

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 02, 2013

Screeener: Douglas Taylor

Panel member validation by: Jakob Granit
Consultant(s):

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

FULL SIZE PROJECT GEF TRUST FUND

GEF PROJECT ID: 4966

PROJECT DURATION : 5

COUNTRIES : Regional (Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Seychelles, Swaziland, Tanzania, South Africa, Zambia, Congo DR, Zimbabwe)

PROJECT TITLE: Sustainable Groundwater Management in SADC Member States

GEF AGENCIES: World Bank

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: Southern African Development Community - SADC

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): **Consent**

III. Further guidance from STAP

1. STAP welcomes the proposed Sustainable Groundwater Management in SADC Member States project. The project builds on efforts by SADC and its member states to build capacity for conjunctive use of ground and surface waters for drought proofing and increasing resilience towards climate change. Many of the aquifers in the SADC region are shared and groundwater is an important component of potable water supply in all the countries.
2. The PIF builds on the evaluation findings and lessons from the predecessor project (GEF ID 970) and the proposed project could act as a model for how a regional economic multipurpose organization can build effective outreach and support to specialist water management organizations. Collective action in the field of transboundary natural resources management is dependent on functioning institutions and viable regional governance frameworks. In regions with a complex political economy there is a need for more comprehensive and stable governance frameworks, which can regulate cooperation, link issues and facilitate a higher degree of political coordination and leadership. The baseline analysis in the PIF provides a good example of how the proposed intervention fits into different national, regional, and global biophysical and political economic contexts. This suggests the increasing relevance of multipurpose regional organizations as hosts of complex natural resources programs that can put the efforts of single-purpose and specialized agencies (such as the GMI) into context. Such comprehensive and multipurpose regional frameworks and governance mechanisms depend on a political vision and buy in which is clearly demonstrated in the PIF. The strong support from the donor community to SADC and the SADC water sector provides additional robustness to the intervention.
3. STAP further welcomes the fact that the Implementing Agency has a Regional Integration Assistance Strategy in place for Subsaharan Africa (2008). The strategy emphasizes that by lowering physical, political and economic barriers and harnessing the synergies of regional collaboration countries can better coordinate their interventions for regional public goods. The strategy notes that improving the management of shared water resources is key for sustainable socio-economic development. The proposed project is well placed in this regional strategy.
4. STAP does not have scientific and technical concerns about the design of the project. This is a well-researched project proposal with good synthesis of background documents and agreements. STAP notes how the proposed project is well anchored in e.g. SADC's Regional Strategic Action Programme which is an established mechanism for regional cooperation and investments into water resources infrastructure through further development and consolidation of scientific and technical capacity building at transboundary national level. Shared Aquifer Diagnostic Analysis usefully extends the standard GEF TDA and has been demonstrated previously (e.g. through GEF projects such as the Regional Shared Aquifer Diagnostic Analysis for the Nubian Sandstone Aquifer System).

5. The predecessor project set out to establish a SADC groundwater management institute. However, the implementation of the institute was delayed due to administrative challenges (see the World Bank's Implementation Completion Report of October 31, 2011) and limited experience on the part of the executing agency vis-à-vis the implementing agency. However, lessons have been learned from the first project and are captured in the risk analysis section of the PIF and STAP notes that implementation challenges and delays should be factored in properly in the project time frame. With the member states having endorsed a host institution the proposed project would bring necessary incremental financing to establish and explore long term sustainability of such an institute within the SADC cooperative framework. Component C on infrastructure development is not yet developed and could, if not well designed, be at risk for implementation delays. STAP recommends that component C activities are limited, simple and focus on innovative interventions.

6. The proposed operational focus of the project through existing river basin organizations (RBOs) is interesting and logical from a scientific, technical coordination and also policy perspective. STAP accepts that it is appropriate to invest further in RBOs, given that groundwater is considered part of 'watercourses' in the Revised SADC Protocol. However, the PIF does not appear to consider the risks associated with under-performing RBOs, particularly from a groundwater perspective, and it will be important for the proponents to consider what targets and indicators would be effective in tracking the performance of RBOs and the sustainability of their increased focus on groundwater, compared to surface water priorities. Accordingly the project brief should expand on how the RBOs participating will be assisted to integrate and balance their work across the entire water resource entrusted to them.

<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
1. Consent	<p>STAP acknowledges that on scientific or technical grounds the concept has merit. However, STAP may state its views on the concept emphasizing any issues where the project could be improved.</p> <p>Follow up: The GEF Agency is invited to approach STAP for advice during the development of the project prior to submission of the final document for CEO endorsement.</p>
2. Minor revision required.	<p>STAP has identified specific scientific or technical challenges, omissions or opportunities that should be addressed by the project proponents during project development.</p> <p>Follow up: One or more options are open to STAP and the GEF Agency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) GEF Agency should discuss the issues with STAP to clarify them and possible solutions. (ii) In its request for CEO endorsement, the GEF Agency will report on actions taken in response to STAP's recommended actions.
3. Major revision required	<p>STAP has identified significant scientific or technical challenges or omissions in the PIF and recommends significant improvements to project design.</p> <p>Follow-up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The Agency should request that the project undergo a STAP review prior to CEO endorsement, at a point in time when the particular scientific or technical issue is sufficiently developed to be reviewed, or as agreed between the Agency and STAP. (ii) In its request for CEO endorsement, the Agency will report on actions taken in response to STAP concerns.