

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: November 08, 2017
Screener: Douglas Taylor
Panel member validation by: Ferenc Toth
Consultant(s): Blake Ratner

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

FULL-SIZED PROJECT	GEF TRUST FUND
GEF PROJECT ID:	9801
PROJECT DURATION:	3.5
COUNTRIES:	Regional (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, Ukraine, Serbia)
PROJECT TITLE:	Danube River Basin Hydromorphology and River Restoration (DYNA)
GEF AGENCIES:	WWF-US
OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:	International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR), The International Sava River Basin Commission (ISRBC/ "Sava Commission"), National governments, WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme
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):
Major issues to be considered during project design

III. Further guidance from STAP

1. STAP is in support of this project proposal which aims to strengthen capacities within the Danube River basin to enable the conjunctive restoration of ecohydrological services that are expected to result in a win-win for ecology, flood defense and which also strengthens climate resilience. The proposal presents a clear baseline and adequate justification for action to be taken. However, STAP advises that the proposal, although presented in a lengthy PIF, is very weak regarding measurable outputs and outcomes and the theory of change underpinning the expected outcomes. At CEO endorsement stage much more precision will be expected, including further attention to the theory of change advanced in the PIF. STAP's suggestions for improvement are further elaborated below.

2. There seems to be a lack of sharpness in defining the scope and focus of the project. The title focuses on hydromorphology and river restoration. The Project Objective focuses on river restoration and aquatic biodiversity conservation. Yet all of the biodiversity-related outcomes appear to be results of improved management of hydromorphological change; none are separate areas of intervention. The text references benefits of improved hydromorphological management measures and river restoration, including protection of groundwater supplies, floodwater retention, improved fish habitat and migration routes, habitat for migratory bird species, etc. But, given the multiple threats to ecosystem services in the basin, the PIF does not adequately establish how addressing hydromorphological change will complement transboundary efforts addressing other vectors of change, such as point and non-point source pollution, or other measures to address conservation of key habitats and water quality.

3. The theory of change advanced in the PIF needs to be further structured to result in a clear logical framework to unpack the general statements presented dealing with needs, opportunities and hoped for

outcomes. At present it is not possible to discern what interventions are actually needed, and why these are the right ones to achieve the outcomes. Recognising alternative approaches and the rationale for selecting these interventions would strengthen the argument for the proposed investment. In addition, as part of a knowledge management strategy, specification of knowledge sources and development of uptake pathways are essential to support the theory of change.

4. The text on components is written very generally and needs restructuring to present clear output driven paths to outcomes; the statements do not easily map against the promising sub-components listed in the Indicative Project Description Summary (Section 1 B). For example, how will 'increased regional capacity' be measured, how much is needed anyway, and what will the outcome to impact path look like? Please address throughout the project design similarly open-ended statements about 'increases', 'innovation', 'improvement', 'adequately', 'strengthen', etc., that require objective targets and measures to connect to a theory of change. While the global environmental benefits noted on p14 are highly relevant, they are not quantified, and therefore it is difficult to determine to whether the associated outcomes are substantial, or not.

5. In the introductory text of the section on components, 'innovative hydromorphology demonstration pilot project investments' are proposed. What is innovative about them? Statements like this do not help to justify the investment requested. Please set out the characteristics of these pilot projects and reference the baselines and the science for which innovation is being claimed, and their contribution to the proposed outcomes. STAP accepts that at PIF stage the proposed sites could not be selected, however, criteria for their selection and representativeness need to be included at the CEO endorsement stage.

6. In the comprehensive list of stakeholders to be engaged, only hydropower is listed among segments of the power sector. Please consider adding other major power generators (fossil and nuclear power plants). Several nuclear plants are using the Danube for cooling water in various countries and they have important stakes in the issues to be addressed by this project.

7. STAP welcomes the inclusion of a specific component focusing on knowledge management (KM), which can be read alongside the concluding section of the PIF, also dealing with KM. The description of the proposed KM needs to go beyond dissemination, however effective that is. A KM Strategy needs to inform the project throughout its life to capture what works, and what does not, be capable of storing experiences, and lessons learned from the project, and be accessible for future initiatives. Further advice is given at <http://www.stapgef.org/knowledge-management-gef>

8. In conclusion, STAP's suggestions are aimed at improving the project design particularly regarding the promising opening sections of the PIF and rationale for intervention, towards a coherent and measurable set of actions that lead to impact across the Danube River basin. Much work is needed to make these improvements; and the work undertaken should be defended at the CEO endorsement stage.

<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
1. Concur	In cases where STAP is satisfied with the scientific and technical quality of the proposal, a simple "Concur" response will be provided; the STAP may flag specific issues that should be pursued rigorously as the proposal is developed into a full project document. At any time during the development of the project, the proponent is invited to approach STAP to consult on the design prior to submission for CEO endorsement.
2. Minor issues to be considered during project design	STAP has identified specific scientific /technical suggestions or opportunities that should be discussed with the project proponent as early as possible during development of the project brief. The proponent may wish to: <p>(i) Open a dialogue with STAP regarding the technical and/or scientific issues raised.</p> <p>(ii) Set a review point at an early stage during project development, and possibly agreeing to terms of reference for an independent expert to be appointed to conduct this review.</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>
3. Major issues	STAP proposes significant improvements or has concerns on the grounds of specified major

to be considered during project design	<p>scientific/technical methodological issues, barriers, or omissions in the project concept. If STAP provides this advisory response, a full explanation would also be provided. The proponent is strongly encouraged to:</p> <p>(i) Open a dialogue with STAP regarding the technical and/or scientific issues raised; (ii) Set a review point at an early stage during project development including an independent expert as required.</p> <p>The GEF Secretariat may, based on this screening outcome, delay the proposal and refer the proposal back to the proponents with STAP's concerns.</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>
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