

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 10, 2012

Screener: Thomas Hammond

Panel member validation by: Annette Cowie; Brian Huntley
Consultant(s): Guadalupe Duron

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

FULL SIZE PROJECT GEF TRUST FUND

GEF PROJECT ID: 4905

PROJECT DURATION : 5

COUNTRIES : Cambodia

PROJECT TITLE: Strengthening National Biodiversity and Forest Carbon Stock Conservation through Landscape-based Collaborative Management of Cambodia's Protected Area System as Demonstrated in the Mondulhiri Conservation Landscape (CAMPAS Project)

GEF AGENCIES: UNEP

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: Ministry of Environment

GEF FOCAL AREA: Multi Focal Area

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 acknowledges UNEP's proposal on "Strengthening national biodiversity and forest carbon stock conservation through landscape-based collaborative management of Cambodia's Protected Area System as demonstrated in the Mondulhiri Conservation Landscape (CAMPAS)". It recognizes the proposal addresses an environmental issue of global significance by tackling deforestation and forest degradation in Cambodia. Nonetheless, STAP does not fully endorse the proposal as currently presented, primarily on the basis that the proposal as currently described appears far too ambitious considering the vast challenges it proposes to tackle; thereby, presenting too great a risk that the stated objective will not be met. Furthermore, it is difficult to assess the proposal in terms of its scientific and technical content. For example, the project description is about socio-economic/political issues, not the science of biodiversity conservation, or climate change response measures (the intended focus of the project). Below, STAP outlines a number of recommendations to be addressed by the proponent during the proposal development phase and prior to CEO endorsement.

1. The biodiversity values and threats to these are described, but the focus in this proposal is largely on problem statements. The document makes a very strong case on the problems regarding weak political buy-in; governance issues; institutional overlaps; capacity weaknesses; and, the conflicting interests of government's economic development strategies and those of sustaining protected areas. The solutions offered are multiple and diverse, perhaps suggesting too many interventions for a single multiple focal area project with limited funding. This is evidenced by the very large number of activities, suggesting an ambitious and over-arching role for the project from national systemic levels of policy and strategy - to protected area strengthening over 4.5 million hectares - to local community activities, such as agro-forestry demonstrations on 500 hectares. STAP is of the view that the project scope is overly ambitious as described, and the Panel believes that a more narrowly targeted project is more likely to succeed.

2. The point above is reinforced further by the ambiguity of the value-added, or advantages, in developing a multi-focal area approach as described in this PIF. Given the complexities of governance, institutions and multiple donor activities, it would appear that a less ambitious approach focusing on biodiversity objectives would be more likely to succeed. These objectives could then be linked to parallel projects under implementation in the climate change focal area, or initiated as separate projects. In essence, the integration of biodiversity, climate change mitigation and sustainable forest management/REDD is not firmly rooted from a scientific perspective as currently described in the proposal. Rather, the basis for integration appears to be more financially driven. In addition indicators for each global

environmental benefit are not explicitly defined, or appropriately linked to the focal area results-based management framework.

3. The proposal demonstrates the very large number of donor interventions relating to biodiversity conservation in Cambodia, the unusually large number of registered INGOs and NGOs and CBOs in the country, and the strong presence of the GEF for many years. This indicates a great opportunity for coordinated actions. STAP recommends, therefore, for the project proponents to define explicitly a framework for coordinating the various stakeholders and their intended activities.

4. Furthermore, given the number and diversity of stakeholders involved, the transaction costs of effectively facilitating the many activities proposed might be higher than the core GEF funding requested permits. Thus, STAP believes it may be necessary to define more clearly these proposed relationships during the proposal development.

5. The project focuses largely on forest protection through law enforcement. However, published and anecdotal literature demonstrates that alternative sources of income may influence forest protection, and sustainable forest management (See “ www.cifor.org). STAP suggests, therefore, emphasizing further viable alternative livelihoods options in the proposal.

6. The major barriers to forest protection appear to be policy-related. It is clear that a comprehensive government approach is required to address, for example, the issuance of economic land concessions. However, it is not clear the Ministry of the Environment will be able to achieve this. In this regard, STAP suggests that an expression of support for this proposal from the other key partners in the proposed project, such as the Forestry Administration and the Fisheries Administration, would be useful at an early stage.

7. STAP welcomes the intention to apply the carbon estimation tools developed through the Carbon Benefits Project. However, STAP wishes further details on how the CBP tools will be applied in conjunction with the approach described in Annex 1 to determine reference level carbon stocks and emissions reduction.

8. STAP notes there seems to be a strong reliance on outputs to be delivered by other projects “ for example, the National REDD strategy. STAP believes this presents a risk that should be discussed further in the proposal.

9. STAP recommends providing further details of the methods applied in planning for protected areas. For example, how is biodiversity value assessed? Also, STAP recommends describing further the "rapid assessment technology" for detecting changes in land use.

10. STAP wishes further clarification on Component 1.2. It appears the component will define national indicators for biodiversity monitoring, which is a major undertaking. If this is not the project's intention, then is the project's aim to apply indicators that will be defined at a higher level? If so, relying on another process to deliver these is a risk.

11. STAP recommends indicating the numbers of professional staff involved in each project component. This information would facilitate understanding the relative priority of each aspect, and the likelihood that stated aims can be achieved.

12. STAP recommends revisiting the project framework so that the outputs are stated as products rather than restating the outcomes, or expressing as activity targets

13. It would be helpful to define the abbreviations at first use.

<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
1. Consent	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
2. Minor revision required.	<p>STAP has identified specific scientific or technical challenges, omissions or opportunities that should be addressed by the project proponents during project development.</p> <p>Follow up: One or more options are open to STAP and the GEF Agency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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.

<p>3. Major revision required</p>	<p>STAP has identified significant scientific or technical challenges or omissions in the PIF and recommends significant improvements to project design.</p> <p>Follow-up:</p> <p>(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.</p> <p>(ii) In its request for CEO endorsement, the Agency will report on actions taken in response to STAP concerns.</p>
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