

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: April 15, 2014

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: 5724

PROJECT DURATION : 3

COUNTRIES : Global

PROJECT TITLE: Participatory Assessment of Land Degradation and Sustainable Land Management in Grassland and Pastoral Systems

GEF AGENCIES: FAO

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: International Union for Conservation of Nature IUCN

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):
Major revision required

III. Further guidance from STAP

STAP acknowledges FAO's proposal "Participatory assessment of land degradation and sustainable land management in grassland and pastoral systems". The project is innovative in attempting to contribute to a knowledge management platform "Pastoral Knowledge Hub", as well as in identifying indicators of ecosystem services and global environmental benefits resulting from pastoral and agrosylvo-pastoral activities.

Generally, the proposal needs to be strengthened in a number of ways for it to be scientifically and technically valid. For example, the problem statement is unclear. The proposed activities also do not appear to be well-coordinated. The outputs proposed "an indicator framework and a range of tools, intended to deliver to several different stakeholder groups, and cover a broad scope from assessment of land degradation to best management practices for sustainable land management" appear extremely ambitious, and poorly integrated. It also is unclear how the project components address the objective. Additionally, the focus of the proposal appears unclear. Although the objective intends to strengthen stakeholders' capacities in grassland and agrosylvo-pastoral systems to address land degradation, the narrative seems to focus more on adaptation and resilience to effects of climate change.

Below, STAP describes these issues further, and requests FAO to address them during the development of the project.

1. In the project description (A.1), STAP recommends defining clearly the problem statement, describing better the barriers and threats to sustainable agro-pastoral and pastoral systems, and how monitoring systems and participatory assessments can address the project objective on "improving the assessment capability and decision-making process" for pastoralists and policy-makers. In this regard, it would be useful to describe more thoroughly (and clearly) the potential drivers (direct and indirect) of land degradation and its adverse effects on ecosystem services (e.g. climate regulation, food provisioning) "basing the information on the target sites as much as possible. References (from published or unpublished sources) would be useful to support statements providing a general characterization of the effects of land degradation, or sustainable land management, on ecosystem services.

Furthermore, additional descriptions of the target sites would be valuable. This includes providing information on the socio-economic characteristics of herders/communities, agroecosystems (e.g. agro-

pastoral, pastoral), and precipitation and temperature trends. Currently, some of this information is provided only for some African (target) countries, while there is no information in the proposal for Latin America or Asia – the other two target regions. One source of information for climate data is the "Climate Change Knowledge Portal": <http://sdwebx.worldbank.org/climateportal/index.cfm>

2. It is unclear from the problem statement and the interventions' descriptions how component 1 and component 2 link to address the project objective. At the moment, these two components do not appear to be complementary. It would be useful to detail further the rationale for component 1. For example, it is unclear from the proposal how the tools to analyse sustainable land management, or land degradation, (component 1) will complement the monitoring system developed by component 2. The interconnection between both components needs to be described clearly and better linked to the problem, and project objective.

3. STAP recommends adding the development of a conceptual framework for the selection of indicators for pastoral and agro-pastoral areas. The proposal raises briefly the intention to develop an indicator framework (page 7) for pastoral and agro-pastoral areas. However, given the importance of developing a conceptual framework for indicator selection, STAP recommends adding this activity to the project framework and developing it further as a more prominent sub-activity of component 2. A comprehensive set of indicators that assesses the impacts of land management (pastoral management) on ecosystem services (global environmental benefits) at the appropriate spatial and temporal scales will require thorough analysis. In addition to comprehensiveness, the framework also will need to be flexible enough to adjust to the purpose of the assessment (including the appropriate scales). It is critical to first articulate the purpose of the indicator set: who will use it, and in what context. Comprehensive and flexible frameworks for indicators can contribute to the sustainability of the tool and its potential for scaling-up. The project developers may wish to rely on the following two sources when conceiving the conceptual framework, or for identifying scientific partners that can assist with this activity: 1) Niemeijer, D. and de Groot, R.S. 2008. A conceptual framework for selecting environmental indicator sets. *Ecological Indicators* 8: 14-25. 2) van Oudenhoven, A.P.E., Petz, K., Alkemade, R., Hein, L., de Groot, R.S. 2012. Framework for systematic indicator selection to assess effects of land management on ecosystem services. *Ecological Indicators* 21: 110-122.

4. The baseline scenario needs to be described more thoroughly. Currently, there is only a brief narrative on the scenario. STAP recommends describing further the baseline scenario based on details relevant to the project sites. Additionally, STAP recommends curtailing the information describing the associated baseline projects, or providing this information in a more user-friendly way – for example in a table.

<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
1. Consent	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
2. Minor revision required.	<p>STAP has identified specific scientific or technical challenges, omissions or opportunities that should be addressed by the project proponents during project development.</p> <p>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.</p>
3. Major revision required	<p>STAP has identified significant scientific or technical challenges or omissions in the PIF and recommends significant improvements to project design.</p> <p>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.</p>