

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: May 14, 2012

Screener: Thomas Hammond

Panel member validation by: Thomas Lovejoy
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I. PIF Information *(Copied from the PIF)*

FULL SIZE PROJECT GEF TRUST FUND

GEF PROJECT ID: 4848

PROJECT DURATION : 5

COUNTRIES : South Africa

PROJECT TITLE: Improving Management Effectiveness of the Protected Area Network

GEF AGENCIES: UNDP

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: South African National Parks,

Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency,

Department of Environmental Affairs,

South African National Biodiversity Institute CapeNature

East Cape Parks and Tourism Agency

Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism

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): **Consent**

III. Further guidance from STAP

STAP welcomes this important project proposal to strengthen the sustainability and effectiveness of South Africa's network of protected areas and notes its ground-breaking nature in dealing for the first time with the country's PA system as a whole as opposed to specific sites.

The major thrusts of the project are the innovative, cost-effective approach to the expansion of the PA network to include underrepresented globally important terrestrial and marine habitats and to increase and monitor management effectiveness. Perhaps the title could better reflect both objectives.

The PIF is well prepared and includes a convincing level of detail on objectives, components, risks and global biodiversity benefits. It builds on a well-formulated National Protected Areas Expansion Strategy, on lessons learned from extended experience in implementing GEF projects, and builds on an existing strong capacity within some institutions. It identifies the asymmetry of capacities across national and provincial institutions and will address this barrier through in-situ training and skills development.

During project development attention should be given to the mechanisms to be used to increase the application of METT and to address the specific capacity and operational challenges identified by the METT. The opportunity should also be used to improve the METT as a tool for wider and more effective application within GEF interventions, especially in resource-poor African countries.

During implementation, the monitoring of key indicator species in addition to the threatened rhinoceros populations should be considered. Identification and monitoring of measures of ecosystem function and services needs further elaboration during project development.

Emphasis is placed on the participation of local communities and private landowners towards achieving the targets of the NPAES, but no detail is provided (other than area of land) on indicators with which to measure and monitor effectiveness of conservation outcomes from such strategies. This aspect should be strengthened during project development.

Further elaboration needs to be provided on the role the project might play or be influenced by climate change adaptation and resilience during the project preparation phase. South Africa's available strength in climate change science should be brought to bear during this phase, and the landscape level interventions proposed in the project offer special opportunities at looking at climate change influences across widely differing ecosystems (from winter-rainfall desert to summer rainfall sub-tropical savannas, grasslands and forests).

The project has great potential to serve as a model for the implementation and achievement of PA systems expansion, sustainability and cost-effectiveness strategies.

The project objective is multi-faceted, and understandably so, since the problem is as well and all the issues are closely interdependent. Nevertheless, the objective could use a bit of focusing or tighter wording. The results framework is thorough and consistent with the objective.

The global environmental and biodiversity values and benefits are well presented, in a general way. During project preparation additional effort should be directed at defining these values and benefits at specific sites against which project impact will be measured, particularly at the species level. It is noted that while the title of the project is improving management effectiveness of the protected area network, there is no explicit use of the METT aside from targeting a 17% increase in METT scores for 1,000,000 ha of protected area within reserves addressed by this programme.

The stress is the expansion of the PA estate and the description of baseline conditions, with few exceptions such as rhino poaching statistics, is geared towards area statistics and targets for expansion. These baselines should be more fully complemented by other baseline indices addressing additional species of particular concern and also ecosystem processes and services.

With regard to the definition of barriers, the first one presented is the underrepresentation of globally important terrestrial and marine habitats and thus key biodiversity areas in the country's PA estate. It is difficult to interpret this as a barrier. This is more descriptive of the baseline condition or situation, a part of the problem, which the project is planning to address. This barrier could be rethought and rephrased.

The definition and assessment of risks is realistic and comprehensive.

<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.