

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 07, 2012

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

FULL SIZE PROJECT GEF TRUST FUND

GEF PROJECT ID: 4764

PROJECT DURATION : 4

COUNTRIES : Regional (Mongolia, Russian Federation)

PROJECT TITLE: Enhancing the Resilience of Pastoral Ecosystems and Livelihoods of Nomadic Herders

GEF AGENCIES: UNEP

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: - GRID-Arendal (Norway)

- Ministry of Nature, Environment and Tourism of Mongolia
- International Centre for Reindeer Husbandry St Other Executing partners:
- Taiga Nature Society (Mongolia)
- All-Russian Institute of Nature Conservation (Russia)
- Saint Petersburg State University (Russia)
- Institute for Indigenous Peoples of the North of the Herzen State University (Russia)
- Taiga Nature Society (Mongolia)
- Association of World Reindeer Herders
- International Centre for Reindeer Husbandry (Norway)
- UArctic EALAT Institute for Circumpolar Reindeer Husbandry (Saint-Petersburg office, Russia)
- UArctic EALAT Institute for Circumpolar Reindeer Husbandry (Norway)
- IUCN/WISP

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): **Major revision required**

III. Further guidance from STAP

STAP acknowledges this concept paper from UNEP with the overall objective of reducing pasture degradation, sustaining resilience of habitats and livelihoods of nomadic herder communities, and conserving the globally important biological diversity and traditional cultural values of rangelands in Russia and Mongolia. In the context of semi-arid to sub-humid rangelands, it is pleasing to see a proposal that is attempting to bring multiple benefits in what are acknowledged to be marginal and difficult biophysical environments, where the livelihoods of local herders are also critical.

However, STAP urges that a number of scientific and technical issues further outlined below will require immediate consideration as well as priority attention if the project proceeds to a full proposal:

STAP has concerns that there is poor scientific logic and inconsistencies between the FA Strategy Framework, the Project Framework, project baseline and planned activities. There is, in particular, confusion in what currently appears as Expected Outputs and Outcomes. For example, the Expected FA Output for LD-1 appears to be an indicator, not a project deliverable. Its respective outcome bears little scientific relation to the Output. In the Project Framework, the Outcome 1.1 reads as an activity of the project, not a fundamental downstream change brought about by the project. Outputs such as 1.1.3 are simply rather detailed project activities, rather than a project deliverable that enables a global environmental benefit. At Component 2, the stated Outcome of applying ecosystem approaches and tools is again only a short-term activity of the project "what are these tools expected to achieve (this might be an output) and to what

change in the “preferably, global - environment might they contribute (this could be an Outcome)? The project baseline appears to be primarily a review of some current projects in the two countries, set in an introductory context of global rangeland degradation. It selectively describes some findings from projects, findings which appear to have only marginal relevance to the current project's objective. A word-search through the document failed to find any mention of “indicator(s)”. In STAP's understanding, this does not set a scientifically-credible baseline - a baseline which should describe the current status of the relevant rangelands and any on-going activities that are directly attempting to address the described degraded condition. As currently written, it is difficult to see any clear system of indicators that would be able to track future project impact, or for ensuring the delivery of GEBs. These are fundamental flaws in project design which need urgent attention.

Some biodiversity-based GEBs are mentioned on page 21, in terms of eco-regions where the project will engage with activities and in terms of some endangered plants and animals. A biodiversity monitoring system is also mentioned, but no information is given as to what will be measured, what methods will be used and who will do it. Missing from the proposal are major cross-cutting GEBs such as sequestering of carbon, changes in land cover or any of the impact indicators chosen by the UNCCD for national reporting. Similarly, CBD-relevant indicators for the objectives of the Convention appear not to have been considered.

At the end of the baseline section B1, it is stated that "the project will try to address the above issues by taking stock of prior initiatives and continuing to foster a shift towards integrated biodiversity conservation practices and sustainable land uses." This vagueness runs through the whole document and infers a lack of clear scientific direction. It suggests that the current project is merely designed to continue a number of projects that are shortly to complete.

STAP further failed to identify the incrementality rationale of the project. What will the GEF investment actually achieve? Would the project have happened without the GEF funding? Is the project simply a continuation of a number of ongoing federal government financial support initiatives for various sectors?

A project such as this aimed at an important area of herder/pastoral communities will necessarily be very reliant on local institutions and support structures, and it will also have to have important components of livelihood support. Scientific studies in other equivalent environments uniformly confirm that local people will only take on new practices that address their own economic and social needs as seen from their perspective. The project reads instead in a top-down fashion, supporting the likely possibility of a lack of true local participation. Gender issues appear not to have been considered. STAP urges a re-directioning of the emphasis towards local institutions that need to be strengthened, the use of existing knowledge and gender-relevant concerns. More detailed information on how the resilience of pastoral ecosystems will be enhanced would be appreciated. Information will be required on how this trans-boundary project will handle knowledge, especially on best practices.

STAP acknowledges that at this stage some of the information needed is unavailable and will be collected and/or developed during a PPG stage. However, the proposal gives so little basis on which to undertake a well-directed project preparation that STAP is forced to recommend to the GEF Council that the current proposal undergoes Major Revision.

<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
1. Consent	STAP acknowledges that on scientific/technical grounds the concept has merit. However, STAP may state its views on the concept emphasising any issues that could be improved and the proponent is invited to approach STAP for advice at any time during the development of the project brief prior to submission for CEO endorsement.
2. Minor revision required.	STAP has identified specific scientific/technical suggestions or opportunities that should be discussed with the proponent as early as possible during development of the project brief. One or more options that remain open to STAP include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Opening a dialogue between STAP and the proponent to clarify issues (ii) Setting a review point during early stage project development and agreeing 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 revision required	STAP proposes significant improvements or has concerns on the grounds of specified major scientific/technical omissions in the concept. If STAP provides this advisory response, a full explanation would also be provided. Normally, a STAP approved review will be mandatory prior to submission of the project brief for CEO endorsement. 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.

