

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: November 14, 2017
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:	9551
PROJECT DURATION:	4
COUNTRIES:	South Sudan
PROJECT TITLE:	Capacity Development in Reducing Illegal Wildlife Trade and Improving Protected Area Management Effectiveness in South Sudan
GEF AGENCIES:	UNEP
OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:	Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism (MWCT), in conjunction with African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) and Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)
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 important project from UN Environment entitled "Capacity Development in Reducing Illegal Wildlife Trade and Improving Protected Area Management Effectiveness in South Sudan" in an important but difficult area for conservation. STAP welcomes the project and appreciates the inclusion of maps to help orient the reader. STAP has included a number of comments below that the PPG should respond to. The most important regards the overall vision for the project. STAP recommends a shift in emphasis from seeing this as a short-term anti-poaching project (which, of course, is important) to being the first step in a longer effort to secure parks by, where possible, utilizing parks as (partly) self-funded economic engines and, where possible, initiating effective CBNRM in the buffer zone.

Given the size and diversity of ecosystems and the abundance of wildlife in South Sudan, STAP believes that this is a vital project and fully supports implementation, despite the significant challenges presented by operating in a country beset by civil conflict. South Sudan has the natural assets at scale to build a world-class wildlife-economy, and this project is in position to support that end goal. The GEF has a unique opportunity to contribute to this vision as poaching and illegal wildlife trade threatens the country's natural capital.

STAP recognizes that GEF resources will be instrumental in addressing the immediate needs of the target protected areas and in keeping longer term options open. Despite the immediacy of this project, however, STAP also requests that project proponents begin to provide a pathway for the mid- and long-term investments needed to protect the wildlife and the wilderness areas of the country, both for biodiversity but also for the benefit of the South Sudanese people. In other words, while the project should acknowledge that these areas will be lost without effective law enforcement, it is vital to ensure that this law enforcement should not alienate local people. Instead, it should be viewed as an investment in their future following the

theme of "parks as economic engines" in remote rural areas – see, for example, the highly successful and home grown philosophy of conservation that has led to major recoveries of wildlife in southern Africa (Child 1995).

In addition to these overarching comments, STAP would like to draw attention to a number of issues that should be addressed during PPG phase, prior to CEO Endorsement.

1. While the emphasis on Illegal Wildlife Trade (in the title) is important, project proponents may want to consider it as an Outcome not an Objective, as it is a means to an end and not really an end in and of itself. STAP suggests that an alternative title may be stronger such as "Strengthening the recovery of parks and wildlife in South Sudan to conserve biodiversity and provide an alternative wildlife economy." Along these lines, the project should sharpen the focus on the core business – (1) establishing the legal environment for parks and CBNRM (2) park management and protection of four parks (3) piloting CBNRM. STAP suggests that the project might be much stronger using the following goals and logic: Protect and recover protected areas in the short term, with the long-term goal of developing a wildlife economy based on parks as economic engines, and effective wildlife-enhanced community livelihoods in buffer zones.
2. The project logic contains conceptual gaps that should be addressed including the incentives for further engagement of the local communities to gain from the outcomes of the project. If the project is successful in reducing illegal wildlife trade (IWT), what will be the benefits to South Sudan and its people? In other words, what is the long-term goal of this project?
3. The Project Description comprises a list of activities that need to be better articulated. The activities listed in the project which are necessary to address the current threats (i.e. IWT and surveys), but should be expressed more clearly within the context of socio-economic development, governance, park management and Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) necessary for a viable project of this nature. The project will greatly benefit from a reduction in the number of outputs, some of which read repetitively and may not be the most appropriate ways to deliver the suggested outcome. Activities like acceding to international agreements are nice to have but could be delayed or dropped for the moment as they are peripheral to the core business of protecting wildlife and engaging with the communities in and around the target protected areas. Instead, the project needs a clearer explanation of (1) what law enforcement strategy it will use (2) how it will make parks financially and/or economically viable in the long term and why will ordinary South Sudanese want them and (3) the conceptual basis of CBNRM (which is widely available).
4. Component 1 relates to building the capacity of the National government. It should narrow down the number of interventions needed for an appropriate legal and institutional framework for the management of parks, the protection of wildlife in and around them, and the engagement of local communities. For the long term, South Sudan will need to work on the recognition of rights of the communities to use wildlife as part of their household economy (at the right scale) and the establishment of CBNRM practices to adapt to the specific circumstances of each and all of the target Protected Areas (Cooney, Roe et al. 2017, D. Roe, R. Cooney et al. 2017).
5. In Components 2 and 3, the project proposes taking measures for the effective patrolling (and intelligence) at each park, using SMART as a monitoring tool. SMART is only a tool, and to be effective it will require that law enforcement leadership, equipment and incentives are in place. SMART will not solve any problems on its own. Consideration should be given to options like "paying for results" such as patrol days, arrests, etc., but care must be taken to avoid using only these options in places and opportunities where engagement with communities will generate the necessary short and long term results .
6. STAP further recommends that the project establish a sustainable business plan for each area. This will generally require wildlife recovery, tourism access and infrastructure, and private investment. As we see in Namibia and large parts of Southern Africa, tourism provides a tool for financial sustainability only in advanced stages of conservation, but in early transformation stages low-offtake high-value hunting is a proven tool for making the transition from a failing to a successful wildlife regime, especially in post-conflict areas where tourism is highly unlikely to succeed in the short term (Robin Naidoo, Chris Weaver et al. 2016). Once wildlife populations have recovered (which will take 20 years and/or major recapitalization) it can then be replaced by wild-based ecotourism .
7. CBNRM: Effective CBNRM must be based on strong, local proprietorial rights – to access, use, sell, protect and manage wildlife themselves (with help) (Ostrom 1990). Again, see the example of CBNRM in Namibia (Jones and Weaver 2009, NACSO 2015). Fiddling around vaguely with fishing will not solve the

problem. Serious reinforcing measures to support artisanal fishing is a necessary step for effective CBNRM (e.g. following Ostrom's principles).

8. In addition, the document lists a large number of issues and tools relating to law enforcement. It needs to be clearer on which set of approaches have been successfully used and if there are any new ones to be tested. How is it going to deal with the huge staff? Park based law enforcement that includes boots-on-the-ground, investigations and training of magistrates is solid and effective. Is this what the project aims to do? The use of village scouts/game guards has been very effective and cheap in other places and should be considered. Tools like paper-based MOMS (Stuart-Hill, Diggle et al. 2005) should be also considered an alternative to SMART in places where for instance there is limited power.

9. STAP would also like to see more synergy between the two very different sites supported by two separate NGOs. While Nimule National Park and the targeted parks in The Sudd face some similar problems, there are also many important differences making the project seem a bit disjointed with funds being spread too thinly across disparate regions and also at the National level. In terms of knowledge management, STAP suggests coordination including sharing of data and expertise between the two sites and between the 2 main executing partners– Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and African Wildlife Foundation(AWF). The relationship between these groups should be made clear in the proposal. STAP suggests that although this project is not formally part of the GEF funded "Global Wildlife Program" <https://www.thegef.org/publications/global-wildlife-program-global-partnership-wildlife-conservation-crime-prevention>, the issues outlined in this project document are the same, making it logical for those involved in implementation of the project to participate in the various GWP – sponsored knowledge exchange events.

10. In terms of innovation, this project uses SMART (Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool), to support wildlife law enforcement, which although not new, is innovative in this field. Also, each of the field sites use innovative means for engaging communities in order to improve their well-being and also to increase local enforcement. In Nimule National Park (NNP), African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) will set up a Natural Resource Management Committee (NRMC) which works to transfer access and use rights back to communities, empowering them with devolved management responsibility. The project needs to obtain reassurance on the part of the local and regional governments that this type of action can be carried out.

11. In the Sudd, WCS proposes to use an anti-poaching model based on networks and focal points to gather information, which has been successful in other parts of South Sudan such as Boma NP, along with community conservancies based on wildlife friendly land use activities with the fishing and pastoralist communities. In contrast to other areas of South Sudan, however, the Sudd also contains the country's largest oil deposit with several international companies present and some accused of wildlife trafficking (<https://qz.com/695830/south-sudans-oil-fields-are-becoming-a-wildlife-trafficking-hotspot/>). Considering the seriousness of the situation, the engagement with the extractive industries will require negotiations at higher levels with companies and government as has been done in similar situations where conservation is at odds with the extractive industries. Such engagement may help to minimize poaching and encourage the use of environmentally-friendly practices going forward. The executing agencies have the "bandwidth" to approach the companies for high-level discussions using their own experience and available tools. If this industry is intended to be a stakeholder, it should be listed in Table 1. Widespread corruption – also related to oil revenue – may be a major issue (de Waal, 2014). The use of the "Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit" developed by the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC) proposed in Output 1.1. should provide guidance on identifying the specific issues to be addressed. Again, STAP suggests coordination with the GEF – funded "Global Wildlife Program" for support, since ICWC is a partner of the program.

12. In terms of risks, the most obvious and important risk (accurately listed as "high" in Table 2) is armed conflict and weak rule of law, which threaten to undermine donor efforts, as has historically been the case in South Sudan). Conflict has been a major factor in the civil war and continues unabated – for example between Dinka and non-Dinka (<https://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/widespread-conflict-between-dinka-and-non-dinka-equatorias>). A recent study analyzing the relationship between armed conflict and GEF projects found that nearly half of GEF recipient countries have experienced armed conflict since 1991 and that insecurity due to conflict often resulted in implementation delays and failure of GEF projects (Morrow, 2017). In addition to undergoing training in the field for the safety of project staff, project managers should make use of UN Environment expertise in post-conflict situations as well as tools available for conflict sensitive planning such as the UNDP Conflict and Development Analysis (CDA) tool (<https://undg.org/document/conflict-and-development-analysis-tool/>), and others developed by USAID and other donors and UN Agencies.

In summary, STAP firmly believes that this project is highly worthwhile and should be supported by the GEF. However, as discussed, the project should be greatly simplified to focus on core business with clear indicators. IWT is also just one of several components to the multi-faceted project. Far more emphasis should be given to understanding local people, and to thinking towards sustainable financing, noting that the governance of the relationship between parks and wildlife and local people that will determine the long term success of the project.

References:

Child, G. (1995). *Wildlife and People: the Zimbabwean Success. How the Conflict between Animals and People became Progress for Both.* Harare, Wisdom Foundation.

Cooney, R., D. Roe, H. Dublin, J. Phelps, D. Wilkie, A. Keane, H. Travers, D. Skinner, D. W. S. Challender, J. R. Allan and D. Biggs (2017). "From Poachers to Protectors: Engaging Local Communities in Solutions to Illegal Wildlife Trade." *Conservation Letters* 10(3): 367-374.

De Waal, A. (2014). When kleptocracy becomes insolvent: Brute causes of the civil war in South Sudan. *African Affairs* 113(452): 347 – 369.

Jones, B. and C. Weaver (2009). *CBNRM in Namibia: Growth, Trends, Lessons and Constraints. Evolution & Innovation in Wildlife Conservation.* H. Suich and B. Child. London, Earthscan: 223-242.

Morrow, N. (2017). *Assessing the relationship between armed conflict and Global Environment Facility projects from 1992 – 2016 (unpublished analysis).*

NACSO (2015). *The state of community conservation in Namibia - a review of communal conservancies, community forests and other CBNRM initiatives (2015 Annual Report).* Windhoek, Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organisations (NACSO).

Robin Naidoo, Chris Weaver, Richard W. Diggle, Greenwell Matongo, Greg Stuart-Hill and C. Thouless (2016). "Complementary benefits of tourism and hunting to communal conservancies in Namibia." *Conservation Biology* 30(3): 628-638.

Roe, D., R. Cooney, H. Dublin, D. Challender, D. Biggs, D. Skinner, M. Abensperg-Traun, N. Ahlers, R. Melisch and M. Murphree (2017). "First line of defence: engaging communities in tackling wildlife crime." *Unasylva* 68.

Ostrom, E. (1990). *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action,* Cambridge University Press.

Stuart-Hill, G., R. Diggle, B. Munali, J. Tagg and D. Ward (2005). "The Event Book System: a community-based natural resource monitoring system from Namibia." *Biodiversity and Conservation* 14: 2611-2631.

<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	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: (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, and possibly agreeing to terms of reference for an independent expert to be appointed to conduct this review.

	<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>
<p>3. Major issues to be considered during project design</p>	<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>