

# 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 03, 2011

Screener: Guadalupe Duron

Panel member validation by: Michael Anthony Stocking  
Consultant(s):

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

**FULL SIZE PROJECT    GEF TRUST FUND**

**GEF PROJECT ID:** 4559

**PROJECT DURATION :** 6

**COUNTRIES :** Eritrea

**PROJECT TITLE:** Integrated Semenawi and Debubawi Bahri-Buri-Irrori- Hawakil Protected Area System for Conservation of Biodiversity and Mitigation of Land Degradation

**GEF AGENCIES:** UNDP

**OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:** Ministries of Agriculture, Marine Resources, Tourism, Justice, Local NGOs, Community, Northern & Southern Red Sea administrations as well as, academia

**GEF FOCAL AREA:** Biodiversity

### 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

STAP supports UNDP's proposal "Integrated Semenawi and Debubawi Bahri-Buri-Irrori-Hawakil Protected Area System for Conservation of Biodiversity and Mitigation of Land Degradation" in Eritrea. In particular, STAP commends Eritrea's decision to use its STAR resources in an integrated way to address simultaneously biodiversity conservation, sustainable land management, and climate change resilience. STAP is very supportive of GEF interventions targeted at achieving multiple global environmental benefits via a focus on a specific area or theme.

Nevertheless, although the project appears relatively straightforward in extending the scope and reach of the PA system in Eritrea, it is extremely ambitious. The analysis in Section B1, #17-21, summarises well the potential barriers and difficulties of establishing sustainable co-management, with or without the extra dimension of building climate resilience. UNDP and its partners in Eritrea can build on the previous GEF project experience (1999-2007) of initiating marine PAs. However, even with the restricted mandate of dealing with coastal and island biodiversity, the complexities of implementing shared and managed use of marine resources and trying to establish PAs was realised to be substantial and was only partly successful. This project will be even more complex. Although Eritrea has by WB estimates 4.26% of its area intended as terrestrial PA, many species are threatened and most of this PA is in name only. Furthermore, with 80+% of the population reliant on meagre subsistence agriculture, a GDP per capita of little more than US\$400, and national economic reliance on international remittances, the establishment of secure and sustainable PAs on a restricted and managed use basis will be a major challenge. The risk of failure is significant, especially in the project's ability to balance conservation of biodiversity with agricultural uses by very poor people in a difficult climate. As an overview comment, STAP feels that the focus "and ultimately the foundation for success" is in Component 3, the application of SLM practices. STAP finds that there is inadequate attention to what these practices might be, what approach to their promotion will be, and how knowledge on SLM will be managed. It would be very desirable for a better elaboration of this Component, taking into account the copious literature and experience on multiple-use PAs. For example, as outlined in a recent paper, the authors highlight the vigorous "debate over the effectiveness of PAs in reducing deforestation, especially when local people have rights to use the forest". Marginal drylands will arguably be even more difficult.

STAP elaborates below several ways it would like to see the proposal strengthened prior to CEO endorsement -

1. STAP fully agrees that it is crucial to involve communities in the co-management of biodiversity conservation and sustainable land management (SLM) through a landscape approach. The proposal is less clear how, and to what extent, the project's SLM practices will be built upon farmers' and pastoralists traditional knowledge on natural resource management, grazing practices, and climate adaptation strategies on agriculture and livestock. The proposal notes, for example, that there has been a significant breakdown in traditional NR management consequent upon war (#13.p.6). The project proponents need to be clear whether there is an intention to revitalise traditional knowledge systems, or to attempt to replace them with new ventures and practices. Experience elsewhere (e.g. Luangwa NP, Zambia) suggests that the second option can be very risky, especially if managed by conservation staff with little or no experience of working with local people.

2. The project component on "SLM practices applied to reduce threats to a managed resource use" is more focused on biodiversity conservation and less on SLM at the outcome and output level. The description of outcome 3 in section B2 also lacks a specific focus on SLM – climate resilience practices that aim to conserve biodiversity, and increase land productivity. Thus, STAP suggests increasing the emphasis on SLM in the wider landscape, as well as detailing explicitly the proposed SLM interventions in the project framework and incremental reasoning section. Even though the proposal notes that SLM practices will be identified during the PPG stage, an emphasis on SLM of landscapes is evidently lacking in this component.

3. Furthermore, the description of the expected global environmental benefits is strictly focused on biodiversity, and excludes the potential multiple benefits generated through climate friendly SLM interventions (carbon sequestration and carbon stocks). This reinforces STAP's aforementioned impression that the SLM component needs to be developed further so that SLM, and its multiple global environmental benefits, are an integral part of the project.

4. It is unclear whether the alternate livelihood options proposed in Table 1 were defined through the National Portfolio Prioritization Process. Perhaps more importantly is on what basis were these livelihood options selected – that is, established markets exist. STAP suggests detailing further what factors were considered when selecting alternative livelihood opportunities for farmers and pastoralists.

5. The proposal could strengthen its gender focus by adding that, and specifying how, women and men have different roles in natural resource management and livestock management, and that climate change will affect them differently. For example, women tend to be denied land rights, and have less access to information (e.g. use of weather data in decisions related to crop production). Climate change is likely to have different effects on women's and men's and their capacities to adapt.

6. STAP wonders whether the project's intention to use weather data to help with adaptation measures will apply to pastoralists. For example, perhaps the project also could consider an early warning system that strengthens pastoralists ability to cope with drought and other climate change shocks that influence their grazing management and livelihood decisions; thereby indirectly contributing to biodiversity conservation.

<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
<b>1. Consent</b>	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.
<b>2. Minor revision required.</b>	STAP has identified specific scientific/technical suggestions or opportunities that should be discussed with the proponent as early as possible during development of the project brief. One or more options that remain open to STAP include: (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 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.
<b>3. Major revision required</b>	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. 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.