

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: March 14, 2016
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I. PIF Information *(Copied from the PIF)*

FULL SIZE PROJECT	GEF TRUST FUND
GEF PROJECT ID:	9369
PROJECT DURATION:	4
COUNTRIES:	Ecuador
PROJECT TITLE:	Implementation of the Strategic Plan of Ecuador Mainland Marine and Coastal Protected Areas Network
GEF AGENCIES:	CI
OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:	Undersecretary of Marine and Coastal Management (MAE), CI-Ecuador
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):
Concur

III. Further guidance from STAP

STAP welcomes this well-articulated concept note. The project logic is clear, obviously based on previous experience, and is likely to result in the delivery of suggested outcomes because it is based on a good knowledge of Ecuador's working environment. Equally obviously, it will contribute to GEBs. This PIF can be used as an example for many projects because it is clearly written, the Project Summary is strong, the text is clear and answers all required questions (see below), and it even includes a map which many PIFs do not. This PIF is very well done, even a model, though it could be considerably strengthened by including an understanding of the economic governance of PAs. In this respect, there are several places where an already strong concept can be further strengthened:

1. Socio-economic Case: The strong economic case for PAs is not really made, but could considerably strengthen the project and provide the basis for synergies and agreements between PAs and various stakeholders. Specifically:

a. With the exception of likely tourism derived values (e.g. concessions, pay-for-use permits) and increased fisheries benefits, there is almost no mention of the likely positive socio-economics of the marine protected area systems.

b. It is highly likely that a sound economic assessment would demonstrate that these PAs have a large positive impact (note: Ecuadorian graduate students in my class have conducted such studies of two PAs in Ecuador that show that PAs have very large positive economic outcomes which are probably generalizable). An economic (valuation) approach might be considered in the project design to further strengthen the project. Refer to the World Bank Wealth Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystems work for example (<https://www.wavespartnership.org/>)

c. If the PAs have broad base positive economic (as opposed to strictly financial) outcomes, this will provide the basis for considerable synergies between PAs, tourism, fishers and other local stakeholders. Indeed, theoretically one would assume that the rationale for improved PA management (including stronger policy and enforcement) rule formation and exclusion of illegal uses) and collective action (e.g. with local authorities, planners and so on) proposed in the project is to build synergies and optimize net outputs. New governance systems will encourage positive resource allocation, optimization and tradeoffs, and will replace current open access regimes and reduce/exclude low value or unsustainable uses.

2. Sustainable Financing: There may be an over-dependence on a funding model based on government support and philanthropy, in addition to the proposed Environment Trust Fund (\$400K). Consideration should be given to charging user fees in some of the PAs, and developing them as decentralized cost centers, as has been done in some PAs in Africa through UNDP, Norway and other projects.

3. The combination of four field pilots and national institutional development is good, but much more should be made of this in describing how the project will be operationalized. In other words, the PPG should deliberately state that the pilots will be used to develop guidelines, best practice and communities-of-practice that actively (and iteratively) inform institutional development at national level.

Additional Notes:

Clear scientific baselines are provided including tourism numbers, populations or ranges of biodiversity and relevant management effectiveness targets. However some of the project background/introductory literature cited was a bit dated and more recent journal articles may be available insofar as MPA management, fisheries/MPA interactions, baseline fisheries data etc. Marine Spatial Planning exercises have also taken place via UNEP in partnership with CPPS and habitat mapping exercises resulting in preliminary mapping tools in the Southeast Pacific. Refer to the Spain-UNEP LifeWeb Marine Spatial Planning/ Marine Mammal Corridors Project outcomes:

- Overview: <http://www.unep.org/lifeweb/marine-mammals.asp>
- Project Concept Doc: http://cpps.dyndns.info/corredores/joomdocs/2-Spain-UNEP_LifeWeb_Concept-Marine_Mammal_Corridors.pdf
- Outcomes of MSP Training Workshop in SE Pacific & Wider Caribbean : "Inter-regional Workshop on Broad-Scale Marine Spatial Planning and Transboundary Marine Mammal Management"
http://www.pnuma.org/documento/taller%20mamiferos%20marinos/Lifeweb%20Report%20Workshop_PTY%20May%202012.pdf

Likely stakeholders are generally well described and defined. The project's intention to do a formal stakeholder analysis will be important to further identify critical partners, help define the project and build good will and participatory support in the region. One recommendation (as noted in para #107 in "Coordination" section) is to try to engage some of the other NGOs working in the region including MarViva, WWF, and also to collaborate with CPPS, and UNEP's Regional Office for Latin America & Caribbean on work related to marine spatial planning and habitat mapping tools for marine mammal corridors in the southeast Pacific. Academic institutions have also conducted significant research on marine biodiversity and MPA management tools.

The risks are well-understood and the project is specifically designed to address them through engagement with fishers, local government, tourism actors and so on. One additional risk to add, for consideration, is the financial sustainability of the project and related investments. In particular, volatility of world economic markets could affect the interest rates (4% projected) from the Trust Fund, which is meant to feed into funding streams for the government to carry out the new MPA governance work. Further, projected revenues derived from tourism and park "concessions" could be influenced by changes in the global market or even health-related concerns (e.g. Zika virus).

During the PPG phase, STAP urges additional baseline to uncover lessons from previous marine and coastal protected areas management projects in Ecuador and the region (eg. Spain-UNEP LifeWeb Marine Mammal/MSP Project). This could include utilizing learning tools such as IW:Learn, the proposed "specialized training courses" to share specific products of the project look very relevant and applicable to exchange knowledge with key practitioners within Ecuadorian government.

STAP advisory response	Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed
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<p>1. Concur</p>	<p>In cases where STAP is satisfied with the scientific and technical quality of the proposal, a simple “Concur” response will be provided; the STAP may flag specific issues that should be pursued rigorously as the proposal is developed into a full project document. At any time during the development of the project, the proponent is invited to approach STAP to consult on the design prior to submission for CEO endorsement.</p>
<p>2. Minor issues to be considered during project design</p>	<p>STAP has identified specific scientific /technical suggestions or opportunities that should be discussed with the project proponent as early as possible during development of the project brief. The proponent may wish to:</p> <p>(i) Open a dialogue with STAP regarding the technical and/or scientific issues raised. (ii) Set a review point at an early stage during project development, and possibly agreeing to terms of reference for an independent expert to be appointed to conduct this review.</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>
<p>3. Major issues to be considered during project design</p>	<p>STAP proposes significant improvements or has concerns on the grounds of specified major scientific/technical methodological issues, barriers, or omissions in the project concept. If STAP provides this advisory response, a full explanation would also be provided. The proponent is strongly encouraged to:</p> <p>(i) Open a dialogue with STAP regarding the technical and/or scientific issues raised; (ii) Set a review point at an early stage during project development including an independent expert as required.</p> <p>The GEF Secretariat may, based on this screening outcome, delay the proposal and refer the proposal back to the proponents with STAP’s concerns.</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>