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: February 24, 2014 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: 5535
PROJECT DURATION : 5
COUNTRIES : Regional (Burkina Faso, Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Chad)
PROJECT TITLE: Improving IWRM, Knowledge based Management and Governance of the Niger Basin and the Iullemeden Taoudeni Tanezrouft Aquifer System (ITTAS)
GEF AGENCIES: UNDP and UNEP
OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: Niger Basin Authority (NBA), Observatory of the Sahar and Sahel (OSS), UNESCO-IHP
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): **Consent**

III. Further guidance from STAP

1. STAP welcomes this proposal that builds on the approved SAP (2010) by the Council of Ministers of the Niger Basin Authority. The project sets out to specifically examine conjunctive use of groundwater and surface water in the Niger Basin and its related groundwater systems as defined in the SAP specifically related to knowledge generation and pollution control. The project aims to strengthen the groundwater knowledge and management component of the existing Niger Basin TDA, connect these to knowledge provided by the existing TDA of the Iullemeden Aquifer System, extend this baseline to the adjacent aquifers termed the Iullemeden-Taoudeni-Tanezrouft Aquifer System (ITTAS), and to enable recommended actions to be ministerially endorsed. STAP notes that the Niger Basin Authority has been identified as the coordinating platform for the project and that governance weaknesses described regarding the capacity of the Niger Basin Authority and national focal points is to be addressed through parallel financed projects from various donors.

2. The barriers [to conjunctive use of ground and surface water] described appear to be relevant but are not comprehensively analysed. A fifth barrier, not mentioned, is the lack of clear policies to deal with governance and management of ground and surface waters, because existing river basin organizations may not have a mandate to deliver conjunctive water management. A sixth barrier concern the broader political and economic governance aspects at the regional level in which the NBA sits which is critical from a sustainability and ownership point of view. This includes the role of the multipurpose ECOWAS that has developed a specific Water Resources Coordination Centre to ensure the coordination of regional and national sectoral policies on water resources beyond the river basin scale linking it to e.g. the water-energy-food nexus. Important good lessons learned in this regard are noted in the recently approved PIF for the GEF project Sustainable Groundwater Management in SADC Member States (GEF ID 4966) and in STAP's screening report for this project.

3. The present project proposes actions delivered through four components, STAP's advice is set out below:

Component 1 focusing upon improved knowledge and capacity to conjunctively manage of surface and ground waters appears in general scientifically sound, but the project brief should describe more objectively

what is required to "â€¦establish a sound understanding of the ITTAS groundwater resources and their linkages with surface water systems to support IWRM processes in the Basin.", i.e. what is the likely minimum effort required to obtain adequate data, the description should be formulated to help others to design similar projects.

Component 2 supporting the NBA Shared Vision and implementation of the Niger Basin SAP looks to be a useful set of community based actions proposed. However, as presented in the PIF, the outputs proposed are not coherent regarding overall expected impact at aquifer or basin scale; neither do they, with the exception of Output 2.4, appear to be directly aimed at barrier removal. The project preparation phase should carefully examine these points and re-focus the Component as necessary focussing on groundwater management issues to ensure learning during project implementation.

Component 3 is particularly welcome and picks up on what is noted in the SAP; the focus on partnership with industry and establishment of clear standards and good practices should be an effective demonstrator of the potential to engage with the wider business community in the region and bringing in UNIDO expertise.

Component 4 focuses on capacity building and policy support. The former is clearly appropriate and welcome. Policy support for conjunctive management of surface and ground waters is essential and the identified outputs would be expected to contribute to the resolution of this challenge, however, as described in the PIF Output 4.2 may not be sufficiently influential to resolve it.

4. STAP has noted above that a similar initiative is underway in the SADC region (GEF ID 4966), with a range of expert inputs that should clearly complement the identified sources of expertise for the proposed project. The project developers are encouraged to share scientific and technical approaches for example the SADC project's Shared Aquifer Diagnostic Analysis to complement GEF's TDA and in particular, policy information with that project with a view to formulating an Africa-wide protocol for governance and management of ground/surface waters possibly linked to the AU that has as its mandate to coordinate and support efforts of Regional Economic Commissions and other regional institutions.

STAP advisory response	*Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed*
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	STAP has identified significant scientific or technical challenges or omissions in the PIF and recommends significant improvements to project design. Follow-up: (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. (ii) In its request for CEO endorsement, the Agency will report on actions taken in response to STAP concerns.