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 14, 2017
Screener: Guadalupe Duron
Panel member validation by: Annette Cowie
Consultant(s):

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

FULL-SIZED PROJECT	**GEF TRUST FUND**
GEF PROJECT ID:	9583
PROJECT DURATION:	6
COUNTRIES:	Argentina
PROJECT TITLE:	Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Land Management (SLM) into Development Planning: Making Environmental Land Use Planning (ELUP) Operational in Argentina
GEF AGENCIES:	UNDP
OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:	Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development (MAyDS) with the collaboration of Provinces
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 issues to be considered during project design

III. Further guidance from STAP

STAP welcomes UNDP's project "Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation and sustainable land management (SLM) into development planning: Making Environmental Land Use Planning (ELUP) Operational in Argentina". Agricultural expansion and intensification, and also mining and urban expansion, are causing significant land degradation and threatening biodiversity. The project aims to apply an integrated approach, ELUP, to address the drivers of biodiversity loss and land degradation. STAP believes that the application of an integrated approach is appropriate, and encourages UNDP to detail further the ELUP approach by defining the concepts that underpin it (e.g. ecosystem services approach, landscape approach). The impacts of climate change on agro-ecosystems and biodiversity are likely to be severe, so STAP believes the project should detail how it will integrate climate change adaptation strategies into its activities.

To further strengthen the project during its design, STAP recommends addressing these points:

1. STAP understands the project will apply integrated landscape management to improve biodiversity and land management in the four targeted provinces. In the project document, STAP recommends UNDP define more specifically how the approach will: a) value ecosystem services based on stakeholders' assessments of their needs; b) integrate biophysical and social-ecological attributes so that complementarities are sought between livelihood needs and landscape management objectives; and, c) identify indicators that are appropriate to the spatial scale defined by the approach.

UNDP may wish to draw from the following paper on landscape multi-functionality. In particular, the decision tree framework to guide the selection of landscape approaches with a multi-functionality scope would be valuable for the project: Mastrangelo, M. et al. (2014) "Concepts and methods for landscape multi-functionality and a unifying framework based on ecosystem services". Landscape Ecol (2014) 29:345-358.

2. STAP notes that Argentina will set Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) targets. The objectives and implementation approaches for LDN are closely aligned with the ELUP approach to be pursued in the project. Therefore, STAP encourages UNDP to link this project with Argentina's LDN planning. STAP suggests that UNDP utilise the LDN framework recently completed by the Science-Policy Interface of the UNCCD, which describes the scientific basis and principles for implementing LDN: http://knowledge.unccd.int/knowledge-products-and-pillars/land-degradation-neutrality-ldn-conceptual-framework/spi-publication

3. In addition, it would be valuable for the project to contribute to knowledge and learning on applying an integrated approach based on landscape management, and/or ecosystem services. There is a need to understand more about integrated approaches and their impact in meeting multiple objectives to improve the environment and livelihoods. The project can contribute to this learning by detailing the approach; how it has been applied, and how progress has been measured (e.g. defining indicators that are spatially relevant) Furthermore, it would be valuable to draw from Argentina's experience in applying an ecosystem services approach, given the project's focus on valuation of ecosystem services. This should be part of component 3 as it aims to monitor ELUP, and generate knowledge and learning about the approach. The following two papers could be useful in identifying the knowledge gaps on integrated approaches, and how the project can contribute towards addressing them: 1) Mastrangelo, M. et al. (2015). "Ecosystem services research in contrasting socio-ecological contexts of Argentina: Critical assessment and future directions", EcosystemServices16. 63â€“73; 2) Reed, J. et al. (2016). "Integrated landscape approaches to managing social and environmental issues in the tropics: learning from the past to guide the future". Global Change Biology, 22. 2540-2554.

4. STAP recommends detailing the agro-climatic conditions and climate projections for Argentina, particularly for the targeted areas. The project should consider the impacts that climate change is having on biodiversity and ecosystem services. Therefore, the project should detail how it will address climate as a driver of biodiversity loss and land degradation. For example, how will the project integrate climate change adaptation strategies into the ELUP, so that stakeholders' knowledge and capacities are strengthened to address climate risks; and what observations can be made about the impact of climate on biodiversity, and ecosystems in the target area?

5. STAP recommends applying the Resilience, Adaptation Pathways and Transformation Assessment (RAPTA) Framework. RAPTA is a tool designed to support the application of resilience concepts during project planning and implementation. Using an integrative approach and close stakeholder engagement, RAPTA will assist the project proponents to describe and assess the social-ecological systems, and identify the need to adapt, or transform, based on the risks and shocks (e.g. climate risks) that may affect the system. STAP would be pleased to advise on the application of RAPTA in the project design and implementation. The RAPTA guidelines can be found at: http://stapgef.org/rapta-guidelines

6. In addition, the project should recognize the value of improving and maintaining ecosystem functions in regulating the climate, reducing floods, or droughts. The following paper may be useful for UNDP to support the need to embed climate strategies in the project: Scheffers, B. et al. (2016). "The broad footprint of climate change from genes to biomes to people". DOI: 10.1126/science.aaf7671.

STAP advisory response	*Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed*
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	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: (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.

	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 issues to be considered during project design	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: (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. The GEF Secretariat may, based on this screening outcome, delay the proposal and refer the proposal back to the proponents with STAP's concerns. 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.