

# 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: October 19, 2017  
Screener: Guadalupe Duron  
Panel member validation by: Annette Cowie  
Consultant(s):

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

FULL-SIZED PROJECT	GEF TRUST FUND
GEF PROJECT ID:	9760
PROJECT DURATION:	5
COUNTRIES:	Congo DR
PROJECT TITLE:	Mai-Ndombe REDD+ Integrated Project (GEF)
GEF AGENCIES:	World Bank
OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:	Government
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):  
**Major issues to be considered during project design**

### III. Further guidance from STAP

STAP acknowledges the World Bank's proposal "Mai-Ndombe REDD+ Integrated Project (GEF)". GEF funding will complement an original investment made by the Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI) on a project "Improved Forest Landscape Management Project". Together, the investments seek to "...build on the integrated REDD+ approach successfully piloted in Mai Ndombe Province's Plateau District by scaling it up to the entire Mai Ndombe province. The combined goal of these two investments is to improve community livelihoods and forest management and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation." (Project Information Document (PID)).

Unlike the comprehensive and valuable description of the World Bank's project "Sustainable Productive Landscape", submitted to the Council in September 2016, STAP believes this project does not have sufficient information to enable screening of its scientific and technical soundness. The documents do not provide a problem analysis that explains how and why interventions on biodiversity conservation are needed. There is only a scant description of biodiversity in the Mai Ndombe Province, and no explanation for how, and why support to protected areas (Objective 1h) will contribute to meeting the project's objective. The baseline scenario and incremental reasoning are also weak with respect to biodiversity and climate change—the two areas requesting GEF funding. More details on baseline investments are needed to understand the rationale for the GEF's activities on biodiversity, and its links to REDD+.

As the World Bank designs the project, STAP recommends the following:

1. Describe the environmental issue that the project addresses; its drivers, and the planned interventions, including description of the theory of change to clarify the logic of the proposed activities. Currently, it is not clear how the listed actions comprise a coherent strategy to achieve the stated goals. The goals must be consistent with the activities proposed. Currently, the goal is stated as "to improve community livelihoods and forest management and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation", but the activities emphasize biodiversity conservation as the objective.

2. STAP appreciates that the proponents plan to apply lessons learned through the earlier phase of the project. STAP would like to see a description of the "realistic and simple indicators" identified for monitoring. This information will be a useful lesson for other projects. Are these indicators for monitoring climate change mitigation, or biodiversity outcomes?
3. STAP notes the intention to focus on local benefits ("short-term incentives and socioeconomic benefits") instead of targeting global public benefits such as forest conservation and carbon sequestration". STAP appreciates that this may be a sound strategy, but suggests there is a need to explain and justify this approach. The proponents should clarify, for example, how they will ensure that this focus enables sustainable alternative livelihoods to be established.
4. Consider actions to mainstream biodiversity in policies, capacity building, and sustainable land management plans (Objective 1b -1c; 1f, 1h), and design these interventions so they contribute to the evidence base of mainstreaming biodiversity. This involves paying close attention to the design, implementation, monitoring and assessment of outcomes from embedding biodiversity conservation in policies, strategies, and land use approaches. This activity will then inform learning on mainstreaming biodiversity. STAP's advisory document on "Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Practice" can provide further guidance: <http://stapgef.org/node/1600>
5. The project has a strong emphasis on forest emissions reduction, but it lacks a description of the links to biodiversity. For example, a description of the community forest management activities should detail how they expect to contribute to biodiversity conservation. In addition, STAP recommends identifying the risks and opportunities of REDD+ on biodiversity. Equally important will be to define how biodiversity impacts on REDD+ will be monitored and assessed. It would be valuable for the project proponents to consider the complexity of assessing biodiversity over time. The following paper may assist in this regard: Dickson, B., et al. (2012). "Biodiversity Monitoring for REDD+". Current Opinion on Environmental Sustainability.
6. The project document mentions that integrated REDD+ methodology will be implemented by World Wildlife Fund. STAP recommends detailing the criteria for spatially targeting REDD+ interventions. STAP recommends applying monitoring and adaptive management, to detect and remedy unintended outcomes, and safeguard biodiversity gains. In addition, the World Bank could contact the U.N. REDD Programme, working with UNEP's World Conservation Monitoring Center (WCMC) to support countries in spatial targeting of REDD+ interventions to generate multiple benefits from REDD+. <http://www.un-redd.org/single-post/2016/09/29/REDD-Beyond-Carbon>
7. The project should describe the potential impact of conflict on biodiversity in the Democratic Republic of Congo . This includes present conflict issues that may affect the target area, and the possibility of future conflict situations as a result of increased population pressure, and possible impacts of climate change on biodiversity that may intensify conflict near the project sites. The project also should detail strategies to address this conflict. There are several resources on biodiversity and conflict that the World Bank can draw upon, including: Ruyle, T. et al. (2017). "The Impacts of Conflict on Biodiversity in the Anthropocene." Earth Systems and Environmental Science.

<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
<b>1. Concur</b>	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.
<b>2. Minor issues to be considered during project design</b>	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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Open a dialogue with STAP regarding the technical and/or scientific issues raised.</li> <li>(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.</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 issues to be considered during project design</b>	<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>