

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)

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

FULL SIZE PROJECT GEF TRUST FUND

GEF PROJECT ID: 5551

PROJECT DURATION : 5

COUNTRIES : Kiribati

PROJECT TITLE: R2R Resilient Islands, Resilient Communities

GEF AGENCIES: FAO

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: Ministry of Environment, 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): **Major revision required**

III. Further guidance from STAP

1. STAP welcomes this project concept of building social and environmental resilience through a set of activities that include integrated land use planning and locally-managed protected areas. The PIF describes a relatively bleak picture of widely dispersed communities coping with a decline in available ecosystem services, due to global change, and their own low awareness about sustainability. Coupled with large distances, scarce finance and under-equipped governance, Kiribati has to cope both with urban and broad-scale coastal problems simultaneously. STAP recommends that a number of important scientific and technical issues need to be addressed if the project proceeds and therefore requests that major revision to the project design is performed by the proponent.

2. The PIF describes fairly adequately the root causes and principal barriers and goes on to describe the baseline actions that are in place, along with the GEF alternative scenario. There appears, however, to be a significant disconnect between the barriers described and the proposed GEF interventions, which address issues that are more likely to be better dealt with by first focusing on the root causes described. The intervention logic is missing and will need to be specified carefully in order to ensure that the project does not fracture into a large number of separate activities, unrelated to each other. The PIF focuses on two distinct targets: Protected Area consolidation and designation of new areas (Component 1); urban and peri-urban coastal management (Component 2). Again, there is little in the PIF to identify how and why these two targets should be related.

3. The first target is proposed to be achieved through community consultation and presumably education and outreach to all related resource users. It is not clear what the overall strategy is for upscaling this and connecting the livelihoods of communities distant from the PAs to the assumed benefits of improved PA management. While Component 3 on knowledge management does seem to include some elements of dissemination, an uptake pathway strategy is missing and will need to be specified in the full project brief.

4. The principal vulnerability or risk related to this approach is that the resulting PA areas may not actually enhance livelihoods, but merely displace exploitation, thereby intensifying ecosystem degradation. No evidence is presented for the assumed win-win scenario implied by activities in support of Component 1. It is clear that the planned PA interventions are likely at least locally, to result in positive change to the immediate ecosystem if sustained for decadal periods. It is less clear why these pilot interventions are expected to have broader impact, particularly the more remote pilots, upon community management practices elsewhere, without a range of clear and demonstrable incentives flowing from the pilots,

5. STAP advises that awareness raising conducted throughout communities and targeted support for technical capacity building for Ridge to Reef management are a higher priority, which could precede investment in a limited number of community co-managed coastal areas.
6. The biodiversity values to be enhanced under Component 1 and to some extent under Component 2 would remain vulnerable to invasive species, listed as a root cause of problems, yet the PIF does not include mention of control measures through either baseline or GEF-supported actions.
7. Component 2 appears to address secondary barriers, rather than the well-described barriers to effective land resource use planning. While a focus on mangrove management, sea grasses and coral reefs is very important, actions directed at these ecosystems are likely to be unsustainable with first consolidating effective Ridge to Reef spatial planning and enforcement that is coherent, accepted by communities and adopted by all levels of government. It is not clear from the PIF whether the co-financed actions of NZ Aid for example will generate sufficient outcomes to address the deficiencies listed in the PIF about existing legislation. What will be needed are well-focused actions to train planners and resource managers to cooperate and to build a truly integrated package of spatial planning regulations, consistent with the guidance provided through the Ridge to Reef Program. Further advice from STAP regarding the Ridge to Reef approach is given below.
8. Component 3 describes a standard module required to deliver the necessary M&E for the project. What is not included is the extensive communication and outreach actions that are required to bridge the large distances, raise awareness and build sustained and technically competent training and support the other project components. The project brief should include an additional budgeted Component to deliver this support.
9. Overall the project fails to link effectively to the Ridge to Reef program actions detailed in other documents. In particular information flows (lessons etc.) from the project have been described in the PIF as flowing from Kiribati to the R2R program, and not both ways as would be expected.
10. This proposed project is one of the child projects proposed under the Ridge to Reef Program (GEF ID 5395); that being the case the forthcoming project brief must demonstrate more clearly what its connection is with the regional program and its other projects in the region. The PIF briefly mentions the R2R Program but fails to, even in summary, include the expected support from the Program and the expected coordination with SOPAC technical focal points. For example from the parent R2R Program it is unclear what expertise will be provided to Kiribati from regional level sources. STAP would expect a significant Program input during the PPG phase, but this is not mentioned.
11. One of the lessons learned from a related regional project on fisheries (GEF ID 2131 Oceanic Fisheries Management: Implementation of the Strategic Action Programme of the Pacific Small Island Developing States) in the region, coordinated through the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), is that each child project in a program through its full project brief needs to detail the support relationship envisaged and responsibilities respectively of the (Kiribati) project unit and the regional unit.
12. As a member of the R2R Program the present project also needs to show how the scientific and technical linkages outlined in the parent program translate into practical action to benefit Kiribati. STAP has noted that the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation cites the concept of "SIDSTAP", the operationalization of the small island developing States roster of experts. While little progress has been achieved, as noted in regional meetings held prior to the Rio+20 Conference, the present project has the opportunity, at least alongside the cluster of 14 countries represented within the Program, to benefit from a strengthened set of scientific and technical linkages between the PICs, building upon the SOPAC mechanism. The project brief should therefore detail how the Science, Technology and Resources Network (STAR) of SOPAC could assist the present project to draw upon a regional multidisciplinary network similar to the SIDSTAP concept, augmented with SOPAC-STAR support and in coordination with the University of the South Pacific.
13. Regarding the Ridge to Reef concept and its application to Kiribati, STAP recognizes that the Ridge to Reef concept has become more popular and that in some ways it offers a more coherent framework for combining ICM and IWRM into one water flow linked whole. However, taken in isolation these management approaches, even considered under a Ridge to Reef label should also take account of spatial planning, which takes a strategic viewpoint and which is capable of resolving conflicting uses by spatially planning activities and determining different zones for different uses, or the need to balance development and conservation by spatially planning and zoning according to objectives (conservation, economic development, maintaining existing uses, etc.). For example, in the form of Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) as applied to the Convention on Biological Diversity, it is marine and coastal planning that is forward looking, participatory, iterative, and which includes environmental and socio-economic considerations; it is also management that is comprehensive, science-supported and area-based, and promotes sustainable development.

14. STAP advises the project proponents to consider the guidance offered through the joint GEF/CBD publication on Marine Spatial Planning in order to maximize the potential of the ICM/IWRM approaches planned to resolve unsustainable trajectories for biodiversity, land and water use within the coastal zones and related catchments concerned. At present one of the key deficits of the parent Program outlined in the R2R documents is the absence of a strategy for assisting the countries with planning within the Ridge to Reef approach towards a realizable and sustainable future, the present project should show how this strategic support will be realized.

Further reading

Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel GEF (2012). Marine Spatial Planning in the Context of the Convention on Biological Diversity: A study carried out in response to CBD COP 10 decision X/29, Montreal, Technical Series No. 68, 16 pp.

<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
1. Consent	<p>STAP acknowledges that on scientific or technical grounds the concept has merit. However, STAP may state its views on the concept emphasizing any issues where the project could be improved.</p> <p>Follow up: The GEF Agency is invited to approach STAP for advice during the development of the project prior to submission of the final document for CEO endorsement.</p>
2. Minor revision required.	<p>STAP has identified specific scientific or technical challenges, omissions or opportunities that should be addressed by the project proponents during project development.</p> <p>Follow up: One or more options are open to STAP and the GEF Agency: (i) GEF Agency should discuss the issues with STAP to clarify them and possible solutions. (ii) In its request for CEO endorsement, the GEF Agency will report on actions taken in response to STAP's recommended actions.</p>
3. Major revision required	<p>STAP has identified significant scientific or technical challenges or omissions in the PIF and recommends significant improvements to project design.</p> <p>Follow-up: (i) The Agency should request that the project undergo a STAP review prior to CEO endorsement, at a point in time when the particular scientific or technical issue is sufficiently developed to be reviewed, or as agreed between the Agency and STAP. (ii) In its request for CEO endorsement, the Agency will report on actions taken in response to STAP concerns.</p>