

Piloting the use of voluntary third party assurances (vTPAs) in West Africa

The information and data generated by vTPA programmes can be useful to the relevant regulatory authorities, enabling them to target inspections according to the risk posed by food businesses and to direct the resources of their national food control systems more effectively. This project will test and evaluate how the new Codex guidelines on voluntary third party assurance (vTPA) programmes can be used in practice by government authorities in Mali and Senegal to improve food safety outcomes for consumer protection and fair practices in the food trade based on public-private collaboration. At the same time, the project will help identify capacity and infrastructure gaps in these countries and seek solutions to address them.

This project is closely related to an STDF pilot project on the use of vTPA programmes in Central America, benefitting Belize and Honduras ([STDF/PG/682](#)). With a collaborative and innovative approach, both pilots will convene and connect diverse public/private stakeholders and generate experiences and learnings of relevance for national food control authorities elsewhere.

The STDF and UNIDO held a virtual discussion on accreditation and the role of vTPA programmes. The [webinar](#) took place on 9 June 2020, marking the World Accreditation Day. Click [here](#) to access the slides, and [here](#) to access e-news and video.

Download the factsheet [here](#).

STDF/PG/665

Status

On-going

Start Date

12/10/2020

End Date

11/10/2023

Project Value (US\$)

\$858,065

STDF Contribution (US\$)

\$779,397

Beneficiaries

Mali

Senegal

Implementing Entities

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

Background

Food business operators (FBOs) are responsible for managing the safety of their products and for demonstrating to the competent authorities that they have effective controls and procedures in place to protect the health of consumers and ensure fair practices in the food trade. To this end, and as sectors such as the retail trade increasingly require their suppliers to do so, many food business operators are voluntarily using quality assurance programmes, including voluntary third party assurance (vTPA) programmes.

Expected Results

- Increased awareness of regulatory authorities in pilot countries on how to evaluate and use data/information generated by vTPA programmes.
- Formulation of a risk-based food inspection policy and updated inspection operational procedures in the horticulture value chain in Mali and Senegal.
- Improved food safety compliance of FBOs in selected value chains based on the use of a voluntary food safety capacity building programme to protect public health and improve trade.
- Increased awareness among food safety regulators of the application of the vTPA approach in other countries through regional and global events and the creation of a partnership platform for regional interventions.