

Response to comments in the STAP Scientific and Technical screening of the PIF

Comment 1: STAP acknowledges the proposal and its various components, as well as the candid comments on the limitations of its predecessor project, LVEMPI. Lake Victoria is a critical transboundary water system for a large population of its basin countries and long term support is required to have any hope of making a difference there. STAP also welcomes the integrated monitoring and evaluation system that will measure regularly the new project's implementation and performance based on a series of indicators.

It is less clear, however, how the project proposes to re-align an activity which by its own account appears not to be on the correct path to achieving its intended impact.

RESPONSE:

Point noted but not sure what response is expected..

Comment 2: The four components in Section A are specified to different degrees and levels of detail. Detailed information is provided for some components in the project framework, but this is not consistent throughout the section. Perhaps detailed information could be provided for each activity listed under each component (page 8).

STAP questions the rationale of Component #4, stakeholder participation, placed after the substantial efforts in the previous components to build the infrastructure and governance of LVB and to enhance economic growth. Success in meeting the goal of the project, to improve the collaborative management of the transboundary natural resources of the Lake Victoria Basin, will be contingent upon stakeholders from many places, especially land users and lake users. To factor in their participation through "Stakeholder education and participationon Lake Basin resource management plans" is redolent of previous efforts that promoted technical solutions on unwilling participants.

RESPONSE: It may be noted that during preparation, the project has been simplified to reduce the complexity of the project design, and to focus the project support on core ecosystem management interventions. The component structure in particular has been reorganized and activities have been redistributed. Please see Part IV of the CEO Memo for details on the changes since PIF approval.

However, it is also clarified that since the PIF approval, the components have been further developed and defined. These now include detailed description of activities and outputs within the components and subcomponents. See Annex 4 and the Incremental costs annex of the Document for details.

Comment 3: Further, the order of the 4 components and the relative size of the first 2 components suggests the opposite order for getting action and progress. While not wanting to downplay the importance of information and formal governance instruments, STAP recommends greater priority/prominence on 3-4 to have a greater chance of increasing the impact. Given the poverty in the basin, no progress on conservation will be made unless economic gains are included in the equation. Conservation based economic instruments must be broadened well beyond 'use based fees' as these are unlikely to finance a great deal, from past experience in other environment areas. Agricultural groups such as ICRAF and national agricultural partners should be included in the land management side where possible, in order to find and help integrate economically viable land management technologies such as horticulture and agroforestry.

RESPONSE:

It may be noted that the component link with the Terrafrica Partnership and the country programmatic frameworks through which projects have access to best practices in land management as described in the incremental cost annex. Component 2, addresses point sources of pollution, which are important for quick wins, with regards to water quality improvements. Component 3 focuses on the non-point sources of pollution, including reduction of leachates from agricultural zones, as well as sediment loads. The investments under these two components, account for over 80% of the resources, and bring in significant conservation and livelihoods improvement impacts. Components 1 and 4 are for policy and management frameworks to improve collaboration in SLM/NRM, plus coordination of implementation of activities, thus are modest.

Comment 4: STAP also has concerns on the contribution of the GEF increment to delivering global environmental benefits. As it stands in the PIF (Part II, Section F), the GEF contribution will go to a number of activities such as the harmonization of water resource management planning, which have no direct process relation to GEBs - or, these relationships have not been spelled out. If, as indicated, GEF's incremental funds will go to ensure an overall watershed management approach, how are the necessary impacts of GEF's investments to be measured and monitored to verify achievement of GEBs?

RESPONSE:

With respect to the activities and their links to the GEBs the document includes further information since the PIF and now describes how the project with its GEF incremental financing contributes towards delivering global environmental benefits (see Annex on Incremental costs Analysis and the component Descriptions in Annex 4). The results framework also defines specific outcomes and outputs for the project which are directly linked to the GEBs. For example, in implementing activities related to strengthening regional frameworks, integrated monitoring of Basin Watershed for a coordinated program of national investments (through the implementation of the Basin Sustainable Land Management Strategy), as well as support to country frameworks, which will have access to knowledge and best practices, including with the support of the TerrAfrica partnership..

Comment 5: STAP also notes that climate change risks were not addressed in the PIF. This could perhaps be addressed before CEO endorsement. STAP does note the project proponent covers the importance of Lake Victoria for climate modulation in the region, as well as the intended global environment benefits that are specific to adaptive capacity, and watershed management. Further details on how the project will attempt to address adaptive capacity at the regional level would be useful to include, as well as the potential challenges the project will likely face in doing so.

RESPONSE:

A comprehensive program of watershed management in the basin will help reduce the impact of flooding, while water management mechanisms and investments will help smoothen the cyclical impacts of droughts and floods, and improve overall water resources management and availability. The Watershed Management Plan will include guidance on improving the adaptation of communities through land management investments (activities for which are to be implemented under component 3). Most of the NRM Conservation activities, including soil and water management, improved small irrigation schemes, and construction of small dams/reservoirs, are aimed at adaptation to climate change. At the regional level (LVBC), efforts will be made to identify and address the cross-boundary issues arising from the impact of climate change on the availability of natural resources during the course of the project.