Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel

The Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel, administered by UNEP, advises the Global Environment Facility

STAP Scientific and Technical screening of the Project Identification Form (PIF)

Date of screening: October 7, 2008  
Screener: Lev Neretin  
Panel member validation by: Meryl Williams

I. PIF Information
(Paste here from the PIF)

Full size project  GEF Trust Fund

GEFSEC PROJECT ID: 2884  
GEF AGENCY PROJECT ID: 2848  
COUNTRY(IES): AFGHANISTAN AND I.R. IRAN  
PROJECT TITLE: SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF THE SISTAN BASIN  
GEF AGENCY(IES): UNDP, (select), (select)  
OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: UNOPS  
GEF FOCAL AREA(S): International Waters,(select), (select)  
GEF-4 STRATEGIC PROGRAM(S): IW SP3: BALANCING OVERUSE AND CONFLICTING USES OF WATER RESOURCES IN SURFACE AND GROUNDWATER BASINS THAT ARE TRANSBOUNDARY IN NATURE

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

2. STAP welcomes this project for which the GEF-IW approach - comprehensive diagnostics and integrated management through coordinated strategic planning and implementation - is particularly suited.

3. Distinguishing climate and human effects on water flows: The risk assessment for the project is sound, especially the risk of the project coinciding with a drought cycle. This points to a major scientific challenge for the proposed TDA, namely in distinguishing the impact of climate change from impacts of irrigation and other water uses on water flows into the Sistan Basin, especially the flows of the Helmand River. The outcome of the analysis to distinguish climate-related water flows from human mediated withdrawals should guide design of the proposed IWRM plan. The PIF puts strong emphasis on balancing water uses, while mostly neglects long- to medium-term impacts of climate change on the natural hydrological cycle controlled primarily by snowmelt and rainfall in the Hindu Kush Mountains. Local communities’ adaptation measures to droughts and floods in response to climate induced variations of the hydrological cycle can be integrated into Component 3 activities (demonstration of innovative IWRM practices).

4. Special focus on the Sistan wetlands: The Sistan wetlands (Hamoons) is a unique and severely degraded ecosystem(s) of global importance that deserves special treatment in the project. The role of the proposed Joint Commission on Sistan Wetlands for wetlands conservation and how the Commission’s activities will be integrated in the IWRM process for the whole basin are not clear. At the PPG stage, STAP recommends conducting a separate diagnostic analysis of Sistan wetlands ecosystem in order to develop a menu of conservation options promoting bilateral cooperation. Indeed, the Sistan wetlands interventions could be developed as a separate project component, given the conservation importance of this area.

5. Include gender expertise in the TDA/SAP processes: STAP supports including gender elements of the project and recommends, from a scientific and technical standpoint, that the TDA includes gender experts to ensure that a good understanding is reached of gender roles and options for gender-sensitive actions in the pilot and demonstration projects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAP advisory response</th>
<th>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Consent</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|   | 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. |
|---|---|---|
|   | 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. |