

# 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 09, 2013

Screeener: Thomas Hammond

Panel member validation by: Brian Huntley  
Consultant(s):

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

**FULL SIZE PROJECT**    **GEF TRUST FUND**

**GEF PROJECT ID:** 5337

**PROJECT DURATION :** 5

**COUNTRIES :** Sri Lanka

**PROJECT TITLE:** Enhancing Biodiversity Conservation and Sustenance of Ecosystem Services in Environmentally Sensitive Areas

**GEF AGENCIES:** UNDP

**OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:** Ministry of Environment

**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

1. STAP welcomes this proposal focusing on areas of high biodiversity value in Sri Lanka. Although Sri Lanka ranks high in global biodiversity assessments, it has been long under-represented in conservation strategies at national level due to conflict or other national emergencies. The project focuses primarily on putting in place the planning and regulatory mechanisms required to address the specific management needs of environmentally sensitive areas, and help to ensure meet biodiversity conservation needs and the sustainable use of the these areas by local communities.

2. The rationale for proposing minor revisions at this stage relates primarily to the disconnect between what is presented in the title of this project, particularly with regard to the "ecosystem services" approach, and what is described by way of planned activities in the project framework and outline. In assessing the description of the project at this stage, it would appear that heavy emphasis (particularly in component 1) is placed on the regulatory, governance, planning, and capacity building needs of the primary government entities responsible for oversight and implementation. Terms such as "planning, monitoring, and enforcement" are used throughout the project information form. STAP would agree that the approach of developing more coherent, evidence based planning models for sustainable land management in these environmentally sensitive area is both needed and welcome, and technically the approach presented is sound. However, in component two of the project which addresses the potential benefits from biodiversity conservation, it would again appear that much emphasis is still placed on the needs for regulatory oversight (e.g. "land use planning and zoning, monitoring, enforcement and penalties for malfeasance, etc.). In addition, the proposed activities for developing the full potential of biodiversity benefits in the project areas remain vague and poorly defined. STAP welcomes the emphasis the project intends to place on capacity building and extension at community level. However, it would appear that a significant underlying assumption in this project is that capacity building almost on its own will result in continued flow of benefits to these communities over the long term - required for project success and the durability of global environmental benefits. The Panel strongly supports a focus on exploring and developing the full potential of ecosystem services in the project focal areas, and proposes a greater shift in level of effort in the project towards the development of these approaches. In short, STAP believes that proponents should place greater emphasis on "carrots" and less emphasis on "sticks" in the development of the full project brief. STAP is fully confident that in the preparation of the full project brief that models and strategies for mainstreaming activities such as PES, certification, eco-tourism, and others may be developed in a more robust way within the context of the full potential of this project.

3. With the exception of the development of detailed land use plans, it is not clear how success will be measured in this project. A short description of likely biodiversity and socio-economic indicators to be used and approaches to track change over time, along with underlying assumptions regarding expected change, would be useful.

4. In terms of stakeholder engagement, it is noted that IUCN is not included amongst the potential actors. Given the focus of this project, along with IUCN's strong science focus, long history of activity in the biodiversity domain in Sri Lanka, along with the lead role this organization plays in biodiversity monitoring through its Red Listing activities, it would seem logical that IUCN would be an appropriate partner.

5. In developing the full project brief, STAP urges that the proponents consult the STAP advisory document on Payments for Ecosystem Services [1] and Certification [2] .

Sources:

[1] <http://stapgef.org/payments-for-environmental-services-and-gef>

[2] <http://stapgef.org/environmental-certification-and-gef>

<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
<b>1. Consent</b>	<p>STAP acknowledges that on scientific or technical grounds the concept has merit. However, STAP may state its views on the concept emphasizing any issues where the project could be improved.</p> <p>Follow up: The GEF Agency is invited to approach STAP for advice during the development of the project prior to submission of the final document for CEO endorsement.</p>
<b>2. Minor revision required.</b>	<p>STAP has identified specific scientific or technical challenges, omissions or opportunities that should be addressed by the project proponents during project development.</p> <p>Follow up: One or more options are open to STAP and the GEF Agency:            (i) GEF Agency should discuss the issues with STAP to clarify them and possible solutions.            (ii) In its request for CEO endorsement, the GEF Agency will report on actions taken in response to STAP's recommended actions.</p>
<b>3. Major revision required</b>	<p>STAP has identified significant scientific or technical challenges or omissions in the PIF and recommends significant improvements to project design.</p> <p>Follow-up:            (i) The Agency should request that the project undergo a STAP review prior to CEO endorsement, at a point in time when the particular scientific or technical issue is sufficiently developed to be reviewed, or as agreed between the Agency and STAP.            (ii) In its request for CEO endorsement, the Agency will report on actions taken in response to STAP concerns.</p>