

**STDF WORKING GROUP
7 - 8 JUNE 2022
WTO, GENEVA****SUMMARY REPORT****1 OPENING****1.1 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

1. The STDF Working Group met in-person on 7 and 8 June 2022 (with some members participating online). The meeting was chaired by Kelly McCormick from the United States Food and Drug Administration (USFDA).

2. The chairperson welcomed participants and explained the modalities of the meeting. She informed members that COLEACP, EIF, IICA, ITC, UNIDO and Ignacia Simonetti (STDF gender consultant) would be attending the meeting as observers. She also invited members to celebrate World Food Safety Day on 7 June.

3. Members adopted the agenda without amendments.

4. The list of participants is provided in Annex 1. All presentations made to the Working Group are available on the STDF [website](#).

2 OPERATION OF THE FACILITY**2.1 Selection of vice-chairperson of the STDF Working Group (2023)**

5. The chairperson reminded that Gillian Mylrea (WOAH), vice-chairperson in 2022, would become chairperson of the Working Group in 2023. She invited members to select a vice-chairperson for 2023 (and hence chairperson in 2024) and highlighted recent practice of alternating donor and partner organizations as chairpersons. A list of all previous chairpersons of the Working Group was included in Annex 1 to the annotated agenda. She encouraged members to express their interest either in the margins of the meeting, or via email, to the Secretariat.

2.2 Selection of new developing country experts (2023-2024)

6. In October 2021, the Working Group decided to extend the two-year term of all STDF experts with an additional year, in view of the COVID-19 pandemic. The STDF currently benefits from the expertise and knowledge of six experts from developing countries, namely Visoni Timote, Mirian Bueno, Lucy Namu, Sithar Dorjee, Juliet Goldsmith and Unesu Ushewokunze-Obatolu. The term of three experts - Visoni, Mirian and Lucy - will end on 31 December 2022.

7. For the 2023-2024 period, the incoming chairperson of the Working Group will be requested, together with the outgoing chairperson, to select three new experts, in accordance with the procedure and criteria in para. 22-25 of the [STDF Operational Rules](#). Candidates will be selected from a roster maintained by the Secretariat, recommended by members. Members agreed on 30 September 2022 as the deadline for the submission of recommendations. The chairperson encouraged members to recommend candidates who are from LDCs or other low-income countries.

2.3 Adoption of the LDC transition mechanism

8. The Secretariat briefed members on the background and modalities of the 3-year LDC transition mechanism, approved by the STDF Policy Committee in January 2022. While the mechanism currently applies to Vanuatu only, the UN General Assembly has issued resolutions on LDC graduation of a number of countries, namely Bhutan (2023), Angola, Sao Tome and Principe and Solomon Islands (2024) and Bangladesh, Lao PDR and Nepal (2026). The transition mechanism will be reviewed as part of STDF's next external evaluation.

2.4 Staffing and financial situation

9. The Secretariat briefed members on STDF's staffing situation and welcomed Susanna Pak who started as STDF Communications Officer on 1 December 2021. In addition, in 2021, Marlynne Hopper was appointed as Deputy Head of the STDF and Lead on Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL). While the WTO recruitment process to fill Marlynne's previous position is ongoing, Ezinne Anyanwu is filling the position on a temporary basis. Charles Njemo joined the STDF Secretariat as a Young Professional, and Myriam Hammadi as an intern, both on 1 June 2022. Arshad Nawaz from the Netherlands Trainee Programme (NTP) also worked for the Secretariat until the end of June 2022.

10. Referring to **Annex 2** to the annotated agenda, the Secretariat summarized the financial situation of the STDF trust fund, highlighting a positive balance of CHF2.8 million (approximately US\$3 million) for projects and PPGs that will be examined under agenda item 3. The funding request for this meeting totalled US\$4.5 million.

11. In 2021, the STDF received contributions from Australia, Canada, Finland and Germany for a total of CHF1.8 million. The Secretariat expected to receive an additional US\$4.1 million in 2022 under existing multi-annual agreements (i.e., pledges). Together with the contributions already received, this represented 86% of STDF's target level of funding of US\$7 million. Discussions are ongoing with current and potential new donors regarding new contributions to the STDF trust fund in 2022 and beyond.

12. Ireland announced a new contribution of €200,000 for 2022. Sweden informed that resources are being reallocated to support Ukrainian refugees, which could mean a potential decrease of 10-15% in financial support in 2022. Its decision would be communicated to the Secretariat later this year.

2.5 Communications Plan

2.5.1 Update from the Secretariat

13. The Secretariat offered an update on the implementation of STDF's Communications Plan and reminded participants of its goal to raise awareness of STDF's global platform and promote uptake of STDF knowledge products and project support in developing countries. In this context, the Secretariat's core products included news items, results stories, the Annual Report, newsletters, briefing notes, videos and photos, which are shared through events, the STDF website and social media.

2.5.2 Activities by STDF members

14. The Secretariat informed members that an informal group of communication officers from STDF partners and implementing agencies of STDF projects was established to share resources and guidelines related to communications, seek synergies and promote each other's work through joint campaigns, etc.

15. The Netherlands considered the narrative on food safety and the impacts of increased international trade as very important for STDF's Communications Plan. The IPPC welcomed the informal COMMS group and shared information on recent IPPC webinars and recent collaboration with the World Bank on the PCE tool. Juliet Goldsmith (expert) noted that CAHFSA was currently reviewing its communication strategy and would include a section on its website dedicated to the STDF.

16. The WHO noted that some countries face obstacles in applying for STDF funding because applications are only accepted in English, French, and Spanish. It suggested, supported by Codex and FAO, that the STDF should explore the opportunity of receiving applications in Arabic and Russian to better target certain regions. The FAO highlighted the importance of making the rules for application better known and providing guidance to applicants on how to produce good applications.

17. The IFC shared information on a joint STDF-WBG webinar held in December 2021, which focused on food safety reform and introduced a new IFC e-learning course to support and strengthen food safety systems in emerging markets.

2.5.3 Presentation of 2021 Annual Report

18. The Secretariat provided a brief introduction to STDF's 2021 Annual Report, to be released as an interactive flipbook later in June. The theme of the report is building resilience through safe trade. The report will be circulated for members' consideration and approval.

2.6 Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)

2.6.1 COVID-19 – STDF Response

19. The Secretariat presented the key findings of its 4th COVID risk assessment report, issued in February 2022. Compared to previous reports, there is evidence of increased resumption of travel and in-country activities in projects and PPGs. In general, PPGs appear to have suffered more from the pandemic (including delays), compared to projects which adapted more easily to virtual delivery. The Secretariat expects to issue no further COVID risk reports, unless the situation worsens dramatically.

2.6.2 Implementation of LogAlto tool

20. The Secretariat also presented LogAlto, an off-the-shelf online tool which was selected in November 2021 following WTO's procurement process, to support results-based management. Eight pilot projects (with different implementing organizations, regions, languages, etc.) are currently transitioning to LogAlto. Training sessions have taken place for these users and the STDF Secretariat. The transition to LogAlto will require effort and adaptation for all involved, though initial feedback is encouraging. All ongoing projects are expected to be included in LogAlto by the end of 2022. The Secretariat will present LogAlto to members once more projects are included in the tool.

21. An informal STDF MEL Group (involving FAO, IPPC, WOA, France, GIZ, USDA, US FDA and UNIDO) met virtually in December 2021 and February 2022. The LogAlto tool was presented to the MEL Group and the meetings were useful to exchange on MEL issues, including common challenges.

2.6.3 Ex post evaluation of STDF projects

22. Terms of reference for two outstanding ex-post project evaluations (STDF/PG/502 and STDF/PG/504) will be shared with Working Group members after the meeting. At its next meeting in November 2022 the Working Group will be requested to select other projects (completed in 2021 and 2022) for external ex-post evaluation.

2.7 STDF 2019 external evaluation

23. The Secretariat reminded members of the 2019 external evaluation conducted by Nathan Associates, and the subsequent action plan, adopted by the Working Group in November 2019, which identifies specific actions and tasks to implement the 16 recommendations that were accepted by the Policy Committee. The Secretariat introduced an updated action plan, circulated prior to the meeting, and reported that six recommendations are still outstanding. Some tasks to implement these recommendations are expected to continue until the end of the strategy period. The Secretariat invited members to comment and provide feedback on the recommendations' implementation status.

24. The WTO reported that it has no further information concerning the outstanding staffing recommendations at this stage. Members provided no further comments on the updated action plan.

3 PPGs AND PROJECTS

3.1 Overview of ongoing and completed projects and PPGs

25. The Secretariat referred to document STDF/WG/Jun22/Overview, which contains an overview of the implementation status of ongoing projects and PPGs. Members approved five no-cost extensions to complete project activities (STDF/PG/477, STDF/PG/498, STDF/PG/553, STDF/PG/569 and STDF/PG/634).

3.2 Overview of new project and PPG applications not tabled for consideration

26. The Secretariat introduced document STDF/WG/Jun22/Review, which includes all PPG and project applications not tabled for consideration - separated in two groups - and the reasons for not tabling them. The first group includes those applications that are eligible but not yet ready to be considered by the Working Group, as additional work and inputs are needed. The second group concerns all applications that are not eligible and are merely listed for information purposes.

27. The Secretariat briefly introduced two specific applications (STDF/PG/811 and STDF/PPG/785), which would benefit from guidance and input from the Working Group, before work on these applications can continue:

STDF/PG/811 - Latin America (Salmonella)

28. This project application, submitted by the national food safety authorities of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil and Paraguay, seeks to increase poultry exports, facilitate trade and improve food safety in the member countries of the Permanent Veterinary Committee of the Southern Cone (CVP), the Central American Integration System (SICA) and the Andean Community of Nations (CAN), under the "One Health" approach. It aims at improving food safety management associated with Salmonella in the poultry value chain in these countries, by establishing a "Regional Hub" as an institutional space for South-South public-private cooperation and exchange, with the support of the international reference organizations (CODEX/CCLAC, FAO, PAHO/WHO, WOAAH and IICA).

29. Several members provided comments on this proposal (i.e., WHO, WOAAH, Codex, FAO, EC, USA). While members recognized that Salmonella management is an important issue for the region, they raised substantive concerns and did not support the application in its current state. On the one hand, members questioned whether the issue falls within STDF's mandate to promote the use of international standards. On the other hand, they wondered whether the creation of a "regional hub" to address the problem of contamination with Salmonella is the correct one, instead of working directly with the poultry production units. Members also concurred that the number of activities per expected result was very large, with apparent repetition between some of them, and the expected results lacked clarity. Some members suggested that if the proposal is revised from a foundational point of view, it could eventually be resubmitted to the STDF in the future.

STDF/PPG/785 - DR Congo (cassava)

30. The purpose of this PPG is to identify the main SPS constraints that hinder the cassava sector in DRC to trade. While the application refers to an endemic paralytic disease associated with the consumption of insufficiently processed cassava (Konzo disease), it also highlights many other constraints that are not SPS related: insufficient investment, heavy fiscal pressure, poor infrastructure, etc. The Secretariat requested further information from members, and in particular Codex and IPPC, on the eligibility of this PPG and whether it could be reworked and resubmitted to the Working Group at a later stage.

31. The Netherlands highlighted the importance to give more attention to local food crops and their challenges, especially in times where food security is at the centre of attention. The chairperson suggested that further discussions on this PPG application could be held virtually.

3.3 Website survey – STDF Working Group

32. The Secretariat announced that a survey of the STDF's website would be conducted the following day through Mentimeter, and therefore asked participants to review the website to provide better feedback.

3.4 Consideration of new PPG applications

33. The chairperson requested members and organizations that have been involved in the development or implementation of specific applications to refrain from participating in the decision-making process on PPGs and projects.

STDF/PPG/831 – Bangladesh (P-IMA)

34. The Working Group approved this PPG application subject to two conditions: (i) improve complementarity and linkages with past and on-going projects in Bangladesh including those of FAO, World Bank Group and USDA; and (ii) consult with IFC to explore how its pilot assessment of the IFC Scan Guide: "Policy and Regulatory Dimension of Food Safety, Food Fortification, Food Loss and Waste, and Livestock Production in Bangladesh" can inform the prioritization of SPS related investments.

STDF/PPG/846 – Feasibility study for post-harvest & exit-point treatment of FFV, cuttings, and flowers in Uganda

35. The Working Group **approved** this PPG application on the condition that comments raised by members be addressed in the final proposal. Members highlighted the need to clarify the outputs of the PPG and to include references to relevant ISPMs and IPPC guidance materials. A PCE was scheduled to be conducted in 2022. Canada and COLEACP questioned to what extent the STDF should fund research and development for a private sector company that would potentially profit from the study. COLEACP suggested that the Secretariat incorporate a requirement to ensure transparency of information generated by the study to mitigate problems linked to licensing fees. The EC recommended to take into account the results of the 2019 EU/DG SANTE report on plant health controls for the export of plant and plant products when carrying out the feasibility study.

36. The Secretariat clarified that PPG funds would not be used to purchase licensing fees for the technology. It also noted that the Ministry of Agriculture had submitted a letter recommending that Mairye Estates would directly manage the funds for the PPG, in close partnership with the National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO). In response to a question from Sweden, the Secretariat explained that private sector companies have implemented PPGs in the past. France and Unesu Ushewokunze-Obatolu (expert) noted the potential of establishing an innovative PPP through this PPG.

STDF/PPG/847 - Use of a Systems Approach for sustainable management of aflatoxins and pests on maize grain in Uganda

37. The Working Group **approved** this PPG application. The Secretariat noted that the comments received from members in writing prior to the meeting could easily be integrated into the final proposal, including references to relevant ISPMs and the Beyond Compliance tools. Lucy Namu (expert) mentioned to share names of academics working on aflatoxin in Kenya that might be able to provide expertise. The FAO highlighted the relevance of the concept but suggested that the focus be solely on aflatoxin contamination, rather than on the secondary issue of quarantine pests. The World Bank supported the proposal and agreed with FAO's suggestion. It also noted how this PPG provides an opportunity to do a full analysis of the value chain in order to determine the critical control points. It was also noted that IFC is undertaking a small project linked to district-level regulatory controls for aflatoxin contamination in Uganda, which would complement and help inform the PPG.

3.5 Consideration of new PG applications

STDF/PG/755 - Strengthening phytosanitary compliance and public private partnerships to boost seed trade in the Asia Pacific region

38. The Working Group **approved** this project subject to revisions. Members acknowledged the relevance as well as the multi-stakeholder, interdisciplinary, and regional approach of the project. Specific recommendations included to: (i) further detail and fine-tune some outputs; (ii) consider sustainability matters in the early stages of project implementation (specifically for some expected outputs such as the creation of a portal of phytosanitary requirements); and (iii) identify concrete synergies and complementarities with relevant ongoing initiatives in the region. Unesu Ushewokunze-Obatolu (expert) highlighted the potential concern of seed trade and genetic influences on biodiversity and noted how these risks should be taken account during this project.

STDF/PG/807 - Strengthening management of invasive scale insects in East Africa (Kenya, Uganda and Burundi) to boost export of fresh fruits

39. The Working Group **approved** this project upon condition that the project document be further improved in the following areas: (i) including relevant information on related phytosanitary capacity building initiatives in Uganda and Burundi, including recent STDF projects; (ii) putting in place mitigation strategies for staff turnover in NPPOs; (iii) consulting and formalizing participation of the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE), based in Kenya; and (iv) addressing other written comments provided by members, including targeted recommendations by USDA and the EC to improve sustainability, strengthen linkages with their programmes, and include representation of the EU delegation in Kenya in the Project Steering Committee.

STDF/PG/842 – Piloting the use of Third-Party Assurance (TPA) Programme in East Africa (Uganda and Rwanda)

40. The Working group **approved** this project. Some members recognized the opportunity to pilot the Codex vTPA guidelines in a fast-growing African region, where food safety reform is underway and public-private dialogue is growing. Members made some recommendations to take into account during the inception phase and implementation, including to: (i) clearly align the project to the Codex vTPA Guidelines; (ii) ensure a market driven approach to ensure sustainability; (iii) promote exchange and learning with the STDF vTPA regional pilot projects in West Africa and Central America; (iv) clarify and deepen linkages to other donor-supported projects (e.g. COMESA, EU-supported NAME project); (v) develop criteria to assess and better understand the costs and benefits of implementing vTPA approaches when resources are limited in the public and private sector, and when the necessary infrastructure and equipment related to the use of vTPA approaches is not always available.

STDF/PG/753 - Latin American Pesticide Residue Mitigation through the Promotion of Biopesticides and other Integrated Pest Management Control Options for the enhancement of Agricultural Trade Opportunities

41. The Working Group **approved** this project subject to some revisions. Members recognized the multi-stakeholder, interdisciplinary and regional approach of the project, as well as its potential to develop synergies with the ongoing STDF projects on biopesticides in Asia and Africa. Members made recommendations to strengthen the implementation of the project, including: (i) detailing some of the expected outputs; (ii) considering sustainability issues from the early stages of project implementation (specifically for some expected outputs such as the Regional Training Centre and the MUF-LATAM chapter); and (iii) identifying concrete synergies and complementarities with relevant ongoing or completed initiatives in the region. The EU delegation in Peru asked to be invited as an observer to the Project Steering Committee. Some members also suggested making the link with the integrated pest management programs and to make the associated costs more visible.

STDF/PG/838 – Regional Phytosanitary Intelligence Centre for the Andean Community (Pilot for Fusarium FocR4T)

42. The Working Group **approved** this project subject to a response from the EC regarding a similar project request that was received by the EU delegation in Lima, Peru. ¹ Members recognized the importance of strengthening regional pest surveillance and monitoring capacities of the four Andean countries, as well as supporting producers and health authorities in early decision-making. The IPPC recommended to include specific references to relevant ISPMs as well as IPPC guides and training materials, in particular those on Surveillance, Market access, Pest status, and Pest Risk Communication. It was also suggested to mention IPPC national reporting obligations. New prevention guidelines on Fusarium TR4 will shortly be published in Spanish and could be used in this project.

43. Several members highlighted the importance of ensuring coordination with a large number of ongoing and planned initiatives and projects that seek to support countries in the region to control Fusarium TR4, in order to ensure synergies and avoid duplication of efforts. Specific reference was made to initiatives of IICA, FAO Latin America, the World Banana Forum, the EU (including a reference to the Copernicus programme) and USA.

3.6 Decision on prioritization and funding new project applications

44. The Secretariat informed that sufficient resources were available in the STDF trust fund to fund all the project approved and that no decision on prioritization was needed.

3.7 Analysis of PPG/project applications

45. The Secretariat presented its assessment on PPG and project applications. At the October 2021 meeting, some members had queried about the high numbers of PPG applications received and their conversion rate into successful projects.

46. Canada appreciated the analysis and noted the high effectiveness of PPGs given the high conversion rate to projects. Sweden noted how the STDF can play an important role in mobilizing resources and catalysing new initiatives to be funded by other donors.

47. The IPPC noted the increase in collaboration in recent years around the application of the PCE tool, the results of which provide ample opportunity to utilize STDF funds for follow-up activities. The FAO suggested that PPG funding for the application of SPS needs assessment tools could be increased beyond the US\$50,000 limit and potentially separated into a special PPG category. The World Bank supported FAO's request but also cautioned how repeatedly funding SPS capacity evaluation tools may not be in line with the PPG objective of exploring new innovative approaches.

48. The US highlighted the uniqueness of the PPG mechanism and viewed it as a place for experimentation of new ideas and approaches. It also highlighted the responsiveness and willingness of the Secretariat to collaborate with US partners on the ground. Unesu Ushewokunze-Obatolu (expert) questioned why there weren't more applications from certain regions such as Southern Africa and asked whether Working Group members could help in this regard by supporting applicants. Germany noted that it can be difficult to explain the STDF and its funding opportunities to officials in developing countries. It suggested that the Secretariat should work with local and regional communication officers to develop materials and produce simpler content for the website. The Netherlands viewed that the STDF should have an advisory role in the WTO on the matters concerning food safety, and animal and plant health as well as sustainable food systems, so that the other stakeholders may approach STDF for institutional advice on such matters.

49. The Secretariat appreciated the positive feedback received from members and explained that work on the STDF website is planned. This will include a focus on making information for applicants

¹ On 20 June 2022, the EC confirmed that the EU Delegation in Lima will not fund this project proposal, due to administrative and operational reasons, but considers it a good initiative to support Andean countries to deal with the challenges presented by plant pests.

clearer. It also noted that follow up and tracking of PPGs after their completion requires resources, which are limited, but that PPG surveys and the new MEL tool could help to some extent.

4 KNOWLEDGE WORK

4.1 STDF gender assessment

50. The Secretariat provided the background to the STDF gender assessment and thanked members who had shared comments to support this work (including the TORs, inception report and draft assessment report). A special thanks was given to Sweden (SIDA) which had offered an online one-day gender training for the STDF Secretariat in December 2021. The assessment aims to evaluate how (and to what effect) gender equality is addressed and how gender is mainstreamed across STDF's work, and to draw key findings, conclusions and practical recommendations to improve gender mainstreaming in the future. The Secretariat introduced the external consultant (Ignacia Simonetti) who was contracted to carry out the assessment and noted that the revised draft report (taking into account feedback after the presentation, as well as additional comments from the gender peer review group) would be shared with members for their review, prior to finalization of the report in August 2022.

51. The consultant presented the assessment's methodology, as well as the key findings, conclusions and recommendations. While she highlighted growing attention to gender in trade since the WTO Ministerial Conference in 2017, she also pointed to limited evidence on the potential impact of compliance with SPS measures on gender equality. In her conclusions she highlighted limited awareness and inconsistent attention to gender equality among STDF Working Group members, which limited integration of gender equality into processes and project work, ambiguous accountability for gender mainstreaming, and opportunities for the STDF to exercise its convening power to increase attention to gender in an SPS context. Based on the conclusions, the report contained six draft recommendations.

52. Members thanked the consultant for a comprehensive presentation and shared initial comments including: (i) the need to further clarify terms and concepts, and to fully consider women and men; (ii) consider how relevant social barriers faced by women affect their economic participation and how related data (e.g. land ownership) could support M&E; (iii) take a step-wise approach to address the recommendations beginning with more discussion in the Working Group on what gender equality means for SPS compliance and STDF's work; and (iv) consider the resources needed for follow up on gender mainstreaming, including the need for greater awareness on the topic among Working Group members and appropriate guidance for STDF project stakeholders. Some members offered to share information on their experiences in gender mainstreaming. One member proposed the creation of an informal group to exchange best practices.

53. The Secretariat drew attention to the recommendations of the 2019 external evaluation of the STDF, which identified other cross-cutting issues (i.e., climate and the environment) as more aligned to STDF's work and SPS in general. Members agreed to organize a follow-up discussion to further reflect on the recommendations, once the report is final, and agree on next steps.

4.2 Report by Secretariat on ongoing work

4.2.1 Prioritization of SPS Investments for Market Access (P-IMA)

54. The Secretariat provided a brief introduction of the STDF framework on [Prioritizing Investments for Market Access \(P-IMA\)](#) and noted how interest in the P-IMA framework by developing countries continues to be strong. Members were briefed on efforts to make P-IMA more user friendly and easy to access, including production of training modules which support the virtual/hybrid application of P-IMA. The modules were piloted in the [Caribbean](#) in partnership with CAHFSA and in [Ecuador](#) with IICA.

55. In May 2022, Kenya reviewed the findings of its P-IMA report ([produced under a joint EIF/STDF project](#)) as part of a WTO national SPS workshop in Nairobi. In [Ghana](#), the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) is supporting the implementation of the National Policy for Aflatoxin Control in food and feed by applying STDF's P-IMA framework to rank various priorities. Armenia is finalizing the application of P-IMA to promote exports of agricultural products. The Bahamas has

self-funded a second application of P-IMA with the aim to develop a national SPS strategy. As part of a USDA programme, the Philippines is applying P-IMA to prioritize food safety investments.

56. An independent external evaluation of the P-IMA framework is planned to start in the second half of 2022. The Secretariat will develop and circulate Terms of Reference for this evaluation for members' comments.

4.2.2 SPS electronic certification ([e-Cert](#))

57. The Secretariat briefed members on its participation in a webinar organized by the OECD in February 2022, at which a draft background paper entitled "Challenges and Opportunities of Electronic Sanitary Certification for Animal Products" was presented. This was followed by a panel discussion on country experiences with electronic sanitary certification and a session that reflected on the way forward for OECD and non-OECD member countries.² The Secretariat also drew attention to a meeting organized by UNESCAP in April 2022 where participants considered regional progress on cross-border paperless trade in the Asia-Pacific region.³

58. The Secretariat informed members on the panel discussion, organized by the STDF in collaboration with the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation, as part of UNCTAD's eCommerce Week, in April 2022. The public (New Zealand and Madagascar) and private (Senegal and UPS) sector presented their experiences and lessons. The session illustrated how SPS eCert plays a key role in trade reform and highlighted the need scale up and expand SPS eCert beyond ePhyto.⁴

4.2.3 Public Private Partnerships (PPPs)

59. The Secretariat updated members on ongoing work on PPPs, including PPP case stories published on the STDF website the latest PPP Practitioner Group meetings, and the UNIDO-led vTPA Partnership Platform to leverage public and private sector expertise and resources in support of the STDF regional vTPA pilot projects. STDF members were encouraged to share other examples of SPS-related PPPs with the Secretariat to be written up and shared (see STDF [website](#)). The Secretariat referred to the planned STDF PPP event (budgeted in the STDF workplan for 2022) and welcomed feedback on possible interest of STDF members to partner on this event.

60. UNIDO mentioned an upcoming event in Vienna in October 2022 on topics related to remote inspection, data-driven regulatory approaches and vTPA programmes, and suggested to partner with STDF on this event. IFC announced its global food safety platform and to share its plans and events with the STDF ahead of the joint STDF -World Bank event in December 2022 which will be helpful in reaching out to partners as part of IFC target.

61. IFC shared an update on its latest food safety training tools and global food safety platform and recognized the value of collaboration with the STDF on recent events. IFC noted that it looked forward to further cooperation with the STDF on future events to reach more stakeholders in developing countries.

4.3 Good regulatory practices (GRP)

62. The Secretariat referred to the GRP Guide (2021) and Briefing published on the [STDF website](#) (in English, French and Spanish), noting that the Guide drew attention to topics raised by Working Group members including the impact of SPS measures on different genders and new-generation trade agreements. Following the STDF GRP event on the margins of the SPS Committee (Nov. 2021), the STDF and Asian Development Bank (ADB) had organized a regional Zoom event on GRPs for the Asia Region (with close to 200 participants), as well as an online event for SPS stakeholders in Pakistan. STDF members were requested to share any opportunities to disseminate the STDF GRP

² A recording of the workshop is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-9EF2vZtn0U>.

³ For more information see: <https://www.unescap.org/events/seventh-meeting-interim-intergovernmental-steering-group-cross-border-paperless-trade>.

⁴ A recording of the session is available at the UNCTAD eCommerce Week dedicated platform: <https://unctadeweek2022.pathable.co/>

Guide via their upcoming newsletters, events, etc. Attention was drawn to an expected future project for STDF consideration resulting from an ongoing PPG in The Philippines.

4.4 Internal assessment of STDF Practitioner Groups

63. The Secretariat shared information on an internal assessment of STDF Practitioner Groups conducted in 2022 aiming at: (i) taking stock of, reflecting on and learning from the initial experiences with these groups; and (ii) proposing recommendations (quick wins as well as longer-term actions) to adapt and/or strengthen the Practitioner Groups, as relevant, to contribute more effectively to delivery of the STDF Strategy.

64. The assessment showed that the groups support information sharing and that members are satisfied and appreciate the usefulness of the topics discussed. The Secretariat highlighted that recommendations centred on planning, organization, and delivery of the meetings, on clearer purpose and expectations of the groups, the need for more engagement and follow-up to encourage members to move beyond sharing information and experiences to work collaboratively on the creation of practical new knowledge products. The final assessment will be shared with the various Practitioner Groups to inform a discussion on next steps.

4.5 Report on STDF climate change/SPS webinars

65. The Secretariat briefly summarized the [four webinars](#) that were held from 3-6 May 2022. Members highlighted the need for greater capacity development on risk assessment and risk management at country level. The World Bank noted that practical guidance on how to conduct rapid risk assessments would be useful for developing countries and that it plans to organize a webinar on this topic in collaboration with the STDF, possibly in the margins of the WTO SPS Committee in November 2022.

66. Members appreciated the work of the STDF on climate change issues and suggested to integrate climate change in STDF grant applications to better capture its impact on SPS risks. They also tasked the Secretariat to refresh and update the existing STDF briefing on this topic and to review STDF's template for the submission of project applications. Development of a practical guidance and risk communication tool on climate change might also be beneficial.

4.6 Information exchange

4.6.1 UNIDO's Standards Compliance Analytics (SCA) platform

67. UNIDO [presented](#) its [Standards Compliance Analytics](#) (SCA) platform, which contains information on border rejections in major global markets and aims to help exporting countries to focus and navigate their efforts in improving SPS compliance. Members considered the platform very useful to inform analysis and capacity development efforts. Some shared concerns related to data limitations and provided practical recommendations aimed at better meeting the needs of beneficiaries and users. Members pointed out the usefulness of having information about the main reasons for the rejections and suggested to include data on quantities traded (with HS codes), to be able to analyse seasonal trends in terms of rejections.

4.6.2 Food Standards Australia on the APEC Food Safety Risk Communication Framework

68. Food Standards Australia shared information on APEC's [Food Safety Risk Communication Framework](#) and Associated Guidelines. Members supported the framework, raised questions on examples of successful risk communication strategies, and expressed willingness to use the framework in their future activities. In addition, members recognized the relevance of the framework and highlighted that the Guidelines could be shared with developing countries as good communication practices.

4.6.3 Other new/emerging SPS initiatives/issues

69. The US informed members of a joint collaboration between the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), IICA and other partners to address African swine fever in the Western hemisphere. The US also highlighted a collaboration

mechanism between USFDA, USDA and USAID on a food safety network partnership that started in 2017 to support different SPS capacity building projects globally as part of the US government [Feed the Future initiative](#). Similarly, WHO informed members that its global strategy for food safety was adopted at the [75th World Health Assembly](#) that was held in Geneva, Switzerland, on 22-28 May 2022.

70. The EC mentioned a new 5-year €25 million programme to support COLEACP. The "Fit For Market+" (FFM+) programme provides support to the horticultural sector in member countries of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), to improve the capacity of smallholders, farmer groups and horticultural MSMEs to access domestic, regional and international markets, adapt to environmental challenges, Covid-19 and climate change, and addressing the priority areas identified in the Farm to Fork strategy of the European Green Deal.⁵

71. In addition, COLEACP announced a €7 million programme funded by the EC to provide enhanced data and knowledge to developing and emerging countries, covering changes in EU policies, regulatory and non-regulatory measures, standards and market trends that have a potential impact on the competitiveness, market access and trade dynamics of agricultural value chains linked to the EU market.⁶

72. The WTO informed members about the draft SPS Ministerial Declaration to be discussed by WTO Members at the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference from 12 to 17 June 2022, which may lead to new areas of work for the SPS Committee.⁷ It also updated members on relevant activities of the upcoming SPS Committee meeting, to be held the week of 20 June, including a [workshop on transparency](#) and a [thematic session on the Use of Remote \(Virtual\) Audit and Verification in Regulatory Frameworks](#).

5 OTHER BUSINESS

73. The Secretariat informed members that the next meeting will be held on 29-30 November and 1 December 2022. Members would be informed about the modalities of the meeting (in person, virtual, or hybrid) in the coming months. It reminded members of the deadline of **30 September 2022** for the submission of recommendations for new developing country experts. Finally, the Secretariat thanked the chairperson, on behalf of all members, for effectively chairing the meeting.

6 CLOSURE

74. The chairperson thanked all participants for their active engagement and closed the meeting at 15:55.

⁵ For more information see: <https://www.coleacp.org/current-programmes/fit-for-market-plus/>

⁶ For more details see: <https://www.coleacp.org/current-programmes/agrinfo/>

⁷ The Declaration was adopted by WTO members on 17 June 2022 and is available at: <https://docs.wto.org/dol2fe/Pages/SS/directdoc.aspx?filename=q:/WT/MIN22/27.pdf&Open=True>

ANNEX 1

**STDF WORKING GROUP
7 – 8 JUNE 2022**

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