

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: @@@@ @@, @@@@

Screeners: Guadalupe Duron

Panel member validation by: Michael Anthony Stocking
Consultant(s):

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

FULL SIZE PROJECT **GEF TRUST FUND**

GEF PROJECT ID: 4605

PROJECT DURATION : 5

COUNTRIES : Belize

PROJECT TITLE: Management and Protection of Key Biodiversity Areas

GEF AGENCIES: World Bank

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: Government of Belize, Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment (MNRE) and Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF)

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 supports UNDP's proposal "Management and Protection of Key Biodiversity Areas in Belize". The PIF makes a convincing case for a large multi-focal area project focussed around the objective of protecting biodiversity, but through multiple actions including legal and institutional issues. It also includes initiatives welcomed by STAP, such as reviewing and updating the National Protected Areas System Plan from 2005 so that climate change impacts are better reflected in protected areas. The intention to establish and provide training for a carbon stock monitoring system is also innovative and welcome. These types of efforts will assist Belize strengthen its climate resilience efforts.

The PIF provides considerable justification for the project. Technical and scientific details are not elaborated, and STAP wishes to alert the proposers to some issues that will need to be addressed by the full proposal if lessons from efforts in other parts of the world are to be heeded:

1. STAP suggests that, prior to designing and trying to implement systems of exploitation of natural resources in forests of Belize, a study is undertaken to examine total economic value of the PAs and Belize's forests. TEV has become the standard and most widely applied framework used by economists to categorise ecosystem values. The major innovation of TEV is that it extends beyond the marketed and priced commodities to which economists have conventionally limited their analysis, and considers the full array of economically important goods and services associated with ecosystems. For guidance and a useful example, see Hughes, J. (2011) The Economic value of Congo Basin protected areas goods and services. *J. Sust. Devlpt.* 4(1): 130-142.
2. STAP acknowledges that non-timber forest products (NTFPs) have the potential to impact local livelihoods in ways that may contribute to the sustainability of protected areas (Component 2). Sustainable harvesting and marketing of NTFPs does, indeed, have potential to bring local benefits to people while protecting the larger ecosystem. Nonetheless, it is important to consider the comprehensive context of NTFPs to fully assess their viability, potential contributions to livelihoods and protected areas, as well as the constraints associated with harvesting and marketing NTFPs. Thus, STAP recommends for the World Bank to specify further whether the project will conduct a market chain analysis of NTFPs, and, if so, to detail this analysis in the full proposal. STAP also encourages the World Bank to specify whether it will offer NTFPs training, as well as additional support (e.g. how to seek micro-finance) to assist project recipients get started with NTFP harvesting "commercialization activities. Additionally, STAP recommends defining explicitly the risks affiliated with NTFPs, and the mitigation responses (e.g. overharvesting of NTFPs; hence, affecting the status of local biodiversity and livelihoods). Climate change also may impact the density of the species of interest for NTFP activities.

3. STAP recommends for the World Bank to refer to STAP's advisory document on "Payments for Environmental Services and the Global Environment Facility" for further guidance on developing PES activities (www.unep.org/stap - in the section Publications/Advisory Products of STAP). In particular, STAP wishes to highlight the barriers to PES effectiveness, which should be considered in the project preparation – 1) non compliance with contractual conditions; 2) poor administrative selection; 3) spatial demand spillovers; and, 4) adverse self-selection. These four conditions are detailed in the STAP PES advisory document, along with explicit advice from STAP how the proposal should "...describe choices to minimize these threats and specify indicators that will permit one to evaluate the importance of these threats in the project."

4. The proposal is very weak on the gender dimensions of the project's socioeconomic impacts, and global environmental benefits. Several NTFPs studies conducted in tropical countries indicate that men and women are significantly involved in commercializing NTFPs. In some instances, the literature suggests that women are more involved than men throughout the NTFP value chain (Commercialisation of Non-Timber Forest Products: Review and Analysis of Research R. Neumann and E. Hirsch). Thus, STAP suggests to detail explicitly the gender dimensions of NTFP harvesting and commercialization, and how they contribute to socioeconomic and global environmental benefits. A good reference for guidance on gender dimensions is the 40-page publication from IFAD in 2008: Gender and non-timber forest products: Promoting food security and economic empowerment. It highlights the key issues on the role of women in NTFPs and contains a useful bibliography.

5. The proposal does not identify which key biodiversity areas the project will address. STAP looks forward to the World Bank defining clearly these biodiversity areas in the full proposal. Additionally, STAP encourages strengthening capacity to monitor for invasive alien species (Component 3). This will help strengthen Belize's capacity to monitor, and develop responses to, the potential impacts of climate change on protected areas.

6. Given that forests are predominant in Belize and a valuable resource to local livelihoods and as a global environmental benefit, STAP also encourages the World Bank to detail the climate change risks on forests (e.g. implications of climate change on shifts in forest type).

7. As noted above STAP welcomes what appears from the project framework to be the intention of instituting tracking and monitoring systems for important GEBs such as carbon. STAP draws the proposers' attention to the GEF-financed Carbon Benefits Project which is in the final stage of testing in the development of a comprehensive tracking system for carbon above- and below-ground and GHG emissions. The project should use best practice in its tools and methods, rather than trying to invent new systems.

<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.	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: <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 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 revision required	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. 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.