

# 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 24, 2015

Screeener: Lev Neretin

Panel member validation by: Jakob Granit

Consultant(s): Stephen Olsen

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

**FULL SIZE PROJECT GEF TRUST FUND**

**GEF PROJECT ID:** 5544

**PROJECT DURATION :** 5

**COUNTRIES :** Marshall Islands

**PROJECT TITLE:** R2R Reimaanlok Looking to the Future: Strengthening Natural Resource Management in Atoll Communities in the Republic of Marshall Islands Employing Integrated Approaches (RMI R2R)

**GEF AGENCIES:** UNDP

**OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:** SPREP

**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 the UNDP proposal to strengthen natural resources management through integrated approaches in the Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI). This project proposal has three major components focused on the expansion of MPA network, improved governance and knowledge management. Funding is sought from biodiversity and international waters focal areas. The proposal has strong information and knowledge management elements, which is commended by the STAP. STAP has the following comments/recommendations that could be considered during preparation of the project document and CEO endorsement:

1. This is a child project of the Pacific Islands Ridge to Reef (R2R) program approved by the GEF Council in 2013. Several of STAP's recommendations provided in the program screen continue to be applicable for this proposal. They include justification for stronger coordination between project activities at the regional and national levels, particularly taking into account geographic separation between national and local management bodies (e.g., Coastal Management Advisory Council and Community Management Planning Committees) on the one hand and national and regional (i.e., SOPAC) institutions on the other hand. STAP recommends that project proponents consider explicit and targeted activities across all components (particularly in information and technology flows and governance arrangements) that would support local versus national and national versus regional coordination, capacity building and learning.

2. While submitted as a part of R2R focused program, this project has relatively weak links to this concept. Project's focus on information gathering and at some extent capacity building happens at the expense of further supporting area-based management approaches such as integrated coastal zone management and marine spatial planning. Points 11 and 12 of the STAP's program screen ([https://www.thegef.org/gef/project\\_detail?projID=5395](https://www.thegef.org/gef/project_detail?projID=5395)) remain applicable. Project proponents may refer to additional guidance on operationalizing S2S concept available (Granit, J., Liss Lymer, B., Olsen, S., Lundqvist, J., Lindstrom, A. 2014. Water Governance and Management Challenges in the Continuum from Land to the Coastal Sea – Spatial Planning as a Management Tool. SIWI Paper 22. SIWI. Stockholm; From Ridge to Reef (2015), available at: <https://www.thegef.org/gef/node/1544>; for additional information S2S Action Platform resources could also be useful: <http://www.siwi.org/programmes/action-platform-for-source-to-sea-management/latest-news/>). Application of area-based management governance remains the only effective way of addressing the main drivers of environmental degradation in the S2S continuum of RMI such as land rights, unsustainable fisheries, urban development and pollution, as well as climate change impacts. There would not be a simple solution supporting these spatial management frameworks in the face

of decentralized location and limited resources available in RMI. Employing some elements of marine spatial planning with its forward looking perspective to the proposed in the PIF atoll-level integrated management plans could be one possible option.

3. STAP recommends that the project proponents explore further how to strengthen and mainstream climate resilience and community-based adaptation into proposed project activities taking into account high climate change risks of the project geography. STAP recommends exploring mainstreaming climate resilience and adaptation into local and national strategies and action plans, paying particular attention to community-based adaptation as well as ecosystem based adaptation. Climate change impacts on governance related to adaptation in component 2 are not described. Stronger linkages between this project and MRI's approaches to adaptation should be reflected upon in the final project document. The PROVIA program hosted by UNEP could provide useful scientific guidance: <http://www.unep.org/provia/Default.aspx?tabid=55299>.

4. The global environmental benefits (GEB) section should relate closely to the SDGs and the role of this project in achieving relevant goals when it applies to RMI.

5. Component 3 on knowledge management could include support for further scientific research on the degradation of the atoll ecosystems and anthropogenic impacts in RMI. STAP suggests that research into the impacts of protected areas, biodiversity and climate change is initiated in this child project. This would be a good opportunity to explore how the scientific community in RMI could be strengthened. Ideally this should happen through collaboration with the Pacific Island Forum that plays an important role in the region. The RMI President stressed this need: <http://www.forumsec.org/>. STAP recommends exploring further how proposed in the project knowledge management system (MIS) and flows would benefit local communities in atolls that they would become not only suppliers of information and knowledge but also owners and users of regionally and globally generated knowledge. Proponents could find useful assessing lessons learned in knowledge management of GEF projects recently compiled by the STAP (<https://www.thegef.org/gef/node/11232>).

6. STAP recommends strengthening the results-based components of the project. The updated Plan should benefit from stronger integration of adaptive learning and management into proposed activities and governance frameworks. There would be major benefit if the project adopted an M and E system that promoted learning and adaptations within the project team conducted as an annual "retreat" or similar face-to-face modality.

<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> <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>
<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: <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 including an independent expert as required.</li> </ul>

	<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>
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