

# 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 *(Paste here from the PIF)*

Full size project GEF Trust Fund

GEFSEC PROJECT ID: 3829

GEF AGENCY PROJECT ID: PIMS 4142

COUNTRY: Ecuador

PROJECT TITLE: Sustainable Financing of Ecuador's National System of Protected Areas (SNAP) and associated private and community-managed PA subsystems

GEF AGENCY: UNDP

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: Ministry of Environment (MOE); Ecuador Private Forests Network; Foundation for Agrarian and Rural Development (FUNDAR)

GEF FOCAL AREA: Biodiversity

GEF-4 STRATEGIC PROGRAM: BD-SP1

NAME OF PARENT PROGRAM/UMBRELLA PROJECT: NA

### 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

1. STAP has no major concerns with the proposed plan to improve the financial management of Ecuador's protected area systems, although component 4 seems to be an ad hoc assortment of interventions that could be more focussed.
2. STAP would like to encourage the project proponents to consider two issues. First, although the GEF-4 strategy takes as given the causal connection between higher funding levels or lower variability of funding and global environmental benefits, the proponents should consider if the project can assist the GEF to better understand the relationship between "sustainable financing" and conservation outcomes. For example, the project proposes to implement Financial Sustainability Plans at 5 national protected areas. Would it be possible to pair ten protected areas that are similar in characteristics that affect conservation outcomes, and then randomly choose one in each pair to receive funds for the FSP? Then at the end of the project, one could compare both the change in the level of financing for the PAs, as well as the change in some global environmental indicators. Even if the proponents believe that one would not see a response to the intervention in the life of the project, the design would allow the GEF, UNDP or other agent to return years later and investigate if those PAs who received the FSPs first were better off because of it.
3. Second, if the project is going to implement financial incentives for private protected areas (or help the government to implement them), project proponents should consider if they could contribute to helping build the evidence about the relative effectiveness of different kinds of protected areas. A forthcoming paper in *Conservation Biology*<sup>1</sup> ("An assessment of 100 questions of greatest importance to the conservation of global biodiversity") identifies as an important open question "How effective are different types of protected areas (e.g., strict nature reserves, hunting reserves, national parks) at conserving biodiversity and providing sustainable ecosystem services?" One way of helping to answer this question in the context of the proposed program would be a randomized encouragement design, whereby tax breaks or other incentive are available to all citizens, but some eligible citizens are randomly encouraged by government or an NGO to take up the incentive. This action produces variation in participation that is uncorrelated with the outcomes and thus can allow one to identify the impact of the

<sup>1</sup> <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/118487636/home>

incentives on environmental indicators (the problem with many conservation incentive programs is that the people who sign up for them tend to be those who were going to do the action anyway).

4. Similar designs to those proposed in comments 1 and 2 above could be considered for the communication campaign strategy, the tourism interventions, the payment for environmental services interventions<sup>2</sup>, and the fiscal incentives targeted towards increasing private sector donations.
5. STAP believes that any GEF-funded protected area project should consider the risk of climate change on the protected area system's future benefit flow.

<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
<b>1. Consent</b>	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.
<b>2. Minor revision required.</b>	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"> <li>(i) Opening a dialogue between STAP and the proponent to clarify issues</li> <li>(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</li> </ul> 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.
<b>3. Major revision required</b>	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.

<sup>2</sup> STAP has undertaken to produce a guidance document indicating the ways in which the GEF can be supporting initiatives on Payments for Environmental Services (supplemented by a brief summary of the empirical evidence to date on effectiveness). This paper can be provided to the project proponents when it is available in late 2008.