

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 09, 2013

Screener: Lev Neretin

Panel member validation by: Ralph E. Sims
Consultant(s): Margarita Dyubanova

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

FULL SIZE PROJECT GEF TRUST FUND

GEF PROJECT ID: 5372

PROJECT DURATION : 5

COUNTRIES : Belarus

PROJECT TITLE: Belarus Green Cities: Supporting Green Urban Development in Small and Medium Sized Cities in Belarus

GEF AGENCIES: UNDP

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Belarus, Munisipalities of Novogrudok, Novopolotsk and Polotsk

GEF FOCAL AREA: Climate Change

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 succinct project proposal that has a goal to develop green urban development plans and pilot green urban development projects related to energy-efficiency and sustainable transport in small and medium cities in Belarus. This is a good proposal on "green cities" including energy, water, food, and wastes. (Chemicals and biodiversity were not included but could have been).

The proposal provides references to ongoing and future baseline projects in Belarus. In particular, it mentions the EU Green Economy project with considerable funding available for a wider range of environmental issues such as ecotourism, agriculture, waste management, ecological expertise, renewable energy and energy-efficiency.

The GEF incremental reasoning for this project proposal concentrates solely on climate change mitigation issues of transport and energy efficiency. This will be coordinated with the EU project as outlined. STAP realizes that the exact modalities of this coordination will be identified during the PPG phase, but wishes to highlight that coordination of energy, food, waste, and water issues is important for a truly integrated approach to urban planning.

The choice of the 3 cities is sufficient assuming their populations representing typical municipalities. Developing green urban development plans is appropriate but it usually takes decades to change the infrastructure and configuration of an old city - and this is only a 5-year project. Within this timeframe, developing bikeways and improving street lighting is achievable. Support for bikeways is logical - but will there be a problem in winter from maintaining them after snowfall? District heating is not mentioned but, if present, then in time the heating plant could be converted from gas to biomass as often practiced in northern Europe. Tramways, as proposed, will take longer to develop than bicycle tracks but no mention of dedicated bus lanes or bus rapid transit systems is made, although these might well have a place in one or more of the cities under consideration.

The cities are to provide "significant co-financing" but limited funding is often a constraint for a city to develop environmental imperatives. In this proposal, the risks of lacking co-financing by the cities, while some already committed, are clearly outlined, along with mitigation measures should that occur. The choice of "typical" cities will define if project experiences could be replicated nation-wide. It seems that selected for demonstrations cities might not be representative as some have significant revenue coming from local industry (as in Novopolotsk) and / or tourism (as in Polotsk) and hence can afford higher investments to improve their transport systems than other cities might be able to?

<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.
3. Major revision required	<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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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.