

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 Programmatic Framework Document (PFD)

Date of screening: 27 March 2008

Screener: Guadalupe Duron

Panel member validation by: Michael Stocking

I. PIF Information *(Paste here from the PIF)*

GEFSEC PROGRAM ID: 3423

GEF AGENCY PROGRAM ID:

COUNTRY(IES): Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia, Yemen

REGION: The Middle East and North Africa (MENA)

PROGRAM TITLE: Integrated NRM in the Middle East and the North Africa Region (MENARID)

GEF LEAD AGENCY: IFAD

OTHER GEF AGENCIES: AfDB, FAO, UNDP, UNIDO, UNEP and WB

GEF FOCAL AREA (S): LD, IW, BD, CC and SPA

GEF-4 STRATEGIC PROGRAM(S):

EXPECTED NUMBER OF PROJECTS UNDER THE PROGRAM DURING CURRENT REPLENISHMENT PERIOD: 13

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

STAP appreciates the clear specification of overall objectives and purposes of the MENARID programme framework, especially in respect of providing guidance for individual project investments in promoting INRM in the production landscapes of the MENA region and to improve the economic and social well-being of the targeted communities through the restoration and maintenance of ecosystem functions and productivity. The emphasis on co-benefits for the environment and for human development is essential in achieving lasting beneficial change in the sustainable use of all natural resources, especially of water, dryland biodiversity and soil fertility. In addition, by linking project interventions in a programmatic context, the programme framework should enable the better targeting of priority issues of regional concern and the realization of a greater impact. The analysis of the current barriers to achieving sustainable land management is an excellent example which should provide the individual projects with clear topics to tackle. STAP notes that Syria is mentioned a number of times in setting the rationale for the programme framework, yet Syria is not specified as one of the participating countries; nor does it feature in the listing of projects. Syria has both ecosystems that are important regionally and has institutions (such as ICARDA) which could contribute significantly to the success of the programme.

STAP agrees with the argument in the PFD that the complex barriers and bottlenecks to SLM in such a dryland region can only be tackled in a coordinated regional fashion that seeks harmonization, an emphasis on seeking impacts, long-term planning and a systematic approach to knowledge management. It is not entirely clear from the PFD how coordination will be achieved amongst the intended 13 projects. There is mention, for example, that IFAD will be responsible for "the M&E cross cutting MSP and for aggregating M&E data for projects that fall under MENARID" (p.8). However, later (p.12) the PFD notes that MENARID will not (for cost-effectiveness reasons) have a full coordination component. STAP recommends that important scientific and technical functions in tracking and monitoring would be better placed in national and regional scientific institutions, in order better to mainstream the concepts of INRM/IWRM and to encourage national ownership of the impact data. Techniques and methods (not elaborated in the PFD) must necessarily employ generic tracking tools, the use of remote sensing, integrated data-bases and consistent analytical procedures. STAP wonders whether the "small MSP" mentioned a number of times in the PFD can possibly fulfil the necessary consistency and long-term fulfilment of a vital role in showing how global environmental benefits can be achieved in difficult dryland production landscapes while at the same time human development is benefited. Additionally, in order to show the viability of the programmatic approach and to meet the needs of GEF to demonstrate impact, STAP

encourages the proposers to identify key indicators that cut across all projects, which can be measured in their baselines before commencement of investments, tracked in the lifetime of projects, and then be subject to further monitoring by national and regional institutions in the longer term.

<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.	<p>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:</p> <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 <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 revision required	<p>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.</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>