

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 08, 2017
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Consultant(s):

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

FULL-SIZED PROJECT	GEF TRUST FUND
GEF PROJECT ID:	9383
PROJECT DURATION:	4
COUNTRIES:	Benin
PROJECT TITLE:	Sustainable Forest Management and Conservation Project in Central and South Benin
GEF AGENCIES:	AfDB
OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:	Ministry of Environment Department of Climate Change Management, Reforestation, and Natural Resource and Forest Protection
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

Overall, STAP believes that "Sustainable Forest Management and Conservation Project in central and south Benin (Departments of Borgou and Donga)" is a valuable and well-intentioned project, in which the outputs and outcomes are likely to contribute to the project objective provided they are technically well-defined.

However, the lack of technical detail and some inconsistencies in the PIF do not leave STAP with confidence in the technical operationalization of the project, except in broad, generic terms.

A list of the issues that need to be better defined and evaluated (in terms of technical, social and economic viability) is below:

1. There needs to be more technical clarity in the description of outputs.

- What exactly does the PIF mean by including 150,000 ha of communal forests in protected areas? Are these already parts of the PAs, or are they new? Who will own them and how will they be governed? Are these indigenous forests of plantation forests? (1.1.1) also p 18
- What is needed to implement PA management plans? (1.1.2)
- What is the prognosis of PA financial plans? (1.1.3)
- What does the PIF mean by "up-scaling two protected areas to involve communities in the management process"? (1.2.2) also p 18
- What are the exact alternative livelihoods activities, given how hard it is to create alternative livelihoods? What new seeds is the PIF referring too? Is there technical information about these seeds? (1.2.3)
- How will the endangered species be protected exactly? (1.2.4)
- Is capacity development for SFM only about training? What about rights, community governance, etc.? (1.3.1)

- What are the community groups that will be formed? Are these villages? Do they have title to land/forests and other rights? Will they get these? (1.3.2). On p 19 there is no mention of issues of open access, community rights, governance, etc.
- What are the alternative income generating activities, and what is the technical basis for believing this will work? (2.2.3)
- How many integrated landscape restoration plans? What do these look like? At what scale are they “village, area, and district? Who implements and monitors them? (3.1.1)
- What does a robust GHG accounting system look like? Who is responsible for it? (3.2.2)
- What infrastructure will be rehabilitated? P 17
- What is meant by institutional support to Forest management administration? P17

2. Project complexity is increased by fragmentation of outputs. STAP suggests that it could be simplified by focusing on three components:

- Effective PA management of Mount Kouffe and Wari Maro forest reserves (STAP is still unclear if people live in these protected forest or not. If people live in PAs, combine this component with the next one)
- Sustainable community forest management that integrates outputs from components 1 and 2 in the same communities
- A component at central level that updates forest codes, inventories resources, and integrates these with GHG accounting. This could also incorporate participatory implementation (component 4).

3. If the emphasis on community-based forestry remains strong (which it should) STAP recommends that the PIF needs to analyze the status, barriers, theoretical background, and theory of change related to community-based governance in more detail. Successful community based management is likely to require:

- the delineation of community forests at the correct scale (i.e. village of 200 households),
- the devolution of rights (use, management, benefit, exclusion) and responsibilities (resource protection and monitoring),
- the internal governance of communities (i.e. participatory rather than representational forms of governance),
- oversight of this governance, and
- land use zonation and generation of benefits.

The inclusion of three community game ranches is a positive suggestion that is encouraged by STAP. It is highly likely that these can generate sustainable benefits and wildlife recovery, especially if high-value trophy hunting is introduced. However, this might not be possible on a total area of 6,000 hectares and consideration should be given to increasing this area. The financial viability of game ranching also needs to be assessed (as does the financial viability of "alternative livelihood options"). Game ranching is often viable and is likely to be so in this case. The presence of buffalo especially, and local varieties of large mammals, is likely to be attractive to foreign clients who will pay high fees. Meat production is unlikely to be viable in the short term except as a by-product of high value hunting.

4. The most important risk identified in the PIF is the lack of ownership of local communities. This therefore needs to be specifically addressed by the project. Given that the high risk of poaching, wildfires, unsustainable land use etc. is linked to a commons tragedy, hence the importance of community ownership and delineation. However, the problem of open access (and demography) is never explicitly described in the PIF and needs to be addressed.

5. Although the PIF refers to previous projects several times, it does not draw on relevant knowledge about PA management, community empowerment, alternative livelihoods from any of these projects or from the extensive literature and experience in these issues. STAP suggests that the project builds on relevant knowledge and lessons generated by other projects on these topics.

<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
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	STAP has identified specific scientific /technical suggestions or opportunities that should be discussed

<p>to be considered during project design</p>	<p>with the project proponent as early as possible during development of the project brief. The proponent may wish to:</p> <p>(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.</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>
<p>3. Major issues to be considered during project design</p>	<p>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:</p> <p>(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.</p> <p>The GEF Secretariat may, based on this screening outcome, delay the proposal and refer the proposal back to the proponents with STAP's concerns.</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>