

# Piloting the use of vTPA in Central America

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Competent authorities are increasingly considering and/or using voluntary third-party assurance (vTPA) programmes to better inform their risk profiling of food businesses, and more effectively target resources within their national food control systems. Using vTPA programmes can help competent authorities and food business operators to improve food safety outcomes, while allowing each to operate within their defined roles and responsibilities.

The Codex Committee on Food Import-Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS) defines a vTPA programme as "a non-governmental or autonomous scheme comprising of the ownership of a standard that utilises national/international requirements; a governance structure for certification and enforcement, and in which food-business operator (FBO) participation is voluntary" (CX/FICS 18/24/6). CCFICS has developed principles and guidelines for the assessment and use of vTPA programmes.

The pilot project in Central America promotes public-public and public-private collaboration to pilot and learn from the use of the vTPA approach in practice, based on Codex principles and guidelines. This will help to modernize national food control systems, move towards a risk-based regulatory framework, and make better use of scarce resources for food inspection.

This project is closely related two STDF pilot projects on the use of vTPA programmes in [East Africa](#), benefiting Rwanda and Uganda, and in [West Africa](#), benefitting Mali and Senegal. With a collaborative and innovative approach, both pilots will convene and connect diverse public/private stakeholders and generate experiences and learnings of relevance for national food control authorities elsewhere.

The STDF and UNIDO held a virtual discussion on accreditation and the role of vTPA programmes. The [webinar](#) took place on 9 June 2020, marking the World Accreditation Day. Click [here](#) to access the slides, and [here](#) to access e-news and video.

## STDF/PG/682

### Status

On-going

### Start Date

12/10/2020

### Project Value (US\$)

\$942,612

### STDF Contribution (US\$)

\$619,916

### Beneficiaries

Belize

Honduras

### Implementing Entities

Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)