

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 06, 2015

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

FULL SIZE PROJECT GEF TRUST FUND

GEF PROJECT ID: 9060

PROJECT DURATION : 5

COUNTRIES : Global (Regional, Cote d'Ivoire, Cabo Verde, Ecuador, Indonesia, Peru, Senegal)

PROJECT TITLE: Coastal Fisheries Initiative (PROGRAM)

GEF AGENCIES: FAO, WWF-US and UNDP

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: CI UNDP, UNEP, WB, WWF

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

These comments are based upon a review of the document entitled "CFI Resubmission Clean Signed PDF" and the amendments included in the final draft dated April 24. This review included the Annexes, particularly numbers 6 and 7.

Part II (a) on Global Environmental and/or Adaptation, Root Causes and Barriers is an outstanding summary and analysis of the complexities posed by the governance of coastal fisheries. It is a balanced and thoughtful summary. The comments and concerns that follow address the approach put forward for addressing these challenges.

In paragraph 29 enabling conditions for catalyzing a change are defined as "the environmental, policy, legal and institutional framework for fisheries management". This is an overly narrow definition that sees the factors most critical to an advance towards the ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF) as lying primarily within government. There is, however, abundant evidence that a constituency for change among the fishers themselves and market based strategies (such as certification of sustainable fisheries) are often equally important. A threshold of sufficient capacity to bring about the changes required if more sustainable coastal fisheries are to be achieved is another critical enabling condition. Furthermore the formal adoption of policies and the legal framework for fisheries does not always signal that there is commitment within government for change. Such commitment needs to be gauged by additional sources of evidence. The term "enabling conditions" implies that the fundamental pre-conditions for an EAF initiative are present and such conditions cannot be limited to the formal governmental machinery as implied by this narrow definition.

In paragraph 31 the proposal recognizes that the most critical difference in the many approaches to coastal fisheries reform lies in goal definition. This proposal makes a major step forward by identifying five "thematic areas" that define the priorities and therefore the desired outcomes and therefore the objectives of fisheries management. These differences in coastal fisheries objectives and priorities are briefly defined in Box 1. The differences in how priorities, and therefore EAF strategies (means to ends) are defined are confusing to many, as noted in paragraph 32, and they are not mutually exclusive. A major aim of the CFI project is to therefore to compare and contrast how multiple objectives can be integrated within a coherent and effective strategy tailored to the needs of a particular place and spatial scale.

In the opinion STAP, this element of the proposal would be greatly strengthened if the discussion of the five thematic areas recognized that the priorities and therefore the design of an initiative needs to be tailored to the needs, the problems and opportunities posed by coastal fisheries in a given place. The strengths and

weaknesses of the existing governance system will play a major role in shaping an effective strategy for promoting EAF. Such an analysis of the context is as important as the analysis of the values and priorities of those undertaking fisheries reform. It must be recognized that what works to advance EAF in one locale or region will not necessarily be effective where the initial conditions are different. This important point is absent from the Section (a) discussion.

Section (b) of the proposal ends in paragraph 33 by pointing out that there is no international platform for collaboration among developments and environmental agencies and organizations working in fisheries." Different actors tend to work independently from one another and different approaches hence developed in silos." The CFI proposes to meet this need, and, if it succeeds, this will indeed be a major step forward. As discussed below, such comparative analysis requires a common analytical framework that applies generic indicators to assessing progress through the path described by a theory of change.

Section (c) defines the proposal as an expression of ecosystem-based management: "the objective is to demonstrate holistic ecosystem based management and improve governance of coastal fisheries". The key term here is "demonstrate" implying that the activities that will be undertaken through this project will successfully triangulate among multiple objectives and overcome the barriers identified in the previous discussion. The proposal contends that an approach to coastal fisheries that addresses all the issues described in section (a) and (b) has been defined that will be applied and funded by the CFI through three "child programs" conducted in three geographies and "challenge grants".

Herein lies the weakness of the CFI proposal. The preceding sections make it clear that a large number of coastal fisheries initiatives of various designs and with differing perceptions of the goal and the means to ends are underway. Rather than examining and tracking the impacts and outcomes of a selected sample of these initiatives, the CFI proposes to undertake its own additional initiatives in three regions. These CFI fisheries management projects will address the three pillars of sustainable development – the social, economic and environmental dimensions – and be guided by principles detailed in Appendix 6. The CFI will be organized as three components that will generate results on (1) sustainability incentives in the value chain, (2) institutional structures and processes and (3) best practices, collaboration and performance assessment. These focal points will be examined through the activities undertaken by the project in three geographies. While all fisheries conducted within the EEZs of the three selected geographies will be examined, the focus will be upon small-scale and semi industrial fisheries.

The CFI theory of change is detailed beginning with paragraph 47. A theory of change identifies and explains the sequence of actions and outcomes that lead to a desired result. A theory of change probes our understanding of how change occurs and places a project or program within a wider analysis of why and how change occurs.

The theory of change as put forward in this proposal, however, would be better described as a hypothesis for the successful achievement of EAF. Rather than offering a path with distinct milestones that trace progress to fully operational expressions of EAF, the CFI offers a prescription composed of "correct incentives in the value chain, a holistic approach building on integration of key priorities and using best practices, and the existence of an enabling environment." While these may indeed be attributes of programs that succeed in making EAF an operational reality, the proposal does not attempt to set forth the process nor the sequence of outcomes that mark the advance from current fisheries management to a balance among a diversity of needs and objectives that proves to be sustainable over the long term. The Figure 1 graphic version of this model identifies the components but has no time dimension and does not suggest thresholds along a path of change.

Figure 1 can be interpreted to suggest that the first phase is to assemble the institutional and legal "enabling conditions" while simultaneously putting in place the "right incentives for resources users". The graphic could be interpreted to suggest that a second phase combines the achievements of phase one into "better sector governance" that in turn produces in phase three the sustainability outcomes that link across economic performance, human well being and environmental health.

It is revealing that by far the greatest detail is for Phase One, the institutional framework, and the incentives. Yet experience is demonstrating that the greater challenges lie in the implementation of a fisheries management policy and/or plan. In Figure 1 this is described by a single box labeled as "Better sector governance leading to sustainably managed coastal fisheries". Presumably this may be interpreted as the implementation of a plan of action that combines the three components of the CFI approach into an operational plan of action. It is revealing that this critical phase with the many forms of behavioral change it implies is without detail. Yet it is here that the strengths and weaknesses of the achievements suggested by the two lower tiers of the enabling conditions will become apparent. The revised version of Figure 1 requires further development to place greater emphasis on the challenges of implementing a fisheries management plan with common indicators that encourage comparison across initiatives.

This raises the critical issue of time. The length of the CFI program is a five year effort that, if judged successful, may hope to be continued in future. Experience demonstrates repeatedly that the transition from unsustainable levels of fisheries exploitation to sustainable forms of fishing at a regional scale will be a long term process extending perhaps over decades before the phase 3 outcomes suggested by the Figure 1 become manifest. The GEF experience with LMEs in developing country contexts like the selected three geographies are still working to achieve the phase one conditions after as much as two decades of investment. Among other factors, climate change, as recognized by this proposal, is bringing major changes to the productivity of tropical fisheries. This reinforces the reality that the achievement of greater sustainability is a long-term process of adaptive governance. This suggests that the CFI would be more likely to achieve its objectives if a greater investment was made in examining and tracking the progress of on-going coastal fisheries management initiatives rather than investing in a new set of projects of its own.

This leads to another set of concerns. The key to comparative analysis across a diversity of projects conducted in a range of social/economic/environmental contexts requires a common analytical framework (Juda and Hennessey, 2001; Olsen, 2003; National Research Council, 2008; GPA/UNEP, 2006; Olsen et al, 2009; Olsen et al, 2011). This should be an expression of the theory of change and should (1) offer an analytical process for characterizing the context within which an initiative is undertaken and (2) identify the topics or questions that will be assessed at each stage of the initiatives being examined as they advance on their path to greater sustainability. The CFI proposal, however, states that the activities undertaken in each of the geographies will develop its own monitoring and evaluative framework. Paragraph 91 states that the CFI will also apply the GEF's monitoring and evaluation guidelines to the project as a whole. This places the emphasis of monitoring on project performance and does not address the central need for a common monitoring and evaluation system that applies the same indicators to all the coastal fisheries management initiatives undertaken or connected to the CFI program.

Similarly, the knowledge management component (beginning at paragraph 94) should be closely linked to a common analytical framework that organizes and analyses the influences of differences in context with differences in the design of the coastal fisheries initiatives that are examined.

The ingredients for an M and E framework that allows for objective outcome- based comparative analysis is present in the anticipated outcomes identified for each of the three CFI components. These identify the changes associated with the implied three phases of Figure 1. For example for Component 3 (best practices, collaboration and performance assessment) indicators can be grouped as follows:

- Phase 1: best practices disseminated, capacity developed in governments, regional organizations and NGOs;
- Phase 2: best practices applied, fisheries performance evaluated.

A number of activities, such as stakeholder consultation will change in focus as an initiative progresses from phase 1 to phase 2. In some cases phase 3 improvements in societal and environmental well-being may be achieved within an initial five year period. The degree to which such achievements can be attributed to phase 1 and 2 outcomes will be critical topics for the M and E component.

The degree to which the CFI can strengthen global momentum towards EAF will depend upon the strength of the M and E system. If this does not prove to make a convincing case that it is producing positive results through consistent and objective, evidence based analysis, the CFI will become just one more body of experience with its own internal logic and assertions of questionable transferability.

In Summary:

- The description and analysis of coastal fisheries issues is excellent.
- Recognition that major differences in approaches to coastal fisheries lies in differences in the goals and priorities of fisheries management is a crucial insight.
- In the opinion of STAP there is much to be gained by tracking ongoing fisheries management initiatives "in part since outcomes emerge over decades of time. The CFI, however, proposes to launch its own initiatives in three geographic regions and draw its conclusions from applications of a pre-selected "solution" to the challenges posed by coastal fisheries management.
- Rather than a theory of change, the CFI puts forward a hypothesis for the attributes of effective coastal fisheries management. Theories of change address the sequence in which actions and outcomes evolve. However, the Figure 1 description of the hypothesis can be interpreted to suggest three distinct phases in what would more appropriately be termed a theory of change for coastal fisheries. If the ideas in the first version of Figure 1 were developed to suggest sequence over time the attributes of implementation (phase

2) would need to be further developed. In its current form the emphasis and detail is restricted to the enabling conditions (phase1).

- The proposed methods do not appear to be designed to recognize the major influence of differences in the socio/economic/environmental context in which coastal fisheries occur. When assessing the relative success of initiatives in different geographies such differences in context are crucially important variables. This should be addressed and highlighted in the final version of the methodological design.
- The CFI design does not call for a common analytical framework for the analysis of the processes and outcomes of the initiatives to be undertaken as "Child Projects" in three regions and "Challenge Grants". The absence of a common analytical framework will compromise the drawing of conclusions across initiatives and is a major flaw in the CFI design that needs to be addressed.

The FAO Response Matrix to a draft of these STAP comments dated April 23, 2015, demonstrates that the concerns and interests of the FAO and STAP are fully consistent. After reviewing the responses the STAP recommends that the CFI program view as a priority the further development of its theory of change. Greater attention should be given to the transition from analysis and planning (phase 1) to the implementation of the fisheries management plans that are rooted in EAF (phase 2). A more fully developed theory of change should be the basis for developing the indicators of a common M and E system that should be applied across CFI initiatives to assess progress and engage in comparative analysis. Such an M and E system for the CFI should be designed early on in the CFI program. It should feature the documentation of baseline conditions for an initiative that examines the socio/environmental context within which CFI initiatives are undertaken.

The indicators contained in the UNEP/GPA (2006) handbook offers an example for such an M and E system. Common indicators (termed principles) for EAF have been developed by the FAO That address attributes of the enabling conditions (phase 1). An example of a methodology for baseline documentation is the LOICZ (2011) handbook.

References

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Olsen, S. B, Olsen E, Schaefer, N. 2011. Governance Baselines as a Basis for Marine Spatial Planning. 2011. J Coast Conservation 15:313-322

Olsen et al. 2009. The Analysis of Governance Responses to Ecosystem Change: A Handbook for Assembling a Baseline. LOICZ Reports and Studies No 34. GKSS Research Center, Geesthacht, 87 pages.

Olsen, S.B., J.G. Sutinen, L. Juda, T.M. Hennessey, and T.A. Grigalunas. 2006. A Handbook on Governance and Socioeconomics of Large Marine Ecosystems. Coastal Resources Center, University of Rhode Island, Narragansett.

Olsen, S.B. (2003) Frameworks and indicators for assessing progress in integrated coastal management initiatives, Ocean & Coastal Management, 46(3-4), pp 347-361

UNEP/GPA (2006) Ecosystem-Based Management: Markers for Assessing Progress. UNEP/GPA, The Hague.

| <i>STAP advisory response</i> | <i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i> |
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| 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. |

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| | <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> |
| <p>3. Major issues to be considered during project design</p> | <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 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> |