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: 10 November 2008 Screener: David Cunningham

Panel member validation by: Paul Ferraro

I. PIF Information

Full size project GEF Trust Fund
GEF PROJECT ID: 3777 PROJECT DURATION: 5 years
GEF AGENCY PROJECT ID: 605522
COUNTRY(IES): Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Gabon
PROJECT TITLE: Sustainable management of the wildlife and bushmeat sector in Central Africa
GEF AGENCY(IES): FAO
OTHER EXECUTING PARTNER(S): Commission des Forêts d'Afrique Centrale (COMIFAC), Réseau des aires protégés d'Afrique Centrale (RAPAC), World Conservation Society (WCS), World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Centre International de Coopération en recherche agronomique pour le développement (CIRAD), Organisation pour la Conservation de la Faune Sauvage en Afrique (OCFSA), Institut de recherche écologique tropical /centre national de recherche scientifique et technique (IRET/CENAREST), National institutions responsible for forestry, wildlife and rural development
GEF FOCAL AREA (S): Biodiversity
GEF-4 STRATEGIC PROGRAM(S): BD-SP 4
NAME OF PARENT PROGRAM/UMBRELLA PROJECT (if applicable): CONGO BASIN INITIATIVE
PROJECT PROMOTES SOUND CHEMICAL MANAGEMENT (if applicable): yes ☐ no ☐

II. STAP Advisory Response *(see table below for explanation)*

1. Based on this PIF screening, STAP's advisory response to the GEF Secretariat and GEF Agency(ies): **Consent**

III. Further guidance from STAP

1. STAP welcomes the proposed effort to reduce the impact of the bushmeat trade in Central Africa, which has a detrimental impact on biological diversity and ecosystem functioning in the region. STAP also applauds the emphasis in the PIF on a better understanding of the impacts of bushmeat management strategies. In particular, the proposed effort to rigorously examine the impact on bushmeat use of past projects to develop rural economic growth in the area is commendable, as is the interest in empirically evaluating the contribution of the alternative livelihoods component of this proposed project.

2. STAP encourages the project proponents to think more deeply about how the proposed activities can be implemented with the goal of generating credible evidence of their effectiveness. Many of the proposed interventions, such as awareness-raising and creating alternative livelihoods that induce rural communities to substitute labor away from the bushmeat trade, have a weak evidence base (if anything, the evidence base suggests they are ineffective at generating environmental benefits). Other interventions, such as community-based wildlife management, have some evidence to support them in more arid environments, but not in tropical forest environments. STAP encourages the project proponents to think about creative ways in which some of the actions can be implemented (e.g., awareness-raising at the regional level) in a way that will allow one to test their effectiveness in reducing the commercial hunting pressures on wildlife and thus help build the evidence base about what works and when. The proponents indicate that they will measure baselines and monitor change in bushmeat harvesting (although it appears that this will only be done in the context of the alternative livelihoods component). Measuring before and after changes in indicators is a way to consider status and trends, but is not, by itself, a means to evaluate program impacts empirically. The ability to measure impacts stems from a project design that allows one to predict what would have happened without the project. High-quality project designs induce sufficient variation in key variables to allow identification and measurement of program impact on relevant outcome indicators. Experimental designs induce this variation by controlling the way in which the data are collected. More precisely, control groups are

selected to represent the counterfactual outcome for the groups that are receiving the program intervention. A variety of ways exist to select control groups. The World Conservation Society (a partner in this proposed project), has experience in experimental designs for conservation projects. STAP hopes that the project proponents will draw on this expertise, and STAP is also prepared to assist in this effort.

3. The PIF mentions community-based management, but does not explicitly address the issue of property rights over wildlife and the role of the existing property rights regime in contributing to the loss of wildlife. STAP expects that the full project document, and the project itself, would examine this issue given it has been central to scientific inquiry into the human use of wildlife.

4. The PIF notes that the implementation of policies and regulations is weak in all countries, but the PIF does not clearly address how the proposed actions will change this. What exactly constrains policy action and goal setting, which this PIF is aiming to induce, is not clear. The PIF seems to imply that the absence of regulation is a "capacity" problem. In the risk section, the proposal notes that "initiatives in the past have experienced risks associated with a lack of dedication from institutional stakeholders." The solution to address this risk – "placing national ministries and intergovernmental organizations in an important monitoring position" - seems to imply that the lack of dedication stems from a lack of information. A more likely reason is that government agents see few benefits from regulating the bushmeat trade and many costs (political or financial). STAP is concerned that the lack of effectiveness of past actions to induce policy change on the bushmeat trade in Central Africa is not well understood and could hinder the proposed PIF's effectiveness. It's hard to believe that these nations do not have the capacity to define "national goals" for bushmeat management. If the main barrier is a lack of interest, it's hard to see how the interventions proposed in this program will be effective. If it is believed that awareness raising will induce policy change (as well as behavioural changes in the field), then the PIF should make this clear and the full project proposal should explain how this conjecture will be tested formally.

STAP advisory response	*Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed*
1. Consent	STAP acknowledges that on scientific/technical grounds the concept has merit. However, STAP may state its views on the concept emphasising any issues that could be improved and the proponent is invited to approach STAP for advice at any time during the development of the project brief prior to submission for CEO endorsement.
2. Minor revision required.	STAP has identified specific scientific/technical suggestions or opportunities that should be discussed with the proponent as early as possible during development of the project brief. One or more options that remain open to STAP include: (i) Opening a dialogue between STAP and the proponent to clarify issues (ii) Setting a review point during early stage project development and agreeing 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 revision required	STAP proposes significant improvements or has concerns on the grounds of specified major scientific/technical omissions in the concept. If STAP provides this advisory response, a full explanation would also be provided. Normally, a STAP approved review will be mandatory prior to submission of the project brief for CEO endorsement. 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.