

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 05, 2015

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Consultant(s):

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

FULL SIZE PROJECT GEF TRUST FUND

GEF PROJECT ID: 9055

PROJECT DURATION :

COUNTRIES : Ecuador

PROJECT TITLE: Sustainable Development of the Ecuadorian Amazon: Integrated Management of Multiple Use Landscapes and High Value Conservation Forests

GEF AGENCIES: UNDP

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:

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 issues to be considered during project design

III. Further guidance from STAP

This project - "Sustainable Development of the Ecuadorian Amazon: integrated management of multiple use landscapes and high value conservation forests" seeks to "Catalyze the transformation of land use planning and management in the Ecuadorian Amazon (CTEA) by building a governance and sustainable production framework based on a landscape approach and optimizing ecosystem services and livelihoods".

The Project aims to (1) strengthen multi-level governance frameworks (2) provide market incentives for sustainably produced products and (3) implement sustainable commercial and livelihood production at a landscape level.

This is a well-written PIF, especially the introduction, with a good background on Ecuador and a strong biodiversity justification. The description of the various sub-regions is well done and much appreciated; however, a map would really help to interpret the PIF.

The baseline section suggests significant land use planning, enforcement, credit and support of extension services in the Ecuadorian Amazon, albeit aimed more at agricultural production than biodiversity conservation.

Barriers are identified as weak multi-level governance for sustainable production, weak incentives, markets and credit for sustainable production, and low capacity for sustainable production at field/plot level.

Alternatives therefore are to (Component 1) strengthen multi-level land use planning and governance (Component 2) improve access to markets, credit and incentives for sustainable products and (Component 3) implement sustainable commercial and livelihood practices in high value conservation forests.

The logic of the project is clear, and its goals and intentions are sound and well-articulated with statements such as:

- "catalyse the transformation of land use planning and management",
- "build a governance and sustainable framework based on a landscape approach"
- "developing the governance, financial and market frameworks for sustainable production and management of multiple use landscapes and delivery of global environmental benefits"
- "develop bio-industry approaches to develop alternative livelihoods"
- "ensure adequate enforcement of the environmental and forest regulations at local level"

- "increase the demand for sustainable products"
- "regularize process (e.g. licensing) to gradually mainstream sustainable environmental measures in the above value chains"
- "foster the adoption of environment-friendly practice",
- "promote sustainable use of biodiversity",
- "promote livestock best practices" and "support soil restoration and reforestation in mining areas".

What is missing is the "HOW?" In very few places does the document explicitly state or evaluate how these intentions will be operationalized. It also needs an analysis of whether a \$12m project can achieve all these goals. Therefore, the PPG needs to convert the conceptual/theoretical goals of the PIF into a project that is both operational and carefully costed, and this may require that the scope of the project is reduced, or significantly reduced.

The PIF incorporates a range of good ideas, including support of extension and stakeholder platforms, but these do not add up to a cogent theory of change. The PIF basically proposes a wide range of activities at meso and macro level, and the linkages between these activities and on-the-ground interventions and results is unclear, including in the indicators, most of which "are to be developed at PPG stage". This somewhat top-down approach often/usually results in a lot of workshops and planning, but limited real impact, with commentators noting that excellent ideas were developed but that implementation was weak. However, the situation in Ecuador may be different, and a top-down approach may be suitable; whatever the case, the PPG should provide additional confidence in the approach take to build multi-stakeholder governance systems.

There are four major conceptual issues that the PIF/PPG needs to address:

1. What exactly is a "strengthened multi-level governance framework" (see p1, Component 1, p16 in risks), how does the sequencing and structuring of this framework consider bottom-up as well as top-down processes, and what indicators can you use to measure if it works?
2. What is "capacity-building" and how does this work?
3. Can either of the above be achieved in the absence of significant investment in learning how to make these work at field level, and using the process of making small gains to build stakeholder process, and also the guidelines, tools, norms, etc. necessary to mainstream these activities?
4. How will planning (top of p11) create change unless it also changes the underlying economics of biodiversity? This is to some extent addressed in Component 2, but the sections on planning should carefully consider costs and benefits to landholders who are ultimately deterministic of land use outcomes.

Therefore, the PIF/PPG should give more attention to the process of strengthening multi-level governance frameworks. Learning from systems theory, the top levels of the hierarchy should serve the bottom levels (Meadows 2008), and presumably planning/institutional development should balance top-down and bottom-up approaches; the current PIF is more top-down in tenor. An important question is whether rights (including land use plans, which operationalize and restrict some rights) are "appropriated from above" or emerge from below. Murphree (Murphree 2000) provides an excellent theoretical discussion of how to build institutions of scale, as does Ostrom in several case studies of irrigation projects in Sri Lanka I Governing the Commons (Ostrom 1990). (Child and Child 2015) describe the implementation of a bottom-up regulatory framework for natural resources in Zimbabwe in the 1940s. In other words, to what extent can we complement or replace top-down authority with bottom up incentives and participation?

The second issue is "capacity-building", to which training contributes. Thus, effective capacity building seeks to bring individuals and (cross-scalar) groups together to achieve clear targets through a process of experiential learning, to which training, research and information can contribute. This is embedded in the long-hook short-hook approach developed by UNDP in, for example, the South African Grasslands Project, whereby the unity and capacity of multi-stakeholder forums was built by solving issues of mining wetland reclamation/offsets, biodiversity in production forests and so on. The key to this was strong, field-level targets to which these forums were accountable, significant flexibility in achieving these targets, and the presence of effective facilitators that (1) provided scientific inputs (2) helped to keep groups together and moving forward and (3) translated on-the-ground successes into formal tools, guidelines, etc. that were then adopted at higher levels of governance.

In the light of these comments, would the balance and effectiveness of this project not be strengthened by using landscape level interventions at high priority or demonstration field sites (i.e. component 3) to develop

mechanisms for incentivizing sustainable/biodiversity production (i.e. component 2), and in this way contribute to strengthened multi-level governance frameworks (i.e. component 1)?

Specific comments:

1. Selection of the three priority landscapes will be based on criteria including 1) high conservation value, 2) biomass carbon concentration, 3) deforestation risk level, 4) stakeholder willingness, and co-funding. Is the information/data necessary for this analysis readily available at comparable scales and if so, how will it be combined to effectively determine the priority landscape “in a GIS”
2. The indicators for Component 1 need to be much stronger. For example, METT focuses on management process in PAs, and is not really useful for measuring livelihoods and biodiversity outcomes in community and indigenous lands.
3. At what level will output 1.3 focus, and how?
4. What are "decision-making tools in support of sustainable production", "coordination mechanisms between indigenous peoples" (p2)
5. What does 2.3 b) mean?
6. Developing micro-credit for supporting sustainable production (2.4 b.) is a big job in and of itself.

Child, G. and B. Child (2015). "The Conservation Movement in Zimbabwe: An early Experiment in Devolved Community Based Regulation. ." Southern African Journal of Wildlife Research 45(1): 1-16.

Meadows, D. H. (2008). Thinking in Systems. A Primer. London, Earthscan.

Murphree, M. (2000). Constituting the Commons: Crafting Sustainable Commons in the New Millennium. Multiple Boundaries, Borders and Scale" at the Eighth Biennial Conference of the International Association for the Study of Common Property (IASCP). Bloomington, Indiana, U.S.A.

Ostrom, E. (1990). Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action, Cambridge University Press.

<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
1. Concur	In cases where STAP is satisfied with the scientific and technical quality of the proposal, a simple “Concur” response will be provided; the STAP may flag specific issues that should be pursued rigorously as the proposal is developed into a full project document. At any time during the development of the project, the proponent is invited to approach STAP to consult on the design prior to submission for CEO endorsement.
2. Minor issues to be considered during project design	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: (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. 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.
3. Major issues to be considered during project	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:

design	<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 GEF Secretariat may, based on this screening outcome, delay the proposal and refer the proposal back to the proponents with STAP's concerns.</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>
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