

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: January 23, 2012

Screeener: Thomas Hammond

Panel member validation by: Thomas Lovejoy
Consultant(s): Douglas Taylor

I. PIF Information *(Copied from the PIF)*

FULL SIZE PROJECT **GEF TRUST FUND**

GEF PROJECT ID: 4653

PROJECT DURATION : 5

COUNTRIES : China

PROJECT TITLE: CBPF - MSL: Strengthening the Management Effectiveness of the Protected Area landscape in Altai Mountains and Wetlands.

GEF AGENCIES: UNDP

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: Xinjiang Forestry Department, Liangheyuan Provincial Nature Reserve Management Bureau, Altai Mountains Forestry Bureau

GEF FOCAL AREA: Biodiversity

II. STAP Advisory Response *(see table below for explanation)*

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

STAP welcomes the remedial actions proposed by the project to bring wetland management in PAs into a more strategic and effectively managed catchment-based framework. In particular STAP commends the well developed analysis of the barriers to be overcome within the Altai Mountains and Wetland Landscape.

With regard to the incremental reasoning section in which the proposed response is discussed STAP requests that a Minor Revision be undertaken guided by the following suggestions when preparing the full project brief.

Component 1

Management effectiveness. STAP acknowledges that improvement of the management effectiveness of the PAs is an essential component and that, as proposed through Component 1, an effective governance framework is established within which individual PAs will be considered within an overall network. As presented however, the description of Component 1 is more suited to dryland PAs than to wetlands, and appears to omit the necessary water management arrangements to address the barriers to effective catchment level management that were raised earlier in the PIF. Without clearly assigned responsibilities to perform effective analysis of flows, volumes and quality (including e.g. sediment loads and mining wastes), and to achieve the necessary hydrological conditions to maintain and improve biodiversity conservation, action is unlikely to be taken by the diverse authorities mentioned without formalized catchment management planning and associated performance indicators to be established for the network and also at PA level.

Institutional strengthening. In order to achieve a professionally consistent and sustained expected outcome of strengthened capacity the strategic training activities described, which are proposed to be developed at national level, would be expected to be fully consistent with the parent Program CBPF-MSL Main Streams of Life Wetland PA System Strengthening for Biodiversity Conservation. However, STAP has previously advised that under that proposed Program's Component 1, several outputs are described relevant to ad hoc professional training and competency standards, but the Program fails to mention how in an institutional sense this effort will be sustained. Therefore STAP requested that this point be further elaborated by the proponents. STAP further advised that, for example, if there is no other project active in the field of capacity building in this sector the Program could affiliate with one or more universities to develop graduate programs and there are a number of international training centers (e.g. UNESCO-IHE, Delft, Netherlands) which could assist the Program and its dependent projects to develop viable long term training partners and curricula within China. Regarding the present project and the development of the project brief, STAP

requests that the proponents further elaborate how strategic training activities and the application of professional competency standards for PA management staff are to be sustained, e.g. taking into account the findings of Shuqing An et. al. (2007).

Component 2

The PIF promises that a model for effective biodiversity conservation using the Altai PA network will be established at landscape scale, this is to be commended, but again there is no explicit mention of water management or related wetland valuation in this Component (or indeed included within the threats shown in Table 2). STAP therefore recommends that the proposed activities (i) to (iv) be amended, for example to include (i) cost/benefit of water supply to wetland PAs; (ii) economic valuation of the environmental services of catchments and of wetland PAs, particularly relating to water regulatory services, informed by e.g. relevant TEEB (2010) case studies and by De Groot, et. al. (2006); (iii) examination of best practice in use of eco-compensation / Payments for Environmental Services (see STAP, 2010, GEF 2011, Xiong Ying et. al., 2010) and lessons learnt; (iv) including intersectoral coordination of water management.

This Component also calls for a Biodiversity Health Index to be set up but it is not clear what standards, including indicators, will be employed, or how this tool relates to the Biodiversity Health Index proposed in the CBPF-MSL program document, comprising a score of habitat suitability for important biodiversity and status of important biodiversity. What is proposed is both innovative and risky, the former measure likely to suffer from subjectivity while the latter should build on established methodology where possible to ensure replicable and sustainable monitoring. The proponents are recommended to consider using and adapting existing indicator frameworks. The most widely recognised are the CBD Indicator Framework and the UN Millennium Development Goals Framework and the proponents are advised to seek peer review of the system proposed, for example, through the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (see BIP). The proponents should also explain what plans are in place for peer review of the proposed index.

Component 3

STAP commends the co-management arrangements envisaged for the Altai Liangheyuan NR demonstration of management effectiveness, and the intention to study lessons from eco-compensation arrangements elsewhere in China, including from the Mainstreaming Biodiversity Protection within the Production Landscapes and Protected Areas of the Lake Aibi Basin (GEF Project 3611). STAP considers that lessons learnt from this component of the project will be of value to the GEF community.

References:

BIP. Biodiversity Indicators Partnership. (UNEP-WCMC). <http://www.bipnational.net/Default.aspx>

De Groot, R.S.; Stuij, M.A.M.; Finlayson, C.M.; Davidson, N. 2006. Valuing wetlands: guidance for valuing the benefits derived from wetland ecosystem services. Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and Ramsar Convention Secretariat, Gland-Switzerland. <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/publications/cbd-ts-27.pdf>

GEF, 2010. Payment for Ecosystem Services.

Shuqing A., et al. 2007. China's Natural Wetlands: Past Problems, Current Status, and Future Challenges. *Ambio* Vol. 36, No. 4, 335-342.

STAP, 2010. Payment for Ecosystem Services and the Global Environment Facility. A STAP advisory document. 16 pp.

TEEB, 2010. The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity, <http://teebweb.org/>. Including case study for the Tuul River Watershed Services, Mongolia. <http://www.eea.europa.eu/atlas/teeb/watershed-services-crucial-for-economic-1>

Xiong Ying et al, 2010. Eco-compensation effects of the wetland recovery in Dongting lake area. *J. Geogr. Sci.*, 20(3): 389-405

<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>