

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: May 10, 2013

Screeener: Thomas Hammond

Panel member validation by: Annette Cowie; Brian Huntley
Consultant(s): Margarita Dyubanova

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

FULL SIZE PROJECT GEF TRUST FUND

GEF PROJECT ID: 5330

PROJECT DURATION : 4

COUNTRIES : Thailand

PROJECT TITLE: Maximizing Carbon Sink Capacity and Conserving Biodiversity through Sustainable Conservation, Restoration, and Management of Peat-swamp Ecosystems

GEF AGENCIES: UNDP

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE)

GEF FOCAL AREA: Multi Focal Area

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

STAP welcomes this proposal to conserve and restore peat-lands to increase their capacities to act as carbon sinks, as habitats for globally important species, and as sources of ecosystem services for improved livelihoods. The project builds on a strong foundation of baseline projects and on the experience gained and lessons learned from previous GEF investments in the region. The goals are clearly stated and the strategies for achieving these goals are sound from the scientific and technical perspectives; expected outcomes and outputs and clearly stated.

The outline of threats to peat-land ecosystem - land use pressures for oil palm and rubber tree plantations along with the barriers in lack of hydro-technical measures and policies- is clear and informed. Risks are fully and objectively assessed.

STAP appreciates the intention to identify and promote sustainable livelihood activities. However, STAP would wish to have a clearly defined and described set of interventions and their expected acceptability to local communities and how the positive impacts to such communities and biodiversity and ecosystem services will be measured. This will be critical to providing a positive incentive to local landholders to modify behaviour, as creation of protected areas and awareness-raising are unlikely to be sufficient deterrent. It is unclear whether the envisaged sustainable livelihood activities will include sustainable harvest of timber products.

Overall, STAP welcomes this PIF that is of significance to the global scientific community that aims to enrich scarce data on GHG fluxes that are associated with the peat-land degradation and fires from drained or rewetted tropical peat-lands.

Minor comments:

On p7 please explain what is meant by "cameral measurements" (Is this static chambers?) and please provide details and/or reference for "vegetation proxy" method. N2O is not a carbon flux - describe the proposed measurements as GHG fluxes.

On p8 please acknowledge that 40.33 tCO₂-e/ha/y is a rough, conservative estimate. Four significant figures gives an unwarranted impression of accuracy - it would be better to cite 11 t CO₂-C, with 40.33 in parentheses, in the main text. In the next sentence, should 40.33 have been used in this calculation instead of 44.33?

It would be good to see more detail on how the baseline oxidation rates are estimated, as the IPCC draft document is not readily accessed.

STAP notes the intention to quantify the carbon sequestered through reforestation more accurately at PPG stage. The proponent may wish to utilise the Carbon Benefits Project carbon estimation tools for this purpose. The tool can be found here <http://www.unep.org/climatechange/carbon-benefits/About/tabid/3539/Default.aspx>

The 'baseline projects' are very cursorily described – it is difficult to measure what the 'added value' of this project will be.

Component 1 targets the expansion of the PA system with a 13 000 ha core area, surrounded by zoned land uses which together embrace 128 000 ha. STAP would wish to have a description of the spatial land use planning approaches to be used, the land use classes, and the measures to be used (Such as the Management Effectiveness tracking Tool) to set baselines and monitor progress in achieving the goals of the PA component.

Component 2 refers in the baseline scenario an intervention to re-wet 10,00 ha of peat forest to avoid fires – the estimated cost cited is USD 1,5 M. Is this the correct figure, as it appears high?

Component 3 addresses strategy and policy interventions. STAP would suggest that the specific legislative instruments to be developed and the relation to existing legislation be described in the revision. Further, reference is made to a national inventory and strategy for wetlands to be undertaken under this component, but no indication is given of the science and technological base and approaches to be used, the available information resources, and the institutions that will conduct the survey and develop the strategy.

Global environmental benefits include the listing of a number of vertebrate species, but no plants. STAP would suggest that the description of the biodiversity values of the systems to be included in the project be strengthened by reference to IUCN categories of both plant and animal species that are of global importance and which occur in the project area.

<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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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	<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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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.