

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: 11 March 2008

Screener: Guadalupe Duron

Panel member validation by: Paul Ferraro

I. PIF Information *(Paste here from the PIF)*

GEFSEC PROJECT ID: 3609

GEF AGENCY PROJECT ID: 4151

COUNTRY: VENEZUELA

PROJECT TITLE: Strengthening the financial sustainability and operational effectiveness of the Venezuelan National Parks System

GEF AGENCY: UNDP

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: INPARQUES (Ministry of Popular Power for the Environment)

GEF FOCAL AREAS: Biodiversity

GEF-4 STRATEGIC PROGRAM: SO1, SP1/SP3

Full size project GEF Trust Fund

II. STAP Advisory Response *(see table below for explanation)*

1. Based on this PIF screening, STAP's advisory response to the GEF Secretariat and GEF Agency(ies):
Consent

III. Further guidance from STAP

2. STAP believes that the proposal is quite detailed and ambitious (perhaps too ambitious). However, the connection between the outcomes and the planned interventions are not always clear in the PIF (however, we acknowledge that this PIF is much more detailed than many other submitted PIFs and thus offers more opportunities for substantive comments). Although STAP does not doubt that the planned actions in the PIF are worthy of GEF support, the strong connection between the long list of threats in Part II.A.3 and the solution in Part II.A.4 (i.e.; increase budgets and capacity for the PA system) is not clear in the proposal. Clearly more guards and staff with better training are better than fewer such guards, but the PIF does not clearly explain why funds would not be better invested in altering the policies and incentive structures that lead to the threats listed in II.A.3. Arguing that the system is funded at only 15% of the "budget needed" is not an adequate justification, particularly given the relationship between conservation impacts and "full funding" has no empirical basis. The proposal raises a hypothesis, often repeated in conservation circles, that an important reason why PAs are underfunded is because "decision-makers are not aware of the full magnitude of the benefits currently and potentially delivered by PAs." Thus a solution to the funding deficit is to increase their awareness. Although there are anecdotes to support this hypothesis, there is no clear evidence from either developed or developing nations that conducting valuation studies and passing this information on to decision-makers increases funding for environmental protection. STAP would encourage the proposal proponents to think creatively about ways to test this hypothesis rather than assume it is true. One important point raised in the PIF and of great relevance to the GEF is that the current allocation of PA funds does not reflect the global value of PAs (II.A.7), but rather emphasizes the PAs role in the economic development. However, the PIF does not identify how this situation will be changed through GEF investments, unless somehow capacity building will change the current incentive structure of the Venezuelan government with regard to PA funding allocations. Minor point: Some of the outcomes are outputs in this PIF (e.g., training 300 staff members in management practices; tools applied), but in general the outcomes listed are appropriate.

<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
1. Consent	STAP acknowledges that on scientific/technical grounds the concept has merit. However, STAP may state its views on the concept emphasising any issues that could be improved and 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 revision	STAP has identified specific scientific/technical suggestions or opportunities that should be discussed with the proponent as

<p>required.</p>	<p>early as possible during development of the project brief. One or more options that remain open to STAP include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Opening a dialogue between STAP and the proponent to clarify issues (ii) Setting a review point during early stage project development and agreeing terms of reference for an independent expert to be appointed to conduct this review <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 revision required</p>	<p>STAP proposes significant improvements or has concerns on the grounds of specified major scientific/technical omissions in the concept. If STAP provides this advisory response, a full explanation would also be provided. Normally, a STAP approved review will be mandatory prior to submission of the project brief for CEO endorsement.</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>