

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: March 15, 2013

Screeener: 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: 5142

PROJECT DURATION : 3

COUNTRIES : China

PROJECT TITLE: Sustainable and Climate Resilient Land Management in Western PRC

GEF AGENCIES: ADB

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: State Forestry Administration (SFA)

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

1. It would be useful to detail further the outcome indicators. In this regard, STAP suggests focusing on what is going to be measured – for example, percentage of sustainable land management practices adopted by local communities at ten demonstration sites (2.1.1).
2. STAP is pleased to see the global environmental benefits defined explicitly. During the preparation of the proposal, STAP encourages for ADB to define indicators that are measurable – as indicated in the proposal. STAP also wishes to highlight that the carbon tools raised in the global environmental benefits section are not being developed by GEF/STAP. The carbon tools were developed by a consortium of scientists based in Africa, Europe, and the United States under the leadership of UNEP-GEF. The project is titled the "Carbon Benefits Project". STAP's role has been to review the scientific rigor of the tools. ADB may wish to contact the GEF Secretariat, or UNEP, to learn more about the state of the tools.
3. STAP encourages references to peer-reviewed scientific papers, or rigorous published resources, to substantiate the baseline definition, and the proposed activities. These resources also can include lessons from previous GEF and non-GEF initiatives in the targeted region. In this regard, it would be useful for the project proponents to detail best practices arising from the first phase of the program, or lessons learned, for the development of the proposed interventions.
4. Furthermore, STAP recommends detailing comprehensively the components. At the moment, the components are described briefly only; thereby, it is difficult to assess whether the interventions are scientifically and technically valid.
5. For example, under component 1, the project developers could detail the proposed land restoration techniques by ecosystem, and how they will contribute to global environmental benefits. Likewise, the tree species need to be defined in component 1. If the species are not native, STAP recommends pursuing a risk assessment analysis of invasive species. For the PES initiative, STAP recommends referring to its publication - <http://www.stapgef.org/payments-for-environmental-services-and-gef>
6. Component 1 will target the recovery of degraded areas through several techniques suitable for different ecosystems. In this regard, improving soil health and fertility will be a critical outcome of the suggested interventions. The project proponents may wish, therefore, to consider the results of a study conducted in Shaanxi province on the changes in soil properties and quality through vegetation restoration – Wang, B. et al. "Changes in soil nutrient and enzyme activities under different vegetations in the Loess Plateau area, Northwest China. *Catena* 92 (2012).

7. Under component 2, STAP suggests rephrasing activity (i) as follows “ Identify and test the applicability of income earning opportunities (or "rural income diversification" as used in the program document) that contribute to innovative SLM practices... This text may be clearer than "Identify and test sustainable livelihoods related to innovative SLM practices..."

8. Additionally under component 2, STAP recommends defining the concept "lower-carbon consuming lifestyles" as it relates to the targeted population. Given the scope of the project, this intervention possibly could be described better as low-carbon emissions from land management practices. If estimates on carbon emissions are available for the targeted region, it also would be useful to add it to the proposal. STAP also would appreciate an explanation of "regional green development". This concept may not be understood by all.

9. Similarly in component 2, perhaps the project developers could rely on climate adaptation guidelines developed by ADB for similar contexts, or by other GEF Agencies with at least equal expertise in this area. One example are joint initiatives between UNDP, UNEP, and others on climate change resilience frameworks, and tools
 “[http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Environment%20and%20Energy/Climate%20Strategies/TACC%202010%20REPORT%202012%2011%2008%20\(27Nov2012\).pdf](http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Environment%20and%20Energy/Climate%20Strategies/TACC%202010%20REPORT%202012%2011%2008%20(27Nov2012).pdf)

10. For green products (component 2), STAP recommends relying on the STAP publication on "Environmental Certification and the Global Environment Facility". The publication includes four main threats on the effectiveness of eco-certification projects that could be addressed in the proposal design, as well as other relevant information - <http://www.stagef.org/biodiveristy-and-biosafety>

11. Under component 3, STAP suggests describing further the biophysical, socio-economic and policy conditions for sustainable land management in the two provinces to be added to the partnership “ Guizhou and Sichuan. This information will help strengthen the validity of the incremental reasoning.

12. The socioeconomic benefits are described well (B.3.). One segment that needs further development is on the "new international approaches and methods" “ that is, sustainable financing of SLM and climate change adaptation and reduction of community vulnerability. Alternatively, these two options could be imbedded more prominently throughout the components. For example, climate change data (China's vulnerability to climate change and readiness for resilience) could be included in the problem statement and project baseline. Sources for this information can be found at -http://sdwebx.worldbank.org/climateportal/index.cfm?page=global_map_region&ThisMap=AS
 Climate change resilient technologies and their contributions to reducing livelihood vulnerabilities while contributing towards global environmental benefits also could feature prominently in component 2 and 3. This includes mainstreaming adaptation in land management and in the appropriate policy frameworks related to land use and climate change.

<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
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.