

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: November 08, 2017
Screener: Guadalupe Duron
Panel member validation by: Michael Anthony Stocking
Consultant(s):

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

FULL-SIZED PROJECT	GEF TRUST FUND
GEF PROJECT ID:	9768
PROJECT DURATION:	5
COUNTRIES:	China
PROJECT TITLE:	PRC-GEF Partnership Program for Sustainable Agricultural Development
GEF AGENCIES:	UNDP, FAO and World Bank
OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:	Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Environmental Protection; General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine; Agriculture Department of Hainan Province; Agriculture Department of Hubei Province
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

Starting in 2002 with the PRC-GEF Partnership to Combat Land Degradation in Dryland Ecosystems (known locally as the OP12 program – Integrated Ecosystems Management), China has built a good record of using this program modality of the GEF to deliver substantial global environmental benefits (GEBs) across focal areas, and also a significant culture shift in integrated thinking and cooperation amongst national agencies and professionals. STAP therefore warmly welcomes this new Program Framework Document for a PRC-GEF Partnership on Sustainable Agricultural Development. The scope of this partnership is somewhat more restricted in topics and geographical scope than the partnership title – Sustainable Agricultural Development - suggests. Yet, the proposed partnership is aimed at addressing a number of pressing issues in Chinese agricultural development, principally agrobiodiversity, carbon stocks in grasslands and Invasive Alien Species. STAP is particularly welcomes the often-neglected potential of grasslands to store huge amounts of carbon as well as increasing the productivity of ecosystems. However, STAP believes that this new partnership proposal should more explicitly pick up lessons from previous programs in China to ensure both efficiency in use of GEF finance as well as outputs that will make a significant contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals.

In February 2012, the GEF, assisted by STAP, undertook a Learning Mission to China in order to understand the GEF-PRC Partnership approach and how it might deliver more than the sum of its (child project) parts – see https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/publications/China-knowledge-series-1-2012_1.pdf. The present proposal could usefully learn from the conclusions of that mission and take on board the principal issues that need to be factored into a successful program: namely, (a) What are the drivers that generate catalytic effect? (b) How does the GEF's catalytic role influence the choice of activities to contribute to GEBs? (c) How is progress toward targeted outcomes being tracked? (d) What tools and indicators are being applied for monitoring the overall approach?

STAP would like to see the present program proposal framed much more in terms of the benefits of a program approach, perhaps utilizing the above questions. It is disappointing that the program itself as currently specified is little more than an 'umbrella' for its five, largely-independent, child projects. It will be difficult, despite the stated intention of building a program-wide Knowledge Management Strategy, to draw generic lessons for up-scaling and wider replication unless these lessons are specifically targeted from the beginning.

1. Drivers to generate a catalytic effect. As the Learning Mission cited above noted, the drivers of GEF catalytic effect [in the present case for agobiodiversity, carbon stocks in grasslands and IAS] are manifested at regional, national, and local levels, mainly in the context of linking policy and on-the-ground actions. The Program specification needs to address how a catalytic effect will be generated through the cooperation and working partnerships of the stakeholders at all levels.

2. Choice of activities to contribute to GEBs. The current proposal appears not to have a strong core theme to which activities may contribute and from which GEBs can be generated and measured. The original PRC-GEF Partnership had 'integrated ecosystem management' as a theme around which to build activities – the present proposal has only a loose set of topics, from which it will be very difficult to generate synergy, let alone a coherent record of GEBs. The potential for integration or mainstreaming biodiversity conservation and control of IAS is high in all provinces and could be important for enhancing resilience of grassland ecosystems. Yet this opportunity for a strong theme – such as integration or resilience – appears not to be addressed.

3. Tracking of progress toward targeted outcomes; and tools and indicators. One of the conclusions from previous programs is that there was insufficient attention paid to indicators and tools for monitoring GEBs, especially at the program level. There is a golden opportunity now to select appropriate indicators of GEBs and establish baselines for monitoring. The indicators and monitoring tools should be streamlined and standardized across all child projects to demonstrate more effectively the benefits from the overall partnership approach. This will entail high-level cooperation arrangements between ministries and other agencies.

<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	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.

	<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>
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