

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 08, 2013

Screeener: Guadalupe Duron

Panel member validation by: Michael Anthony Stocking
Consultant(s):

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

FULL SIZE PROJECT GEF TRUST FUND

GEF PROJECT ID: 5347

PROJECT DURATION : 4

COUNTRIES : Yemen

PROJECT TITLE: Support to the Integrated Program for the Conservation and Sustainable Development of the Socotra Archipelago

GEF AGENCIES: UNEP

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: Ministry of Water and Environment (MOWE) / Environment Protection Authority (EPA); Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH; UNDP

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 revision required**

III. Further guidance from STAP

The Socotra Archipelago (Yemen) is the largest, biologically most diverse island group in the Arabian Region. STAP therefore welcomes this project with its overall objective of reinforcing national capacity to manage and protect the Socotra Archipelago WHS through a sustainable land-use approach and improved management of Invasive Alien Species. Although principally a biodiversity project focussing on PAs, it draws on the LD focal area for funding of small-scale, environmentally-friendly sustainable land management activity in adjacent areas.

The proposal has a number of positive features that are scientifically and technically sound. In particular, STAP supports an 'umbrella' project approach bringing together SLM, IAS management, community based management of PAs, Conservation Financing Mechanisms, alternative livelihoods, and training, all as a coordinated partnership among a broad range of stakeholders, donors and GOY. STAP also appreciates the Annex 5 analysis of how the project will contribute to CBD Aichi targets. The PIF lists an impressive number of donor and scientific stakeholders, each with a specialist expertise to contribute to biodiversity conservation. The PIF is also candid about the potential difficulties of working on biodiversity issues in a country that has more high-profile development issues; and in a country where there is a lack of transparency and very limited experience of participation especially by poor local communities and women.

This last point mentioned above does, indeed, raise significant difficulties for the project which need to be addressed during the PPG period and fully elaborated in the project brief. Some of the points addressed below should ideally be in a revised PIF. GEF involvement in Socotra goes back to 1997. Since then there have been problems in building capacity and human resource capabilities, even in relatively straightforward projects. More sustained long-term financing is argued as the needed element according to the PIF. However, in STAP's view the poor performance of projects has probably been because they failed to address the major barriers to conservation in the Yemen - poverty, poor livelihoods and inability to address stakeholders' needs. STAP understands that the PIF cannot at this stage detail how the project will proceed. Nevertheless, it might have been expected that the proposal would have a more robust analysis and self-evaluation of why and how previous projects have not delivered to full expectations. There are glaring gaps in information in the PIF that are made more urgent given the difficulties of working in the Yemen.

(1) Human pressures on Socotra. One of the foremost ecologists with local knowledge, Kay van Damme said in 2011 [in the book *Biodiversity Conservation in the Arabian Peninsula*] that "An anthropogenic tsunami currently seems to be sweeping over Socotra." Allowing for a certain degree of hyperbole, it is clear that biodiversity is greatly being endangered by human pressures and that these are steadily increasing. It is strange that the proposal does not analyze

this pressure in anything other than general terms. What are the population pressures, encroachment on PAs, introductions of potentially invasive species and so on? Any comprehensive strategy involving local people will have to have a full causative analysis of the political ecology and economy of Socotra in order to provide a baseline of information. There does not seem to be provision for this even in the Project Framework [In Component 1 there is mention of an output on ecosystem service assessment to be done under the management effectiveness of the PA network, but this is not what we mean here]. Ideally the change in pressure on biodiversity and implementation of sustainable practices should be tracked through the lifetime of the project – see also below. STAP requests this analysis be included and that it be done by accepted political ecological analysis and/or rural sociology.

(2) Sustainable Land Management. Critical to this project will be the design and implementation of SLM for local communities, so that they not only have their livelihoods protected but also they respect the PAs and join in the effort to eradicate Invasive Alien Species. STAP notes that there are no government agencies involved in agriculture, land use or forestry listed as involved in the project, and is worried that mistakes of the past will be re-created where ecologists attempt to run sustainable development enterprises with local people without sufficient background or experience on ‘best practices’ or analysis of livelihoods. Attention needs to be paid to issues such as soil conservation, land and water management practices and alternative livelihood promotion – along with a robust form of participation, about which see below. STAP advises that lessons from other integrated conservation and development projects (ICDP) be used on which to draw lessons. A good starting might be the discussion of the conceptual flaws in the ICDP approach and their potential sustainability – see Barrett, C.B. 1996. Are integrated conservation and development projects sustainable? *World Development* 23(7): 1073-1084. The 2009 book chapter by Andreas Kotsakis on ‘Community participation in biodiversity conservation: localities of tension’ could be another useful source. It should be noted that even INGOs such as WWF and IUCN now tread far more carefully in attempts at linking PAs and activities with local communities. STAP would have expected to see agriculture and land use partners involved in the project.

(3) Participation. The PIF mentions the need for local community participation plus also engagement more closely with women, and it also points out that there is little successful experience of promoting these aspects in the Yemen, despite previous projects that have tried. Again, the project needs to inform itself of lessons drawn from elsewhere on how local communities and gender involvement can be better assured – rather than just hoped for. Such participation needs to be central to project decision-making. Participation can range from mere exchange of views right through to integral decision-making. There does have to be the local institutional structures for negotiation and discussion. The PIF is largely silent on these aspects of local governance which have proved to be crucial in other projects. Any of the standard texts on participation in the context of biodiversity conservation should be consulted and criteria be elaborated for the full project. A Nigerian example is in Eneji, VCO et al 2009. Problems of public participation in biodiversity conservation. *Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal* 27: 301-307.

(4) Global environmental benefits. Intended GEBs in Section A.1.5 are wholly devoted to protection of species. Not only should the project proposers look further at impact indicators in the GEF-5 Biodiversity FA Strategy, but they must also include indicators in the LD/FA Strategy. In addition, there should be a systematic monitoring and tracking of indicators that give good links to GEBs. In particular, STAP advises that changes in total system carbon would be an excellent cross-focal area indicator enabling the assessment of how far the project investment has benefitted both SLM and CC mitigation, not to mention its proxy link to biodiversity. Some more creative thinking on GEBs, impact indicators, tracking and monitoring should really be introduced at the PIF stage because of their central importance to the overall GEF Strategy.

Because this project is in an area of such high-value biodiversity and situated where interventions could prevent further loss of habitat and species, STAP advises that the project should proceed as Minor Revisions, and that attention must be paid to addressing the weak technical points noted above.

<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
1. Consent	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. 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.
2. Minor revision required.	STAP has identified specific scientific or technical challenges, omissions or opportunities that should be addressed by the project proponents during project development. 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>	<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:</p> <p>(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.</p> <p>(ii) In its request for CEO endorsement, the Agency will report on actions taken in response to STAP concerns.</p>
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