

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 30, 2017
Screener: Guadalupe Duron
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Consultant(s):

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

FULL-SIZED PROJECT	GEF TRUST FUND
GEF PROJECT ID:	9599
PROJECT DURATION:	5
COUNTRIES:	Djibouti
PROJECT TITLE:	Sustainable Management of Water Resources, Rangelands and Agro-pastoral Perimeters in the Cheikhetti Wadi watershed of Djibouti
GEF AGENCIES:	UNDP
OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:	Ministry of Housing, Urban Planning and Environment (MHUPE) through the Directorate for Environment and Sustainable Development (DESD); with Ministry of Agriculture, Water, Fisheries, Husbandry and Marine Resources (MAWFHMR)
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 welcomes UNDP's proposal "Sustainable management of water resources, rangelands and agro-pastoral perimeters in the Cheikhetti Wadi watershed of Djibouti". The project will improve agro-pastoral ecosystem services in the Cheikhetti Wadi watershed through the application of integrated watershed management plans. STAP applauds the holistic approach, which addresses the three pillars of sustainability, and the clear, logical and comprehensive description of the project. The PIF demonstrates strong understanding of the drivers of land degradation, potential solutions, and the biophysical and social barriers to improving land management in this challenging environment. STAP is pleased with the detailed problem analysis, the maps and criteria for site selection provided in the annexes. This information is helpful for understanding the purpose of the project, the selection of interventions, and the partnerships required to meet the project objective. STAP welcomes the inclusion of a knowledge management platform, and adaptive management. Putting in place a knowledge management system will strengthen the dissemination of sustainable land management and agro-pastoral practices among stakeholders with different access to information, and capacities.

As UNDP designs the project, STAP recommends for the following issues to be taken into account:

1. Limit the scope of component 1. Currently, the component encompasses knowledge management, monitoring and assessment of watershed management interventions, and capacity building of farmers and herders to implement improved land management practices. STAP recognizes the links between monitoring and assessment, knowledge management and governance. However, STAP believes the structure of the project framework would be clearer if these activities were separated, and their linkages established across

two components. First, a component on multi-stakeholder governance and engagement. This component can identify the relevant partners to involve in the design and implementation of the project. It also describes the governance arrangements needed to determine who is involved in decision-making and in the implementation of the project. A stakeholder engagement plan is recommended to identify which stakeholders to engage during the different implementation phases, and how to engage them. And second, a component on monitoring and assessment for watershed management interventions, and links to the proposed knowledge management system, or platform. The focus can be on managing knowledge and learning throughout the project implementation. This includes adaptive learning based on established governance arrangements between stakeholders, collecting and managing information and data as the project is being implemented, and responding to insights learned from this information. Interventions on scaling up integrated management approaches in the Wadi can also be part of this second component. Further information on how to develop these two components with a view towards systems thinking is available in the guidelines to the Resilience, Adaptation Pathways and Transformation Assessment (RAPTA) Framework: <http://www.stagef.org/rapta-guidelines>

2. STAP recommends that the knowledge management platform be linked with the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT). WOCAT manages a global database on SLM approaches and technologies, which is recommended by the UNCCD. Further information about the database can be found through this link: <https://qcat.wocat.net/en/wocat/>

3. STAP appreciates that UNDP recognizes the limited capacity to expand irrigation, and the risks of salinization. STAP recommends that UNDP provide details of the methods that will be used to assess the capacity for sustainable irrigation, including the probable impacts of climate change, noting the limited hydrological knowledge and data availability.

4. A minor point – the meta-analysis and capacity building interventions are described in detail in the innovation section. STAP suggest that these activities be described earlier in the respective components.

5. STAP is pleased to see the use of remote sensing (Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) and Rain Use Efficiency (RUE)) to monitor and assess vegetation cover as a proxy of land degradation). STAP encourages UNDP to describe the opportunities and limitations in using NDVI and RUE data. Three references to consider:

1) Yengoh, et al (2015). "Use of the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) to Assess Land Degradation at Multiple Scales, Current Status, Future Trends, and Practical Considerations".

2) Higginbottom, T. et al. (2014). "Assessing Land Degradation and Desertification Using Vegetation Index Data: Current Frameworks and Future Directions". *Remote Sens.* 2014, 6, 9552-9575; doi:10.3390/rs6109552

3) Pricope, N. et al. (2013). "The climate-population nexus in the East African Horn: Emerging degradation trends in rangeland and pastoral livelihood zones". *Global Environmental Change* 23 (2013) 1525–1541

6. Furthermore, STAP encourages UNDP to complement the geo-referencing data with field visits, socio-economic factors, and land use information. This will help to understand why land degradation, or the loss of vegetation, may be occurring – as well as indicate trends that are important for land management decisions. Pricope, N. (2013), cited above, concluded that in the East African Horn:

"...general vegetation browning trends persist even during years with normal rainfall conditions such as 2012, pointing to potential long-term degradation of rangelands on which approximately 10 million people depend. These findings may have implications for current and future regional food security monitoring and forecasting as well as for mitigation and adaptation strategies in a region where population is expected to continue increasing against a backdrop of drying climate trends and increased climatic variability."

Long-term trends are also relevant for rehabilitation measures (component 2). STAP recommends the application of the Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) scientific framework as an approach for rehabilitating, or "reinstating ecosystem functionality" in lands with potential. The LDN framework can be accessed through this link: <http://knowledge.unccd.int/knowledge-products-and-pillars/scientific-conceptual-framework-land-degradation-neutrality-overview>

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