

# 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 08, 2013

Screener: Thomas Hammond

Panel member validation by: Michael Anthony Stocking  
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### I. PIF Information *(Copied from the PIF)*

**FULL SIZE PROJECT    GEF TRUST FUND**

**GEF PROJECT ID:** 5510

**PROJECT DURATION :** 5

**COUNTRIES :** Papua New Guinea

**PROJECT TITLE:** R2R Strengthening the Management Effectiveness of the National System of Protected Areas

**GEF AGENCIES:** UNDP

**OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:** Ministry of Environment and Conservation, Conservation and Environment Protection Authority YUS Conservation Organization Tenkile Conservation Alliance

**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

1. Biodiversity conservation is a high priority for Papua New Guinea which has received a succession of GEF-supported projects, with varying results. STAP has reviewed the outcomes and likely impact of previous GEF projects (e.g. GEF IDs 347, 1261) in the portfolio, which addressed biodiversity conservation and protected area designation and management, often revealing a disappointing set of results. From a scientific and technical perspective the predecessor projects had merit, but clearly the main vulnerability noted in evaluations was the need (perhaps underestimated) to invest in community buy-in and follow-up over extended periods to build and maintain trust. An equally important vulnerability has been the failure to invest adequate effort in legislative support for protected area (PA) designation, funding and management. For these reasons, STAP has significant concerns regarding this project. However, given that the majority of STAP's concerns are not explicitly of a scientific or technical nature - but rather concerning the assessment of project risk in other areas - STAP has proposed minor revisions with regard to this project.
2. The present project proposal, of five years duration, enters (in the STAP Panel's view) yet another risky project environment, in partnership with a new government department in the process of formation (CEPA), a governance background that appears to need considerable extra baseline research to arrive at workable local vs. national balance of customary rights and national laws. The past disconnect between under-equipped national institutions and distant communities would appear to remain a very significant risk which appears to dwarf any scientific and technical concerns that STAP has about the project concept. STAP strongly recommends that the full project brief tracks the proponent's responses to STAP's concerns and responds to the following suggestions for improvements to the design.
3. The PIF describes in some detail the situation with regard to PAs and the wide range of actors that initiate and invest in PAs. This is commendable and it is clear that as the PIF describes, the project will be just one module with a wider framework of support to PNG. What the PIF fails to do is to review the baseline situation of the PAs described within the broader PNG land and water planning framework, particularly that supported by the Department of Lands and Physical Planning; this gap should be addressed. A recent conference organized by the Department ("Refocusing and Enabling Sustainability of the physical planning system in PNG and beyond 2020."), would appear to have been highly relevant to the context within which this Ridge to Reef project was formulated. However, the PIF contains no mention of this or of arrangements to apply relevant methods such as Integrated Landscape Management Plans (ILMPs, e.g. see GEF ID 5517), IWRM, ICM etc. within the family of spatial planning and management approaches and to build inter-Departmental capacity to share necessary expertise and to agree inter-Ministerial policy support for ILMP or equivalent.

## Component 1

4. The statement in the PIF to the effect that "The project will ensure that support for Conservation Areas and other community-managed conservation areas is integrated into relevant national, provincial and local land-use and sectoral planning processes", is welcome, but needs to be much more explicitly formulated in a full project brief that also details how the Ridge to Reef Program will support development of necessary inter-Departmental working arrangements, relevant expert capacities, on-going training and regional peer review. Particularly important will be the proposed pilot Integrated Land Use Plan for the Sogeri Dam catchment area as a practical focus for the national to local cooperation required.

## Component 2

5. While the actions proposed under this Component appear to be well described and focused on two sites, nevertheless STAP is concerned that the ambitious plans to designate and manage increased PA areas may compromise the pressing need to consolidate existing PAs and existing community livelihood concerns. STAP requests an explanation, i.e. why this trade-off has been proposed, which may distract from the core need to demonstrate increased management effectiveness of the current portfolio of PA area, within a well-planned R2R framework.

## Landscapes, ecosystem functions and local livelihoods

6. Cross-cutting both components but primarily concentrated in Component 2 is the objective of improving ecosystem functions and establishing secure livelihoods for local communities who will be expected to be the primary guardians of the PA system. STAP is concerned that this wider aspect features only briefly in the project framework and not at all in the textual commentary on activities to be accomplished in the project; yet as noted elsewhere in this screening of the PIF, addressing both immediately local issues as well as attention to the whole landscape (from "ridge to reef") will be essential in developing any hope of sustainable outcomes. An issue that will need to be urgently considered is how "conservation farming" will be promoted "and indeed, what the proponents mean by the term. If this should be some form of conversion of swidden agriculture to permanent occupation with the use of composts, then there will need to be a substantial drawing of lessons from other projects that have attempted agricultural change and intensification but with conspicuous lack of success. In addition, a target of 5 percent sediment yield reduction is mentioned in at least two places but without any information as to how this will be achieved and whether this is either a realistic or insufficient level. STAP is unconvinced about the reasoning and linkages to ecosystem functions and local livelihoods that the project promises consequent upon the investments in the PA system.

## Regional considerations

7. The project design has relatively weak links to the regional Program as described, and there are significant opportunities to share lessons and ongoing experience at regional level regarding PA community-based management and financing. The PIF mentions that "the Government of PNG is also initiating work on biodiversity financing (module 3), including offset systems to mitigate biodiversity loss, innovative PA management models such as concession bidding, and fund management structures such as biodiversity trust funds". STAP welcomes this linkage and urges the proponents to set out their suggestions for collaborative work to connect with the regional support project (GEF ID 5404).

8. The capacity building linkage of the project to the University of Papua New Guinea would be a welcome development, and should be augmented by outreach to regional capacity building and knowledge platforms. Even though the project does not have specific International Waters focal area funding support, nevertheless the R2R Program linkage implies more than simply "alignment" with the Program. Instead exchange between the family of child national projects focused on training capacity building knowledge management and adaptive management suggestions mediated by the program should be supported.

9. STAP recommended in its screening of the regional support project that it should include support for a multi-focal "PacIW:LEARN" for the region, which could act to sustain a peer to peer scientific and technical network for in-service training. This would satisfy the long standing demand under the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation, at least in this Pacific SIDS area. This advice was provided for the reason that, given the complex multidisciplinary threats and barriers shared by many of the PICs to be overcome, the sharing of expertise between PICs would strengthen sustainability of individual projects within the Program, but also across the other GEF and non-GEF projects delivering against allied environmental targets. In this connection the inclusion in the present project of knowledge management, as mentioned above, is essential and STAP advises that the project brief should show how it could connect more formally to the proposed regional network as discussed above. Additionally, the baseline PacIWRM project's successful

delivery of distance learning and twinning for IWRM capacity development is an excellent basis to build on regionally and nationally.

10. One of the lessons learned from a related regional project on fisheries (GEF ID 2131 Oceanic Fisheries Management: Implementation of the Strategic Action Programme of the Pacific Small Island Developing States) in the region, coordinated through the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), is that each child project in a program through its full project brief needs to detail the support relationship envisaged and responsibilities respectively of the (PNG) project unit and the regional unit.

11. As a member of the R2R Program the present project also needs to show how the scientific and technical linkages outlined in the parent program translate into practical action to benefit PNG. STAP has noted that the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation cites the concept of "SIDSTAP", the operationalization of the small island developing States roster of experts. While little progress has been achieved, as noted in regional meetings held prior to the Rio+20 Conference, the present project has the opportunity, at least alongside the cluster of 14 countries represented with the Program, to benefit from a strengthened set of scientific and technical linkages between the PICs, building upon the SOPAC mechanism. The project brief should therefore detail how the Science, Technology and Resources Network (STAR) of SOPAC could assist the present project to draw upon a regional multidisciplinary network similar to the SIDSTAP concept, augmented with SOPAC-STAR support and in coordination with the University of the South Pacific.

12. STAP advises the project proponents to consider the guidance offered through the joint GEF/CBD publication on Marine Spatial Planning in order to maximize the potential of the ICM/IWRM approaches planned to resolve unsustainable trajectories for biodiversity, land and water use within the coastal zones and related catchments concerned. At present one of the key deficits of the parent Program outlined in the R2R documents is the absence of a strategy for assisting the countries with planning within the Ridge to Reef approach towards a realizable and sustainable future, the present project should show how this strategic support will be realized.

#### Further reading

Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel GEF (2012). Marine Spatial Planning in the Context of the Convention on Biological Diversity: A study carried out in response to CBD COP 10 decision X/29, Montreal, Technical Series No. 68, 16 pp.

<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
<b>1. Consent</b>	<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>
<b>2. Minor revision required.</b>	<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:            (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>
<b>3. Major revision required</b>	<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:            (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.</p>