

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: April 30, 2013

Screener: Christine Wellington-Moore

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

FULL SIZE PROJECT GEF TRUST FUND

GEF PROJECT ID: 5404

PROJECT DURATION : 5

COUNTRIES : Regional (Cook Islands, Fiji, Micronesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Palau, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Samoa)

PROJECT TITLE: R2R - Testing the Integration of Water, Land, Forest & Coastal Management to Preserve Ecosystem Services, Store Carbon, Improve Climate Resilience and Sustain Livelihoods in Pacific Island Countries

GEF AGENCIES: UNDP

OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:

GEF FOCAL AREA: International Waters

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 noted in its screening of the parent Program that it commended the partners and countries that have collaborated to formulate the Program. STAP has screened this project concept from two main perspectives: (A.) as a regional project targeting support to the Ridge to Reef concept in the Pacific Island Countries (PICs), and (B.) as the coordination mechanism for the Program "Pacific Islands Ridge to Reef National Priorities - Integrated Water, Land, Forest & Coastal Management to Preserve Ecosystem Services, Store Carbon, Improve Climate Resilience and Sustain Livelihoods" (GEF ID 5395).

2. STAP also notes that the proposed project is the core coordinating and technical support mechanism of the Program; STAP advises that there are opportunities to significantly improve the design of the project. STAP therefore recommends Minor Revision and requests that the proponents address the issues discussed below.

(A.) Ridge to Reef support and capacity building

3. STAP advises that greater attention needs to be given in assessing existing capacity in the various countries to undertake the actions and to strengthen the links between planning and the implementation of a plan of action that produces the desired outcomes, given that both capacity and commitment range very considerably. The work to be undertaken would greatly benefit from a sustained process of monitoring and self-assessment that applies the approach termed "developmental evaluation" by Michael Quinn Patton (2011)

4. The Pacific Ridge to Reef Network (Component 4.1.3) is, however, welcomed by STAP as a major contribution towards the need for a regional network for science and technology called for by the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation which cites the concept of "SIDSTAP", the operationalization of the small island developing States roster of experts.

5. Regarding the support proposed under Components 2 and 4, STAP advises that the present project on behalf of the Program, has the opportunity, at least for the cluster of 14 countries represented with the Program, to more broadly strengthen the scientific and technical linkages between the PICs, building upon the SOPAC mechanism and to consider how 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.

6. The PacIWRM project (GEFID 2586) was reported as having tested application Payment for Ecosystem Services under its Component 3 (see PIF, section A.1.6), which is regarded in the present project as one of the baseline contributions to be applied to the coastal zone. STAP has not been able to find any references in the cited mid-term report on the PacIWRM project to review the use of PES and would therefore wish to stress that advice on use of PES has been evolving (the concept of ecosystem services can be extended to take in "environmental" services). Therefore the proponents should carefully consider the current advice from STAP and publications from the GEF Secretariat to address appropriate entry points and reduce the threats to PES effectiveness e.g. (i) non-compliance; (ii) poor administrative selection; (iii) spatial demand spillovers; and particularly important, (iv) adverse self-selection. STAP would be pleased to discuss the design of the further application and development of PES in the combined IWRM/ICM extension.

7. The project aims to support blue carbon initiatives across the region and suggests that tools to value blue carbon will be employed. The proponents should liaise with UNEP to obtain the latest information regarding methodologies for carbon accounting (refer to project GEF ID 4452) and for survey and valuation from the UNEP/World Bank carbon benefits project (GEF ID 3449).

Ridge to Reef Concept

8. STAP recognizes that the Ridge to Reef concept has become more popular and that in some ways it offers a more coherent framework for combining ICM and IWRM into one water flow linked whole. However, taken in isolation these management approaches, even considered under a Ridge to Reef label 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.

9. STAP advises the program proponents 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 14 countries concerned. At present one of the key deficits of the Program outlined in the parent PFD, although with more substance within the present PIF, is the absence of an overall strategy for assisting the countries with planning within the Ridge to Reef approach towards a realizable and sustainable future.

Establishing climate change adaptation benefits

10. Given that the ambition of the present project is to be supported by CCA funds (SCCF), it is important to draw clear connections to climate risks, and to establish the logical relationships between planned interventions and vulnerability reduction / resilience enhancement. This aspect of the project (and parent Program) needs strengthening, as follows.

Clarity and emphasis on ecosystem-based adaptation.

11. 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.

Connecting community-based adaptation to national and regional planning processes

12. An initial reading of this and related child PIF's does not reveal strong connections between the variety of resilience-oriented community level activities and national adaptation planning. Ideally, the vulnerability/adaptation priorities identified by communities should be communicated to and addressed at the national level and vice versa. These connections will strengthen the mainstreaming of adaptation.

Stronger linkages with current initiatives

13. There are a number of past and current initiatives in Micronesia and Melanesia related to climate change adaptation. It will be important for the project to leverage the knowledge base and networks built through these interventions. Two examples of significant initiatives closely related to the proposed Ridge to Reef program are (supported by the Governments of Australia and Germany respectively):

- a. "Building the resilience of communities and their ecosystems to the impacts of climate change in the Pacific" is a partnership supported by AusAID and led by The Nature Conservancy working at the community, province and national level in three countries: The Solomon Islands (Isabel and Choiseul provinces), Papua New Guinea (Manus province) and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (Majuro and Namdrik Atolls). The approach recognizes that healthy natural environments are more resilient to climate impacts and that the communities where we work are largely dependent on healthy ecosystems for their livelihoods. The partnership works with communities to consider ecosystem-based approaches to resilience such as sustainable fisheries management and resilient protected areas. Natural resources, as well as cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, gender, socio-economics and governance are being considered to understand climate risk and assist with resilience options.
- b. "Building the Resilience of Communities and their Ecosystems to the Impacts of Climate Change in Micronesia and Melanesia". The project will help people on target vulnerable islands to understand climate risks, strengthen their adaptive capacity, and work with decision makers to identify and prioritize adaptation strategies. The project will explore the economics and socio-cultural aspects of local and regional adaptation efforts, and investigate measures to quantify and reflect on the effectiveness of adaptation. Lessons learned will be disseminated through innovative partnerships and networks. This will in turn inform local and national adaptation strategies, and contribute to global guidelines. The project will focus on the environment and ecosystem services as the foundation for resilient island communities and livelihoods, providing multiple benefits through better management, at scale, of island and coastal natural resources.

(B.) Program coordination mechanism

14. STAP welcomes the proposed harmonized reporting and results tracking outlined in Component 4.1, and particularly the planned feedback mechanism (Component 4.1.3) to enable individual countries to benefit from the investment in the Ridge to Reef results frameworks to be embedded into national systems.

15. When screening the parent Program document (PFD, GEF ID 5395), STAP noted the need for lessons from similar predecessor program coordination arrangements to be to be fully internalized within the Program. Accordingly STAP requests that the following advice is carefully considered by the project proponents regarding Component 5.

16. One of the lessons learnt from a related regional project on fisheries (GEF ID 2131 Oceanic Fisheries Management: Implementation of the Strategic Action Programme of the Pacific Small Island Developing States) in the region, coordinated through the SPC, was that a regional delivery mechanism is not an appropriate channel for delivery of core institutional change at national level, particularly when requiring detailed scientific and technical advice, but is well-placed to manage the processes associated with the delivery of such services. Additionally, the terminal evaluation of the otherwise successful IWCAM project (GEF ID 1254) which is cited by the parent PFD, noted that there is a risk that a strong Project Coordination Unit may increase the risk of post-project failure to take over strong leadership within the host regional organization. The full Project brief should show how the PCU embedded within SOPAC will be transitioned over the life the Program in order to address this concern.

17. From a programmatic standpoint the PIF does not consider explicitly this set of issues and risks, and STAP notes that it is unclear whether all the expertise provided to countries from regional level sources by UNDP and its partners would be channelled via the SOPAC focal points, or at least coordinated by them. For example, in the Risks table of the parent PFD, the risk of limited commitment and capacity of PICs is to be mitigated by targeting capacity building support to PICs from UNDP's and other networks. Indeed this support needs to be delivered direct to countries but fully owned and internalized also by SPC/SOPAC and not just project coordination units at national and regional level. It would be helpful if the proponents could further develop the relevant section within the full project brief to reflect necessary mitigation measures to address the lessons learnt from the above cited projects.

Program rationale and support from this project

18. The parent Program document, in setting out reasons for a programmatic approach, over that of a project by project approach, appears not to be adding value regarding the setting of learning objectives for the suite of actions proposed, both to enable lessons for wider use within the GEF partnership and to share within a community of practice for the PICs. Indeed taking the parent Program as a case in point, there is almost nothing proposed within a monitoring and evaluation context that could be used to determine whether the Program, coordinated through this project, adds value beyond being a coordination mechanism. Please address this opportunity to add value to the project and its parent Program.

19. STAP had very similar concerns regarding the GEF Program Pacific Alliance for Sustainability (GEF ID 3420) when it asked what the parameters for success would be "Will they be mainly the amount of and efficiency of GEF and co-financing achieved? Or the on the ground success of projects? And how will attribution of success between PAS and component partners and implementing country/regional agencies be made?"

20. The program, through this project, offers the GEF an opportunity to test regional multi-focal area (MFA) approaches - so will merit stronger than normal inputs and leadership from the agencies involved. This needs to be built into the PIF and reflected in the budget.

References

- Payment for Ecosystem Services. 2010. The Global Environment Facility.
- M. Q. Patton. Developmental Evaluation: Applying Complexity Concepts to Enhance Innovation and Use. Guilford Press New York. 2011.
- 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, 16 pp.
- The Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel, 2010. Payment for Ecosystem Services and the Global Environment Facility. A STAP advisory document. 16 pp.
http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/publication/STAP_PES_2010.pdf

<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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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.
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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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.