



# Global Environment Facility

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GEF Council  
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Agenda Item 6

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVED SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY GUIDANCE IN THE GEF

**(Prepared by the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel)**

# Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel

The Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel, administered by UNEP, advises the Global Environment Facility



## Recommendations for Improved Science and Technology Guidance in the GEF

### Recommended Council Decision

The Council, noting that the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel has previously provided to the Council its *Science Vision for GEF5 – Proposals from the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel* (GEF/C.34/Inf.14), and further noting the *Report of the April 2009 STAP Meeting* (GEF/C.35/Inf.9), welcomes and endorses the recommendations of STAP regarding science and technology guidance provided in document GEF/C.35/13 *Recommendations for Improved Science and Technology Guidance in the GEF*

### Introduction

1. The Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP), through its advisory work conducted within the GEF project cycle, also as a member of GEF-5 Technical Advisory Groups and through participatory working with GEF partners, has identified a number of recommendations for enhancing the impact of existing and future portfolios of programs and projects, and additional suggestions which are aimed at strengthening the impact and sustainability of GEF actions.

### Global Environmental Benefits

2. STAP advises that the GEF is the primary mechanism for financing global environmental benefits, and that the potential to generate global environmental benefits should continue to be central to the selection and design of GEF projects. Care must be taken to distinguish such projects from sustainable development projects generally.

### Recommendation 1

3. STAP recommends that the GEF reaffirms the central importance of global environmental benefits in GEF projects and programming

### Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

4. STAP recognizes the growing scientific evidence of climate change and its impacts on the global environment including the oceans and coasts. STAP advises that all GEF project designs should explicitly consider the risks that climate change poses to the project's long-term flows of global environmental benefits, including carbon sequestration. Projects must be made more resilient in the face of a changing climate through considering the likely impacts of climate variability and change.

### Recommendation 2

5. STAP recommends that all mitigation projects and also, as appropriate, GEF strategies should incorporate climate adaptation measures, thus promoting mitigation-adaptation synergies as recommended by the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change.

### Cross-Focal Area Operations

6. STAP advises that the added value of the GEF could be increased through attention to a whole landscape approach regarding natural resource management, chemicals life cycle management and which critically applies risk assessment to its proposed actions in order to maximise resilience

(adaptation) to climate change while also investing in mitigation. At the same time, the GEF focal area strategies must explicitly recognize that investments in one focal area can have negative impacts on the objectives of other focal areas, and that objectives in different focal areas are frequently best achieved jointly rather than separately.

### ***Recommendation 3***

7. STAP recommends that GEF operations should take cross-focal area relationships into account and, when appropriate, ensure that relationships among focal area objectives are acted upon through cross-focal area coordination and investments to derive multiple Global Environmental Benefits in a cost-effective way.

### **Implementation science**

8. STAP notes the plethora of recommendations within programs and projects for actions to generate global environmental benefits. It also notes the dearth of evidence about the effectiveness of these recommended actions, as well of our poor understanding about the conditions and designs under which these actions have the greatest potential to be effective. The paucity of evidence substantially constrains the ability of the GEF and other environmental organizations to catalyze large-scale change. As a global environmental leader, the GEF has an opportunity to contribute to building the evidence base by encouraging the application of implementation science in its project portfolio. Implementation science uses a quantitative scientific framework to design projects with the explicit intention of creating generalizable knowledge about program effectiveness that can be applied across settings and contexts. The results from these efforts will contribute to strengthening GEF's capacity to deliver on its own mandate and the broader global public good of enhanced knowledge to catalyze change in environmental practice.

### ***Recommendation 4***

9. STAP recommends that the GEF acknowledge the strategic need for implementation science in its project portfolio, through identification of learning objectives and project design that explicitly generates scientifically credible knowledge about the way in which programs most effectively achieve environmental impacts.

### **Role of STAP in the GEF**

10. STAP is an impartial and independent advisor on science and technology to the GEF Council, GEF Agencies and the GEF Secretariat. According to its mandate and terms of reference STAP provides objective, strategic scientific and technical advice on GEF policies, operational strategies, programs and on projects and programmatic approaches. When performing its role, there have been instances during GEF-4 and in its work towards GEF-5 where STAP's advisory role has not been clearly delineated compared to the GEF Secretariat, and therefore STAP recommends that its Terms of Reference should be reviewed and provided to the Council for its consideration.

### ***Recommendation 5***

11. STAP recommends that its Terms of Reference be reviewed by the Council at its November 2009 meeting to define more clearly both the balance between STAP's operational advisory role within the project cycle and also its strategic advisory role principally directed towards the Council, and also to clarify the extent to which STAP's role complements those of other bodies.

### **GEF Science Conference**

12. STAP acts as the pro-active convenor to identify new developments in scientific, technological and economic arenas for the benefit of the entire GEF partnership. In order to enable the most inclusive acquisition of scientific and technical advice, STAP proposes to convene a periodic GEF Science Conference to augment its regular meetings and will provide a proposal for consideration by the Council at its next meeting.

***Recommendation 6***

13. STAP recommends that the Council considers at its November 2009 meeting a STAP proposal for a regularly convened GEF Science Conference to ensure that the GEF is fully informed of the most recent developments in environmental science and technology.