

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 01, 2015

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Consultant(s):

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

FULL SIZE PROJECT GEF TRUST FUND

GEF PROJECT ID: 6992

PROJECT DURATION : 5

COUNTRIES : Myanmar

PROJECT TITLE: Ridge to Reef: Integrated Protected Area Land and Seascape Management in Tanintharyi

GEF AGENCIES: UNDP

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: Lead national ministry: Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry

Other partners: Tanintharyi Regional Government, Smithsonian Institution (SI), Green Economy Green Growth (GEGG)-Myanmar Association, Fauna and Flora International (FFI)

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 issues to be considered during project design

III. Further guidance from STAP

STAP acknowledges and welcomes UNDP's proposal "Ridge to reef: Integrated Protected Area Land and Seascape Management in Tanintharyi". STAP is pleased the project will build on existing multi-stakeholder initiatives covering terrestrial and marine ecosystems. The list of stakeholders is impressive, and their engagement will allow for local knowledge and other scientific sources of information to be mutually reinforcing for delivering global environmental benefits. Multi-stakeholder platforms are an important component in achieving the project objective on strengthening biodiversity conservation through inter-sector planning between terrestrial and marine ecosystem management. Addressing these linkages requires an integrated approach that can address the complexity of social-ecological systems. Integrated land use and biodiversity conservation is now seen as a priority agenda item requiring innovative and explicit approaches – see Rands, M.R.W. et al (2010) Biodiversity Conservation: Challenges Beyond 2010. Science 329: 1298-1303. The proposal begins to outline some important links, which STAP hopes will be detailed in the full proposal, but fails to address a strategic approach towards integration which will be essential for the project. Below, STAP recommends how the proposal can be strengthened in this aspect and other issues relevant to the viability of the project.

STAP recommends strengthening the project by addressing the following points during its design:

1. The table (page 11-12) and map of the protected areas are useful in providing context to the project. It would be useful to name explicitly the protected areas and conservation corridors the project will focus on, since this information is not clear in the document. Furthermore, STAP recommends describing the biodiversity in each area, along with the social-ecological characteristics. This information will complement the description of the Tanintharyi region that is provided in the document, and will be relevant to analyzing the planning and management needs of the protected areas.

2. Under threats, it would be valuable to include information on trends and projections of climate change in the region. The project developers may wish to refer to Myanmar's National Programme of Action to Adaptation (NAPA) for climate information and Myanmar's priorities for increasing the resilience of coastal zones in the Tanintharyi region. <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/napa/mmr01.pdf> Additionally, STAP recommends detailing how climate change may affect the resilience of marine ecosystems, and how the project intends to address these risks. Under risks, the project proponents begin to describe how coral reefs

will be monitored. Component 1 can build on this text by defining the methods used, and how the project aims to contribute to learning and data gaps on dynamic and linked systems such as the terrestrial and marine environments.

3. In the table on barriers (page 9), STAP recommends adding a fourth barrier on weak cross-sectoral planning for terrestrial and coastal management. The document lists weak integrated approaches to land-seascape management under barrier 1. However, STAP believes this aspect should be listed separately and described comprehensively, given the aim of the project is to address this barrier.

4. Additionally, STAP believes the proposal does not detail sufficiently an integrated approach on ridge to reef planning - an important aspect of component 1 and indeed a prominent feature of both the title of the project and its headline objective. The importance of connectivity between different parts of the landscape from “ridge to reef” does not feature in the proposal to date; and STAP is concerned that the project will merely attempt a multi-stakeholder and multi-thematic approach to what is essentially a conservation protected area project without engaging the interactions between, say, shifting cultivators, illegal hunters and loggers and rubber plantation enterprises “all of which will be critical to the success of the core objectives of the project. The issue of land(sea)scape connectivity and activities that promote integration has been reviewed recently in the academic literature: see Makino, A. et al (2013). Integrated planning for land-sea ecosystem connectivity to protect coral reefs. *Biological Conservation* 166: 35-42. These authors discuss how integrated planning delivers substantially different spatial priorities compared to an approach that ignored connections.

5. STAP therefore recommends using a framework that links management of land and marine resources, and which can assist the project developers in the planning process. A framework is needed to assist in analyzing and synthesizing the social-ecological processes and trends of linked systems characterized by multiple decision-makers. A recommendation is to apply the Biogeographic Assessment Framework (BAF) developed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The BAF is a decision support tool for marine spatial planning and can be found at: <http://www2.coastalscience.noaa.gov/publications/detail.aspx?resource=P2gqej303LREYS1FC8GThy5x7dkal0eESTYDQqNZ3eg=>

6. In component 1 and 2, STAP recommends defining how the project will address runoff, or pollution, from watersheds that may impact the status and sustainability of marine resources. It will be important to factor these issues into the component so that the boundaries of the terrestrial-marine systems can be defined and their management needs assessed.

7. The baseline narrative and global environmental benefits table synthesizes this information in a useful manner. STAP believes its contents can be improved in the following ways:

- i. Under land and seascape planning and management, the table and the baseline descriptions of on-going initiatives do not appear to be consistent always. For example, the table suggests the project will empower local communities to improve land and forest management, and biodiversity conservation. However, the baseline activities, suggest that Wildlife Conservation Society and the Smithsonian Institute worked with the Ministry of the Environmental Conservation and Forestry to strengthen local capacity on community forest management and biodiversity conservation in a variety of ways. STAP recommends describing how the project's interventions will contribute to these baseline activities.
- ii. For each selected environment benefit, STAP suggests defining indicators. Specifying how the benefits will be measured and tracked will strengthen this section and the incremental reasoning.

A minor point is to reference the EX-ACT calculations (found in annex 1) on avoided greenhouse gas emissions in the table. STAP appreciates these estimates.

8. On the potential for scaling-up the project's impacts, STAP wishes to see further details on this aspect in the full proposal. Currently, in the PIF there is some confusion as to whether the project is primarily to be geographically-focused on Tanintharyi, or will address integrated protected area management more broadly across Myanmar. In doing so, STAP recommends paying close attention to the following points:

- a. identify monitoring and evaluation methods to measure the scaling-up impact and process
- b. determine the cost-effectiveness of scaling-up
- c. detail how partnerships, mechanisms for policy dialogue and uptake, and effective communication between multi-stakeholders will be developed, and
- d. define how cross-sectoral learning will be encouraged and achieved

This information will contribute to the knowledge management of the project – an important contribution to the GEF and the marine spatial planning community.

<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
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	<p>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:</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>
3. Major issues to be considered during project design	<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>