

# 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: September 30, 2016  
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:	9266
PROJECT DURATION:	5
COUNTRIES:	Eritrea
PROJECT TITLE:	Restoring Degraded Forest Landscapes and Promoting Community-based, Sustainable and Integrated Natural Resource Management in the Rora Habab Plateau, Nakfa Sub-zoba, Northern Red Sea Region of Eritrea
GEF AGENCIES:	UNDP
OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:	Ministry of Land, Water and Environment; Northern Red Sea Administration Regional Office – Department of Land and Agriculture Development
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):  
**Concur**

### III. Further guidance from STAP

STAP welcomes UNDP's project on "Restoring degraded forest landscapes and promoting community-based, sustainable and integrated natural resource management in the Rora Habab Plateau, Nakfa sub-zoba, Northern Red Sea Region of Eritrea". STAP believes a cross-sectoral approach is appropriate to tackle the multiple drivers of biodiversity loss, forest and land degradation. STAP is pleased the project will strengthen institutional capacities across sectors to work on landscape management and climate smart agriculture, with a "whole system" approach. Embedding traditional knowledge in the chosen landscape practices will be important in meeting the project objective along with learning. STAP appreciates the importance Eritrea and UNDP have placed on integration, stakeholder engagement, gender considerations, continuous learning and adaptive management in the project design and implementation.

STAP appreciates the very well-written PIF. It is well-referenced, comprehensive in scope, yet succinct in presentation. It lays out a clear description of the challenges, including strong understanding of the drivers and barriers, and recognition of the risks.

To further strengthen the project during its design, STAP recommends addressing these points:

1. Provide climate projection data for Eritrea, or the target sites if this information is available.
2. Apply a framework that supports the multi-functionality objectives that are sought from the targeted agricultural systems – that is, enhancing biodiversity and ecosystem services, improving land and forest management, and supporting livelihoods. This involves describing impact pathways to meet the multiple benefits (environmental, economic and social), and analyzing trade-offs that may exist between these

aspects. The project developers may wish to refer to the following paper for further information on such a framework: Hodbod, J. et al. "Managing adaptively for multifunctionality in agricultural systems". Journal of Environmental Management (2016) 1-10. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvman.2016.05.064>

3. STAP also recommends the Resilience, Adaptation Pathways and Transformation Assessment (RAPTA) Framework. The guidelines for the Resilience, Adaptation Pathways and Transformation Assessment (RAPTA) Framework describe how to embed resilience in projects so they can better achieve their goals amidst global environmental change and socio-economic uncertainty. RAPTA also helps determine whether incremental adaptation is required, or whether more fundamental transformational change of the social-ecological system is needed to achieve long-term sustainability. This is of relevance to Eritrea and its project, given the impacts of climate change on its agriculture and forests. RAPTA fosters an ability across stakeholders to understand issues, trade-offs, intervention points and routes to impact, and creates innovations and connections. The guidelines can be found at: <http://www.stapgef.org/the-resilience-adaptation-and-transformation-assessment-framework/>

4. The project aims to improve access to irrigation as a way to increase agricultural productivity. Further information on the irrigation technologies would be useful as well as detailing how these technologies will not exacerbate the threat of depleting groundwater resources, which was identified as a risk, or increase risk of soil salinity.

5. If Eritrea is participating in the UNCCD's Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Programme (LDN TSP) it would be mutually beneficial to develop linkages with that programme, particularly in relation to land rehabilitation and restoration.

6. To inform forest management strategies, Eritrea and UNDP may consider utilising remote sensing data. For example, the following paper may be useful in providing figures on changes in forest cover in the project design: Ghebregabher, M. et al "Extracting and analyzing forest and woodland cover change in Eritrea based on landsat data using supervised classification". The Egyptian Journal of Remote Sensing and Space Sciences <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ejrs.2015.092>

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

	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.
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