

# 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 03, 2012

Screener: Douglas Taylor

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

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

**FULL SIZE PROJECT    GEF TRUST FUND**

**GEF PROJECT ID:** 4483

**PROJECT DURATION :** 4

**COUNTRIES :** Regional (Albania, Montenegro, Macedonia)

**PROJECT TITLE:** Enabling Transboundary Cooperation and Integrated Water Resources Management in the Extended Drin River Basin

**GEF AGENCIES:** UNDP

**OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:** UNOPS, UNECE, GWP-MED

**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 revision required**

### III. Further guidance from STAP

1. This project has been proposed to build upon the 'Drin Dialogue', itself informed by a preliminary Transboundary Diagnostic Assessment (TDA), provided through UNDP and three GEF projects focusing on the management of transboundary lakes within the Drin river basin. The principal drivers that led to the project proposed are stated to include the desire, by the three GEF recipient countries within the project, to adopt or to align their regulations towards the EU Water Framework Directive standards and a more general commitment fostered under the UNECE Water Convention towards collective management of the extended Drin basin (it is noted that only Albania of the three riparian countries have signed and ratified the UNECE Water Convention). A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the management of the shared Drin river basin "A shared vision- was signed between the riparian countries on 25 November 2011 indicating a significant step towards building a common management regime in the basin.

2. The three countries are currently in different stages related to accession into the EU. FYR Macedonia and Montenegro have a candidate status and Albania is a potential candidate as enlargement countries. The EC Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2011-2012 document (COM(2011) 666 final) outlines an enlargement strategy with the Western Balkan countries stressing the implementation of the EU acquis (full body of EU legislation). The EU integration process is also noted as a key commitment by the riparian countries in the Drin river basin shared vision. Regional cooperation and good neighborly relations are carefully monitored by the EU Commission (DG Enlargement). The International Financial Institutions Advisory Group (IFIs AG) is e.g. one of the mechanisms put in place by Directorate-General Enlargement to improve the coordination between the IFIs and the European Commission amongst the candidate countries. The candidate countries can participate in the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development and the Competitiveness and Innovation programme and energy interconnection is a key element in the EU's cooperation with the objective to promote sustainable economic growth, trade and cultural exchange.

3. STAP welcomes the project, subject to further clarification regarding the political economic framework related to the EU accession process, coordination with the EU Commission and also concerning analysis of risks and benefits. STAP appreciates that the PIF contains largely well researched background and a clearly written history of the initiatives leading to the present project proposal, but notes the rapid integration process with the EU and is concerned that the project is designed outside this framework even though support to the transposition of the EU WFD is noted in the PIF.

4. For the above reasons, and especially concerning the potentially duplicative approach taken by the proponent and the potential outcome of lack of harmonization with EU processes, STAP recommends significant revision of project

conceptualization as outlined here prior to full project document submission to the GEF CEO for approval. It is also recommended that the proponent invite STAP to review the full project document and discuss actions taken prior to submission of the project brief for Council approval. STAP requests that it be contacted by the proponent to discuss and agree on next steps in this regard.

5. STAP agrees that the principal drivers cited in the PIF can lead to agreed collective action plans. However, the EU enlargement process and steps to research the likely benefits of collective action and benefits distribution are not clearly stated, compared to the greater emphasis in the PIF regarding the determination of the obligations cited e.g. prevent and control pollution, protect biodiversity, etc. Similarly the output statement of the establishment of a High Level Commission for the Extended Drin river basin can be questioned considering the existing sub-basin and lakes agreement and the current coordination undertaken by the GEF-MED. STAP recommends that an institutional analysis be conducted that takes a long term perspective into account, considering the EU integration process, in order to determine whether there are different institutional models that may be more attractive from a sustainability perspective.

6. Additionally, given the substantial investigative work that has already been conducted at transboundary level between individual countries regarding Prespa, Ohrid, Drin, Skadar/Shkoder sub-basins, the added value of the present project regarding gap filling to investigate shared problems at extended basin scale compared to what is known at sub-basin scale is not entirely clear from the description (e.g. in Component 1) within the PIF, in order to avoid duplication of past TDA-related work.

7. Regarding the specific project Components STAP requests that the following issues are also addressed in a revised project design:

**Component 1.**

A sub-component to outcome 1 should be added to research the existing (baseline) shared costs and benefits experienced by the participating countries regarding shared water resources and services generated from the resources. Information from this sub-component could usefully drive discussion on enhancing shared benefits and to strengthen the proposed Water Futures scenarios proposed in the TDA, as well as the Visioning process proposed in Component 2;

**Component 2.**

While the SAP as proposed in Outcome 2 is a standard approach, its framing should be extended to go beyond considering the issues of transboundary concern, towards opportunities including the issues/topics already cited and additional sectors (e.g. tourism, food security, transport) assessed through social and economic valuation taking the wider EU enlargement process into consideration.

**Component 3.**

Consider a broad institutional analysis as a foundation for a sustainable cooperative framework.

8. Regarding the proposed training program, consider adding training on economic evaluation as applied to investment strategy regarding e.g. cost/benefit of flood management, water quality and supply, watershed services, etc.

9. Risks. While STAP agrees that the principal risk is lack of political support, this risk could be mitigated by careful attention to the work proposed in the TDA. As mentioned earlier, the project as it is presently formulated might result in a SAP that appears unduly prescriptive regarding obligations on countries to prevent pollution, reduce flood risk, protect biodiversity, etc. without additional scientific effort to research and value the socioeconomic benefits that may be realized under Component 4. Other risks that could compromise project implementation include corruption (it will be important to have an anti-corruption plan in place), organized crime that may delay project components due to insecurity and weak regional frameworks in general.

<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
<b>1. Consent</b>	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.  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.
<b>2. Minor revision required.</b>	STAP has identified specific scientific or technical challenges, omissions or opportunities that should be addressed by the project proponents during project development.  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.
3. <b>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>