

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: July 15, 2014

Screeners: Kristie Ebi

Panel member validation by: Anand Patwardhan
Consultant(s):

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

FULL SIZE PROJECT LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES FUND

GEF PROJECT ID: 5815

PROJECT DURATION : 4

COUNTRIES : Regional (Bhutan, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar)

PROJECT TITLE: Building Climate Resilience of Urban Systems through Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) in the Asia-Pacific region.

GEF AGENCIES: UNEP

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: UNEP " Regional Office for Asia Pacific (ROAP) and UN-HABITAT.

GEF FOCAL AREA: Climate Change

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):
Major revision required

III. Further guidance from STAP

STAP welcomes the UNEP proposal "Building climate resilience of urban systems through Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) in the Asia-Pacific region." The proposal aims to build the resilience of vulnerable urban communities in Asia-Pacific LDCs by catalyzing large-scale implementation of EbA. The project will focus on demonstrating urban EbA interventions in pilot cities in Bhutan, Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar. The PIF clearly articulates the possible benefits of EbA interventions and provides lists of possible specific activities to accomplish the project outcomes and outputs, but then notes that which activities will actually be implemented will be determined during the PPG. While the overall aims of the project are laudable, the outputs are fairly generic and the PIF lacks specifics.

To further strengthen the project, STAP recommends addressing the following:

1. While the PIF does identify the main problem (page 5), the key point is that in many rapidly urbanizing developing country cities, conventional approaches for climate resilience that rely on civil infrastructure and purely structural responses may not be feasible given costs and the rapidly changing pattern of urbanization. The value proposition of urban EbA needs to be established keeping in view these contextual factors. Consequently, STAP recommends providing a more nuanced evaluation of the costs and benefits of EbA in the countries included. While EbA can be an effective approach to adaptation, it is not a panacea.
2. STAP also recommends the PIF provide information on how outputs will be accomplished, including (but not limited to): how and who will decide that a specific EbA is appropriate, how will the costs and benefits of EbA be determined, how the performance of EbA interventions be assessed, and how sustainability will be determined. The criteria for selecting pilot cities are listed, but it would be helpful, for example, to understand how vulnerability would be assessed. Further, the relevance of some of the urban "EbA" options listed for climate resilience may be better established. For example, the relevance of "urban agriculture" as an EbA option for climate resilience is not very clear.
3. While the PIF (rightly) emphasizes barriers, it is also possible that there could be on-going inadvertent EbA "experiments" that could be validated by the current project.
4. The footnote on page 8 states the limited budget means that only cities with populations of less than 2.5 million could be included, but not the reasoning behind this.

5. It would be helpful to understand how stakeholders will be selected and how they will be engaged through the project. Further, it would be helpful to have a list of the major stakeholders who would be included.
6. The PIF needs to be clarified as to how information on EbA design and implementation will be disseminated throughout the region. Given the long list of possible activities, it is possible that each city will chose a different set of activities, with minimal overlap across the countries. It is unclear what this would mean for determining lessons learned and best practices.
7. The PIF is inconsistent on the extent of experience with EbA in urban areas, with some statements indicating it is effective in urban and rural settings and other statements saying that effectiveness has primarily been demonstrated in rural regions. If the later is the case, then it would be helpful for the PIF to make the case of why it would be reasonable to expect the activities to be effective in the chosen cities. In particular, this also makes it attractive for the project to include aspects related to experimental design “ if evidence for effectiveness and performance can be generated, the benefits would go beyond this particular project.
8. STAP suggests the PIF include consideration of the effectiveness of the likely EbA interventions to additional climate change in the four countries, as well as to include consideration of how different development pathways (including trends in poverty, education, human health, energy needs, etc.) could alter vulnerabilities and effectiveness as they relate to the outputs. STAP suggests considering using the Shared Socioeconomic Pathways being developed as part of the new climate change scenario process as they describe a range of possible development pathways, including qualitative descriptions and quantitative variables such as demographic growth, education, and GDP <http://www2.cgd.ucar.edu/research/iconics>
9. Component 2 states interventions will be cost-effective and sustainable. STAP recommends providing the criteria that will be used and the process by which those determinations will be made. Similarly, Component 3 states investments will be sustainable; the criteria and process also would be helpful to understand.
10. Page 12 says that climate-resilient plants and trees will be planted, but without indicating how that will be assessed for each pilot region, for today and over coming decades with climate change.
11. STAP appreciates the information on the wide range of activities in the Asia Pacific region, but it would be helpful to understand how the proposed project will ensure coordination and collaboration with these.
12. STAP appreciates the statement that the project will ensure representation of women and other vulnerable groups. STAP hopes the gender aspects will be further developed and specified in the full proposal.
13. STAP recommends that project indicators be developed for the full proposal.

<i>STAP advisory response</i>	<i>Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed</i>
1. Consent	<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>
2. Minor revision required.	<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>
3. Major revision required	<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</p>

	<p>point in time when the particular scientific or technical issue is sufficiently developed to be reviewed, or as agreed between the Agency and STAP.</p> <p>(ii) In its request for CEO endorsement, the Agency will report on actions taken in response to STAP concerns.</p>
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