

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: March 17, 2016
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Consultant(s):

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

FULL SIZE PROJECT	GEF TRUST FUND
GEF PROJECT ID:	9232
PROJECT DURATION:	4
COUNTRIES:	Regional (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar)
PROJECT TITLE:	Sustainable Management of Peatland Ecosystems in Mekong Countries
GEF AGENCIES:	IUCN
OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:	National Government Agencies, ASEAN Secretariat, Global Environment Centre, IFAD
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 welcomes IUCN's proposal "Sustainable Management of Peatland Ecosystems in Mekong Countries". The project intends to address a significant gap in our knowledge on peatlands and their sustainable management based on interventions in Myanmar, Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR). The detailed maps and ecology profiles of each site are welcomed by STAP. STAP also appreciates that the objective is well defined, and that there is a strong rationale for addressing the drivers of peatland degradation through an integrated approach combining biodiversity conservation, sustainable forest management and sustainable land management.

To strengthen further the design of the project, STAP recommends addressing the following points:

1. Further detail on the baseline is required of the specific activities that form the baseline and who will undertake them.
2. STAP would like to see the role of policy, as part of effective governance, recognized, including measures to devise effective policies for managing the drivers of peatland losses in protected areas through logging, peat extraction and agricultural concessions. Additionally, STAP recommends for the project developers to use FAO's "Peatlands &€" guidance for climate change mitigation through conservation, rehabilitation and sustainable use", or a similar source on peatland management: http://www.gret-perg.ulaval.ca/fileadmin/fichiers/fichiersGRET/pdf/Doc_generale/Joosten_2012_Peatlands-guidance_for_climate_change.pdf

The guidelines will be useful in addressing the three project objectives (PIF, page 9): 1. Expand the network of protected peatland ecosystems in the countries in line with Aichi Target 11; 2. Strengthen capacity at local and national levels for sustainable peatland management; and, 3. Strengthen management of peatland

in existing protected areas to demonstrate sustainable management of peatland to conserve biodiversity, reduce GHG emissions and strengthen sustainable livelihoods for local communities.

3. For Myanmar and Cambodia, the project developers should consider the "Taking Deforestation out of Commodity Supply Chain" Integrated Approach Pilot, which focuses on the global impacts of agriculture commodities on climate change and biodiversity by meeting the growing supply and demand of certain crops, including palm oil. The design and implementation of Indonesia's project on palm oil should be of interest to this project.
4. On global environmental benefits for biodiversity conservation, STAP suggests identifying concrete indicators how these benefits will be measured. Currently, this information appears absent in the document. Additionally, STAP recommends for the project to consider soil carbon increase by implementing SALT (Sloping Agricultural Land Technology) in Inle lake Basin in the project's incremental reasoning. To support the estimation of climate change benefits, STAP would also like to see an explanation of the method used to determine the areas of each of the mitigation measures.
5. STAP is pleased the project seeks to empower local stakeholders as their role is critical for the sustainability of peatlands. It would be valuable to describe further how stakeholders' traditional knowledge, roles and responsibilities will be embedded in the design and implementation of the project. The project should also recognize the risk of having divergent views based on competing demands (e.g. increased agricultural productivity versus biodiversity protection), and how the project proposes to facilitate dialogue and consensus so that interventions are designed based on multiple perspectives. Additionally, mapping the relevant stakeholders at the local, regional and international level (e.g. Convention on Biological Diversity, Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil, among others) will be important to assess the problem and the role of stakeholders across scales to develop and implement effective policies for protected area management amidst land use change.
6. STAP appreciates the recognition of sustainable use as a strategy to simultaneously contribute to environmental protection and livelihood enhancement. STAP would like to see more detail of the sustainable use options being considered, or the process to devise these.
7. A comprehensive analysis of the social, economic and biophysical context to describe the social-ecological characteristics and map the interactions between these variables, will be beneficial. This analysis will assist in identifying common drivers that might affect the social-ecological system (e.g. markets, climate change), and controlling variables (small number of variables that regulate the social-ecological system through direct and feedback loops). Doing so, will allow the project stakeholders to understand better the most effective measures to target in devising interventions, and to identify and evaluate sustainability of alternative options. Analysis of the likely impacts of climate change on the peatland environments and associated communities should form part of the project. The project developers could consult the Resilience, Adaptation Pathways and Transformation Assessment (RAPTA) Framework at www.stagef.org for guidance on multi-stakeholder processes to assess resilience and develop adaptation pathways.
8. STAP is pleased there will be knowledge and learning exchange between the project and other regional projects on sustainable peatland management. The activities for knowledge exchange within the three targets countries are nominated; STAP would like to see more detail on the design of effective knowledge exchange between these countries and neighboring countries with strong experience in peatland management. Besides this, STAP also encourages the project developers to consider how learning from the project (e.g. drawing from a theory of change, and monitoring and assessment) will generate knowledge to assess and monitor its progress, as well as identify adjustments that will assist in reaching the objective.

<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	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>during project design</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>3. Major issues to be considered during project design</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>