

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: September 25, 2016
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I. PIF Information *(Copied from the PIF)*

FULL-SIZED PROJECT	GEF TRUST FUND
GEF PROJECT ID:	9607
PROJECT DURATION:	6
COUNTRIES:	Regional (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Montenegro, Tunisia)
PROJECT TITLE:	Mediterranean Sea Programme (MedProgramme): Enhancing Environmental Security
GEF AGENCIES:	UNEP and EBRD
OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:	UNEP/MAP, EIB, UNESCO IHP, GWP Med, WWF MedPO, UNIDO and IUCN.
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

This Programme proposal (PFD) follows logically on from the recently completed MedPartnership project (GEF ID 2600), both of which support the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) for the Barcelona Convention. This provides a regional framework for 21 countries (both in the European Union and non-EU) to collaborate regarding the MAP - Protection of the Marine Environment and the Sustainable Development of the Coastal Areas of the Mediterranean.

The MedPartnership project, Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Sea Large Marine Ecosystem "Regional Component, has been previously evaluated. Therefore the PFD and the draft evaluation report were the primary baseline documents reviewed by the Panel. STAP acknowledges that major lessons and recommendations of the MedPartnership evaluation were addressed in this new submission. The need for the proposed Programme is understood by STAP to be a demand for a coordinating mechanism for the implementation of actions identified through the MedPartnership project. Therefore this screening report tests the theory of change that has been proposed and also examines the proposed added value of a programmatic approach and its regional component given the wide range of national abilities to implement outstanding actions that were formulated through the MedPartnership. Furthermore, STAP takes into account a new and systemic dimension proposed in the new PFD "to enhance environmental security through implementation of agreed priority actions by parties to the Barcelona Convention to reduce transboundary environmental stresses affecting the Mediterranean Sea. A Programme of this size and complexity provides new innovative solutions to be applicable widely in the GEF but also technical and implementation challenges. This STAP screen focuses on these two dimensions.

Baseline scenario:

This section of the PFD is well-written and succinct, and conveys the depth and richness of the coordinating actions at regional level and the national pilots well, while highlighting the updating of the two SAPs.

The PFD reflects upon the achievements of the pilots (three clusters) from the MedPartnership project, but also posits in the section 'Highlights of the Current Situation' new stresses that could, in STAP's opinion, act to distract attention away from implementation of actions shown by the pilots to be necessary and feasible. Consolidation of actions needs to be achieved to deliver real reductions in stress and relocation of necessary actions across the region. In this regard the updating of the TDA proposed in Child Project 1.1 should not be permitted to distract from the implementation of the two agreed SAPs and various NAPs.

This proposal takes consideration of key convention related chemicals pollution, particularly POPs, PAHs and mercury. There are some data indicating the increase of POPs releases that the project should address, but good source identification may help to overcome this challenge.

Stakeholder analysis:

Stakeholders are mentioned frequently throughout the PFD as being essential for effective actions to be delivered, and the barrier to stakeholder participation in the context of MPAs is mentioned. However, although the section on stakeholders lists the key stakeholders for the MedProgramme, based on the structures of the Barcelona Convention, a strategy for engagement of stakeholders is missing, which also appeared to be an initial weakness of the MedPartnership project. It is not clear from the PFD that the child projects proposed have been designed in a participatory manner with national and local stakeholders, particularly with civil society representatives and community groups. The PFD still reads as largely a top-down document and proponents need to address this deficit, regarding roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of stakeholders especially at sub-national level.

The analysis should be specific for each country, detailing how, at regional level, effective support and coordination will be achieved, including for selection of stakeholders and the linked setting up of Communities of Practice. STAP does, however, welcome the proposed recruitment of a gender specialist and their involvement in project formulation. The Terminal Evaluation of the MedPartnership project noted successful experience in developing a stakeholder engagement plan and NGO engagement plan as well as the role of Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development in facilitating stakeholder engagement and public awareness. For the Programme of this size and focus on environmental security, a stakeholder engagement plan should consider the importance of building socio-economic resilience of impacted communities (more on that in the next section).

Theory of change:

STAP welcomes the inclusion of a theory of change and that the overall path from outputs to expected impact is clearly set out. However, we question the underlying presumption of the Programme that "overall environmental security, the sustainability of the livelihoods of the growing coastal populations and their resilience... will be improved by addressing hot-spots of coastal/marine pollution and habitat degradation, implementing ICZM and nexus [water, food and energy] planning, introduce conjunctive surface and groundwater management, protecting coastal groundwater related ecosystems and coastal/marine biodiversity" tells only half of the story and misses the important element of human security.

Contrary to the recognition of the links and tensions between biophysical, political and economic domains, in practice there is often a disconnect between communities working on conventional security and those working on human security and sustainable development. While the state-centric security studies community generally tends to focus on countering direct threats to the state, emphasizing short and medium-term security concerns, human security discourse typically has a longer time horizon, and looks more broadly at risks and vulnerabilities to humans and ecosystems, with less attention to political delineations. An integrated understanding of socio-ecological systems requires approaches to deal with irreversibilities and uncertainty in a multi-stakeholder context encompassing both security dimensions. Therefore, the entire Programme design should provide for sufficient flexibility and appropriate adaptive management strategies to counteract political instability and continuously changing circumstances of the countries in the Mediterranean region.

Without bridging two dimensions of security (political and human) the impacts of this significant investment run the risk of having a bundle of necessary but not strategically integrated individual activities, i.e., largely repeating the same approach employed by the MedPartnership project without utilizing the potential a programmatic approach offers. Therefore, during the further preparation of the Programme and its individual

projects, STAP strongly recommends using a common analytical approach using scenarios to explore possible futures and identify specific intervention points for most impactful programme/project interventions.

Project proponents could explore practical tools available in this domain. Two resources could be potentially useful in this context (but there are others available too): Stockholm Environmental Institute Working Paper "Integrating sustainable development and security: An analytical approach with examples from the Middle East and North Africa, the Arctic and Central Asia" available at: <https://www.sei-international.org/publications?pid=2842>. The approach includes three steps: understanding the broader socio-economic and environmental context; developing scenarios through a participatory process; and appraising options for robust governance and development investments. Such an approach can help foster a more dynamic and broader view of sustainable development, informed by insights from the security realm.

Another source that could be explored is the recent guidance by the STAP - The Resilience, Adaptation Pathways and Transformation Assessment Framework (RAPTA) available at: <http://www.stapgef.org/the-resilience-adaptation-and-transformation-assessment-framework/>. The frameworks could be applied at the sub-national, national and regional levels. RAPTA could be used to revise the proposed elements in the Programme's Theory of Change by integrating ecological and social systems on the one side and political and human security considerations on the other side. Therefore, STAP holds an opinion that the Programme can be greatly improved by systematically extracting the full range of key barriers identified within the baseline sections, and showing, e.g. in the section C. Alternative Scenario, how these will be addressed at regional and national scales in a systemic way. Without such a structured approach considering the integrity of the socio-ecological systems at the appropriate scales, the Programme risks piecemeal actions and reduced impact. Furthermore, building or mainstreaming the resilience into the Programme and its child projects would require stronger focus (than the current Programme has) on climate change adaptation in the context of human security.

Apart from considering the construction and maintenance of protective structural and non-structural hazard resistant infrastructure, ecosystem-based adaptation solutions could be explored. Recognizing the current regional security context, STAP recommends developing further cooperative and transboundary infrastructure to protect human security of refugees and migrants by e.g., supporting livelihoods diversification among human traffickers. Another aspect of migration that the Programme of this size could tackle to certain extent indirectly is uncontrolled rural to urban migration stressing urban systems and increasing vulnerability of urban populations while also undermining food security and traditional livelihoods.

Many of the Programme interventions are best described in the framework of the Source to Sea concept. Programme proponents are advised to consult the recently released Source to Sea conceptual framework to consolidate and design further often loosely connected activities of the Programme (available at: <http://www.thegef.org/council-meeting-documents/conceptual-framework-governing-and-managing-key-flows-source-sea-continuum>).

Innovation, Monitoring and Knowledge Management:

STAP acknowledges a range of innovative elements and actions proposed in the Programme. Among them is introduction of conjunctive surface and groundwater management, planning for food, energy and water nexus, innovative technologies transfer and others. Properly designed knowledge management project of the Programme is critical to assure sustainability of these innovations and Programme's contribution to global learning.

The terminal evaluation of the MedPartnership project states that monitoring was not addressed; the monitored quantitative impact of stress reduction was limited to removal of PCBs from Turkey and Bosnia and Herzegovina and through demonstration projects some reduction in industrial waste pollution. STAP welcomes the intention of the proposed Programme to focus support on implementation of a monitoring programme, within which the non-EU countries can be guided to collaborate on generating their own data towards the common set of indicators identified to ensure that stress reduction can be measured. However, given the substantial barriers noted in the PFD regarding monitoring and information management, this area of proposed work appears to represent the potential to delay stress reduction actions, and the related risks to Programme outcomes need to be fully reflected in the risks table. The Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) for the Mediterranean is, however, the best available common set of tools for informing the science-policy interface (SPI) which is critical to achieve meaningful progress on stress reduction. However, a priority not dealt with in Component 4 is provision of support to participating countries to incentivize application of IMAP to policy reform or implementation. The report of the Plan Bleu workshop

in December 2015 Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach in the Mediterranean: Strengthening the SPI, highlighted the gaps and opportunities available, and the Programme should be strengthened accordingly.

Component 1 focuses on reductions of land-based sources of pollution and proposes to target chemicals pollution through the disposal of stockpiles and wastes, adoption of sustainable consumption and production practices, innovative technologies and regulatory approaches. However, there should also be consideration of potential non industrial sources of POPs and other toxic chemicals, and seeking out of the potential role of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) techniques to minimise use of pesticides in agriculture, horticulture, general pest control, vector control, structural preservation treatments and others. These could be major sources for POPs and harmful pesticides. Furthermore, where there are data gaps as relates to chemicals pollution, there should be careful retention of such data in the course of implementing this project, as well as key lessons learned in the course of implementation of methods to curtail chemicals pollution from various sources, including the impacts of climate change and variability on the concentration and behaviour of harmful chemicals.

The section on Knowledge Management (KM) deals primarily with tools and data systems, but omits mention of how tacit knowledge, including capacity building or related lessons learnt derived from the predecessor MedPartnership project will be used, some of which are mentioned elsewhere in the PFD text (e.g. pages 13, 26). Capacity building and tacit knowledge indicators should be introduced. The Programme designers may have implicitly assumed that lessons and experience have been transferred from the MedPartnership project to the present proposal. However, STAP recommends that an explicit commitment to knowledge transfer (including South-South and North-South transfer) be outlined. A comprehensive effort to update and finalize the presentation and availability on the web of the many publications and reports, the incomplete bibliography and related document links that were pending at the close of the MedPartnership project should be undertaken as a part of the KM child project. As recommended by the MedPartnership terminal evaluation, the Programme should attempt to translate major documents into appropriate languages of the region.

Risks:

The evaluation of the MedPartnership project recommended that "In developing future projects with a national component, UNEP and MAP should carefully identify potential problems that represent substantial sources of risk, and take appropriate decisions and identify necessary measures for risk mitigation." STAP recommends that this advice be translated into a more fully argued risk table, with particular attention to the following sections and close links to the Theory of Change.

Lack of political support: The risk table makes the unwarranted assumption that this risk is low, however, this risk should be broken out by country or raised to at least medium as a risk overall. For example, regarding Aichi targets, the PFD mentions the need for stronger political commitment as well as greater cooperation and new governance approaches. Surely this represents at least a medium risk?

Also in connection with political support (but also civil/local support) the PFD does not provide substantive evidence of ownership (the word is missing from the entire document), beyond the formal country endorsements, and as is the case with regional projects in general, an emphasis on the demand side needs to be more fully demonstrated, especially for the proposed child projects.

Political instability: The risks table correctly rates political stability as high risk and within this category states that child projects will be implemented only in countries where conditions are considered stable and/or rapidly improving. In this regard Libya, as an example, would seem to be infeasible as a country in which to locate a child project that requires pre-conditions of good governance and safe field operating conditions to advance the proposed MPA coverage and future sustainability. In this section the Programme designers should also indicate the proposed mitigating actions that are to be taken should the child project or Programme actions not be possible. Options to consider might be to transfer the resources to another country, or enable out of country capacity building support.

Another substantive risk related to political instability is that of impacts on the entire regional system resulting from instability in one country, and the proposed regional and national child projects need to take into account these likely risks accordingly. For example, transfer of increased pollution from hotspots, unsustainable fishing/loss of species, dispersal of invasive alien species, etc.

Monitoring and data sharing:

Until monitoring standards and protocols and data sharing arrangements are fully operational, there is a substantial risk of serious delay or possible non-delivery of much of the stress reduction actions proposed in child projects. The risk table should also include an assessment and proposed mitigation of the risk that

regionally agreed common monitoring data collected will not be shared by countries that regard some or all the collected data to be sensitive; a situation that applied to one country in the previous project regarding groundwater resource data.

Climate change risks:

The PFD states that child projects will include contingency measures and targeted mitigation measures to potential adverse impacts of climate change. Recognizing high impacts of climate change on this region and the existing knowledge base, STAP recommends considering climate resilience measures as a subset of building overall systemic resilience of the Programme (see section on Theory of Change).

<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>