

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: January 23, 2012

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Panel member validation by: Michael Anthony Stocking
Consultant(s):

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

FULL SIZE PROJECT **GEF TRUST FUND**

GEF PROJECT ID: 4751

PROJECT DURATION : 5

COUNTRIES : Botswana

PROJECT TITLE: Mainstreaming SLM in Rangeland Areas of Ngamiland District Productive Landscapes for Improved livelihoods

GEF AGENCIES: UNDP

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: Depts of Forestry & Range Resources, Environmental Affairs, Animal Production & Crop Production, Botswana Meat Commission

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): **Minor revision required**

III. Further guidance from STAP

STAP welcomes UNDP's proposal to mainstream SLM in rangeland areas of Ngamiland District, Botswana. The project framework is commendably simple with two components that target (1) the better management of the biophysical rangeland, and (2) the governance and incentives for herders to reduce stocking rates and improve quality. STAP appreciates the emphasis of further supporting moves in Botswana towards local governance of the rangeland, while simultaneously addressing the condition of the range, ecological monitoring and market-driven incentives for local people to participate and to improve their livelihoods. Botswana, and southern Africa more generally, has a long history back to colonial times of attempts to improve rangeland. These efforts, using aspects of some of the measures now being proposed in this project, largely failed for a variety of complex reasons, including failure to understand herders' strategies and the inappropriateness both technically and socially of the methods promoted to manage the range. It is, therefore, important that this project is cognisant of the lessons from previous attempts. The further guidance below is aimed at ensuring a strengthened proposal as it progresses towards a full project document. Because STAP has concerns that the proposal does not appear to be well rooted in both rangeland science (biophysical and social) and the monitoring of global environmental benefits, the STAP advisory response is minor revision required.

1. A re-reading and assimilation into this project of some of the lessons of previous attempts to improve the rangeland in Botswana will be essential. A good starting point is the 1989 paper by Louise Fortmann (Peasant and official views of rangeland use in Botswana. Fifty years of devastation? Land Use Policy 6(3): 197-202). It provides a 60-year historical context as to why many herders in Botswana are extremely sceptical of official rangeland policy. This will be a fundamental barrier that the current project will need to surmount explicitly. The complex linkages between herders' largely-opportunistic strategies, the condition of the vegetation, soil and plant communities and the productivity of the range also demands a careful look – see Annika Dahlberg (2000), J. Arid Environments 44(1): 19-40. It is clear that while people and livestock do have an appreciable impact on the vegetation, it is not at all clear that productivity has declined. Carrying capacity concepts – as proposed in the current project – are far too simplistic and lead to erroneous outcomes – see Abel N (1993). Carrying capacity, rangeland degradation and livestock development policy for the communal rangelands of Botswana. Overseas Development Institute, Pastoral Development Network Paper 35:1-9.

2. In line with the point above about learning from history, it is good that the current project contains at least six important elements – SLM technologies and skills; adaptive management; ecological monitoring; land governance;

markets and trade; and finance. STAP has some concerns that the purely technical aspects such as SLM technologies and credit finance will receive disproportionate attention. It is important in a project such as this that the 'difficult' aspects such as local community involvement and devolution of governance are not sidelined. The wide-scale non-compliance with government land policy, noted by the proposal (PIF #10), is largely a result of the imposition of technical solutions that local people find unacceptable.

3. The 'barrier analysis' (#18+) is well presented. It does, however, represent a somewhat technocratic view of the problem of rangeland degradation. So, for example, Barrier 1 focuses on the lack of application of the "clear principles of range management". It appears that the principles meant are those related to the classic application of rotational grazing and carrying capacity calculations - see point 1 above. Nowhere in the proposal is there recognition or understanding of non-equilibrium dynamics in rangeland use and practice, as well as the lack of understanding of pastoralist strategies (see the review by Scoones, I. 1999. *New ecology and the social sciences: what prospects for a fruitful engagement?* *Annu. Rev. Anthropol.* 28:479-507). The proponents are urged to build their approach carefully on the new thinking on range ecology that emerged in the 1990s - see example from Botswana at <http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/9529IIED.pdf> - paying particular attention to threats posed by privatising 'the commons'.

4. STAP appreciates the attempt to list Global Environmental Benefits (GEBs) in #21 of the proposal. However, STAP recommends a careful elaboration of this section in the full proposal. As currently worded, the expected GEBs are not global benefits as recognised by the GEF. They include actions that may lead to global benefits, but the actual beneficial impact on aspects such as biodiversity conservation, carbon sequestration, and changes in land (vegetation) cover are not mentioned. The pathways between the activities of the project claimed to lead to GEBs need to be specified, along with the indicators that will verify that global benefits have been achieved.

5. STAP notes the intention to support ecological monitoring that is mentioned in the Project Framework. There is a lack of specification of what this monitoring will be - including the indicators and methods that will be used - and who will do the monitoring. It will be essential in a project such as this that indicators are well chosen to be both scientifically-valid and relevant to the GEF focal area strategies. STAP suggests that changes in total system carbon be included on a sample basis, along with rangeland biodiversity and land cover (NDVI) measures. Further, the project makes claims to support the provision of ecosystems goods and services; therefore measures of livestock and rangeland productivity would be appropriate. Consistency with UNCCD impact indicators would be good and would support national reporting to the Convention. In addition, the UNCCD PRAIS is moving towards the reporting of 'best practice' in SLM and the present project is urged to contribute, since the solutions found in Botswana may well be applicable more widely. The project's links with the Okovango Research Institute could be useful here, giving it a central role in ecological monitoring.

<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
1. Consent	STAP acknowledges that on scientific/technical grounds the concept has merit. However, STAP may state its views on the concept emphasising any issues that could be improved and the proponent is invited to approach STAP for advice at any time during the development of the project brief prior to submission for CEO endorsement.
2. Minor revision required.	STAP has identified specific scientific/technical suggestions or opportunities that should be discussed with the proponent as early as possible during development of the project brief. One or more options that remain open to STAP include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Opening a dialogue between STAP and the proponent to clarify issues (ii) Setting a review point during early stage project development and agreeing 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 revision required	STAP proposes significant improvements or has concerns on the grounds of specified major scientific/technical omissions in the concept. If STAP provides this advisory response, a full explanation would also be provided. Normally, a STAP approved review will be mandatory prior to submission of the project brief for CEO endorsement. 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.