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 23, 2017
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:	9798
PROJECT DURATION:	5
COUNTRIES:	Angola
PROJECT TITLE:	Sustainable Land Management in Target Landscapes in Angola's Southwestern Region
GEF AGENCIES:	FAO
OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:	Ministry of Environment (MINAMB)
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 acknowledges FAO's proposal "Sustainable Land Management in target landscapes in Angola's southwestern region". STAP appreciates that the project will be informed by other GEF projects, and non-GEF projects, in the region. The outcomes of these projects will provide valuable information on the use of remote sensing for land use planning, how to scale-up farmer field schools, and dryland management. STAP is pleased to see the theory of change presented, that provides sound justification for the three planned areas of activity. STAP appreciates the strong focus on developing Agroecological zoning as a basis for land use planning. STAP notes that the project will apply Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) Indicators to assess rehabilitation measures. STAP suggests that integrated land use planning for LDN, applied at landscape scale, can be a useful tool to enhance ecosystem services and strengthen the capacity of communities to deal with increased risks, such as climate change. Therefore, FAO is encouraged to consider LDN more broadly as a synergistic approach to achieve multiple environmental and social benefits.

Below, STAP identifies issues the project can strengthen further during the design phase:

1. Define explicitly the global environmental benefits, and the indicators that will be used to measure and monitor each benefit. The incremental reasoning table (page 14) can be detailed to provide this information, which is currently absent. For component 2, STAP acknowledges that LDN indicators will be used to monitor rehabilitation measures. STAP encourages FAO to identify the potential benefits that LDN can help deliver by reducing, and reversing, land degradation. STAP suggests that the LDN conceptual framework can be used to inform monitoring and assessment of land-based ecosystem services, and on-ground interpretation of results. The "Scientific Conceptual Framework for Land Degradation Neutrality" provides "…guidance on how best to assess land degradation, identify appropriate management actions, and report on progress in achieving LDN."(Orr, B. et al. 2017. "Scientific Conceptual Framework for LDN"). The framework can be accessed at: http://knowledge.unccd.int/knowledge-products-and-pillars/land-degradation-neutrality-ldn-conceptual-framework/land

2. In addition, the project's LDN effort should contribute towards Angola's voluntary targets for LDN. The project document should reflect how the interventions link with the UNCCD's target setting programme: http://www2.unccd.int/actions/ldn-target-setting-programme

3. STAP welcomes the geo-spatial analysis of land degradation using GLADIS, and the maps provided in the annex. STAP agrees that a more robust GIS analysis at a higher resolution than GLADIS is needed for land use planning purposes. Therefore, it is encouraged by component 1, which will use geo-referenced data to gather information on soil, terrain, land cover, climate, and crop suitability.

To understand further the potential benefits of using and establishing a geographical information system as a land-use planning tool for the target region, STAP encourages FAO to provide details on the geo-referenced methods, or approach, and the data (spatial and temporal parameters) that will be used in the project, and to describe its advantages and limitations as a spatial planning tool in meeting the project objective. The project document also should define measures that will address the limitations (e.g. satellite imagery not matching well the temporal characteristics of the cultivation season). Information required to ground-truth, or complement, the geo-referenced data also should be detailed in the project document – for example, what are the cultivation and agro-forestry practices; how long are the cultivation periods; how is regeneration of forest, or soil fertility to be assessed?; and, what are the socio-economic factors that may have influenced the geo-spatial observations?. For insights into the use and results of geo-referenced approaches for assessing cultivation dynamics in south-central Angola, FAO could consider the following papers: (1) Schenibel, A. et al. (2017). "Assessment of spatio-temporal changes of smallholder cultivation patterns in the Angolan Miombo belt using segmentation of Landsat time series". Remote Sensing of Environment 195 (2017) 118–129. and (2) Cabral, A., et al. (2010). "Spatial dynamics and quantification of deforestation in the central-plateau woodlands of Angola (1990e2009)". Applied Geography 31 (2010) 1185 -1193, that quantifies deforestation in the Huambo province using remote sensing.

4. STAP appreciates the theory of change provided in the annex. The proposed theory of change articulates the rationale for the proposed components, and the links between them. STAP encourages FAO to add a learning component to the theory of change, so that assumed causal relationships between interventions and impacts can be tested, and understanding of the system can be strengthened, to inform this and future projects.

5. STAP welcomes the focus on assessment of "land suitability and potential productivity", as the basis for targeting SLM and land rehabilitation interventions. STAP encourages the consideration of all the dimensions of land potential, which encompass the soil and site attributes and limitations, and resilience to natural and human stressors. The Resilience, Adaptation Pathways Transformation Assessment (RAPTA) Framework provides guidance on assessment of resilience: http://www.stapgef.org/rapta-guidelines.

6. On a minor point, FAO may wish to consider revising the project title, as the current wording could be interpreted as implying that local stakeholders do not apply sustainable or rational approaches, and the meaning of "land-use stabilization" is unclear.

STAP advisory response	*Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed*
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: (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. 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.
3. Major issues to be considered during project design	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: (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. The GEF Secretariat may, based on this screening outcome, delay the proposal and refer the proposal back to the proponents with STAP's concerns. 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.