

# 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 10, 2012

Screeners: Guadalupe Duron

Panel member validation by: Annette Cowie  
Consultant(s):

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

**FULL SIZE PROJECT**    **GEF TRUST FUND**

**GEF PROJECT ID:** 5044

**PROJECT DURATION :** 5

**COUNTRIES :** Argentina

**PROJECT TITLE:** Sustainable Land Use Management in the Drylands of North-west Argentina

**GEF AGENCIES:** UNDP

**OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:** Environment and Sustainable Development Secretariat (SAyDS)

**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): **Consent**

### III. Further guidance from STAP

STAP welcomes the project submitted by UNDP and Argentina's Secretariat of the Environment and Sustainable Development on "Sustainable land use management in Argentina's northwestern drylands." The global environmental outcomes outlined in the proposal are ambitious, addressing a pressing issue of both regional and global significance. In doing so, STAP supports the mainstreaming of sustainable land management (SLM) strategies in this high-priority area through the implementation of multi-level cooperation and monitoring mechanisms. STAP also appreciates the well-referenced baseline analysis for the project using the LADA methodology.

However, STAP proposes that a number of scientific and technical issues as outlined below be addressed in the further development of this concept to a full proposal:

1. In component 1, STAP suggests defining explicitly the methodology that will be used to assess the values of the different SLM practices and the ecosystem benefits they are likely to generate. STAP also encourages UNDP to provide scientific references supporting the valuation of land-based ecosystems services. Additionally, UNDP may wish to refer to the following two publications on valuing ecosystem services: 1) de Groot R., et al. "Global estimates of the value of ecosystems and their services in monetary units." *Ecosystem Services* 1 (2012), 50-61. 2) Farley, J. *Ecosystem services: The economic debate*. *Ecosystem Services* 1 (2012), 40-49.
2. One aspect UNDP will need to consider is defining clearly the socio-economic context of valuing an ecosystem service, given the complexity and diversity of stakeholders likely to be affected by the project. For example, placing a value on an ecosystem service may exclude the livelihood dependence of stakeholders on that service (e.g. provision of food), thus, undervaluing the ecosystem service. Refer to de Groot R., et al. "Global estimates of the value of ecosystems and their services in monetary units". *Ecosystem Services* 1 (2012), 50-61.
3. The proposal defines the global environmental benefits it intends to generate in the three eco-regions. Nonetheless, there is a need to identify indicators for each benefit, and to describe how these indicators will be measured and monitored throughout project implementation. Currently, the monitoring of global benefits is only succinctly described in the proposal section B.5. Therefore, STAP suggests describing more explicitly the methods for measuring and monitoring impact, in ways amenable for tracking the expected global environmental outcomes. This will strengthen the scientific rationale for the incremental cost reasoning. Moreover, STAP requests the inclusion of project-tracking mechanisms in the final proposal. Given the complicated institutional architecture of the project, means for its monitoring are indispensable for evaluation purposes.

4. The geographical boundaries of the three eco-regions targeted by the project are loosely defined. The use of geographical coordinates or more specific geographic references would help further clarify the localization of the targeted regions as well as some of the politico-jurisdictional complexities inherent in the project's implementation.

5. In addition, while the proposal stresses that land management challenges are not homogeneous in the targeted drylands, the catalysts and impact of land degradation are described generically. Table 2, which synthesizes the effects of particular issues in each targeted ecosystem, is not sufficiently explicit – i.e. the meaning, scale, and weighting methodology for the values presented in Table 2 is unclear. A further description of this analysis would be helpful. Alternatively, references to LADA documents describing the land degradation analysis (drivers and impacts) could be provided in the proposal.

6. STAP also welcomes a more detailed explanation of the land-use conflicts and ecological challenges that specifically affect each targeted eco-region, especially in terms of how they affect particular ongoing practices and stakeholders. The illustration of the specific activities driving environmental degradation will facilitate the linkage of regional issues to global challenges, re-emphasizing the potential global benefits to be derived from the project.

7. The Risk Assessment in Section B.4 appears limited. The assessment fails to mention, for example, risks concerning the magnitude of livelihood benefits over and above the costs associated with implementing best practices. Furthermore, the proposal does not address whether the introduction of SLM strategies is achievable throughout the targeted areas, nor potential resistances from political actors involved in baseline programs. Due to the atomized nature of the governance authority, ongoing legal challenges to the implementation of the baseline programs, and institutional asymmetries in Argentina, the institutional and political risks need to be addressed more explicitly. STAP recommends including the risk of: non-recovery; institutional rigidity and resistance to inter-institutional collaboration; and, barriers to the implementation and reform of baseline programs.

8. STAP welcomes the detailed description of the multiple stakeholders involved in the project, and their roles in relation to the project components. However, STAP wishes to see a more detailed description of the local-level stakeholders – i.e. small farmers, indigenous people, and large agri-business companies. This is significant because local-level actors are given an important role in the implementation of the project. In addition, there is no mention of existing multi-stakeholder organizations, such as region-specific "Conglomerados Productivos," whose role also may be important in addressing the project implementation barriers. Similarly, indigenous peoples are referenced only elliptically at B.1 para 13. They are not mentioned in section B.3., although they are likely to significantly benefit from the project.

9. More significantly, the project proponents recognize the importance of gender issues in only one sentence at the end of B.3. STAP recommends strengthening gender mainstreaming in the project components. UNDP may wish to refer to its material on gender and the environment, among other sources -

[http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/environmentandenergy/focus\\_areas/gender/](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/environmentandenergy/focus_areas/gender/)

<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.
<b>3. Major revision required</b>	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.

