

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 31, 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:	9919
PROJECT DURATION:	5
COUNTRIES:	Regional (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro)
PROJECT TITLE:	Implementation of the SAP of the Dinaric Karst Aquifer System: Improving Groundwater Governance and Sustainability of Related Ecosystems
GEF AGENCIES:	UNDP
OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:	UNESCO International Hydrological 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):
Concur

III. Further guidance from STAP

1. STAP is in support of this project which consolidates the extensive earlier work on this important hydrogeological system and which demands an innovative approach that integrates groundwater and surface water monitoring and management.
2. STAP notes that the present project address most of the key lessons learned from the predecessor project (GEF ID 3690), which led to the DIKTAS TDA and supports the key objectives. These further develop the twin original objectives of: a) facilitating the equitable and sustainable utilization and management of the transboundary water resources of the Dinaric Karst Aquifer System; and b) protecting from natural and man-made hazards, including climate change. in the unique groundwater-dependent ecosystems that characterize the Dinaric Karst region of the Balkan Peninsula.
STAP also notes with appreciation that the GEF/FAO project Groundwater Governance – Global Framework for Action findings, fully informs the project design.
3. While it is true that the transboundary aquifers already mapped concern directly the four project countries, the advice from the predecessor project's terminal evaluation (to invite Serbia and FYA Macedonia to observe or participate) is not explicit within the present proposal. At a regional level scientific and technical information exchange will be enhanced if the knowledge sharing/management components of the project reach out to both the additional non-EU Dinaric Karst-sharing countries. These are: Component 1.1 for the joint multi-disciplinary thematic expert groups; Component 3 – outcome 4 supporting actions; Component 5.2 regarding a DIKTAS rulebook; and Component 6.3 linking IW:LEARN activities with the cited projects. STAP acknowledges that the proponents have identified ongoing GEF projects which already involve both countries, nevertheless further attention to the suggested outreach to these adjacent countries is relevant.

4. One area that could be usefully strengthened within project design is the knowledge management (KM) side of Component 5. As currently written it is aimed primarily at stakeholder-oriented knowledge dissemination which is of course very important. However, given the GEF's increasing emphasis on KM, further development of the KM aspects would be desirable at CEO endorsement stage. This applies in particular to: learning captured during implementation, and its influence on adaptive project management; and the need to share more (uptake pathways/theory of change) about what succeeds (or fails) within the GEF and beyond. See for example, project-related recommendations to the GEF at: <http://www.stapgef.org/knowledge-management-gef>.

5. Identification of stakeholders and related awareness raising and capacity building forms a key part of project design. STAP appreciates the intention through Component 5, and output 6.1 to include educational outputs. Please consider the Ramsar Convention's outreach and support materials supporting wise use of wetlands, particularly on Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA). For example, due to the well-developed caving sport sector, there are relevant materials developed for karst in Slovenia: 'A Five Year Karst CEPA Strategy' at http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/outreach_actionplan_slovenia_karst.pdf

<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.</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 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>