

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 12, 2011

Screener: Lev Neretin

Ravindranath

Panel member validation by: Douglas Taylor; Meryl Williams; Nijavalli H.

Consultant(s):

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

FULL SIZE PROJECT GEF TRUST FUND

GEF PROJECT ID: 4452

PROJECT DURATION : 4

COUNTRIES : Global

PROJECT TITLE: Standardized Methodologies for Carbon Accounting and Ecosystem Services Valuation of Blue Forests

GEF AGENCIES: UNEP

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: GRID-Arendal, WCMC CI WWF IOC UNESCO Indonesian Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries IUCN Blue Ventures University of Cape Town

GEF FOCAL AREA: International Waters

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 revision required**

III. Further guidance from STAP

STAP welcomes this timely project to address the standardization of Blue Carbon accounting methodologies and to build consensus for their adoption by international organizations and governments as part of the suite of tools available to value carbon sequestration. STAP thanks UNEP for its productive early discussions on the development of the project concept.

1. In climate mitigation and adaptation instruments and discussion, the accounting for carbon in aquatic environments lags far behind that for terrestrial systems. IPCC and GEF, through the Carbon Benefits Project that STAP has also been involved with, are reasonably well advanced in translating extensive research, measurement, modelling and monitoring of terrestrial carbon into tools that are useable by project developers and managers. These tools and databases of default values and best practice methods do not include the major aquatic ecosystems, especially the marine and brackish water systems. The proposed project, if developed in an IPCC compliant format, may accelerate the IPCC's current consideration of blue carbon methods, which is proceeding in an incremental way only at present. STAP is concerned about potential duplication of efforts supported by this project and ongoing work of the IPCC aimed at the development of additional national-level inventory methodological guidance, including default emission values, on wetlands. IPCC work guidance (to be delivered in 2013) will consider ecosystems such as coastal wetlands (mangroves, saltmarshes, seagrass) and tidal freshwater systems as well as other freshwater wetlands and peatlands. STAP recommends that project proponents explore potential overlap and complementarities with the IPCC work and propose appropriate actions before the CEO endorsement.

2. STAP recommends that, during the preparation of the full project document, the proponents work collaboratively with the partners of the Carbon Benefits project (UNEP as Implementing Agency) to gain insight into approaches to standardize methods for blue carbon accounting. The CBP is IPCC compliant. Closer knowledge of how IPCC compliant methods are developed and applied will likely better inform the Project proponents of pathways to IPCC and national carbon accounting acceptance. The Project proponents should focus on the development of "blue carbon" methodologies for GEF projects and take into account the specific GEF requirements and reporting mechanisms which often differ from those of other funding institutions and of the UNFCCC's flexible mechanisms.

3. The proposal will help some strategically selected countries to take into account carbon sequestration services (using existing approaches of carbon accounting) together with other ecosystem services and develop tools and methods on how to reconcile carbon sequestration of blue carbon with other services provided by respective

ecosystems. It would be work similar to "REDD+ readiness" efforts, and even without a legitimating decision of UNFCCC COP, it would still have merit on its own to raise global awareness of the importance of these services.

<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.	<p>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:</p> <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 <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 revision required	<p>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.</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>