

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 15, 2012

Screeener: 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: 4937

PROJECT DURATION : 4

COUNTRIES : South Africa

PROJECT TITLE: Strengthening Wildlife Forensic Capabilities to Combat Wildlife Crime for Conservation and Sustainable Use of Species (target: Rhinoceros)

GEF AGENCIES: UNEP

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: Department of Enevironmental Affairs, Ministry of Water and Environmental Affairs, South Africa

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 important proposal to improve the capacity to combat wildlife crime in South Africa, and by extension contribute to this elsewhere, focusing on improving forensic capabilities to better control the recent upsurge in the poaching of rhinoceros in the country's protected areas. STAP's overall recommendation at this stage is consent, however the Panel wishes to point out a number of issues for consideration during project design and implementation.

The project framework is logical although one point should be clarified. The primary focus of the project is the conservation of rhinoceros, primarily in Kruger National Park and to a lesser extent in five other large protected areas, through the strengthening of law enforcement capacity. However, improving management effectiveness of protected areas and increasing coverage of unprotected threatened species (2,130,077 ha) are the expected outcome and output. It is understood that conserving the Rhino is to be accomplished through improved management capability. This, however, is only one element of the larger issue of overall PA management effectiveness. Using the area of Rhino habitat where law enforcement capacity is to be increased is not the same as increasing PA coverage. Moreover, the Rhino and other threatened species present on the targeted territory are already "protected" as such, although not as well as before in the face of an increase in poaching pressure. While improving forensic capacity is clearly needed, a significant aspect of the problem concerns prosecution and its effectiveness and the constraints that existing laws, rules and procedures present in that regard (e.g. 48 hours to produce sufficient evidence). The legal dimension of the overall problem should receive additional attention in the course of further project development.

The PIF notes that the project will increase management effectiveness over the 2 million ha of privately owned land. Current regulations and permitting for rhino management and conservation by private landowners is regarded as prohibitively costly to such owners. The project should therefore present specific measures to be taken by government conservation agencies to assist private landowners to better achieve rhino conservation goals. This includes measures to resolve the conflict between legal and illegal trophy hunting to which reference is made in the PIF.

The global environmental benefits are clearly defined, given the parameters of the project's objective. With regard to the use of DNA forensic approaches and increased capacity to significantly reduce losses of rhino and other species from poaching (an important Global Biodiversity Benefit), more detail will be needed during project development on both the specific technologies to be developed and their cost effective application across the species' range in southern Africa. The PIF gives extensive detail on the poaching problem, but is very vague on technological aspects.

The baseline activities and investments are only briefly described. During project development, more detail should be presented. Given the detailed information already available on rhino populations both within formal PAs and on private land in South Africa, and the recorded trends and rates of poaching impact, these trends should be monitored within an experimental design that allows objective measures of the impact and cost-effectiveness of the proposed interventions (please see Ferraro 2012, . This case study should be used to test the assumptions that technological innovation will provide a better return on investment than traditional wildlife protection approaches. The baseline vis a vis the targeted rhinoceros populations, the populations of other species that are to benefit, and PA management effectiveness scores will also need to be established during further project development.

It is noted that the project's title and objective differ somewhat in terms of their focus. The title stresses the strengthening of forensic capabilities whereas the objective highlights the improvement of law enforcement capacity. Clearly the two are closely related but the phrasing of the objective is more in line with the overall scope of the proposal which is broader than just strengthening forensic capabilities as the title suggests. The title could be modified to reflect this more accurately.

The expected risks are well considered, however the exclusion of climate risk is questioned. While this decision may be understandable from the perspective of the technical aspects of the project's intended outputs, projected ecological changes from future climate change in southern Africa should be considered in terms of potential impacts on project expected outcome.

<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.