STDF

Standards and Trade
Development Facility

BEYOND RESULTS:

Learning the lessons from STDF Projects

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Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The objective of this report is to provide an independent assessment of the performance of STDF projects aimed at improving the quality and performance of future STDF projects. The report constitutes a meta-evaluation of STDF projects based on an in-depth review and analysis of the evaluation reports that have been produced on STDF projects to date. The analysis relies on a structured methodology to assess the quality of the reports, their findings and the lessons learned proposed by the authors of the reports. Projects were classified in three different categories: technical assistance activities, institution building and sector development.

By the end of September 2017, 61 STDF projects had been completed, of which 25 projects (41%) had been evaluated ex-post by external evaluators. A total of 22 evaluation reports were included in the assessment of quality and results in this report. All 25 evaluations were considered in the discussion on lessons learned. The distribution of the evaluated projects according to region and main SPS sector is relatively even, but there is a smaller coverage of institution building compared to the other main project types – technical assistance and sector development.

Most of the evaluation reports are deemed of good or very good quality in relation to what can be expected from small-budget evaluations of complex projects. This means that the evidence produced by the reports generally is of sufficient quality to constitute a reasonable basis for this meta-evaluation. It is very likely that the STDF Evaluation Guidelines have greatly contributed to a common structure (based on the OECD/DAC criteria for evaluation) and raised the quality of the evaluations.

In terms of performance, STDF projects score very highly on relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, but lower on impact and sustainability. Sector development projects demonstrate greater contribution to impact and sustainability than technical assistance and institution building projects, since the sector development projects can work with various stakeholders through the whole value chain and, importantly, reach out directly to small producers. Technical assistance and institution building projects may be more appropriate for testing tools and approaches in multi-country settings, but they would have to be designed carefully to be able to demonstrate any contribution to impact or sustainable results. Isolated technical assistance generally has very limited and intangible effects if not embedded in wider structures or processes.

A total of 126 lessons learned were identified in the evaluation reports relating to project design and implementation, involvement of public and private sector actors, the sector context and the wider enabling environment of STDF projects. It should be noted that the externally evaluated projects considered in this study were all completed in or before 2015, and STDF projects have given greater attention to these areas since 2015.

The analysis identified four aspects of STDF projects that would benefit from more rigorous consideration (than was the case in the evaluated projects). These include:

- The importance of grounding projects locally;
- Unpacking and clarifying the theories of change of STDF projects;
- Planning for sustainability of results; and
- More systematic and focused attention to gender and the environment, within the context of broader socio-economic considerations and the Sustainable Development Goals.

There are several possible ways forward that could increase the way STDF as a facility draws and disseminates lessons from STDF projects. These include to reflect on whether:

- STDF's rules and procedures for projects have influenced project design and performance;
- More can be done to support the dissemination, learning and follow-up of individual STDF projects in beneficiary countries and regions;
- The sharing of good practice on SPS capacity building can be enhanced; and
- Ensuring that the results coming out of STDF projects are effectively integrated into the current results reporting of the STDF and in line with the expectations of STDF's partners, donors and beneficiary countries.

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study the following recommendations are made to the STDF:

1. **Quality of evaluations.** Continue to safeguard the quality and comparability of STDF project evaluations by mandating that the STDF Evaluation Guidelines are applied both to ex-post evaluations and end-of-project evaluations commissioned by project implementers, and encouraging the use of theory-based approaches to evaluation to more clearly distinguish between outputs and outcomes.
2. **Timing and coverage of evaluations.** Ensure that STDF project evaluations are not conducted more than two years after the end of a project and conduct ex-post evaluation mainly for projects that can be expected to have contributed to sustainable higher-level results (impact and sustainability).
3. **Project quality.** Consider all STDF projects to be part of on-going complex and constantly changing processes in beneficiary countries and regions, which means consideration of local contexts, theory-based results frameworks, adaptive management, and follow-up.
4. **Development focus.** Integrate aspects of poverty, gender and environment, within the context of broader socio-economic considerations and the Sustainable Development Goals, into project design and implementation.
5. **Lessons learned.** Deepen analysis and dissemination of lessons learned and good practice from STDF projects and those of other donors within specific themes, e.g. poverty reduction, gender, the country level context and sector development/value-chain approaches.

1. INTRODUCTION

Background

The Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) is a global partnership and trust fund that supports developing countries in building their capacity to implement international Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) standards, guidelines and recommendations to improve their human, animal and plant health status and ability to gain and maintain market access.

An important part of STDF's activities is to provide support and funding for the development and implementation of projects that strengthen SPS capacity in developing countries to promote market access. By the end of September 2017, the STDF had approved 80 project grants, benefitting public and private sector stakeholders globally. STDF projects aim to address key food safety, animal and/or plant health issues that affect the ability of developing countries to gain and/or maintain market access.

The STDF regularly commissions independent ex-post evaluations of a selection of the projects funded by the Facility. The objective of these evaluations, according to the STDF Evaluation Guidelines[1], is to:

- Verify whether the project achieved the objectives set out in the project document;
- Identify if the project contributed to any of the higher-level objectives of the STDF;
- Identify key experiences, good practice and lessons of interest to the beneficiaries of the evaluated project, as well as to STDF Working Group members and development partners more broadly (including for future STDF programme development).

This body of existing evaluations provides an opportunity to analyse and synthesise the key findings, experiences, results and lessons learned from STDF projects. Such an exercise is part of STDF's on-going efforts to monitor and learn from results and strengthen its rules and procedures for project applications and evaluations. STDF's current monitoring and evaluation system is guided by its monitoring and evaluation framework (STDF 509).[2] Moreover, STDF is regularly subject to external evaluations[3] and has also previously synthesised lessons from an early set of project evaluations.[4]

1 See: www.standardsfacility.org/sites/default/files/STDF_214_Evaluation_Guidelines_2018_Final.pdf

2 See: www.standardsfacility.org/sites/default/files/ME_Framework_EN.pdf

3 See the last external evaluation of STDF (Jan. 2014) at: www.standardsfacility.org/sites/default/files/STDF_MTR_Jan-14.pdf

4 Overview of Evaluations of STDF Projects. Lessons learned and recommendations, STDF 205 (rev.1 December 2009). See also the STDF Briefing note on good practice in SPS technical cooperation (Dec. 2008) at: www.standardsfacility.org/sites/default/files/STDF_Briefing_No1_EN_web.pdf.

Objective

The objective of this study is to provide an independent assessment of the performance of STDF projects aimed at improving the quality and performance of future STDF projects. The report constitutes a meta-evaluation of STDF projects based on an in-depth review and analysis of the evaluation reports that have been produced on STDF projects to date. The analysis relies on a structured methodology to assess the quality of the reports, their findings and the lessons learned proposed by the authors of the evaluation reports.

2. STUDY DESIGN

Approach

The study methodology is grounded in a 'realist' approach to evaluations. The realist approach is based on the insight that the complexity and context-specificity of development interventions make it impossible to firmly determine '*what works?*' Instead, we can use evidence to build and test a conceptual framework of '*What works for whom in what circumstances, in what respects and how?*'[5] This approach fits well with the strong emphasis on learning that permeates the Terms of Reference for this study.

Since the evaluation reports are such vital data sources for this meta-evaluation it is important to consider the underlying rules and procedures that guide the design and evaluation of STDF projects. These issues are considered at some length in Annex 1. Here, a few observations with implications for this study are worth highlighting:

- STDF's rules and procedures on project design and evaluation broadly follow established international practice.

- STDF project applications are required to include a standardized logical framework since 2009 that specifies the planned activities, expected results at various levels (outputs, outcomes and impact), in addition to indicators, sources of verification and assumptions/risks.

- STDF evaluations are guided by STDF's Evaluation Guidelines that notably draw on the OECD/DAC criteria for evaluation: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability and lessons learnt. The guidelines also contain a set of key evaluation questions and a template for the evaluation report structure, including executive summary, introduction, methodology, findings and analysis (structured according to the evaluation criteria and questions), conclusions and recommendations, and lessons learned.

- STDF's rules and procedures have evolved over time. While almost all evaluation reports follow the OECD/DAC criteria, some of the early projects that were evaluated did not have log-frames, which made it difficult for the evaluators to assess the projects against expected results. Additionally issues pertaining to gender and the environment were less in focus in STDF's rules and procedures before 2015.

Overall, the standardization of STDF's projects and evaluations greatly facilitates this meta-analysis, by allowing for the use of standardized criteria of assessment that can be directly applied to the evaluation reports.

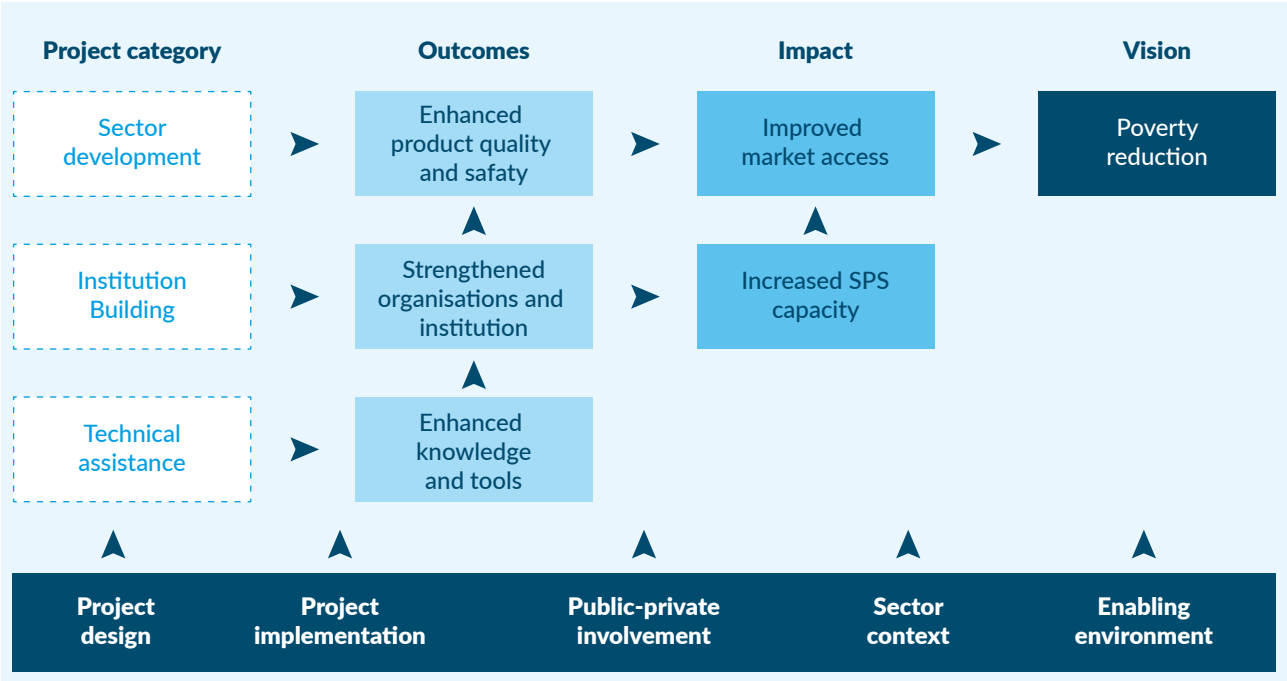
Methodology

The conceptual framework that has been used in this study is shown in Figure 1. It should be emphasized that it is a highly simplified map of the context of STDF projects. The framework shows three key dimensions of STDF projects. STDF's three main results levels (outcomes, impact and vision) are listed at the top. Under project type

5 Pawson, Ray et al 2004. *Realist synthesis*: An Introduction, ESRC Research Methods Programme, University of Manchester, RMP Methods Paper 2/2004.

(encompassing a set of activities and outputs), three different project categories are shown and at the bottom of the diagram, five categories of enabling conditions that are expected to influence the performance of SPS capacity building have been listed. They include project design and implementation, involvement of public-private actors, the sector context and the wider enabling environment of a project. The discussion on lessons learned below is organized according to these categories.

Figure 1. Conceptual framework for meta-analysis of STDF evaluations



The development of the methodology (particularly the categories for classifying lessons learned) benefitted from participation of the author in an STDF PPG workshop on Spillover Effects of Trade-Related SPS Capacity Building Programmes on the Domestic Food Safety Situation, which was organized by Michigan State University in Geneva on 1-2 November 2017.[6]

For this study, the evaluated STDF projects have been classified in three categories:

1. Technical assistance activities, such as workshops, trainings, studies and development of assessment tools;

2. More elaborate institution building aimed at reforming and/or strengthening administrations and engaging the private sector; and

3. Sector development that commonly applied a value-chain approach to support individual sectors, involving a wide range of local stakeholders.

6 Many thanks to Morag Webb (COLEACP) for suggesting a first set of enabling conditions during the STDF workshop on the spillover effects of trade-related food safety capacity building. See: www.standardsfacility.org/PPG-535.

Such a classification can never be perfect. In practice, many projects contain features of all three project categories, which is illustrated in the diagram by the dashed lines. However, it is important to make a distinction between different categories of projects, since we have different expectations of results depending on the project category. This is shown in the diagram by the arrows leading from the project categories to the respective outcomes. Technical assistance projects usually target individual public officials or representatives of the formal private sector, while institution building aims at wider change among public and private sector organizations. Sector development usually involves both technical assistance and institution building within a given sector, but also commonly reach out directly to both small and large farmers and producers. We can thus expect sector development projects to contribute more directly to higher level impact, than a technical assistance activity that must work itself through a much longer results chain to have an impact.

It should be noted that the conceptual framework does not distinguish between countries and SPS sub-sectors. The main reason is that arguably the fundamental challenges facing STDF projects are similar across countries and sectors. Moreover, the sample of evaluation reports is too small to provide lessons learned along those dimensions.

The methodology used for this study involves the following steps:

1. Formulating the review questions based on the Terms of Reference;

2. Identifying and collecting the evidence in the form of STDF project evaluation reports;

3. Assessing the quality of the evaluation reports against a set of criteria, inspired by the UNICEF Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System[7];

4. Assessment of the performance of the evaluated projects, based on the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria;

5. Extraction and synthesis of lessons learned from the reports, based on a conceptual framework explained below; and

6. Drafting and revision of the report and presentation for the STDF Working Group.

Steps 3 and 4 are based on standardized criteria that are summarized in Annex 2. Efforts have been made to make these criteria as simple as possible. Ratings of different aspects have been kept simple with three (Yes, No, Not clear) or four (Very good - fully satisfactory, Good - mostly satisfactory, Poor - not or barely satisfactory, Not addressed/not clear) grade scales depending on the issue. For step 4 a summary motivation is given for each main rating. The given ratings are by necessity subjective and represent an interpretation of the report texts (which in turn are also subjective and partial interpretations of project achievements by the individual report authors). In this synthesis report, efforts have therefore been made to focus on overall patterns and lessons learned, with individual projects used as illustrative examples.

The STDF evaluations are generally produced with limited budgets and time by individual authors, which means that we need to be realistic in our expectations of what relatively limited evaluation reports can yield in terms of assessment of results (Box 1). In addition, the consistency of the reports is also affected by the fact that STDF has strengthened its rules and procedures of project applications and evaluations over time as mentioned above and

7 www.unicef.org/evaluation/index_GEROS.html

in Annex 1. However, from a 'realist' perspective even a diverse set of evaluations can contribute constructively to our understanding and learning about various project approaches and contexts.

Lastly, while this meta-analysis looks at past experiences, there are emerging trends in the development community that are worth considering when reflecting on the future of STDF projects, including:

- The multi-dimensional challenges addressed by the Sustainable Development Goals;
- The growing attention to horizontal issues such as gender and the environment; and
- The Doing Development Differently movement that emphasizes the involvement of local stakeholders and adaptive management to increase development effectiveness.[8]

Box 1. Challenges involved in conducting small evaluations in complex contexts

Relevance. At a general level, this criterion is the easiest to assess, given that technical experts usually have an idea of the relevant needs in developing countries. What is more difficult to assess is whether the focus and approach proposed are relevant to the more specific needs and contexts of local stakeholders, since this requires in-depth local knowledge and consideration of alternative types of support.

Effectiveness. Assessing delivery and quality of outputs are usually the core of evaluations as they are relatively concrete and easy to measure. Much more difficult is the assessment of outcomes, i.e. the changes produced by the outputs, since changes take time and many other factors influence results at this level. Often, evaluators need to rely on the opinions of stakeholders or case stories to assess the contribution of projects to outcomes.

Efficiency. Timing of delivery and spending against the project budget are easy to assess, while value-for-money is very challenging because it is unusual to find good comparators or counterfactual situations.

Impact. Assessing higher level results are generally challenging and mainly relevant for projects that can be expected to contribute to such results (see discussion on the conceptual framework below). For projects with a narrow focus or scope of intervention, however, it is less relevant to assess impact, although the likelihood of contributing to impact can be discussed.

Sustainability. Again, a challenging task, although an assessment can usually be made of the actual or potential viability and institutionalization of changes in capacity and service delivery to which the project has contributed at least in the short to medium term.

8 See: www.doingdevelopmentdifferently.com

3. COVERAGE AND QUALITY OF STDF PROJECT EVALUATION REPORTS

Coverage of reports

The first analytical step is to identify the portfolio of reports that constitutes the basis for the meta-analysis. By the end of September 2017, 61 STDF projects had been completed during the life-time of STDF, of which 25 projects (41%) had been evaluated ex-post by external evaluators (see in Annex 3). The evaluated projects were randomly selected for evaluation (see Annex 1).

From the group of evaluated projects, the evaluation of STDF/PG/126 (Horticulture Development Council of Tanzania Support Project) was excluded from the meta-analysis because the report was not approved by the STDF. The projects STDF/PG/255 (Regional initiative on the fight against fruit fly in West Africa) and STDF/PG/313 (Continuation of the West African Fruit Fly Initiative, WAFFI) were assessed jointly since the report treats them together.[9] Additionally, the evaluation of STDF/PG/335 (Strengthening Phytosanitary Controls in the Floriculture Sector in Uganda) was excluded from the portfolio as it is an end-of-project evaluation that was not commissioned by the STDF and does not follow the OECD/DAC criteria. This left a total of 22 evaluation reports that were included in the assessment of quality and results. However, all 25 evaluations were considered in the discussion on lessons learned.

The distribution of the 22 evaluations included in the full analysis according to geographic region, main SPS sector, main project type and time period is shown in Annex 4. The distribution according to region and main SPS sector is relatively even, but there is a smaller coverage of institution building projects, compared to the other main project types – technical assistance and sector development.

As shown in Annex 4, there have been significant time lags between the end of projects, finalization of the evaluation reports and this meta-analysis. The most recent project included in the analysis ended in July 2014 (the excluded STDF/PG/335 ended in May 2015). The average time lag between the formal end of the project and evaluation report is slightly over two years, varying between one month and over five years. In six of the eight cases, when the gap was more than 2.5 years between the end of the project and the evaluation, the evaluation reports also note that the data collection was negatively affected by the long delay because of loss of institutional memory and difficulties in getting in touch with people involved in project implementation. This suggests that two years may be a maximum cut-off for effective ex-post evaluations, even though this depends on the type of project.

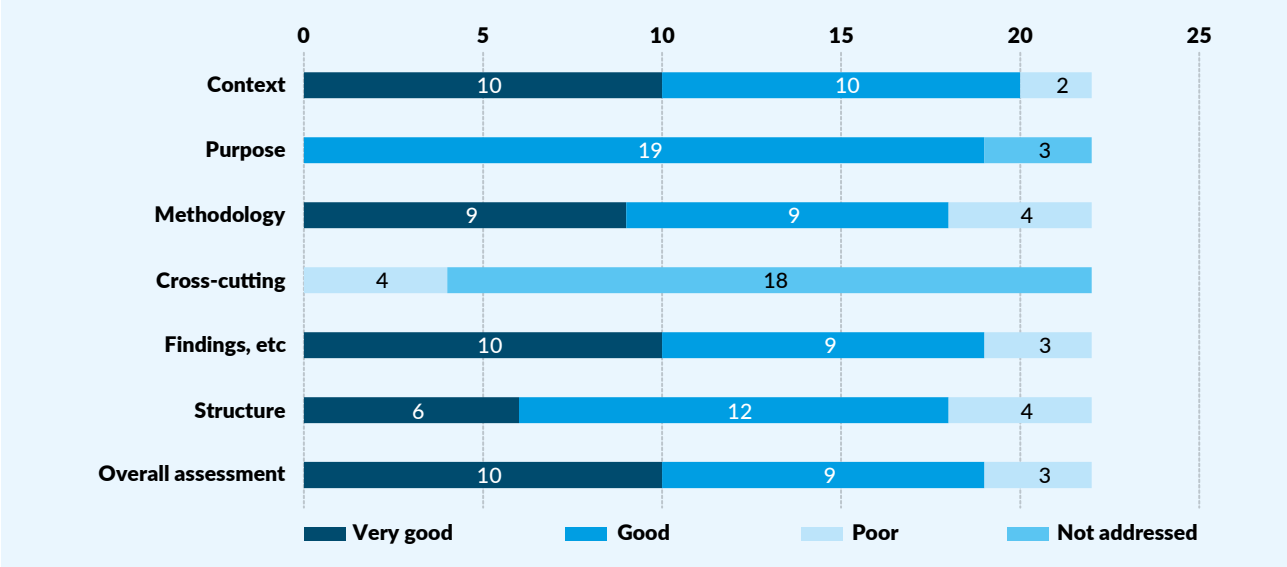
Quality of reports

The quality of reports is assessed according to seven criteria, with 18 sub-criteria. The main findings are summarized in Figure 2 (the "purpose" criterion is only assessed through yes/no). Most of the reports are deemed of good or very good quality in relation to what can be expected from small-budget evaluations of complex projects. This

9 A synthesis report covering four projects related to fruit flies in West Africa (STDF/PG/255, 283, 287, and 313) was not included in this analysis.

means that the evidence produced by the reports generally is of sufficient quality to constitute a reasonable basis for this meta-analysis. It is very likely that the STDF Evaluation Guidelines have greatly contributed to a common structure and raised the quality of the evaluations. This is shown by the fact that more than half of the reports mention the STDF guidelines explicitly and 19 of the reports are organized according to the OECD/DAC criteria.

Figure 2. Assessment of quality of evaluation reports



The report sample is too small to allow for firm analysis of trends over time, but it can be noted that the last six evaluations (produced in 2015 and 2016) were rated 'Good' or 'Very good'. By far, the weakest point of the reports concerns cross-cutting issues, notably gender and environment, which are not mentioned in most of the reports. This is not surprising since STDF only started to pay attention to these issues systematically in project development and review in 2015. Other specific potential areas of improvement include:

- Use of a theory-based approach to assess the project's results framework and as a tool for evaluating the contribution to higher level results (not applied in any of the reports);
- More systematic discussion on methods and data and their limitations (poor or lacking in eight of the reports); and
- Clearer link between findings and conclusions (poor in seven of the reports) and between conclusions and recommendations (poor or lacking in nine evaluations).

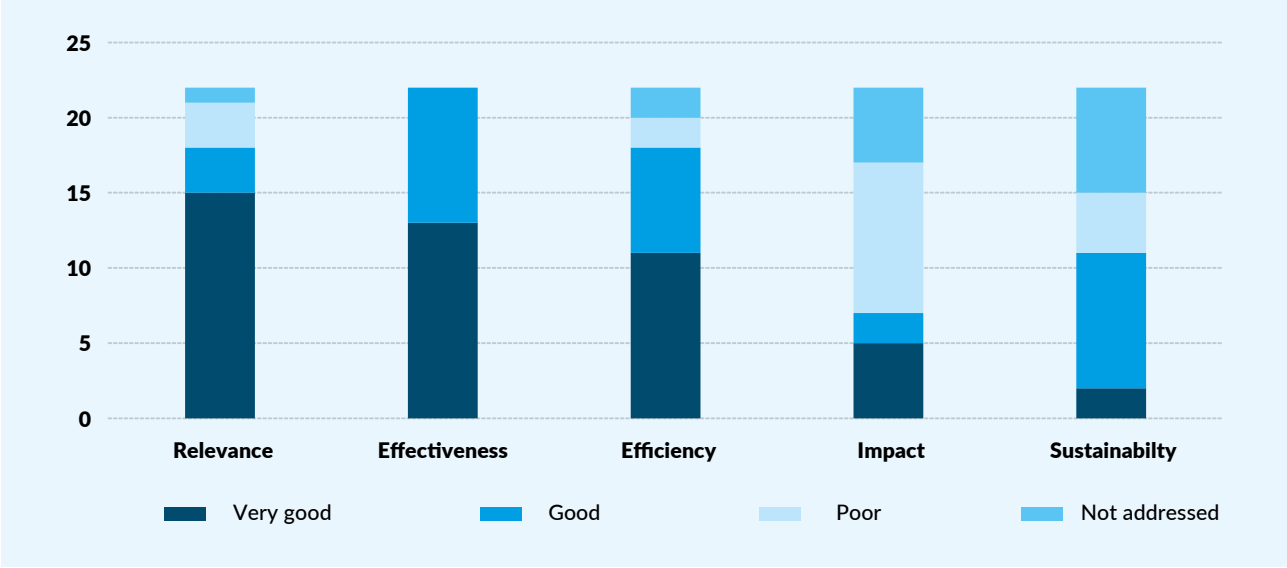
Being clear about the link between the evidence source (e.g. documents, interviews, surveys) and the findings (e.g. under effectiveness or efficiency) is also something that can be improved. All these issues are related to ensuring transparency and rigour of the evaluation process, rather than technical knowledge on SPS issues. It is an understandable challenge to find both these competencies and qualities in one individual evaluator.

4. PERFORMANCE OF STDF PROJECTS

Having determined that the evaluation reports are generally of adequate quality (i.e. good or very good), we can use them as a basis for assessing the overall performance of the STDF projects. Again, these assessments are solely based on the findings and conclusions of the reports and are therefore subjective. However, interestingly the exercise generates findings that are very close to our expectations. Figure 3 summarizes the ratings for the whole portfolio of 22 projects per OECD/DAC criteria. We see that the share of "Very good" ratings fall as we move from relevance to sustainability as the criteria get increasingly challenging for projects to attain and for evaluators to evaluate.

Overall, STDF projects score very highly on relevance (18 projects scoring 'Very good' or 'Good'). This means that the evaluators generally believed that the projects had the right focus in relation to the needs of beneficiaries and the strategic goals of the STDF. An example is the succinct assessment made by the evaluator of STDF/PG/326: ***"Highly relevant for the beneficiaries and fitted well with the strategic goals of the STDF"***. Low scores on relevance were only given to three projects because they were not sufficiently adapted to country circumstances or country ownership was weak.

Figure 3. Performance of STDF projects by OECD/DAC criteria



Projects can also generally be considered effective (22 projects scoring 'Very good' or 'Good'). For the projects scoring 'Very good' the evaluators explicitly concluded that the projects had been effective, believed that most if not all outputs had been achieved and/or could give evidence of outcome related results. A 'Good' score was given to projects that failed to deliver on one or more significant outputs.

While the delivery and quality of outputs are well assessed in the reports, it is more difficult to find examples of concrete outcomes. Eight of the reports do not provide any clear indications of outcome level results. The distinction between outputs and outcomes is central because it is at the outcome level that the change, reform or use occur that open the way for wider impact and sustainability. For example, one report notes on a technical

assistance project (STDF/PG/173) that: ***"while the workshop fulfilled its purpose of introducing a structured methodology to assess capacity-building needs the project was less successful in ensuring the application of this structured methodology at the country level"***. The use of a theory-based approach to evaluation could be helpful for evaluators to distinguish between outputs and outcomes.

The efficiency criterion was also met fully or with satisfaction in most of the projects (18 projects scoring 'Very good' or 'Good'). The reports mainly consider efficiency in relation to timing and budget, while none of the reports can give comparative evidence of value-for-money. When the project experienced some issues with implementation it scored 'Good'. The report on STDF/PG/326 illustrates this: ***"The project overcame numerous difficulties and made efficient use of available resources. Some 47% of deliverables, including most of the key activities of the project, were delayed by between 7 and 12 months when compared to the target dates given in the original work-plan. As a result, much of the project work was compressed into the final 10 months of the project (including the approved extension period)."***

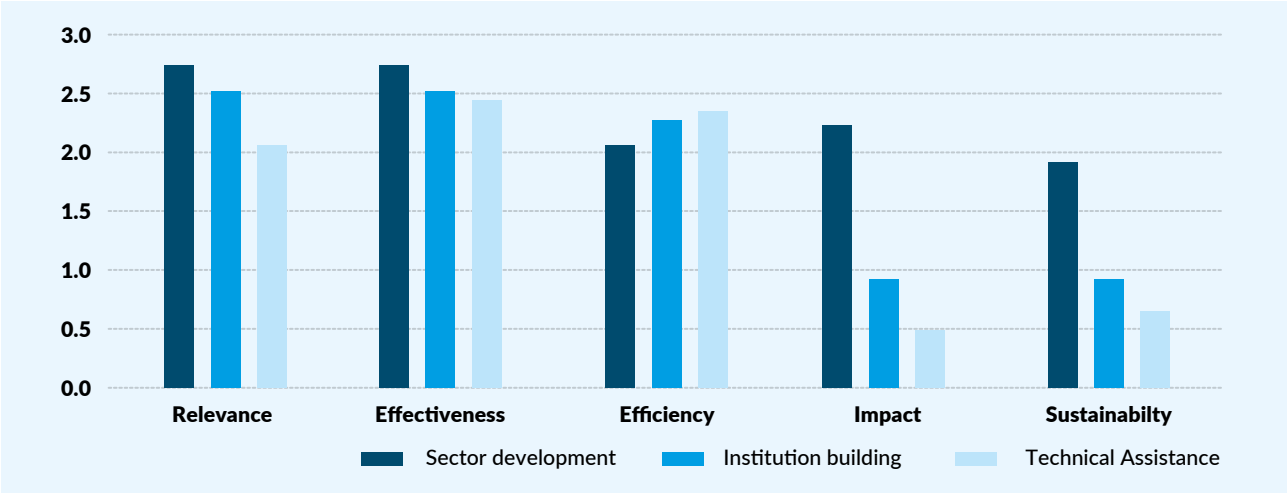
As far as can be gauged from the evaluation reports, eight of the projects were delayed by on average 10 months. In three projects STDF did not allow for an extension of implementation time or budget (STDF/PG/019, STDF/PG/134, and STDF/PG/145). This is an issue we will get back to when discussing lessons learned as it pertains to on-going discussions on the importance of adaptive management within the international development community.

Unsurprisingly, it is on the impact criterion that projects score the lowest. In fact, for 15 of the projects impact level results are either not satisfactory or not assessed. An example of high impact again comes from STDF/PG/326: ***"The project had a significant and lasting impact on management of food safety risks within fruit and vegetable value chains in Thailand and Viet Nam. All of the beneficiaries visited have gained benefits in terms of improved market access, higher incomes and lower levels of product rejections"***. Here the author argues in a convincing way that there is a clear contribution from the project to improved market access. In the evaluation of STDF/PG/173, a technical assistance project, this contribution is not clear: ***"the ways in which this would be reflected in the improved performance of the national food control system to provide a safe supply of food for consumers, and therefore, contributing to improved public health, is difficult to assess."***

The STDF projects score slightly better on sustainability than on impact, although only two projects get a 'Very high' score. In seven reports, sustainability has not been properly assessed. A representative of 'Good' sustainability is the following comment (STDF/PG/019): ***"The project has the potential for sustainability over the long term. At the same time, despite these achievements, there remain issues that could negatively impact the long-term sustainability of the benefits such as sustained upkeep and technical management of the web-based infrastructure."*** The overall impression from reading the reports is that some projects do leave a legacy, but that longer-term sustainability is dependent on follow-up support or changes in the local context.

To understand these results, we need to consider the expectations we can have of different project categories. The conceptual framework shows that one-off technical assistance activities are likely to have less higher-level results compared to institution building or sector development. Figure 4 gives some empirical backing to this claim. For convenience, the ratings have been translated in the figure into a numerical scale from 0 to 3 and presented as averages per project category.

Figure 4. Performance of STDF projects by OECD/DAC criteria and project category



There are notable, but relatively minor differences between project category on relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. In fact, because they are simpler to implement we could expect technical assistance activities to score highly on effectiveness and efficiency. It is in relation to impact and sustainability that we see the largest differences between project types. Sector development projects score much higher on both accounts, while the technical assistance projects average below one. Institution building projects are at an intermediary position (keeping in mind that there are only four such projects). While no technical assistance project scores higher than one ('Poor'), three of those projects do achieve a rate of 'Good' sustainability, as in this example from STDF/PG/015: ***"The benefits of the project have been found to continue after the end of the training, both at the individual participant level and at the institutional level. However, sustaining the training effort and providing capacity improvements were identified as the two main key factors that ensure the sustainability of results."*** In contrast, sector development projects get on average high ratings on impact and sustainability, showing that the participatory and value-chain approaches that tend to characterize such projects yield tangible results. Seven of the ten sector development projects clearly targeted small producers and other producer groups directly.

Many evaluation reports discuss external factors that affected negatively the implementation of projects. Most of these factors, such as lack of political will and local capacity, are not surprising, but taken together they give concrete examples of the type of risks and conditions STDF project need to deal with (Table 1). This is an appropriate introduction to the next section on lessons learned, which to a large degree focuses on the importance of grounding project design, implementation and follow-up in local contexts.

Given that parallel thinking has been going on to identify and capture spill-overs on trade-related SPS capacity building programmes on the domestic food safety situation, it seems relevant to also assess this aspect of the evaluation reports. Unfortunately, such an exercise yields little information. Only three reports mention explicitly spill-over consequences of the projects.

In the case of the regional fruit fly projects in West Africa (STDF/PG/255, 313), the report finds that: ***"An unexpected impact of the projects was to put in contact - via the training sessions - actors of the sector and thus to highlight the interest (undisputed) of the pooling of efforts within the sector going into the sense of a quality approach"*** (own translation from French). The same author notes for the project targeting the mango sector in Mali (STDF/PG/283) that the project contributed indirectly to the development of quality standards for other products and led to a clarification of the roles and partnership of the public and private sectors. In the project on aflatoxin in Brazil (STDF/PG/114), the author suggests that the dissemination of the results of the scientific work sponsored by the project was an unintended

impact. This bodes the question whether such dissemination should not have been included in the original project design to boost the intended impact of the project.

Table 1. External factors affecting implementation and results of STDF projects

Category	Issue	Project
Trade policy in importing countries	Increased testing of floriculture shipments constraining market access	STDF/PG/335
Natural disasters	Flooding and draught Avian influenza	STDF/PG/326 STDF/PG/013, 014
Regional integration	Considerable delays in formulating regional programme to fight against fruit fly	STDF/PG/255, 287, 313
Donor coordination	Other larger donor projects overrun the STDF project	STDF/PG/246
National ownership, capacity and reform	Lack of political support, legal reform, coordination between stakeholders, resources, and technical knowledge Issues with good governance, capacity and sustainable funding in the SPS authorities Certification processes and procedures not developed (outside the scope of the project) Staff-turnover	STDF/PG/133 STDF/PG/015 STDF/PG/155 STDF/PG/134
Private sector strategies	Private sector re-directed focus on export markets with less strict SPS standards	STDF/PG/114

5. LESSONS LEARNED FROM STDF PROJECT EVALUATIONS

This chapter builds on a compilation and discussion of the lessons learned proposed in the evaluation reports. A total of 126 lessons learned were identified in the evaluation reports. These lessons learned have been categorized according to the five enabling conditions proposed in the conceptual framework. During this work it proved difficult to separate project design from implementation, and sector context from enabling environment. The distribution of these lessons learned are shown in Figure 5 broken down by enabling condition and by whether the lessons learned were negative (i.e. based on a condition lacking in the projects) or positive (i.e. based on a condition present in the projects).

As shown, most of the lessons learned can be related to project design. This is probably because the design phase determines so many aspects of a project. We also see that 70% of the lessons learned are based on conditions that were perceived by the evaluators to be missing in the projects. This negative bias is not surprising given that evaluators tend to focus on issues that should be corrected in the future. For this chapter, the distinction between negative and positive lessons learned is less important. What matters is to identify areas that are crucial to consider when striving to enhance the quality of future STDF projects.

Figure 5. Distribution of lessons learned from STDF projects

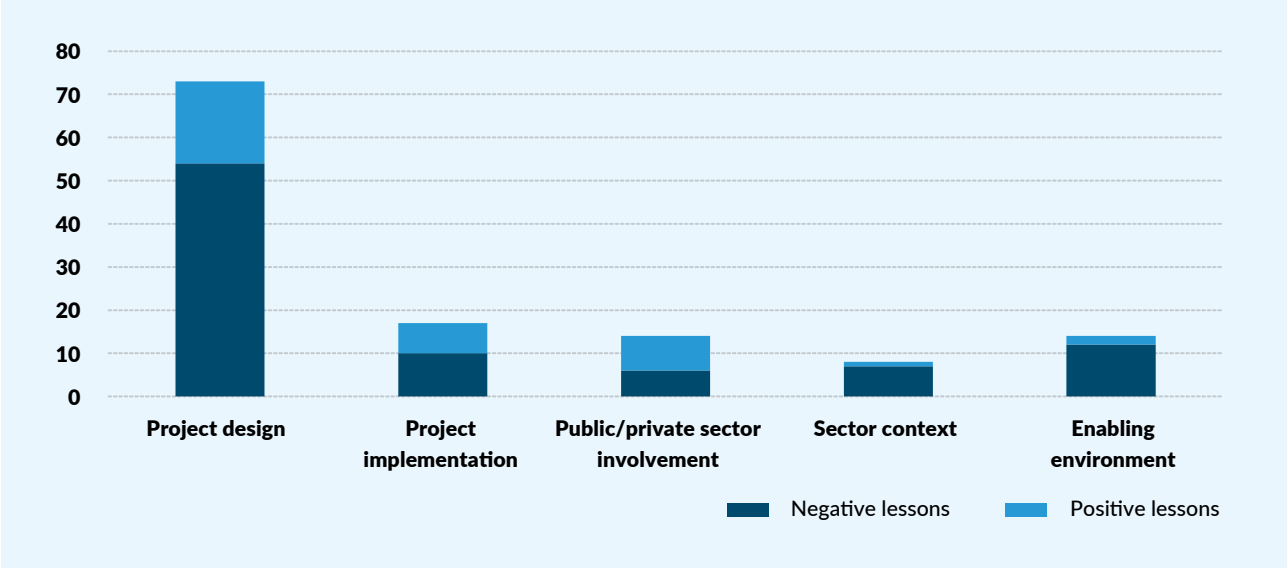
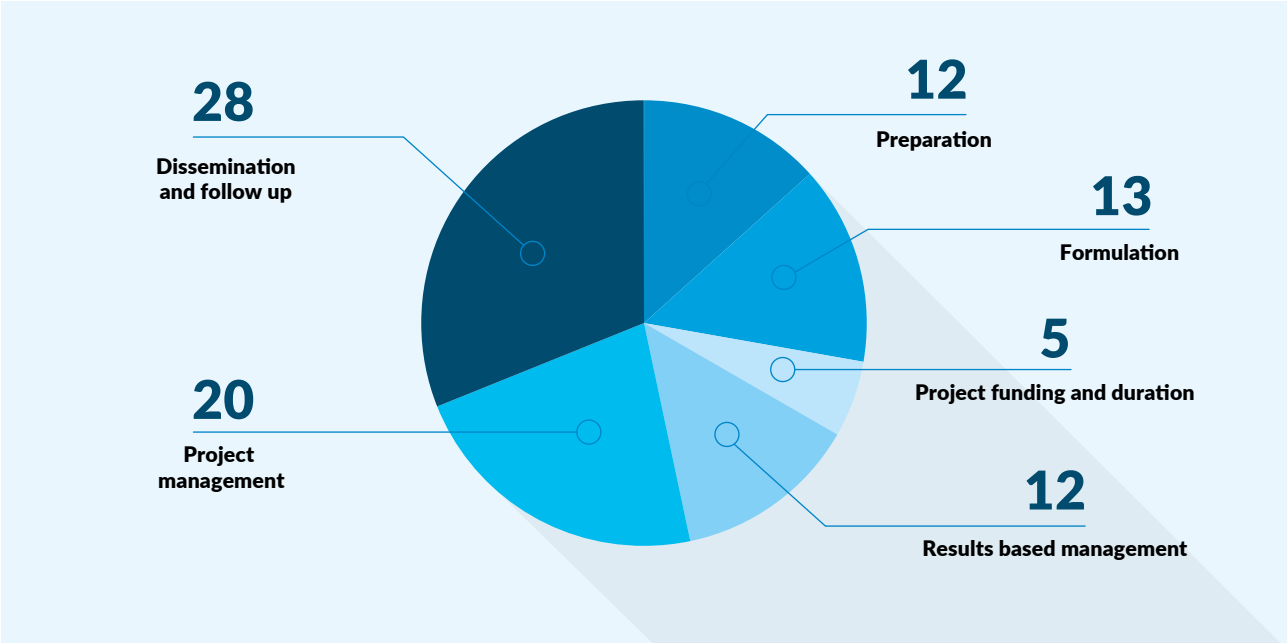


Figure 6. Number and distribution of lessons learned by project cycle element



Project design and implementation

Of the 126 lessons learned identified, 90 were related to project design and implementation. It is useful to organize these lessons according to elements of a standard project cycle:

- Preparation (attention to local context, needs and ownership);
- Formulation (scope, approach and methodologies);
- Funding and duration (financial resources and timing);
- Results-based management (results framework, monitoring and evaluation);
- Project management (structure, management and adaptability); and
- Dissemination and follow-up (communication, scaling-up and follow-up).

Figure 6 shows that taken together the evaluation reports cover the different elements quite evenly, except for dissemination and follow-up. These six elements will now be discussed one by one.

Project preparation

The first lesson coming out from the evaluations concerns the importance of assessing local needs and contexts in addition to ensuring local ownership during project preparation. One success factor of the STDF project in the cattle sector in Costa Rica" (STDF/PG/116) was that ***"the traceability system was aligned with the needs and resources of Costa Rica and the requirements of international trade and individual buyers."***

Several reports recommend conducting a needs analysis to adapt projects to the local context (e.g. STDF/PG/134). Such analysis can range from a wider scoping study to better target projects (STDF/PG/020), to cost benefit analysis (STDF/PG/283; 259) or more targeted needs assessments for example of training needs (STDF/PG/015). In the aflatoxin project in Brazil (STDF/PG/114) a socio-economic study was undertaken by the project, but it ***"... provided very general recommendations and missed opportunities to explore the options and roles of different players more comprehensively".***

A comprehensive and systematic approach is to use capacity evaluation tools (STDF/PG/145). While such tools have the merit of providing a structured basis for analysis, there are important issues to consider when they are used: the purpose of the tool (stimulating a local process or rapid assessment to get funding); the content (high international standards or locally adapted); the link to resources to follow-up on the results of the needs assessment; and assuring the quality of the evaluation process itself.

The crucial importance of local ownership should also be emphasized here, although this issue will also be dealt with below. A simple letter of support may not be enough to ensure ownership in a technical assistance project (STDF/PG/173). Reflecting on the weak local ownership of Cambodian authorities in STDF/PG/246, the evaluator suggests that ***"The terms of reference for the project should explicitly require activities by the project team to engage the attention and interest of the local Ministries/agencies"***.

Box 2. Good practice to increase effectiveness of technical assistance activities

- Understanding training activities as a component of a broader strategy for capacity development (STDF/PG/173)
- Considering technical assistance offered previously (STDF/PG/134)
- Using real cases of market access negotiations to fuel interaction between public and private sectors (STDF/PG/328)
- Tailoring training to specific value-chains (STDF/PG/326)
- Fostering information exchange and interactive learning (STDF/PG/037)
- Making available and disseminating the training material (STDF/PG/037)
- Managing diversity of regional needs in training (STDF/PG/134)

Project formulation

The next issue is the choice of project scope, approach and methodologies. The evaluation reports did not explicitly reflect on the choice of type of project, with one exception that favoured focusing on phytosanitary issues preventing export of specific products compared to building general capacity building (STDF/PG/113). As shown above sector development projects can be expected to more clearly contribute to higher-level results than the other project categories, but at the cost of narrowing the scope to a sector and potentially increasing the complexity of implementation.

STDF has successfully supported sector development projects both at a regional level in the case of the fight against fruit fly in West Africa (WAFFI) (STDF/PG/255, 313) and nationally, such as in the case of Rwanda Horticulture Export Standards Initiative (RHESI) (STDF/PG/145). One feature of such approaches is the possibility to apply participatory approaches (STDF/PG/259) and learning by doing (STDF/PG/155).

The evaluator of the MOTSSA project in Nicaragua (STDF/PG/155) reports that: ***"the importance of mixing practical with theoretical training – the field demonstration plots in the identified key demand-driven commercial crops, the certification and adoption of GAP/GMPs and the development of model infrastructure were really important in getting a clear message for change to the farmer."***

The evaluation reports also gave evidence of how STDF projects have applied good practices to enhance the effectiveness of technical assistance activities, in particular in the design of various types of trainings, either as stand-alone projects or as part of broader approaches (Box 2).

Project funding and duration

Issues relating to project funding and duration are particularly important in the complex and unpredictable contexts of sector development projects. These projects usually involve multiple stakeholder and activities, which put pressure on time and resources. Additionally, even though these projects are designed as holistic and comprehensive they are still limited compared to the substantial recurrent needs of governments and producers in most supported countries. This creates expectations for scaling up and follow up among beneficiaries that need to be managed, something which will be discussed further below.

The report on the MACBETH project in Viet Nam and Thailand (STDF/PG/326) suggests that the allocated project was too short: ***"This type of project should really run for 3-5 years and have a higher level of resources to allow for greater mentoring support of trainees."***[10] One challenge is a mismatch between planned activities and budget, and to address new needs that arise during implementation, as in STDF/PG/019 and STDF/PG/283, a situation that underpinned a suggestion for establishing a trust fund to simplify funding and ensure continuity. Another remedy to resource constraints is obviously to leverage resources from partners and other donors. In recent years, this has been a recurrent feature of STDF projects and monitored by the STDF Secretariat. The evaluation reports are, however, relatively silent on this issue, except for the cattle project in Costa Rica (STDF/PG/116), where this was done successfully.

A related issue is that actual implementation periods may be shorter than on paper, for instance due to delays in sub-contracting within the project as in the MACBETH project in Viet Nam and Thailand (STDF/PG/326) and the SPS project in Viet Nam (STDF/PG/259). The laconic recommendation made in the first STDF evaluation report (STDF/PG/013) that ***"launching a project under constraining time conditions is to be avoided"***, undoubtedly still has merit.

10 The maximum implementation period of STDF projects was increased to three years in 2011.

Results-based management

The results-based management of the projects are not covered at great length in the evaluation reports, which may be because there was less focus on this issue in the STDF's early years or insufficient experience on behalf of the evaluators. As we have seen there is usually little explicit reflection in the reports on the theory of change of the projects or assessment of the log-frame indicators. However, there are some lessons learned on results-based management worth highlighting.

Initially, STDF project applicants were not required to develop a logical framework, as is currently the case. This prompted the evaluator of project STDF/PG/014 (that ended in 2006) to write: ***"The STDF should insist on more robust analysis of intervention logic (including cause-and-effect relationships) and external risks and assumptions, and on the definition of objectively verifiable indicators of progress, before financing its projects."*** Subsequent evaluators note the absence or low quality of logical frameworks in later projects, which makes evaluations more difficult (STDF/PG/155, 283, 287).

Assumedly, the current STDF requirements have redressed this issue. The other main issue concerns the delay between the end of projects and the ex-post evaluation noted above. Three reports (STDF/PG/145, 255, 313) note that a delay of more than two to three years makes it difficult to find the relevant stakeholders and collect precise information. One way of countering this problem is to establish and store a database of people involved in a project (STDF/PG/134, 155). The STDF website includes individual project pages with project documents and other relevant materials.

Lastly, there is a call for follow-up to technical assistance projects, as in the case of the report on the risk analysis and risk assessment training in India (STDF/PG/120) that argues that follow-up surveys could have been sent out ***"…to enable retrospective comment, assessment of the use participants have made of their experience and of any work done as a result of the workshop"***. In the case of the newsletters produced on the fruit fly in West Africa (STDF/PG/287) the report suggests that a reader survey could have provided information on reader satisfaction.

Project management

Several interesting lessons learned proposed in the evaluation reports relate to the structure, resourcing and management of the STDF projects. The first pertains to the importance of a competent project team to manage project implementation, which is illustrated by two contrasting experiences in Paraguay (STDF/PG/019) and Nicaragua (STDF/PG/155). In the first case, the evaluation reports that: ***"the lack of communication between the international consultant and the local authorities is according to the unanimous view of the Paraguayan stakeholders the most important factor hindering the implementation of STDF 19"***, while in the second case the report notes that: ***"a strong, balanced project supervision team was recognized by stakeholders as one of the strong points of the project"***.

One challenge is to put together teams with the right mix of skills and experiences, e.g. covering both economic (costs and benefits) and technical aspects of SPS capacity building (STDF/PG/020). The use of international experts may place pressure on the budget and hamper certain project activities as in the case of the Beyond Compliance project (STDF/PG/328) in South East Asia. Instead, one strong lesson from sector development projects is the advantage of relying on local experts to reduce dependency on foreign experts, lower costs, ensure performance and increase local relevance (STDF/PG/116, 134).

More generally, local stakeholder involvement was crucial in organizing activities and increasing impact in the cases of the MOTSSA project in Nicaragua (STDF/PG/155) and the cattle sector support project in Costa Rica

(STDF/PG/116). In other projects the evaluators call for greater consideration and interaction with other donors (STDF/PG/255, 313, 155). An exceptional case is the SPS action plan project in Cambodia (STDF/PG/246), which showed that STDF may need to change or even cancel projects if confronted with a large overlapping project financed by another donor.

This highlights the more general value of allowing for flexibility, innovation and adaptive management in project design and implementation. The cattle sector in Costa Rica (STDF/PG/116) benefitted greatly from a gradual introduction of the traceability system, continuous improvement, and innovation. In addition, frequent reporting to STDF was considered a very effective way in solving problems in a timely manner (see also STDF/PG/114). Thorough initial planning in combination with revision of plans to accommodate unexpected changes was a key success factor in the MOTSSA project in Nicaragua (STDF/PG/155). In contrast, in the report on the fish sector project in West Africa (STDF/PG/134), the evaluator calls for greater adaptability to changes in the external context and more flexibility on behalf of STDF to approve project extensions if well-motivated.[11]

Dissemination and follow-up

This is by far the element of the project cycle that both quantitatively and qualitatively has consistently been an area of concern in most of the evaluation reports. The most common lesson is the need for follow-up activities to maintain the results that have been achieved during the projects.

Some reports mention the general need for follow-up, for instance by including a specific follow-up phase in the project (e.g. STDG/PG/134, 259). Other reports focus specifically on the need for continuous training to achieve long-term results and sustainability (e.g. STDF/PG/335) or ensuring the availability of project outputs (such as ensuring access of relevant stakeholders to the results of the use of the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation Tool in the Pacific (STDF/PG/133). In more research oriented projects (STDF/PG/255 and STDF/PG/313 on fruit fly in West Africa, and STDF/PG/114 on aflatoxin in Brazil) the evaluators would have liked to see activities allowing for the testing and application of the research results. In the project on evaluation of the capacity of national veterinary services in Latin America and Caribbean (STDF/PG/014), there was a lack of initial thinking on how to support roll-out of the tool that had been developed. Similarly, the actual implementation of the SPS action plan for Cambodia (STDF/PG/246) should have been considered in the budgeting and planning phase.

Given that many of STDF's projects have a pilot character, one specific challenge concerns how to scale up activities after projects have ended. This may concern both the application of a methodology to other countries and regions as in the case of the Beyond Compliance project (STDF/PG/328), or to other actors or sectors as in the case of the mango export sector in Mali (STDF/PG/283). In the words of the latter report: ***"the modest number of beneficiaries of the activities (producers, sector actors, inspectors) in relation to the needs, invites to an extension of the activities"***.

The important message is to not view STDF projects as stand-alone. Regardless of the approach or methods employed there is always a before and an after that needs to be considered when designing STDF projects. Experience tells us that it is rare that governments or other donors spontaneously pick up the thread left by projects supported by external actors. Project applicants thus need to integrate the various aspects of follow-up mentioned here, with the support of the STDF Secretariat and Working Group members.

11 STDF's Working Group approved a non-cost extension request for STDF/PG/134 until 30 June 2010 (original end date was 28 Feb. 2010). The Working Group declined to approve a request for a "budget extension".

By way of inspiration Box 3 gives examples of how sustainability was integrated into the STDF project supporting the cattle sector in Costa Rica (STDF/PG/116). This example shows how consideration of sustainability in planning, involvement of local stakeholders, communication efforts and the use of market mechanisms together can support sustainability within the project, without removing the need for continuous efforts after the project ends. We simply must accept that capacity development is a complex and long-term process.

Box 3. Designing for sustainability in support of the cattle sector in Costa Rica (STDF/PG/116)

Project features that supported sustainability according to the evaluation report:

- The sustainability of the project outcomes was considered from its origin involving all actors in the cattle producing and beef value chain.
- There was cooperation and joint work from the design phase of the project onwards.
- An outreach and communications strategy was established and launched in order to complete the process and extend it nationwide.
- During project implementation, a campaign was launched to publicize the existing national regulations to a wide range of stakeholders.
- All IT used in the project were developed in Costa Rica.
- The guides and related forms produced by the project had a cost for users, approved by decree.
- The project involved addressing cattle thefts, which is a problem of concern for local stakeholders for its economic and cultural significance.

Still, the evaluation report notes that there is a need for continuous funding and capacity building, training and communication work to further support sustainability.

Public and private sector involvement

The Terms of Reference for this study asks specifically for experiences and lessons learned regarding the role of the public and private sector as implementing partners and/or beneficiaries of STDF projects. The importance of local stakeholder participation in all aspects of project design has already been emphasized above. In this section the role of the public and private sector is analyzed in more depth.

Strengthening the collaboration between the public and private sector is at the heart of STDF's institution building and sector development projects. According to the evaluation reports, this was successful in several projects, such as in the cases of the SafeNut project in Brazil (STDF/PG/114), the fruit fly initiative in West Africa (STDF/PG/287) and the Beyond Compliance project in South-East Asia (STDF/PG/328). It is important to consider public-private linkages in the project design phase and actively involve the private sector when designing the project (STDF/PG/326).

Taking a value chain perspective makes clear that a number of public and private stakeholders need to be involved: ***"the project should act as a linkage mechanism of all partners (producers, processors, traders, and consumers) to form as a complete value chain from the production, distribution and consumption of safe and higher quality vegetable products."*** (STDF/PG/259). In the cattle sector project in Costa Rica (STDF/PG/116) it was recognized there was a need to involve both public and private institutions, in addition to different professionals, in the development of a sustainable cattle traceability system.

The evaluation reports also make clear that the public or private sectors are not homogenous. The public sector consists of a large array of government bodies, agencies and parastatals. While it may be challenging to get buy in and support from government at senior level as in the SPS Action Plan project in Cambodia (STDF/PG/246) and the MACBETH project in Thailand/Viet Nam (STDF/PG/ 326), it may be easier to involve more technical public-sector agencies. This may in turn be vital for engaging the private sector as in the case of the MOTSSA project in Nicaragua (STDF/PG/155): ***"Strong buy-in and hands-on involvement from government bodies meant producers paid more attention and became involved, as this gave greater credibility and support to reach the desired objectives"***.

Clearly, the private sector is also highly heterogeneous. Trade associations and some large firms may have the incentive and capacity to participate actively in projects, while other firms, smaller producers and farmers are more at the beneficiary end. One of the strengths of STDF's sector development projects is that they make it possible to work directly with small producers, as was done successfully in the MACBETH project (STDF/PG/326) through training to implement food safety management/good agricultural practices standards, in the fresh vegetables sector in Viet Nam (STDF/PG/ 259) and in the MOTSSA project in Nicaragua (STDF/PG/155).

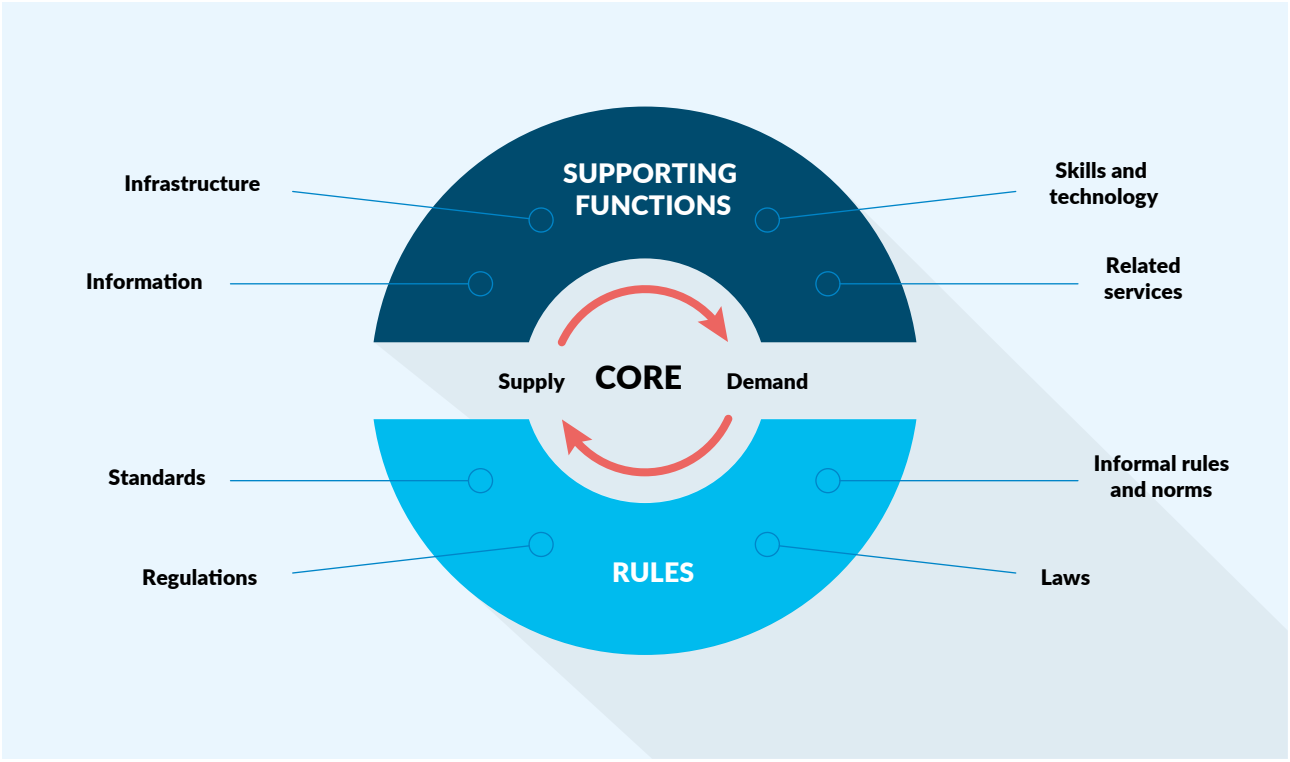
Some STDF projects were, however, constrained in their private sector reach. In Rwanda (STDF/PG/145), the evaluation report notes that ***"the RHESI project did have a problem of identifying a sufficient number of private stakeholders. In a country where subsistence agriculture is predominant private sector involvement may be very difficult to achieve. This should be taken into account when designing projects and stakeholder involvement in other least developed countries."*** While the Beyond Compliance project in South-East Asia (STDF/PG/328) did strengthen the collaboration between the national plant protection organizations and national industry, the evaluation report suggests that importing partners in market countries could also have been more closely involved to foster understanding, closer cooperation and facilitate negotiations. The fish sector project in West Africa (STDF/PG/134) did not manage to reach primary producers and diffuse good hygiene practices to fishermen, wholesalers and handlers of fish products. According to the evaluation report a demand by the project for a budget increase to include such activities was rejected by the STDF Working Group.

Sector context and enabling environment

A fundamental characteristic of successful projects is that they are grounded in local contexts. The implication is that the particularities of the sector and the enabling environment more generally need to be considered in all aspects of project design and implementation. To organize our thinking on these issues, a useful starting-point is a stylized picture of the market system (Figure 7). Seen through this lens, STDF projects act within a market system, which is a ***"…multi-function, multi-player arrangement comprising the core function of exchange by which goods and services are delivered and the supporting functions and rules which are performed and shaped by a variety of market players."***[12]

The strengths and weaknesses of the different elements of the market system vary between countries and over time, but ultimately can be expected to be closely related to GDP per capita. This means that in poorer countries, the market system situation is generally weaker. While this may seem obvious it does have implications for the design of STDF projects. Or in the words of one STDF evaluator (STDF/PG/037): ***"Lack of knowledge is not necessarily the bottleneck in meeting international standards. The institutional environment or (information or logistic) infrastructure in a country may not be suitable for bringing this knowledge into practice. Such situations are more likely to occur in developing countries than in developed countries, as developing countries are often in a state of transition. For these countries, capacity building should focus on the development of a stable and transparent institutional environment and infrastructure"***. It is at this level that STDF's projects on institution building and systems development aim to have an impact.

Figure 7. Market system[13]



12 The Springfield Centre (2015), *The Operational Guide for the Making Markets Work for the Poor (M4P) Approach*, 2nd edition funded by SDC & DFID, p. 3

13 Idem

The evaluation reports give several examples of factors or challenges in the sector context and enabling environment that STDF projects need to manage to be successful. In terms of supporting functions, issues include high staff turn-over (STDF/PG/145, 335), limited facilities for diagnostic services and facilities aimed at identification of harmful organisms (STDF/PG/335), and lack of access to communications technology in rural settings (STDF/PG/326).

A further complication is that there are complementarities between sectors. For example, the evaluation report on the cattle sector project in Costa Rica (STDF/PG/116) argues that there is a need to recognize that traceability is a tool both for animal safety and food safety, which means that officials within the project need to discuss, analyze and agree with other stakeholders on priorities within realistic timeframes.

On the rules side, one issue is the difficulties and time needed in getting legislation adopted as experienced in the mango sector project in Mali (STDF/PG/283). Similarly, the report on the horticulture project in Rwanda (STDF/PG/145) states: ***"The implementation and/or transposition of RHESI's recommendations were dependent on the Rwandan legislative and executive. These implementation activities can be very lengthy. For similar projects, ways to assist in implementation/transposition difficulties after the conclusion of a project should be addressed."***

Most reports focus on the importance of creating a favorable environment for STDF projects more generally. The evaluator of STDF/PG/013 calls for prudence in selecting candidate countries for projects, that is they should not be affected by violent conflict, be of manageable size, and show a sincere commitment to the project. In regional initiatives, it is suggested that 'leader' countries be mobilized to help creating common political will (STDF/PG/287).

An important lesson from the SPS project in Cambodia (STDF/PG/246) is not only the need for backing from relevant authorities, but also how such commitment can be secured. One can sense resignation in the words of the evaluator: ***"One approach would be to provide STDF support for broad-scope action planning projects only when they are clearly and strongly backed by all of the relevant national agencies and when there is firm commitment for specific follow up action by a donor or donors. Unfortunately, such favourable circumstances are likely to be rare, and there will always be the risk (as in the case of STDF/PG/246) that the interest of local agencies and/or potential donors may weaken over the course of the project."***

It is important to note that these are valuable lessons from past projects that do not necessarily reflect the level of ownership of more recent STDF projects.

The report on STDF/PG/173 notes that the possibilities of achieving positive outcomes are higher when activities are linked or responding to on-going country dynamics. This was the case in the cattle sector project in Costa Rica (STDF/PG/116), where there was firm country vision resilient to internal and external pressures, combined with the fact that the project helped addressing a widely shared concern – cattle theft. The fish sector project in West Africa (STDF/PG/134) showed that authorities are incentivized to support reforms to tackle food safety issues in the export sector if the economic stakes are high: ***"the adaptability of the competent authorities and heads of establishment and their ability to believe in the high potential of exporting fish resources from their country has been a major asset for the success of this project."***

The reports also reflect on some fundamental aspects of the core functions of market exchange. Overall, there is a need for STDF projects to consider local production technologies and socio-economic conditions (STDF/PG/255, 313). This includes understanding the contexts and strategic choices of both large and small producers, e.g. by adapting training content and delivery to the local situation, particularly when targeting small producers (STDF/PG/259).

The evaluation report on the aflatoxin project in Brazil (STDF/PG/114) highlights the importance of understanding the strategic choices of industry: ***"A critical lesson emerging from this project, and pointed out by several authors before, is that when a project is formulated to address a compliance issue, specific emphasis should be placed on understanding the need to adopt a strategic perspective of the industry, which implies understanding the implications of the emerging regulatory requirements, the constrains/opportunities faced by different industry players, and analyzing the different options available to address those constraints to effectively identify the required adjustments. The only option considered by the project was compliance with EU restrictive regulatory requirements for in-shell nuts. A more critical analysis of industry options was not entirely done."***

Lastly, the SPS project in Viet Nam (STDF/PG/259) illustrates the importance of thinking through the whole value chain in relation to local market conditions. The project was relatively successful in upgrading product quality of vegetables produced by small-scale producers. However, the producers faced challenges in translating this into increased incomes. First, the project focused on cherry tomato and baby cucumber, which were new products and the sale of which depended on a sole processing company. This increased the risk for the producers. Second, there was a risk that consumers were not able to distinguish between "normal" and "safe" produce, making it difficult to obtain a price premium. To counter these issues, the report recommended establishing producer groups, diversifying the type of vegetables supported, linking up with safe buyers, paying attention to market demands, and working on branding safe products.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report has used a structured analytical framework to assess the quality of STDF's evaluation reports and the performance of the underlying projects, in addition to compiling lessons learned that can inform future STDF projects and evaluations. The study is based on a relatively well diversified sample of reports that turned out to be of sufficient (i.e. good or very good) quality to provide the basis of a meta-analysis. It seems clear that the STDF Evaluation Guidelines introduced in a first version in 2007 (and since revised) have been highly instrumental in enhancing quality, by imposing uniform methodologies and structures with the OECD/DAC criteria at the core. This greatly facilitated the assessment of the evaluation reports and the writing of this study.

It should be remembered that the STDF evaluators generally have limited funding and time at their disposal to assess often complex projects. Nevertheless, the evaluation reports could be strengthened in their discussion of methodologies, limitations, and the theory of change of the evaluated projects.

The other main issue concerns the timing of the evaluations. With limited means it is obviously difficult to verify impact and sustainability three to five years after the end of projects, since project stakeholders become more difficult to track and project results dissipate. Such long time lags also mean that learning opportunities are lost. Introducing end-of-project evaluations, as has recently been done in the Operational Rules (paras 104-105), therefore makes sense, but, crucially, they also need to follow the STDF Evaluation Guidelines to contribute productively to the wider body of experiences coming out of STDF projects.

The general conclusion from the assessment of project performance is that STDF projects perform satisfactorily as viewed through the lens of the evaluation reports and given the constraints and limitations inherent in relatively small and short-lived projects in complex contexts. As could be expected, relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency are ranked relatively highly by evaluators, while impact and sustainability receive lower ratings.

Unsurprisingly, sector development projects demonstrate greater contribution to impact and sustainability than technical assistance and institution building projects, since the sector development projects can work with various stakeholders through the whole value chain and, importantly, reach out directly to small producers. Technical assistance and institution building projects may be more appropriate for testing tools and approaches in multi-country settings, but they would have to be designed carefully to be able to demonstrate any contribution to impact or sustainable results. Isolated technical assistance generally has very limited and intangible effects if not embedded in wider structures or processes.

A variety of lessons learned can be identified in the evaluation reports. The basic idea in this meta-study has been to let the evaluators "speak" within a set structure, to avoid theorizing and come as closely to the STDF project experience as possible. The many valuable lessons and suggestions from projects can easily be put together to form a set of generic principles or check-list for future STDF projects. An attempt at this, based solely on the experiences of evaluated STDF projects, is included in Annex 5. This list may provide a basis for reflecting on the adequacy of the current rules and procedures, including the STDF Guidance Note for Applicants, PPG/PG application forms, and the STDF Review Template, that shape STDF projects.

There are four aspects of STDF projects that need to be considered in a more rigorous way than was generally the case in the evaluated projects, namely:

1. The fundamental need to ground projects locally (including understanding local contexts and needs, and securing local ownership and participation at all stages of the project);

2. The importance of unpacking and clarifying the theories of change of STDF projects, which would *inter alia* help to address the more limited impact and sustainability of technical assistance and institution building projects, compared to sector development projects;

3. The importance of planning for sustainability of results (including grounding projects locally, disseminating project results and lessons, and preparing clear phase-out and follow-up strategies); and

4. More systematic and focused consideration of gender and the environment, within the context of broader socio-economic considerations and the Sustainable Development Goals.

This study shows that STDF projects all have both strong and weak elements, and that successful approaches are highly adapted to the local context. This means that it is difficult to wholesale transpose a specific project design to other settings. Each situation is unique. However, there are STDF projects that seem particularly successful in terms of effectiveness, impact and sustainability, including:

- Development and Implementation of a Movement Control System for Cattle in Costa Rica (STDF PG/116);

- Improving fish trade performance in West Africa (STDF/PG/134);

- Rwanda Horticulture Export Standards Initiative (RHESI) (STDF/PG/145);

- Market-Oriented Training Service on Standards Application (MOTSSA) in Nicaragua (STDF/PG/155);

- Strengthening Vietnamese SPS Capacities for Trade - Improving safety and quality of fresh vegetables through the value chain approach (STDF/PG/259); and

- Market access through Competency Based Education and Training in Horticulture (MACBETH) (STDF PG/326).

These are all sector development projects involving multiple private and public stakeholders, including small producers. Despite their achievements, they are all facing the challenge of sustaining the gains that have been made, disseminate experiences and lessons, and find ways to scale up successful practices to reach greater numbers of stakeholders and producers and other sectors.

A value-added of STDF, compared to other donors, is to participate in facilitating the wider knowledge sharing from projects through the Working Group, the STDF website, the new series of results stories, and presentations and outreach at diverse events, etc. The results of this meta-analysis could be a first contribution in stepping up these efforts.

There are several possible ways forward that could increase the way STDF as a facility draws and disseminates lessons from STDF projects:

1. **Project design.** The current STDF Project Grant Application Form has a good structure that covers most of the issues that have been identified in this study. There are clear sections about the local context, sustainability, log-frame and gender/environment. It is evident that STDF has learnt from previous projects and adapted its rules and procedures. The question that could be asked is how these rules and guidelines have influenced project implementation. Are recent projects more thoroughly designed than previously and, if this is the case, has this increased their performance? A cursory look at the evaluation reports indicate that this may be the case, but the sample is too small for firm conclusions.

2. **Dissemination and follow-up.** Can STDF as a partnership do more to support the dissemination, learning and follow-up of individual STDF projects in beneficiary countries and regions within the broader STDF Communications Plan?[14]

3. **Good practice.** How can STDF increase the sharing of good practice on SPS capacity building that comes out from STDF projects and those of other donors? Suggestions include updating the 2008 STDF Briefing note on good practice in SPS technical cooperation and meta-studies (e.g. on a regional, country or sector/thematic basis) of SPS capacity building projects funded by other donors, as well as SPS elements of broader programmes. STDF's Project Results Stories series is also intended to contribute to the sharing of good practice.[15]

4. **STDF's reporting on results.** This meta-study shows that STDF projects produce robust results at different results level. Are these results effectively integrated into the current results reporting of the STDF and in line with the expectations of STDF's partners, donors and beneficiary countries?

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study the following recommendations are made to the STDF:

1. **Quality of evaluations.** Continue to safeguard the quality and comparability of STDF project evaluations by mandating that the STDF Evaluation Guidelines are applied both to ex-post evaluations and end-of-project evaluations commissioned by project implementers. It is also worth reflecting on whether the current balance between technical expertise and evaluation methodology expertise is appropriate among the evaluators engaged by STDF, and encouraging the use of theory-based approaches to evaluation to more clearly distinguish between outputs and outcomes.

2. **Timing and coverage of evaluations.** Ensure that STDF project evaluations are not conducted more than two years after the end of a project and conduct ex-post evaluation mainly for projects that can be expected to have contributed to sustainable higher-level results (impact and sustainability). This may involve adapting the selection criteria for the project to be evaluated, with a view to prioritize sector development and value chain projects and avoid excessive time lags between the end of projects and evaluations.

14 The STDF Communications Plan (STDF 586) includes guidance for organizations implementing. See: www.standardsfacility.org/sites/default/files/STDF_Communications_Plan_2016.pdf

15 See: www.standardsfacility.org/driving-sps-capacity-delivering-results-series.

3. **Project quality.** Consider all STDF projects to be part of on-going complex and constantly changing processes in beneficiary countries and regions, which means:

    - Paying attention to how well-grounded projects are in local contexts;

    - Developing realistic results frameworks based on well-grounded theories of change, including managing sometimes unrealistic expectations for rather limited activities, recognizing the longer pathways of technical assistance and institution building projects to trade impacts, and using intermediate outcome indicators;

    - Being prepared to adapt project implementation to changing circumstances; and

    - Considering dissemination, phasing out and follow-up firmly in project design.

4. **Development focus.** Integrate aspects of poverty, gender and environment, within the context of broader socio-economic considerations and the Sustainable Development Goals, into project design and implementation. A first step may be to step up discussions and analytical work on the link between these issues and SPS capacity building

5. **Lessons learned.** Deepen analysis and dissemination of lessons learned and good practice from STDF projects and those of other donors within specific themes, such as poverty reduction, gender, the country level context, and sector development/value-chain approaches.

Annex 1: Background to STDF projects and project evaluations

The purpose of STDF project grants is to strengthen SPS capacity in developing countries, in line with the beneficiary's priorities. STDF projects aim to address key food safety, animal and/or plant health issues that affect the ability of developing countries to gain and/or maintain market access. Projects should preferably be in the range of US$250,000 and US$1 million in size. Projects are given favourable consideration by the STDF Working Group if they:

- Identify, develop and disseminate good practice in SPS-related technical cooperation, including the development and application of innovative and replicable approaches;
- Apply regional approaches to address SPS constraints; and
- Implement collaborative approaches across food safety, animal and plant health and trade, and benefit from the involvement of two or more STDF partners or relevant organizations.

Table 2. Log-frame structure for STDF projects

Results level	Activities	Expected results (outputs)	Immediate objective (purpose)	Goal
Description	What are the key activities to be carried out, and in what sequence, to produce the expected results?	What tangible end-results will be delivered by the project to achieve its purpose?	What is the specific purpose or outcome of the project?	What is the longer-term goal (impact) to which the project contributes?
Example[16]	Review current socioeconomic networks with emphasis on gender and the needs of vulnerable groups Develop and implement a training programme for key stakeholders	Effective institutional linkages and networks in place Capacities of producers and others in the market chain strengthened	Farmer groups and exporters are competent partners for international trade and are exporting dried fruit products to organic and fairtrade markets	Increased income of small farmers and their families

Detailed information on STDF funding opportunities and requirements can be found in the STDF Guidance Note for Applicants. Applications need to follow the STDF Project Grant Application Form. Additionally, a Practical Guide on Trade-related Project Identification, Formulation and Design is made available to applicants.[17] Together these documents contain ample information on results-based management.

16 Example from "A Practical Guide on Trade-related Project Identification, Formulation and Design". See: www.standardsfacility.org/sites/default/files/EIF_HandbookProjectDesign_Feb-12.pdf

17 See: www.standardsfacility.org/project-grants

Importantly from an evaluation perspective, the current STDF Project Grant Application Form stipulates that project applications must contain a logical framework (log-frame) summarizing what the project intends to do and how, what the key risks and assumptions are, and how outputs and outcomes will be monitored and evaluated. The results levels of the current log-frame structure are shown in Table 2.[18]

The structure follows a standard results logic with activities, outputs, outcome (immediate objective) and impact (goal). It is worth reiterating the definition of these three results levels, since they are key to any evaluation exercise and the analysis that follows in this report:

- Impact - Positive and negative, long-term effects on identifiable population groups produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.

- Outcome - The likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs, typically the change of behaviour resulting from the uptake or use or implementation by others outside the project team (often beneficiaries) of the outputs.

- Output - The products and services which result from the completion of activities.

STDF's Operational Rules set out the requirements regarding monitoring and evaluation of STDF projects. The latest revision to the Operational Rules (in 2016) includes provisions for:

- Independent end-of-project assessment, carried out under the responsibility of the implementing agency at the completion of the project, to assess the final project results, based on the logical framework and indicators (para 104);

- An ex-post impact evaluation (para 105) focused on the actual impact (e.g. improved market access, reductions in rejections, improvements in national food safety, plant or animal health, etc.) of the STDF project beyond the immediate project outputs;

- The possibility for an ex-post impact evaluation group of projects on a selected topic to identify convergence between topics and regions in order to exploit the results and common achievements of several projects to ensure long-lasting effects and improved convergence in future projects (para 106).

The current Operational Rules require that at least two projects are selected every year for an independent ex-post impact evaluation. Ex-post impact evaluations should be carried out on the selected projects two to three years after their completion. Projects to be subjected to an external evaluation are selected by the Working Group chairperson, during the first meeting of the Working Group in the year after project completion, using the method of ordinary random selection, unless the Working Group decides otherwise. External ex post project evaluations are carried out by external evaluators, contracted by the STDF Secretariat, based on a short-list of consultants circulated to the STDF Working Group. By the end of September 2017, 25 external ex post evaluations of STDF projects had been carried out.

18 See: www.standardsfacility.org/sites/default/files/PGApplicationForm_English_FINAL_2015.doc

The STDF has developed guidelines (STDF 214, rev.1 July 2015) that set out the overall framework for independent ex-post evaluations of STDF projects, based on the STDF Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. These guidelines draw heavily on the OECD/DAC Principles for the Evaluation of Development Assistance.[19] According to the guidelines STDF evaluations should typically be organized around the standard evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability and lessons learnt. The guidelines also contain a set of 18 key evaluation questions and an outline template for the evaluation report, including executive summary, introduction, methodology, findings and analysis (structured according the evaluation criteria and questions), conclusions and recommendations, and lessons learnt.

Since this report covers evaluation reports produced at different points in time, it is important to note that STDF's provisions for project applications and evaluations have evolved over time. This means that projects have been subject to somewhat different practices depending on when they were formulated, approved and evaluated (Table 3). There have also been changes in the permitted duration, as well as an increase in the budget level for projects.

19 See: www.oecd.org/dataoecd/31/12/2755284.pdf

Table 3. Milestones for the development of rules and procedures for STDF projects

Document	Milestones
Guidance Note for Applicants	First produced in 2010, revised in 2013 and 2015.
Project and PPG Application Forms and Criteria	Support letters from concerned government / other organizations in beneficiary countries started to be submitted in 2008. Logical framework requested as part of project application forms from 2009. The maximum amount of STDF funding for projects was raised to US$1 million per project (from US$600,000) and the implementation period increased to up to three years in 2011. Application forms revised in November 2015 to include new specific sections on gender and environmental-related issues.
Project Review Template	Improved version finalized end of 2011 and applied commencing March 2012.Subsequently modified to address cross-cutting issues following the incorporation of gender and environmental issues into the Project Application Forms.
STDF Evaluation Guidelines	Developed in 2007, with latest revision in 2015 that included a question on gender and environment under lessons learned.
STDF M&E Framework	First framework adopted by the Policy Committee adopted by the STDF Policy Committee in February 2015.

Annex 2: Assessment criteria for the meta-evaluation study

Quality of STDF evaluation reports

Theme	Criteria	Rating
Context	1. The context and object of the evaluation are adequately described in the evaluation report	Very good - fully satisfactory Good - mostly satisfactory Poor - not or barely satisfactory Not addressed/not clear
	• The context of the project is adequately described (context, stakeholders)	Very good - fully satisfactory Good - mostly satisfactory Poor - not or barely satisfactory Not addressed/not clear
	• There is a clear description of the project to be evaluated (object of the evaluation)	Very good - fully satisfactory Good - mostly satisfactory Poor - not or barely satisfactory Not addressed/not clear
Purpose	2. The report clearly describes the objective, purpose and scope of the evaluation	Yes/No
Methodology	3. The report adequately describes and explains the evaluation methodology and its application	Very good - fully satisfactory Good - mostly satisfactory Poor - not or barely satisfactory Not addressed/not clear
	• The report clearly explains what methods/tools that were used and why they were selected	Very good - fully satisfactory Good - mostly satisfactory Poor - not or barely satisfactory Not addressed/not clear
	• The validity and reliability of information sources are adequately addressed	Very good - fully satisfactory Good - mostly satisfactory Poor - not or barely satisfactory Not addressed/not clear
	• The report adequately addresses limitations to the methodology	Very good - fully satisfactory Good - mostly satisfactory Poor - not or barely satisfactory Not addressed/not clear
	• The report clearly lists the evaluation questions	Very good - fully satisfactory Good - mostly satisfactory Poor - not or barely satisfactory Not addressed/not clear
	• The STDF Evaluation Guidelines	Yes No Not clear
	• Field visit performed?	Yes No Not clear
	• Surveys used?	Yes No Not clear

Theme	Criteria	Rating
	• Survey response rate	Percent Note clear
Cross-cutting	4. Gender, the environment and other relevant crosscutting issues are adequately addressed	Very good - fully satisfactory Good - mostly satisfactory Poor - not or barely satisfactory Not addressed/not clear
	• Is gender equality addressed?	Yes No Not clear
	• Is the environment addressed?	Yes No Not clear
	• Other relevant crosscutting issues are addressed?	Yes No Not clear
Findings, etc	5. The report presents findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons separately, clearly and logically	Very good - fully satisfactory Good - mostly satisfactory Poor - not or barely satisfactory Not addressed/not clear
	• The report adequately addresses all the evaluation criteria and questions	Very good - fully satisfactory Good - mostly satisfactory Poor - not or barely satisfactory Not addressed/not clear
	• Findings are clearly presented and based on the objective use of the reported evidence	Very good - fully satisfactory Good - mostly satisfactory Poor - not or barely satisfactory Not addressed/not clear
	• Conclusions are clearly substantiated by findings and analysis	Very good - fully satisfactory Good - mostly satisfactory Poor - not or barely satisfactory Not addressed/not clear
	• Recommendations are well-grounded in the evidence and conclusions reported, clearly stated and realistic	Very good - fully satisfactory Good - mostly satisfactory Poor - not or barely satisfactory Not addressed/not clear
	• Lessons learned are correctly identified and relevant	Very good - fully satisfactory Good - mostly satisfactory Poor - not or barely satisfactory Not addressed/not clear
	• Comments	
Structure	6. The report is well structured, logical and clear	Very good - fully satisfactory Good - mostly satisfactory Poor - not or barely satisfactory Not addressed/not clear
Overall assessment	7. Overall assessment of quality of report	Very good - fully satisfactory Good - mostly satisfactory Poor - not or barely satisfactory Not addressed/not clear
	8. Can the report reliably be used to extract good practices and lessons learned for STDF?	

Performance of STDF projects

Theme	Criteria	Rating
Relevance	The evaluation report indicates that the project is relevant in relation to the needs of target groups and the objectives of STDF (SPS capacity for market access)	Very good - fully satisfactory Good - mostly satisfactory Poor - not or barely satisfactory Not addressed/not clear
	Comment	Note the main motivations to the rating and factors that affected the relevance of the project
Effectiveness	The evaluation report indicates that the project achieved its stated objectives (or are likely to do so in the near future).	Very good - fully satisfactory Good - mostly satisfactory Poor - not or barely satisfactory Not addressed/not clear
	Comment	Note the main motivations to the rating and factors that facilitated or hindered the successful implementation of the project
	Are outcome level results reported?	Give examples of such outcomes
Efficiency	The evaluation report indicates that the programme was generally efficient.	Very good - fully satisfactory Good - mostly satisfactory Poor - not or barely satisfactory Not addressed/not clear
	Project period extended	No months
	Comment	Note the main motivations to the rating and notable factors that effected the efficiency of the project
Impact	The evaluation report indicates that the project contributed to the higher-level objectives of the STDF (market access, domestic/regional SPS situation, poverty reduction)	Very good - fully satisfactory Good - mostly satisfactory Poor - not or barely satisfactory Not addressed/not clear
	Comment	Note the main motivations to the rating and factors the influenced the contribution of the project to STDF objectives
Sustainability	The evaluation report indicates that benefits of the project or programme are likely to continue after project completion	Very good - fully satisfactory Good - mostly satisfactory Poor - not or barely satisfactory Not addressed/not clear
	Comment	Note the main motivations to the rating and the main factors identified as enhancing or inhibiting sustainability of results?
Cross-cutting	The evaluation report indicates that the project effectively contributes to the cross-cutting objectives of gender equality and the environment (whether planned or not)	Very good - fully satisfactory Good - mostly satisfactory Poor - not or barely satisfactory Not addressed/not clear
	Comment	Note the main motivations to the rating
Risk management	The evaluation report indicates that risks related to the project have been appropriately managed	Very good - fully satisfactory Good - mostly satisfactory Poor - not or barely satisfactory Not addressed/not clear

Theme	Criteria	Rating
	Comment	Note the main motivations to the rating
	What were the main external factors facilitating or hindering implementation of the project	Note the main external factors
Spillovers	The evaluation report indicates that were unintended positive or negative consequences of the project	Note the spillovers
Overall comment	Main type of lessons that can be pulled from this evaluation report	Briefly comment

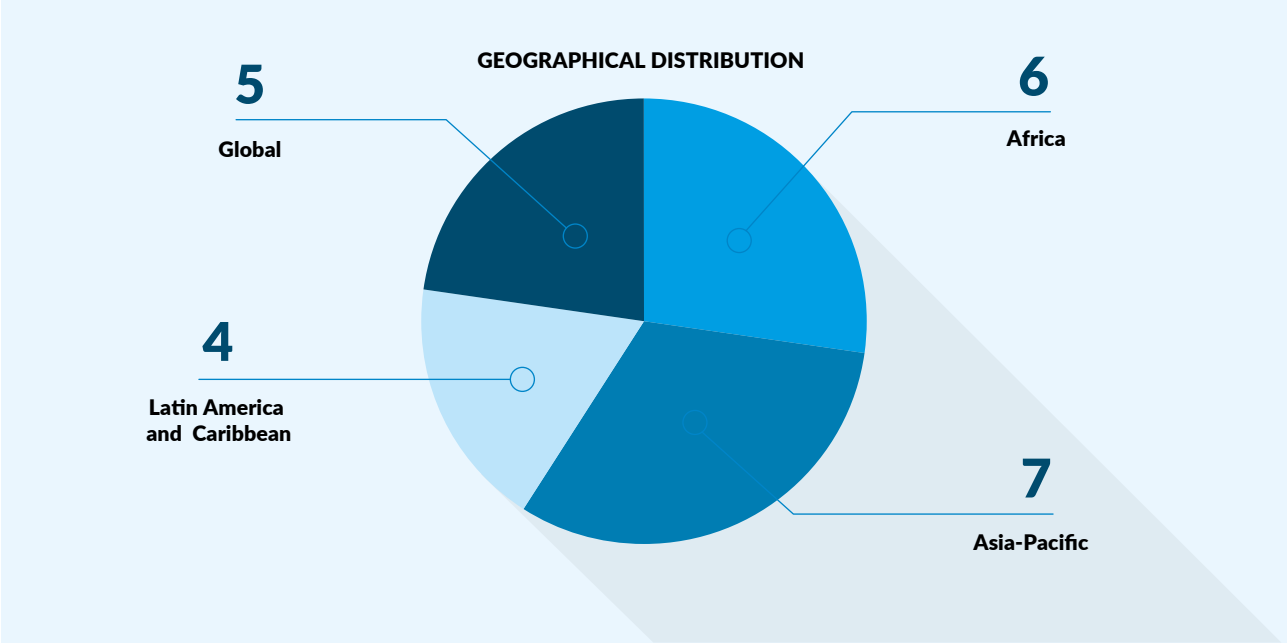
Annex 3: Completed STDF project evaluations

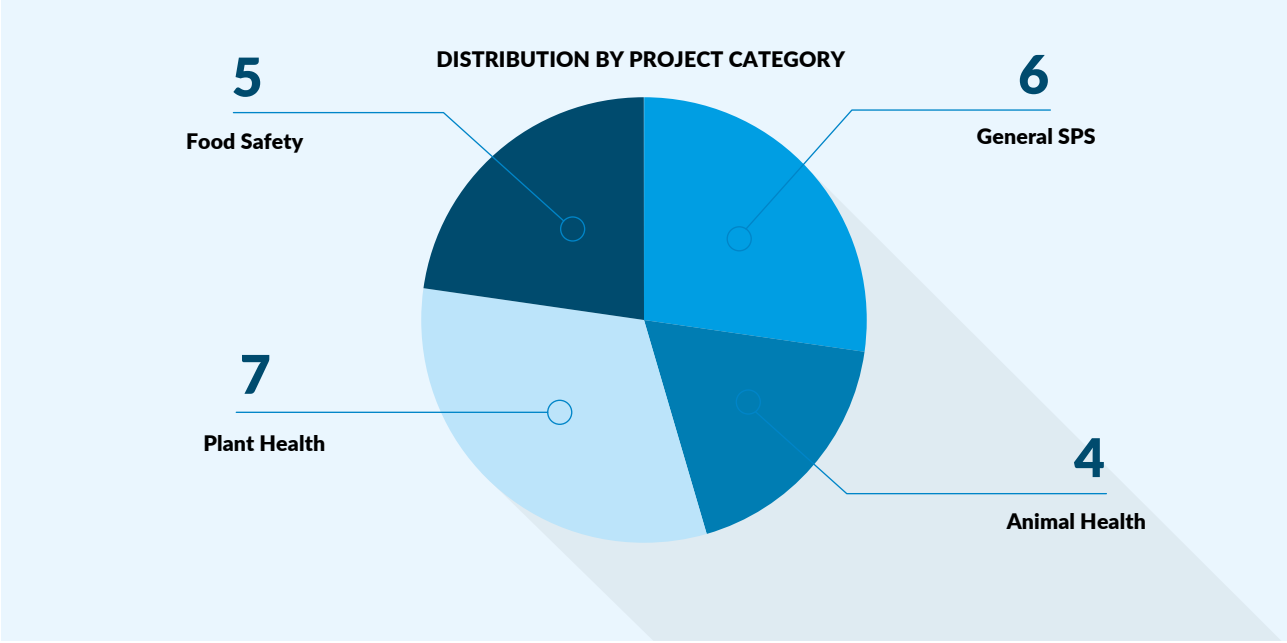
Reference	Title	Beneficiary	End year	Total project budget (US$)	STDF contribution (US$)
STDF/PG/335	Strengthening Phytosanitary Controls in the Floriculture Sector in Uganda	Uganda	2015	392 154	348 632
STDF/PG/328	Beyond Compliance: Integrated Systems Approach for Pest Risk Management	Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam	2014	904 686	600 000
STDF/PG/326	Market access through Competency Based Education and Training in Horticulture (MACBETH)	Thailand, Viet Nam	2013	719 275	581 665
STDF/PG/313	Continuation of the West African Fruit Fly Initiative (WAFFI)	West Africa	2011	848 469	559 482
STDF/PG/287	Information sharing initiative on the actions to control fruit fly in Sub-Saharan Africa	Sub-Saharan Africa	2011	136 500	82 800
STDF/PG/283	Support for SPS risk assessment in the mango export sector in Mali	Mali	2012	528 021	474 208
STDF/PG/259	Strengthening Viet Namese SPS Capacities for Trade - Improving safety and quality of fresh vegetables through the value chain approach	Viet Nam	2012	641 470	533 770
STDF/PG/255	Regional initiative on the fight against fruit fly in West Africa	West Africa	2010	694 540	313 220
STDF/PG/246	SPS Action Plan for Cambodia	Cambodia	2010	199 360	199 360
STDF/PG/173	Assessing capacity building needs of food control systems in developing APEC member countries	APEC countries	2009	176 500	97 500
STDF/PG/155	Market-Oriented Training Service on Standards Application (MOTSSA)	Nicaragua	2012	764 644	560 994
STDF/PG/145	Rwanda Horticulture Export Standards Initiative (RHESI)	Rwanda	2009	642 545	589 845
STDF/PG/134	Improving fish trade performance in West Africa	Benin, Mauritania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, The Gambia	2010	704 340	523 840
STDF/PG/133	Building capacity to use the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) Tool in the Pacific	Asia-Pacific countries	2009	287 645	230 215
STDF/PG/126	Establish the Horticulture Development Council of Tanzania (HODECT)	Tanzania	2011	299 281	299 281
STDF/PG/120	Risk analysis and risk assessment training in India	India	2007	110 420	95 060

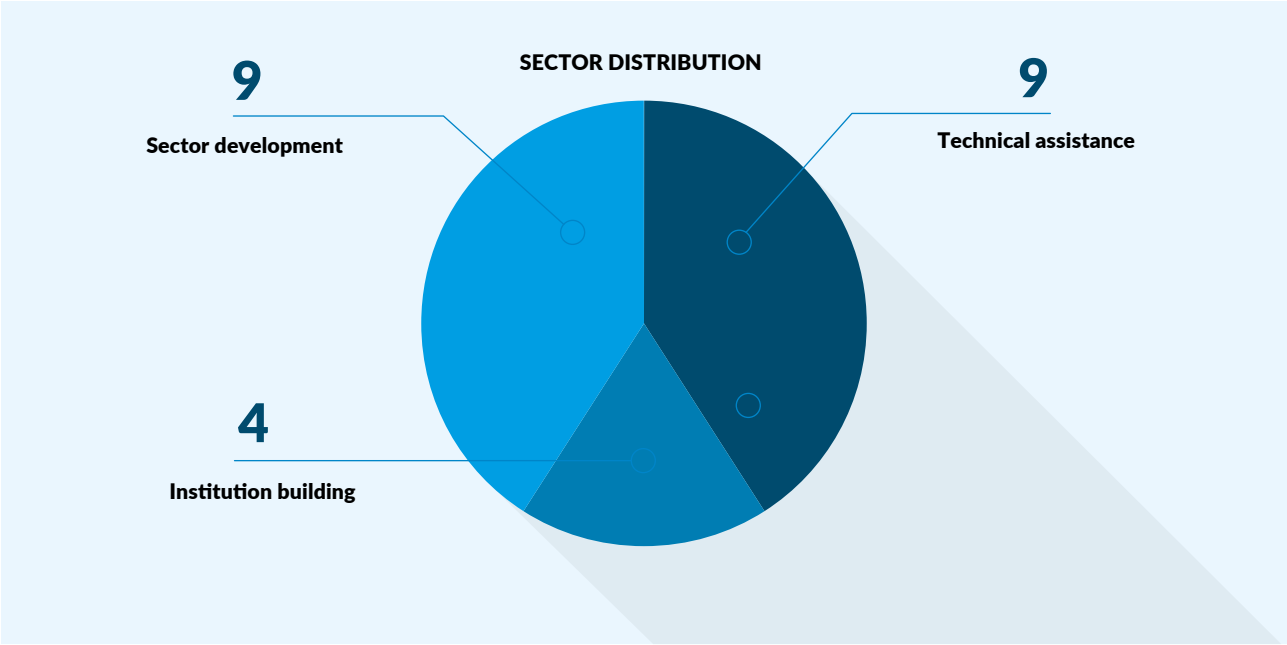
Reference	Title	Beneficiary	End year	Total project budget (US$)	STDF contribution (US$)
STDF/PG/116	Development and Implementation of a Movement Control System for Cattle in Costa Rica	Costa Rica	2011	654 600	455 220
STDF/PG/114	Effective aflatoxin management system in Brazil nut production	Brazil	2008	826 219	619 664
STDF/PG/089	International Plant Health Risk Analysis Workshop	Global	2007	274 000	147 000
STDF/PG/037	Assistance to developing countries in the implementation of ISPM 15	Global	2006	362 500	332 000
STDF/PG/020	Country-based plans for SPS-related development	Peru, Uganda	2007	170 862	170 862
STDF/PG/019	Model arrangements for SPS stakeholder involvement at the national level	Paraguay, Sri Lanka	2007	291 218	291 218
STDF/PG/015	Expanding SPS capacities at national and regional levels in the fields of animal health	Egypt, Latin America, Mali, Thailand	2007	130 614	130 614
STDF/PG/014	Evaluation of capacity of national veterinary services	Latin America and Caribbean	2006	39 960	39 960
STDF/PG/013	Development of Regional Action Plans to Enhance Veterinary Capacity in East and West Africa	Djibouti, Ethiopia, Mali	2008	329 400	329 400

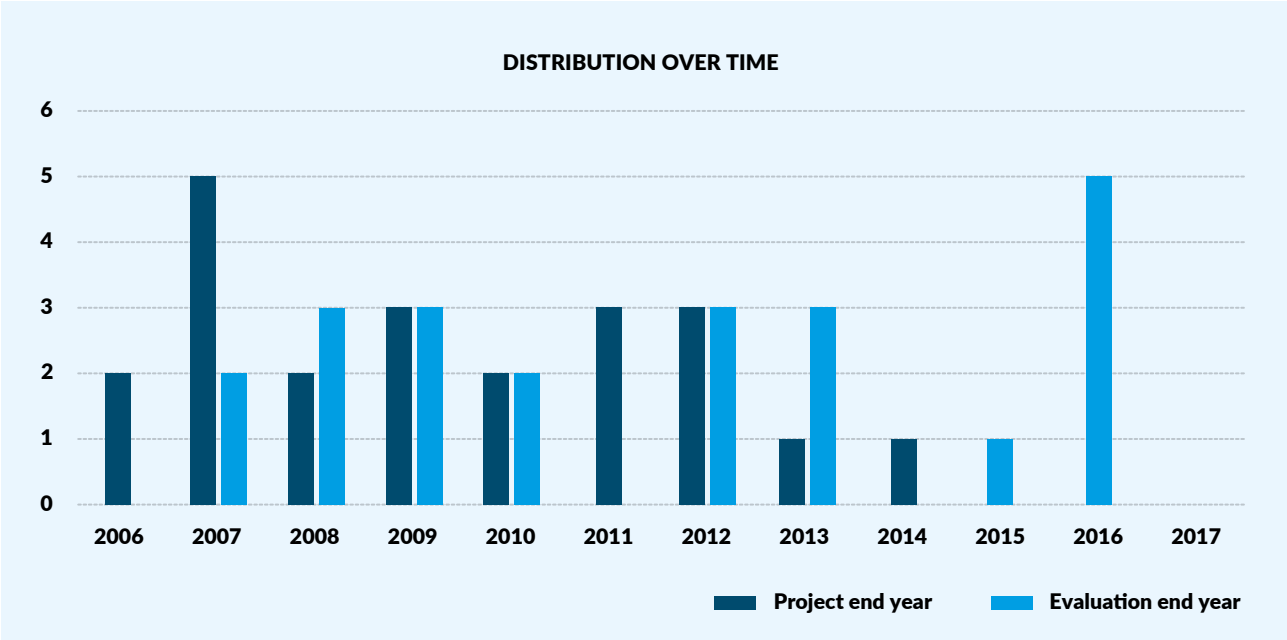
Annex 4: Distribution of assessed project evaluation reports

Number of evaluation reports. Total: 22 projects






SECTOR DISTRIBUTION
9
Sector development
9
Technical assistance
4
Institution building


DISTRIBUTION OVER TIME
6
5
4
3
2
1
0
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011
2012
2013
2014
2015
2016
2017
Project end year
Evaluation end year

Annex 5: STDF project checklist based on project evaluations

Project design/implementation

1. Are relevant needs assessments and contextual analysis performed in a participatory way?
2. What is the level of local ownership and is the project anchored in local reform processes?
3. Are local stakeholders and experts involved in project preparation, management and implementation to ensure local relevance of the project?
4. Does the project team have the proper capacities and competencies?
5. Are the project approach and methodologies in line with the overall project objectives?
6. Are the duration and budget realistic, leverage the resources of partners and other donors, and allow for a smooth start-up phase?
7. Are the elements of RBM in place?
    - A logical framework with realistic, clear, consistent objectives, outputs and indicators?
    - Will project stakeholders, documents, data and reports be stored for future use?
    - Are the external evaluations well-timed?
8. Are adaptability and innovation built into project design and workplans?
9. Are project outputs properly communicated and disseminated to widen impact?
10. Are there clear exit and follow-up plans to support sustainability?

Private-public partnership

11. Is the value chain approach also reaching small-scale producers?
12. Are there specific activities aimed at involving the private sector?
13. What are the strategies governing private sector actions?
14. What are the demand/supply conditions in the sector?

Enabling environment

15. Is there commitment from authorities at different levels?

16. Is the project adapted to the context in the sector and is the timing right?

17. Have other donor activities been properly considered?

GLOSSARY

APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
MACBETH	Market Access through Competency Based Education and Training in Horticulture
MOTSSA	Market-Oriented Training Service on Standards Application
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PCE	Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation
PG	Project grant
PPG	Project preparation grant
RBM	Results Based Management
RHESI	Rwanda Horticulture Export Standards Initiative
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary
STDF	Standards and Trade Development Facility
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WAFFI	West African Fruit Fly Initiative

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