

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 30, 2017
Screener: Douglas Taylor
Panel member validation by: Ferenc Toth
Consultant(s):

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

FULL-SIZED PROJECT	GEF TRUST FUND
GEF PROJECT ID:	9886
PROJECT DURATION:	5
COUNTRIES:	Regional (Mali, Niger, Chad)
PROJECT TITLE:	Economic Growth and Water Security in the Sahel through Improved Groundwater Governance
GEF AGENCIES:	World Bank
OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:	Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS), Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), FAO/UNESCO, IWMI
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):
Concur

III. Further guidance from STAP

1. STAP appreciates this well thought through project proposal to ascertain the availability and sustainability of groundwater within the sub-region identified. The project is innovative, with very good potential for transfer, and attempts to close the gap between top-down planning, management and governance, and the decision support needs of managers at all scales.
2. As discussed within the project context section of the PCN, a clear need is to address data deficiencies and to develop criteria at all scales for assessing and governing groundwater use. Component 1 identifies data needs and an outline of methodology together with mechanisms to facilitate knowledge generation and access.
3. Regarding Component 1 (and its links to Component 2), STAP fully supports the diagnostic work proposed under this Component and emphasizes that this should include special attention to the decision support needs relevant to local communities, including their affordability and replicability. Scientific and technical innovation on diagnostic tools which are capable of being applied even at remote locations is badly needed: these will help to inform local groundwater use managers about the difficult decisions about water use, and trade-offs.
4. The diagnostic approach being considered, together with training applied to local water committees, is very promising. Component 2 could consider adding support for knowledge transfer and exchange visits focused on these local committees between the three countries identified. STAP notes that, within the regional approach proposed, facilitation of exchange of experience through study tours is already envisaged: it would be helpful to elaborate more on the selection approach to be taken regarding who would participate (including their place in the hierarchy, and scale of governance, management and use) and what outcomes are expected. Considering the large intra- and inter-annual variability of rainfall, adaptive resource

management strategies will be crucial aspects of the groundwater management plans in Component 2. Moreover, while preventing degradation and dropping of the water table due to over-exploitation is the key objective, is it possible to consider restoration actions for over-exploited ground water zones, like the one mentioned in Box 1?

5. Under Component 3, the experience of practitioners acquired through regional, national and local groundwater management practice should be welcomed and systematized as contributions to the knowledge management outputs of the project. These practitioners need to be offered opportunities as trainers of trainers and, while that activity is mentioned in the proposal, it is unclear how that activity would be delivered. STAP suggests that the OSS be encouraged to pursue collaboration with universities in the region, or indeed with UNESCO-IHE/IHP, or through IWMI, to consolidate and improve sustainability of the training outputs of the project and to enable up-scaling across the Sahel region as a whole.

6. Finally, the diagnostic approach and practical ground-truthing that this project is capable of delivering will be useful to complement and share with ongoing GEF projects such as the Sustainable Groundwater Management in SADC Member States project (P127086, GEF ID 4966), and at the start of the project Enhancing conjunctive management of surface and groundwater resources in selected transboundary aquifers: Case study for selected shared groundwater bodies in the Nile Basin (GEF ID 9912).

<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	<p>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> <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, 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 to be considered during project design	<p>STAP proposes significant improvements or has concerns on the grounds of specified major 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>