

# 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: October 06, 2013

Screeners: Thomas Hammond

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

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

**FULL SIZE PROJECT    GEF TRUST FUND**

**GEF PROJECT ID:** 5517

**PROJECT DURATION :** 5

**COUNTRIES :** Micronesia

**PROJECT TITLE:** R2R Implementing an Integrated Ridge to Reef Approach to Enhance Ecosystem Services, to Conserve Globally Important Biodiversity and to Sustain Local Livelihoods in the FSM

**GEF AGENCIES:** UNDP

**OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:**

**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

1. This project concept is a welcome and ambitious addition to the existing diverse range of support measures for the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), and has the potential, within the regional Ridge to Reef Program, to sustain the key issues of technical support and capacity building to sustain improved environmental management of the islands within the FSM. STAP largely supports the approach outlined in the PIF and agrees that the threats and barriers identified are relevant, and notes the extensive revision to the PIF since first submission. Nevertheless STAP advises that the project concept should be subject to Minor Revision and respectfully requests the proponent to address the concerns noted below.
2. It is disappointing that in spite of the significant donor funding cited, including the establishment of the USA/FSM Trust Fund, that environmental services were not prioritized, given the critical dependence of SIDs in general (and Pacific Island Countries in particular) upon well managed watersheds and related ecosystems. The GEF intervention, as proposed within this PIF, has the potential to reverse land and water degradation but the evidence presented for the likely sustainability of the expected outcomes is weak.
3. More detailed comments are provided below on the project components and on the expected linkages to the regional program. STAP advises that the Ridge to Reef approach should not be confined to the "high islands"; there is no reason why the concept cannot apply throughout, regardless of island status. Many of the threats are shared, namely invasive species, pollution of groundwater lenses and inappropriate land uses.

#### Component 1

4. This component addresses the barrier: lack of an over-arching framework for promoting sustainable development. It calls for Integrated Land Management Plans (ILMPs) to be formulated. These are to be used essentially to create a framework to capture choices for use of land and water, informed by constraints to those land use choices, namely areas that are considered important for biodiversity conservation reasons: the "Areas of Biodiversity Significance". The PIF states that Strategic Environmental Analysis will provide the necessary data for ILMPs. However, STAP is uncertain what baseline assumptions will drive the SEA work, and how these ILMPs will be 'community-led'. For example, if the SEA is merely a tool to mitigate existing sectoral impacts upon conservation areas then that would represent a major missed opportunity, which would be far better spent on re-examining land and water uses that complement and sustain ecosystem services and to map alternatives (including relocation of certain land uses) for intersectoral review.

The outcomes of a more open-minded process will deliver far more than a set of constraints on land use focused on biodiversity conservation. The published literature on ILMP emphasizes the value of the approach to capture the multiplicity of options for land and water use resulting in scenarios that are not pre-determined. Additionally, participatory approaches will need to be developed that will empower local communities to take the lead in decision-making on land management. Experience elsewhere indicates that support will be needed for community-based organizations, as well as attention to farmer concerns such as security of land tenure. Well-conducted ILMP (spatial planning) should become a core process cutting across all government sectors.

5. An outcome of Component 1 actions may likely entail e.g. relocation of polluting land uses, and in situ land use change. Apart from support to pig farmers, there appear to be no market-based mechanisms or other incentives mentioned to effect this change, beyond the implied forest and wetland rehabilitation measures.

#### Component 2

6. STAP welcomes the focus on capacity building to strengthen the effectiveness of PAs and their sustainability, and especially the focus on strengthening communities' knowledge and capacity to do so. The PIF describes a series of relatively detailed interventions and named stakeholders and partners, which is welcomed. Delivery of the actions is another matter, and while the PIF lists an impressive number of stakeholders with assigned roles, it is not clear if these roles have been agreed.

7. A risk not described is that resulting extra PA areas may displace exploitation, thereby intensifying ecosystem degradation outside of PAs.

#### A missing Component?

8. Support to or provision from local sources for knowledge management, outreach and communications, including translation, use in schools, appears to be missing from this project design. This is surprising and should be addressed in the full project brief. Without an explicit uptake and dissemination strategy, it is highly unlikely that the 'paradigm shift' in attitudes and practices of environmental management will become embedded in local communities and government agencies.

#### Regional considerations

9. The PIF states that the project is well aligned with the GEF's Programme Framework Document for the regional programme "Pacific Islands Ridge-to-Reef National Priorities – Integrated Water, Land, Forest and Coastal Management to Preserve Ecosystem Services, Store Carbon, Improve Climate Resilience and Sustain Livelihoods". That may be so, but the PIF is silent about how the project will interact with the regional program support project (GEF ID 5404).

10. STAP recommended in its screening of the regional support project that it should include support for a multi-focal "PaciW:LEARN" for the region, which could act to sustain a peer to peer scientific and technical network for in-service training. This would satisfy the long standing demand under the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation, at least in this Pacific SIDS area. This advice was provided for the reason that, given the complex multidisciplinary threats and barriers shared by many of the PICs to be overcome, the sharing of expertise between PICs would strengthen sustainability of individual projects within the Program, but also across the other GEF and non-GEF projects delivering against allied environmental targets. In this connection the inclusion in the present project of knowledge management, as mentioned above, is essential and STAP advises that the project brief should show how it could connect more formally to the proposed regional network as discussed above. Additionally, the baseline PaciWRM project's successful delivery of distance learning and twinning for IWRM capacity development is an excellent basis to build on regionally and nationally.

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 (FSM) 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 the FSM. 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 with 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. 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>
<b>1. Consent</b>	<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>
<b>2. Minor revision required.</b>	<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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) GEF Agency should discuss the issues with STAP to clarify them and possible solutions.</li> <li>(ii) In its request for CEO endorsement, the GEF Agency will report on actions taken in response to STAP's recommended actions.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Major revision required</b>	<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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(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.</li> <li>(ii) In its request for CEO endorsement, the Agency will report on actions taken in response to STAP concerns.</li> </ul>