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 31, 2018
Screener:	Virginia Gorsevski
Panel member validation by:	Brian Child
Consultant(s):	

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

FULL-SIZED PROJECT	**GEF TRUST FUND**
GEF PROJECT ID:	10007
PROJECT DURATION:	6
COUNTRIES:	Sao Tome and Principe
PROJECT TITLE:	Enhancing Capacity for Biodiversity Conservation and Protected Area Management
GEF AGENCIES:	UNDP
OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:	Regional Directorate of Environment & Conservation, Directorate of Environment, Directorate of Forests, Directorate of Agriculture, Directorates of the Natural Parks on São Tomé and Príncipe
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 the project proposal from UNDP entitled "Enhancing Capacity for Biodiversity Conservation and Protected Area Management." The objective of this project is to strengthen systemic, institutional and operational capacity at national and site levels for protected area management and sustainable land management, to safeguard globally significant terrestrial and marine flora and fauna and ensure environmentally sustainable livelihoods.

São Tomé and Príncipe (STP) is struggling with under-managed and under-resourced protected areas (PAs) as well as lack of coordination and capacity at the national level. In addition, unsustainable land practices in the PA buffer areas is adding additional pressure, along with destructive fishing practices. The primary underlying drivers of degradation are increasing population and unsustainable economic growth tied to industries that rely on natural resource extraction, and also the growing tourism industry. This UNDP project builds on several past projects administered by the EU, IFAD, FAO and UNDP, which have led to the establishment of the PAs and some efforts to mainstream biodiversity and promote climate resilient development, among other things.

The rationale for working in STP is clear given the country's extensive biological diversity and the growing threats identified above. However, to improve this project and its overall likelihood of success, STAP has several general observations and some specific recommendations.

In general:

Despite the high economic value of many African protected areas, they are underperforming because institutions are poorly designed administratively (e.g. the over-sight/policy agency is also the implementing agencies) and financially (e.g. finances are over-centralized). STP represents a greenfield where these future problems can be avoided. It is therefore recommended that the PPG:

1. Undertake a rigorous analysis of the regulatory requirements for PA and buffer-zone institutions, and how best to institutionalize these functions, rather than following the antiquated model of a state PA agency. Regulatory goals should establish indicators for key performance areas – biodiversity status and protection, tourism and income, infrastructure and equipment, sustainable communities and community-based natural resource management (CBNRM).

2. Assess whether the regulatory agency should be a government agency, and how to make it effective and accountable to society and to achieve global environmental benefits (GEBs).

3. Carefully contemplate how to separate regulatory functions from implementation functions, and consider delegating implementation functions to non-government agencies.

4. Take considerable care in matching the aspirations of the PAs to their sustainable revenue potential.

Specific comments related to each of the Components are as follows:

Component 1: The use of a sound economic cost-benefit analysis to decide priorities is highly endorsed by STAP. So is the use of management plans, noting that these can or should be limited to ten pages with a clear results chain and performance indicators, and should be developed by the agencies that will implement them (with some external facilitation) and not by short term consultants. In addition, STAP believes that it is technically sound to integrate science into planning process. However, it is not clear from reading evaluations of past projects that lack of capacity is the primary barrier; rather it may be a question of political will and incentive. If so, will valuation of biodiversity and improved frameworks be sufficient to give national governments and (more importantly) local people incentive to change their practices? What if the business case for conservation isn't strong enough? What valuation methods and models will be used and why? What will be the incentive for palm oil and cocoa industries to engage in a productive manner?

Component 2: Irregular collection and mismanagement of park fees, along with shortage of staff and limited enforcement are major issues. If tourism shows growing potential, this sector should be brought into the process and effort should be made to show how revenue from tourism benefits local communities and businesses (does it?). STAP has developed an excel spreadsheet-based tool – Tourism Economic Model for Protected Areas – TEMPA that could potentially be used to help make the business case for greater investments in park infrastructure, for example.

Component 3: STAP endorses the focus on ten buffer zone communities. However, STAP suggests that efforts during the PPG phase give serious consideration to assisting communities to obtain land rights coupled with quality participatory collective governance, but also to move beyond platitudes of SLM, SFM, CFM, IGAs (p12) to technically feasible interventions.

Component 4: Lack of reliable data is listed as a problem: therefore, it is important for project proponents to work with science teams and others to collect and monitor relevant information during the duration of the project. However, greater effort should be paid to understanding why past projects didn't fulfill their potential (e.g. IFAD biodiversity mainstreaming project discusses many of the same barriers so clearly not 100 % effective. How can this project learn to avoid making same mistakes?). STAP notes that this project is incremental to 6 stages of the EU-funded ECOFAC programme. Consequently, STAP recommends that the PPG takes great care to focus on doing a few things properly than trying to resolve all problems in a single project cycle, and shares its concerns that the proposal may already be taking on too much. These should probably be 1. Establishing the minimum enabling legal environment with project champions 2. Establishing good management systems in PAs and 3. Piloting high quality community projects.

Finally, this PIF cites statistics on forest cover that are nearly 20 years old and which rely on the country's own forest survey. In 2018, with the abundance of freely-available satellite data on forest cover, it should be quite simple to update this information and provide a more accurate depiction of the current land cover situation. According to Global Forest Watch, tree cover constitutes 11.5% of total land area. Also this figure would not take into account recent deforestation trends – mainly due to oil palm production and commercial cocoa producers. Effort should be made in the PPG phase to sharpen these numbers to get a better sense of baseline conditions of different types of forest, among other land cover types.

STAP advisory response	*Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed*
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	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: (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. 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 issues to be considered during project design	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: (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. The GEF Secretariat may, based on this screening outcome, delay the proposal and refer the proposal back to the proponents with STAP's concerns. 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.