

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: @@@@ @@, @@@@

Screener: Guadalupe Duron

Panel member validation by: Michael Anthony Stocking
Consultant(s):

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

FULL SIZE PROJECT **GEF TRUST FUND**

GEF PROJECT ID: 4584

PROJECT DURATION : 5

COUNTRIES : Kazakhstan

PROJECT TITLE: Improving Sustainability of PA System in Desert Ecosystems through Promotion of Biodiversity-compatible Livelihoods in and Around PAs

GEF AGENCIES: UNDP

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: Forestry and Hunting Committee of the Ministry of Agriculture

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 welcomes UNDP's proposal "Improving sustainability of PA system in desert ecosystems through promotion of biodiversity compatible livelihoods in and around PAs" in Kazakhstan. The project framework is thorough and clearly presented, and the outputs and outcomes are explicit. Furthermore, the threats to desert ecosystems are explained clearly, the project components, along with the barriers, are well-defined, and the global environmental benefits are defined thoroughly. The overall approach of extending the PA system into under-represented dryland areas, while also addressing buffer zones and sustainable land management is sound. In general, STAP believes this proposal is scientifically and technically sound. Below, STAP offers a few recommendations on how further to strengthen the proposal.

1. The proposal is strong on biodiversity-related issues and it should not only ensure that the PA system of the country is extended for critical desert and semi-desert areas where overgrazing has been rife (Component 1) but also develop sustainable use of biodiversity through co-management arrangements with local people (Component 3). It is in Component 2 where STAP feels that the proposal is weakest. Here SLM practices will need to be developed for degraded rangelands. This is a major challenge and will require close coordination and understanding between all parties, especially with local people and communities. The proposal does not specifically mention traditional management practices, issues of gender differentiation or productivity of these areas. Landscape integrity and the maintenance of ecosystem functions are essential elements of Component 2 explicitly identified in Expected Outcomes but not necessarily matched or linked to Expected Outputs. Much is hidden in Output 2.1.4 which will require very considerable elaboration and specification (see Point 5 below which identifies an especial risk aspect).

2. The complexities of developing SLM around the new PAs do appear to be underestimated. To quote a major IFAD study researched by ICARDA for a degraded area of over 3 million hectares in Syria, one of the major lessons in reversing rangeland degradation is that:

"Rangeland management and rehabilitation activities ought to be an integral part of rangeland development programmes for herder communities and should address issues such as water supply, livestock development, rural finance, access to markets, and improvement of herder skills" [<http://www.ifad.org/rainfedag/rangeland/index.htm>]

3. In addition to training for protected area management (component 1), STAP wonders whether the training also could include education on desert ecosystems so that park rangers and other field staff can help strengthen communities' knowledge; hence, influence potentially their value of desert ecosystems and, potentially, their ability to co-manage the

protected areas (component 3). Currently, the proposal is not clear whether education will form part of the capacity building for communities, or field staff.

4. STAP suggests adding the risk that land users may abandon activities under 2.1.4, primarily as a result of poor economic returns particularly at the start of the project. Scientific evidence is clear that rehabilitation of degraded drylands is a slow and costly process, delivering returns only after a decade or so. Since these activities will require higher investments (e.g. labor) from land users, their sustained adoption will likely require longer than farmers can afford in time and resources. UNDP also should define a mitigation strategy for this risk.

5. The text immediately above the global environmental benefits box does not include sustainable land management: "Through this, BD benefits will accrue." STAP recommends amending the text to reflect sustainable land management benefits. Also, it suggests removing "Innovative approach to engagement of local communities and women in PA livelihoods..." as a global environmental benefit. A minor point - the box would read more clearly if specific rows were defined, so that it was more apparent what intervention(s) yielded what global environmental benefit(s).

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