

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 12, 2016
Screener: Thomas Hammond
Panel member validation by: Brian Child
Consultant(s):

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

FULL SIZE PROJECT	GEF TRUST FUND
GEF PROJECT ID:	9413
PROJECT DURATION:	5
COUNTRIES:	Brazil
PROJECT TITLE:	Realizing the Biodiversity Conservation Potential of Private Lands
GEF AGENCIES:	UNEP
OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:	MMA, PUC-Rio (CSRio and CPI), FBDS
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

This is an exciting project, but will benefit from much clearer analysis and conceptualization. STAP recognizes the enormous importance of innovative approaches to private sector conservation, and strongly encourages that this project be pursued because it is addressing a vital component of conservation (the private sector) that has been largely neglected, not to mention that conserving 88 million hectares of Private Set-Aside Areas is a powerful goal. However, the documentation and approach to this project is unwieldy and needs to be clarified in several important aspects. The central assumption of the document seems to be that more centralized monitoring, regulation and enforcement is necessary. STAP is skeptical that this will work without far greater consideration of stakeholder processes, landholder rights, empowerment, engagement and incentives. Therefore STAP requests that the proposers give serious consideration to flipping the project logic, and using field level implementation of the three pilot projects to define and drive demand for other requirements, rather than taking regulation and central monitoring as the starting point. This implies a much more learning/adaptive approach than the somewhat blueprint/top down approach envisaged.

In either scenario, STAP recommends that the Project Description Summary includes very clear indicators of what success looks like. For example, what is a governance and coordination strategy, and what exactly will it achieve? While STAP finds this project potentially very innovative, the approach to mainstreaming is not sufficiently based on scientific/technical evidence to be confident that the approach is workable.

Specifically, STAP recommends that:

- GEBs are included in the Project Document in the form of biodiversity baselines and targets (areas to be considered, how the "quality" of this conservation will be measured, etc.). STAP specifically recommends that measurable baselines and indicators are provided for:
 - o six globally threatened species on the 150,700 ha Sao Joao Basin site
 - o 45 globally threatened species in the 850,000 ha site Cerrado Global hotspot,
 - o improved provision of ecosystem services on 1 million hectares in these sites, including what exactly this means and how it will be measured

- o institutional outcomes of the mainstreaming process, including landholder buy-in
 - o socio-economic indicators that will be affected by regulatory approaches.
 - The incremental cost reasoning in this project needs to be clarified and simplified (p22-23), including how it is incremental to the many on-going initiatives listed (p10-11).
 - STAP therefore suggests that the approach to this project is far more targeted and simplified, for example by focusing on the three pilot approaches in Component 2, developing and testing these approaches, then incorporating these lessons nationally.
 - A significant weakness of the project (see comments and suggestions below) is the failure to analyze and include scientific and technical lessons from elsewhere, especially regarding landholder conservation processes, including from Brazilian, GEF project and elsewhere.
 - The sequencing of this project requires more rigorous analysis. How does policy and regulatory change really work? Do regulators set new rules, and landholders follow them? Or is it more effective to pilot new guidelines and rules with landholders, and then incorporate and norm them into the regulatory environment? If the latter, the balance and sequencing of the project could be flipped, emphasizing a collaborative adaptive management process in the three pilot sites as a way of piloting, testing and designing the regulatory environment, not the other way around as is currently proposed.
- There are a number of statements in the document that are poorly defined. STAP would like to see some cross-referencing of what "biome specific SLM Guidelines" are, and how they have worked (or not) in other places. Similarly, the proposal needs to provide a scientific and technical description of what it means by the "tools [for] integrating biodiversity conservation and land management considerations for a proper integrated land management planning at macro and project levels" p8. STAP has recently published a report on Sustainable Land Management which may be useful to project planners: <https://www.thegef.org/gef/node/11790>. STAP seeks technical clarity on output 3.1.1, especially what is meant by "PSAA conservation", "natural capital measuring" and "biodiversity and ecosystem services management", how exactly these will be done, examples of success/failure from elsewhere, and how success will be measured (i.e. targets and indicators).
- STAP also suggests that the process of piloting SLM guidelines be carefully thought through and articulated in terms of stakeholder buy in (e.g. landholders, or special interest imposing their agenda on landholders) and sequencing: will these guidelines be designed by in a top down fashion or will they be developed hand-in-hand with the landholders they are intended to affect. The proposal would be greatly strengthened by including scientific and technical knowledge about managing stakeholder/ landholder processes, with reference to other examples of such activities.
- STAP notes that a key barrier is the "severe lack of technical assistance" to farmers relating to conservation and extension, yet addressing this barrier is not specifically noted in the outputs and outcomes – there is far more mention of rules than of providing and getting knowledge to farmers. Similarly (p7) the criticism that farmers don't really understand conservation and its regulations, needs to be complemented by the criticism that conservationist regulators often do not understand farmers and their motivations, an important issue in designing this project.
- The top-down bottom-up conundrum
- As noted, STAP recommends that this project thinks through far more carefully how it is going to combine a top-down, regulatory approach with private land holders and a bottom-up participatory approach. To some extent this idea is introduced with the forest industry (albeit with little operational or technical detail), but participation and pathways to uptake are not specifically described in the two pilot areas, with little or no mention of landholder associations, conservation extension mechanisms, and so on. STAP recommends that the project should analyse the lessons of Brazil's current regulatory approach, and strengthen this with experience from more inclusive approaches in GEF and elsewhere (see notes below). This should be reflected in the barriers section, including a better understanding of if and how landholders are responding to the current regulatory approaches. There needs to be more clarity on if this proposal is really recommending more of the same, or if and how it is testing a more innovative approach that includes multi-stakeholder learning and devolved regulation.
- An innovative aspect of this project is the potential partnership with forest sector in addressing issues of sustainability, because it links central technical approaches to a demand by forest managers. The approach to addressing biodiversity conservation in the two pilot production landscapes, however, in aspects of participation, governance, self-regulation, extension, and in its vagueness does not provide confidence that it will work. Indeed, the regulatory approach into which much has been invested is apparently not working on its own, which is presumably the justification for this project, yet the project seems to propose more of the same, rather than looking for what is transformational. It is therefore not particularly innovative or incremental, except that it targets private conservation.
- As noted, STAP recommends that the current proposal needs to incorporate far more evidence and references or critical analysis of lessons (including failures) from other projects, and perhaps experiences from similar challenges in other countries. STAP therefore refers the project to:
- the very similar challenges in the soil conservation and management following the American dust bowl, including consideration of concepts like "soil conservation districts", conservation and extension, and so on.

- Particular attention is drawn to Zimbabwe's 'Intensive Conservation Area Approach' initiated in the late 1940s, not only pre-empting many of the principles laid out by Ostrom in the 1990s, but describing how to build local catchment institutions, link them to conservation and extension systems, manage conflicts locally and through natural resource courts, state land inspections, and so on.
 - A more recent approach, though less institutionally sophisticated, is the private land stewardship programme supported by the UNDP-GEF Grasslands Project in South Africa. The authors of this project are referred to the extensive documentation of this project, and encouraged to engage with the people who actually implemented this project (see, for example, <http://biodiversityadvisor.sanbi.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/key-principles-in-mainstreaming-biodiversity-from-the-gp.pdf>.)
- Finally, on a readability note, this was a difficult project to review. The document needs to be carefully edited and shortened, and also needs either to reduce the number of acronyms or to provide a table of these to enable the reader to follow which organization the authors are referring to.

<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 to be considered during project design	<p>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:</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>
3. Major issues to be considered during project design	<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>