

# 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: May 12, 2017  
Screener: Guadalupe Duron  
Panel member validation by: Annette Cowie  
Consultant(s):

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

<b>FULL-SIZED PROJECT</b>	<b>GEF TRUST FUND</b>
<b>GEF PROJECT ID:</b>	9389
<b>PROJECT DURATION:</b>	7
<b>COUNTRIES:</b>	Mongolia
<b>PROJECT TITLE:</b>	Ensuring Sustainability and Resilience (ENSURE) of Green Landscapes in Mongolia
<b>GEF AGENCIES:</b>	UNDP
<b>OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:</b>	Ministry of Environment and Green Development and Tourism, Ministry of Food and Agriculture
<b>GEF FOCAL AREA:</b>	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 UNDP's project "Ensuring the Sustainability and Resilience (ENSURE) of Green Landscapes in Mongolia". The project aims to enhance ecosystem services by enhancing pasture and land management along with biodiversity conservation in the Sayan and Khangai mountains and southern Gobi. STAP welcomes UNDP's initiative to review past experience in Mongolia on pasture management, forest management, and biodiversity conservation, so that the project can build from this knowledge. STAP also appreciates the inclusion of research components to provide evidence for the impacts of the interventions. Learning will be important in order to adapt, or strengthen, the beneficiaries' coping capacity to climate change, which is affecting Mongolia. In this regard, STAP encourages UNDP to develop the activities by applying a climate risk lens. STAP is pleased to see the emphasis on stakeholder engagement, particularly through local user groups.

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

1. The Mongolian steppes have undergone lots of change due to climate change, political and socio-economic changes. It is important to build resilience to change, and also to consider the need to adapt, or transform, social ecological systems in the steppes. STAP notes that the project will utilise a resilience-based rangeland management concept developed by SDC. STAP is interested to see more information about this method. STAP recommends that UNDP also consider applying the Resilience, Adaptation Pathways, and Transformation Assessment (RAPTA) Framework. RAPTA is based on integration principles, that assesses the resilience of social-ecological systems, and identifies the need to adapt, or transform, based on the risks and shocks (e.g. environmental, economic, social) that may affect the system. RAPTA is anchored on multi-stakeholder engagement and participants' iterative learning so that adaptive management is built-in to assess resilience, and present options of adaptation and transformation. STAP would be pleased to advise on the application of the RAPTA during the project design and implementation. The RAPTA guidelines can be found at: <http://stapgef.org/rapta-guidelines>

In addition, STAP recommends that UNDP apply an integrated approach so that trade-offs between sectors (rangeland management, forest management and biodiversity conservation) and livelihood needs can be analysed and managed.

2. In addition, the following paper which analyses the tipping points for pastoral social-ecological systems in Mongolia may of interest to UNDP. A time series analysis of climate, livestock, vegetation and human populations was used to study the tipping points in the five regions of Mongolia. Policy recommendations are provided based on scenario planning if thresholds are crossed: Fernandez-Gimenez, M. et al. (2017). "Exploring linked ecological and cultural tipping points in Mongolia". *Anthropocene* 17. 46-69.

3. In component 2, STAP recommends detailing the potential impacts of climate change on biodiversity conservation, and forest management. For example, how resilient are the proposed biodiversity conservation approaches to climate change? The same applies to the forest management activities. Is there a higher incidence of fires as a result of climate change? Will increased temperatures affect the incidence of pests?

4. For component 1, STAP recommends applying its guidance on Payment for Ecosystem Services detailed in: <http://stapgef.org/sites/default/files/stap/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Payments-for-Environmental-Services-and-GEF.pdf> The guidance will assist UNDP define PES activities to strengthen the evidence base of PES effectiveness.

5. It would be valuable to detail the evidence to date of pastoral user groups in Mongolia. This would strengthen the hypothesis that pastoral user groups improve rangeland conditions in the target area. It also will be useful to detail the risks associated with pastoral user groups, such as power struggles within the group that may affect their effectiveness. The following paper may be valuable in defining the activities on pastoral user groups: Addison, J. et al. (2013). "Do pasture groups lead to improved rangeland condition in the Mongolian Gobi Desert?" *Journal of Arid Environment* 94 (2013) 37-46.

6. Additionally, UNDP is encouraged to look at the literature on community-based rangeland management to further support its activity on best practices for rangeland management. In particular, it would be valuable to suggest how pastoral user groups, or community-based management, can strengthen coping, or adaptive, capacity to climate change, or to other risks and stresses faced by pastoralists. Two papers that may be useful in this respect are: 1) Gimenez-Fernandez, M. et al. (2015). "Lessons from the Dzud: Community-Based Rangeland Management Increases the Adaptive Capacity of Mongolian Herders to Winter Disasters." *World Development*. Vol. 68. Page 48-65.; 2) Ulambayar, T. (2015). "What Matters Most in Institutional Design for Community Based Rangeland Management in Mongolia?". *Proceedings of the Trans-disciplinary Research Conference: Building Resilience of Mongolian Rangelands, Ulaanbaatar Mongolia, June 9-10, 2015*.

7. STAP supports the use of traditional knowledge for identifying best practices for rangeland and forest management. It would be useful to detail indicators for traditional knowledge that complement the project's monitoring of rangeland and forest conditions. The following paper on the use of herders' knowledge for rangeland management may be of value in this regard, and for describing further the traditional tools described in component 1: Bruegger, R. et al. (2014). "Herder Observations of Rangeland Change in Mongolia: Indicators, Causes, and Application to Community-Based Management". *Rangeland Ecol Manage* 67:119-13.

8. In component 3, STAP recommends using native species for the tree nurseries. If this is not possible, STAP recommends conducting a risk assessment of invasive alien species.

<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</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

<p><b>during project design</b></p>	<p>may wish to:</p> <p>(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.</p> <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>
<p><b>3. Major issues to be considered during project design</b></p>	<p>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:</p> <p>(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.</p> <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> <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>