

# 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

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

**FULL SIZE PROJECT**    **GEF TRUST FUND**

**GEF PROJECT ID:** 4779

**PROJECT DURATION :** 5

**COUNTRIES :** Bosnia-Herzegovina

**PROJECT TITLE:** Sustainable Forest and Abandoned Land Management

**GEF AGENCIES:** World Bank

**OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:** Ministry of Agriculture , Water Management and Forestry in the FBiH, and Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Water Management in the RS

**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): **Consent**

### III. Further guidance from STAP

STAP fully supports the project objective to improve environmental and economic sustainability and carbon sequestration opportunities through enhanced and integrated management of forest, scrub and pasture landscapes. Furthermore, STAP welcomes the multiple Expected Outputs, especially carbon stock measurement systems, integrated land management methodologies and plans, and innovative financing mechanisms with carbon credits. This is a challenging mix of outputs. STAP has some concerns that the scientific and technical complexities of the initiative may have been underestimated. In order to endorse fully the project, STAP requests that the following issues receive priority attention during project preparation.

The project is predicated upon the hypothesis that degraded and scrub forest land can be rehabilitated in short time through appropriate forest management techniques. As studies in the tropics have shown (e.g. Parrotta, J.A. 1996. Catalyzing native forest regeneration on degraded tropical lands. *Forest Ecology & Management* 99: 1-7), this objective can only be achieved with a good scientific research and experimental support structure. The use of tree plantations to catalyze restoration of degraded forests and lands requires research to develop appropriate management options. To quote the cited paper: "There is strong evidence that plantations can facilitate forest succession in their understories through modification of both physical and biological site conditions. Changes in light, temperature and moisture at the soil surface enable germination and growth of seeds transported to the site by wildlife and other vectors from adjacent forest remnants. Development and design of management options to assist this process are required, taking into account socio-economic realities, development priorities and conservation goals." However, the options need to be tested and fully evaluated. Provision for this needs to be made in the project.

As the principal environmental rationale for forest regeneration is to sequester carbon, management options and tree mixes need to be tested carefully, especially in their capacity to increase soil organic matter over a time period of 3 to 5 years, which can then be validated by the carbon monitoring systems to be developed. It would be possible to use the web-tools developed by the GEF-funded Carbon Benefits Project to do scenario testing as to which options look to be most likely to yield the most favorable carbon outcomes. These outcomes may need to be assessed against livelihood support, cost considerations and conservation/aesthetic values. This is important prior work that needs to be done during project preparation before forest management practices are implemented.

STAP also has concerns over the limited scope of the risk analysis. For example, the National Communication (October 2009), as identified in the proposal, identified that complex legal mechanisms and administration caused unresolved property disputes and illegal land acquisitions around forest areas in the country. Land tenure issues need to

be included and proposals suggested to mitigate the risks of property disputes. STAP suggests that further investigation of this issue is warranted.

STAP notes the low risk rating of forest fires. If the pasture/grassland is left abandoned, how are the environmental benefits (stored carbon) going to be maximized in addition to the benefits that are happening in the natural environment? How are forest fires going to be prevented?

Other than as a passing mention in the mitigation column of the risk analysis, climate change risks have not been assessed. In this ecological region and with the proposed land uses, the risks must be substantial, and they will also relate to the forest fire risk mentioned above. There is a wide choice of climate change screening and assessment tools which should be consulted and used – see [http://www.ddrn.dk/filer/forum/File/Anne\\_Hammill.pdf](http://www.ddrn.dk/filer/forum/File/Anne_Hammill.pdf)

The Project Framework identifies components that are not described in the body of the proposal. For example, development of INRM tools and methodologies (Output 3.2). The Project Framework identifies voluntary carbon markets as an activity of the project. However, in the body of the proposal this activity is mentioned as a planned future activity. STAP wishes to clarify whether this activity is going to be pursued under the funding of this project.

<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
<b>1. Consent</b>	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.
<b>2. Minor revision required.</b>	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"> <li>(i) Opening a dialogue between STAP and the proponent to clarify issues</li> <li>(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</li> </ul> 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.
<b>3. Major revision required</b>	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.