

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: 7 October 2008

Screener: Douglas Taylor, STAP Secretary

Panel member validation by: Paul Ferraro

I. PIF Information

GEFSEC PROJECT ID: 3750

GEF AGENCY PROJECT ID: PIMS 4182

COUNTRY: Democratic Republic of Congo and Republic Democratic of Congo

PROJECT TITLE: Catalyzing Sustainable Forest Management in the Lake Tele-Lake Tumba (LTLT) Transboundary Wetland Landscape

GEF AGENCY: UNDP

EXECUTING PARTNERS (ROC): MINISTRY OF FORESTRY, ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND ENVIRONMENT

EXECUTING PARTNERS (DRC): MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, NATURE CONSERVATION, TOURISM, WATER & FORESTRY

OTHER PARTNERS: WWF, WCS, IRM, CARPE, COMIFAC, CBFP

GEF FOCAL AREA: Biodiversity

GEF-4 STRATEGIC PROGRAM: SFM - BD SP3: Strengthening Terrestrial Protected Area Networks; SFM – BD/LD/CC SP7: Management of LULUCF as a means to protect carbon stocks and reduce greenhouse gas emissions

NAME OF PARENT PROGRAM: Strategic Program for Sustainable Forest Management in the Congo Basin (CBSP)

Full size project GEF Trust Fund

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. The STAP welcomes the attempt to protect the valuable biological diversity in the Lake Tele / Lake Tumba landscape. A focus on community-managed protected areas is particularly interesting and worth testing as an alternative conservation strategy. However, while consenting to the project concept, STAP asks that the following issues be carefully considered when developing the full project brief.
3. The proposal indicates that a multi-stakeholder process will be used to identify a representative network of protected areas within the LTLT landscape. Such a process is politically desirable, but project proponents should be aware of the potential danger from such a process. There is substantial evidence that protected areas are often located in areas that are not at high risk of degradation, hunting, or conversion to other uses (e.g., Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005; Green and Sussman 1990; Hunter and Yonzon 1993; Pressy 1995; Brandon et al. 1998; Cornell 2000; Scott et al. 2001; Sanchez-Azofeifa et al. 2003; Andam et al. 2008; Sims 2008). This bias in location is hypothesized to result from the politically contentious process of siting PAs, which often steers PAs to the areas where there is the least public resistance. If short or medium-term GEBs are desired, the project should put in place mechanisms that can detect when such bias is arising and correct it, if desired.
4. The project correctly notes (p.6) that “community-based management of protected areas has not been tested as a complement to government-led conservation efforts” (true in most of the world), but the way in which this project is going to design their own test is unclear. Will the project contrast changes in environmental indicators (or human behavioural indicators) in forests managed by communities receiving outside assistance to forests managed by communities that were similar at baseline but received no outside capacity building investments? Or contrast participating community forests to government forests? Is there an alternative design that could generate insights into the effectiveness of community-based management efforts? The full project brief should clarify this issue. Likewise,

although the idea of providing alternative livelihoods continues to be popular by donors, there is little empirical evidence to suggest that donor-driven attempts to find “new socio-economic activities” for rural citizens in low-income nations is a successful conservation strategy (or even a successful development strategy). The project should make some attempt to test this strategy.

5. The project has identified the following barrier to effective NRM (p.7): “Government does not have the capacity to support community-based conservation.” It is often assumed in conservation projects that government employees lack the capacity to engage in conservation actions, whereas the lack of incentives for government employees to act in ways that achieve conservation objectives is often a much more serious barrier. No one doubts that capacity to implement conservation actions in the Congo basin is lower than in much of the rest of the world, but governance is often a matter of incentives (including social norms) rather than capacity. The proposal makes brief mention of incentives in the risk section, but (a) lack of incentives is not just about low salaries (government employees can directly profit from exploitation activities), and (b) it’s not clear how the mitigation measure of ensuring “a focus on community management” mitigates the problem of incentives for government employees to support community management.

<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: <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 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.