



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 November 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 STRATEGY

1.1. The STDF Strategy (2020-2024) "*Safe and Inclusive Trade Horizons for Developing Countries*" aims to further strengthen STDF's 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.²

1.2. The Strategy is accompanied by a new Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework, adopted by the STDF Working Group in October 2020. The MEL Framework will strengthen planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting, and will also help to identify and integrate key experiences and lessons into new STDF work. The MEL Framework will be available shortly on the STDF website.³

1.3. In October 2020, the STDF Working Group also updated STDF's Communications (COMMS) Plan, which provides an overview of key communications areas for the STDF including objective and audience, products and channels, resourcing, monitoring evaluation and learning. The updated COMMS Plan is available on the STDF website.⁴

2 COVID-19

2.1. On 8 February 2021, the STDF hosted a webinar to reflect on the changes caused by COVID-19 for STDF's Strategy and approach. While the pandemic has triggered challenges, it has also raised awareness about the importance of safe food, animal and plant health systems, opening up new opportunities to strengthen relationships and expand STDF's reach, which can support SPS capacity development globally. Speakers identified opportunities to further adapt, innovate and strengthen STDF's delivery and impact, including through digital platforms. Participants identified three trends in STDF's Strategy that are key for SPS capacity development in the future: regional and South-South trade, digitalization and access to technologies, and climate change. They also considered that SPS capacity development should be placed within larger food systems.⁵

2.2. On this occasion, the STDF also launched its new STDF film "Shaping a safer world", which highlights the importance of investing in SPS capacity for developing countries to protect health and

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/key-documents>.

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

⁵ Listen to the webinar at: <https://us4.campaign-archive.com/?u=1dd65e410f4f874eaf3175abc&id=1bebbf0a0f>.

access markets.⁶ SPS delegates are encouraged to share and show this film widely, including in their own administrations to raise awareness about SPS investments, as part of internal training on SPS compliance, etc. The Secretariat welcomes your feedback on the film.

2.3. On 24 March 2021, the STDF will host a session titled: "Investing in Safe Trade Systems to Protect Health and Market Access", as part of the broader WTO Aid-for-Trade Stocktaking Event on 23-25 March, which aims to survey the trade impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and mobilize Aid-for-Trade financing.⁷ Panelists from FAO, OIE, CAB and the World Bank will explore how we can invest and scale up SPS assistance for developing countries to support economic recovery and longer term resilience, in response to COVID-19.

3 KNOWLEDGE PLATFORM

3.1. 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.

3.1 Prioritizing SPS Investments for Market Access: P-IMA

3.2. 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.

3.3. As a part of the dedicated practitioner group series, the STDF hosted a P-IMA practitioner group meeting in February 2021 to deep-dive into the P-IMA Framework along with Mr Spencer Henson (University of Guelph), who led the elaboration and development of the tool. The practitioner group was well received and fostered greater knowledge sharing and technical knowhow on how best to implement the P-IMA framework in different country contexts.

3.4. Also in February, the STDF organized a webinar with TradeMark East Africa, with support from the Netherlands, where public and private sector stakeholders from Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda shared their experiences in applying STDF's P-IMA framework to discuss and rank SPS investments. More than 20 investment options were identified across diverse value chains to boost trade to regional markets.⁸

3.5. Delegates who would like to know more about - or benefit from - application of the P-IMA tool can visit the STDF website⁹ or contact Mrs Roshan Khan in the STDF Secretariat (roshan.khan@wto.org).

3.2 Public Private Partnership (PPP)

3.6. 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.¹⁰ The Secretariat encourages SPS delegates to share PPP examples and further distribute this survey with their respective networks.

3.7. As a part of the continued PPP Practitioner Group series, a session was hosted by the STDF in February 2021. At the meeting, Mr Ali Badarneh (UNIDO), presented UNIDO's PPP approach in relation to the work of the Sustainable Food Systems and the Partnership Management divisions. The discussion featured interesting insights into the opportunities and challenges of fostering greater

⁶ Watch STDF's new film at: <https://youtu.be/DT3dnlz-nTg>.

⁷ See: https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/devel_e/a4t_e/gr21_e/gr21_e.htm.

⁸ See: <https://us4.campaign-archive.com/?u=1dd65e410f4f874eaf3175abc&id=e6d4bdd5ca>.

⁹ See: <https://www.standardsfacility.org/prioritizing-sps-investments-market-access-p-ima>.

¹⁰ See: <https://www.standardsfacility.org/public-private-partnerships>.

PPPs in the field of SPS. The next session of the PPP Practitioner Group is scheduled on 15 March, featuring a keynote presentation by the World Economic Forum (WEF).

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

3.3 Good Regulatory Practice

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

3.10. Delegates who would like to know more about STDF's GRP work can visit the STDF website¹¹ or contact Mrs Marlynne Hopper in the STDF Secretariat (marlynne.hopper@wto.org).

3.4 Electronic SPS certification

3.11. 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. The focus of STDF's work is on increasing the use of electronic SPS certificates (SPS e-cert), including through innovative and collaborative projects with the IPPC, OIE and other partners.¹²

3.12. The SPS Electronic Certification Advisory Committee (ECAC) convenes and connects stakeholders with an interest in SPS e-Cert to exchange experiences, identify opportunities for collaboration, promote synergies and disseminate good practices to drive catalytic SPS improvements that facilitate safe trade.¹³ At a meeting in December 2020, UN/CEFACT presented its work on a new Implementation Guideline for e-Certificates, including an update on its scope (i.e. SPS eCert, eQuality and eCITES permits), attributes and architectural aspects and an illustration of SPS and CITES eCert procedures (i.e. Hub and point-to-point G2G exchange). The guide will be released in 2021.

3.13. Members also agreed to broaden the group and invite other interested STDF members and collaborating partners from STDF's wider network to participate in future meetings of the ECAC. The next meeting of the ECAC will be held on 13 April 2021 and will feature a keynote presentation by the OECD on its recent study on Digital SPS solutions.

3.14. 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).

4 PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

4.1. 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.

4.2. 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.

¹¹ See: <https://www.standardsfacility.org/good-regulatory-practice>.

¹² See: <https://www.standardsfacility.org/SPS-eCert>.

¹³ See: <https://www.standardsfacility.org/spes-ecac>.

5 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

5.1. 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).

5.2. 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.

5.3. 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).

5.4. 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.

6 HOW TO APPLY FOR FUNDING?

6.1. 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 **23 July 2021**.

6.2. 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