

# 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: September 21, 2009  
updated February 11, 2010

Screeener: Guadalupe Duron

Panel member validation by: N.H. Ravindranath and Mary Seely

### I. PIF Information

**Full size project**      **GEF Trust Fund**

**GEF PROJECT ID: 3963**

**PROJECT DURATION: 48 months**

**GEF AGENCY PROJECT ID:**

**COUNTRY:** Venezuela

**PROJECT TITLE:** PROSALAF-GEF: Promotion of sustainable and climate-compatible rural development in Lara and Falcon States (Venezuela)

**GEF AGENCY:** IFAD

**OTHER EXECUTING PARTNER(S):** Ministerio del Poder Popular para el Ambiente

**GEF FOCAL AREA (s)<sup>1</sup>:** Climate Change

**GEF-4 STRATEGIC PROGRAM(s):** CC SP6

**NAME OF PARENT PROGRAM/UMBRELLA PROJECT (if applicable):**

### II. STAP Advisory Response *(see table below for explanation)*

1. Based on this PIF screening, STAP's advisory response to the GEF Secretariat and GEF Agency(ies):  
**Consent**

### III. Further guidance from STAP

2. STAP welcomes the IFAD proposal on "Promotion of sustainable and climate-compatible rural development in Lara and Falcon States". The main environmental concerns facing the project area are clear, and the project interventions appear to address many of these concerns. However, STAP would like to understand better the following aspects:

The project talks about the anthropogenic activities and drivers of forest clearing. It is desirable to conduct a systematic assessment of these drivers leading to degradation and deforestation.

STAP has a basic question regarding this project on the need for raising a forest in a region which is described as "xerophytic scrublands eco-region" with arid to semi-arid conditions. It is not clear to what extent forest can be established in the arid region where the natural vegetation may have very few trees. The proposal also aims to afforest or re-vegetate savannas and scrublands subjected to severe water shortage and degradation. Afforestation based on tree planting may or may not be the right approach for the arid region. Promotion of natural vegetation and reducing anthropogenic pressure on these lands may lead to reclamation of the degraded lands as well as increase in carbon stocks and conservation of biodiversity. Why not explore protection and promotion of natural regeneration?

Component 1

a. The proposal states "...increased income diversification..." as one additional benefit to component 1. It would be useful to specify further what income generation activities are being considered. A brief reference is made to agroforestry, but no details are provided. For example, what feasible markets are in place for agroforestry products, and how will agroforestry (or other income activities) contribute to global environment benefits?

b. The proposal states it will increase biodiversity. However, the proposal does not detail what are the intended global biodiversity benefits. These benefits need to be specified further.

<sup>1</sup> Select only those focal areas from which GEF financing is requested.

c. What tree species will be used to reforest the project area? And how will the species for planting be selected? Will a risk assessment be done on the use of potential invasive species? It was not clear whether the species will be indigenous, or not.

d. The rationale for the carbon sequestration potential is not defined in the proposal. It would be useful to specify how the carbon sequestration potential, 132 KtC, was calculated. The projected benefit of 44 tC per hectare seems to be high for the degraded and arid to semi-arid conditions. More precisely, what methodology will be used to calculate the sequestered carbon, and what techniques will be used to analyze the results. Also, if wood extraction will take place, it is unclear how the project will calculate this since wood harvesting often changes the live carbon pool.

e. The proposal also talks about carbon sequestration as a viable option for marginal agricultural areas. What is the rationale for this?

## Component 2

Capacity building at the national level based on a small scale project (3000 ha) such as this one needs to be justified. It is also not clear why farmers and communities need to be trained in data gathering and monitoring of parameters related to carbon estimation. This is a task for the trained or skilled staff. Carbon monitoring is normally done once in 3-5 years and the procedure may last only a few days. Thus training hundreds or thousands of farmers and community members may not be justified. What may be required is awareness building on the carbon dimension of the project.

Adaptation to climate change: In addition to economic diversification, it is important to consider the likely impacts of climate change on the existing as well as proposed forest and plantations. It is also important to identify and incorporate adaptation practices in the proposed activities.

Risks: The major risk of poor forest regeneration in arid and semi-arid conditions needs to be considered and addressed.

<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
<b>1. Consent</b>	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.
<b>2. Minor revision required.</b>	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: (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.
<b>3. Major revision required</b>	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.