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: October 03, 2012 Screener: Christine Wellington-Moore

Panel member validation by: Hindrik Bouwman
Consultant(s):

I. PIF Information *(Copied from the PIF)*
FULL SIZE PROJECT GEF TRUST FUND
GEF PROJECT ID: 4881
PROJECT DURATION : 4
COUNTRIES : Regional (Antigua And Barbuda, Argentina, Barbados, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay)
PROJECT TITLE: Continuing Regional Support for the POPs Global Monitoring Plan under the Stockholm Convention in the Latin American and Caribbean Region
GEF AGENCIES: UNEP
OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: Stockholm Regional Centre in Uruguay
GEF FOCAL AREA: POPs

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

The project focuses on "strengthen(ing) capacity for implementation of the revised Global Monitoring Plan in the Latin American and Caribbean region and create the conditions for sustainability of the networks", acting as a follow up to the first phase of the support to laboratories to enhance their skills and capacity to detect and monitor POPs in the environment.

Comments on the General Approach of the PIF/project

This PIF project framework is generally clear in explaining what the project hopes to achieve. However, when one moves into the text of the PIF (Section B.1), it is necessary to sift through much extraneous information to determine project baseline, and what was left undone/problematic in the last phase of the project. As a result, the incremental reasoning of Section B2 suffers, since it is difficult to clearly correlate the summarised baseline points with new intended mitigative action. Similarly, one could generate a more concise set of risks and risk mitigation strategies for section B4, and there would be more confidence overall that this phase of GMP support will not repeat past mistakes and that the new approach is sound. For some shortfalls one can easily correlate the new corrective action, but it is hard to pinpoint the response to each. The risks lack similar development. So for example, how will the 250% standard deviations associated with POPs data from true samples be addressed? How can it be ensured that there is a way to consistently identify those additional elements that may present analytic challenges for the new POPs, in particular the interference of other parameters like determination of water content (inaccurately referred to as â€˜humidity' in this document) and fat interferences in previous analytical attempts of other POPs.

Therefore, in the eventual project document, it will be important to address these issues succinctly, with a crisp, systematic analysis of summarised baseline elements (including what was left undone/problems encountered in the first project), then a proposed set of incremental actions for each, followed by an analysis of related risks, and mitigation strategies.

Another element that is missing from the project is how conditions for sustainability of networks can be improved. Any government lab will require buy-in from the decision-makers to understand the importance of the work being done, and how it can feed into national issues of development, human and environmental health. It is upon this basis that most labs (even some private ones that may rely on government-based work) derive funding support. Regulatory/legislative demand generally drives the activity of environmental and other standards laboratories. The emphasis of the utility of

the POPs monitoring data in the PIF is mostly to the Stockholm Convention. However, Convention buy-in is likely not what will sustain activity of a lab post project: those line Ministries at the centre of Health and (Economic) Development will have far more influence on providing ongoing support to the continued operation of labs, and to lending them scope to participate fully in the project itself. Therefore, it would be good if the Project Framework include an element that would help generate outreach and buy-in to important national players to illustrate the importance of POPs monitoring to national development (e.g. one could highlight the impact of POPs on food and feed safety, and how this translates to economic losses, trade etc.). If this is not done, the GMP could be seen as marginal and academic with no hope for long-term sustainability.

In order to address the sustainability issue, consideration could be given to prioritizing analytes that should done by laboratories in countries and regions that have shown levels of concern for certain POPs based on the 1st round. It seems that aldrin and endrin were below detection limit, and mirex and toxaphene were found at very low levels. The need to maintain adequacy for these compounds (also considering that there is no known manufacture anymore) could therefore be evaluated, and laboratory support efforts concentrated on compounds that were identified as of concern from the first round. Adequate analytical resources remain available in the participating laboratories in Europe as a check on compounds that are difficult to analyse and/or present only at very low levels.

Similarly, the next round could also see a check on which of the newer POPs are of concern in the region. Air, sediments, and breast milk may not the best matrixes to look for PFOS as they generally occur at very low levels (although some of the related compounds might be), and a careful deliberation may be needed on how to include PFOS as a compound.

Both these considerations will support sustainability, as countries and laboratories may not be willing to support unnecessary capacity for compounds not deemed a problem, or even absent.

Specific Points to Aid Clarity

There should be a thorough edit for hanging and incomplete sentences in the final document, as in the PIF there were numerous instances of these which at times required several re-reads to fully understand what was being conveyed.

Page 6: There is reference in the text to a training overview table, which should be "shown below", though it is actually above. It also adds no value to the PIF, and could just be summarised verbally as "In October 2010, 5 day training sessions took place in Chile, Peru, Mexico, Brazil, Uruguay, Jamaica, Cuba and Ecuador".

Page 8: Para 2. Suggest reworking of first sentence which now reads: "In order to determine the "true" concentration of (here) POPs in a sample, a chemical laboratory must be able to prove that it is capable to (sic) identify and quantify chemicals (=analytes) of interest at concentrations of interest".

Page 8: Para 7. Suggest reworking of first sentence, and checking of punctuation, which now reads: " The GRULAC region recognized that although their participation in the interlaboratory study was high (And they should be applauded for having accepted this challenge), the results are not yet."

Page 11, Section B4, Para 1, last sentence does not inspire confidence. It currently questions if the LATU Laboratory of Uruguay confirmed its capacity as regional hub for the POPs analysis training during the first project, since the sentence ends with bracketed question marks. Did it or didn't it?

STAP advisory response	*Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed*
1. Consent	STAP acknowledges that on scientific or technical grounds the concept has merit. However, STAP may state its views on the concept emphasizing any issues where the project could be improved. Follow up: The GEF Agency is invited to approach STAP for advice during the development of the project prior to submission of the final document for CEO endorsement.
2. Minor revision required.	STAP has identified specific scientific or technical challenges, omissions or opportunities that should be addressed by the project proponents during project development. Follow up: One or more options are open to STAP and the GEF Agency: (i) GEF Agency should discuss the issues with STAP to clarify them and possible solutions. (ii) In its request for CEO endorsement, the GEF Agency will report on actions taken in response to STAP's recommended actions.
3. Major revision	STAP has identified significant scientific or technical challenges or omissions in the PIF and recommends significant improvements to project design.

required	Follow-up: (i) The Agency should request that the project undergo a STAP review prior to CEO endorsement, at a point in time when the particular scientific or technical issue is sufficiently developed to be reviewed, or as agreed between the Agency and STAP. (ii) In its request for CEO endorsement, the Agency will report on actions taken in response to STAP concerns.