PA management. Old fashioned PA agencies designed in the 1960s and 1970s often included both management and regulatory functions to the detriment of sector governance, often becoming highly monopolistic and ineffective yet having the regulatory power to protect non-performance.
2. Care must be taken to very carefully analyze and justify the need for a system of double overheads “ supporting the bureaucracies of both a central protected area agency and a trust fund. Again, old fashioned PA agencies carry with them the danger of centralizing finances and starving field PA management.
3. Given that 91% of the extent of PAs in PNG is managed by communities, the appropriateness of a centralized bureaucratic approach to establishing a PA system needs to be carefully considered rather than assumed. As we have seen in many other countries, centralized protected area agencies often weaken community rights and reduce the probability of financial viability by extracting rents from PA sites to fund HQ overheads. This may be counter productive to long term conservation goals, which will often require community engagement and support.

There would be considerable merit in reconsidering the theory of change, evaluating the needs of PAs, and then and only then designing an overhead superstructure to support these needs before entrenching bureaucratic costs that may not add value. As noted, this could be done fairly simply in the PPG stage by developing a 5-page plan for a number of PAs that includes a statement on biodiversity value and action and performance indicators for the key performance areas of (1) biodiversity monitoring and protection (2) tourism development and other commercial or ecosystem service values provided (3) infrastructure and equipment needs and maintenance costs (4) issues of community governance, participation and benefit sharing and (5) management systems including monitoring these objectives, staffing and so on.

Further, the link or mechanism between improved PA management and local livelihoods is not well specified. In addition, capital investment in infrastructure can be the most important method for bring a PA to financial viability through tourism, and this is not mentioned. Therefore the PPG needs to:

1. Carefully describe the link between PA management and local livelihoods
2. Consider capital investment in tourism as a financial strategy

In addition, given the important role of land owners in PNG, it would be interesting to know the results of the GEF-4 project, Community-based Forest and Coastal Conservation and Resource Management in Papua New Guinea project (2012-2018) aimed at developing community-based resource management and conservation models for communal landowners in the Owen Stanley Range and New Britain Island. Can any of the early results be applied to this project to help improve its likelihood of success?

Customary landowners appear to be the primary stakeholder in this project since they own and manage over 90% of the land. The project intends to engage this group in the consultative process and in Component 3 related to specific projects. Given the high levels of ethno-linguistic fragmentation (~740 different languages spoken) and inter-ethnic violence in PNG (Reilly, 2008), perhaps some portion of the project should focus on the last stakeholder group listed on page 18 (Customary landowners and local communities) in such a way that does not treat it as a monolithic entity “ particularly given their role in overseeing protected areas. STAP is also concerned about the dangers inherent in the usurpation of powers and rights from communities.

STAP therefore recommends that the PPG gives much greater emphasis on supporting and financing Community Conserved Areas as part of the national PA network, including holding communities to account for biodiversity performance. Conversely, the PPG should give less emphasis to re-creating a rather outdated and centralized PA model. It certainly should not encourage commandeering local Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs) to central control, and should put in place measures (e.g. separating regulatory and implementation powers) that prevent excessive extraction of finances from the local to the national level.

Reference:

Reilly, B. (2008). Ethnic conflict in Papua New Guinea. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 49(1): 12 – 22.

<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	<p>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:</p> <p>(i) Open a dialogue with STAP regarding the technical and/or scientific issues raised.</p> <p>(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> <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>
3. Major issues to be considered during project design	<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>