

**SUMMARY REPORT OF THE STDF WORKING GROUP MEETING
20-22 OCTOBER 2014
WTO, GENEVA**

I. REGULAR WORKING GROUP MEETING

1 ADOPTION OF AGENDA

1. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Craig Fedchock (IPPC Secretariat). The Secretariat requested to discuss a concept note entitled "Creative and Innovative Sustainable Ways of Funding SPS Compliance" submitted by the International Trade Centre (ITC) under agenda item 3(i) (Possible future STDF work). The agenda was adopted.

2. A list of participants is provided in Annex 1.

2 OPERATION OF THE FACILITY

(a) Implementation of Action Plan to implement recommendations of STDF mid-term review

3. The Secretariat briefed on progress made to date on the implementation of recommendations of the STDF Mid Term Review (MTR) report, as outlined the Action Plan. These included: (i) strengthening the Results-Based Management (RBM) framework; (ii) increased and improved cooperation with global and regional players; and (iii) strengthening the Secretariat's capacity.

4. The Secretariat noted that work was on track with respect to the first recommendation, which includes an intervention logic, a logical framework and a monitoring and evaluation strategy for the STDF. The Secretariat highlighted several ongoing cooperation activities to implement the second recommendation. These included amongst others: possible participation in the Global Food Safety Partnership (GFSP) conference in December 2014 and the Fifth Global Review of Aid for Trade in 2015. The Secretariat also reported on STDF operations to the WTO Committee on Trade and Development and the WTO LDC Sub-Committee. In terms of the third recommendation, contracts of STDF staff were upgraded (two-year duration) and a vacancy notice was issued. Other recommendations will be addressed when discussing and revising STDF's Operational Rules.

(b) Next Policy committee meeting

5. The Secretariat requested Partners to consider hosting the next STDF Policy Committee in 2015. Donors and developing country experts were invited to agree - among themselves - on their representation in the next Policy Committee and to inform the Secretariat accordingly.

(c) Selection of new developing country experts (2015-2016)

6. On behalf of the Working Group, the chairperson expressed its gratitude to three developing country experts whose three-year term was coming to an end, i.e. Ms Martha Byanyima (Uganda), Ms Delilah Cabb (Belize) and Mr Sidney Suma (Papua New Guinea).

7. The Secretariat invited members to submit names and CVs of potential candidates to serve as new experts in 2015-2106, for selection by the incoming Working Group chairperson. The deadline for submission was set on Friday 28 November 2014.

(d) Selection of new Working Group vice-chairperson (2015)

8. The Secretariat welcomed expressions of interest from Members for the position of vice-chairperson of the Working Group in 2015 (and hence chairperson in 2016). It was agreed that a decision on this matter would be taken at the next meeting in March 2015.

(e) STDF reception (March 2015)

9. The Secretariat reminded the Working Group about the STDF reception in March 2015, to be held on the margins of the Working Group and SPS Committee meetings. This decision was taken in consultation with the WTO. The reception would be an opportunity to highlight the excellent results achieved by the STDF over the last decade.

(f) Staffing and financial situation

10. The Secretariat informed Members that a new vacancy for a one-year post (at Grade 6 entry level) was issued in August 2014. The procedure to fill this vacancy is expected to be completed by early 2015. In the interim, a temporary contract was offered to Ms Roshan Khan until the end of January 2015. Moreover, contracts of current STDF staff members had been upgraded to two-year contracts. The Secretariat also acknowledged the support of two STDF interns, Ms Malgorzata Loj and Mr Edwin Gaarder.

11. The Secretariat reported on the financial situation of the Facility and commented on the information and figures in Annex 1 in the annotated agenda (STDF/WG/Oct14/Annotated agenda). In 2014, the STDF will likely meet its annual funding target level of USD 5 million, assuming that additional pledges will be received between now and the end of the year. This would include contributions from Denmark (under an existing agreement, 2013-2015) and Japan (a renewal of its contribution for 2014 is expected). A new multi-annual agreement on STDF support is also in place between the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the WTO, covering the period 2014-2018. France is considering making a contribution to the STDF and attended the Working Group as an observer. The Secretariat thanked all donors for their contributions.

3 ENHANCED COLLABORATION IN SPS-RELATED TECHNICAL COOPERATION**(a) Secretariat participation in external events**

12. The Secretariat informed Members about its participation in selected external events and meetings since the last Working Group meeting in March 2014. An overview of events was available in the annotated agenda (STDF/WG/Oct14/Annotated agenda).

(b) Relevant SPS activities and initiatives of partners, donors and observer organizations – exchange of information

13. The Secretariat introduced information received from Members on their on-going and planned SPS-related capacity building activities. The Secretariat's presentation and the documentation received in advance of the meeting can be viewed on the STDF website.

14. The IPPC Secretariat reported on activities under project STDF/PG/401 entitled "Training of Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) Facilitators" mentioning that the call for facilitators had been extended until the end of November 2014 and that the number of applications received was very high, as expected. The IPPC also mentioned that under one of the projects included under the FAO African Trust Fund, seven countries from the SADC region were going to make a regional application of the IPPC PCE tool. The use of PCE in these countries, as well as in Central Asia, in the framework of another FAO project, were going to be used as practical cases for training under project STDF/PG/401.

15. The developing country expert from Uganda provided information about COMESA's collaboration with SNV Zambia to support honey producers in improving market access opportunities. The FAO informed Members about the meeting of FAO's Committee on Agriculture (COA) where FAO's strategy for food safety was unanimously accepted by FAO member countries. The WTO briefed Members on the SPS Workshop on Risk Analysis (13-14 October) and the ongoing SPS Advanced Course in Spanish (6 to 24 October). The WHO informed about capacity building projects managed by its regional offices and briefed members on its important work on quantifying global diseases.

16. The World Bank reported on the status of the Global Food Safety Partnership (GFSP), which was formally established in December 2012. The partnership promises innovative ways of training and assessing countries' food safety systems. The third annual GFSP conference will be held in Cape Town, South Africa, in December 2014. The World Bank noted that GFSP is highly complementary to STDF and expressed commitment to renewed engagement with the Facility.

17. The Secretariat reminded Members about a possible study on spill-over effects of export-oriented SPS projects on domestic food safety. In the past, the Working Group had discussed the importance and relevance of such a study. Members, however, had provided no further information about projects that could be part of the study. The Secretariat requested members to reflect on ways to move this work forward, potentially through an STDF-funded project. The WHO expressed interest in undertaking this study and suggested to have further discussions on this.

(c) Presentation by Isabelle Rollier (European Commission) on the Better Training for Safer Food (BTSF) programme

18. Ms Isabelle Rollier from the European Commission (DG SANCO) presented the Better Training for Safer Food (BTSF) training programme, which started in 2006 and is a key element of the EU's food safety strategy. BTSF aims to provide high-quality training for EU Member States and third country control officials working in areas of food and feed law, animal health and animal welfare rules, and plant health rules. The programme contributes to a better understanding of EU food safety legislation and leads to more harmonized controls across the EU.

19. Several members expressed interest in collaborating with the BTSF programme and in contributing with training material. The FAO made reference to the e-Learning course on the Codex Alimentarius Commission. IICA expressed interest in establishing links with the ongoing EDF-funded SPS programme in the Caribbean region. The developing country expert from Uganda informed members about BTSF's work in Africa. The World Bank reminded about GFSP and looked forward to strengthen collaboration with the BTSF programme. The EC presentation can be viewed on the STDF website.

(d) Implementation of SPS measures to facilitate safe trade: status of STDF work and discussion

20. The Secretariat presented the ongoing work on the implementation of SPS measures to facilitate safe trade, with reference to the background note on the status of this work and possible follow-up activities. It was noted that while the work in Southern Africa is taking longer than expected, in part due to the closure of TradeMark Southern Africa, a draft report is expected soon and will be shared with partners for comments. The Secretariat indicated that the consultant responsible for the research in Southeast Asia had revised his draft report on the basis of comments received from partners, particularly extensive specific modifications to the text proposed by WTO. It was further noted that the areas suggested for possible STDF follow-up were based on a recommendation made at the Working Group meeting in March 2014, as well as recommendations in the consultant's report for Southeast Asia.

21. Most participants expressed appreciation for the Southeast Asia report and agreed on the relevance of the issues discussed. A representative from the Philippines referred to the value of the findings and recommendations of this research to inform ongoing efforts to strengthen SPS capacity in the country. Reference was also made to Lao PDR's intervention in the WTO SPS Committee during the previous week, which described how some recommendations are currently being addressed with World Bank and FAO assistance. Some participants indicated their support for follow-up work by the STDF based on the areas identified in the background note. UNCTAD proposed sharing the recommendations of this work with national trade facilitation committees.

22. The IPPC commented that the positions of partner organizations, including the IPPC, on a previous draft of this report were circulated to the Working Group in advance and available on the STDF password protected website. It also clarified that FAO has not used the results of this consultancy for its work in Lao and indicated its reservation that the Southeast Asia report focuses more on cost analysis than trade facilitation, and noted that the findings (from only four countries) should not be applied to other countries more widely in Asia or globally. In response to the IPPC's concern regarding incomplete consideration by the consultant of the Terms of Reference (TORs)

for this regional research, the Secretariat noted that the language in the TORs reflects the revised background note, circulated to the Working Group in January 2012, on which no further comments were received. Moreover, the Secretariat noted that the consultant had fully delivered on his TORs. Some members noted that it would be useful to conduct additional studies in other regions to improve the methodologies and support the validity of any recommendations.

23. The IPPC, FAO, OIE and WHO stressed the importance of proper implementation of international standards and noted that, while unnecessary hindrances to trade should be removed, transaction costs should not influence the level of protection. The World Bank highlighted the importance of this work for trade and development, and underlined the need to keep transactions costs as low as possible, while ensuring an appropriate level of sanitary and phytosanitary protection. The World Bank reiterated the need for additional tools to support risk-based SPS management and enhanced border cooperation. Based on the Secretariat's suggestion, the Chair proposed to delay a detailed discussion on possible follow-up work to the next Working Group meeting - when the Africa Report is also available – to which Members agreed.

(e) Presentation by Michael Roberts on the Aid for Trade work programme (2014-2015) + discussion on STDF side-event at next Aid for Trade Global Review

24. Mr Michael Roberts (Aid for Trade Coordinator, WTO) generally briefed the Working Group on the Aid for Trade initiative and more specifically on the Fifth Global Review of Aid for Trade themed: "Reducing Trade Costs for Inclusive, Sustainable Growth". This event will be held at the WTO from 30 June to 2 July 2015. The Review will be based on a monitoring and evaluation exercise that consists of a self-assessment process, based on questionnaire formats for developing and developed countries, and a call for case stories and examples of successful initiatives (details at http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/devel_e/a4t_e/a4tmonit_e.htm).

25. Queries from the Working Group related to the operation of the Aid for Trade initiative, its implementation and monitoring systems. Mr Roberts explained that the main functions of the initiative are to: (i) encourage mainstreaming of trade into national development strategies of developing countries (demand side); (ii) encourage additional flows of Aid for Trade from bilateral, regional and multilateral donors to support requests for trade-related capacity building from beneficiary countries (supply side); and (iii) disseminate monitoring and evaluation results, in collaboration with the OECD.

26. Several members welcomed an STDF side-event during the fifth Review that could focus on reducing SPS trade transaction costs (while not compromising on sanitary and phytosanitary protection objectives). It was agreed that the Secretariat will develop a proposal in this regard for discussion at the next Working Group meeting in March 2015. The Secretariat will also liaise with the Aid for Trade unit in the WTO to secure a slot in the programme.

(f) New STDF website and Virtual Library – presentation by STDF Secretariat

27. The Secretariat noted that the new website, based on the content management system Drupal, was officially launched in August 2014 and had been undergoing a two-month testing period to ensure that the system is stable and free of technical problems. While efforts are under way to resolve a few minor outstanding technical issues, the website is by and large completed. New features were highlighted, including the availability of creating individual project web-pages (fact sheets), summary tables of projects and PPGs (with optional filters) and a function to download relevant documents. The Secretariat highlighted that project fact sheets will initially be only available for projects completed in 2009 or later.

28. The IPPC considered that more could be done in terms of highlighting useful material that is currently hidden within the different web-pages, in relation to STDF thematic activities or projects.

(g) Status of STDF work: Finalization of SPS market access prioritization tool

29. The Secretariat noted that work on Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA) is being re-branded as SPS Market Access Prioritisation (SPS MAP), based on the recommendation of the STDF workshop in Geneva in July 2013 to clarify the tool's scope and focus on prioritizing SPS

investments for market access. The Secretariat indicated that Mr Spencer Henson had been contracted to revise the tool, based on the discussions of this workshop. As recommended, a revised, more user-friendly draft guide would be circulated to a small peer review group (including STDF partners) for comments and feedback prior to its finalization. The final tool is expected in the first quarter of 2015.

30. The Secretariat noted that Zambia plans to hold a stakeholder workshop on 10 November 2014 to follow-up on and re-apply the initial MCDA work, with COMESA and USDA support. It indicated that in Rwanda, the outcomes of the MCDA work were used to develop the national five-year strategic plan for agricultural transformation and the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources is interested to use this tool for ongoing planning work. A growing number of requests for information on SPS MAP are being received from external institutions (e.g. Millennium Challenge Corporation in Benin, Food Trade ESA Project in Tanzania, the EU-funded ACP TBT Programme, etc.).

31. The developing country expert from Belize mentioned that Belize is in the process of finalizing its five-year strategic plan and that each department will use the SPS MAP tool to prioritise relevant activities. The developing country expert from Papua New Guinea informed the Working Group on the use of the tool in the Seychelles for priority-setting under CAADP and to identify priorities for the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between COMESA countries and the EU.

(h) Status of STDF work: Joint EIF/STDF analysis on SPS issues in DTIS studies

32. The Secretariat recalled the objectives of this study and reported on progress made to date. Mr Digby Gascoine was selected as the lead consultant and work commenced in June 2014. Three countries were selected for field work, i.e. Cambodia, Tanzania and Senegal. Due to uncertainties related to travel of international consultants to West Africa, a decision was made to hire a national consultant to undertake the field work in Senegal, and whose findings will be incorporated into the study. The aim is to have the study completed before the next meeting in March 2015.

(i) New STDF film – discussion

33. The Secretariat briefly introduced this work and suggested some possible topics to be included in the new film, such as regional approaches to SPS capacity building (building on recommendations in the MTR report) and public-private partnerships to address SPS constraints.

34. The developing country expert from Panama suggested that the new film could feature domestic producers that currently do not export, as a means to encourage their participation in SPS decision-making processes.

35. The EC requested if donors, partners' and beneficiaries' viewpoints be adequately represented and their visibility promoted. It proposed the EDES and PIP programmes as case stories. It also suggested that footage of border inspection and clearance procedures be included in the new film.

36. The developing country expert from Nigeria thought that project STDF/PG/172 on the export of sesame seeds and shea butter would be a good case story, notably in the context of value chains.

37. The WTO suggested that the new film be shown at the next Aid for Trade Global Review. The Secretariat noted that this timeline is very tight – but that it might be possible to already present some footage.

38. The IPPC suggested showcasing the nature of the STDF partnership and its objectives and not to abuse the word "Food" since under the IPPC many other types of regulated articles are traded and clearly covered by the text of the Convention and its standards. With regard to case studies, it suggested the inclusion of a case study on the implementation of ISPM 15 (wood packaging material).

39. IICA supported a focus on regional initiatives and asked whether members were aware of case studies of border control posts area where simplification of SPS controls had led to benefits for

both SPS authorities and customs. It also flagged development and implementation of legislation as a potential topic.

40. The World Bank highlighted the importance of showcasing cross-country, multi-sector, multi-agency and public-private cooperation.

41. The developing country expert from Papua New Guinea suggested the issue of transshipments and consignments in transit through and from landlocked countries. Another suggestion was to explore, through a commodity-based approach, how standards are implemented in different ways and depending on regions.

42. The Secretariat thanked the Working Group for the exchange of views and ideas and committed to preparing an information note for discussion in the next Working Group, which would further elaborate on specific case stories. The next step would then be to start working on a script and to prepare for a tender following WTO's procurement process.

(j) Possible future STDF work – discussion

43. The Secretariat reminded that STDF is currently working on a large number of activities and projects that will spill over into 2015. Hence, there will be little room to include any additional activities. That said, it proposed to have an open discussion on new and potential topics that could merit STDF's attention in the years to come. This type of discussion could recur at future meetings as well.

44. The developing country expert from Uganda emphasized the importance of trade facilitation work in Africa and viewed that STDF should bring more evidence to countries and partners on good practice in simplifying border controls and other SPS measures. Results and lessons learned from research should be disseminated at the next Global Review of Aid for Trade.

45. The US proposed good regulatory practice, noting that many countries are undergoing regulatory reform efforts, thus creating opportunities for spill-over effects and synergies.

46. IICA suggested future work on identifying and addressing areas where countries struggle to implement regulations and standards. E-certification and trade facilitation could also be considered given their importance in the context of global trade.

47. The IPPC noted that while trade facilitation is a current topic, countries will not be able to facilitate trade unless they have the capacity to implement phytosanitary standards and procedures.

48. The FAO noted the need for a stronger dialogue on international standards implementation. The EU concurred with further efforts on harmonization.

49. The developing country representative from Nigeria suggested working on identifying SPS constraints and challenges specific to different regions. The representative from Papua New Guinea asked to consider further work on invasive species and environmental issues and urged closer collaboration with the Global Environmental Facility and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

50. Chinese Taipei¹ viewed that the Working Group is well positioned to reconcile the SPS and Trade Facilitation Agreements, and requested flexibility from members in order to resolve differences between them.

51. The WHO noted that trade is facilitated when countries comply with international standards, and that barriers to trade arise when countries fail to comply with these standards. It urged members to concentrate on capacity building for standards compliance. It also viewed that assistance provided by the STDF should be more horizontal and far-reaching, helping countries to understand risk analysis and the rationale for international standards.

¹ Chinese Taipei is a WTO Member in application of Article XII of the Marrakesh Agreement (1994). WTO membership has no implication regarding the sovereignty of the Member pursuant to international law.

52. The WTO suggested updating the STDF guide on capacity evaluation tools, potentially as an e-document on the STDF website including links to the various tools.

53. The ITC circulated a concept paper proposing joint ITC/STDF thematic work on identifying creative, innovative and sustainable ways to finance SPS compliance. Development assistance has proven to be unsustainable in the long run, if not accompanied by an appropriate exit strategy to ensure financial sustainability. It proposed to document and assess the status of different alternative funding mechanisms in different countries at policy, institutional and enterprise levels. Such an initiative would benefit from strong expertise, knowledge and skills in the SPS area, which are available in the STDF.

54. The Secretariat noted that due to resource constraints it would not have the capacity at present to further develop this topic as STDF thematic work in 2015. However, it was suggested that the ITC could prepare a project proposal for consideration by the Working Group at a future meeting.

4 IMPROVED CAPACITY OF BENEFICIARIES TO IDENTIFY NEEDS AND FORMULATE PROJECTS

(a) Presentation of project and PPG applications not accepted for consideration

55. The Secretariat introduced the project and PPG applications not tabled for consideration by the Working Group. These applications and the reasons for not tabling them were listed in Tables 2 and 3 in document STDF/WG/Oct14/Review.

(b) Discussion of PPG applications

STDF/PPG/477 – Improving sanitary capacity and facilitating export of livestock and livestock products in Ethiopia

56. The Working Group approved this PPG request subject to: (i) clarification of the scope and activities in the project document to avoid overlap and duplication with on-going and past initiatives in the Ethiopian livestock sector; and (ii) inclusion of an SPS needs assessment to identify gaps and areas that the ensuing project is expected to address. The EC recommended considering various EU interventions in the livestock sector in Ethiopia to avoid overlap and duplication of efforts. Similarly, the US wished to see how the resultant project will build on USAID's past initiatives and dovetail ongoing efforts.

57. The FAO indicated its willingness to provide support for work on veterinary legislation and revision of legal frameworks, if requested by the Government.

STDF/PPG/481 – Strengthening the Phytosanitary Capacity of the Horticulture Sector in Zambia

58. The IPPC suggested applying the updated version of the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) tool, before starting the development of a project proposal, in order to determine and prioritize capacity building needs to strengthen the NPPO's capacity to implement international phytosanitary standards. It also informed members that this tool may be applied in Zambia shortly under a regional FAO project.

59. The Working Group considered that – if this were to happen – the applicant may prefer to submit a project proposal to the STDF – to be developed based on the results of the PCE – for consideration by the Working Group on a future occasion.

60. Alternatively, the Working Group could offer the applicant an increase in the amount requested from the STDF to cover the cost of conducting the PCE tool in Zambia, as a first step, and then to develop a project proposal based on these results.

It was decided to present these two options to the applicant for its consideration

STDF/PPG/487 – Development of a proposal for a Regional Total Diet Study in Latin American and Caribbean Countries

61. The Working Group approved this request for funding subject to: (i) clarification as to which organization will take the lead role in implementing the PPG; and (ii) submission of further detail on certain budget lines.

62. The FAO noted that it could provide household budget survey data for Nicaragua upon request and, as such, suggested that Nicaragua could be included in the regional Total Diet Study. It also suggested including an additional activity to harmonize existing data from individual food consumption surveys in a compatible format with the FAO/WHO Chronic Individual Food Consumption Database Summary Statistics (CIFOcOs) and the forthcoming FAO/WHO Individual Food Consumption Database.

STDF/PPG/491 – ISPM-15: Need based interventions for facilitating compliance in South Asia

63. The Working Group decided not to support this application, based on extensive comments received from the IPPC Secretariat. The IPPC Secretariat underscored the lack of background information provided to justify the need for this PPG and raised concerns over the relevance and scope of various PPG activities, as well as on the capacity of the applicant to work in the area of standards implementation. It highlighted that the application lacks evidence of consultation and support from key stakeholders, including the Asia and Pacific Plant Protection Commission (APPPC), the IPPC Secretariat as well as FAO's Forestry Department. It also questioned the real buy-in of the relevant NPPOs for the proposed work. The IPPC Secretariat viewed that any work related to implementation of ISPM 15 at the regional level should be carried under the auspices of the APPPC, which is currently leading on a similar initiative.

(c) Overview of implementation of on-going PPGs

64. The Secretariat referred to document STDF/WG/Oct14/Overview, which provides an overview of the implementation status of all on-going PPGs. Relevant PPG documents (reports, etc.) are available on the STDF website.

65. Members approved an extension to the contracting period for three PPGs to allow the Secretariat to finalize contracting arrangements: STDF/PPG/355 (Prevention and Control Capacity Building on Aflatoxin Contamination of China Peanut) and STDF/PPG/431 (Aflatoxin management in chillies in Pakistan) and STDF/PPG/435 (Strengthening SPS compliance of sesame production in Sudan for enhanced access to international markets).

Presentation by Dr Kevin Walker (Michigan State University, STDF consultant) on the results of a feasibility study on improving the effective participation of SADC member states in the SPS Committee (STDF/PPG/379)

66. The Secretariat explained the background to the feasibility study, being the first activity under STDF/PPG/379.

67. Dr Walker presented the key findings of the study, noting that distinction between three terms is central: (i) technical understanding: relates to understanding of the SPS Agreement and its various aspects; (ii) technical capacity: refers to consistent execution that flows from the understanding of the provisions of the Agreement and; (iii) institutional capacity: refers to the countries' overall leadership and commitment of resources, processes and actions to establish and sustain prioritized SPS lines of action.

68. Dr Walker argued that SADC member states should strengthen their national SPS agenda, increase regional coordination and develop a mechanism to link participation in international SPS meetings and events to SPS performance. He further highlighted the importance of inculcating a sense of ownership for SADC member states and recommended to focus increasingly on developing institutional capacity when providing technical assistance.

69. The Secretariat reminded members that USD 50,000 was approved for this PPG, of which half was still remaining to develop a proposal. The Working Group supported the development of a follow-up proposal, based on the findings of the feasibility study. While acknowledging the importance of building institutional capacity to build national SPS agendas, the chairperson encouraged close coordination with Codex, OIE and the IPPC Secretariats in this regard.

Introduction by STDF Secretariat on the results of a feasibility study on developing virus indexing capacity for planting materials in Malawi (STDF/PPG/404)

70. The Secretariat informed Members that the feasibility study, produced under STDF/PPG/404, recommended developing a project proposal, as requested by the applicant. The study highlighted different options to develop this capacity, based on expanding capacity in existing facilities and adopting a Public Private Partnership model, and identified two potential private investors. It estimated that the funding needed to develop these facilities amounts to about USD 160,000. The study confirmed that additional efforts would be needed to tackle other phytosanitary capacities to ensure the success and sustainability of the proposed facilities.

71. The Secretariat noted that, based on the recommendation in the study, it would proceed to contract project development, and that the Working Group had already approved funds for this purpose. Since the resulting project would focus on infrastructure development, it indicated that the resultant project would likely not be eligible for the STDF and that other potential donors should be identified. The IPPC requested clarification that the project proposal to be developed would focus only on the development of the virus indexing and tissue culture facilities, and not on other phytosanitary capacity needs, based on the initial PPG request. The STDF Secretariat confirmed this.

72. The chairperson concluded that the Secretariat would proceed to contract the formulation of a project focused on developing virus indexing and tissue culture facilities.

5 IMPROVED CAPACITY OF BENEFICIARIES OF STDF PROJECTS

(a) Discussion of project applications

STDF/PG/486 – Improving food safety and compliance with SPS measures to increase export revenues in the oilseeds value chain in Myanmar

73. The FAO noted that the problem identification was not sufficiently clear and that the logical framework was not as detailed and concrete as it could be. The EC requested the ITC to informally provide clarifications on issues in the EC's written comments but otherwise supported the approval of the project. UNIDO informed that it had recently launched a four-year project focused on quality infrastructure and that it has already been in contact with the ITC to ensure complementarity and coordination on the ground.

74. The Working Group approved the project subject to the ITC working with the FAO to address FAO's outstanding concerns. The Working Group considered the proposal to be approved, if and when the FAO agrees to the revised application.

STDF/PG/489 – Technical assistance on SPS and the value-chain, to improve market access for small-scale / artisanal fisheries in West Africa

75. The Working Group welcomed and approved this project subject to a revision of the proposal to take into account written comments provided by the FAO, the EU delegations in the participating countries, the United States and the STDF Secretariat. Comments included, *inter alia*, a revision of the logical framework and a greater emphasis on international standards, and particularly Codex standards, in training activities.

76. Members noted the extensive field work and needs assessments carried out by UNIDO prior to formulation of the project and acknowledged the tight budget of the project. It was agreed to grant exceptional approval to the applicants to exceed the equipment budget slightly above the

10% ceiling set by the STDF Operational Rules. UNIDO was invited to consult with the members who had commented previously when modifying the project document.

STDF/PG/495 – Regional project for the accreditation of laboratory diagnostic tests for animal diseases in OIRSA member countries

77. The Working Group acknowledged that the project can contribute to improving market access for live animals and animal products from the beneficiary countries within and outside the sub-region, but also agreed that the project document would benefit from re-formulation. It recommended the applicant to revise and resubmit the application for consideration by the STDF at a future meeting.

78. The revised application should take into consideration the following recommendations: (i) take into account economies of scale and capabilities of a regional network of laboratories, including private sector laboratories; (ii) review the budget, in particular the amount requested for minor laboratory supplies and materials which exceeds the STDF 10% ceiling; (iii) reformulate the logical framework; (iv) consider development of a business/sustainability plan for each laboratory before starting investments; and (v) strengthen coordination and take into account complementarities with other ongoing projects and programs in the countries concerned.

79. OIRSA was invited to consult with members who provided specific comments (FAO, OIE, EU and US) in revising the project document.

(b) Decisions on financing and prioritization

80. No decision on prioritization was required.

(c) Overview of implementation of on-going projects

81. The Secretariat referred to document STDF/WG/Oct14/Overview, which contains an overview of the implementation status of all on-going projects. The Working Group approved no cost extensions to the following projects: STDF/PG/335 (six months), STDF/PG/336 (three months), STDF/PG/344 (twelve months), STDF/PG/350 (six months) and STDF/PG/354 (twelve months).

(d) Selection of projects for external evaluations

82. The Working Group agreed to evaluate the following three projects: STDF/PG/284 (Strengthening the National SPS Committee of Honduras), STDF/PG/298 (Mitigating the harmful effects of pesticide residues in cocoa in Africa) and STDF/PG/326 (Training platform to build trade capacity for fresh and processed fruits and vegetables in Thailand and Viet Nam).

6 OTHER BUSINESS

83. The Secretariat reminded members of the deadline of Friday 28 November 2014 to submit names of possible candidates for the selection of three new developing country SPS experts. Tentative dates for the Working Group meetings in 2015 are: (i) 23-25 March (including one day for discussion on the STDF Operational Rules as well as the STDF reception on 25 March, immediately following the WTO SPS Committee); and (ii) 12-13 October.

84. The meeting closed at 15:30.

II. MEETING ON REVISION OF STDF STRATEGY/RBM FRAMEWORK

85. A meeting on the revision of STDF's strategy and RBM framework was held on Tuesday 21 October from 16:00 to 18:00 and continued on Wednesday 22 October from 09:00 to 12:45. This meeting was moderated by Mr Jens Andersson, the consultant selected and hired to assist the STDF in this work, in line with the Action Plan agreed by the Working Group in March 2014.

86. Members engaged in a rich and detailed discussion on three proposed documents prepared and circulated in advance by the consultant (and based on preliminary discussions held at a

meeting at FAO among STDF partners and the developing country expert from Belize): (i) STDF intervention logic; (ii) STDF logical framework and; (iii) monitoring and evaluation framework of the STDF.

87. The consultant took note of the comments and feedback from members and agreed to revise the documents in light of these. An additional period of comments was provided to members until Friday 7 November 2014.

88. In terms of next steps, the Secretariat noted that the aim is to finalize the documents by mid-December 2014, including a revised strategy. The documents will then be circulated to members to provide an additional period for comments until mid-January 2015. The final draft documents will be presented to the STDF Policy Committee for consideration and endorsement in 2015.

89. The STDF Operational Rules currently state that the Facility should be evaluated at least every five years, normally to be concluded one year before the end of the STDF Medium Term Strategy (see para. 108). Given that the current Strategy runs from 2012-2016, the STDF should in principle initiate and conclude another independent external evaluation of the Facility in 2015, i.e. one year before the end of the Strategy. However, the Secretariat remarked that it may not have the resources for this, while recommendations of the previous evaluation (conducted in 2013 and concluded in January 2014) are still being implemented. In light of this, the Secretariat suggested that members could consider agreeing on a revised strategy for a period beyond 2016. For instance, if the revised strategy would run until 2019, then the next evaluation of the Facility could be conducted in 2018, i.e. within five years from the conclusion of recommendations and one year before the end of the Strategy as required by the Rules.

90. Mr Andersson concurred that such a decision would allow time to implement the recommendations of the recent MTR and provide an opportunity to assess and test the new proposed monitoring framework.

91. The OIE commented that the Facility should have regular five-year evaluations, as stipulated in the Operational Rules. Care should be taken not to have too many successive evaluations.

92. The Chair concluded that successive evaluations may have important implications on the Secretariat's resources. Timing of the revised strategy and the next evaluation should be deliberated upon carefully among members and is eventually a matter for decision by the STDF Policy Committee.

93. The FAO provisionally offered to host the next Policy Committee meeting.

94. The Secretariat reminded members of key dates; (i) Friday 7 November 2014 for additional comments on RBM documents; and (ii) Friday 28 November 2014 for nominations for new developing country experts.

95. The meeting closed at 12:45.

III. MEETING ON REVISION OF STDF OPERATIONAL RULES

96. A first meeting (members only) on revision of the STDF Operational Rules (STDF/139/Rev.3) was held on Wednesday 22 October from 14:00 to 16:00. Over summer, the Secretariat compiled the general comments and specific revisions received from specific members (FAO, OIE, WTO, EC and US) by 30 June 2014 into one document. Following this compilation, additional reactions were received by 15 September 2014 from Ireland and Sweden. The Secretariat explained that the compilation document and all the specific comments and reactions were made available on the password protected website to facilitate the discussion in the Working Group.

97. The Chairperson requested members to present their comments and clarify why the Operational Roles need to be adjusted in their view. Members generally expressed satisfaction with the operation of the Facility and most members agreed that no major changes are needed. In some cases, minor changes could be beneficial to improve clarity of the current rules to support

the work of the STDF. Members also highlighted the importance of a consensus-based decision-making process.

98. The Chairperson suggested that those members who had provided initial comments: (i) self-reflect on the proposed changes; (ii) withdraw those suggested changes that are either not absolutely necessary or that do not have consensus; and (iii) provide clarification on the rationale for the changes proposed. A compilation of these changes, along with the clarifications, will form the basis of future discussions in the Working Group.

99. Members agreed to start working on these items in a smaller group that should include at least the members who had provided initial comments.

100. The Secretariat reminded that in principle a one-day meeting was scheduled (tentatively on 23 March 2015) to further discuss amendments to the Operational Rules.

101. The Secretariat, on behalf of the Working Group, thanked Ms Martha Byanyima (Uganda), Mr Sidney Suma (Papua New Guinea) and Ms Delilah Cabb (Belize) for their contributions to the STDF over the last three years. The three experts expressed their gratitude for the opportunity and experience to serve as STDF developing country experts. The chairperson noted that their contribution to the Working Group had been very valuable and was appreciated by the membership.

102. Finally, the Secretariat, on behalf of the Working Group, expressed its appreciation to Mr Craig Fedchock for chairing the Working Group meetings in 2014 in an excellent manner.

103. The meeting closed at 16:00.

**STDF WORKING GROUP
20-22 OCTOBER 2014
ROOM E**

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