

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: @@@@ @@, @@@@

Screeener: Lev Neretin

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

FULL SIZE PROJECT GEF TRUST FUND

GEF PROJECT ID: 5104

PROJECT DURATION : 5

COUNTRIES : Russian Federation

PROJECT TITLE: Sustainable Land Management and Ecosystem-based Climate Change Mitigation in the Altai-Sayan Ecoregion

GEF AGENCIES: UNDP

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment

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): **Consent**

III. Further guidance from STAP

STAP wishes to commend the United Nations Development Programme and the government of Russia for this thorough and innovative proposal that has a goal to promote sustainable and integrated land and forest management in Altai-Sayan Ecoregions in order to reduce pressures on natural resources from competing land uses and to secure conservation and enhancement of carbon stocks. The stated goal is achieved through two project components focusing on 1) enabling policy environment and strengthening enforcement capacities for integrated land management and sustainable forest management, and 2) demonstrating improved sustainable land and forest management. The components are based on comprehensive description of baseline activities, barriers at all levels to achieving the desired result, and measures on how the barriers could be overcome.

This eloquently written proposal is scientifically and technically sound while its logical structure provides references to other project related GEF initiatives, scientific literature, and international and national policy documents.

The mention of intent to use Carbon Benefits Project (Detailed Assessment Module, which is equivalent of IPCC Tier-2) for calculating ecosystem carbon in steppe and grassland ecosystem is welcomed by STAP.

While STAP is happy for this project to proceed, it wishes to flag a number of issues that will need to be either addressed or be elaborated upon in the PPG phase of this ambitious project:

1. Passing mention is made of the WWF experience in the Altai-Sayan Ecoregion. The current proposal needs to be harmonised with WWF projects. In particular, a 2009 initiative entitled "Integrated Community Development and Biodiversity Conservation in the Republic of Tuva" funded by Oxfam-GB in Republic of Tyva (Russia) would appear to offer experience on community involvement in SLM/SFM and biodiversity conservation – community participation is an aspect that is critical but not particularly well-developed in the current proposal.
2. The ASE also has some strong local cultures and local knowledge systems which need to be included within the current project. For example, the Tyvans have evolved a strong social system of mutual help called temnejir that manages the collective use of lands, collaboration between aals (family groups), shared hunting and help with hay and crop harvests. It would be unfortunate if an excessively top-down approach to integrated forest and land management were to be adopted which neglected these valuable local systems.
3. Livestock herders in the ASE are under increasing pressure in the face of epizootic diseases as well as predator attacks by wolves (occasionally); herders suffer from very few options, and it is reported that lack of credit and available markets mean that opportunities for investments in small businesses cannot be realised. These and other critical human development constraints need also to be explicitly analyzed and addressed by the project.

4. Climate change and climate vulnerability risks are not well described in the risk analysis, and will need more explicit attention. For example, mean warming in this part of Russia over the period 1976-3007 is significantly greater at 1.33 degs C. than global means. This appears to have had impacts on aspects such as snow depth, river runoff and shifting of vegetation zones. GEF projects must have a robust analysis of these issues and build measures to adapt and cope with anticipated changes due to climate change

5. STAP recommends project proponents to more critically assessed lessons learned during implementation of the UNDP/GEF project "Conservation of biodiversity in the Russian portion of Altay-Sayan Ecoregion". While the project focused solely on biodiversity protection and establishment of protected areas, experiences (i) in supporting alternative livelihoods (i.e., focusing efforts on upscaling rather than demonstrations and testing), (ii) developing proper impact indicators focusing on social and behavioral aspects in addition to those mandated by the GEF BD and LD focal areas as well as (iii) considering biodiversity mainstreaming activities are applicable and should be used in developing and implementing proposed in the project integrated land and forest use plans (ILFUPs) (Component 1).

6. As PIF correctly stated forest and steppe ecosystems over-exploitation as well as anthropogenically caused fires in many instances are driven by illegal or uncontrolled activities often explained by deficiencies in the enforcement capacity. How this barrier of lacking enforcement capacity to be addressed by the project remains unclear and should be addressed during PPG stage.

7. Unsustainable mining operations are impacting both forest and steppe ecosystems. While the PIF acknowledges this threat, it is not clear how the project will address unsustainable mining practices and work with mining companies on environmental sustainability in general. Would they be participating among ILFUP consultations? Would the project try to assist at least some of these companies in aligning their practices with the best international standards of environmental performance? It seems that working with mining sector on improving its environmental performance is a critical factor for project success and should be addressed during project preparation.

<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
1. Consent	<p>STAP acknowledges that on scientific or technical grounds the concept has merit. However, STAP may state its views on the concept emphasizing any issues where the project could be improved.</p> <p>Follow up: The GEF Agency is invited to approach STAP for advice during the development of the project prior to submission of the final document for CEO endorsement.</p>
2. Minor revision required.	<p>STAP has identified specific scientific or technical challenges, omissions or opportunities that should be addressed by the project proponents during project development.</p> <p>Follow up: One or more options are open to STAP and the GEF Agency: (i) GEF Agency should discuss the issues with STAP to clarify them and possible solutions. (ii) In its request for CEO endorsement, the GEF Agency will report on actions taken in response to STAP's recommended actions.</p>
3. Major revision required	<p>STAP has identified significant scientific or technical challenges or omissions in the PIF and recommends significant improvements to project design.</p> <p>Follow-up: (i) The Agency should request that the project undergo a STAP review prior to CEO endorsement, at a point in time when the particular scientific or technical issue is sufficiently developed to be reviewed, or as agreed between the Agency and STAP. (ii) In its request for CEO endorsement, the Agency will report on actions taken in response to STAP concerns.</p>