



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 work of the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) since the last meeting of the Committee in June 2020. Delegates are encouraged to visit the STDF website to view and learn from STDF activities and projects, download STDF briefing notes and other publications, and subscribe to STDF's mailing list (at the bottom of the STDF homepage) to receive regular updates on STDF work (see: <http://www.standardsfacility.org>).

1 IMPLEMENTING STDF'S NEW STRATEGY (2020-2024)

1.1. The new STDF Strategy (2020-2024)² "*Safe and Inclusive Trade Horizons for Developing Countries*", launched in January this year, consolidates and builds on STDF's strengths and performance, and aims to further develop the partnership and expand its reach and resources. In the coming years, the STDF will further strengthen its role as a global platform for dialogue and learning on SPS capacity development. The STDF will also continue to finance the development and implementation of collaborative and innovative SPS projects, with the potential to influence and catalyse SPS improvements.

1.2. On 13 October 2020, the STDF Working Group discussed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on STDF's operations, including the risks faced and the mitigation measures taken across STDF's global platform, knowledge work and project portfolio since the March 2020. The Secretariat will provide a further update on its COVID-19 webpage shortly.³

1.2 Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

1.3. On 13 October 2020, the STDF Working Group adopted a new Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework to accompany the Strategy. The MEL Framework provides a results-based management approach to track progress in achieving results and provide feedback on the management of the Facility. It will strengthen planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting, and will also help to identify and integrate key experiences and lessons into new STDF work. Simple web-based surveys will be used to elicit targeted data to help assess the results achieved by the STDF at the programme goal, outcome, and output level. This may also include surveys of SPS Committee delegates to collect qualitative data on the results and impacts of STDF's work. The new MEL Framework will be available shortly on the STDF website.⁴

1.3 Communicating results

1.4. On 13 October 2020, the STDF Working Group also updated the STDF's Communications (COMMS) Plan to support the delivery of the new STDF Strategy and the accompanying MEL Framework. The Plan provides an overview of key communications areas for the STDF including

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: https://standardsfacility.org/sites/default/files/STDF_Strategy_2020-2024.pdf.

³ See: <https://www.standardsfacility.org/stdf-partnership-updates-covid-19>.

⁴ See: <https://www.standardsfacility.org/key-documents>.

objective and audience, products and channels, resourcing, monitoring evaluation and learning. The updated COMMS Plan will also be available shortly on the STDF website.⁵

2 STDF KNOWLEDGE PLATFORM

2.1. The STDF continued its work on the selected cross-cutting thematic topics below, with the aim to identify and promote good practices and improve SPS capacity development outcomes. This work is taking place in virtual practitioner groups, which convene interested STDF founding and other partners, donors and SPS experts from developing countries. Each topic has its own dedicated STDF webpage.

2.2 Prioritizing SPS Investments for Market Access: P-IMA

2.2. The P-IMA framework is an evidence-based approach to help inform and improve SPS planning and decision making, and mobilize public, private and/or donor resources for SPS investments. The framework is being applied in several developing countries through project and project preparation grants (PPGs). The Secretariat also initiated a review and update of the P-IMA user guide to improve its practicality and user-friendliness, and to allow for virtual training on the P-IMA framework.

2.3. Delegates who would like to know more about - or benefit from - application of the P-IMA tool can visit the STDF website⁶ or contact Mrs Roshan Khan in the STDF Secretariat (roshan.khan@wto.org).

2.3 Public Private Partnership (PPP)

2.4. Building on previous STDF work on PPPs, the Secretariat continued to identify, collect and compile new examples of PPPs in the area of SPS capacity (across food safety, animal health and/or plant health) to facilitate safe trade. To help collect additional PPP examples the Secretariat issued a call for case stories in English, French and Spanish.⁷ The Secretariat encourages SPS delegates to share PPP examples and further distribute this survey with their respective networks.

2.5. Earlier this year, the Secretariat had issued a survey on existing and/or planned regulatory frameworks and practices related to voluntary third-party assurance (vTPA) programmes (including quality management systems, assurance schemes or certification programmes) in food and feed safety, in cooperation with IICA and UNIDO. The Secretariat will provide more information on this STDF/UNIDO/IICA work during the SPS Committee Thematic Session on Voluntary Third-Party Assurance as part of National SPS Control Systems on 3 November 2020.

2.6. On 9 June 2020, the STDF in collaboration with UNIDO organized an online global discussion on vTPA programmes and the importance of accreditation. More than 230 participants worldwide joined the webinar. Key questions focused on the potential of vTPA approaches to respond to the new challenges posed by COVID-19, opportunities to increase trust across the public and private sectors, and key experiences from countries that are using vTPA approaches were discussed.⁸

2.7. Delegates who would like to know more about STDF's PPP work can visit the STDF website or contact Mrs Marlynn Hopper in the STDF Secretariat (marlynn.hopper@wto.org).

2.4 Good Regulatory Practice

2.8. STDF's work on the use of Good Regulatory Practice (GRP) aims to provide guidance and develop a practical checklist for developing countries to ensure that SPS measures are "fit for purpose" and avoid the creation of non-tariff barriers. This work seeks to identify good practices and recommendations to enhance the development and implementation of SPS measures in order to: (i) strengthen the effectiveness of regulatory interventions; (ii) improve compliance with

⁵ See: <https://www.standardsfacility.org/key-documents>.

⁶ See: <https://www.standardsfacility.org/prioritizing-sps-investments-market-access-p-ima>.

⁷ See: <https://www.standardsfacility.org/public-private-partnerships>.

⁸ See: <https://www.unido.org/news/partnering-improve-food-safety-outcomes-accreditation-and-role-vtpa-programmes>.

international standards and the SPS Agreement; and (iii) ensure health protection while facilitating trade. The Secretariat aims to present this work on the margins of a Committee meeting in 2021.

2.9. Delegates who would like to know more about STDF's GRP work can visit the STDF website⁹ or contact Mrs Marlynne Hopper in the STDF Secretariat (marlynne.hopper@wto.org).

2.5 Electronic SPS certification

2.10. The STDF continued its work on promoting and supporting the transition in developing countries to paperless SPS systems, which can improve traceability throughout SPS supply chains, lower food waste, cut trade times and costs, and help to build trust among trading partners. Particularly, STDF's work is focused on increasing the use of electronic SPS certificates (SPS e-cert), including through innovative and collaborative projects with the IPPC, OIE and other partners.¹⁰ On 23 September 2020, the STDF organized a webinar, attended by 260 participants, to showcase the results of the STDF-funded ePhyto project and discuss next steps in scaling up the ePhyto solution.¹¹ The Secretariat also continued to convene the eCert Advisory Committee (ECAC), which saw a keynote presentation from the European Commission on the newly established connection between the ePhyto system and the EU Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES).

2.11. Delegates who would like to know more about STDF's work on SPS eCert can visit the STDF website or contact Mr Simon Padilla in the STDF Secretariat (simon.padilla@wto.org).

3 PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

3.1. 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.

3.2. A total of **108 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.

4 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

4.1. 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. 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).

4.2. A total of **102 projects** have been approved for STDF funding since its inception. Information on on-going and completed projects is available on the STDF website.

4.3. 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. 69% of the overall budget for PPGs).

4.4. 48% of the number of STDF projects and PPGs has gone to Africa, 25% to Asia-Pacific, 16% to Latin America-Caribbean, and 2% to other regions (Middle East and Europe). In addition, 9% of the STDF projects and PPGs are classified as global.

⁹ See: <https://www.standardsfacility.org/good-regulatory-practice>.

¹⁰ See: <https://www.standardsfacility.org/SPS-eCert>.

¹¹ See: <https://standardsfacility.org/ephyto-webinar>.

5 HOW TO APPLY FOR FUNDING?

5.1. 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 to be considered at that meeting. The next deadline for the submission of applications is **25 December 2020**.

5.2. The STDF launched a new online application system which replaced the traditional form of receiving grant proposals via email. Further information on the system, eligibility criteria, 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:

<https://www.standardsfacility.org/sites/default/files/STDFGuidanceNote2020.docx>

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
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