
Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework



This MEL Framework was prepared with the support and guidance of the STDF MEL Group including Alice Green (FAO), Lorenz Nake (OIE), Brent Larson (IPPC), Julie Emond (Canada), Johanna Polvi (UK/SITFA), Sanjay Dave (developing country expert) and Marianne Schmitt (ITC). In the STDF Secretariat, the MEL Framework was led by Marlynne Hopper, with Roshan Khan and Angélica Cottica Grisuk.

Other Working Group members provided inputs to the MEL Framework with feedback shared during a Zoom meeting on 24 September 2020, and written comments provided by Australia, Ireland, Sweden and the United States. The revised MEL Framework was approved by the STDF Working Group on 13 October 2020.

CONTENTS

| | | | |
|-----------|----------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------|
| 03 | Acronyms | 24 | Risk management |
| 04 | STDF's MEL Framework at a glance | 26 | Results matrix |
| 10 | Introduction | 28 | Indicators |
| 12 | Purpose and Audience | 32 | Data sources and methods |
| 14 | Context | 36 | Processes and data management |
| 18 | STDF's Theory of Change | 41 | Delivery and resources |
| 22 | Cross-cutting issues | 42 | Annexes |

ACRONYMS

| | |
|------------------|--|
| COMTRADE | United Nations International Trade Statistics Database |
| CPM | Commission on Phytosanitary Measures |
| DAC | Development Assistance Committee (OECD) |
| DTIS | Diagnostic Trade Integration Studies |
| EBA | Enabling the Business of Agriculture |
| EU | European Union |
| EIF | Enhanced Integrated Framework |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| HS | Harmonized System |
| IDE/JETRO | Institute of Developing Economies, Japan External Trade Organization |
| IHR | International Health Regulations |
| IPPC | International Plant Protection Convention |
| ISPMs | International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures |
| ISSBs | International Standard-Setting Bodies |
| IRSS | Implementation, Review and Support System |
| ITC | International Trade Centre |
| LDCs | Least Developing Countries |
| LPI | Logistics Performance Index |
| MEL | Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning |
| M&E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| MRLs | Maximum Residue Limits |
| MSMEs | Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises |
| NTBs | Non-Tariff Barriers |
| NPPO | National Plant Protection Organization |
| NTMs | Non-Tariff Measures |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| OIE | World Organisation for Animal Health |
| PCE | Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation |
| PG | Project Grant |
| PPG | Project Preparation Grant |
| PVS | Performance of Veterinary Services |
| RASFF | Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SPS | Sanitary and Phytosanitary |
| STDF | Standards and Trade Development Facility |
| TSCR | Trade Standards Compliance Report |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| UNCTAD | United Nations Conference on Trade and Development |
| UNIDO | United Nations Industrial Development Organization |
| US | United States |
| WBG | World Bank Group |
| WHO | World Health Organization |
| WTO | World Trade Organization |
| UK/SITFA | United Kingdom/Support to the Implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement |

STDF MEL Framework at a Glance



Why MEL matters

The MEL Framework provides a results-based management approach to better manage STDF’s programme over the course of the STDF Strategy for 2020-2024. It provides a way to assess how the STDF’s global partnership delivers results and influences changes in Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) capacity that facilitate safe trade. At the same time, it promotes learning about innovative and collaborative approaches to SPS capacity development, including the linkages with cross-cutting issues like gender equality and the environment, that can further improve performance and impact.



PURPOSE

Ensure accountability: Provide evidence on a regular basis on the implementation of the STDF Strategy for 2020-2024, and the results and outcomes achieved with the allocated resources

Increase learning: Expand knowledge and improve learning about how the STDF’s work drives catalytic SPS improvements in developing countries and facilitates safe trade, including innovative and cross-cutting approaches to improve SPS capacity



AUDIENCE

Members of the STDF Working Group and Policy Committee

Organizations implementing STDF projects, donors and other stakeholders involved in SPS capacity development and Aid-for-Trade

STDF beneficiaries

STDF Secretariat



APPROACH

Reflects the STDF’s uniqueness as a multi-partner, multi-sector facility working at the global, regional and national level, with a relatively small sphere of control and wide sphere of influence

Takes into account the nature of STDF’s demand-driven interventions and the need for flexibility to respond to emerging demand

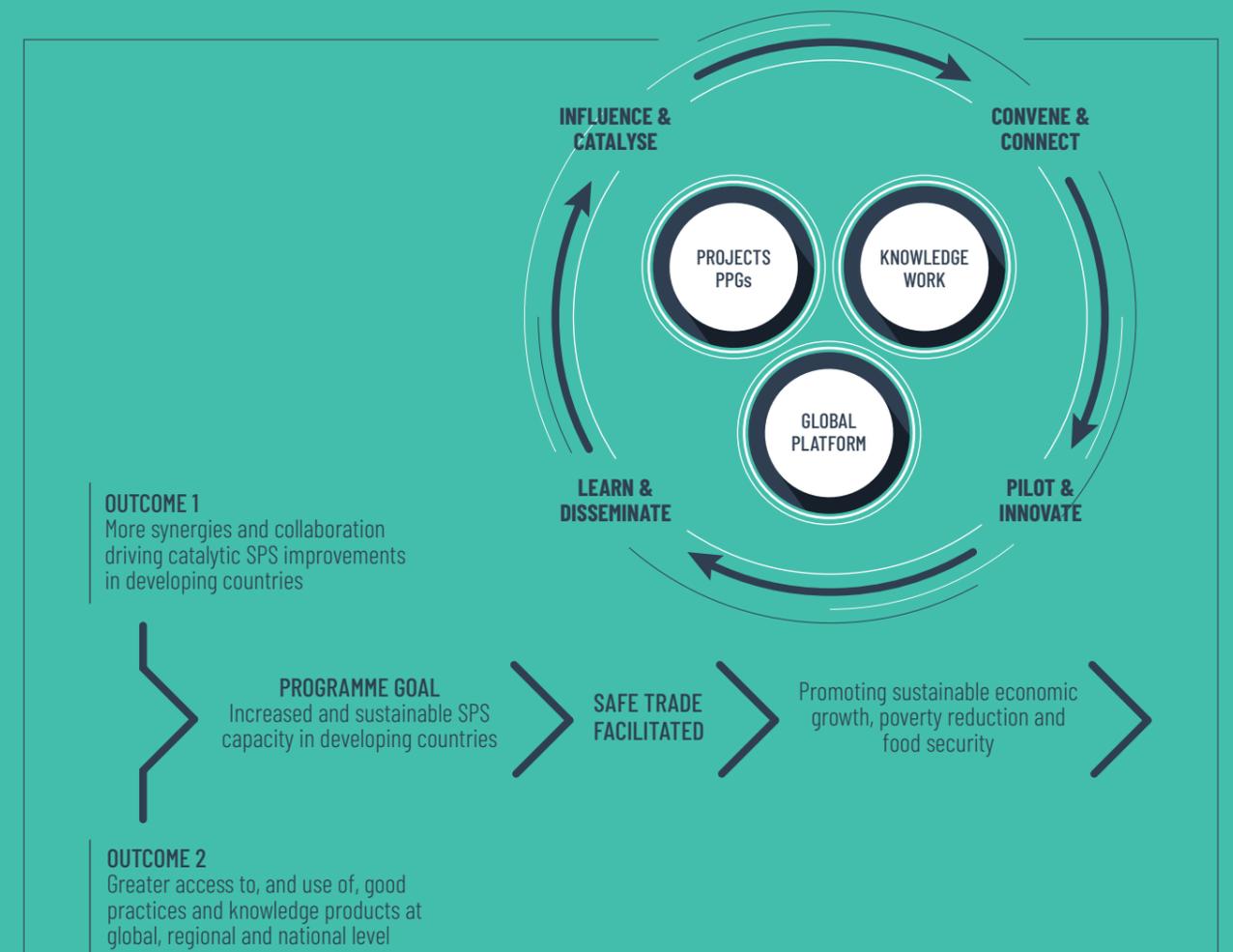
Increases attention to cross-cutting issues like gender equality, inclusiveness and environment

Complements existing data sources and methods with selected new approaches and tools

Ensures a simple, practical and cost-effective approach

STDF’s Theory of change

The Theory of Change in the STDF Strategy for 2020-2024 outlines the pathway through which change will be achieved, and provides the backbone for STDF’s MEL Framework. The MEL Framework traces the STDF’s contribution to higher-order impacts, including selected SDGs and safe trade facilitated, as far as possible. Attribution rests at the programme goal level.



Risks and assumptions

RISKS

Continuation of the Covid-19 global pandemic, and/or emergence of a new major global crisis

Limited interest of developing country stakeholders in STDF's work

Inadequate resources to deliver the STDF's Strategy

Lack of engagement of members in STDF's work

External factors of specific relevance to STDF projects

ASSUMPTIONS

Increased SPS capacity is a global public good that benefits from cooperation of public/private organizations across agriculture, health, trade and development

Relevance and value of sharing experiences and lessons learned across different areas of SPS capacity

Organizations financing and/or delivering SPS capacity development recognize the value of cooperation, and are prepared to invest the necessary resources and time

Members of STDF's partnership are catalysts for change and influence SPS capacity development globally

Results framework

RESULTS MATRIX

Provides a living management tool for MEL that promotes ownership, informs corrective actions and improvements, and supports accountability

Sets out the key elements of the intervention logic and expected cause-effect relationships across the STDF's outputs, outcomes and programme goal

Includes the detail (indicators, baselines and targets, data sources, measurement units and frequency, responsibilities, definitions, etc.) needed to operationalize the MEL Framework

Provides the basis for the STDF's logical framework, which is complemented by logical frameworks for individual STDF projects

MEL processes and delivery

PROCESSES

Monitoring to track performance on an ongoing basis

Evaluation to assess the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact of STDF's work

Learning to increase understanding about innovative and cross-cutting approaches to develop SPS capacity, with dissemination linked to the STDF Communications Plan

DELIVERY

The STDF Secretariat leads implementation of the MEL Framework, working with organizations implementing STDF projects/PPGs and the STDF "MEL Group" of interested Working Group members

The STDF Secretariat reports regularly on MEL to the Working Group, which oversees delivery, including resource allocations

A new cloud-based MEL Tool will be piloted to promote innovation and improvements on MEL



Introduction



1. This Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework accompanies the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) Strategy for 2020-2024 “*Safe and Inclusive Trade Horizons for Developing Countries*”, which provides the backbone for MEL. It puts a greater focus on learning, while tracking results and lessons from the Facility’s operations, taking STDF monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities to the next level.

2. The MEL Framework consolidates and deepens STDF’s focus on results-based management, learning from the experiences of the M&E Framework attached to the 2014-2019 STDF Strategy. Building on the recommendations of the 2019 External Evaluation², more emphasis goes to learning, measuring how results and experiences are shared across countries, regions and globally, and understanding how the STDF’s work benefits safe and inclusive trade. This includes explicit attention to ensure that the STDF results framework addresses cross-cutting issues like gender equality and the environment, including through targeted indicators. At the same time, the framework aims to be simple, practical and cost-effective. It assesses areas within STDF’s influence and reach by tracking results under the STDF’s programme goal and two outcomes, based on STDF’s Theory of Change. This ensures a focus on measuring outcomes and pathways to change, with related learning, rather than only accounting for completed activities and outputs.

Purpose and Audience

3. The MEL Framework provides a results-based management approach to better manage STDF’s programme over the course of the STDF Strategy for 2020-2024. It will strengthen planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting, and will also help to identify and integrate lessons into new work. Reflecting the uniqueness of the STDF, the MEL Framework aims to be proportional in its size and resources. In practice, this means providing a simple and practical way to demonstrate results and assess learning across the STDF’s work.

4. The MEL Framework was developed taking into account: (i) the STDF’s uniqueness as a multi-partner, multi-sector facility, working at the global, regional and national level, that has a relatively small sphere of direct control versus a wide sphere of influence; and (ii) the STDF’s fairly large number of relatively unique and “small” demand-driven interventions, and the need to ensure flexibility to address emerging demand.

5. The MEL Framework aims to achieve a balance between upward accountability and learning. The key purpose is to:

Ensure accountability: Provide evidence, on a regular basis, on the implementation of the STDF Strategy for 2020-2024, and results and outcomes achieved with the allocated resources.

Increase learning: Expand knowledge and improve learning about how the STDF’s work drives catalytic Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) improvements in developing countries and facilitates safe trade. This includes increased understanding about innovative and cross-cutting approaches to improve SPS capacity of relevance to STDF members and SPS stakeholders in developing countries, including decision-makers.

6. In addition, the MEL Framework will help to improve operations by monitoring the delivery and effectiveness of STDF operations on an ongoing basis, in areas such as the relevance and uptake of STDF knowledge products, effectiveness of meetings and trainings, and facilitation of partnerships. The use of an online data management tool will improve the quality of MEL activities, in turn supporting achievement of the accountability and learning objectives. This will also encourage improvements on reporting and transparency, identification of innovations, and support better decision-making.

Developing the MEL Framework: A consultative process with STDF members

Recognizing the importance of collaboration to improve MEL across the STDF’s programme, and provide upwards accountability, interested STDF partners and other members were actively involved in developing the MEL Framework. The STDF “MEL Group” met in a series of virtual meetings from 5 June to 3 September 2020, supported by the STDF Secretariat.

This collaborative and consultative process supported the design of a coherent and a fit-for-purpose MEL Framework. STDF partners, donors, developing country experts and others in the MEL Group served as a sounding board, sharing their expertise and knowledge. This helped to strengthen relationships across the STDF partnership and identified opportunities for greater alignment across work led by the STDF Secretariat and others. It also created momentum for follow-up through development of a feedback loop on MEL between the STDF Secretariat and members of the wider partnership.

7. The MEL Framework’s audience comprises members of the STDF Working Group and Policy Committee, and other stakeholders involved in the STDF’s work. This includes partners leading on implementation of STDF Projects and Project Preparation Grants (PPGs), current and future donors, other stakeholders involved in delivery of SPS capacity building and/or Aid-for-Trade at national, regional and global levels, the beneficiaries of STDF’s work, and the STDF Secretariat.

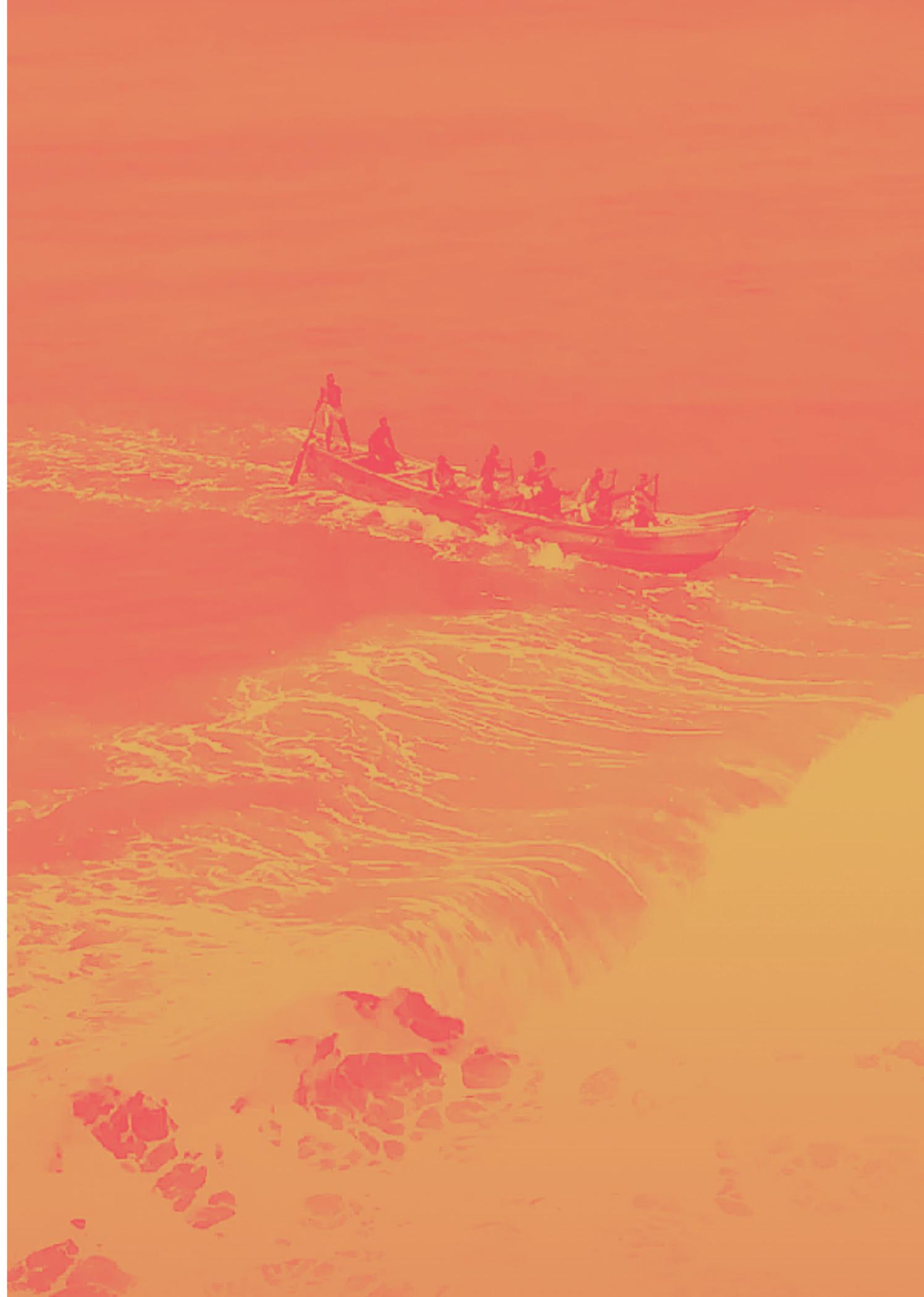
8. The key audience is upward, which facilitates shared learning across members of the partnership, implementing partners and other stakeholders (including diverse public and private sector organizations that are involved in and/or benefitting from STDF projects and PPGs). At the same time, the accountability needs of donors are met in terms of assessing the difference (i.e. the plausible and distinct contribution) that the STDF makes to increased and sustainable SPS capacity in developing countries and safe trade. In addition, through the STDF’s global platform, knowledge work and projects and PPGs, learning on what works in SPS capacity development will incrementally be strengthened between different types of stakeholders at the country and regional level, and globally.

9. Assessing the difference made by the STDF means looking at: i) the extent to which the STDF can plausibly claim to have contributed to increased and sustainable SPS capacity and safe trade in developing countries; and ii) trying to distinguish the contribution the STDF has made from contributions made by other projects or external factors. This will not provide definitive proof of the contribution that the STDF partnership makes to facilitating safe and inclusive trade. Rather it offers evidence and a line of reasoning from which it is possible to draw a plausible conclusion that, with some level of confidence, the STDF programme has contributed to the documented results.

¹ See: www.standardsfacility.org/sites/default/files/STDF_Strategy_2020-2024.pdf

² The evaluation recognized how STDF’s monitoring and evaluation improved since the 2015 Mid-Term Review and acknowledged efforts to capture results and lessons across STDF’s global platform, knowledge and project work, including the 2018 meta-evaluation of projects. It concluded that learning has not always been as systematic or far-reaching as possible, given the Secretariat’s resources and the scope of the existing M&E framework. See: www.standardsfacility.org/evaluations

Context



10. Historically trade has proven to be an engine for development and poverty reduction by boosting growth, particularly in developing countries. Evidence shows that access to markets helps to create jobs, improve incomes, attract investments and boost growth. Rapid trade growth contributed substantially to the unprecedented reduction in poverty levels, which led to the early achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (WTO, 2018). Recognizing this contribution, the SDGs emphasize the role of trade in generating inclusive economic growth and poverty reduction that contributes to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

11. There is substantial evidence that agriculture plays a major role in poverty reduction. Agricultural development raises farm incomes, increases food supply, reduces food prices, and provides opportunities to add-value and generate jobs in both rural and urban areas, stimulating diversification and growth in the wider economy. Empirical research shows that growth in agriculture helps reduce poverty more than growth in other sectors, and the poorest benefit the most (Christiaensen and Martin, 2018).

12. International standards for food safety, animal and plant health are essential for agricultural development and safe trade.³ They provide the requirements and guidance to help develop effective national food control systems, veterinary services and phytosanitary systems, that support agricultural development and facilitate safe trade. To be able to export their agri-food products regionally and globally, countries need to be able to meet these standards, as well as other SPS requirements in importing markets. SPS measures are applied based on the WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement) to protect the health of consumers, and the life and health of animals and plants, given the potential cost of importing unsafe food, animal disease and plant pests.

13. Several studies highlight how the ability to comply with international standards – including SPS measures – positively affects the competitiveness and trade performance of developing countries (WBG, 2019; UNIDO 2010, 2013, 2015; Jaffee/Rios, 2008). Meeting standards can provide a catalyst to boost trade, add value to agricultural supply chains and support sustainable economic development (Jaffee/Rios, 2008). At the same time, there is evidence that capacity gaps in the public and private sector in developing countries to meet food safety, animal and plant health standards limit these opportunities, preventing more people from benefiting from safe trade. The challenges of meeting standards for exports to developed country markets is well-documented. While there are fewer studies on the impact of standards on access to developing country markets, there are examples of the impact of standards on regional trade. Similarly, it is recognized that non-tariff measures (NTMs), including SPS measures, have a much bigger impact on trade, including trade between developing countries, than tariffs (UNCTAD/WBG, 2019, UNESCAP/UNCTAD, 2019).

14. NTMs may serve legitimate and important public policy objectives though failure to have essential SPS measures in place, or their poor implementation, can have serious negative impacts, from the spread of plant and animal diseases that harm agricultural production and/or prevent trade in agricultural products, to food safety issues. NTMs are usually more complex, less transparent and more difficult to monitor than tariffs, and are sometimes used by governments with a protectionist intent, rendering them non-tariff barriers (NTBs) (UNESCAP/UNCTAD, 2019). Both developed and developing countries use NTMs, sometimes in a way that hurts exports. Given the importance of agricultural production and trade for developing countries, they tend to feel the impacts of NTMs most. Compliance with food safety requirements is also recognized as becoming the norm for

trade between low and middle-income countries, with issues for export competitiveness (Jaffee et al, 2019).

15. Improving SPS capacity is an essential part of the solution to help developing countries transform and diversify their economies and benefit their populations. Meeting food safety, animal and plant health standards for trade involves costs for both the public and private sectors, limiting the potential for trade to support the SDGs. Investing in standards and regulations is particularly costly for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) (ITC, 2016). Studies have shown that women face more procedural obstacles than men in exporting (WBG 2011).

16. Trade offers opportunities to increase women's access to skills, expand their role in the economy and reduce gender inequality. For instance, in developing countries, women make up to 33% of the workforce of exporting firms, compared with 24% of non-exporting firms (WBG/WTO, 2020). Inadequate data and analysis on the connections between the economic roles played by women as workers, consumers and decision-makers has limited understanding to date about the impact of trade on gender equality. New research concludes that trends in global trade, such as the rise of global value chains and the digital economy, create important economic opportunities for women, provided that countries adopt trade policy reforms that reduce gender discrimination and develop women's human capital (WBG/WTO, 2020).

17. There is little in-depth research available on the gender dimensions of SPS compliance. Evidence suggests that women can find compliance to be especially challenging, given their relative lack of resources, smaller-sized firms, and vulnerability as workers in precarious positions in global value chains (Henson, 2018). In addition, women-headed businesses tend to be smaller

and to struggle with scale issues. This is because: (i) there are significant fixed costs associated with compliance; and (ii) women are vulnerable to changes that occur in the structure and/or modus operandi of global value chains as a result of the compliance process, and this affects their livelihoods and participation in global value chains (Henson, 2018). Women are heavily involved in, and dependent for their livelihoods, on small-scale cross-border trade. Research from Africa and Southeast Asia highlights that female traders pay higher taxes than their male counterparts, are delayed longer than men by quarantine issues at border crossings, spend more on transportation just to get through the border crossing, and disproportionately face high levels of procedural obstacles and harassment at borders (Stensland et al, 2019). These findings are relevant for SPS capacity development, even if additional data and more in-depth analysis is needed to better understand the gendered impact of SPS procedures and processes.

³The WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures recognizes the international standards set by the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).

STDF'S Theory of Change



18. Against this context, the STDF's global partnership drives catalytic SPS improvements in developing countries that facilitate safe trade, contributing to the SDGs related to sustainable economic growth, poverty reduction, and food security. The Theory of Change in the STDF Strategy for 2020-2024 outlines the pathway through which change will be achieved. It sets out the intervention logic and provides the backbone of the MEL Framework.

19. The Theory of Change offers a flexible, evolving tool that will be revisited during the implementation of the Strategy, especially with a view to promote learning. The attribution line rests at the goal level, where the STDF can be held accountable for results to some degree, given the attribution challenge. Due to the complexity and interdependence of SPS interventions, it will only be possible to trace the contribution to higher-order impacts above the programme goal. This generative (not counterfactual) approach to causality will mainly be achieved through project evaluations, evaluations of the entire STDF programme and other donor-led Aid-for-Trade evaluations. Given the relatively small size of the STDF, and the need for MEL to be practical and cost-effective, establishing a more rigorous, counterfactual causal logic is inappropriate in the complex SPS sphere and overly ambitious given the size of the STDF programme and MEL resources available.

20. The needs and issues faced in strengthening SPS capacity are so complex, wide-ranging and challenging that no individual institution, government or other stakeholder can do it alone. Achieving increased and sustainable SPS capacity in developing countries depends on many capabilities across agriculture, health, trade and sustainable development. It also relies on facilitating interactions and coordination across diverse organizations at a global, regional and national level. The pathways to change are sometimes uncertain. This makes it essential to capitalize on the roles and competencies across international organizations, standard-setting bodies, regional organizations, bilateral donors, the private sector and other stakeholders that provide financing and/or technical and operational expertise for SPS improvements.

21. One of the key assumptions behind the STDF is that there are benefits to be gained through collaboration. The STDF's multi-stakeholder partnership involves diverse organizations from different sectors working together, sharing risks and combining their unique resources and competencies in ways that can generate and maximize value towards the STDF's programme goal, as well as the goals of individual partner objectives. Convening and connecting diverse organizations involved in various aspects of SPS capacity development creates opportunities to share and learn from each other's experiences, to reduce duplication and gaps, and to promote a more coherent approach to SPS capacity development.

In the process, this partnership catalyses opportunities to leverage expertise and resources, to scale-up innovative approaches across sectors and regions, and ultimately to achieve more and better results together, than would be possible alone. The power of the STDF comes from the unique roles and competencies of its members, the sharing of information and the complementary resources the members each bring to the table.

22. The STDF Strategy for 2020-2024 focuses STDF's work on three workstreams: i) its global platform; ii) knowledge work; and iii) project and project preparation grants. This enables the STDF to deliver two key outcomes where the STDF partnership can create added-value for its members, as well as beneficiaries in developing and least developed countries. More synergies and collaboration driving catalytic SPS improvements in developing countries (Outcome 1) and greater access to and use of good practices and knowledge products at global, regional and national level (Outcome 2) will contribute to increased and sustainable improvements in SPS capacity in developing countries (STDF's programme goal). This will in turn facilitate safe trade (i.e. trade that ensures health protection, while minimizing transaction costs), contributing to the SDGs.

23. Increased and sustainable SPS capacity is based on the ability to meet the standards of the three international standard-setting bodies recognized in the WTO's SPS Agreement – the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC). It includes knowledge, skills and competencies to perform SPS management functions, solve SPS problems and set and achieve SPS objectives in a sustainable manner.

24. An external evaluation of Aid-for-Trade programmes in 2018 identified compliance with standards as an ongoing challenge for most developing countries. It pointed to negative impacts on developing country's exports and imports, except where international standards are introduced into their domestic markets. The evaluators highlighted the importance of building capacity to set, implement and enforce standards, and linked this to the role of the STDF on trade performance, including the participation and adaptation of beneficiary developing countries in the global trading system.⁴ Similarly, the external evaluation of the STDF programme in 2019 concluded that the STDF is responding to the needs of developing countries in its focus on building SPS capacities to enable and unlock trade (Nathan Associates, 2019). Other evaluations and reviews have reached similar views.

For instance, the 2019 mid-term review by Denmark of its Aid-for-Trade programmes, as well as other evaluations and reviews carried out by Australia, Norway and the UK.

25. The WBG's hierarchy of trade-related SPS management functions includes six key attributes of capacity across the public and private sectors. These include capacity to develop and implement legislation and regulations, policies and strategies, structures and processes that are necessary to ensure food safety and the protection of animal and plant health for safe trade. Capacity attributes at the different levels are inter-related and tend to reinforce each other. Weaknesses in one area are likely to have a negative impact on other areas. The STDF's Theory of Change recognizes that while meeting standards is essential, other attributes also need to be in place to facilitate access to markets (e.g. infrastructure, transportation, financing, etc.).

26. Strengthening SPS capacity in developing and least developed countries relies on a multitude of factors and contexts, involves a high degree of uncertainty as to the link between causes and effects, and is influenced by multiple actors, perspectives and relationships. SPS capacity depends on functioning systems, processes, competencies and skills across different government agencies, and the private sector, as well as coordination and networks between them. It depends on the commitment and engagement of diverse stakeholders to change their practices. This includes institutions and officials in developing country governments, as well as regional and global organizations that have a role to play in SPS capacity development.

27. STDF's unique value proposition creates potential for the STDF's relatively small programme, in terms of financing, to have a much greater influence and reach thanks to the number and type of stakeholders engaged in the partnership. Achieving the STDF's two outcomes will depend on the commitment and willingness of members to come together to exchange and share their expertise, to contribute to joint projects and knowledge work for the greater good, and to effectively mobilize their colleagues and networks. It also depends on them having adequate resources (including time) to devote to STDF work on an ongoing basis. Similarly, the magnitude of achievement of the two outcomes may also change over time, depending on variations in financial contributions to the trust fund.

Assumptions underlying the STDF's Theory of Change

Increased SPS capacity is a global public good that benefits from engagement and cooperation of diverse (public and private sector) organizations across agriculture, health, trade and development sectors.

Experiences and lessons learned in different areas (sectors) of SPS capacity development have relevance and value for other areas.

Donors and other organizations involved in financing and/or delivery of SPS capacity development work recognize the value of cooperating with other actors involved in SPS capacity development, and are prepared to invest the resources and time needed for such cooperation.

Members of STDF's partnership influence SPS capacity development globally, and serve as catalysts for change.

⁴ Better Ways of Trading: Evaluation of technical assistance for trade policy and regulations. 2018. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands.



Cross-cutting issues

28. Cross-cutting issues including climate change, the environment, gender equality, inclusiveness (such as micro, small and medium-sized enterprises) are relevant for STDF's programme goal and two outcomes. The MEL Framework gives attention to cross-cutting issues at different levels of the Theory of Change, enabling them to be addressed in a way that is relevant and feasible, while keeping in mind the uniqueness and size of the STDF programme. It provides the basis to mainstream these issues more systematically across the STDF's global platform, knowledge work, and projects and PPGs, covering both substantive and operational aspects. In addition, it will help to tease out and clarify the linkages between these issues and SPS capacity development, which will generate new knowledge that can further inform and strengthen other work.

29. The independent meta evaluation of STDF projects identified opportunities to strengthen attention to cross-cutting issues, including gender and the environment, in STDF projects (STDF, 2018). The MEL Framework builds on these recommendations, while also seeking to proactively identify and track how STDF's trade-focused projects generate (direct or indirect) benefits for domestic food safety, animal and plant health. These may include, for instance, impacts on improved knowledge, institutions, practices or infrastructure, as outlined in STDF's work on domestic spillovers.

30. On gender equality, STDF work will pay attention to the role of women as small-scale farmers, processors and workers in agri-food value chains and cross-border traders, as well as the gender sensitivity of SPS policies, regulatory processes and measures. This will include attention to power dynamics and specific gender constraints, for instance in successful adoption at the firm and value chain level. Gender considerations will be clearly identified, assessed and monitored across STDF's workstreams, with gender-aggregated data collected and analysed to facilitate reporting at different levels of the Theory of Change (including, for instance, increased exports for women-led firms). Efforts will also be made to ensure that gender equality is addressed within project and PPG applications, and that different genders are encouraged to submit applications. Development of a rapid assessment tool for identifying gender issues associated with trade-related SPS measures (recommended by Henson, 2018) would further help ensure their design, implementation and capacity-building is made more gender-responsive.

31. STDF work will also pay attention to how the implementation of SPS measures contributes to a healthy planet, for instance by reducing contamination of drinking water, farm soils or fish stocks by heavy metals, enhancing biodiversity, supporting agricultural systems that are more resilient to climate change, improving environmental public health, or mitigating the impacts of climate change. Linkages between climate change and the environment will be identified at the level of individual projects and PPGs, with environment-related indicators included in the menu of standard indicators for STDF projects.

32. In thinking about cross-cutting issues, the starting point has been to identify and select a manageable number of indicators that demonstrate the value of the data and incrementally improve MEL, as well as the ambitions of the STDF programme. Selected indicators focused on cross-cutting issues are included at different levels of the Results Matrix. They will be refined and improved as the MEL Framework is operationalized. They will also be included in the standard project indicators, to be developed as part of the Results Matrix.

33. Additional attention will go to mainstream cross-cutting issues in the operation of the STDF. For instance, to promote gender balance in the selection of STDF developing country experts and participation in meetings, as well as within the STDF team.



Risk management

34. Ongoing efforts will be made to manage identified risks that may affect the delivery and sustainability of the STDF, as well as to proactively identify any new or emerging risks faced.

These include:

- The inability for the STDF partnership to remain relevant and focused in the face of new and/or evolving risks and trends (such as climate change, resource stress, new global business models, disruptive technologies or economic conflict) affecting the global trade landscape.
- Decreased demand from partners and organizations in developing countries due to an unexpected surge in other priorities and reduced attention to trade.
- COVID-19 and/or other global/regional crises (such as conflict, new infectious disease or pandemic, trade wars, etc.) that influence the capacity to deliver the STDF's work.
- Widely diverging views and/or expectations of members regarding the operation and delivery of the STDF Secretariat's work.
- Inadequate alignment or agreement among members, for instance on implementing the STDF Strategy or following up on the recommendations of the last STDF external evaluation to improve the partnership's delivery model and performance.
- The inability of members to engage in a meaningful way in the STDF's partnership, including to allocate the necessary time and expertise.
- A sudden drop in resources available in the STDF Trust Fund to deliver the STDF's work plan, for instance linked to resource constraints following COVID-19 or an overall drop in aid budgets.
- A Secretariat that is under-resourced and/or incapable to deliver on the work plan and expectations of members.

35. A detailed risk matrix is presented in Annex 1. In addition to risks that affect the STDF at the programme level, STDF projects face distinct risks, which are captured in individual logical frameworks for each project. Risk management at the project level will inform MEL and vice versa. External risks of specific relevance to STDF projects will be assessed by project implementing organizations and the STDF Secretariat on an ongoing basis as part of project monitoring and reporting, with attention to identify and implement risk mitigation measures, as necessary. Where relevant, MEL activities will also identify, analyse and report on the implications of global or regional risks, including the COVID-19 pandemic, for STDF projects and other workstreams.⁵ An annual review of the Theory of Change by the STDF Working Group will ensure an opportunity to revisit the risks and assumptions.

⁵ STDF reporting on the risk of COVID-19 is available at: <https://www.standardsfacility.org/updates-covid-19>

Results matrix

36. The Results Matrix is at the core of the MEL Framework. It sets out the planned and measurable logic of STDF at the programme level and outlines the results, within the STDF's sphere of intervention, for which the programme can be held accountable (i.e. at the programme goal, outcome and output levels). It needs to be considered against the very complex set of relationships and roles affecting SPS capacity development at the national and global level, as well as the multiple causes and dimensions of issues that need to be addressed in different areas (food safety, animal and plant health, trade facilitation) to facilitate safe trade.

37. The Results Matrix includes the details needed to operationalize the MEL Framework. It captures the essential elements of the logical and expected cause-effect relationships among outputs, outcomes and programme goal, as well as additional information on definitions and conceptual clarification, units, frequency of measurement, responsibilities, as well as baseline, milestone and target data (both forecast and actual). It will be used to measure progress and performance at different levels, and also capture how the STDF's programme goal contributes to higher-level impacts in terms of safe trade facilitated and the SDGs. Ongoing work, in collaboration with relevant partners, is taking place and/or planned to refine and complete the Results Matrix. For instance, baseline data will be collected for new projects at the inception phase and incorporated into the Results Matrix. For ongoing projects, existing data will be integrated, as far as possible. Given the resources available, it is not possible to conduct a thorough baselining exercise across the entire MEL Framework.

38. The logical framework is derived from the Results Matrix and will be used for reporting. Use of a high-quality Results Matrix, including the logical framework, for the STDF programme facilitates use of a single results-management tool, rather than spending resources to develop and manage multiple performance management formats based on different needs from STDF members, including donors.

39. In addition to the Results Matrix (and logical framework) for the STDF programme, individual projects have their own logical frameworks. Through the MEL Framework, and the use of selected standard indicators across the programme and project level, the project-level logframes will be linked to the programme logframe.

40. The Results Matrix will provide the basis and structure of the new data management tool (software), which will be developed during the period of the 2020-24 Strategy to replace existing tools (Excel spreadsheet) used by the Secretariat. It will serve as a living management tool that fosters ownership and consensus on MEL work, guides corrective actions, as needed, and ultimately serves as a key accountability tool.

Indicators



41. The Results Matrix includes indicators (quantitative and qualitative) to track and measure progress and results over the Strategy period. These indicators have been selected because: (i) they are flexible enough to remain relevant to the three main workstreams (global platform, knowledge work, and projects and PPGs); and (ii) they can be brought together coherently at the programme level, while taking into account the limited resources available for MEL.

42. The MEL Framework recognizes that not everything can or should be measured. Given the size of the STDF programme, it is important to be realistic about the number and type of indicators used. Trying to collect and measure certain key indicators systematically is seen as more important than trying to measure everything possible. Attribution will clearly rest at the programme goal level, even if the MEL Framework aims to trace, as far as possible, the STDF's contribution to higher-order impacts, including selected SDGs and safe trade facilitated.

43. The type of indicators to be used will vary. Balancing the use of qualitative and quantitative indicators will help to facilitate triangulation of data from multiple sources. As shown in page 30-31, the output level indicators are more straightforward and quantitative. The indicators used at the outcome and programme goal levels are more descriptive and reflective. In view of the need to see evidence of the contribution that the STDF makes to facilitate safe trade and the SDGs (particularly, SDGs 1, 2, 3, 8, 17), the Results Matrix also includes some carefully-selected indicators at these two levels.

44. At the vision and impact levels, existing, industry-standard indicators, drawn from and reported on by other organizations, will be used to measure progress, limiting the need for additional (new) measurement and reporting by the STDF. As such, the MEL Framework incorporates the use of several new data sources including existing trade data (COMTRADE), other publicly available data sources on SPS non-compliance, as well as relevant data on different aspects of safe trade facilitated from other initiatives (such as the World Bank Group's Enabling the Business of Agriculture and Logistics Performance Index, UNIDO's Trade Standards Compliance Reports, and the findings of SPS capacity evaluation tools and other reporting initiatives led by STDF partners (Annex 2).

45. In designing the MEL Framework, thought has been given as to how the programme-level indicators link to indicators for individual STDF projects. This is important in order to be able to aggregate, in a consistent and harmonized way, the results achieved by individual projects as part of reporting at the

programme level. It means that data collection carried out by implementing organizations for STDF projects will be incorporated into reporting on some indicators at the programme level. A menu of standard indicators for projects, including indicators extracted from different levels of the programme level Results Matrix, will be developed to accompany the MEL Framework. This menu will include specific indicators that address different aspects of inclusiveness (including gender equality, as well as benefits on MSMEs), in addition to benefits on the environment and other domestic spillovers on domestic food safety, animal and/or plant health systems of trade-focused support. These indicators will help to show how the STDF's work contributes to gender equality, environmental benefits and other cross-cutting topics at different levels of the Results Matrix.

46. The MEL Framework builds on available learning to encourage an inclusive approach to SPS capacity development that recognizes the cross-cutting dimensions and implications of SPS compliance, as well as the challenges facing other vulnerable groups such as MSMEs and informal traders. The Results Matrix includes explicit measurable indicators focused on gender, climate change, environment and inclusiveness more broadly. For instance, indicators are included to track participants by gender in different STDF events, including the Working Group and project-led events, as panellists, speakers and participants. Knowledge work on different thematic topics will address gender equality in a way that ensures that women are not seen exclusively as a recipient and target group, rather also as change agents and a source of knowledge that enriches SPS processes.

47. Gender equality, environmental benefits and MSME inclusiveness will be measured in projects and PPGs. In STDF projects, this will take place at: (i) the project review stage; (ii) project inception and baseline collection; (iii) collection of disaggregated data as part of M&E; and (v) attention and analysis to cross-cutting dimensions in project reports. In PPGs, guidance will be provided to implementing partners to help them ensure that cross-cutting dimensions of SPS compliance are considered and addressed in the PPG output. The incorporation of leverage indicators is novel and helps to measure the added-value of the STDF through crowding-in, copying and replication effects.

48. Learning from across STDF's work will be analysed to draw out and analyse linkages between SPS compliance and gender and environmental aspects, and also to track how STDF's work benefits MSMEs. This knowledge will be documented and disseminated so that it can be used to inform and improve future SPS capacity development.

Indicators in the Results Matrix⁶

Indicators for Sustainable economic growth, poverty reduction and food security (SDGs 1, 2, 3, 8, 17 supported)

- SDG 1 (No Poverty): 1.1.1 Proportion of the population living below the international poverty line by sex, age, employment status and geographic location (urban/rural)
- SDG 2 (Zero Hunger): 2.3.2 Average income of small-scale food producers, by sex and indigenous status
- SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being): 3.d.1 International Health Regulations (IHR) capacity and health emergency preparedness; C 4.1 Multisectoral collaboration mechanism for food safety events
- SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth): 8.2.1 Annual growth rate of real GDP per employed person / 8.a.1 Aid for Trade commitments and disbursements
- SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals): 17.11.1 Developing countries' and least developed countries' share of global exports

Indicators for Safe Trade Facilitated

- X markets accessed
- X firms with an increase in exports, disaggregated by gender and size of firm
- # of SPS non-compliance alerts/notifications
- Logistics Performance Index (LPI) sub-score on the efficiency of the clearance process

- Evidence of market access and exports/imports directly facilitated through STDF support, with particular attention to climate change, environment, gender and inclusion

Indicators for increased and sustainable SPS capacity in developing countries (Programme Goal)

- # of STDF initiatives and PPGs/PGs contributing to changes in SPS legislation, regulation, policies, strategies, structures and/or processes, including attention to cross-cutting issues (climate change, environment, gender, inclusion)
- Evidence of improved implementation and enforcement of food safety, animal and/or plant health measures for trade, with attention to climate change, environment, gender and inclusion

Outcome 1: More synergies and collaboration driving catalytic SPS improvements

- Value (US\$) of new investments leveraged
- #, type of collaborative networks, relationships, initiatives at global, regional and/or national level that support the delivery of change in SPS systems, including attention to partnerships addressing climate change, environment, gender and inclusion
- Evidence of adaptation, replication, scaling of STDF approaches
- Evidence of the coordination and/or alignment of SPS capacity development interventions by WG members

Outcome 2: Greater access to, and use of, good practices and knowledge products at global, regional and national level

- # of people reached (disaggregated by women/men and geography/region) with STDF good practices, knowledge products
- % of people reached (disaggregated by women/men and geography/region) reporting minimum satisfaction threshold with STDF good practices and knowledge products
- # of downloads of different types of knowledge products from website, disaggregated by geography
- Evidence of uptake and application of good practices and knowledge products produced by STDF to inform and support SPS capacity development led by global / regional / national bodies

Output-level Indicators

STDF Global Platform: Dialogue and exchange among WG Members and with other relevant organizations

- # and type of STDF meetings / year
- # of participants (quantity) in online or physical STDF events, disaggregated by location, gender and type of participants

STDF knowledge work, publications, good practice briefings, films, etc. produced

- # and type of STDF knowledge products completed/published
- # knowledge products that address cross-cutting issues (climate change, environment, inclusion or gender equality)

SPS assessments and feasibility studies conducted and project proposals formulated under STDF PPGs

- # PPGs approved for STDF funding
- # PPGs completed
- % of PPGs meeting minimum STDF assessment threshold

Innovative and collaborative SPS capacity development projects implemented

- # PGs approved for STDF funding
- % of PGs that mainstream cross-cutting issues (climate change, environment, inclusion or gender equality)
- # PGs completed
- % of PGs meeting minimum STDF assessment threshold

⁶List of indicators in the Results Matrix in October 2020. Some of these indicators may be further refined and improved during operationalization of the Results Matrix, while respecting the need to have comparable data between baseline and endline.

Data sources and methods



49. Data sources to measure the expected changes were identified during the process of defining indicators, with attention to the accessibility and relevance (sense) of data. A variety of data sources and methods will be used. Wherever possible, measurement strategies will be based on existing data sources and tested data collection methods, including several types of reliable existing secondary datasets, as well as primary data collection tools. At the higher levels of the intervention logic, where the attribution challenge is the greatest, the Results Matrix relies on readily available, high quality data and its analysis, rather than collecting primary data. Lower level indicators have attempted to pare down data collection to the bare minimum required for successful monitoring, learning and management, while also making use of indicators that previously delivered valuable information.

50. Secondary data will come from already existing global and national trade data, and administrative data (i.e. data that is collected routinely by the STDF Secretariat and/or project implementing organizations, as part of their day-to-day operations). Datasets and reports that are publicly available and globally comparable will be used, including trade-focused databases (such as UN Comtrade and national statistics).

51. One of the challenges is the limited availability and coverage of regularly updated data on compliance with standards, especially data that differentiates between legitimate versus protectionist measures. UNIDO's Trade Standards Compliance reports provide a valuable source of data, however, are not regularly updated due to limited resources. Use will be made of other sources that provide data and/or analysis on trends related to SPS capacity, SPS compliance and trade. These include the Logistics Performance Index, Enabling the Business of Agriculture, as well as other data tracking SPS compliance in major import markets such as the EU's Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF).

52. The findings of SPS-related capacity evaluation tools (OIE Tool for the Evaluation of Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS), IPPC's Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation Tool (PCE), FAO/WHO food control system assessment tool) provide another source of data, if and when they are applied and/or the findings are publicly available. However, given the relatively limited use and re-use of some of these tools, it will be difficult to rely on them extensively. International Standard-Setting Bodies have developed other initiatives – including the OIE Observatory, the IPPC's Implementation, Review and Support System (IRSS) and monitoring activities linked to the Codex Strategic Plan for 2020–2025 – to help monitor the use of their standards. In due course, the information gathered through these tools will provide some

relevant additional data. An overview of existing data sources is available in Annex 2.

53. Relevant information for analysis and aggregation will also be collected through administrative databases (such as the STDF's existing Excel database of projects and PPGs, as well as the planned MEL Tool). Administrative data will be used, for instance, to track participants in STDF meetings and trainings, grant applications approved and completed, Google Analytics data on access to and use of the STDF website (downloads, etc.). The STDF Secretariat will collect and analyse administrative data, in cooperation with organizations implementing STDF projects, at key points in the project cycle. This will create a relatively large sample, making it possible to detect changes over time and to compare future progress against the past.

54. Primary data will be gathered directly from key stakeholders expected to benefit directly from STDF's work in developing countries, and Working Group members. The information sought will be tailored to the needs of STDF's MEL Framework. Simple, web-based survey instruments will be retained, improved and/or introduced to elicit targeted data to help assess the results achieved by the STDF at the programme goal, outcome, and output level. This will include surveys of the Working Group, SPS Committee delegates, project and PPG beneficiaries, as well as interviews with relevant stakeholders, to collect qualitative data on the results and impacts of STDF's work (e.g. stories of change). Surveys will be carried out using available electronic tools (e.g. SurveyMonkey, Menti) so that primary data collection remains as manageable as possible.

Surveys to support MEL

| Target Audience | Purpose | Delivery |
|---|---|--|
| STDF Working Group members | Short survey to capture views on STDF's work and results, including feedback on individual WG meetings, any new collaborative relationships, initiatives or programmes facilitated through the STDF, etc. | Frequency: End of each Working Group meeting Responsibility: STDF Secretariat |
| PGs/PPGs beneficiaries | Self-assessment survey to provide a baseline of capacity and knowledge at the start and end of all PGs/PPGs | Frequency: At start and end of all STDF projects and PPGs Responsibility: PG / PPG implementing partner (using a template prepared by STDF Secretariat) |
| SPS Committee delegates | Self-assessment survey to get views from country-level on situation of SPS capacity in developing countries (disaggregated by geography, regions, OECD DAC categories). | Frequency: Bi-annual, on margins of SPS Committee meeting Responsibility: STDF Secretariat |
| Participants at events organized under STDF PPGs, PGs, knowledge and outreach work | Feedback survey to gather information on relevance and use of STDF's work, etc. | Frequency: Immediately after each STDF event. This includes events organized by implementing organizations under PG/PPGs, as well as other STDF-organized side-events, information sessions, seminars, webinars, etc. Responsibility: PG / PPG implementing partner |

55. In addition to making use of existing methods, a simple form of social network analysis will be introduced to complement and strengthen existing methods. Use of network analysis provides a practical way to obtain an objective representation of the STDF community (size, cohesiveness, centrality) based on the intelligence data. Social network analysis will be applied initially, as a pilot, at the level of the STDF's global platform (Working Group) to map relationships between members of the partnership, draw out key individuals and groups (gatekeepers, influencers) within the network, and associations/linkages between members. Depending on the initial experiences, and subject to learning and available resources, network analysis could also be applied more broadly on an iterative basis. For instance, to understand the nature and

quality of collaborative relationships and networks at the country/ regional level with STDF projects.

56. Use of network analysis will generate diagrams that show the size of the STDF's network, links between members, sub-groups within the network, the closeness of members, joint activities, etc. This will be helpful to assess the STDF's role in convening and connecting diverse stakeholders involved in SPS capacity development to influence and catalyse wider change. Social network analysis will not provide all the context / details around the data (for instance, certain members may be more visible than others) so the findings will need to be validated.

Processes and data management



57. The MEL Framework is designed to ensure that any changes are undertaken with a view to keeping the system simple, practical and cost-effective. STDF processes on project design and reporting will be reviewed and analysed to introduce changes that strengthen MEL, including greater practical attention to review application forms, templates and related guidance to ensure adequate attention to MEL including cross-cutting issues. In addition, MEL guidance will be developed and made available, for the STDF Secretariat team and implementing organizations to ensure common approaches and practical support.

58. A new MEL Tool is planned to deliver innovation and improvements on how data and information on progress, results and lessons is captured, reported and managed across STDF's three workstreams. This cloud-based digital MEL Tool will support roll-out of the MEL Framework and facilitate consistent and robust data collection, proving a sign that the STDF cares about results and learning from them to improve delivery and outcomes. However, this tool should not be seen as a panacea. Its success will depend on all the other pieces of the MEL Framework being in place for it to serve the needs of the STDF Secretariat.

59. In addition to improving data collection, storage and management, this online tool will deliver efficiency gains in project management, as well as opportunities to facilitate organizational learning and co-creation of knowledge. For instance, it will: (i) support monitoring, measurement, analysis and reporting for STDF projects; (ii) promote consistency in indicators via a master indicator list, which will grow over time; (iii) integrate learning, beneficiary stories and voices to better analyse impact insights; and (iv) enable data entry by organizations leading project implementation.

60. Subject to endorsement of the MEL Framework and available resources, the STDF Secretariat will follow-up on procurement of a MEL Tool that fits the STDF's needs, in accordance with WTO procurement rules. Selected project implementing partners, and other relevant stakeholders, will be engaged alongside the Secretariat to support the design, trial and roll-out of this tool.

Monitoring

61. Monitoring will continue to be used to ensure an ongoing system of information gathering to track performance in delivery across STDF's global platform, knowledge work, and projects and PPGs. Working Group members and others key target groups (e.g. SPS Committee delegates) will be requested to share their inputs and views to monitor performance of the STDF's global platform and knowledge work. Implementing organizations will be required to report on the results of projects in six-monthly progress reports and end-of-project reports, including information on standard project indicators that also address cross-cutting issues. Progress and milestones will be reported in STDF's Annual Reports⁷, as well as in reports for projects (inception, progress and final), PPGs (implementation report) and other documents. The STDF Secretariat will continue to report to the Working Group on the implementation of STDF projects and PPGs.

Evaluation

62. External evaluations of STDF projects and the entire programme have been a cornerstone of STDF M&E efforts under previous strategies and will continue to be important under this MEL Framework. The purpose of evaluation will be to assess the overall relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact of the STDF's workstreams to ensure accountability to donors, and support learning and decisions about what to do next.

63. The STDF Secretariat will continue to outsource external evaluations. Three main types of external evaluations are planned, covering both the programme and project level:

- **External programme evaluations:** An external evaluation of the entire STDF programme is normally carried out every five years, based on the STDF Operational Rules. The focus of this evaluation will be on the impact and results of the entire STDF programme and its three workstreams addressing, for instance, improved market access and safe trade facilitated, improvements in the effectiveness and efficiency of regulatory processes, improvements in national food safety, plant or animal health, etc. Normally this evaluation should be concluded one year before the end of the Medium-Term Strategy, unless decided otherwise by the Policy Committee. The WTO selects the company to carry out this evaluation based on its procurement rules. The next such evaluation is planned in 2023-2024.⁸

- **Independent ex-post project impact evaluations:** At least two STDF completed projects will be selected each year to undergo ex-post impact evaluations.⁹ The Working Group Chairperson will make this selection randomly unless the Working Group decides otherwise. The focus of these evaluations will be on the impact of the STDF project beyond the immediate project outputs, addressing for instance improved market access, reductions in rejections, improvements in the effectiveness and efficiency of regulatory processes, improvements in national food safety, plant or animal health, etc. These evaluations will be carried out by consultants, selected by the Working Group Chairperson (based on a short-list provided by the Secretariat). The STDF Project Evaluation Guidelines¹⁰ will be used to ensure consistency and a common standard in quality.¹¹

- **Independent end-of-project assessments:** All STDF projects will be subject to an independent end-of-project assessment, budgeted in the project document. The implementing agency will contract an external evaluator to carry out this assessment. This assessment will evaluate the final project results, based on the project logical framework and indicators. This would be expected to include the extent to which the project strengthened SPS capacity and facilitated trade, among other benefits. It will be included as part of the final project report, submitted by the implementing organization to the STDF Secretariat.¹²

64. The findings of all STDF evaluations will continue to be shared with all STDF members and made available publicly on the STDF website. Findings, conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations of evaluations will be discussed by the Working Group, and also presented to other relevant audiences, for instance during STDF events and sessions organized for SPS Committee members and other audiences.

65. The STDF published a meta-evaluation study in 2018 that provided an independent assessment of the performance of all STDF projects.¹³ The Working Group may decide to carry out meta-evaluations or assessments addressing specific topics or cross-cutting issues (e.g. gender or environment) across STDF's projects/PPGs and knowledge work.

66. In addition, donors sometimes also carry out their own independent evaluations and reviews of the STDF, including as part of Aid-for-Trade reviews, which are included as a data source for this MEL Framework. These evaluations also provide relevant and useful feedback on the results and impacts of the STDF programme. When publicly available, they are shared with members of the STDF Working Group and posted on the STDF website.

⁷ See: www.standardsfacility.org/stdf-annual-reports/

⁸ STDF Operational Rules: "The Facility will be evaluated by an external reviewer appointed by the WTO after consultation with the Working Group at least every five years, normally to be concluded one year before the end of the Medium Term Strategy, unless decided otherwise by the Policy Committee. After circulation to and discussion in the Working Group and Policy Committee, the evaluation report will be made available in a public document circulated to the SPS Committee."

⁹ The Operational Rules require at least two project evaluations per year.

¹⁰ See: www.standardsfacility.org/sites/default/files/STDF_214_Evaluation_Guidelines_2021_Final.pdf

¹¹ See: STDF Operational Rules (para 104)

¹² See: STDF Operational Rules (para 105)

¹³ See: www.standardsfacility.org/sites/default/files/STDF_Meta-evaluation_EN.pdf

Learning

67. An essential part of the MEL Framework is to capture and distil evidence of STDF's work to not only improve the performance and results achieved by the partnership, but to be useful for other organizations working to support SPS capacity development globally including members of the STDF's global partnership. Generating and disseminating this learning to help scale-up catalytic SPS improvements and influence wider impacts is at the core of the STDF Strategy for 2020-2024.

68. The MEL Framework seeks to facilitate reflection and sharing about SPS capacity development challenges and outcomes, based on work carried out as part of the STDF partnership, as well as SPS capacity development work led directly by members. Learning and reflection on these experiences and results will be synthesized and disseminated via different media to reach and influence members of the STDF partnership, as well as other relevant public and private sector actors globally.

69. The MEL Framework will support learning on the linkages between SPS capacity development in developing countries and impacts on the domestic food safety, animal and/or plant health situation, as well as environmental impacts. For instance, specific project-level indicators to measure the impact of SPS capacity development on local markets and domestic food safety will be part of the indicator menu, generating new knowledge on these effects and how to better target and measure domestic co-benefits.

70. Based on learning, new knowledge will be co-created by STDF members, in collaboration with other stakeholders involved in STDF projects, PPGs and knowledge work, and the STDF Secretariat. Various methods and approaches will be used to support reflection and learning. Working Group members will assess and analyse – through dedicated agenda items in Working Group meetings and ongoing exchange in thematic Practitioner Groups – what is working on specific topics related to SPS capacity development (linked to ongoing work under STDF projects and PPGs), what is not working, why not and opportunities for improvements. Context analysis may be used to facilitate an assessment around why uptake of different pieces of STDF work is happening, or not, in which circumstances, and why, etc.

71. To be effective in reaching STDF's target audience and catalysing change, learning will be designed and carried out hand-in-hand with activities in the STDF Communications Plan. Results, lessons and experiences from STDF projects, PPGs and knowledge work on thematic topics will be compiled in user-friendly products (e.g. STDF briefings, results stories, e-news, videos, etc.) that are widely shared and disseminated to key audiences at global, regional and national level via STDF and other events and online media. Members of STDF's global partnership – including partners, donors, other international and regional organizations, as well as former and current developing country experts – will be more engaged to expand and support outreach and dissemination so that learning generated through the STDF's work reaches all the stakeholders that can use and benefit from it, including regional organizations and economic communities, competent authorities, policy-makers and the private sector in developing countries.

72. Learning will be used by Working Group members to assess and/or adjust activities in the STDF work plan, as needed and to improve the planning and delivery of activities led directly by members of the partnership. In this way, learning will also help to inform and improve MEL over time. Learning will take place across the Results Framework, supported by the new MEL Tool. The MEL Framework also creates scope to substantially improve learning at the lower levels of the logic, including on the uptake of STDF knowledge products, facilitation of partnerships, capacity improvements, leveraging of funding, etc. Practitioner Groups on different knowledge topics will benefit from the MEL Tool, with opportunities to further improve and expand learning that benefits other key target audiences over time, including SPS authorities and other relevant stakeholders at the country and regional level.

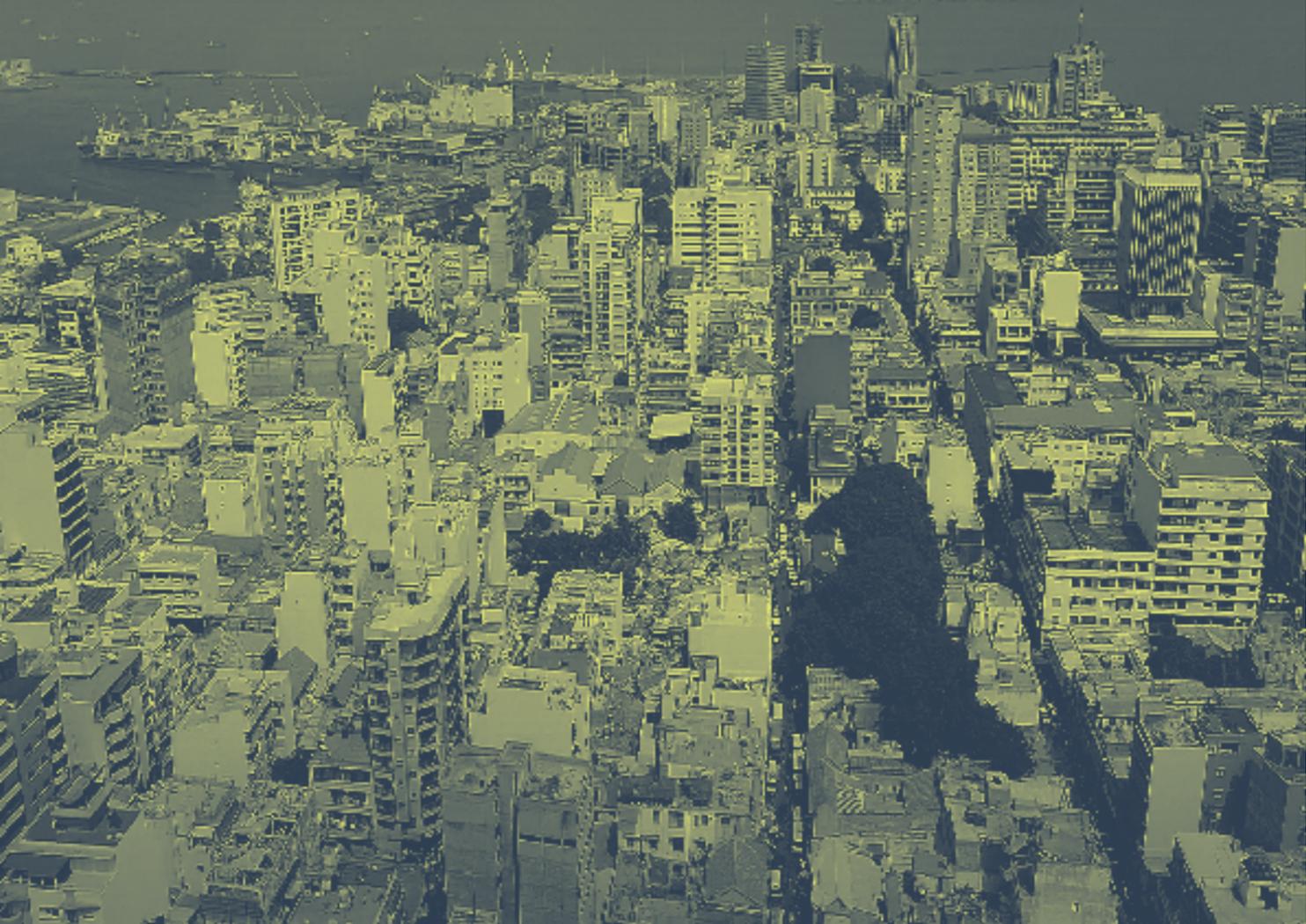
Delivery and Resources

73. Implementation of the MEL Framework will be led by the STDF Secretariat, in close cooperation with the Working Group and other organizations involved in STDF work. Building on the valuable role provided by members in developing this Framework, the virtual "MEL Group" will be maintained to provide guidance to the implementation of MEL activities, including the development and roll out of the new MEL Tool.¹⁴ Organizations implementing STDF projects and PPGs will have a key role to play in delivery of MEL activities, as outlined in the Results Matrix. The Secretariat will report regularly to the Working Group on implementation of the Framework.

74. Following approval of the MEL Framework, the Secretariat will prepare a calendar of MEL activities. The first year of the MEL Framework will be used to develop, launch and trial new tools and methods. This will include development of surveys, development of standard project indicators, setting up and testing the online MEL Tool, and designing and piloting the use of network analysis at the global level (via the Working Group survey). The Secretariat and MEL Group, in consultation with the Working Group, will assess the implementation and results achieved, and introduce modifications as required.

75. Financial and human resources will be needed to deliver this MEL Framework. Resources will be required in the STDF Secretariat, as well as at the level of projects and PPGs. STDF projects include resources for monitoring, evaluation and learning. For ongoing projects, discussions will take place with implementing partners on steps to adopt and use this MEL Framework as part of ongoing MEL work, including resource implications (if any). Project implementing organizations will be supported to be able to use the MEL Framework and Tool. This will include, for instance, the organization of virtual MEL information sessions or webinars, targeted discussions on MEL within projects, preparation and distribution of simple MEL project good practice notes with step-by-step guidance, including on indicators, data collection methods, use of the Results Matrix, etc. For future projects and PPGs, additional resources may need to be allocated to cover MEL, including to expand the focus on learning. Members of the Working Group, including the MEL Group, will also be expected to contribute their time to support MEL.

¹⁴ STDF Secretariat will draft TORs outlining the expected role of this Group, contribution of members, operations, etc. for discussion with interested STDF members. For instance, this Group could contribute to the development of standard indicators for STDF projects, set-up and piloting of online MEL tool, etc. In addition to Working Group members who contributed directly to the development of this MEL Framework, other interested members may wish to join the MEL Group.



Annexes

Annex I: Risk Matrix

| Risk | Likelihood | Mitigation Strategy |
|--|----------------|--|
| Continuation of the Covid-19 global pandemic, and/or emergence of a new major global crisis | MEDIUM | <p>Ongoing efforts to: (i) regularly review, update and/or adapt, as appropriate, the risk mitigation measures put in place since Covid-19 was declared in March 2020; and (ii) identify and implement innovative and/or modified approaches and delivery mechanisms to ensure continuity and progress.</p> <p>This includes consideration of and/or action on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Options and alternatives to supplement (and/or replace) the traditional face-to-face Working Group meetings with the organization of shorter virtual meetings on specific parts of the Working Group agenda and other topics. Launch of virtual STDF Practitioner Groups to engage interested STDF members on specific knowledge topics. Ongoing discussions with STDF project implementing organizations on how to address the risk of Covid-19 in ongoing, pipeline and future projects and PPGs, including on the risks related to delays, under-delivery and/or under-spending in PPGs and projects. Consideration with STDF Working Group members of the need to review and/or carry over activities within the 2020 Work Plan, and/or to review the STDF Operational Rules in view of the crisis and any changes (innovations) introduced to the delivery of STDF's work in response. Ongoing discussions with STDF donors on the implications of the Covid-19 situation for the STDF and the suitability of the mitigation / management response. |
| Limited interest of developing country stakeholders in STDF's work | LOW | Ongoing efforts will be made to ensure that STDF work remains relevant and targeted to the SPS needs of developing countries, building on key issues raised at relevant meetings organized by STDF partners and others. Complementary efforts will be undertaken to share good practices, knowledge products and information on funding opportunities to promote up-take and use by developing country stakeholders. |
| Inadequate resources (including financial, human resources, time) to deliver STDF's Strategy | MEDIUM TO HIGH | Relationships with existing and new donors will be actively nurtured to ensure contributions to the Trust Fund based on targets. Delivery of STDF's MEL Framework and communications plan will help to track and showcase performance and results and support fundraising efforts. Increased human resources in the STDF Secretariat (based on the 2019 evaluation's recommendations) will provide the necessary capacity. |
| Lack of engagement of members in STDF's work | LOW | STDF members will be encouraged to re-commit to the partnership and to provide the necessary time and resources to support delivery of the Strategy. The STDF Secretariat will continue to engage actively with members, during and between Working Group meetings, to ensure that the STDF's work remains relevant and of value and contributes to their objectives. Members of the Working Group will be encouraged to: (i) share information on the STDF's work within their own organizations and networks; (ii) contribute towards delivery of the STDF's work plan, communication plan and MEL Framework; and (iii) identify opportunities for synergies with their work. |
| External factors of specific relevance to STDF projects | MEDIUM | Dedicated attention will be given to identify and assess specific risks (such as the turn-over of key staff, institutional changes, political instability, conflict, emergence of new pests/diseases that challenge trade, etc.) of relevance to STDF projects at the project design stage, and to proactively and regularly re-assess and manage risks during implementation. |

Annex 2: Secondary Data Sources

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) Diagnostic Trade Integration Studies (DTIS)</p> <p>https://enhancedif.org/</p> | <p>The EIF coordinates country-specific trade analysis in LDCs in the form of Diagnostic Trade Integration Studies (DTIS) and Action Matrices. This evidence-based work helps countries identify priorities to guide their trade agendas, reveals constraints to trade integration, and advises on key action areas. DTIS reports, and DTIS Updates, identify constraints and opportunities in the integration of LDCs into global trading systems. Many DTIS and DTIS Updates analyse capacity gaps and constraints relates to NTMs, including SPS measures.</p> |
| <p>European Commission Food and Feed Safety Alerts (RAFSS)</p> <p>https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/rasff_en</p> | <p>The RASFF portal provides an interactive searchable online database (available publicly) with summary information about the most recently transmitted RASFF notifications. RASFF notifications report on risks identified in food, feed or food contact materials that are placed on the market in the notifying country or detained at an EU point of entry. The notifying country reports on the risks it has identified, the product and its traceability and the measures it has taken. RASFF notifications are classified as alerts or information or border rejection notification. In the absence of any other large, publicly available database on SPS compliance issues, RAFSS notifications provide a useful indication and proxy of SPS compliance trends, which can complement other data sources.</p> |
| <p>FAO/WHO Codex Strategic Plan</p> <p>www.fao.org/publications/card/en/c/CA5645EN/</p> | <p>Monitoring activities under the Codex Strategic Plan will monitor the relevance and use of Codex standards by governments and others, to be reviewed by the Commission in 2020 and every two years subsequently through its six-year timespan. In addition, use may be made of reports of regional Codex surveys to collect data on the use of Codex standards. These surveys began in 2016 for the Regional Coordinating Committees, with the most recent surveys carried out in 2019 focused on specific standards (including MRLs for veterinary drugs in foods).</p> |
| <p>FAO/WHO Food Control System Assessment Tool</p> <p>http://www.fao.org/3/ca5334en/CA5334EN.pdf</p> | <p>The FAO/WHO food control system assessment tool provides an approach to analyse the performance of a national food control system, based on Codex Principles and Guidelines for National Food Control Systems (CAC/GL 82-2013). It focuses on the performance of competent authorities involved in food control. It is intended to be used by countries as a supporting basis for self-assessment to identify priority areas of improvement and plan sequential and coordinated activities to reach expected outcomes. Dimension B of the tool addresses routine control functions, including domestic controls, import controls and export controls.</p> |
| <p>IPPC Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE)</p> <p>www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/capacity-development/phytosanitary-capacity-evaluation</p> | <p>The IPPC's PCE is a management tool to help countries to improve their NPPOs and entire phytosanitary system. It aims to assist with identification of gaps and challenges, and development of national capacity development strategies and related action plans. This includes an evaluation of existing capacity and needs (using an online software with 13 modules) to meet IPPC obligations. NPPOs can decide to apply selected modules based on their preferences. The entire PCE process is under the control of the contracting party and PCE reports are confidential. However, trends can be identified and reported to the CPM anonymously.</p> |
| <p>IPPC Implementation Review and Support System (IRSS)</p> <p>www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/implementation-review-and-support-system</p> | <p>The IRSS undertakes activities that evaluate and identify contracting parties' plant protection challenges and best practices. These activities generate national, regional and global information about implementation of the Convention on Phytosanitary Measures, international standards for phytosanitary measures (ISPMs) and emerging issues in plant health. These activities feed into the Triennial Implementation Review Report which summarizes the situation of the implementation of the Convention and its standards by contracting parties.</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>OIE Observatory</p> <p>www.oie.int/en/what-we-offer/safe-trade-and-movement-of-animals/observatory/</p> | <p>The OIE Observatory (being piloted in 2020) provides a continuous and systematic mechanism to collect information and analyse the practices of OIE Members' in implementing OIE standards. It aims to create a better understanding of how these standards are implemented, the different global trends and common challenges faced by OIE Members.</p> <p>Two types of reports are planned: (i) implementation review reports (annual) that provide a high-level summary of the implementation of OIE Standards; and (ii) thematic reports (pluriannual) that provide a more comprehensive and focused analysis on priority topics.</p> |
| <p>OIE Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS)</p> <p>https://www.oie.int/en/what-we-offer/improving-veterinary-services/pvs-pathway/</p> | <p>The OIE PVS Tool evaluates performance of veterinary services against the standards published in the Terrestrial Animal Health Code based on 45 Critical Competencies categorized into the following components: (i) Human, Physical and Financial Resources, (ii) Technical Authority and Capability, (iii) Interaction with Stakeholders, and (iv) Access to Markets. A number of countries have waived the confidentiality of their PVS evaluation reports, and have authorized the OIE to send those reports to OIE partner organizations. Some PVS reports are fully public and available on the OIE website.</p> |
| <p>UNIDO Trade Standards Compliance Report (TSCR) and TSC Footprints</p> <p>https://www.unido.org/our-focus/advancing-economic-competitiveness/meeting-standards/meeting-standards-winning-markets</p> | <p>UNIDO's TSCRs (2010 and 2015) analyse import rejection data for key markets to assess the root causes of rejections with reference to non-compliance with different trade standards (including SPS measures). The TSCR focused on the EU and US markets, while the Australian and Japanese markets were also included in the 2015 TSCR. In 2013, a regional Standards Compliance study for Asia was issued in collaboration with IDE/JETRO. If updated in the future, this provides a useful data source.</p> <p>The Trade Standards Compliance Footprints are country fact sheets providing gives a snapshot on economic, social and particularly trade-related facts for the country in question, with an emphasis on indicators for trade standards compliance capacity derived from import rejection data. In addition, each TSC Footprint presents information on the country's economic and social structure and poverty characteristics, as well as on the trends, composition and direction of its agri-food exports.</p> |
| <p>UNIDO interactive online tool</p> <p>https://hub.unido.org/rejection-data/trade-rejection-analysis</p> | <p>The new tool will enable users to produce customized global, comparative and country analytical reports using rejection data from 2010-19. Rejection data will be categorized based on HS2 digit codes and will include data from different markets (Australia, China, EU, US).</p> |
| <p>World Bank Group Enabling the Business of Agriculture (EBA)</p> <p>https://eba.worldbank.org/en/eba</p> | <p>The "Enabling the Business of Agriculture" initiative measures how government-designed regulations and processes affects the livelihood of domestic farmers. It provides data on eight quantitative indicators, which are globally comparable and can be used to benchmark countries' performances.</p> <p>The following two EBA indicators are most relevant for the STDF: (i) protecting plant health (measured by the quality of phytosanitary regulations); and (ii) trading food (measured by the time and cost to obtain documents to trade agricultural goods and the quality of food regulation system). EBA reports are published bi-annually (with the last report published in 2019).</p> |
| <p>World Bank Group Logistics Performance Index (LPI)</p> <p>https://lpi.worldbank.org/</p> | <p>LPI is an interactive benchmarking tool to identify challenges and opportunities faced in trade logistics performance. It is the weighted average of country scores on six key dimensions. The following two LPI scores are most relevant for the STDF purpose: (i) efficiency of the clearance process (i.e., speed, simplicity and predictability of formalities) by border control agencies; and (ii) quality/competency of border agencies (which includes and categorizes performance of SPS agencies, quality/standards inspection agencies, and customs).</p> |

References

- Christiaensen, Luc and Martin, Will, 2018. Five new insights on how agriculture can help reduce poverty. World Bank Group Blog. July 26, 2018. See: <https://blogs.worldbank.org/jobs/five-new-insights-how-agriculture-can-help-reduce-poverty>
- Henson, 2018. Gender and Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures in the Context of Trade: A Review of Issues and Policy Recommendations. ICTSD. Available at: https://standardsfacility.org/sites/default/files/Gender_SPS_measures_in_the_context_of_trade_Henson-ICTSD_Nov_18.pdf
- ITC, 2015. Unlocking Markets for Women to Trade. Available at: https://www.intracen.org/uploadedFiles/intracenorg/Content/Publications/women_in_trade_web.pdf
- ITC, 2016. SME Competitiveness Outlook 2016: Meeting the Standard for Trade. Available at: <https://www.intracen.org/uploadedFiles/SMECO2016.pdf>
- Jaffee, Steven; Henson, Spencer; Rios, Luz Diaz, 2011. "Making the Grade: Smallholder Farmers, Emerging Standards, and Development Assistance Programs in Africa - A Research Program Synthesis". World Bank Operational Study. Available at: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/2823/623240SR0White0W110Making0the0Grade.pdf?sequence=1>
- Jaffee & Rios 2008 Barrier, catalyst, or distraction? Standards, competitiveness, and Africa's groundnut exports to Europe. World Bank Group, Agriculture and Rural Development Discussion Paper 39. Available at: <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/ru/214321468333019082/pdf/434360NWP0Afla1Box0327368B01PUBLIC1.pdf>
- Jaffee, Steven; Henson, Spencer; Unnevehr, Laurian; Grace, Delia; Cassou, Emilie, 2019. The Safe Food Imperative: Accelerating Progress in Low- and Middle-Income Countries. World Bank Group, Agriculture and Food Series. Available at: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/30568>
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark / DANIDA. 2019. Midterm Review, Aid for Trade Program (2018-20).
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands, 2017. Better Ways of Trading. Evaluation of Technical Assistance for Trade Policy and Regulations.
- Nathan Associates, 2019. External Evaluation of the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF). Available at: www.standardsfacility.org/sites/default/files/STDF_Final_Evaluation_Report_Nathan_Associates.pdf
- Stensland Warren, Heidi; Liungman, Maria; Yang, Aileen, 2019. What's it like for women to trade across borders? World Bank Group blog. June 3, 2019. Available at: <https://blogs.worldbank.org/trade/whats-it-women-trade-across-borders> and <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/zh/742571468007855952/pdf/601120BRI0Afri1public10BOX358310B0.pdf>
- STDF. 2018. Beyond Results: Learning the lessons from STDF projects. By Jens Andersson for the STDF. Available at: www.standardsfacility.org/sites/default/files/STDF_Meta-evaluation_EN.pdf
- UNCTAD/WBG, 2019. The Unseen Impact of Non-Tariff Measures: Insights from a new database. joint publication by UNCTAD and the World Bank. Available at: https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/ditctab2018d2_en.pdf
- UNESCAP/UNCTAD. 2019 The Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report (APTIR) 2019: Navigating Non-tariff Measure towards Sustainable Development. Available at: <https://www.unescap.org/publications/APTIR2019>
- UNIDO, 2015. Trade Standards Compliance Report (TSCR). Available at: https://www.unido.org/sites/default/files/2015-09/TSCR-2015_final_0.pdf
- UNIDO, 2013. Regional Trade Standards Compliance Report (TSCR). Available at: https://www.unido.org/sites/default/files/2013-12/UNIDO-IDE-JETRO_Regional_TSC_Report-East_Asia_2013_final_ebook_0.pdf
- UNIDO, 2010. Trade Standards Compliance Report (TSCR). Available at: https://www.unido.org/sites/default/files/2011-10/TSCR2010_0.PDF
- WTO/WBG, 2020. Women and Trade: The role of trade in promoting gender equality. Available at: https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/booksp_e/women_trade_pub2807_e.pdf

FIND OUT MORE:

 www.standardsfacility.org

 STDFScretariat@wto.org

 #STDF

