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

I. PIF Information

Full size project GEF Trust Fund
GEFSEC PROJECT ID: 3772
GEF AGENCY PROJECT ID: P111621
COUNTRY(IES): Democratic Republic of Congo
PROJECT TITLE: Enforcement of Protected Areas network in DRC
GEF AGENCY(IES): World Bank
OTHER EXECUTING PARTNER(S): ICCN
GEF FOCAL AREA(S): Biodiversity
GEF-4 STRATEGIC PROGRAM(S): SP-3
NAME OF PARENT PROGRAM/UMBRELLA PROJECT: Strategic Program for Sustainable Forest Management in the Congo Basin

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 investments to protect the DRC’s globally important ecosystems and species through the strengthening of the DRC’s PA system.

3. The proposal argues that the post-conflict trend in biodiversity loss can be reversed through the design and implementation of management plans with greater community participation. There is little evidence to support the effectiveness of such an intervention, particularly in a weakly governed nation like the DRC. The World Bank is very involved in GEF-funded efforts to expand and strengthen PA systems globally, and many of them use similar strategies to achieve outcomes (e.g., management plans, local involvement, and alternative livelihoods). STAP therefore encourages the World Bank to think about more rigorous formal testing of many of the underlying assumptions that underpin its PA interventions. For example, trying to measure environmental outcomes (e.g., change in target species) in participating PAs relative to similar control sites would be difficult when each project is only piloting its interventions in three or four PAs. However, given that the World Bank is piloting roughly similar interventions in many different nations (and other institutions are piloting similar interventions in the DRC), there may be an opportunity to conduct more rigorous tests at the level of World Bank’s PA portfolio using a quasi-experimental design in which pilot sites in each country are always matched to sites that do not receive the proposed interventions and then comparisons are made across a large, pooled cross-national sample (which may also include other PA projects from other Agencies). STAP is willing to advise the World Bank in considering whether such a quasi-experimental program design would be feasible.

4. A minor point, but the PIF seems to inconsistently categorize outputs and outcomes.

5. Unmentioned risk: STAP notes that a conservation strategy that is based on legal regulations enforced by the State could be viewed as a risky strategy unless the governance issues concerned are constructively and openly dealt with.

<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</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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. |