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Agenda Item 10

PROPOSAL OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF UNEP ON ENHANCING THE IMPACT OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL ADVISORY PANEL

Recommended Council Decision

The Council reviewed the *Proposal of the Executive Director of UNEP on Enhancing the Impact of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel* (document GEF/C.31/4) and approves the revised Terms of Reference for the STAP presented in the annex to the document. In particular, the Council agrees that:

- (a) STAP should develop and maintain a broader global network of scientific and technical expertise;
- (b) STAP should provide more effective strategic advice at both the programmatic and project level;
- (c) UNEP should take steps to reconstitute STAP as described in the revised Terms of Reference and should propose new membership to the Council for approval by mail; and
- (d) the STAP Secretariat should be strengthened, within the approved budget, to deliver more effective operational advice and support to the Panel.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), in consultation with the Members of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) to the Global Environment Facility (GEF), proposes changes to the structure and functioning of the STAP. These changes respond to the findings of recent evaluations, decisions by the GEF Council and discussions held within the STAP.
2. The proposed revised Terms of Reference for the STAP (Annex 1) reflect these changes, which are aimed at increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the operations of the STAP and the delivery of scientific and technical advice to the GEF.
3. Key issues considered include the need to make the STAP's advice more strategic, timely and effective, together with necessary changes to enable Panel members and the STAP Secretariat to support these re-defined expectations.
4. In considering a response to the new challenges in GEF-4 and looking ahead to GEF-5, UNEP took into account STAP's track record of advice – including the effective advice provided on sustainable transport, liquid biofuels, and land degradation.
5. UNEP proposes that the STAP, on behalf of the GEF, develops and maintains a broader network of global scientific and technical expertise, using the most appropriate mechanisms, including but not limited to memoranda of understanding with scientific institutions in the public and private sectors.
6. Building upon previously agreed and implemented changes, and to improve the level of strategic advice provided to the GEF Council, UNEP proposes that the number of Members appointed to the Panel be reduced from 15 to 6 members, including the Chair, and that each Member be contracted for a longer period. UNEP would use the consequent cost savings to enable the Panel to engage with networks of scientific institutions as indicated above. Due to the additional operational duties implied by the proposed changes it is proposed that the STAP Secretariat be strengthened by adding one professional post.
7. With regard to the new GEF Project Cycle, UNEP recommends that the STAP focuses on: (i) the provision of advice on the scientific rationale for new Strategic Programs; (ii) the review of the scientific rationale of existing Strategic Programs; (iii) the provision of tools for screening project concepts for scientific and technical soundness and oversight of the screening process, and (iv) the provision of advice on project development on a selective basis.
8. UNEP will work with the STAP to set targets and deliverables and identify indicators that will enable the Panel to measure improvements in its performance.

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Instrument for the Restructured Global Environment Facility specifies that UNEP shall establish, in consultation with UNDP and the World Bank and on the basis of guidelines and criteria established by the Council, the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) as an advisory body to the Global Environment Facility (GEF). UNEP shall provide the STAP's Secretariat and shall operate as the liaison between the GEF and the STAP.

2. In response to recent reviews and recommendations, the GEF Council meeting in June 2006 requested the Executive Director of UNEP and the Chair of the STAP to review the current terms of reference of the STAP and to develop a proposal for the Council to update the STAP's terms of reference to enhance its effectiveness and relevance to the GEF.

3. Annex 1 of this document contains UNEP's proposed revised Terms of Reference (TOR)¹ for the GEF Council's consideration detailing changes to the STAP and its provision of scientific and technical expertise. The proposed changes are designed to improve the STAP's advisory impact, and are presented in the main body of this Proposal. The proposed changes respond to the findings of recent GEF evaluations and the evolving needs of the GEF, which requires new kinds and sources of expertise, including from the private sector.

ISSUES DRIVING THE REFORM OF THE STAP

4. Several changes were made recently to the structure and functioning of the STAP resulting from Council decisions in 2005 and 2006². These include a more independent Roster of Experts³ review function where the STAP, rather than the GEF Agencies, now selects candidates from the Roster, and a more flexible system of STAP membership with overlapping terms of office and cross-cutting roles intended to improve the STAP's responsiveness.

5. The Third Overall Performance Study of the GEF (OPS3) and the Joint Evaluation of the GEF activity cycle identified a number of further improvements that could be made to the fundamental design and functioning of the STAP. In response, the STAP, in its first meeting of the GEF-4 period (16-19 October 2006), convened a brainstorming session on its future, attended by the CEO, the GEF Secretariat, the GEF Evaluation Office and Implementing Agency staff. The CEO of the GEF recommended that the STAP should:

- (a) make its input into the project cycle more effective by applying its expertise selectively and earlier in the project cycle, and by redefining the role of the Roster;
- (b) assist the GEF in delivering improved strategies for the GEF's focal areas for approval by the GEF Council;
- (c) advise on a limited number of strategic, innovative, or controversial projects, and to work with the GEF throughout the lifetime of these projects;

¹ The original ToR of STAP are contained in GEF/C.6/Inf.7

² See: Improving the Effectiveness of STAP: Decisions By STAP, The GEF Secretariat, and the Implementing Agencies (GEF/C.27/Inf.4), and the Revised Procedures for the STAP Roster Review (GEF/C.28/Inf.5)

³ The current Roster of Experts is a database containing a list of the STAP's recommended individual experts for use in reviews of individual projects under each focal area.

- (d) make better use of the “targeted research” modality;
- (e) translate new knowledge, e.g. from scientific assessments such as the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment or from Convention subsidiary bodies, into actionable policy advice;
- (f) provide the GEF with scientific and technical guidance on how to make operational the recommendations made to the GEF by the Conference of Parties of multilateral environmental agreements where the GEF serves as a financial mechanism; and
- (g) establish effective working relations with the GEF Evaluation Office to enable science-based evaluation.

THE STAP’S FOCUS WITHIN THE GEF

6. The GEF is just one mechanism available to address global environmental degradation while promoting sustainable development and its funds are very limited compared to global funding needs. In today’s competitive donor environment, the GEF needs to demonstrate more than ever its strategic value and comparative advantage in catalyzing environmental sustainability through country-driven actions measured against national, regional and global needs. The STAP’s principal focus today must be driven by these needs. STAP must therefore reduce its direct involvement in project quality control in favor of greater emphasis on the provision of persuasive strategic advice, as highlighted by the CEO’s recommendations listed above.

7. The principal reason for refocusing the STAP’s role is that the GEF’s actions are now more broadly driven than ever by competing priorities derived from country-driven development needs, global, regional and nationally focused and influential assessments, multilateral environment agreement expert panels and a wide range of pressure groups. The main strategic focus for the STAP is to advise the GEF Council on the choice of strategic and programmatic priorities based on the STAP’s independent review of the very wide range of potentially conflicting scientific evidence available. A good example of scientific controversy is in the field of liquid biofuels for transport where the STAP’s impartial advice is helping the GEF to make investment choices that are environmentally sustainable.

8. The STAP’s former project-focused role is much less relevant today because the GEF Agencies have greatly increased their in-house expertise. The STAP’s added value at project level should be to provide programmatic guidance for project screening and on adding value to project design.

PROPOSED RESPONSE TO NEW CHALLENGES

9. The STAP has shown that it can deliver very effective advice. For example, the Operational Programs on promoting environmentally sustainable transport (OP 11), and sustainable land management (OP 15) were based on STAP’s advice. This record of how the STAP has been most effective in the past is the basis for the present proposals, which are designed for the STAP to achieve future high levels of performance.

10. The proposed reform of the STAP is intended to build upon previously agreed changes and to help it to meet the evolving needs of the GEF. The original 1995 ToR for the STAP included both strategic and operational functions. The proposed reforms discussed in this section are designed to maintain that balance but support strategic functions more effectively.

11. The STAP comprises a Panel of Members and a Secretariat. Reforms are proposed to the structure and function of both to adapt the body to its GEF-4 related responsibilities.

12. UNEP's role in assisting the STAP to make the required changes is also critical to effective reform. UNEP supports the STAP and enables independent and objective scientific and technical advice to be provided to the GEF, consistent with UNEP's mandate and independently of its operational role as a GEF Implementing Agency.

13. The STAP must be an effective and impartial advisor to the GEF Council and to the GEF CEO and Chairperson of the Facility. To enable this function to be delivered, three main criteria, which were used to test the proposed reforms, must be met:

- (a) The STAP scientific and technical advice must be the most relevant and scientifically rigorous advice available on a global basis;
- (b) The support mechanism to deliver the advice (the STAP Secretariat) must enable timely and consistent service from scientific and technical experts, and be impartial regarding the GEF partners;
- (c) The STAP's activities must be well integrated with the activities of the GEF Secretariat and Implementing Agencies.

14. The STAP's scientific and technical advice needs to be provided in two main modes:

- (a) **Strategic:** looking ahead through GEF-4 and 5 to identify and advise the GEF on emerging issues and challenges in which the GEF has a comparative advantage, and how they should be reflected in the GEF's strategic programs. This is the primary task of the STAP Panel Members.
- (b) **Operational:** to respond to specific questions from GEF bodies and partners. In this mode, the STAP needs to be embedded in GEF's day-to-day operations. This is more the role of the STAP Secretariat, which, in liaison with the STAP Chairperson, may call upon other STAP Members as required.

15. The STAP's advice to the GEF is primarily delivered by the appointed Panel Members, who are expected to leverage access to further high level expertise when required. The balance between the number of Panel Members and external experts is influenced by considerations of cost and by the extent to which individuals can be expected to commit to real engagement with GEF issues yet maintain their independent professional careers. The incentives to work with GEF include the prospect of gaining significant recognition through a high profile advisory role with potential to influence the GEF, as well as compensation for the time expended.

16. Experimentation over the years with the size of the Panel has led to the present 15 member Panel, (originally 10) supported by a small Secretariat. However, the funds available dictate that members are limited to one month paid remuneration per year, which enables attendance at two STAP meetings per year (considered appropriate), leaving relatively little time available to commit to in-depth support to the CEO and Council regarding strategic advice.

17. Another key issue is that while the 15 member Panel appears to be large enough to cover all focal area expertise required, it is often not sufficiently qualified for many specialist areas for which advice is required. However, because Panel Members are retained and remunerated, there is a tendency to rely on them to provide specialist advice in circumstances that ideally call for more qualified external experts to be engaged instead for short periods.

18. UNEP therefore proposes a “core” set of six panelists, one of whom would serve as the Chairperson, with significantly more remunerated time. This would increase their availability and engagement with the GEF, and would ensure that they understand better the complexities of the GEF. The cost savings made can be used flexibly for hiring specialists on demand from the STAP’s networks. The Panel Members will be explicitly required to facilitate access to additional expertise.

19. Cross-focal area issues, such as sustainable forest management and adaptation to climate change, require the Panel to engage a range of disciplines and to remain aware of the need to work as a team, to remain flexible and also open to the need to source additional expertise when required.

20. With a greater need to support the remaining Panel members to select and to contract expertise flexibly and more widely, and a commensurate need to support routine technical processes within the GEF, an increase in the focal area professionalism and capacity of the STAP Secretariat to engage in delivering scientific support functions is required. UNEP proposes to enlarge the STAP Secretariat by one professional post, giving a total of four professional staff positions.

21. This new approach is intended to use the networking capabilities of the STAP and UNEP to enhance the availability of objective and professional scientific expertise to deal with priority issues referred to the STAP by the Council, the GEF Secretariat, and the GEF Agencies. It will also result in a more consistent and effective engagement of the STAP with the GEF Secretariat regarding requests for strategic and operational advice, and enable a more diverse and in-depth access to experts, provided through the explicit linkages that will be developed with a wide variety of scientific and research networks.

22. The recommended changes are further described in Table 1.

Table 1. Recommended changes to STAP structure and function

Key reforms	Justification	Deliverables
The Panel		
Increase STAP Member commitment by reducing the current 15 member ⁴ Panel down to 5 members plus the STAP Chair, each having a term of two years, renewable once, with each Member selected to ensure adequate coverage of all focal areas, and with strong interest in interlinkages. Each member of the core STAP Panel would be contracted for up to three months per year, the Chair for up to six months.	With fewer Members but more commitment and dedication, it is expected that Members would more effectively develop policy advice and connect GEF with the broader global science community, acting as science policy managers.	Direct and timely advice to the CEO and GEF team leaders regarding emerging issues and priorities Annual review of GEF agency science and intervention strategy plans at one STAP meeting per year Global and regional intervention strategies responding to published assessments Advice on scientific/technical matters in M&E Support to scientific and technical indicators Advice on the work program of the GEF Evaluation Office
Institutions, Networks and individual experts		
Institutionalize relations with appropriate organizations ⁵ including private sector research, to make expertise available to the GEF through development and implementation of agreements (e.g. MoUs, valid for 2 years) with scientific, academic, NGO and private sector research bodies, and the Convention-related rosters. Delivering two key functions: appropriate expertise to undertake strategic review and guidance, organized in ‘Expert Groups’ each with an expert convener selected by and reporting to a STAP Member; expertise that is more extensive and flexible to replace the current Roster of Experts by using direct access to qualifying experts in databases managed by the organizations.	Re-allocation of resources in response to GEF needs towards respected global science unions and bodies, overseen by the remaining STAP Members, would establish a more cost-effective, flexible and semi-permanent tool for advising GEF, and would be expected to amplify and to extend the expertise represented by STAP Members. Through MoUs with international science institutions, access to existing experts of good standing, would replace the separate centralized roster with one that uses a meta-data approach to integrate existing lists, and reduces overhead and transaction costs incurred in roster expert selection. GEF agency access to experts for selective reviews would be broadened, within the existing budget.	Through Expert Groups: Analysis of global assessments to advise the GEF Council on GEF’s comparative advantage and its options for action Strategic Program identification and development, through Focal Area expert groups to set immediate objectives and to define indicators and targets Formulation of Targeted Research proposals (in collaboration with GEF agencies, and other appropriate GEF focal points) to extend GEF capacity and safely to encourage innovation Via the meta-database of expertise: Provision of appropriate expertise for selective portfolio or project reviews commissioned by STAP or electively by GEF agencies
UNEP creating direct access for STAP to a new	UNEP’s key role on behalf of the UN	Direct access by STAP to authoritative sources of advice

⁴ Currently 13 STAP Members are contracted for one month per year (about 8%), additionally the Vice-Chair and the Chair are retained for three (25%) and six months (50%) respectively.

⁵ Examples: Scientific & Research networks: Core and joint projects of WCRP, IGBP, IHDP and Diversitas (as represented by their respective scientific steering committees); lead authors of major scientific assessments (IPCC, MEA, the new agriculture and energy assessments). Academic / research institutions: Major national climate change centers: PIK, Tyndall, NCAR, NIES; Major international institutions working in the global change area: IIASA. Private sector research community: Unilever, Monsanto, Danone, Shell, BP. NGO’s / other action-oriented organizations: WRI, Winrock, IISD. Other networks: Rosters of experts of various Conventions; START and the associated capacity-building networks (ENRICH, IAI, APN). These networks would be managed through STAP selected network managers in those organizations.

<p>corporate high level science and policy team working across all Divisions enabling STAP to have better access to identification of emerging issues, and policy needs, improved MEA communication, and access to relevant global science and technical networks and their assessments to inform GEF focal area strategies and policy.</p>	<p>community to assess knowledge of the state of the global environment, implications for development and to advise GEF would be enhanced.</p>	<p>across UNEP. Synthesis reports to the GEF Council on UNEP's assessments and their findings prioritized for proposed GEF action</p>
The Secretariat		
<p>Strengthen and improve the professional capacity of the STAP Secretariat⁶ based in Washington, through selection of focal area specialists and enlarge the Secretariat by one post (to a total of four "P" level staff) to engage consistently in all focal area task forces, and to negotiate, manage and keep under active review MoUs with expert networks</p>	<p>The negotiation and management required to lever much greater flexibility and access by GEF to global science expertise using an MoU approach to institutions justifies one extra specialist post. STAP Panel Members would each be supported by working alongside counterpart Secretariat staff members, with the Secretariat normally attending the task force meetings.</p>	<p>Responsive expert networks selected according to focal area needs Maintained meta-database of individual experts available for selective reviews PIF submissions monitored and the application of STAP's guidance to project approvals kept under review Selective reviews of projects delivered STAP meetings and expert meetings convened and supported</p>
<p>New flexible but rigorous logframe-based approach to problem definition⁷ to formulate need for advice initiated by STAP Secretariat staff linked to focal area, to trigger specific consultancy, expert groups or exceptionally a well-focused workshop.</p>	<p>Best practice in project and program management is expected to focus STAP actions better, improve timeliness and improve cost effectiveness within existing resources.</p>	<p>Reports and guidance on emerging issues and challenges requiring GEF Council attention</p>

⁶ Currently the Washington-based staff comprises of the STAP Secretary, one Programme Officer (vacant) and one Assistant Programme Officer.

⁷ STAP Workshops have traditionally been convened to explore in an open and collaborative (and academic) process potential new areas for GEF development, provide feedback to specific challenges in project implementation or to generate best practice guidance. The OPS3 and other feedback have identified frequent weaknesses in the timeliness and relevance of STAP workshops, and the new proposals provide for greater focus and objectivity.

REFINED PROCESSES FOR EXECUTION OF THE STAP'S PROGRAM OF WORK AND UNEP SUPPORT TO THE STAP

23. The STAP's strategic program of work will set goals and targets for GEF-4 and GEF-5 and will be informed by UNEP's scientific and technical expertise. This would allow for a time-bound and more coherent and strategic framework for STAP's work. The STAP's program of work will include the periodic review of the GEF Focal Areas and Strategic Programs and proposals for changing these as relevant.

24. The STAP will, primarily through participation in Inter-Agency Task Forces and through review and input to Focal Area strategic programming, work actively with UNEP across all divisions to facilitate the mainstreaming of the best science ideas and innovations accessed by the UNEP specialist bodies and programs.

25. In liaison with the relevant UNEP Divisions, the STAP Secretariat will keep abreast of and review the outcomes of the Convention subsidiary bodies to strengthen STAP's advice to the GEF on new strategies and targeted research.

26. UNEP is committed to ensuring that the proposed reforms result in measurable improvements in STAP's performance and accordingly proposes to develop targets and performance indicators for STAP, which will be annually evaluated and reported to the GEF Council.

THE STAP AND THE GEF PROJECT CYCLE

27. The role of the STAP in the GEF Project Cycle is both strategic and operational. Strategically, the STAP should provide advice on focal area strategic programming. Operationally, the STAP should provide: (i) tools for screening project concepts for scientific and technical soundness; (ii) oversight of the screening process; (iii) advice on targeted research proposals; and (iv) selective reviews of projects and programmatic approaches and their project portfolios, in close consultation with GEF Agencies and the GEF Secretariat.

28. The Targeted Research (TR) modality is an important tool of the GEF, with criteria for approval and funding provided by STAP and approved by the GEF Council in 1997⁸. All GEF Agencies, as well as the STAP, can identify TR themes to improve the design or implementation of programs or projects. TR proposals are considered by the GEF Secretariat through the formation of a STAP-chaired Research Committee. All proposals for TR would be screened by the STAP at the concept stage and, later, prior to Work Program inclusion, the STAP would convene the Research Committee to advise the GEF CEO. After project completion, the STAP would review outputs that have a scientific and technical bearing on GEF policy and programs.

29. The main entry points proposed for the STAP in the new GEF Project Cycle are:

- (a) To propose Strategic Programs for consideration by the GEF Council. In this modality, the STAP would participate in a corporate review process to

⁸ The targeted research (TR) modality was approved at the GEF Council in May 1997. [Document GEF/C.9/5, Principles for GEF Financing of Targeted Research]. TR was defined as "goal-oriented research that supports the GEF operational strategy by providing information, knowledge and tools that improve the quality and the effectiveness of the development and implementation of GEF projects and programs".

- (i) revise focal area strategic programming, and optionally,
 - (ii) propose to a GEF Agency, in consultation with the GEF Secretariat, the development of a specific Programmatic Approach
- (b) To provide tools to the GEF Secretariat to apply in screening concepts for projects and Programmatic Approaches submitted through the Project Identification Form (PIF).
 - (c) To convene a Research Committee to advise the GEF CEO on each Targeted Research proposal received.
 - (d) To respond to requests from the GEF Secretariat and the GEF Agencies, to enhance the quality of projects at any stage during project development.
 - (e) To maintain open and transparent access for the GEF Secretariat and GEF Agencies to independent and high quality scientific and technical expertise assured by the STAP Panel members.
 - (f) To assure independence of project reviews, through STAP selection of reviewers.
 - (g) To monitor PIF submissions and keep under review the application of the STAP's guidance to project approvals.

These proposals are included in the Operational Advice section of the ToR in Annex 1.

ROSTER OF EXPERTS

30. The original purpose of the STAP Roster of Experts was to provide expertise to service all parts of the GEF Project Cycle. Currently the Roster of Experts is drawn upon by GEF Agencies to source expertise to review all Full Size Projects (FSPs) prior to Work Program inclusion.

31. The STAP's existing ToR identifies the role of the Roster as a source of expertise for the selective review of projects. The GEF Council accepted in June 2006 (GEF/C.28/Inf.5) that the STAP should pre-select experts from the Roster for each project that the GEF Agencies wished to review scientifically.

32. UNEP proposes to transform the present STAP Roster to make available two forms of expertise:

- (a) scientific and strategic expertise for use early in the project cycle, drawn from networks across the world (as described in Table 1), and
- (b) development practitioners drawn from the GEF recipient countries, consisting of experts with experience in project implementation, that may be used for selective late stage review upon request.

TIMELINE FOR THE TRANSITION

33. The present STAP and its Roster were reconstituted during 2006, with the present 15 Panel Members taking up duties in July 2006, and the new Roster launched in April 2007. The proposed reforms would take effect in July 2007, and will be managed in close cooperation with the CEO and Chairperson of the GEF.

ANNEX 1 REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR STAP

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL ADVISORY PANEL (STAP)

MANDATE

1. The STAP is established as an advisory body to the GEF. STAP shall provide objective, strategic scientific and technical advice on GEF policies, operational strategies, programs and on projects and programmatic approaches; and, maintain a database of institutions, networks and individual scientists to provide the necessary expertise and advice for the GEF. STAP's activities shall be coordinated with the activities of the GEF Secretariat and the Implementing and Executing Agencies (GEF Agencies⁹) and be consistent with GEF processes and procedures approved by the Council.
2. The STAP shall interact in a complementary manner with other relevant scientific and technical bodies, particularly with the subsidiary bodies of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention to Combat Desertification and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. For focal areas in which the GEF is not operating as a convention's financial mechanism, the STAP shall advise on the development of scientific and technical criteria and provide scientific and technical advice on priorities for GEF funding. The STAP shall provide expert scientific advice to inter-agency task forces and bodies handling other GEF processes, when such advice is requested.
3. Pursuant to this mandate, STAP shall report to each regular meeting of the GEF Council and, if requested, to the GEF Assembly on the status of its activities.
4. UNEP shall provide STAP's Secretariat and operate as its liaison with the GEF.

PERFORMANCE

5. UNEP shall monitor the STAP's performance, which shall be measured against agreed deliverables, targets and indicators to be specified in the STAP's program work.

COMPOSITION

6. The Executive Director of UNEP, in consultation with UNDP, the World Bank, the Executing Agencies and the GEF Secretariat, upon approval of the GEF Council shall appoint five members of STAP and shall also appoint a Chairperson. The members shall ordinarily be appointed for a term of two years renewable for a further two years. Members may be removed by the Executive Director of UNEP only for cause.
7. The composition of STAP shall reflect:

⁹ The Implementing Agencies consist of UNEP, UNDP and the World Bank. Executing Agencies include the FAO, UNIDO, IDB, ADB, AfDB, EBRD, IFAD.

- (a) Recognized leadership in specific relevant fields in the GEF focal areas of Biological Diversity, Climate Change, International Waters, Ozone Depletion, Persistent Organic Pollutants, and Land Degradation and with an ability to bridge scientific, technological, economic, social and policy issues;
- (b) Geographical and gender balance;
- (c) Experience in the management of science and with knowledge of issues in the implementation of complex international initiatives;
- (d) An understanding of the organizational and operational setting of the Implementing and Executing Agencies, particularly the context of program and project development and implementation; and
- (e) Knowledge about the scientific processes required for the implementation of relevant conventions in developing countries and familiarity with relevant international assessments.

8. To avoid any potential conflicts of interest, members who hold positions in Government, non-governmental organizations, or who are working in, or have any contractual arrangement, as consultants or otherwise, with an Implementing or Executing Agency or the GEF Secretariat, shall disclose this information to the Executive Director of UNEP. Potential conflicts of interest with agencies or individuals involved in individual projects should be disclosed to the Chairperson of STAP. At the discretion of the Chairperson, members may be excluded from attending Panel discussions in which he/she has a personal interest or has had significant involvement in any capacity.

9. STAP may convene ad-hoc working groups to address particular issues or questions which arise and to obtain specialized technical opinions as needed. The ad-hoc working groups may also be designed as resource groups for the GEF Agencies on specific technical aspects of project design and provide advice on technological options, cost-effectiveness and related social issues.

10. The Chairperson of STAP shall act as the spokesperson in various meetings, and may assign members to represent STAP at meetings. The Chairperson shall be provided adequate financial support in carrying out these responsibilities.

STRATEGIC ADVICE

11. STAP shall advise the GEF Council regarding contemporary issues of the global environment and how to address them; provide a forum for integrating expertise on science and technology, including their social, economic and institutional aspects; function as an important conduit between the GEF and the natural and social science communities and relevant technologists, and, synthesize, promote and galvanize relevant and up to date contributions from them. In carrying out this role, STAP's advice will complement ongoing activities within the GEF-related conventions.

12. STAP's role in providing strategic advice to the GEF shall be as follows:
- (a) Advise on the state of scientific, technical and technological knowledge related to each focal area, highlighting policy and operational implications for the GEF;
 - (b) Advise on the scientific and technical aspects of specific strategic matters such as cross-cutting issues; scientific coherence of GEF operational strategies and programs, and their consistency with GEF policies and objectives; and integration of national and global benefits in GEF interventions;
 - (c) Advise on research by identifying applied/targeted research which would improve the design and implementation of GEF programs and projects, and by reviewing the research work of the GEF Agencies and the GEF Secretariat.
13. As part of its strategic role, STAP shall provide a number of specific products on a regular basis, including:
- (a) Thematic Briefing Documents that summarize the available scientific knowledge and technological know-how within selected specific themes, and translates this knowledge into actionable advice for the GEF. The Briefing Documents also identify controversies and knowledge gaps, and suggest needs for further research, technology development and capacity development;
 - (b) Triennial reports to the GEF Assembly on the broad scientific and technical issues that emerged during the preceding phase of the GEF and on emerging issues and gaps as an outlook for the subsequent replenishment period of the GEF;
 - (c) Reviews of the scientific and technical aspects of GEF operational and focal area strategies and programs;
 - (d) Papers of a scientific and technical nature relevant to GEF strategies and programs; and
 - (e) A STAP Annual Work Program information paper for the GEF Council.

OPERATIONAL ADVICE

14. STAP will contribute to the identification of GEF Strategic Programs, their design, structure and periodic review, in consultation with the GEF Secretariat and the GEF agencies. STAP will commission reports on scientific needs and demands in the program being considered, including recommended indicators and targets. These reports will include sections on the scientific literature supporting the need for a Strategic Program, scientific assessments of geographic locations identified for assistance, advice on appropriate scientific approaches and methodologies, advice on analytical techniques including scientific aspects of M&E, and scientific dissemination and communication strategies.

15. STAP will contribute to ensuring the scientific soundness and technical quality of GEF projects through the provision of tools to the GEF Secretariat to apply in screening project concepts, enabling independent reviews and provision of objective scientific and technical advice, including responding to requests, from the GEF Secretariat and the GEF Agencies, to enhance the quality of projects at any stage during project development. STAP's activities shall be integrated into the processes and timing set out in the GEF Project Cycle, conducted in close cooperation with the GEF Agencies and the GEF Secretariat, and based on the standard documentation provided by the GEF Agencies during various phases of the GEF Project Cycle. Decisions regarding project clearance, approval or endorsement at various steps in the project shall be consistent with procedures approved by the Council.

16. STAP, after identifying and documenting a need, may propose to a GEF Agency in consultation with the GEF Secretariat, the development of a specific Programmatic Approach, to be entered into the Project Cycle as a concept for evaluation under the Programmatic Approach.

17. STAP shall convene a Research Committee to advise the GEF CEO on each Targeted Research proposal received.

18. STAP shall maintain a database of institutions and networks, to enable access to internationally-recognized specialists which will be quality assured by STAP Panel members in the scientific and technical areas relevant to the GEF operations, and STAP will assure independence of project reviews, through STAP selection of reviewers.

19. STAP shall standardize the types of information needed in the technical review process and establish generic guidelines for the terms of reference for external technical reviewers, in consultation with GEF Secretariat and the GEF Agencies. STAP shall continuously update its networks and shall advise the GEF Council on GEF technical review procedures.

20. STAP shall develop and keep under review criteria, which will be reviewed and approved by the Council, for the Panel to initiate additional reviews of projects on a selective basis. STAP shall have the discretion and initiative to selectively review, in accordance with the criteria approved by the Council, any project proposal, after notifying the Chief Executive Officer.

21. STAP shall inform the GEF Agencies of its requirements for minimum documentation to be made available to its members for all projects throughout the project cycle so that it has a complete perspective on GEF operations. These requirements shall be based on the GEF Agencies' standard documentation as it applies throughout the GEF Project Cycle.

EVALUATION

22. STAP will provide timely and relevant advice on scientific and technical matters related to monitoring and evaluation activities. The Chairperson of STAP takes part in relevant meetings and consultations on monitoring and evaluation in the GEF.

23. STAP will provide advice on the work program of the GEF Evaluation Office related to evaluations with components on science and technology, and suggestions on such subjects to evaluate. It may also provide opinions on the evaluability of scientific aspects and related methodologies for measuring global environmental impacts, in response to evaluation approach papers, Terms of Reference or reports. STAP members may also be called upon to support directly an evaluation, while respecting the independence of both STAP and the GEF Evaluation Office.

24. The Panel will also support, on request, monitoring of scientific and technical aspects of the GEF, through knowledge management and information sharing; for scientific and technical evaluation of the portfolio. STAP supports the GEF Secretariat in the development and use of scientific indicators to measure impact at national and portfolio levels.

SECRETARIAT

25. STAP and its ad-hoc working groups shall be served by a Secretariat. This Secretariat shall be provided by UNEP. The Secretary of STAP shall be responsible for the Secretariat functions. Under the guidance of the Chairperson, these functions shall include:

- (a) Making arrangements for sessions of STAP and its working groups and providing them with services as required;
- (b) Preparing the budget and reporting on its status;
- (c) Ensuring the necessary coordination, liaison and involvement with the GEF Secretariat, the GEF Evaluation Office, Implementing and Executing Agencies, Conventions subsidiary bodies and other relevant bodies;
- (d) Ensuring the necessary coordination, liaison and involvement with UNEP's Management Team, and UNEP's scientific and technical focal points.
- (e) Entering, in accordance with the Rules and Regulations of UNEP, into such administrative and contractual arrangements as may be required by STAP for the effective discharge of its functions;
- (f) Maintaining, keeping under review and constantly updating the database of institutions and independent experts;
- (g) Drafting policy, strategy and operational papers for Panel Members and assisting in their timely transmission to the GEF Council and other bodies of the GEF;

- (h) Preparation of documents, reviews and reports, including reports on the performance of STAP and its Secretariat; and
- (i) Performing such other support functions as may be assigned by STAP.

26. Appropriate budgetary procedures shall be instituted to ensure the independence of the operations of STAP.

COOPERATION WITH SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL BODIES OF THE CONVENTIONS AND OTHER SCIENTIFIC BODIES

27. STAP's activities shall be considered complementary to and take into account the work done by the subsidiary bodies on scientific, technical and technological advice of the Conventions on Biological Diversity, Climate Change, Desertification and Persistent Organic Pollutants, and the Panels of Inter-governmental Assessments. STAP will contribute especially in cross-cutting issues, through its ability to review and synthesize scientific and technical information relevant to the objectives and strategies of the GEF. In carrying out its mandate, STAP shall interact with these bodies in a collaborative and cooperative manner reflecting their relative mandates and roles.

28. Cooperation and coordination between STAP and these bodies may be enhanced through a variety of arrangements, including reciprocal participation in meetings and other activities including in working groups. The Chairpersons of the subsidiary bodies and assessment panels may be invited to participate in meetings of STAP and/or its working groups.

29. STAP shall establish practical working arrangements for meeting and consulting with the subsidiary bodies of the Conventions, advisory and assessment panels as well as with relevant research bodies.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS

30. The disclosure of information related to STAP's activities shall be conducted according to the Policy Procedures related to Public Availability of Documentary Information on GEF Operations of UNEP

AMENDMENTS

31. The GEF Council may approve amendments to the present arrangements.