

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 04, 2013

Screener: Douglas Taylor

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

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

FULL SIZE PROJECT GEF TRUST FUND

GEF PROJECT ID: 5526

PROJECT DURATION : 4

COUNTRIES : Regional (Angola, Botswana, Namibia)

PROJECT TITLE: Support to the Cubango-Okavango River Basin Strategic Action Programme Implementation

GEF AGENCIES: UNDP

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: The Permanent Okavango River Basin Water commission (OKACOM)

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

1. STAP welcomes this technically and scientifically sound project proposal in the Cubango-Okavango river basin shared by Angola, Botswana and Namibia in Southern Africa. The project builds on long term efforts by the riparian states to protect and develop the river system for the benefit of poor people living within the basin and to sustain ecosystem goods and services for broader use within the SADC region and beyond. The project is a continuation of innovative investment efforts in governance and management by the GEF (third project) and Sida and USAID that have worked together in a coordinated fashion. The PIF proposes a project design that is prioritizing a few activities within the SAP that complement the work of other donors and builds upon the strengths within UNDP that through its implementation status can provide technical assistance. The ownership rests with the riparian states and the functions carried out by the OKACOM and its secretariat. Nevertheless, STAP recommends minor revision to the project design for the following reasons.
2. As the economies of the three countries and the neighboring SADC countries expand demands for water from energy production, irrigation and water supply will grow. The riparian countries are therefore working to put in place a collective governance mechanism to ensure the sustainable flow of goods and services. The PIF does not, however, provide a governance baseline analysis relating to SADC and its support to transboundary river basin management in general and the work of the SADC water sector. It is recommended that such an analysis is included during project preparation to mitigate potential political risk outside the basin that may impact transboundary water management within the basin. Likewise a national governance baseline analysis should be undertaken covering the political economy of the basin countries and their longer term investment appetite into transboundary water resources management. It is noted in the PIF that financial contributions to OKACOM recently has been put in place by the riparian states and this demonstrates a current willingness to cooperate. As the PIF notes the governance challenges at basin level are significant, nevertheless STAP believes that these also represent an opportunity to innovate and to show how nested governance and benefit sharing can be demonstrated at national and regional scales.
3. STAP agrees with the GEF Secretariat that the proposed use of PES at transboundary level is innovative and STAP encourages the project executants to refer to the available GEF guidance, to keep full records of the assumptions made and decisions taken to enable the GEF to maximize the learning opportunity. Likewise efforts to continue build sustainable tourism efforts beyond Botswana and Namibia into Angola are encouraged.
4. Regarding water abstraction and permits, it was noted by the proponent that OKACOM does not control permits for land/water use, but could seek to influence them. STAP welcomes the availability through other projects of a water audit for the basin. Clearly permits for surface and groundwater abstraction need to be co-managed and budgeted across

the basin with due regard to seasonality given the very large wet/dry season differences in available flows. With respect to co-management of surface and groundwater and the need to proceed to an integrated water budgeting mechanism, the proponents could consider coordination of the proposed project with the proposed World Bank/GEF project "Sustainable Groundwater Management in SADC Member States" (GEF ID 4966), within Component 3. This PIF also has a comprehensive analysis of SADC and its institution in which OKACOM sits.

5. STAP notes that transboundary fishery management is also to be supported through one of the proposed pilot projects. The PIF states that the objectives include the protection and improvement of fish stocks; in this regard STAP cautions that conservation of the species diversity (71 species in the Delta alone) and avoidance of non-native species would be a wise outcome.

6. Finally, STAP notes that there have been a number of GEF investments in the Okavango area from the biodiversity focal area, and wishes to have greater clarity as to the degree to which this initiative may be able to build on the outcomes of these initiative particularly with regard to the management of ecosystem services.

<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: (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.</p>
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: (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.</p>