

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: @@@@ @@, @@@@
Screener: Guadalupe Duron
Panel member validation by: Annette Cowie
Consultant(s):

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

FULL-SIZED PROJECT	GEF TRUST FUND
GEF PROJECT ID:	9586
PROJECT DURATION:	4
COUNTRIES:	Turkey
PROJECT TITLE:	Contributing to Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) Target Setting by Demonstrating the LDN Approach in the Upper Sakarya Basin for Scaling up at National Level
GEF AGENCIES:	FAO
OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:	Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs (MFWA), Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock (MFAL)
GEF FOCAL AREA:	Land Degradation

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

STAP welcomes FAO's project "Contributing to Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) Target Setting by Demonstrating the LDN Approach in the Upper Sakarya Basin for Scaling Up at National Level". The project seeks to address the drivers of environmental degradation by piloting the Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) approach across sectors, namely in agriculture, forestry, and livestock in the Upper Sakarya Basin in Turkey. Integrating LDN across these sectors will assist Turkey strengthen its spatial planning process to restore degraded lands, and reduce desertification rates. STAP applauds the collaborative approach including stakeholder engagement at all levels. STAP is pleased that the project plans to generate learning on LDN "an important concept to the Sustainable Development Goals and to UNCCD. In this regard, STAP looks forward to FAO's LDN guidelines that it will develop based on this project experience. STAP also offers recommendations below on how to capture learning of LDN for knowledge management purposes.

To further strengthen the project during its design, STAP recommends addressing these points:

1. STAP recommends that FAO use the conceptual framework on LDN developed by UNCCD's Science Policy Interface: <http://knowledge.unccd.int/knowledge-products-and-pillars/land-degradation-neutrality-ldn-conceptual-framework/land> to inform the project.

The framework described the scientific basis and principles for implementing and monitoring LDN.

2. STAP is pleased to note the intention to integrate LDN into strategic planning. STAP would like to see further detail on the planning aspect mentioned in component 1, including how the likely future cumulative impacts of land use decisions will be estimated, and how LDN interventions will be prioritised, noting the need to balance losses and gains within one land type, and to manage neutrality at the scale that land use decisions are made.

3. STAP recommends detailing further the causal relationship between the activities, outcomes, and outputs. In this regard, it would be valuable to describe the assumptions, or hypotheses, underlying the linkages between the components. Furthermore, it would be useful to specify how the four chosen components provide a basis for demonstrating LDN and scaling up its application at the sub-national and national level.

4. STAP is pleased that the RAPTA will be used to assess resilience and consider implementation pathways to deal with shocks and trends (e.g. climate change). It is recommended that the RAPTA be applied when developing the theory of change, in order to assess whether the project objective, and the environmental drivers it seeks to address, can be met through incremental changes to the social-ecological system, or whether major transformative changes are needed. This will permit the project developers to consider whether it is necessary to develop alternative impact pathways, or theory of change, to bring about the desired impacts. The RAPTA guidelines can assist in this regard, and they can be found at: <http://www.stagef.org/rapta-guidelines>

5. STAP recommends that the knowledge management section (page 21, section 7) detail further how the learning from piloting LDN will be captured so that it links to the project's adaptive management. When the project is designed, it is recommended to work with stakeholders in defining the learning process. This process should include monitoring of LDN status, and a mechanism for embedding learning into the project. Stakeholders should revisit the theory of change, and assess, based on learning, whether it needs to be adapted. More precisely, stakeholders should identify the lessons learned on how to apply LDN in order to successfully implement LDN in the Upper Sakarya Basin.

The decision support system (DSS) described in the proposal can be a valuable component of knowledge management. It is recommended that learning from monitoring and assessment be embedded in the DSS to improve the capacity to estimate impacts of LDN interventions on the LDN indicators. This should include identifying important environmental and socio-economic factors that can be assessed through complementary indicators to enhance the monitoring of ecosystem services. Focusing on these complementary indicators will allow project proponents and decision makers to be fully informed about the broader impacts of the proposed LDN interventions.

6. The proposal has limited information on the institutional landscape and socio/economic context. For example, further information is needed on the socio-economic characteristics of the farmers, herders, and other land users that the project will target. The agro-ecological zones should also be defined so that the following elements are better understood: a) stakeholders' land planning needs; b) their requirements for ecosystem services; c) how they may be affected by risks (e.g climate change); and, d) how they will strengthen their capacities to cope with negative changes. This should be completed with further descriptions of stakeholders' values, what risks they perceive, the land tenure systems, or institutional arrangements, that characterize their social-ecological systems for managing land, forest, livestock, and water resources.

<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	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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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>The proponent should provide a report of the action agreed and taken, at the time of submission of the</p>

	full project brief for CEO endorsement.
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>