

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: September 29, 2014

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

FULL SIZE PROJECT GEF TRUST FUND

GEF PROJECT ID: 6920

PROJECT DURATION : 5

COUNTRIES : Regional (Indonesia, Timor Leste)

PROJECT TITLE: Implementation of the Arafura and Timor Seas Regional and National Strategic Action Programs

GEF AGENCIES: UNDP

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (Indonesia); Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (Timor Leste)

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):

Major issues to be considered during project design

III. Further guidance from STAP

We have in this screen focused on the technical and strategic aspects of the strengthened governance system for the ATS region that is anticipated to result from SAP implementation.

1. The project follows a strict TDA-SAP approach. It is rooted in the completed TDA analysis and proposes a range of specific interventions recommended in the SAP. The PIF provides an excellent, content rich, description of the importance of the ATS region ecosystem and identifies the ecosystem governance issues to be addressed during Phase 2. However, there is no discussion of the status of the enabling conditions (for example, commitment of governments, support from affected stakeholders, capacity to practice the ecosystem approach) at the beginning of SAP implementation.

2. Assembling the enabling conditions for implementation where presumably a central objective of Phase 1. What progress was made and where the major challenges lie at the threshold to SAP implementation is not discussed. An analytical summary of what has been accomplished and learned in Phase 1 would provide critical context for assessing this proposal and should be included in these initial sections beyond references to the TDA and the SAP. The project region is abundant with different institutional arrangements and governance mechanisms from CTI to PEMSEA. This raise concerns if establishing a separate Regional Coordination Committee with the Secretariat using GEF funds would be a sustainable option in the future without proper "rooting" of this mechanism into existing institutions/frameworks.

3. The subsection on Barriers to Sustainable Management briefly describe three barriers apply implementing the ecosystem approach in the ATS region. These statements describe generic problems common in varying degree to all regional marine and coastal governance initiatives. Similarly, the Baseline Scenario and Associated Baseline Projects section states the ten year vision and long-term objective of the SAP. These are generic statements that apply equally well to many marine regions. They include the restoration of fisheries and habitats, restoring degraded habitats, reducing land-based sources of pollution, protecting key marine species and responding to climate change. The text could be interpreted as saying that the goals of the program, as defined at the top of page 9, will be achieved in five years. This is obviously not possible.

Reference is made to a midterm evaluation of the Phase 1 project that concluded "if specified milestones are met, GEF support to a follow-up ATS SAP is justified". However, the PIF does not identify either the most

important milestones have been achieved nor what further stepping stones toward the long-term SAP objective are anticipated within the five year lifespan of Phase 2.

4. The PIF would be far clearer if it identified the principle changes in behavior of key institutions and user groups that will signal the implementation of the policies and actions that are the focal points of Phase 2. The specific goals, in terms of strengthening the enabling conditions and catalyzing changes in behavior are not identified. It would be more useful if the proposal identified what it saw as technically and politically achievable stepping-stones that can be achieved in five years and will contribute to the long-term goals.

5. There is no discussion of what has been learned about the strengths and weakness of the existing governance system and how the specific barriers will be overcome in order to make the governance system more effective. Instead, the PIF lists in section 1.1.2 generic outcomes and outputs with no information on where the priorities lie or the sequence in which major actions will be taken and associated outcomes achieved.

6. Modifications to the structure of existing government system financing mechanisms and strengthening all institutional and human capacity are listed under outcomes 1.1 and 1.2. Nothing is said to suggest the strategies for how such outputs will be achieved in this region. The outputs listed are so generic that they could be applied to many regions.

7. Component 2 sets forth ambitious expectations for improved management of fisheries that include reductions IUU fisheries, reductions in by-catch and certification of sustainable fisheries. There is no evidence offered for assessing whether these are realistic, what the challenges will be, or what strategies will be applied to address the identified barriers of the low understanding of the ecosystem approach to fisheries and weak enforcement mentioned elsewhere in the proposal.

8. On page 13, it is noted that integrated coastal management plans will be implemented at six learning sites covering a total all over 500,000 hectares of important habitats. Information is provided that there there will be at least three replication sites in year three. The reviewer is given no clues as to whether previous experience in this region suggests that these objectives are reasonable and can be assumed to bring about improved management in these areas. There is no basis for assessing the degree to which these objectives are reasonable and strategic.

9. We also note that the SAP and hence this proposal does not discuss the possibility to introduce Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) processes in the region as a useful approach to support ICM in the regional as a whole and which could become an important framework and tool towards sustainable development. Given Australia's strong role in the project and country's experience with MSP in the Great Barrier Reef system, this seems to be a missed opportunity in this project.

10. Providing a technical review of this PIF presents fundamental problems that are the result of the structure and content of the PIF since a critical review of the governance issues are not discussed. In the absence of a brief description of the baseline conditions for governance at initiation of Phase 2 (the baseline for environmental conditions is well described) it is not possible to assess if the selected outcomes and outputs are strategic nor to what degree they are socially and politically achievable. The consequence of these shortcomings in the PIF is that an objective and informed assessment of the design, the feasibility and strategic quality of the proposal, cannot be made.

We conclude that the governance challenge has to be explored further in the project preparation beyond referring back to the approved SAP. It will take a critical assessment of the governance mechanisms in the region to identify how they could supported contributing to sustainable development of the ATS.

References:

SÄnderbaum, F., & Granit, J. (2014). The Political Economy of Regionalism: The Relevance for International Waters and the Global Environment Facility: A STAP Issues Paper. Global Environment Facility, Washington, D.C.

Olsen, S.B., Page, G.G. & Ochoa, E. (2009). The analysis of governance responses to ecosystem change: A handbook for assembling a baseline. LOICZ Reports & Studies No. 34. Geesthach: GKSS Research Center.

<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
1. Concur	STAP acknowledges that on scientific or technical grounds the concept has merit. 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 issues to be considered during project design	<p>STAP has identified specific scientific /technical suggestions or opportunities that should be discussed with the project proponent as early as possible during development of the project brief. The proponent may wish to:</p> <p>(i) Open a dialogue with STAP regarding the technical and/or scientific issues raised. (ii) Set a review point at an early stage during project development, and possibly agreeing to terms of reference for an independent expert to be appointed to conduct this review.</p> <p>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.</p>
3. Major issues to be considered during project design	<p>STAP proposes significant improvements or has concerns on the grounds of specified major scientific/technical methodological issues, barriers, or omissions in the project concept. If STAP provides this advisory response, a full explanation would also be provided. The proponent is strongly encouraged to:</p> <p>(i) Open a dialogue with STAP regarding the technical and/or scientific issues raised. (ii) Set a review point at an early stage during project development including an independent expert as required.</p> <p>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.</p>