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:	November 20, 2017
Screener:	Guadalupe Duron
Panel member validation by:	Brian Child
Consultant(s):	

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

FULL-SIZED PROJECT	**GEF TRUST FUND**
GEF PROJECT ID:	9372
PROJECT DURATION:	3.5
COUNTRIES:	Sri Lanka
PROJECT TITLE:	Managing Together: Integrating Community-centered, Ecosystem-based Approaches into Forestry, Agriculture and Tourism Sectors
GEF AGENCIES:	UNDP
OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:	
	Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment
	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):
Concur

III. Further guidance from STAP

STAP welcomes UNDP's proposal "Managing together: Integrating community-centered, ecosystem-based approaches into forestry, agriculture and tourism sectors". The project aims to strengthen biodiversity conservation, and sustainable land and forest management through land use planning in northern Sri Lanka. The project also targets the tourism sector to strengthen biodiversity conservation and wildlife management, and improve livelihoods.

Overall, the PIF suggests a strongly pragmatic approach to the problem, and is clearly written by people with field experience and good judgement. STAP has three main observations/suggestions, with further specific comments below:

1. This is an ambitious project with 19 Outcomes. While this might be possible given the level of co-financing, the PPG stage should focus on key priorities and what can be delivered reliably. In other words, STAP requests that the project focus on doing a sound job, and does not reduce its potential impact by over-stretching.

2. The emphasis on tourism is welcome, both in terms of sustainable practices and the financing of biodiversity. In this respect STAP:

a. calls attention to various economic tools for evaluating the total economic value and employment multipliers of tourism (Lynne Koontz, Catherine Cullinane Thomas et al. 2017, Thiago Souza, Alex Chidakel et al. 2017 (final draft)).

b. Recommends that the Project considers developing something like a regional Tourism Operator Association, and work with and empower them to implement many of the good ideas in the project.

3. To strengthen communities' abilities to adapt to change and uncertainty resulting from social, economic, and political transformations at the sub-national and national level, STAP encourages the project proponents to apply resilience thinking. Engaging stakeholders and establishing project governance arrangements, essential components in resilience thinking, will be critical to delivering the outcomes and meeting the project objective.

In addition to the comments above STAP proposes below issues to address during the project design:

1. STAP recommends detailing the landscape management approach "Ecologically Sensitive Areas" (ESA). It also would be valuable to describe how the project intends to apply lessons learned from the approach, and advance ESA's learning as a biodiversity planning framework. If publications (published, or unpublished) on ESA are available, STAP suggests referencing them to support the framework's evidence-base as a landscape planning tool in areas experiencing landscape change.

2. The project proponents are encouraged to consider indicators that reflect managing biodiversity conservation, agriculture production and forest management at the landscape level. Doing so, will assist in monitoring and assessment of a landscape approach – including how progress was measured and data gathered to support landscape-level outcomes. The following two papers may be useful to consider when designing the project: 1) Sunderland, T., et al. (2017). "A methodological approach for assessing cross-site landscape change: Understanding socio-ecological system". Forest Policy and Economics 84 (2017) 83–91. 2) Reed, J. et al. (2016). "Integrated landscape approaches to managing social and environmental issues in the tropics: learning from the past to guide the future their progress is measured and to support indicators, so they capture measurements". Global Change Biology (2016) 22, 2540–2554, doi: 10.1111/gcb.13284

3. STAP suggests developing a plan (or framework) that engages the proposed multiple stakeholders. Engaging stakeholders (identifying which stakeholders need to be engaged, and when to engage them) will assist in designing and implementing effectively the components. Doing so will embed stakeholders' values, needs, knowledge, and decision-making into the interventions, which is critical to the success of the project. STAP would like to see the stakeholder plan, or framework, described in the project document.

4. Engagement of stakeholders also is important for analyzing the synergies and trade-offs between the multiple benefits – such as strengthening biodiversity conservation and establishing local development (e.g. establishing eco-tourism) opportunities. The project should detail how communities will be engaged in the tourism plans (component 3) for the three ecologically sensitive areas. Based on stakeholder's socio-economic characteristics, the project should also detail what is required for effective community participation in developing tourism plans. The following paper may be useful to the project proponents when considering measures for engaging stakeholders: Bello, F., et al. (2016). "Community participation framework for protected area-based tourism planning". Tourism Planning & Development Vol. 13 , Iss. 4, 2016.

5. In addition, the project proponents should apply resilience thinking. Global change impacts dynamics at the local level - socially, economically, and ecologically. The dynamics and change affecting social-ecological systems have important links to tourism. STAP's application of the Resilience, Adaptation, Pathways and Assessment (RAPTA) Framework can assist the project proponents frame how global change is affecting the targeted social-ecological systems, and how the systems can respond and adapt favorably to uncertainties and change. STAP suggests two sources on resilience thinking: 1) RAPTA guidelines: http://www.stapgef.org/rapta-guidelines 2) Cheer, J., et al. (Eds) (2018). "Tourism, Resilience, and Sustainability". New York, New York. Routledge.

6. STAP suggests describing how the project intends to implement adaptive management during the project planning. This is important as the project makes assumptions about the outcomes, which will need verification and actions that require adjustments (e.g. eco-tourism will support biodiversity conservation and wildlife management).

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.