

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 03, 2013

Screener: Christine Wellington-Moore

Cowie

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

FULL SIZE PROJECT GEF TRUST FUND

GEF PROJECT ID: 5398

PROJECT DURATION : 4

COUNTRIES : Fiji

PROJECT TITLE: R2R - Implementing a "Ridge to Reef" Approach to Preserve Ecosystem Services, Sequester Carbon, Improve Climate Resilience and Sustain Livelihoods

GEF AGENCIES: UNDP

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS: Pacific Islands Ridge-to-Reef National Priorities - Integrated Water, Land, Forest & Coastal Management to Preserve Biodiversity, Ecosystem Services, Store Carbon, Improve Climate Resilience and Sustain Livelihood

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): **Consent**

III. Further guidance from STAP

1. STAP welcomes this well written and logically presented proposal for the application of integrated water resource and coastal management in Fiji under the proposed ridge to reef concept and the multi-disciplinary approach proposed is commended, especially the focus on strengthening the governance for integrated natural resources management. The threats described and the barriers to be overcome are clearly very substantial and it is clear that the GEF's involvement has to be carefully targeted to maximize the demonstrator/replicator and catalytic value of its investment.

2. The PIF is well researched and referenced and clearly sets out the proposed activities in concert with those identified in the baseline, the design of the project appears essentially sound, although it could be improved further by providing clarifications within the project brief on the following issues.

Integration and sustainability

3. From the Program perspective the PIF is silent about the regional support expected by the project. For example, regarding capacity building and expertise sharing, STAP advised that the parent Program has the opportunity, at least for the cluster of 14 countries represented with the Program, to strengthen the scientific and technical linkages between the PICs, building upon the SOPAC mechanism. The Science, Technology and Resources Network (STAR) of SOPAC could build capacity to make operational a regional multidisciplinary network similar to the SIDSTAP concept, augmented with SOPAC-STAR support and in coordination with the University of the South Pacific.

4. STAP recommended in its screening of the regional support project (GEF ID 5404) that it should include support for a multi-focal "PaciW:LEARN" for the region, which could act to sustain a peer to peer scientific and technical network for in-service training. This would satisfy the long standing demand under the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation, at least in this Pacific SIDS area. This advice was provided for the reason that, given the complex multidisciplinary threats and barriers shared by many of the PICs to be overcome, the sharing of expertise between PICs would strengthen sustainability of individual projects within the Program, but also across the other GEF and non-GEF projects delivering against allied environmental targets. In this connection the inclusion of knowledge management (Component 4) is welcomed and STAP advises that beyond fulfilling IW:LEARN obligations, that the project should connect more formally to the proposed regional network as discussed above. Additionally, the baseline

PacIWRM project's successful delivery of distance learning and twinning for IWRM capacity development is an excellent basis to build on regionally and nationally.

Specific activities.

Component 2.

5. The PIF does not advance criteria for selection of areas for forest re-planting to reduce perverse incentives and leakage. In addition, in the case of the reforestation of grasslands; is this recent deforestation and its replacement with grass that is being targeted? For example the statement "Reforestation of the open grasslands using pine in the Tuva catchment will improve the ecological integrity of the coral reefs downstream in the Natadola bay" gives rise to concern regarding the upstream ecosystem and choice of tree species.

Component 3.

6. Activities described in this component regarding integrated natural resource management plans are welcomed, particularly the inter-sectoral linkages across fisheries, agriculture, tourism and health. STAP advises that Component 3 actions should also take account of spatial planning, which takes a strategic viewpoint and which is capable of resolving conflicting uses by spatially planning activities and determining different zones for different uses, or the need to balance development and conservation by spatially planning and zoning according to objectives (conservation, economic development, maintaining existing uses, etc.). For example, in the form of Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) as applied to the Convention on Biological Diversity, it is marine and coastal planning that is forward looking, participatory, iterative, and which includes environmental and socio-economic considerations; it is also management that is comprehensive, science-supported and area-based, and promotes sustainable development.

7. The issue of leakage associated with creation of new protected areas is not considered, either in the description of Component 2, or in the discussion of risks. Some discussion on how leakage will be avoided should be included.

8. Note that the carbon sequestered is overestimated through the use of the R value for under 20 t per ha: this is the applicable figure for young forests, and should not be assumed to apply up to age 10 years. To address this point, STAP recommends use of the GEF Carbon Benefits Project tools as a possible approach for estimating carbon sequestration. (see http://www.unep.org/ClimateChange/carbon-benefits/cbp_pim/).

9. STAP advises the project proponent to consider the guidance offered through the joint GEF/CBD publication on Marine Spatial Planning in order to maximize the potential of the ICM/IWRM approaches planned to resolve unsustainable trajectories for biodiversity, land and water use within the coastal zones and related catchments of the project sites concerned. Strategic planning assistance could also be sought from the parent Program.

10. The PIF states that Fiji's Department of Forestry together with the private hardwood corporations has been developing its own certification standards since 2005 and that the project would restart this design work. In doing so, STAP advises careful attention to evolving certification standards and caveats (see STAP 2010). In addition to providing updated guidance the project should document opportunities if any regarding the use of certification to increase the sustainability of other existing natural resources exports.

11. The PIF states that a third outcome will be added to this Component if support from SCCF is obtained. STAP welcomes the proposed linkage to a Fijian community based adaptation project which may partly address STAP's concerns about a lack of clarity about ecosystem-based adaptation within the Program as a whole. STAP had noted for the parent Program and the coordination project (GEF ID 5404) that it is important to draw clear connections to climate risks, and to establish the logical relationships between planned interventions and vulnerability reduction / resilience enhancement. Even though there is mention of some ecosystem-based adaptation (EBA) activities such as mangrove planting/restoration, greater detail on ecosystem-based adaptation and the way in which EBA will promote resilience to climate change would be helpful. In particular, what is important is not just implementation of ecosystem based adaptation approaches (such as replanting mangroves to buffer coastal areas from sea level rise) but assessment of how these approaches compare to engineered approaches (e.g., shoreline hardening) i.e., when/where it makes sense to implement EBA. It will be important to show the costs/benefits of EBA compared to engineering approaches to help make the case for nature-based adaptation. Given that many of the activities in the project and Program target national and regional decision-makers, this is of importance.

Component 4.

12. STAP advises that the proposed information portal should be sited and managed within a host that can participate within a regionally sustainable network. The PIF does not make clear how this vital project element will be sustained or connected to capacity building. The project could consider making a demand upon the regional support project (GEF ID 5404) to integrate and link the project and its demonstration sites into the regional portal.

References:

- STAP, 2010. Environmental certification and the Global Environment Facility: A STAP advisory document.
- Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel GEF (2012). Marine Spatial Planning in the Context of the Convention on Biological Diversity: A study carried out in response to CBD COP 10 decision X/29, Montreal, Technical Series No. 68, 44 pages

<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 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>