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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

UPDATE ON THE STANDARDS AND TRADE DEVELOPMENT FACILITY

NOTE BY THE SECRETARIAT¹

This document provides a brief update on the activities and projects of the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) since the last update to the meeting of the SPS Committee in July 2018 (G/SPS/GEN/1627). Delegates who would like to know more about the STDF are encouraged to visit the STDF website to view the projects and download STDF briefing notes and publications.² Delegates are also encouraged to subscribe to the STDF mailing list (<http://www.standardsfacility.org>).

1 FACILITATING SAFE TRADE

1.1. The Secretariat shared lessons and experiences from STDF's work on reducing SPS procedural obstacles at borders and facilitating safe and efficient trade during the SPS Committee workshop on SPS Control, Inspection and Approval Procedures on 9-10 July 2018. On that occasion, the STDF also issued a new briefing note on "Facilitating safe trade: protecting health, reducing SPS trade costs".³

1.2. The Secretariat continues to share information on its trade facilitation work in different fora, including meetings of STDF partners and other relevant organizations. The STDF initiated the organization of a regional workshop for government officials from selected SADC countries on Border Agency Cooperation on 14-16 November 2018. Organizations participating include FAO, OIE, World Bank Group, World Customs Organizations and the WTO, as well as the Codex and IPPC Secretariats. The workshop will aim to raise awareness on the linkages between the TFA and SPS Agreement and explore ways in which coordinating border clearance processes can facilitate trade, while ensuring/reinforcing human, animal or plant life and health. Specific attention will be given to improving cooperation among border agencies in transit countries.

2 PRIORITIZING SPS INVESTMENTS FOR MARKET ACCESS: P-IMA

2.1. Work in the STDF continues on STDF's P-IMA framework, which offers an evidence-based approach to inform and improve SPS planning and decision-making processes.⁴ Two P-IMA focused PPGs are ongoing in Tajikistan (STDF/PPG/561)⁵ and Madagascar (STDF/PPG/575).⁶ In addition, in September 2018 the STDF started a project to help selected COMESA members states in using the P-IMA framework to mainstream SPS investments into agriculture, trade and environment planning and financing frameworks, including the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Plan (CAADP) (STDF/PG/606).⁷ This STDF project will be implemented in partnership with the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF).

¹ This document has been prepared under the Secretariat's own responsibility and is without prejudice to the positions of Members or to their rights and obligations under the WTO.

² See: <http://www.standardsfacility.org/>.

³ See: http://www.standardsfacility.org/sites/default/files/Briefing_Facilitating_safe_trade.pdf.

⁴ See: <http://www.standardsfacility.org/prioritizing-sps-investments-market-access-p-ima>.

⁵ See: <http://www.standardsfacility.org/PPG-561>.

⁶ See: <http://www.standardsfacility.org/PPG-575>.

⁷ See: <http://www.standardsfacility.org/PG-606>.

3 GOOD REGULATORY PRACTICES

3.1. The STDF continued its work on Good Regulatory Practices (GRP) to analyse how GRP can improve the quality and effectiveness of SPS measures in developing countries. The main objective of this work is to bring the subject of GRP (in an easily understandable form) to the attention of policy-makers and staff of SPS regulatory authorities in developing countries, as well as the private sector. An international consultant was contracted and is currently working on a study on GRP in the SPS area, based on desk research, key informant interviews and analysis. A small peer review group – comprised of interested STDF partners and other relevant/interested organizations – was created to review and comment on the work produced by the consultant.

3.2. An STDF briefing note on the use of GRPs to improve the development, implementation and/or periodic review of SPS measures and regulatory frameworks is also envisaged in due course. More information on this work is available on the STDF website.⁸

4 EVALUATION: LEARNING LESSONS FROM STDF PROJECTS

4.1. An independent meta-evaluation of STDF projects was published in July 2018.⁹ The study shows that in terms of performance STDF projects score highly on relevance, effectiveness, efficiency. Sector development projects demonstrate greater contribution to impact and sustainability than technical assistance and institution building projects, since 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 have to be designed carefully to be able to demonstrate contributions to impact or sustainable results.

4.2. The STDF partnership is reviewed every five years by an independent evaluator. On 1 September 2018, the STDF initiated a comprehensive external evaluation, conducted by Nathan Associates (<https://www.nathaninc.com/>). The evaluation is assessing the impact and the results achieved by the STDF over the period 2014-2018 and identifying experiences and lessons learned. The evaluation will also include recommendations to inform the development of a new strategy for the STDF for 2020 and beyond. The evaluation is scheduled to be completed by 1 March 2019. The final report will be circulated to the SPS Committee.

5 LIBRARY

5.1. The STDF Library¹⁰ is an online information repository providing quick and easy online access to a variety of information resources focused on SPS technical cooperation and capacity building. Delegates are encouraged to submit relevant documents to the Secretariat (STDFSecretariat@wto.org) for inclusion in the Library, including: project documents and final reports, training materials, project evaluations/reviews, SPS capacity needs assessments, cost-benefit analyses, case studies, relevant research papers, and other articles on SPS capacity building. The Library complements and includes links to other information systems and databases developed and maintained by STDF partners, donors and other organizations.

6 PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

6.1. The STDF provides advice and support to applicants on issues related to SPS project development and finances project preparation grants (PPGs). PPGs, normally up to US\$50,000, are available to help applicants articulate their SPS needs and develop technically sound and sustainable project proposals. PPGs can be requested to: (i) apply SPS capacity evaluation and prioritization tools; (ii) prepare feasibility studies before project development to assess the potential impact and economic viability of proposals in terms of costs and benefits; and (iii) develop project proposals for funding by donors and/or the STDF.

6.2. A total of **92 PPGs** have been approved and funded by the STDF since its inception. Information on on-going and completed PPGs is available on the STDF website.¹¹

⁸ See: <http://www.standardsfacility.org/good-regulatory-practice>.

⁹ See: http://www.standardsfacility.org/sites/default/files/STDF_Meta-evaluation_EN.pdf.

¹⁰ See: <http://www.standardsfacility.org/library>.

¹¹ See: <http://www.standardsfacility.org/projectpreparationgrants>.

7 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

7.1. Project grant (PG) financing for projects is also available from the STDF. Favourable consideration is given to projects that: (i) identify, develop and disseminate good practice in SPS-related technical cooperation, including the development and application of innovative and replicable approaches; (ii) apply regional approaches to address SPS constraints; and/or (iii) implement collaborative approaches across food safety, animal and plant health and trade.

7.2. Beneficiaries must contribute to the project from their own resources, either in the form of financial or in-kind contributions such as staff time, use of premises, vehicles or other existing assets.

7.3. A total of **89 projects** have been approved for STDF funding since its inception. Information on on-going and completed projects is available on the STDF website.¹²

7.4. Since its inception, the STDF has devoted 66% of its project and PPG resources to LDCs and other low income countries (OLICs). The STDF continues to meet its target to devote at least 40% of its project and PPG resources to LDCs and OLICs. In particular, the allocation of PPG resources to LDCs and OLICs remains high (i.e. 75% of the overall budget for PPGs).

7.5. Forty-nine per cent of the number of STDF projects and PPGs has gone to Africa, 24% to Asia-Pacific, 15% to Latin America and the Caribbean, and 2% to other regions (the Middle East and Europe). In addition, 10% of the STDF projects and PPGs are classified as global.

7.6. Applications for STDF funding can be made at any point in the year but should be received at least 60 working days in advance of each Working Group meeting in order to be considered at that meeting. The next deadline for the submission of applications is **14 December 2018**. Further information on eligibility criteria, application forms, etc. is available on the STDF website.

RECOMMENDED STEPS TO FOLLOW WHEN SEEKING PG OR PPG FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES WITH THE STDF:

1. Browse the webpages for information (aims, eligibility criteria, etc.) on:

- PPGs: <http://www.standardsfacility.org/project-preparation-grants>
- PGs: <http://www.standardsfacility.org/project-grants>

2. View examples of previous projects:

- PPGs: <http://www.standardsfacility.org/projectpreparationgrants>
- PGs: <http://www.standardsfacility.org/projectgrants>

3. Carefully read the guidance note for applicants:

http://standardsfacility.org/sites/default/files/STDFGuidanceNote_English_FINAL_2015.pdf

4. Consult relevant stakeholders in the country/region.

5. Send a brief concept note of your potential project for feedback on eligibility and likelihood of funding (STDFSecretariat@wto.org).

6. Fill out an application form and submit it electronically before the deadline:

- PPGs: http://standardsfacility.org/sites/default/files/PPGApplicationForm_English_FINAL_2015.doc
- PGs: http://standardsfacility.org/sites/default/files/PGApplicationForm_English_FINAL_2015.doc

¹² See: <http://www.standardsfacility.org/projectgrants>.