

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: 19 March 2009

Screener: David Cunningham

Panel member validation by: Paul Ferraro

I. PIF Information *(Paste here from the PIF)*

Full size project **GEF Trust Fund**

GEFSEC PROJECT ID: 2416

GEF AGENCY PROJECT ID: 2903

COUNTRY: Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR)

PROJECT TITLE: Mainstreaming biodiversity in Lao PDR's agricultural and land management policies, plans and programmes

GEF AGENCY (IES): UNDP, FAO

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

GEF FOCAL AREAS: Biodiversity

GEF-4 Strategic program(S): BD-SO2, SP4

Name of **PARENT PROGRAM/UMBRELLA PROJECT:** N/A

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):
Minor revision required

III. Further guidance from STAP

2. The PIF makes a good case for the importance of agro-biodiversity in Lao PDR. However, the causal link between the interventions proposed and the outcomes desired are not clear and need to be made more explicit in the full project document.
3. The PIF correctly notes that current agricultural decisions are influenced by market incentives, government tax and subsidy distortions, information, and subsistence food preferences. However, the suite of interventions proposed seem to be entirely targeted toward providing information and thus the PIF assumes that the absence of information is the binding constraint on conservation outcomes rather than incentives from market and government sectors (i.e., lack of information is what is preventing the mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation into the agricultural sector). Despite having listed a number of barriers, the PIF goes on to cite the following "key barriers to restricting the loss of biodiversity in and around agro-ecosystems in Lao PDF: poor knowledge base on the importance of crop and crop-associated biodiversity (C-CAB) and of the role of agricultural landscapes for general biodiversity conservation; "poor understanding of policy makers on current and potential values of agro-biodiversity for Lao PDR's development; low economic benefits ascribed to agro-biodiversity and poor institutional capacity to promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in the agricultural sector." On what basis have the proponents identified the lack of understanding and "capacity to promote" as the key barriers to goal attainment? Why would producing guidelines for private firms on biodiversity-friendly practices encourage them to adopt these practices? The project asserts that by demonstrating the value of biodiversity to the relevant actors, conservation outcomes will be realized. That may be, but the project proposal needs to make a stronger case that information will induce change despite the strong economic incentives arrayed against biodiversity conservation.

<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
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.	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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 <p>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.</p>
3. Major revision required	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>