

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: 27 March 2008

Screener: Guadalupe Duron

Panel member validation by: Michael Stocking

I. PIF Information

GEFSEC PROGRAM ID: 3482

GEF AGENCY PROGRAM ID: TBD

COUNTRY: People's Republic of China (PRC)

TITLE: PRC-GEF Partnership on Land Degradation in Dryland Ecosystems Program

GEF LEAD AGENCY: Asian Development Bank

OTHER GEF AGENCIES: World Bank, IFAD

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: Program management and coordination – Ministry of Finance and State Forestry Administration; Main partners – State Environmental Protection Administration, central government technical and financial agencies, participating provincial governments of Gansu, Inner Mongolia Ningxia, Qinghai, Shaanxi and Xinjiang (sub-project specific).

GEF FOCAL AREAS: Land Degradation, Biodiversity, Climate Change

GEF-4 STRATEGIC PROGRAMS: LD – SP1, SP2, SP3; BD – SP3, SP4, SP5, SP8; CC – SP6-bis.

NAME OF PARENT PROGRAM: PRC-GEF Partnership on Land Degradation in Dryland Ecosystems

EXPECTED NUMBER OF PROJECTS UNDER THE PROGRAM DURING CURRENT (GEF-4) REPLENISHMENT PERIOD: 6

Full size project GEF Trust Fund

II. STAP Advisory Response *(see table below for explanation)*

1. Based on this PIF screening, STAP's advisory response to the GEF Secretariat and GEF Agency(ies):
Consent

III. Further guidance from STAP

2. STAP welcomes the continuation of this broad programmatic approach in western China with its explicit goal of deriving co-benefits for land degradation control, sustainable land use, biodiversity conservation, carbon capture and equitable benefit sharing to reduce poverty. It notes a subtle change of emphasis of the original CPF away from integrated ecosystem management (IEM) towards a broader view of synergies and co-benefits. It notes, however, that there is still an intention to “deepen the level of understanding of IEM approaches.... and mainstream IEM into government policies and strategies at the national, provincial and county levels”. These were components in the original CPF and STAP would like to see the science-based justification for now having to repeat these activities, and the articulation of how the new Program will be different in achieving such understanding and mainstreaming. The Program does still face major challenges, not least in promoting to national institutions the concept of an integrated approach to complex land-related problems.

STAP has some concerns over the delivery and verification of global environmental benefits consequent upon the new requested GEF investments of over US\$20 million. It would like to see the basis upon which it “is estimated that by improving the management of agricultural lands in the western region, over 25 million tons of carbon may be stored each year and that by improving forest and forest land management, a further 87 million tons of carbon can be sequestered each year.” Are these figures verifiable and based upon scientific calculations, and are they in any sense targets for the current round of investments? In this context, STAP especially welcomes the intention to introduce “effective and transparent monitoring and evaluation systems to assess the outcomes and impact of efforts to combat land degradation and reduce poverty”, and looks forward to seeing concrete examples of such systems in the six projects that are planned.

STAP would also like to recommend that each of the six projects to be financed under the Program has a well-established baseline of key indicators, including carbon, biodiversity and poverty indicators; and a tracking mechanism for these indicators during the lifetime of the Program and beyond to be handled by

the PMO or other acceptable national institution. Mainstreaming requires that the issues of delivering GEBs and human development co-benefits be kept central to the measurement of the success of the individual projects and the Program as a whole.

<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: (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.