

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: April 16, 2012

Screeener: 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: 4732

PROJECT DURATION : 6

COUNTRIES : Malaysia

PROJECT TITLE: Improving Connectivity in the Central Forest Spine (CFS) Landscape - IC-CFS

GEF AGENCIES: UNDP

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (NRE)

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 revision required**

III. Further guidance from STAP

The objective of this project is to secure the critical wildlife habitats, conserve biodiversity and maintain continuous flow of multiple ecosystem services in the Central Forest Spine (CFS) Landscape of Malaysia through sustainable land and forest management. STAP fully supports this objective because, according to WWF, this trans-boundary landscape straddling much of northern Peninsular Malaysia and a part of southern Thailand is threatened by logging operations and road development. These developments pose a large threat to tiger habitat, and conversion of forests to agriculture or commercial plantations has resulted in more frequent encounters between tigers and livestock. Human-tiger conflict has resulted in negative sentiments locally towards tigers.

STAP also notes with approval that the project components closely reflect the recommendations in both the CFS Master Plan and the National Tiger Recovery Program. It is also pleasing to note that STAP guidance on PES scheme development is assisting the design of a suitable national scheme.

STAP wishes to raise a number of scientific and technical issues that will require attention in the further development of this project to a full proposal.

1. STAP welcomes the inclusion of quantified targets in the Project Framework matrix at Section B of the PIF. However, STAP is concerned that the Expected Outcomes appear to be somewhat more specific and detailed than the Expected Outputs. Given that Outputs are the project's deliverables by the end of the project, and Outcomes are the major changes to which the Outputs should contribute well after the project time-frame, the structure of the present Logical Framework does need reviewing. STAP further suggests that the Project Framework column under Expected Outputs includes quantified targets for the global environmental benefits to be achieved. This should preferably be the impact indicators "selected from the strategies of three focal areas (BD, LD and SFM) - that will be tracked during the project and evaluated at the end of the project
2. Given that the CFS is trans-boundary with Thailand, STAP identifies the importance of cross-border compliance and enforcement with Thai counterparts. Have these been explored? Would a regional project not be more effective?
3. Under Component 1, STAP raises the question as to whether the establishment of a dedicated specialized unit in the Federal Government is the best way forward for conservation compliance and enforcement. In such a complex cross-sectoral milieu involving forest, wildlife, agriculture and development agencies, a separate unit may merely shunt responsibility for compliance with the Master Plan to a few individuals, leaving major decisions to continue to be taken

by sectoral agencies. The exploitation of synergies is usually best achieved by all mainstream professionals working together. This risk should, at the very least, be explicitly addressed.

4. Under Component 2 (the implementation of SLM), the rehabilitation of degraded lands is to be included. According to GLASOD (the Global Assessment of Soil Degradation) Malaysia has multiple causes of soil erosion and some sites with severe rates of soil erosion. The problem has been well-recognised since the early 1970s. STAP warns that rehabilitation of degraded lands is not only technically very difficult (especially on acid humid tropical soils with low levels of organic matter) but also extremely costly. If this rehabilitation is only to be one of many activities in this project Component, it would be better to focus on areas that are not currently degraded and ensure that these are maintained in good condition, before embarking on areas that have already lost their topsoil.

5. The immediate global benefits of the project are stated to be the sustainable management of 5,100,000 ha of predominantly forested land. During the PPG phase it will be vitally important to identify the global environmental benefits (GEBs) more precisely, to include indicators of impact (and not just delivery), measures for tracking GEBs (for example, changes in total system carbon, given the importance of the CFS to Malaysia's total stock of carbon) and the targets for delivery of GEBs included in Expected Outputs.

6. STAP is pleased to see that the risk analysis in Section B4 includes climate change risks. One risk that is acknowledged widely is local people's attitudes to conservation, especially fuelled by the conflict between tiger attacks and villages. This reinforces the importance of identifying very clearly all the stakeholders and ensuring their inclusion in decision-making, and not just the sharing of benefits. Gender considerations should also be addressed. There is little in the PIF on local decision-making, and STAP is concerned that the project will not only be perceived to be top-down imposition of conservation but will actually be so. Compliance and enforcement needs to be balanced by suitable governance and local-level decision-making. These issues need to be addressed in the full project proposal.

<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.