

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE STDF WORKING GROUP MEETING

7-8 November 2007

OIE Headquarters, Paris

1. The meeting was chaired by Dr Dewan Sibartie (OIE) and held at OIE Headquarters in Paris. The Secretariat informed the meeting that the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and Norway were attending the meeting as observers. Mrs Jennifer Rathebe from South Africa was welcomed as one of three new developing country representatives. A list of participants is provided in **Annex 1**.

2. The Secretary recalled that no vice-chair of the Working Group had been appointed at the last meeting. He requested donors to liaise among themselves to identify a possible candidate.

Adoption of the agenda

3. The agenda was adopted with amendments, notably the inclusion of project STDF 114 ("Effective aflatoxin management system in Brazil nut production") under agenda item 12 (Overview of implementation of ongoing projects and PPGs).

4. The FAO and OIE informed the Working Group of their intention to introduce documents under agenda item 14 (Other business).

Overview of operation of the Facility (STDF 209)

5. The Secretary introduced document STDF 209 by noting that the STDF website was currently being transferred from the World Bank to the WTO. It was observed that the section on training materials needed further work and a call for new and updated materials would be made following the meeting. A password protected site for the posting of meeting documents would be completed in time for the next Working Group meeting in 2008.

6. On staffing matters, offers had been made to two candidates for the posts of Economic Affairs Officer (grades 7 and 8). Candidates were expected to start in 2008. The Operating Plan for 2008-09 envisaged a further strengthening of the Secretariat through the recruitment of an Economic Affairs Officer. An update on the implementation of projects and PPGs was provided in document STDF 207 and discussed under agenda item 12 (Overview of implementation of ongoing projects and PPGs).

Status of implementation of STDF regional technical consultations

7. The Secretariat introduced document STDF 203 which provided an overview of the workshops organized by the STDF as part of the Regional Reviews of Aid for Trade in Lima (12 September), Manila (18 September) and Dar es Salaam (30 September 2007). It was recalled that the original work programme (contained in document STDF 175) had been extended in scope to include a sub-group of ASEAN countries (Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam), the timing of the meetings had been advanced by three months and the work more clearly separated into two stages. The beneficial effects of linking the STDF work with the Aid for Trade initiative were highlighted.

8. The first stage of the consultation work had resulted in reports on evaluations of SPS-related technical cooperation needs in all three regions. It was concluded that a considerable body of research work on SPS capacity evaluations already existed but that this information was not shared between donors and international organizations in any systematic manner. Any new analysis typically started

from zero and there was scope for greater information sharing and common capacity evaluations. A further difficulty identified was that while capacity evaluations had technical ownership, they often lacked ownership at a political level. This in turn caused difficulties in the translation of needs into the allocation of budgetary resources in the SPS area.

9. The first stage also resulted in the preparation of inventories of SPS-related technical cooperation provided to all three regions. Difficulties were reported in the collection of data and in getting information and documentation from partners and donors. The inventories also reflected a great variation in partner and donor activities between and within regions, and between the different categories researched (food safety, animal and plant health, and general SPS technical assistance). The inventories suggested that the delivery of technical assistance was "ad hoc" and not subject to a comprehensive overall strategy. All three inventories noted the increasing volume of trade related technical assistance (TRTA) - including in the SPS area – which was expected to grow further as a result of Aid for Trade initiative.

10. The Secretariat recalled that the current work programme was only half complete, but one conclusion which could already be drawn was that the work of the consultants needed better managing by the Secretariat. The second stage would be carried out jointly by one consultant and one Secretariat staff. The first stage of work had proven to be time-consuming and similar events in 2008-09 had been scaled back in the new Operating Plan. An evaluation by the Working Group in June 2008 was agreed before any new initiatives in other regions were started.

11. The STDF's coordination role was recalled and its aim to develop into a "centre of excellence". The STDF should give advice to partners and donors, outlining for instance the countries and areas where more technical assistance was needed. More work seemed to be necessary to align the various capacity evaluation tools. The OIE concurred and noted existing practice to send out joint missions together with FAO/World Bank.

12. The objective to learn from recipients about the effectiveness of the technical assistance provided was noted. The focus of the second stage would be to identify good practice rather than an overall impact assessment of projects. The idea would be to take a sample of projects that provide good practice and evaluate these. This, however, was subject to donors' willingness to identify such projects and share the necessary information and documentation.

13. It was felt that many conclusions of the work in the first stage were perhaps expected but that they served to give an idea of the magnitude of the problem. The workshops were considered awareness raising events bringing SPS to a broader audience of officials in the trade and development area. However, more work needed to be done. In particular the next General Council meeting in November 2007 focusing on Aid for Trade would be important. The Secretariat mentioned that STDF was included in one of the technical sessions of the WTO General Council meeting. At this stage, no future events had been planned with the Aid for Trade Initiative, but that could change dependent on the outcome of the WTO General Council meeting.

14. In terms of next steps, the Secretariat explained its plans for the second stage of the research work, including prioritization of SPS needs by countries in each region and contact with donors on how to integrate priority needs into ongoing or future projects (as well as the commissioning of PPGs). To this end, "balance sheets" of demand/supply of SPS-related technical assistance would be prepared for each region. Finally, research on good practice would be carried out. The Secretariat called upon partners and donors to identify projects that would be considered "good practice" from the three pilot regions. Conclusions arising from this work could be integrated in future projects and disseminated more widely by the Secretariat.

15. The Secretariat presented the draft report of the consultant, Mr Digby Gascoigne, on benchmarks for good practice on SPS related technical cooperation (document STDF 204). Due to late submission of the draft report, it had not been possible for the Secretariat to review the document and request revisions prior to the meeting. Comments were sought from the Working Group on the draft report with a view to its further improvement.

16. Although the report contained interesting observations on SPS-related technical assistance and recommendations for future STDF work, it was the Secretariat's opinion that the consultant had partly missed his terms of reference. In particular, clear conclusions and recommendations as to parameters and benchmarks for technical assistance were lacking. Moreover, the consultant did not seem to have consulted all the documents and persons recommended by the Secretariat. In short, it was felt that the report needed further work.

17. The Working Group agreed with the Secretariat's analysis. The report contained little connection with the ongoing regional consultation work. Various other elements were missing. For example, the current application forms for STDF funding needed to be taken into account. Public/private sector cooperation should be considered as a benchmark in itself.

18. Practical experience from a number of countries showed that financial resources could be raised for SPS-related technical assistance through the development of national SPS action plans. SPS had also to be seen in the context of health protection and the domestic market, rather than just focusing on market access. The importance of an integrated approach was underlined and the Enhanced IF given as an example. With respect to infrastructure, it was considered important to consider both SPS and TBT perspectives.

19. The importance of sequencing technical assistance activities and not addressing the most technically complex functions first was recalled. Simple initiatives to improve compliance would have beneficial effects both domestically as well as for market access. It was noted that the objective of the STDF was to enhance developing countries' capacity to analyze and implement SPS standards, improving their health situation, and thus ability to gain and maintain market access.

20. It was concluded that the draft report provided a good first discussion on parameters and benchmarks but that basic expected outputs were still missing. The structure of the report needed improvement. A single document for use by the Secretariat and partners and donors that would clearly identify parameters and benchmarks was recommended. The recommendations to the Secretariat were thought to be useful. Canada mentioned that the report was largely theoretical and should instead be based on existing parameters and benchmarks, both in the short and long term. The Working Group agreed that the Secretariat would request the consultant to improve the report taking into account these comments.

Discussion of STDF Operating Plan 2008-09

21. The Secretariat presented the updated Operating Plan 2008-09 (document STDF 198 rev.1) - including a tentative calendar on STDF meetings for 2008. The Operating Plan focused on four thematic areas: coordination, project development, project implementation and dissemination of results. The original document had been updated to reflect comments in relation to STDF's coordinating role.

22. It was recalled that SPS was a cross-cutting issue in most countries. Recognizing other non-trade objectives could open the door to additional funding. Requests for funding of projects through the STDF were expected to increase and more thought should be given to the issue of raising additional resources and on STDF's "matchmaking" function. The Secretariat explained that STDF

staff would be expected to accompany consultants implementing PPGs on their missions. In terms of matching projects with funding, a greater role for the Working Group was felt important.

23. The calendar of STDF meetings was dependent on SPS Committee meetings. SPS Committee dates were tentative and could be changed - in particular the date for the October 2008 meeting. The Working Group agreed to the Operating Plan 2008-09, with one minor amendment on the funding of thematic meetings, for final endorsement by the Policy Committee on 9 November 2007.

Discussion of issues arising from previous evaluations

24. The Secretariat introduced document STDF 205 which provided a compilation of lessons learnt from the evaluations of three early STDF projects (STDF 14, 37 and 56). The evaluations highlighted concerns at two levels of the project cycle: i.e. project design and project implementation. The Secretariat recalled that many concerns arising from the evaluations had already been addressed by the new Operational Rules adopted in December 2006. However, further improvements could be made and a number of recommendations were highlighted – some of which required amendment of the Operational Rules.

25. In discussion of the proposed amendments to the Operational Rules (document STDF 139), a discussion arose over the procedure for selecting developing country representatives.

26. The procedure for the selection of latest developing country representatives was questioned. Suggestions of names had been made directly by Codex, IPPC and OIE. The Chairman of the SPS Committee and the Committee itself would be more involved in the choice in the opinion of the Working Group member.. It was considered important that the Chairman should have a list of names to choose from rather than just approving one proposed candidate. Discussion followed on the merits and procedure for appointing a LDC representative and the role of the Enhanced IF Board. Changes were also made to paragraph 91 on annual reporting obligations. The Working Group agreed the amended Operational Rules and submitted them for final endorsement by the Policy Committee on 9 November 2007

Discussion on forthcoming SPS-related technical assistance activities

27. The World Bank and UNIDO gave an overview of the workshop on laboratory infrastructure to be held under the STDF umbrella on 15 and 16 November 2007 at WTO Headquarters in Geneva (STDF 206). The workshop would examine various issues of laboratory infrastructure such as identification of critical laboratory functions, sustainability of investments, accreditation, the role of the private sector, etc.

28. FAO referred to the independent evaluation which would be discussed at the upcoming FAO Conference in Rome on 17-24 November 2007. A more concise version of the food safety capacity evaluation tool had recently been developed, while the main tool was in the process of being updated following pilot implementation in several countries. An integrated biosecurity tool was in the process of being field-tested in Ghana, Thailand and Chile. Reference was also made to a training package on participation in the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission – including an e-learning course. Support to the Tanzanian Government under the one-UN initiative in the area of biosecurity was also highlighted.

29. The IPPC Secretariat referred to development of a comprehensive strategic plan for capacity building as commissioned by its Strategic Planning & Technical Assistance Working Group (and recommended by the report of the independent evaluation of the IPPC). Consideration was being given to a coordination role of the Secretariat with regard to capacity building and technical assistance

– recognizing that IPPC would be best placed to coordinate and deliver such activities. A suggestion was made to further link with the STDF. Reference was also made to an update of the phytosanitary capacity evaluation tool (following an independent evaluation by CABI). Implementation of national projects was ongoing in Zambia, Mozambique, Tanzania, Kyrgyzstan and Indonesia. In addition, the Secretariat was supervising an STDF project in the Pacific region implemented by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). Finally, a large project on fruit flies in the East African region was currently being discussed with the EC and USAID for funding.

30. The World Bank referred to its work in the area of costs of compliance and recalled that it had developed national SPS action plans in several countries. It also referred to possible synergies between the STDF and the Trade Standards Practitioners Network. The WHO recalled that its Food Safety Department was involved in various training activities across the globe. For this purpose, the WHO used its reference centres in all five WHO regions.

31. The OIE referred to its global programme of strengthening veterinary services worldwide through the use of the PVS tool. It also announced a new project on developing model veterinary legislation for both anglophone and francophone countries in Africa. Increasing attention was also given to the concept of twinning laboratories whereby OIE reference laboratories engaged in agreements with other laboratories. OIE's sub-regional representations as those in Botswana, Panama and Brussels; and animal regional health centres together with FAO as those in Mali and Lebanon, were increasingly becoming involved in the delivery of technical assistance activities.

32. The WTO noted that four regional seminars on the SPS Agreement were envisaged for 2008 with the participation of Codex, OIE and IPPC. In addition, a number of national SPS seminars were foreseen. An e-learning course on SPS issues was starting in mid-November 2007. It noted that the STDF was moving in the right direction with the organization of the World Bank/UNIDO workshop on laboratory infrastructure. The suggestion was made that the topic could be discussed in more detail at the next Working Group meeting.

33. The ITC mentioned the work being done with ISO on the self-diagnostic tool entitled "ISO 22000: Are you ready". The tool was currently available in English, French and soon in Spanish. Furthermore, two new bulletins were expected by the end of the year – including one on SPS standards. Projects were ongoing in Malawi focusing on improving the standards infrastructure, with 11 enterprises being trained on HACCP and few testing labs assisted to be accredited. Two projects in Central Asia are focusing on assistance to enterprises in the implementation of ISO:22000 (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) and included a review of the SPS infrastructure, workshops on "The WTO Agreement on SPS: A Business Perspective" and laboratory accreditation. In Bangladesh, a quality support project is ongoing and it includes a train-the-trainers programme through workshops for the private sector on SPS/TBT and a seminar for top-level management on how to manage a cost-effective, export-oriented SPS regime. The project is also providing assistance to enhance capacity of the private sector to disseminate information on SPS measures and influence the national SPS regime. A project focusing on how to influence the development of SPS standards was currently under preparation jointly with the Commonwealth Secretariat.

34. UNCTAD noted a change in its internal structure and mentioned that projects focusing on SPS and other standards would from now on be dealt from within the Commodities Division. Projects under preparation included in The Gambia (fisheries and fair trade) and Madagascar (lychees and horticulture development).

35. UNIDO mentioned that SPS was often just one component of its larger technical assistance programmes. It mentioned a project in Tanzania funded by NORAD focusing on harmonization of food safety measures and conformity assessments to enhance trade. In collaboration with the Tanzania Bureau of Standards, a manual had been developed on food safety and quality. It also

referred to partnerships with other organizations, notably ISO with which it developed joint training programmes on the new ISO 22000 standard. A trade capacity building agreement between Italy and Egypt had led to the development of a traceability system in the food sector and the establishment of a "regional centre of excellence". Based on experiences in this project, systems were now being established in Tanzania.

36. The OECD recalled that it did not undertake technical assistance activities as such and that its activities were limited to economic analysis and studies. It referred to a large study on non-tariff trade measures – including SPS – as well as to case studies in key sectors such as meat, dairy products and fruits and vegetables. These studies did not look at the issue of private standards though this issue might come up in another study looking at the exclusion of smallholders and the development of alternative marketing strategies.

37. Canada referred to the Canada - China agriculture development programme which included an SPS component. In addition, a project on livestock health extension services was ongoing. The programme SPS in the Americas included activities in Guatemala, Costa Rica and with CARICOM. CIDA was also implementing a beef enhancement training programme in Uruguay and Paraguay.

38. The UK highlighted a focus on assisting smallholders meet private standards. In collaboration with GTZ, a GlobalGap secondment had been financed. The Challenge Fund had been designed to come up with innovative ways to promote pro-poor procurement by UK supermarkets. In the UK's view, the STDF could do more on the issue of private standards. The UK directed most of its resources towards the Enhanced IF and Aid for Trade and encouraged STDF links with these two initiatives.

39. The EC recalled that it was a significant provider of technical assistance and referred to its statements made in the SPS Committee. Many Directorate Generals were involved in this assistance – including DG trade, DG Health and Consumer Affairs (SANCO), DG Development and DG Aidco.

40. GTZ stated that it hoped to present lessons learnt from projects focusing on group certification and strengthening enquiry points early next year. It also announced a study on SPS measures maintained by the EC and the US on products of animal origin examining the costs incurred as a result of differences in measures.

41. The Secretariat concluded that a wealth of information was available and that there was a clear need to better structure the reporting on future partner and donor activities in view of the importance attached to STDF's coordination role. One way to do this was through a tri-annual newsletter. It was agreed that the Secretariat would circulate a first draft of a newsletter in December. Partners and donors were invited to provide the Secretariat with written contributions of their planned activities following the meeting.

42. Various other options were also identified to give the information sharing process more focus, such as focusing on a particular area or on a particular geographic region. Some issues might not need a separate workshop but could be discussed in a more targeted manner in Working Group meetings – for example based on information sheets prepared by the Secretariat. The Working Group agreed that the next meeting in April 2008 would focus on the issue of laboratory capacity based on the results of the upcoming workshop. The meeting in June 2008 would be dedicated to the issue of private standards as a topic for further discussion.

Evaluation of projects received

43. The Secretariat introduced document STDF 199 containing the Secretariat reviews of the PPGs and projects tabled for consideration by the Working Group at the meeting . The review of the

three projects withdrawn (STDF 182, 200 and 210) was contained in document STDF 199 add.1. The Working Group agreed with the evaluation of these projects.

- *STDF 165 rev.1: PPG for SPS compliance for dry beans and peas from Madagascar*

44. The Working Group agreed with the Secretariat's recommendation that the PPG be funded.

- *STDF 171 rev.1: African Phytosanitary Centre of Excellence*

45. Concerns were expressed by some of the members of the Working Group as to whether placing the centre in Kenya would be in the interest of other beneficiaries, in particular given the centre's regional character. It also mentioned that the project should include a provision for an outreach plan. It was highlighted that the project might overlap with current assistance provided by the EC to KEPHIS in terms of strengthening its organization. Interest was expressed on the part of the Dutch Plant Protection Service (PPS) to become involved in the project because of its other ongoing technical assistance activities in the region and its specific knowledge and expertise. It was noted that inclusion of a major donor might facilitate follow-up actions, where necessary, after completion of the project. Although the Working Group recognized the potential benefits of involving the Dutch PPS, it questioned whether the STDF should provide the additional resources to facilitate their involvement. Calls were made upon the Netherlands to identify the necessary resources in its own development budget.

46. In conclusion, the Working Group agreed with the Secretariat's recommendation to fund the project – on condition that the Secretariat take the comments of the Working Group into account and revise the proposal accordingly. It was agreed that members would provide detailed comments in writing to the Secretariat following the meeting. A new letter of support from the applicant, KEPHIS, confirming its (in-kind) contribution to the project should also be submitted. On the issue of participation of the PPS, the Secretariat was instructed to work with the Netherlands to identify the additional resources needed to facilitate their involvement.

- *STDF 48 rev.3: Improvement of quality control of agri-food products (shea and cashew nuts) in Benin*

47. Several members of the Working Group questioned whether the project did not overlap with existing initiatives implemented by the EC and UNCTAD, amongst others. One member felt that the project should capture work already carried out in the region perhaps through the organization of a regional workshop to examine existing work done in this area. The Working Group felt that the project should be revised to reflect this comment. The Working Group noted the previous failure by the applicant to revise and update its approved project grant prior to March 2007. It was noted that the application had been prepared with the help of a consultant. The Working Group accepted the project for funding by the STDF – upon condition that another local donor or international organization supervise implementation of the project.

- *STDF 127 rev.2: Support for SPS information systems in Benin*

48. Links that could be established by the project to the International Portal on Food Safety, Animal and Plant Health were noted, and that the project could serve as a pilot project to be replicated in other countries. One member expressed an interest to liaise further with the project - given its focus on the private sector. Another observed minor mistakes in the budget that had to be rectified. The Working Group accepted the project for funding by the STDF. It was also agreed that FAO would assume a supervising role over the implementing beneficiary organization, i.e. the Benin Chamber of Commerce.

➤ *STDF 62 rev.1: Support for strengthening food safety in Cameroon*

49. The Working Group agreed with the Secretariat's analysis and considered it a catalyst for further activities in the SPS area. It approved the project for funding by the STDF – pending receipt of two outstanding letters of support. It was agreed that FAO would implement the project.

➤ *STDF 116: Costa Rica traceability project*

50. In light of various outstanding issues that still needed to be addressed, it was agreed that the applicant would be invited to revise the project request. The applicant was requested to submit a revised application for consideration by the Working Group at its next meeting.

➤ *STDF 155: Nicaragua SPS compliance in fruits and vegetables*

51. The Secretariat expressed its support for the project - subject to certain amendments to be made in terms of long term sustainability and budget - but noted that the consultant, i.e. Michigan State University, had disregarded the STDF rules on PPG consultants not implementing STDF projects. The Working Group agreed that no exception should be made to the Operational Rules and that the project could not be approved for funding by the STDF. It decided to approve the project for funding outside the STDF and instructed the Secretariat to explore external funding possibilities in this regard. Both the EC and the US agreed to provide the contact details of representatives in Nicaragua for further follow up.

Decisions on financing and prioritization

52. The Secretariat explained that the available balance for project funding stood at US\$ 1,190,000 and that the proposals accepted for funding amounted to US\$ 2,099,032. The Secretariat noted that discussions were on-going with various donors on contributions to the STDF. Assuming commitments given by donors materialised, no problems were foreseen and no prioritization was considered necessary.

Overview of implementation of ongoing projects and PPGs

53. The STDF introduced document STDF 207 – providing an overview of the implementation status of projects and PPGs.

➤ *STDF 114: Effective aflatoxin management system in Brazil nut production*

54. The Secretary reported on its meeting with the implementing agencies (CIRAD and NFA) and informed the Working Group that just prior to the meeting it had received a request for an extension of the project until 30 November 2008 (6 months). The delays were attributed to difficulties in identifying local consultants and Brazil nut samples in the previous season. The Secretariat also recalled that it was exploring the possibility to use the project for the development of a training video. The Working Group decided to grant the requested extension.

➤ *STDF 10: International portal on Food Safety, Animal and Plant Health*

55. The project was completed but no final report had yet been received. FAO agreed to submit the final report before the year end, after which time the project would be externally evaluated.

- *STDF 134: Capacity building for improving the fish trade performance of African countries and STDF 170: Strengthening the capacity of government SPS officials in Nepal*

56. FAO informed the Working Group that both projects were going through FAO's internal review process and that it aimed to contract the projects before the end of 2007.

- *STDF 65: Support to compliance with official and commercial standards in the fruit and vegetable sector in Guinea*

57. The Secretariat informed the Working Group that prior to the meeting it had received a request for an extension of the project until 30 June 2008 (6 months) to complete the EurepGap certification process with respect to some of the project beneficiaries. The Working Group decided to grant the extension.

- *STDF 69: Capacity building for safety of Yemeni seafood products*

58. ITC informed the Working Group about implementation by the project beneficiary, the Yemeni Seafood Exporters Association (YSEA). Although ITC was supervising implementation of the project, it acknowledged that its activities were going beyond supervision in some instances. However, the beneficiary was reportedly very committed to the project and it was felt that with the right guidance from ITC the project could be implemented in accordance with the time schedule.

- *STDF 13: Development of regional Actions Plans for Selected African regions to enhance veterinary services*

59. FAO and OIE circulated a report and provided a further update on the status of the project. Implementation delays were attributed to difficulties in identifying a team of experts and political problems. It was stated that both problems had been overcome and that there was evidence that the project could be finalized by the end of June 2008.

60. One member mentioned that the project was tying up STDF resources that might be better spent elsewhere. It was also observed that although the political problems in Mali seemed to be resolved, they seemed to be unresolved as far as Ethiopia/Djibouti were concerned. In addition, the project should take into account the fact that USAID had embarked on a US\$7 million project with the Ethiopian Government on animal track issues. FAO explained that there was a more conducive environment for discussion than there had been several months ago, and that the Ethiopian Government was not positive to the project as a way to resume exports to Djibouti.

61. The Secretariat referred to project STDF 64 (focusing on upgrading the veterinary services in Djibouti) and noted that approval had been withdrawn at the Working Group meeting in March 2007 due to implementation delays. The Secretariat suggested FAO/OIE further develop this project, in particular with respect to the proposed development of a pilot project in Djibouti as outlined in section 7.1.1 of the FAO/OIE report.

62. One member stated that the political problems could have been foreseen at the start of the project and that there were lessons to be learnt. It was agreed that an extension would be granted until 30 June 2008 on the condition that a progress report on the implementation of the project be delivered for the Working Group's consideration in April and a preliminary final report in June 2008.

- *STDF 46: Implementation of Codex standards (PPG in Benin and Tanzania)*

63. The Secretariat recalled that it had commissioned a consultant mission to determine next steps with this PPG. The consultant concluded that at this stage no SPS challenges seemed to exist in the

pineapple juice sector and there was a confused situation on strengthening laboratory services. The WHO informed the meeting that the project proposal needed to be reconsidered. The Secretariat cautioned that at this stage it did not seem likely that a project would materialize.

Discussion of draft annual report for 2007

64. The Secretariat presented a preliminary draft (STDF 208) of the 2007 annual report in order to give partners and donors the opportunity to request improvements and to ensure that the Secretariat would be reporting in the most appropriate format to donors. The Secretariat emphasized that the report should be considered a work in progress. One section that required more work was the section on impact of STDF projects and activities. Partners and donors were invited to submit further comments within two weeks following the meeting.

Other business

65. FAO presented a document submitted by its Regional Office in Asia/Pacific outlining a potential project on economic incentives and training to ensure food safety and encourage value-addition along the livestock and food chain (document STDF 211). The OIE presented a document outlining ideas for a "train the trainers" project. The OIE announced that it was planning to submit the proposal for consideration by the Working Group in April 2008 and stated that it was seeking preliminary comments from partners and donors on how to improve the proposal.

66. One member questioned if the agenda item "Other business" was the correct item to present this type of documents. It was felt that proposals needed to be discussed only if they were submitted to the Secretariat within the established time-limits. Some considered that the STDF rules should be applied strictly. Several other participants, however, found it useful to hear activities partners were planning in the near future. Another suggestion made was that this type of document could be discussed under the item "Information on partner and donor activities" where partners and donors report on their future activities. The Secretary informed the Working Group that the deadline of 45 working days would be applied more strictly.

67. One member noted its preference to have STDF projects implemented at a local level rather than by STDF partners, which instead should have a supervisory or oversight role, where possible.

68. The Secretariat recalled that it had put much effort throughout the year into publicizing the STDF more broadly at workshops, meetings, STDF information events with existing and potential donors, WTO training activities, etc., and requested partners and donors to publicize the STDF as well. Any documentation needed for this purpose could be obtained from the Secretariat in the form of leaflets, posters, standard presentations, etc.

Annex 1
STDF WORKING GROUP

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