

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

GEFSEC PROJECT ID: 3664

GEF AGENCY PROJECT ID:

COUNTRY(IES): Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu.

PROJECT TITLE: Prevention, Control and Management of Invasive Alien Species in the Pacific islands.

GEF AGENCY(IES): UNEP

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNER(S): SPREP, SPC, PII, PILN, Country Institutions

GEF FOCAL AREA (S): Biodiversity

GEF-4 STRATEGIC PROGRAM(S): BD-SP7

NAME OF PARENT PROGRAM/UMBRELLA PROJECT: GEF PACIFIC ALLIANCE FOR SUSTAINABILITY

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. STAP acknowledges this project under the Pacific Alliance for Sustainability (GEF-PAS) programmatic approach. The program is led by the World Bank, with participation from the ADB, UNEP and UNDP and consists of 24 proposed projects from various focal areas (BD, CC, IW and POPs). STAP is written into the advisory structure of the GEF-PAS (pp. 13, 25 of the Program Framework Document) with reference to more specifically identifying the global environmental benefits. For this part of the program, the full project document should:
 - A. Include a clear timeline for the sequence of project components where there are dependencies between them
 - B. Include more realistic output indicators for activities that will not be completed within the four-year timeframe such as (i) eradications and (ii) release of biocontrol agents. These interventions should be based on feasibility assessments
 - C. Recognize the risk of non-participation by other nations in the region.

A. Sequence of project components

STAP requests that the full project document be very clear about the logical sequence of proposed activities, from prioritising species and sites, deciding the most appropriate interventions (e.g. eradication, containment, ongoing control) and implementing these interventions. For example, eradications and biocontrol releases are unlikely to be completed over four years unless these activities are already well advanced under the Regional Invasive Species Strategy (RISS) and national Invasive Species Strategic Action Plans in the region (see B(i) and B(ii) below). If they are well-advanced, are they targeting the species likely to have the most impact on the environment as assessed using the risk analysis methods and surveys to be developed and undertaken under component 3 of this project? It is unclear from the PIF whether these procedures will be developed during the project or have already been identified and only have to be applied. A range of decision support tools exist for invasive species risk analysis, for example a quantitative weed risk assessment spreadsheet has been developed to identify plants that pose a high weed risk in Hawaii and other Pacific Islands (<http://www.hear.org/wra/>). Given UNEP's links to scientific partners set out in the PIF, it is likely that the project can access current best practice approaches that could be adapted to the circumstances of the countries involved.

B. (i) Eradication

Pilot eradications at national and regional levels are proposed to be completed at component 4. Eradication can be defined as the complete and permanent removal of all wild populations from a defined area by a time-limited campaign¹. Eradication of invasive naturalised species is rarely successful and any new attempts should be based on an assessment of the actual or potential impact of the invasive species and the feasibility of eradication, including cost-effectiveness relative to other responses. Eradication is a long process even where it is feasible, e.g. for terrestrial plants it can take many years to eradicate a species from an area and, depending on the longevity of the seed bank, several years of monitoring and surveillance are needed after the last individual is seen in order to declare an eradication complete. With any eradication, the cost per individual of locating and removing the last individual in the population is very high relative to earlier delimiting surveys when enthusiasm for allocating scarce resources to the eradication is at its highest. A long term commitment is essential before starting an eradication campaign; otherwise it should be recognised as an ongoing control program and not eradication. As an output indicator, “eradications completed” does not necessarily lead to a desirable outcome – reducing the impact of invasive species on the environment. It could be achieved at a high numerical level by focussing on those few species for which a short-term eradication can be achieved but these may not be the highest priorities. The indicator should be broadened to include completed eradications within the four-year project and commencement of eradication campaigns for which resources are likely to be available to complete eradication after the four-year project. Alternatively, if the candidate species are already known by 2009, they should be identified in the output indicator.

B. (ii) Biocontrol

As with eradication, the development of a biocontrol method to manage the impacts of invasive species takes many years. Some biocontrol agents have had worse impacts than the invasive species they were intended to control and careful experimentation is required to mitigate this risk. The objective of biocontrol for at least one species per country assumes that there will be a species and ecosystem where biocontrol is the most appropriate and cost-effective intervention and this may not be the case. This output indicator, while simple to assess numerically, is not recommended and could be replaced with, for example, the feasibility of biocontrol is assessed for each country and, where it is determined to be the most appropriate method for a target species, the development of a biocontrol agent is at an advanced stage by year 4.

C. Regional approach

A regional approach is necessary for controlling IAS in the Pacific islands region and the full project document should recognize the risk of non-participation by other nations in the region. There are neighbouring island nations that are not included in this proposal (e.g. New Caledonia, Solomon Islands). Unless the excluded neighbouring nations will be doing more to manage IAS than the nations listed in this PIF will do during the project, lower levels of IAS management in non-participating neighbouring nations may constrain the returns to investment from this GEF-funded project. IAS management is a public good in the Pacific Island region for which the production process has the characteristic known as a “weakest-link” technology: the total amount of the public good is constrained by the contribution of its weakest members (i.e. those investing the least). For example, nation Z may have a strong enabling policy and institutional environment for cross-sectoral prevention and management of IAS, but if the neighbouring island nation of Y does little to manage IAS, the returns to nation Z’s investments may be substantially diminished because nation Y will serve as an IAS refuge and source of future invasions. Greater gains might be had through strengthening nation Y’s IAS system rather than making nation Z’s system more sophisticated.

<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.	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.

¹ Other definitions exist, e.g. FAO and IPPC and use ‘application of phytosanitary [and other] measures to eliminate a pest from an area’; OIE uses ‘the elimination of a pathogenic agent from a country or zone’. The CBD has not adopted a definition but its Guiding Principle 13 in the annex to decision VI/23, sets out some issues to consider when assessing the feasibility of eradication (<http://www.cbd.int/decisions/cop6/?m=COP-06&id=7197&lq=0>).

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.
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