

# 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 05, 2013

Screeners: 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:** 5556

**PROJECT DURATION :** 4

**COUNTRIES :** Regional (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia)

**PROJECT TITLE:** West Balkans Drina River Basin Management

**GEF AGENCIES:** World Bank

**OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:**

**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 is in strong support of the proposed "West Balkans Drina River Basin Management" foundational capacity building project that will support Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, and Montenegro to better govern and manage their transboundary water resources for multiple outcomes including inter alia energy production through sustainable hydropower production, water quality management and flood control. The proposed project will contribute to the countries' efforts to move out of from a post conflict situation and their aspirations to fulfill the goals in the Stabilization and Association Process (EU SAP) with the EU that seek to establish stabilization, transition to a market economy, the promotion of regional co-operation and EU accession. The proposed project will help the countries build their capacity to adopt and implement European standards including the EU Water Framework Directive, Floods Directive and the wider Community acquis. Serbia and Montenegro are candidate countries for EU membership and Bosnia and Herzegovina is recognized as potential candidate country for EU accession.
2. The proposed project also sits in a wider river basin governance and management context. The Drina river basin is a sub-basin to the Sava river basin that adds Croatia and Slovenia (both EU member states) to the system. The Sava river basin is a major drainage basin of South-Eastern Europe and the second largest Danube sub-basin by area. Water management in this transboundary basin is based on the Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin (FASRB) and coordinated by the International Sava River Basin Commission (ISRBC). The Danube river basin in turn has 14 riparian countries and has from 2011 an endorsed EU strategy for the Danube region developed with the non-EU member states and within the framework of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR). In this context it should be noted that the FASRB is the first development-oriented multilateral agreement concluded in the region in the post-conflict period, after the agreements on peace and succession.
3. The governance framework is developing rapidly in the Western Balkans with many actors at the national and regional level supporting efforts to achieve sustainable economic growth and stability. Many of these efforts are described in the project concept document. Considering the changing governance framework STAP recommends that a standard GEF TDA and SAP approach is only considered as one possible approach to strengthen collection action in the basin. It will be critical during project design to undertake a governance baseline analysis that explores the existing governance and management frameworks and strengthen the ones that the countries with support from the EU and other organizations are developing. To add new approaches in the current political and economic situation may not provide the outcomes that the project is proposed to achieve i.e. multi-state cooperation, support for flood management and community participation. The GEF partnership recognizes that alternative approaches to the standard TDA and SAP approached to support collective action always can be considered especially in regions with multiple governance and management frameworks already in the making.

4. STAP further supports the concept of building on the lessons learnt from the GEF Neretva-Trebinjica Management Project in BiH and Croatia (GEF ID 2132), due to complete at the end of 2013 (not 2014 as stated in the PIF). STAP's review of that earlier project focused on the need for integrated transboundary management and pollution reduction, data sharing and development of integrated water resource management and concerns that a transboundary coordinating platform needed more emphasis.

5. STAP notes that the result framework is at this stage somewhat vague and that other reviewers have raised concerns about this fact. This may have arisen because in a typical GEF IW project a case is made (problem statements) for investment to formulate the TDA, which is the process that makes more concrete the subsequent 'stress reduction' measures that are proposed through the GEF SAP. In the present project proposal, the 'rapid Transboundary Diagnostic Scan and Analysis (TDA)' referred to has led to assumptions about results to be achieved, vaguely formulated that appear to jump ahead of the available evidence base. STAP therefore recommends that sufficient time and efforts are spent by the involved organizations (WB project team, country representatives, the EU Commission, the ISRBC with connections to the ICPDR and other key actors) defining a project brief that is indeed complementary and add value to ongoing activities in the Drina river basin and the greater Sava and Danube basin. This is a key outcome in itself and can serve as a model for how GEF interventions can support multi-purpose regional integration efforts in general.

<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
<b>1. Consent</b>	<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>
<b>2. Minor revision required.</b>	<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"> <li>(i) GEF Agency should discuss the issues with STAP to clarify them and possible solutions.</li> <li>(ii) In its request for CEO endorsement, the GEF Agency will report on actions taken in response to STAP's recommended actions.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Major revision required</b>	<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"> <li>(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.</li> <li>(ii) In its request for CEO endorsement, the Agency will report on actions taken in response to STAP concerns.</li> </ul>