1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. The STDF supports its members, and stakeholders in developing and least developed countries, to pilot collaborative and innovative approaches and bring about sustainable improvements in SPS capacity. To achieve this goal, the STDF focuses on two related and closely inter-connected outcomes, as outlined in STDF’s new strategy (2020-2024).

Outcome 1: More synergies and collaboration driving catalytic SPS improvements in developing countries

Coordination between organizations with a role in developing SPS capacity, whether via the lens of agricultural or private sector development, health protection or trade facilitation, is essential to drive catalytic and sustainable SPS improvements on the ground. Dialogue and information exchange encourages synergies, alignment and coherence in interventions, improving results. STDF’s global platform, knowledge work, and projects and PPGs create opportunities for collaboration to influence and drive catalytic SPS improvements that can be leveraged, scaled-up and replicated more widely.

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

Drawing on the expertise of its partners, the STDF identifies, develops and disseminates good practices and knowledge products that focus attention on topics that cut across food safety, animal and plant health and trade to influence and support SPS capacity development. This work promotes access to guidance and tools developed by STDF members to support their wider use at global, regional and national level.

1.2. This work plan provides information on STDF’s planned activities, inputs and outputs in 2020 and 2021 in order to achieve STDF’s goal and its two related outcomes. Underpinning this effort is STDF’s Theory of Change. Working at global, regional and national levels, and across its knowledge and projects work, the STDF convenes and connects diverse stakeholders with a role in SPS capacity development and supports the implementation of demand-driven activities and innovative SPS projects. Learning from and disseminating the results and experiences of this work will ultimately catalyse and influence change, driving sustainable SPS improvements in developing and least developed countries.
1.3. Sections 2, 3 and 4 below describe STDF's planned activities and outputs across STDF's knowledge work, funding mechanism and global platform, respectively. Section 5 provides more detail on how this Work Plan will be delivered, including in relation to Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL), Communications and the Secretariat's resources. Annex 1 includes STDF's logframe (to be completed after development of STDF's new MEL Framework). Annex 2 provides an estimated activity-based budget, based on STDF's annual target level of funding of USD 7 million, as agreed by the STDF Policy Committee.

2 KNOWLEDGE WORK

2.1. STDF's knowledge work on cross-cutting thematic topics (i.e. cutting across the areas of food safety, animal and plant health, and trade) identifies and promotes good practices to improve SPS capacity development outcomes. Knowledge work convenes members and other relevant organizations, drawing on their technical expertise, and aims to influence SPS capacity development work more broadly. Thematic workstreams are supported by peer review or practitioners' groups and can be linked to STDF projects on the ground, acting as a further catalyst.

2.2. At each meeting of the Working Group, the Secretariat will provide an overview of the thematic workstreams, for discussion and reflection by members. Members can propose new topics for future thematic work and where appropriate request the Secretariat, in collaboration with members, to develop concept notes for further consideration. In addition to the thematic areas listed below, the Working Group is currently considering the topic of border risk management (presentations/discussion foreseen in Working Group in October 2020). Some members have informed the Secretariat of their interest in the environmental impacts and spill-overs of STDF's work and possibly revisiting STDF's past work on climate change and SPS risks.¹

2.1 Public Private Partnerships

2.3. The STDF will continue to revisit its work on Public Private Partnerships (PPPs), initiated in 2010.² Current work, which started in 2019, is focused on: (i) learning about the use of voluntary third-party assurance (vTPA) programmes in food and feed safety; and (ii) collecting and compiling new examples of PPPs in the area of SPS capacity and trade, more broadly. The following specific activities are foreseen:

- in 2020, develop and circulate targeted surveys (English, French and Spanish), and share feedback and prepare a report for consideration by the Working Group, on:
  - existing and/or planned regulatory frameworks and practices related to vTPA programmes in food and feed safety; this survey will be circulated to WTO/SPS and Codex delegates.
  - examples of PPPs to develop SPS capacity and trade, more broadly (i.e. beyond collaboration or data sharing linked to vTPA programmes); this PPP survey will be accessible on the PPP page on the STDF website; the Secretariat will follow up separately with relevant stakeholders – including partners, donors, developing country experts (current and former), other stakeholders involved in STDF projects and PPGs, etc. – to obtain PPP examples;

- in 2021, organize a global/regional client-facing event to highlight and present successful examples of PPPs in the SPS area and share experiences and lessons learned; this work will build on the PPP workshop that was organized by the STDF in The Netherlands in 2010 and complement more recent PPP work undertaken by partners, including the OIE).

- establish virtual practitioner groups on vTPA programmes, and more broadly on PPPs to develop SPS capacity, to support wider outreach and learning.

¹ See: https://www.standardsfacility.org/climate-change
² See: https://www.standardsfacility.org/public-private-partnerships
2.2 Good Regulatory Practice

2.4. The STDF will finalize its work on Good Regulatory Practice (GRP) to improve the quality and effectiveness of SPS measures in developing countries. In this work, the Secretariat has been supported by: (i) a consultant undertaking a study to promote the use of GRP in the SPS area, based on desk research, key informant interviews and analysis; and (ii) a small peer review group, comprised of interested STDF partners and other relevant/interested organizations, including the OECD. The STDF also supports the development of specific projects focused on GRP. The following activities are foreseen:

- in 2020, organize additional virtual meetings of the peer review group, as well as a two-day meeting of this group in Geneva, to finalize the study, which will include illustrative case stories and good practices and a practical check-list with links to available GRP tools and resources; additional selected GRP/SPS experts, including from developing countries, may be invited for this meeting.
- in 2021, organize an STDF workshop/seminar to share key findings and recommendations of STDF’s GRP work, most likely on the margins of an SPS Committee meeting.

2.3 P-IMA framework

2.5. The Prioritization of SPS Investment Options for Market Access (P-IMA) framework constitutes an evidence-based approach to help developing countries to inform and improve SPS planning and decision making, including mobilization of additional resources for SPS investments. The Secretariat will continue to disseminate, encourage and facilitate the use of the P-IMA framework, including through synergies with STDF members and other interested stakeholders. The Secretariat will make presentations on the P-IMA guide to interested external audiences, wherever possible.

2.6. Several developing countries are currently benefiting from the application of the P-IMA framework through STDF-funded projects and PPGs. Other interested developing countries will be encouraged to use the P-IMA framework to prioritize SPS investment options and help leverage resources for follow-up, including through new STDF funding applications. More specifically, in 2020 the following activities are foreseen:

- initiate a review and update of the P-IMA user guide, based on the applications to date, improving its practicality and user-friendliness; to this end, the Secretariat will contract the services of the consultant who assisted the STDF in developing the P-IMA framework (Spencer Henson)
- establish a virtual P-IMA practitioners’ group to support wider outreach and learning on P-IMA

2.4 SPS electronic certification

2.7. Paperless SPS systems can improve traceability throughout SPS supply chains, lower food waste, cut trade times and costs, reduce fraudulent certificates, and build trust among trading partners. STDF’s work in this area aims to increase the use of electronic SPS certificates (SPS eCert) in developing countries. This work should also be seen in the broader context of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), which aims – inter alia – to simplify and streamline trade documents. In the past, the STDF has organized seminars and workshops on this topic. The STDF funds two projects in this area, namely e-Phyto, implemented by FAO/IPPC Secretariat, and eVet, implemented by OIE.

2.8. In view of ongoing and planned projects and initiatives in this area, the Working Group in 2019 approved terms of reference and established an SPS eCert Advisory Committee, which currently consists of 11 relevant organizations. The objective will be to exchange information on relevant eCert initiatives, facilitate linkages and synergies among these initiatives, and maximize outputs and

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3 See: https://www.standardsfacility.org/good-regulatory-practice
4 See: https://www.standardsfacility.org/prioritizing-sps-investments-market-access-p-ima
5 See: https://www.standardsfacility.org/SPS-eCert
6 See: https://www.standardsfacility.org/P6-504
7 See: https://www.standardsfacility.org/P6-609
avoid duplication of efforts. Depending on discussions in this committee, and resources available, the STDF may be requested to undertake additional work in this area in 2020-2021, including through STDF-funded projects or PPGs. For the time being, the following activity is envisaged:

- Organize and facilitate (virtual) meetings of the SPS eCert Advisory Committee, including reporting from this committee to the Working Group.

2.5 Spill-over effects of trade-related SPS interventions and projects

2.9. In April 2019, the Secretariat issued a briefing note on this topic, based on initial work carried out under STDF/PPG/535, led by Michigan State University (MSU), in collaboration with interested STDF partners, donors and other members. After further exchange with some STDF partners and donors, the Secretariat prepared a concept note for consideration by the Working Group in October 2019, which outlined possible future work in this area (i.e. development and validation of a practical framework on how to optimize the domestic spill-overs of trade-related SPS capacity investments and projects, supported by a peer review group of interested STDF partners and other members to provide technical advice, direction and oversight of the work).

2.10. In October 2019, members could not reach consensus on future work in this area. As requested by the Working Group, the Secretariat organized two conference calls with interested members and other organizations to further discuss and conceptualize the work. This work will continue in 2020.

- Continue organizing virtual meetings of the peer review/practitioners’ group to agree on a way forward.

3 DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECTS

3.1. STDF project and project preparation grants (PPGs) convene and connect public, private and other stakeholders at global, regional and country level to pilot innovative and collaborative approaches, leverage expertise and resources, and deliver results, including in Least Developed Countries (LDCs). Projects and PPGs link to STDF's knowledge work, allowing all those involved to learn about what works well and less well. Sharing the experiences helps to influence and catalyse SPS improvements more widely. The Secretariat will continue to make the linkages between knowledge and project work and identify synergies, where possible.

3.2. It is anticipated that the STDF will receive a large number of project and PPG applications for initial review by the Secretariat in 2020-2021, based on the high volume of applications over the last years. Applications received are often at various stages of development, ranging from two page concept notes to fully-fledged project proposals. The Secretariat will continue to review these applications and provide advice and support to applicants, in close consultation with relevant STDF partners where appropriate, in terms of SPS needs assessments, priority setting and proposal development. This “helpdesk” function of the Secretariat will continue to absorb a relatively large portion of staff time. The STDF will continue to aim devoting at least 40 per cent of its PPG and project resources to eligible organizations in LDCs and other Low Income Countries (OLICs).

3.3. In consultation with relevant STDF partners, and if the necessary resources are available in the Secretariat, the STDF may also accept to “peer-review” SPS-related projects and programmes initiated by other organizations and initiatives (including EIF "Tier 2" proposals).

3.1 Project Preparation Grants (PPGs)

3.4. Project preparation grants (PPGs) assist beneficiaries to articulate and prioritize SPS needs and develop projects. Predicting the number of PPG applications to be funded through the STDF in 2020-2021 is difficult, given that the number and quality of applications received is beyond the Secretariat’s control. Based on experiences in previous years, and in view of STDF's annual target level of funding, the Working Group will aim to approve at least six project preparation grants (PPGs)

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8 See: https://www.standardsfacility.org/sites/default/files/STDF_Briefing_Note_Trade_Spillovers_En.pdf
9 Reference is made to the concept note and summary report of the Working Group meeting.
10 From 2015 to 2019, the Secretariat received on average 53 requests for funding per year.
11 See also para. 31 of the STDF Operational Rules
for STDF funding per year, corresponding to an average of three PPGs approved at each meeting. Normally up to USD 50,000 is available to eligible organizations under a PPG.

3.5. The Secretariat will continue to assume a pro-active role in the implementation of PPGs and resource mobilization. In some instances, this may include accompanying selected consultants on (parts of) their missions or participating in project validation workshops. Resulting projects can be submitted to the STDF for funding or to another donor. Given the limited resources available in the STDF trust fund, the Secretariat will continue to emphasize the use of PPGs as a vehicle for mobilizing funds (including "co-funding" options) outside the STDF, where appropriate.

3.6. The Secretariat will monitor the outcomes of PPGs, though PPGs are not subject to a final assessment (like the end-of-project review for STDF-funded projects). The Secretariat will continue to deliver an end-of-PPG questionnaire to consult applicants/beneficiaries on the performance and results of PPGs.

3.2 Project Grants (PGs)

3.7. This work plan also foresees the approval of new collaborative and innovative projects. As with PPGs, predicting the number of projects that will be approved for funding in 2020-2021 is difficult given that the number and quality of applications received is beyond the Secretariat’s control. The overall level of funding in the STDF Trust Fund may be another limiting factor. With these caveats in mind, the Working Group will aim to approve at least six project grants, corresponding to an average of three applications at each meeting. It is anticipated that the average STDF contribution to these projects will be approximately USD 600,000.12

3.8. The Secretariat will continuously monitor the implementation of ongoing projects through six-month progress reports and regular consultation with the organizations implementing the projects, as well as the beneficiaries. As part of STDF’s Communications Plan, project communication guidelines for implementing organizations ensure increased visibility of the STDF in project materials and better communication of results. Where appropriate, the Secretariat may visit specific projects to facilitate their implementation. In addition to end-of-project reviews that are built in for each project, the Working Group will select each year three projects for an independent ex-post evaluation (see further MEL section below).

4 GLOBAL PLATFORM

4.1. The STDF convenes and connects diverse public and private sector organizations across agriculture, health, trade and development to exchange experiences, identify opportunities for collaboration, and promote a more coherent approach to SPS capacity development.

4.1. STDF Working Group

4.2. As part of the global platform, the STDF Working Group allows members to share information about relevant past, ongoing and planned SPS activities and learn from each other’s work, helping to disseminate, influence and scale up good practices more widely. Efforts will continue to enable other relevant organizations and initiatives to participate in meetings of the Working Group and share information about new/emerging SPS initiatives and topics. To facilitate discussion and sharing of experiences, each meeting will include at least one presentation related to an STDF activity or PG/PPG. The STDF Trust Fund will cover travel expenditure of presenters from developing countries, and of evaluators of STDF projects. Presentations by STDF partners and other members and organizations are also envisaged and encouraged.

4.3. The Secretariat will organize at least two meetings each year, in spring and in autumn. At least one meeting will be organized in Geneva, hosted by the WTO.13 Travel expenditure of STDF developing country experts to the Working Group meetings (round trip, economy class) will be covered by the STDF Trust Fund, as well as coffee breaks and lunches. Travel expenditure of STDF

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12 Corresponding to the average STDF contribution to projects approved under the previous strategy (2015-2019).
13 The first meeting in 2020 (7-8 April) will be held in Rome, hosted by FAO. The second meeting (13-14 October) will be held in Geneva, hosted by WTO. Dates and venues for 2021 will be announced in the October meeting.
Secretariat staff to Working Group meetings outside Geneva will also be covered by the STDF Trust Fund.

4.2 STDF Policy Committee

4.4. The Policy Committee consists of high-level representatives of STDF’s partners and donors, as well as selected experts of developing countries. The Policy Committee - *inter alia* - sets policy guidelines, provides oversight on the overall direction of the STDF, and oversees efforts by the Working Group in the coordination of SPS-related technical cooperation and the dissemination of good practice.

4.5. Meetings of the Policy Committee are called at the request of one or more STDF members or through a decision of the Working Group. STDF partners host Policy Committee meetings on a rotational basis, with the host partner chairing the meeting. The Secretariat anticipates the organization of at least one Policy Committee meeting in 2020 or 2021. Travel expenditure of STDF developing country experts to the Policy Committee meeting (round trip, economy class) will be covered by the STDF Trust Fund, as well as coffee breaks and lunch. Travel expenditure of STDF Secretariat staff to Policy Committee meetings outside Geneva will also be covered by the STDF Trust Fund.

5 DELIVERING THE WORK PLAN

5.1 Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)

5.1. The Secretariat, in close consultation with members, will develop a new Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework to track progress in terms of achieving results, providing feedback on the management of the STDF and to distil, learn from and communicate key experiences and lessons across STDF’s work programme. The MEL Framework will consolidate the focus on results-based management, building on the STDF external evaluation in 2019, as well as STDF’s previous M&E framework. This will ensure more emphasis on learning, reinforcing the value-proposition of STDF in piloting, innovating, influencing and catalyzing SPS good practices.

5.2. The MEL framework will be designed to ensure that any changes are undertaken with a view to keeping the system simple, practical and cost-effective. It will be developed with a focus on practically assessing those areas that are within STDF’s influence and reach. To assist in the development of the new MEL Framework, the Secretariat will establish an informal working group of interested members who will meet virtually between April and October 2020. As part of this work, the STDF Logical Framework in *Annex 1*, including a set of SMART14 indicators, will be completed. The new MEL Framework will be presented for consideration and approval by the Working Group in October 2020.

5.3. In addition to the above, the following specific MEL activities are also envisaged:

- Development of a MEL companion tool.

- contract three ex-post evaluations each year of completed projects, selected by the Working Group in accordance with the STDF Operational Rules, and based on the STDF Project Evaluation Guidelines.

- prepare an overview and preliminary analysis of all STDF knowledge work, taking stock of what has been done to date, for consideration by the Working Group. This overview will provide the basis and starting point for a publication on STDF knowledge work in 2021 (see below under Communications).

- conduct an in-depth assessment (in 2021) on a cross-cutting issue (e.g. gender or environment), across STDF’s knowledge work and projects/PPGs.

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14 *Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely.*
5.2 Communications

5.4. The Secretariat, in close consultation with members, will update and strengthen the STDF Communications Plan, for consideration and approval by the Working Group at its meeting in October 2020. The plan will put an emphasis on reaching target audiences in developing countries, supporting an increased uptake and use of STDF knowledge, tools and project support. The plan will support the Secretariat, partners, donors and other members in their communication and outreach efforts by bringing on board their communications counterparts. Communications will continue to focus on developing compelling, high-quality and user-friendly products, including across publications, multimedia and digital content.

5.5. The following specific activities are foreseen to implement the Communications Plan:

- Maintain STDF website/library, photo database and subscriptions for tools such as SurveyMonkey, Flickr, Zoom, MailChimp, D-sight, etc.
- Issue a short survey on the STDF website to assess the need for potential enhancements, as agreed by the Working Group in October 2019 (following up on a recommendation in the external evaluation)
- Prepare the STDF 2019 and 2020 Annual Reports (in 2020, the report will be produced in-house, at no additional cost; a budget is included for 2021, in case it is decided to outsource graphic design and infographics)
- Prepare a publication in 2021 on the key results and impacts of STDF knowledge work - similar to STDF’s 2018 Results Book (“Driving Safe Trade Solutions Worldwide”), which highlighted good practice models of STDF projects and PPGs. The plan includes a small budget in case graphic design and infographics of this publication will be outsourced
- Produce a new STDF film that will highlight the importance of SPS investments in developing countries. The Secretariat started work on a new film in 2019 but was not able to complete this project with the company that was hired, and the contract was terminated. The Secretariat will complete the film in 2020 with the remaining budget allocated for this project in 2019
- Organize at least four STDF seminars/workshops/events each year to reach developing country stakeholders and the wider trade and development community. Examples in 2020 include an STDF event at the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA) in Berlin (January). The Secretariat also submitted a request to organize an STDF event during the European Development Days (EDD) in Brussels (June). STDF events can also be organized with partners (including WTO Public Forum, Global Aid for Trade Review, etc.) or in the margins of the SPS Committee. The plan includes a small budget to finance speakers from developing countries, and for other minor expenses.
- Undertake at least ten targeted missions to facilitate the implementation and longer term sustainability of STDF-funded projects and PPGs.
- Liaise with other relevant Aid for Trade programmes, partnerships, networks and initiatives, and participate in selected external events to disseminate information about the STDF and its work, raise funds, monitor developments, foster synergies and promote coherence and coordination in SPS technical cooperation.15
- develop and produce at least two practical and user-friendly communication products per year (e.g. STDF briefing notes, audio-visual material).

5.3 Risk mitigation and assumptions

5.6. The STDF strategy includes a risk matrix highlighting existing, new and emerging risks that may affect STDF’s operations during the next strategy period (2020–2024), as well as a mitigation strategy for each of them. The strategy also describes key assumptions necessary to be in place to

15 This includes annual/regional meetings of STDF partners, including the Codex and IPPC Secretariats.
achieve STDF’s outcomes and programme goal. These risks and assumptions also apply to this work plan. The Secretariat will report on risk mitigation and management in the 2020 and 2021 Annual Reports. The Secretariat will also assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its operations and provide regular reports to the STDF Working Group.

**5.4 STDF Secretariat**

5.7. The Secretariat is housed in the WTO (Agriculture and Commodities Division, AGCD) and includes nine staff members, including the Head, seven professional staff and one administrative support staff. The WTO will continue to provide the Head of the STDF from its regular budget. Indicative staffing needs in terms of implementing the activities outlined in this work plan in 2020 and 2021 are incorporated into the budget under each of STDF’s work areas (see Annex 2) and other headings (MEL, Communications). Provision is also made for the recruitment of STDF interns in both 2020 and 2021.

5.8. In the absence of a Communications Officer among its staff in 2020, the Secretariat will continue to hire and use the services of STDF’s communications consultant (Ms Elena Immambocus), on the same basis as in 2019. In addition, until the vacancy of Lead on Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) is filled, the Secretariat may hire temporary staff to assist in implementation of the Work Plan, including the development of the new MEL Framework. At any time, the WTO may decide to hire additional temporary staff for the STDF in the event of specific activities or a sudden increase in the Secretariat’s workload.

**5.5 Budget estimate**

5.9. Annex 2 sets out an estimated budget for the STDF in 2020 and 2021 (USD 6,746,100 and USD 6,712,200 respectively). In the event of a shortfall in the total amount of funding received, some activities may be scaled back or dropped from the Work Plan. In practical terms, given the priority-setting established in the STDF Operational Rules, any scaling back will most affect the ability of the STDF to approve project grants. In the event the financial resources of the STDF are insufficient to fund all the projects approved, priority will be given to staffing requirements necessary to fulfil existing commitments, then to activities under Knowledge Work, then to funding PPGs, and lastly to project grants.

5.10. Expenditure related to project development and project funding will be subject to approval by the Working Group, based on requests for funding. Other activities will be implemented, based on the Working Group’s approval of this Work Plan.

5.11. The Secretariat will continue to follow up pro-actively with existing and new donors to reach STDF’s annual target level of funding of USD 7 million. This includes presentations, including in capital, and the preparation of funding proposals. In doing so, the Secretariat may be further guided by the STDF Policy Committee which “seeks to develop a broader financial basis for the facility through outreach to donors”.

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16 The information in the budget is an approximate projection of the staffing costs. The actual costs will depend on the individual circumstances of the staff member, including place of recruitment, dependents, etc. Staff can be promoted in accordance with WTO rules and procedures.

17 In the event the financial resources of the STDF are insufficient to fund all the projects approved, priority will be given to staffing requirements necessary to fulfil existing commitments, then to activities under Knowledge Work, then to funding PPGs, and lastly to project grants. Reference is made to para. 86 of the Operational Rules.