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:	9555
PROJECT DURATION:	5
COUNTRIES:	Mexico
PROJECT TITLE:	Sustainable Productive Landscapes
GEF AGENCIES:	World Bank
OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:	SEMARNAT (Including CONAFOR, CONABIO, INECC and CONANP), SAGARPA, FIRA
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 World Bank's proposal "Sustainable Productive Landscapes" in Mexico. The project aims to strengthen sustainable production outside of protected areas by mainstreaming biodiversity across the agricultural, forestry and livestock sectors. By applying a landscape approach and working across the Ministries responsible for biodiversity conservation, natural resource management, forestry and livestock management (among others), the project will focus also on strengthening ecosystem services and stakeholders' efforts on climate change adaptation, and mitigating greenhouse-gas emissions from the land sector. STAP is pleased with the proposed integrated approach that brings together multiple stakeholders and sectors to address the drivers of biodiversity degradation. STAP commends the project's recognition (component #2) on the need to coordinate the various multiple layers of governance to achieve integration. STAP also appreciates the methodology for selecting the project sites and the maps provided in the documentation. These details help reinforce that the project will address biological connectivity and ecosystem services through a landscape management. For the development of the project, STAP recommends two of its advisory documents: 1) "Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Practice"; and, 2) "Designing Projects in a Rapidly Changing World". Both documents are relevant to the project in ways that are detailed below. STAP also encourages Mexico and the World Bank to consider designing measures that monitor and assess the impacts of sustainability standards on biodiversity conservation, and socio-economic development. The project can address important knowledge gaps in the conservation community, as well as in the GEF. Below, STAP provides advice on how to build these measures in the project.

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

1. Provide climate projection data for Mexico, or the target regions (if available), to inform how the project will contribute to climate adaptation.

2. Further develop the theory of change when designing the project. This includes:

a. bringing together the appropriate stakeholders for developing the theory of change;
b. developing impact pathways to meet the multiple environmental and social benefits ;
c. defining assumptions and theories about how the components are linked. It would be useful to include in the theory of change the following assumption stated in the document: "The project will achieve these objectives by promoting sustainable production practices using different financial and market instruments that increase the value of the products or services produced by smallholder farmers/foresters/communities. In this manner, they are expected to improve their welfare while conserving the environment." (page 10).
d. contributing to learning and adaptive management. A theory of change will contribute to learning and adaptive management, which can help achieve long-term goals associated with biodiversity conservation, such as mitigating greenhouse gas emissions from land use, or land use change. STAP's report on "Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Practice" concludes there is an adequate knowledge base on the theories of change for biodiversity mainstreaming, which should be built on. The report can be accessed at: http://www.stapgef.org/mainstreaming-biodiversity-in-practice/

3. 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. The 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. STAP suggests for Mexico and the World Bank to complement the advice from the mainstreaming biodiversity document with the RAPTA guidelines. The guidelines will assist with the planning to reduce impacts of anticipated and unexpected shocks and stresses (e.g. climate change) to biodiversity conservation and socio-economic development. The RAPTA also can assist with assessing trade-offs, which is important given the multiple layers of decision-making by stakeholders and across sectors. RAPTA fosters an ability among stakeholders to understand issues, trade-offs, intervention points and routes to impact, and stimulates innovations and connections. The guidelines can be found at: http://www.stapgef.org/the-resilience-adaptation-and-transformation-assessment-framework/

4. STAP recommends building measures to monitor the effects of sustainability standards and certification on biodiversity conservation, and socio-economic development. Evidence indicates that: "Studies have been rarely designed to evaluate whether certification is more a cause of an existing conservation measure; a result of a pre-existing conservation effort; or, other causes that are not related to conservation (e.g. increased incomes)." (Tscharntke, T. et al. "Conserving Biodiversity Through Certification of Tropical Agroforestry Crops at Local and Landscape Scales" - http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/conl.12110/abstract) (Blackman, et al. "Environmental Certification and the Global Environment Facility", http://www.stapgef.org/stap/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Environmental-Certification-and-the-GEF.pdf)

5. STAP is pleased the project will focus on sustainable production systems at the landscape level to enhance biological connectivity and the delivery of ecosystem services. STAP suggests for the Mexico and the World Bank to consider the use of remote sensing, or other landscape planning tool, to monitor biodiversity dynamics.

STAP advisory response	*Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed*
1. Concur	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.
2. Minor issues to be considered during project design	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.
3. Major issues to be considered during project design	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.