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: @@@@@ @@, @@@@ Screener: Thomas Hammond
Panel member validation by: Thomas Lovejoy
Consultant(s): Doug Taylor

I. PIF Information (Copied from the PIF)

**FULL SIZE PROJECT**

**GEF TRUST FUND**

**GEF PROJECT ID**: 4731

**PROJECT DURATION**: 5

**COUNTRIES**: Ecuador

**PROJECT TITLE**: Advancing Landscape Approaches in Ecuador's National Protected Area System to Improve Conservation of Globally Endangered Wildlife

**GEF AGENCIES**: UNDP

**OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS**: Ministry of Environment

**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

1. The PIF for this project provides an excellent summary of the baseline and barriers to change in order to better maintain PA effectiveness within a wider landscape and there is also a good summary of the other GEF financed projects both active and proposed that taken together appear to provide good coverage of governance, technical and financial issues to be addressed. The PIF emphasises the need for a paradigm shift "from the existing site-focus to one that adopts a landscape-wide approach that improves habitat and connectivity for wildlife needs and enhances coordinated institutional action for reducing illegal hunting and wildlife trade", indeed this is ambitious and innovative.

2. Following from this, STAP suggests that the objectives of the project will likely not be achieved as stated without an equally strong paradigm shift within public awareness in favour of the landscape approach proposed. Within the budget there appears to be implicit support for capacity building of officials within relevant agencies and other measures that amount to a well-supported enforcement approach, but the budget appears to allocate little or no resources to the role of communities or civil society. The PIF mentions the use of the Small Grant Program funds to support development of alternative livelihoods, which STAP welcomes and encourages, but uptake and replication of the impact of SGP investments will need to build on improved public awareness and support for the paradigm shift proposed. STAP is of the opinion that unless project proponents allocate resources within an additional component for scientifically well-informed public awareness and capacity building, including formal curricula in the educational system, there is a major risk that sustained impact of the project will not be achieved. STAP therefore requests that within the project brief the proponents indicate how the project will in practical terms assist implementation of well-informed citizen participation called for within the cited National Environment Policy.

3. The PIF states that the proposed PPG will examine suitable indicators and choice of target species for biodiversity monitoring; therefore STAP proposes to review these issues within the forthcoming project brief. The PIF suggests within the discussion on barriers that "systems for monitoring the status of wildlife in PAs, in order to allow adaptive management, are lacking". This may be so but a previous GEF project (GEF project 945, National Protected Areas System) set up a PA-based biodiversity monitoring system that was claimed to be fully operational in two PAs and intended to be sustainably delivered into the future to enable impact assessment. The system was based on the predecessor of the GEF METT and supported by the Ministry of Environment. The project brief should explain how any new biodiversity monitoring systems proposed can build on previous GEF-supported investments to enable long term measurement of impacts to be achieved.
4. The PIF suggests that some form of eco-compensation or payments for environmental services (PES) will be necessary to incentivize cooperation of farmers and land managers with a landscape approach, and the Socio Bosque program is mentioned. STAP has previously advised UNDP regarding the related GEF project (GEF ID 3829) that sound experimental design should be considered to better understand expected conservation outcomes in response to PES. STAP requests that the forthcoming project brief should document the strategy proposed, e.g. are payments intended to be short-term for land use change, or long term to secure existing biodiversity assets? For further guidance the proponent is advised to consult the STAP publication Payments for Environmental Services and the Global Environment Facility (STAP, 2010) and also the related GEF publication, Payment for Ecosystem Services, GEF, 2010.

5. The PIF suggests that in addition to the existing financial support to PAs that resources, including from the GEF project, will be directed to supporting connectivity in the wider landscape and that in turn the internal structure of PAs will be prioritized for more effective biodiversity conservation. STAP requests that in the full project brief the measures of connectivity and monitoring to be employed be described and referenced.

6. Finally it is unclear from reading the PIF to what extent the present core emphasis on PA protection and maintenance will be sustained within a shift to a landscape-based conservation approach, for example, if resources become constrained in the future. While STAP supports the notion of a dual track approach employing PAs and a wider landscape approach, the policy priority should remain to maintain PA management at optimum levels in order to maintain stable refuges in case of future financing constraints.

Climate Risk

Future climate risks in Ecuador are projected to be moderate to high. However, STAP is of the opinion that this initiative will assist in ensuring protected areas in Ecuador are resilient to these expected risks.

<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 during the development of the project brief prior to submission for CEO endorsement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Minor revision required</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Major revision required</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>