

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: May 06, 2013

Screener: Lev Neretin

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

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

FULL SIZE PROJECT GEF TRUST FUND

GEF PROJECT ID: 5405

PROJECT DURATION : 5

COUNTRIES : Regional (China, Indonesia, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Philippines, Timor Leste, Vietnam)

PROJECT TITLE: EAS Scaling up the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia

GEF AGENCIES: UNDP

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: PEMSEA

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 complex project proposal outlines an ambition to scale up the partnerships, capacities and investments in environmental management of the East Asian Seas (EAS), and STAP agrees that the project outline in the PIF is consistent with the outline presented in the parent Program (GEF ID 4936) under which the present proposal is one of three projects within the Program. In its screening of the parent Program STAP noted that while the Program strives to achieve transformational impact at this stage, its specific components and projects are, however, more incremental than transformational. STAP was also concerned about the program design and the links to the broader regional development agenda. STAP also holds a similar opinion regarding the present proposal, but accepts that its three main elements (governance improvements, targeted investments in healthy and resilient marine and coastal ecosystems, and knowledge management) are robust.
2. The PIF outlines three components, each proposing substantial country involvement at regional and in partnership with each other, national actions to address SDS-SEA targets. STAP agrees that the support to PEMSEA is relatively clearly described in the PIF; however, the PIF fails to explain clearly how the country actions will be delivered and their sequencing. STAP requests that this deficit be fully addressed in the project brief.
3. The word "innovative" is used several times in the project framework and text of the PIF without any indication of what this promises. STAP notes that the threshold for "innovation" is being set very high for the project and the project brief will need to describe what will actually be delivered and by whom.
4. The indicative project framework set out in the PIF appears consistent with the Program outline; however, it remains vague about targets. Importantly, the list of common challenges and constraints (barriers) described in the baseline scenario (section A.1.2) at country level are not matched by the actions described in Components 2 and 3, except in very general terms. For example, lack of capacity, awareness and relevant policies are listed, but apart from Component 2.3.3 (Innovative policies, technologies and good practices developed) the critical path to effectiveness is not supported by components or clearly linked to country needs. In particular, Annex A does not provide sufficient clarity on how components 1 and 3 will connect to these country-based needs, thus the PIF is incomplete and unclear how it should result in any tangible outcomes. STAP suggests developing evidence-based criteria that would take into account catalytic and transformational change in selecting interventions under Component 2. One way to take a more holistic view in prioritizing these interventions would be to use the Marine INvest model or similar tool that is based on the valuation of marine natural capital assessing the tradeoffs associated with alternative choices in order to identify areas where investments in natural capital can enhance human development and ecosystem conservation (<http://www.naturalcapitalproject.org/InVEST.html>).

5. Component 3 describes support for knowledge platforms, which STAP fully supports. The set of actions outlined will generate many products and the proposed skills training courses and programs at regional and country levels are welcomed. This investment provides an opportunity to satisfy the need to establish a regionally and nationally recognized depository of environmental information/knowledge coming from past and on-going assessments of LMEs of the East Asia region. ICM Learning Centers and Communities of Practice, as proposed in the project, might be appropriate institutions for this work, but not necessarily if this information cannot be channeled to decision-making and funding allocation priorities at the regional level.

Furthermore, the PIF (and its parent Program) remains silent on how the impact of proposed projects and activities as well as results of other initiatives in the region will be measured and reported back to key regional decision-making bodies (e.g., to EAS Partnership Council and other regional bodies). STAP requests that the project brief details how policy-relevant information will be delivered, monitored and utilized.

6. STAP reiterates its recommendation about adding a fourth Component addressing program wide sustainability issues and tackling the broader regional economic frameworks addressing regional integration issues as defined by the "ASEAN plus three" and the East Asia Summit (EAS) such as trade, energy, infrastructure, labour and investment, which may be needed for long term success of project outcomes. Such a fourth component could be strategically important in promoting transformational change in creating a sustainable green/blue economy and maintaining and restoring ecosystem services in the LMEs under consideration. This would ensure that program results become part of a broader sustainability and growth agenda in the region. The lack of "proper coordination and agreed procedures and methodologies among different regional entities, programs and projects" led to fragmentation and ineffectiveness in using development funds in the region (Tengberg and Cabanban, 2013). While it could be challenging to establish formal communication channels between all regional bodies active in the EAS region facilitated by PEMSEA, a much stronger and regular process of information exchange and coordination is feasible and highly desirable between GEF partners active in the region (UNDP, UNEP, FAO, WB, and ADB). Accordingly STAP recommends institutionalizing this process within the program framework and integrating the present project within it.

7. One of the aims of the proposed project (in support of the Program) is to expand adoption of ICM policies and plans and enhance their mainstreaming each into country's sustainable development and financing frameworks. The SEA region became one of the most successful examples applying ecosystem-based management approaches to LMEs using ICM. Application of the ICM on the ground, however, faces a number of challenges such as its limited scope in mainstreaming ecosystem services and multiple benefits and trade-offs for the use of coastal and marine space. Furthermore, ICM applications are lacking opportunities to mainstream climate variability and change as well as for alternative scenario building. ICM's utility in holistic accounting for multiple ecosystem services, and potential conflict resolution for the use of coastal and marine space, also remains limited. STAP reiterates that the project proponents are recommended to consider wider support for marine spatial planning (MSP) across the SEA region building on the existing ICM experience. Recently released assessments of lessons learned in applying MSP globally, prepared by the STAP for the CBD, could provide a useful guidance in moving forward (CBD and GEF-STAP (2012).

References

- Tengberg and A.S. Cabanban. 2013. Lessons learned from investing in marine and coastal management initiatives in the East Asian Seas. *Marine Policy* 38; 355-364
- CBD and GEF-STAP. 2012. Marine spatial planning in the context of the Convention on Biological Diversity: A study carried out in response to CBD COP 10 Decision X/29, Montreal, Technical Series No. 68, 44 pp.).

<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
1. Consent	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.
2. Minor revision required.	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. Major revision required	<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> <p>(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.</p> <p>(ii) In its request for CEO endorsement, the Agency will report on actions taken in response to STAP concerns.</p>