

Internal Assessment of STDF Practitioner Groups

Draft Report for Discussion by STDF Working Group (30 May 2022)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. STDF Practitioner Groups were initiated under the [STDF Strategy for 2020-2024](#) to connect representatives of STDF Working Group members, exchange information and learning on selected knowledge topics, and promote collaboration that contributes to the STDF's two outcomes: (i) more synergies and collaboration driving catalytic SPS improvements in developing countries; and (ii) greater access to, and use of, good practices and knowledge products at global, regional, and national level.

2. In 2020, three Practitioner Groups started focused on the following topics: [electronic SPS certification](#), [public-private partnerships](#) and [P-IMA's evidence-based approach](#). The STDF Secretariat convenes meetings (via Zoom) and interested STDF Working Group members participate, alongside other stakeholders who are involved in STDF projects and/or interested in STDF knowledge/project work.

3. The STDF's MEL Framework identifies the opportunity for assessments and reviews on specific topics to learn about STDF's work. In October 2021, the STDF Secretariat proposed to carry out an internal assessment of the three Practitioner Groups. This assessment was led by the STDF Secretariat in close participation with Practitioner Group members, from February to April 2022.¹ This report documents the findings and recommendations, for discussion by the STDF Working Group in June 2022.

II. PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE

4. The purpose of the internal assessment was to: (i) take stock of, reflect on and learn from the initial experiences with the Practitioner Groups; and (ii) propose recommendations (quick wins as well as longer-term actions) to adapt and/or strengthen the Practitioner Groups, as relevant, to contribute more effectively to delivery of the STDF's Strategy.

5. The audience for the assessment includes members of the Practitioner Groups, as well as the STDF Working Group and the STDF Secretariat. The findings of the assessment will be used to inform a discussion in the STDF Working Group on opportunities to improve the delivery and results of Practitioner Groups in the future.

III. METHODOLOGY

6. The assessment took a participatory and learning approach:

- Members of the Practitioner Groups were engaged as active participants to share their insights, feedback and views in a structured way as part of the assessment.
- Analysing the operation and experiences of the three Groups in 2020-21 was seen as a way to take stock of the lessons and identify opportunities for improvements.

7. A mixed-methods approach was used including quantitative and qualitative methods to collect, analyse and interpret data to answer the research questions (see Box). Analysis of primary and secondary data sources enabled different aspects of the Groups to be explored, including similarities and differences in their objectives, history, membership, set-up and way of working, experiences, challenges, results, etc.

¹ Terms of Reference for the internal assessment were prepared and shared with Practitioner Group members

BOX: Methods for the Internal Assessment

Desk review

Available documents were consulted, including summaries of Practitioner Group meetings, background notes and/or Terms of Reference, and other content on the STDF website.

Tailored online surveys targeted at Practitioner Group members

Online surveys (non-randomized) were distributed to members of the three Practitioner Groups via SurveyMonkey. The surveys were targeted at experts who had participated in one or more meetings of the Practitioner Groups (based on the participant lists). Each survey asked the same questions to enable comparison across the three Practitioner Groups. The sample size reflected the average number of participants in the Practitioner Group meetings (revised to exclude STDF Secretariat participants) held from January 2020 until the end of March 2022 (i.e. 24 for PPPs, 29 for P-IMA and 22 for ECAC). The online survey was distributed to persons who had attended at least one meeting of the Practitioner Groups.

Key informant interviews

Discussions took place with the STDF Secretariat team members involved in the Practitioner Groups.

Focus group discussions with Practitioner Group members

Three separate focus group discussions were organized in April 2022 to obtain in-depth feedback from members of each Practitioner Group. The invitation was directed to STDF members and other experts who had already participated in Practitioner Group meetings. In some cases, other individuals who not yet participated in the Practitioner Groups also attended. The CLI Compass Network Enablers was used to

8. The "[Collective Leadership Compass](#)"² – a diagnosis tool and planning tool developed by the Collective Leadership Institute (CLI) to assess, plan, and enact collaborative changes and build vibrant and robust "collaboration systems" aimed at transformation that contributes to the SDGs – was used as a framework to provide structure for focus group discussions and online surveys. The Compass' "Network Enablers" were used by the Secretariat to diagnose and understand patterns of engagement and collaboration in the Practitioner Groups, identify success factors and risks, diagnose practical experiences and lessons, and identify opportunities for further adaptation and improvements.

9. The following questions were used to frame the assessment, drawing on the dimensions of the Collective Leadership Compass.

- i. **Engagement:** To what extent and how have the Practitioner Groups encouraged the emergence of **collaborative processes**, activities or work between participants, linked to STDF's Outcome: More synergies and collaboration driving catalytic SPS improvements in developing countries?
- ii. **Innovation:** To what extent and how have the Practitioner Groups **identified and disseminated existing knowledge** to help people improve their practice and work, linked to STDF's Outcome: Greater access to and use of good practices and knowledge products at global, regional and national level?
- iii. **Collective Intelligence:** To what extent and how has the Practitioner Groups **facilitated dialogue** between people who come together to explore new opportunities on a knowledge topic, solve problems and/or create new, mutually beneficial opportunities? How have they stimulated learning by serving as a platform for communication and reflection?
- iv. **Wholeness:** To what extent and how have the Practitioner Groups provided a **shared context** for people to communicate and share their information and experiences related to the STDF knowledge topic in a way that builds understanding, knowledge and insight?

² The Collective Leadership Compass is a diagnosis tool and planning methodology that can help to assess, plan, and enact collaborative changes and build vibrant and robust "collaboration systems" that aim at transformation that contributes to the SDGs. See: <https://compass-tool.net>

- v. **Humanity:** What has been the role of the Practitioner Groups in **connecting people** (including existing Working Group members and others) who might not otherwise have the opportunity to interact, either as frequently or at all, linked to the STDF Strategy? Why do Working Group members / others participate in the Practitioner Groups? What do they like most / least about the Practitioner Groups? What are their expectations for the Practitioner Groups?
- vi. **Future possibilities:** To what extent and how have the Practitioner Groups addressed potential or opportunities for change? To what extent, and how, have the Practitioner Groups empowered the participants to work towards the STDF's programme goal of increased and sustainable SPS capacity in developing countries, in support of the SDGs?

10. The assessment was carried out in close cooperation with members of the Practitioner Groups. The aim was to fully benefit from the insights and views of the members of the Practitioner Groups, who are the key stakeholders in the exchange of information and creation of knowledge through the mechanism of the Practitioner Groups.

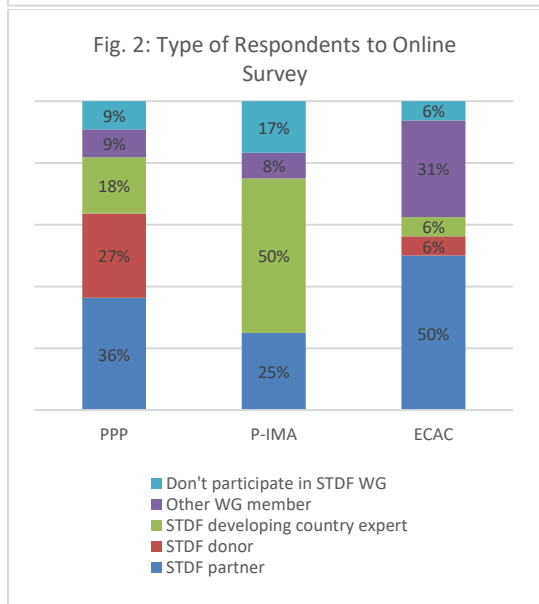
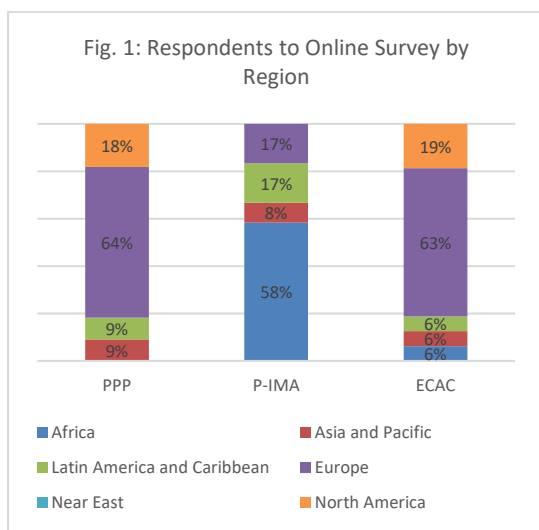
IV. CHALLENGES

11. Delivery of the assessment faced some challenges. Planning and carrying out the assessment in a participatory way, with a large number of stakeholders from the Practitioner Groups, required time, which was sometimes difficult given already heavy workloads of all involved. Initially there was limited feedback to the online survey, which required follow-up and email reminders. The focus group discussions for two of the Groups were rescheduled to enable greater participation, though it was still challenging to find a time that was suitable for members across different time zones. In some cases, some of the most active Practitioner Group members were unable to participate due to conflicting commitments. In some of the breakout groups, some of the participants found it challenging to fully understand and use the CLI network enablers approach, within the relatively short time available. Some participants in the focus group breakouts had not previously participated in the Practitioner Groups, which made it difficult for them to fully engage in identification of the Group's strengths.

V. KEY FINDINGS

12. Key findings of the assessment are analysed and outlined below. Members of the Practitioner Groups proactively shared their views and feedback during the assessment. A total of 39 responses were received to the online surveys: 11 for the PPP survey, 12 for the P-IMA survey and 16 for the ECAC survey. This converted to a response rate of 52% overall (45.8% for PPP, 41.3% for P-IMA and 72.7% for ECAC). A total of 33 members of the Practitioner Groups participated actively in the online focus group discussions, sharing their feedback and views on the strengths and value of the Groups, and areas for further improvement in the future. This comprised 12 participants in the PPP focus discussion on 4 April 2022, 11 in the ECAC discussion on 11 April 2022, and 10 in the P-IMA discussion on 12 April 2022. A list of participants in the focus groups is provided in Annex 1.

13. The diversity of participation in the assessment – with representatives of STDF partners, donors, developing country experts, other Working Group members and experts representing organizations involved in STDF projects/PPGs – is highlighted in the responses received to the online survey (see Fig. 1 and 2 below). In particular, the P-IMA Group stands out as notable in mobilizing a relatively high level of participation from Africa, as well as a relatively large number of participants who do not participate in Working Group meetings and/or who represent organizations involved in STDF projects or PPPs.



Overview of Practitioner Groups (history, membership, meeting structure, etc.)

14. **HISTORY:** There are some differences between the Electronic Certification Advisory Committee (ECAC) and the PPP and P-IMA Practitioner Groups. ECAC emerged in follow-up to the STDF-funded e-Phyto and e-Vet projects. In October 2019, the Working Group considered Terms of Reference for ECAC, recognizing the role and value of the e-Phyto project (STDF/PG/504) in facilitating dialogue among STDF partners and other organizations (including the private sector) with an interest in electronic SPS certification. Members of the Working Group agreed that it would be beneficial to continue this exchange, widening it to cover SPS e-certification as a whole, also reflecting dialogue taking place on veterinary e-certification within the STDF e-vet project (STDF/PG/609).

15. While the Practitioner Groups on PPPs and P-IMA were linked to STDF work taking place under projects and project preparation grants, these Groups did not build on any specific structures or mandates set up within any particular projects. In this way, they emerged more organically and were less "tied" to pre-existing committees. These differences are reflected to some extent in the membership and operation of the Groups. For instance, the PPP and P-IMA Groups are more informal than the ECAC (whose Terms of Reference were discussed in and approved by the STDF Working Group).

16. **ONLINE MEETINGS:** Given the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, all meetings of the three Practitioner Groups have taken place online (via Zoom). Use of Zoom enabled the Practitioner Groups to take

place in spite of the pandemic. However, in feedback to the online surveys and focus groups, some of the members highlighted the challenges of online meetings (including Zoom fatigue, difficulty to combine with other work) and the limitations of what could be achieved in online meetings. Some members in each of the Practitioner Groups identified opportunities to hold on-site meetings to deliver more substantial deliverables. For instance, ECAC members pointed to opportunities to deliver more substantive outputs (e.g. Guide to assess SPS e-certification readiness).

17. **PARTICIPATION:** The Practitioner Groups have mobilized a wide membership of Working Group members representing STDF partners (FAO, OIE, WHO, World Bank Group and IFC, WTO, as well as the IPPC and Codex Secretariats), donors (e.g. Canada, European Commission, Germany, Sweden, United States), developing country experts, other members (including AGRA, AU-IBAR, CITES, COLEACP, COMESA, EIF, GFSI, GATF, Land O'Lakes, IICA, TMEA, SSAFA, UNIDO, etc.), as well as representatives of STDF beneficiary countries/regions (Armenia, CAHFSA, CARICOM, Belize, Ghana, Ecuador, etc.). In several cases, the Practitioner Groups have mobilized new participants from STDF members and other organizations, who have not been involved previously in the STDF Working Group (e.g. Winrock International). The Practitioner Groups have also mobilized participation of experts from organizations involved in, and beneficiaries of, STDF projects and PPGs. This has helped to expand the reach of the STDF. It also creates new opportunities for identifying and creating synergies with other organizations and scaling up STDF results and lessons.

18. From its creation, ECAC has had a more formal membership with the key organizations considered as members of ECAC defined in the Terms of Reference on the STDF website.³ More recently, other organizations – including representatives of the private sector (such as COLEACP, GAFT and ISF) – with an interest in electronic SPS certification) have attended ECAC meetings. Membership of the PPP and P-IMA Practitioner Groups has been more open from the outset, and not limited to representatives of international organizations as for ECAC. For instance, more developing country experts, as well as representatives of STDF projects and PPGs and independent experts have joined PPP and P-IMA meetings. While all the speakers at the ECAC meeting have been representatives of STDF partners or donors, the PPP and P-IMA meetings have engaged more speakers and participants from developing countries.

19. Table 1 below highlights the organizations represented in more than one meeting of each Practitioner Group.⁴ Representatives of some other organizations, who have participated in just one meeting of a Practitioner Group, are not indicated in this table. Participants lists for the Practitioner Groups are included in the summaries of meetings available on the STDF website.

20. **MEETING FREQUENCY:** The number of Zoom meetings organized by each Practitioner Group has been broadly similar, as shown below. From January 2020 to end March 2022, a total of 14 Practitioner Group meetings took place via Zoom. The meetings generally take place every three to four months, approximately. In a few cases, the time between meetings has been longer. The meetings have normally been arranged in the early afternoon Geneva-time to enable the attendance of participants in the America and Asia and the Pacific. It has sometimes been challenging to find a meeting time that suits all the key persons involved. The STDF Secretariat sends out a meeting invite and Zoom link in advance. On average, meetings have lasted approximately 90 minutes. Reflecting reduced participation after one hour, the length of some of the Practitioner Group meetings was shortened in recent meetings.

³ The STDF website lists the following organizations as members of ECAC (accessed 25 May 2022): CODEX Alimentarius Commission, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) Secretariat, UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)/UNCEFACT, UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UN International Computing Centre (UNICC), World Bank Group, World Customs Organization (WCO), World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), World Trade Organization (WTO).

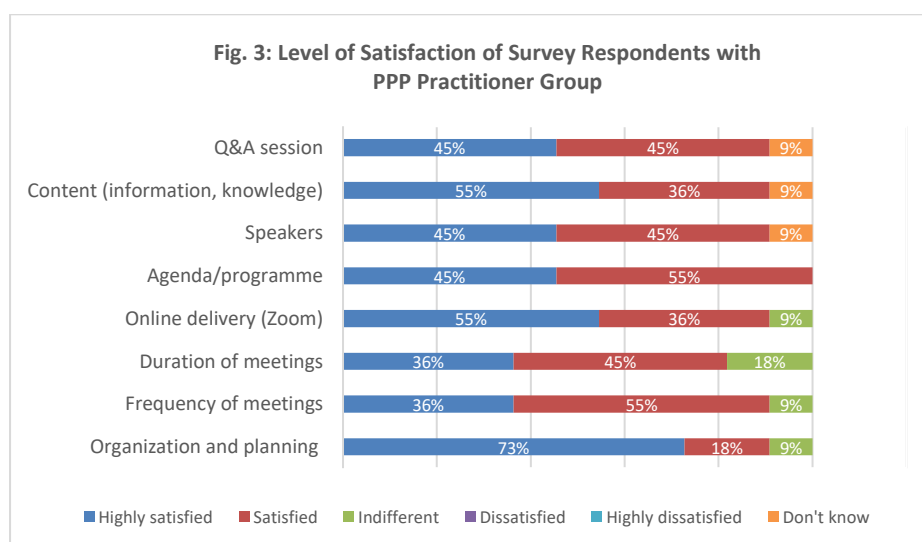
⁴ Participant lists are available on the STDF website for each of the Practitioner Group meetings. Recognizing that some participants have attended just one meeting, this table seeks to show organizations that have been represented in more than one meeting of the Practitioner Group in question.

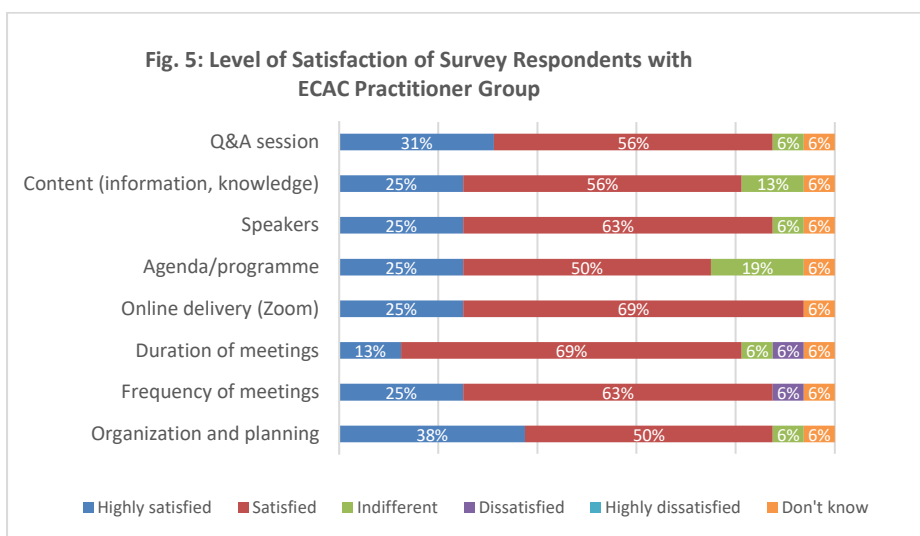
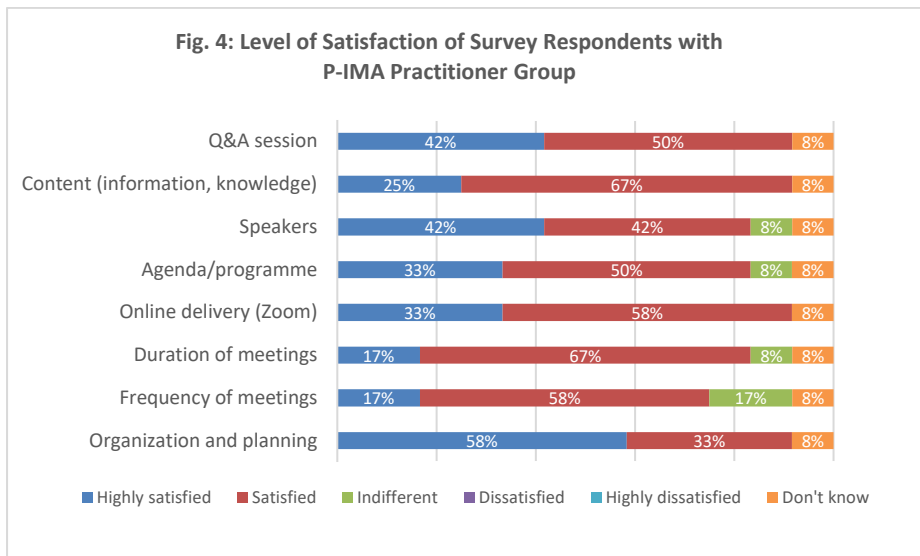
Table 1: Overview of Practitioner Group meetings and membership

	No. of meetings (Jan. 2020 to end March 2022)	Average number of participants per meeting (including STDF Secretariat)	Organizations represented in more than one meeting of the Practitioner Group
ECAC	5	37	CITES, Codex, GATF, FAO, IPPC, OIE, WBG, UNICC, UNECE/UNCTAD, WTO
PPP	6	29	CABI, COLEACP, GFSI, EC, FAO, Land O' Lakes, GATF, IFC, IICA, IPPC, OIE, USAID, US FDA, UNIDO, WBG, WTO, Current/former STDF developing country representatives, STDF Secretariat
P-IMA	3	35	AGRA, CAHNSA, CABI, COLEACP, COMESA, EIF, ERDSC, IICA, IFC, TMEA, Winrock International (B-Safe project, The Philippines), UNIDO

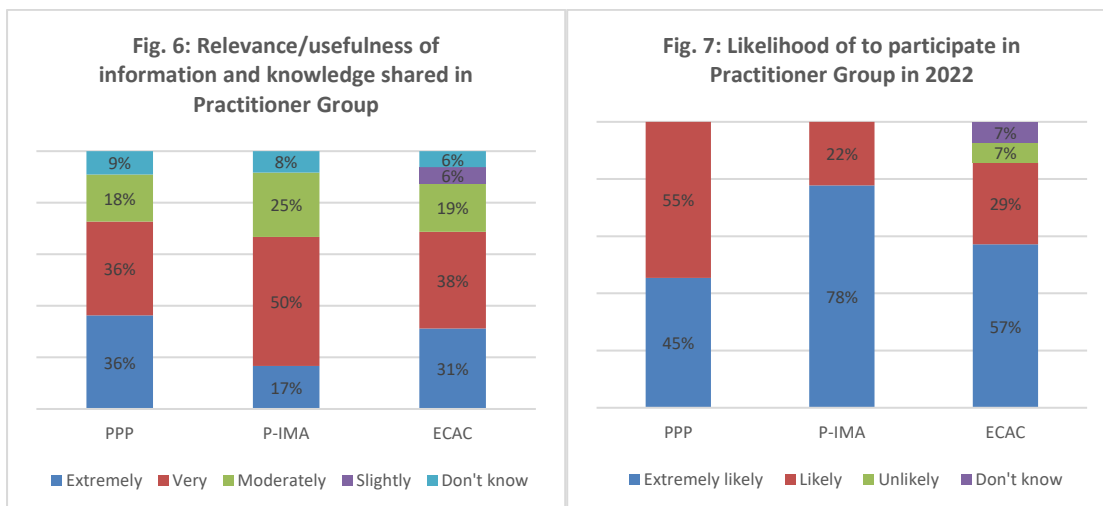
21. **MEETING STRUCTURE:** The format and structure of the meetings is generally consistent across the three Groups. In most cases, a presentation by one of the members (arranged in advance) is followed by a discussion. Some of the Groups have deviated slightly from this format. For instance, while the PPP Group initially included presentations, the last meeting was set up as a panel discussion with two speakers and no PowerPoints. The P-IMA Practitioner Group organized a "master class" on P-IMA, which comprised a detailed lecture on P-IMA. To date, the meetings have been moderated by the STDF Secretariat.

22. **LEVELS OF SATISFACTION:** Based on feedback received to the online surveys, overall respondents appear to be highly satisfied or satisfied with different aspects of the Practitioner Group meetings. Respondents of the PPP Practitioner Group report higher satisfaction levels in general, followed by the P-IMA and ECAC Groups. In general, survey respondents rate the Groups highly on the organization and planning. Duration and frequency of meetings are identified as areas where satisfaction is relatively lower, across the three Groups.

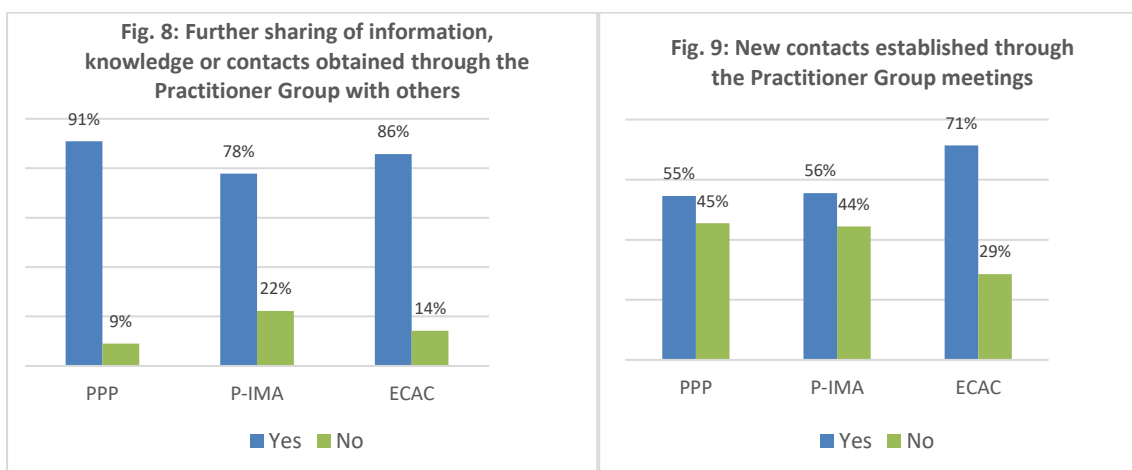




23. **RELEVANCE & USEFULNESS:** Respondents to the online survey were asked to rate the relevance and usefulness of the content shared through the Practitioner Group meetings to their own work. Overall, as shown in Fig. 6, over two thirds of participants of all the Groups rated the content shared as extremely or very relevant/useful, with some minor variations. The perceived value of the Practitioner Group meetings is further reflected in the question which asked participants to comment on the likelihood that they would contribute to participate in the Practitioner Group in 2022 (Fig. 7).



24. **DISSEMINATION & NEW CONTACTS:** Respondents to the online survey were asked whether they shared any of the information, knowledge and/or contacts obtained through the Practitioner Group with others in their organization or wider network. Feedback on this question (Fig. 8) underlines the very practical role of the Practitioner Groups in promoting wider dissemination of information and knowledge shared in the Practitioner Groups. Respondents to the survey pointed to the value of the Practitioner Groups in enabling them to make new contacts of relevance to their work (Fig. 9).



25. **STRENGTHS; WEAKNESSES; OPPORTUNITIES & THREATS (SWOT):** The SWOT analysis framework was used to assess the existing (internal) strengths and weaknesses, as well as the (external) opportunities and risks for each of the three Practitioner Groups, based on responses to the online surveys and discussions in the focus groups. Table 2 below attempts to summarize key strengths weaknesses, opportunities and threats across the three groups. Annex 2 sets out a separate SWOT analysis for each Group.

Table 2: SWOT Analysis for the Practitioner Groups

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive and diversity of participants • Depth of knowledge and experiences shared (including concrete, practical examples) • Experience sharing, networking with new people who share similar goals • Learning from others in different organizations about innovative approaches • Learn about STDF interventions and how we can work better together • Well-organized • Identifying and finding solutions to shared challenges, drawing on diverse perspectives • Interesting guest speakers and cross-pollination of experiences • Participants welcome in their personal capacity with no requirement for official/formal representation 	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorm ideas for development of new knowledge, tools • Identify strategic topics for future work • Identify and develop new collaborative activities with other members (e.g. deeper dive on topics to co-create new guidance, simple tools on the topic that would be valuable to several members) • Find new ways to encourage more active knowledge exchange • Find synergies to create more value and results • More monitoring of how information shared is used to better understand impacts • Clarify linkages of work of the Practitioner Group with larger initiatives (e.g. food systems, AfCFTA) • More engagement with private sector
<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited news between meetings • Lack of clear direction and clarity on goal of meetings (and Practitioner Group in general) • Lack of a targeted approach • Absence of non-Zoom interaction and on-site meetings • Sometimes hard to see how the experiences shared by others are directly applicable • Differences in participation across members • Limited active listening among participants in some meetings 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection issues (limits participation from developing countries) • Zoom fatigue • Challenges of other work-related activities and responsibilities • Proliferation of virtual meetings • Challenges to find a meeting time given spread of participants across different time zones • Time (members, STDF Secretariat) to actively prepare for, participate in and contribute to activities carried out collectively by the Group

26. **CLI NETWORK ENABLERS:** Responses to selected questions in the online survey were scored on the basis of dimensions of the "network enablers" in the CLI Compass. The purpose was to identify how members of each Practitioner Group perceived the current strengths and future possibilities of their Group according to the network enablers: Purpose-Building Narratives; Dynamic Structures; Novel Pathways; Value Creation; Dialogic Exchange; and Contextual Impact. The following charts outline the findings.

27. This analysis generated a strong assessment for each of the Practitioner Groups on current strengths, based on the "network enablers" in the CLI Compass, as illustrated below. Overall, the three Groups achieved above-average scores (about 4 out of 5) as illustrated below, pointing to the strengths of the Practitioner Groups, as perceived by the survey respondents. Overall, the PPP Practitioner Group scored a slightly higher average (4.4) across the six network enablers, as compared to the P-IMA Practitioner Group (4.2) and ECAC (4.1)

28. Analysing the scores in more detail, the PPP Practitioner Group scored particularly well on purpose-building narratives (showing the linkages between the PPP Group and the STDF's outcomes, goal and contribution to the SDGs) and value creation (atmosphere of mutual respect, and diverse perspectives in the discussions). The P-IMA Group scored best on novel pathways (shares good practices, space for discussion, creation of innovative solutions) and value creation (mutual respect, diverse perspectives, open environment, cultivates reflection) standing out. The ECAC scored particularly well on value creation (reflecting its open environment, mutual respect, diverse perspectives, cultivates reflection), novel pathways (reflecting the sharing of good practices, knowledge) and dynamic structures (reflecting its role in enabling dialogue).

Figure 10: Current Strengths of PPP Practitioner Group using the CLI Network Enablers (on a scale of 1-5)⁵

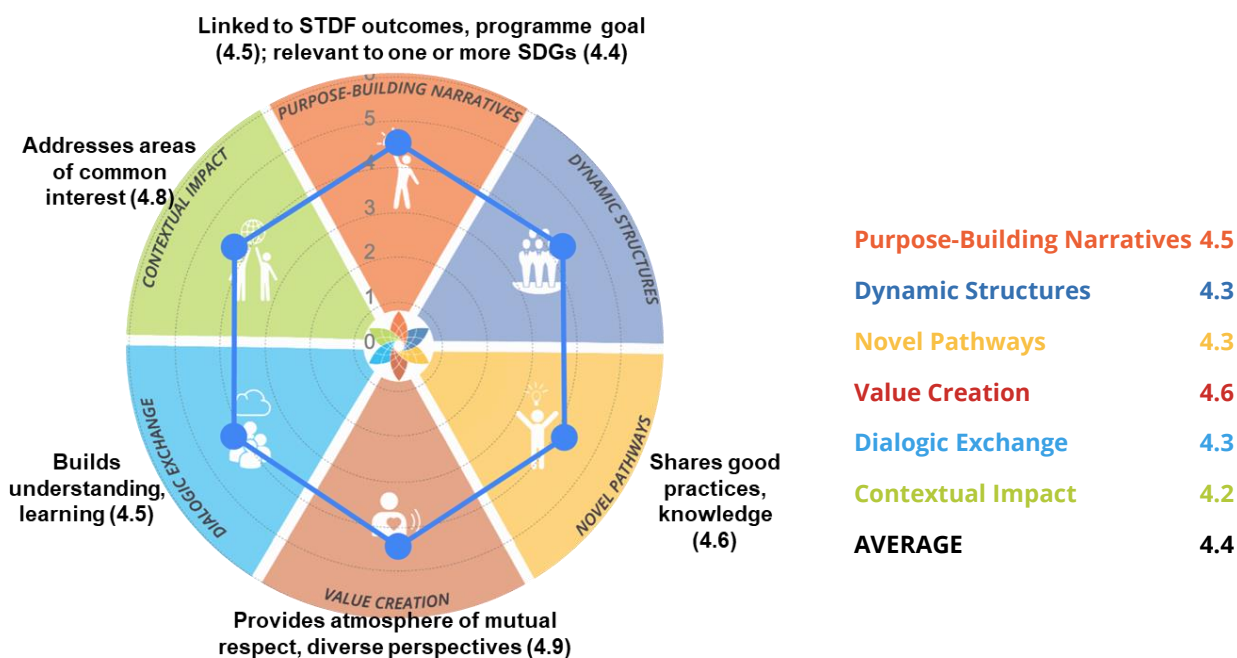
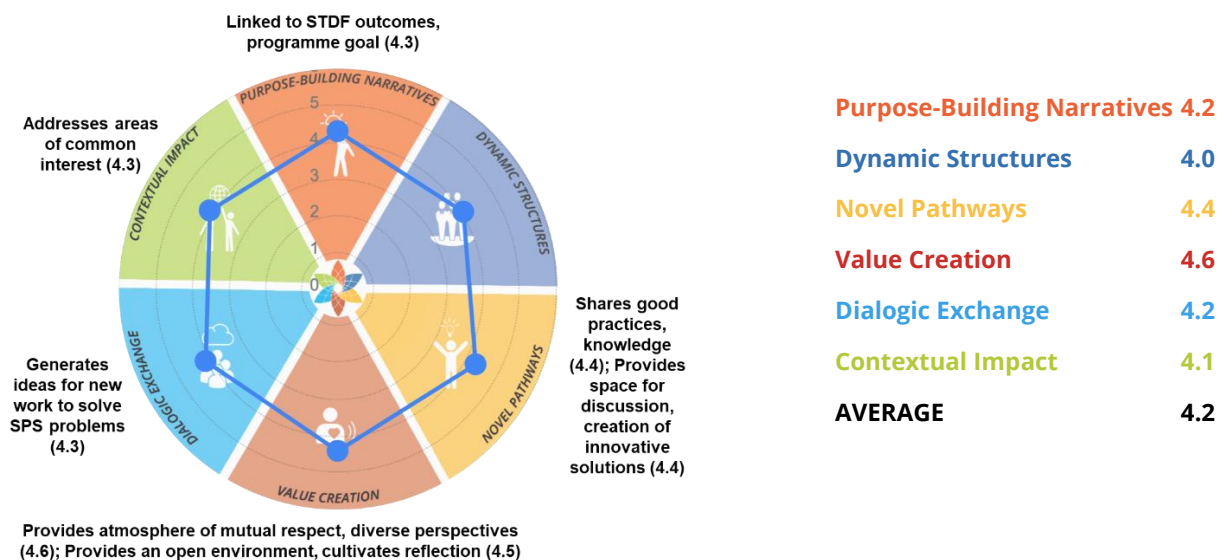
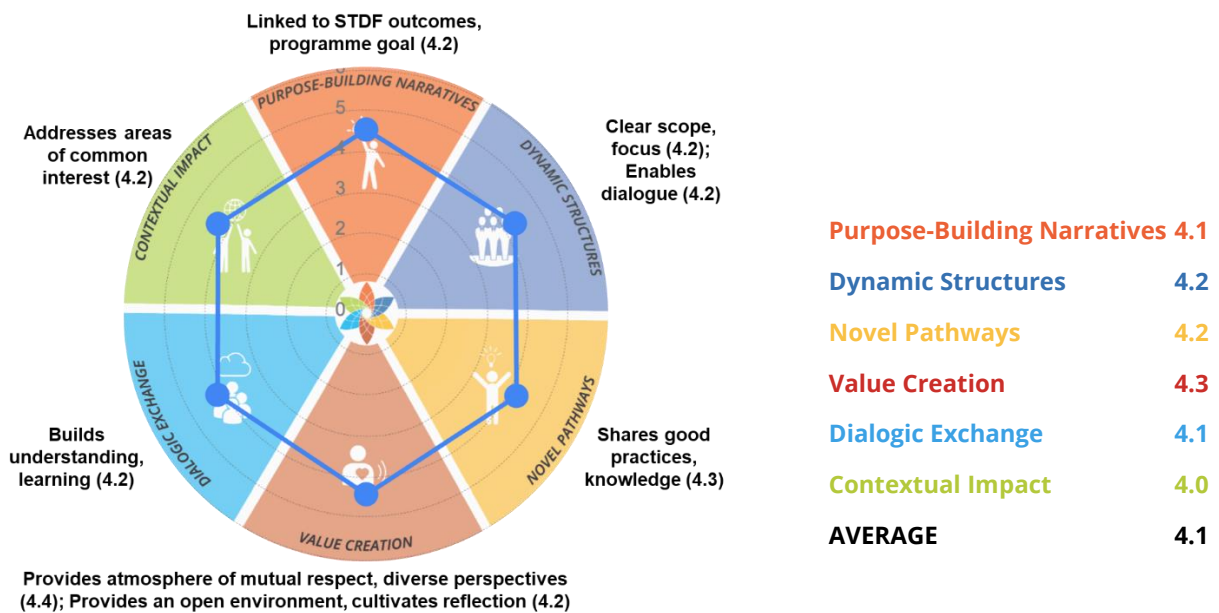


Figure 11: Current Strengths of P-IMA Practitioner Group using the CLI Network Enablers (on a scale of 1-5)

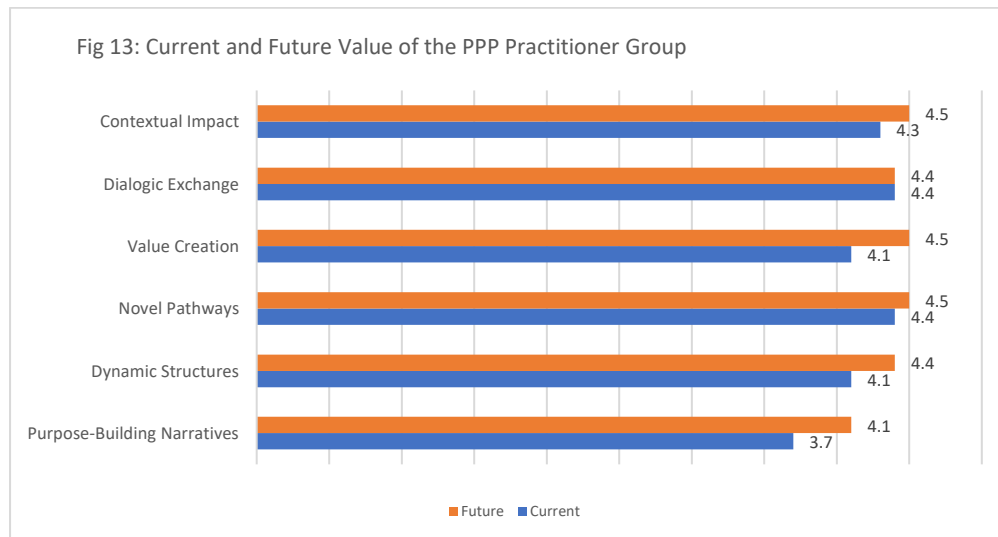


⁵ The text around the edges of the pie refers to additional comments provided by survey respondents. The number in brackets refers to the average score for questions in this category in the online survey.

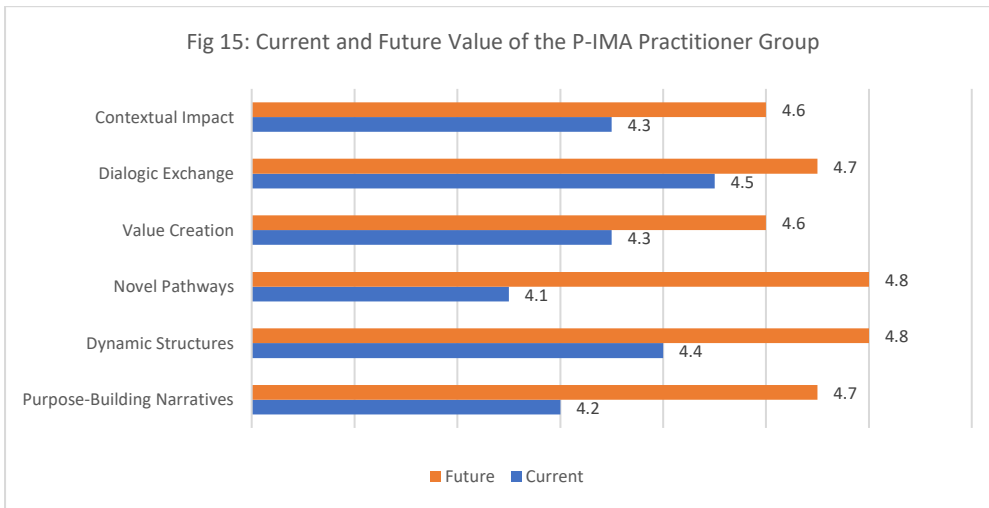
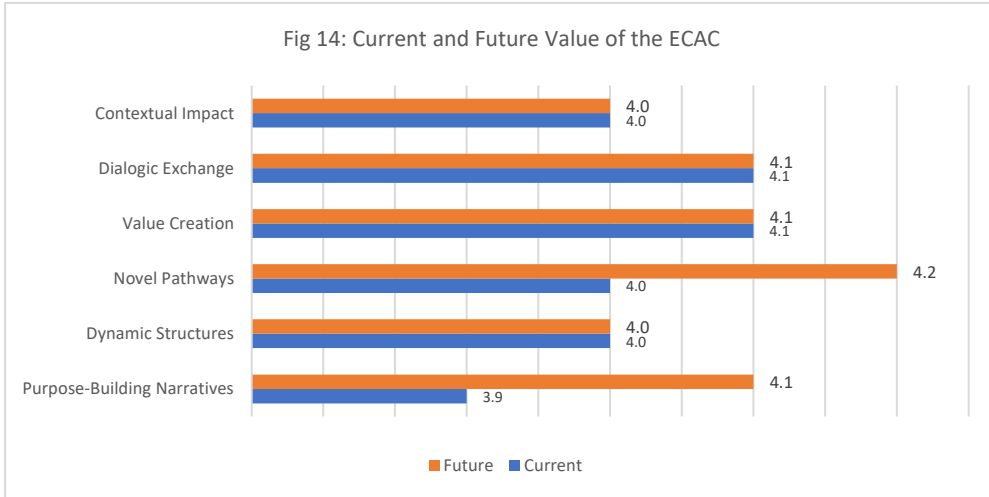
Figure 12: Current Strengths of ECAC using the CLI Network Enablers (on a scale of 1-5)



29. The CLI network enablers were used to obtain views of the Practitioner Group members on the current and future value they expect to draw from the Groups, based on the network enablers. Figures 13-15 illustrate the current and desired/expected future value of survey respondents for the Practitioner Groups. The findings show that survey respondents currently find value in different areas of the Groups. They also point to areas where members would like to draw more value in the future.



30. For instance, for the PPP Practitioner Group, there are opportunities to increase value related to the Group's purpose, structure and value creation. For the ECAC, there are opportunities to increase value related to purpose building pathways and value creation. Responses to the P-IMA survey show that members of this Group desire to draw greater value from it in all areas.



31. Figure 16-18 below illustrate where Practitioner Group members would like to see more value. PPP survey respondents wish to see more future value related to purpose-building narrative, novel pathways, value creation and contextual impact (with an average of 4.4 for all the network enablers). Respondents to the P-IMA survey have identified future value in several areas, particularly dynamic structures, novel pathways, purpose-building narrative and dialogic exchange (with an average of 4.7 for all the network enablers). Respondents to the ECAC have identified future value in areas including purpose-building narrative, value creation and dynamic structures (with an average of 4.1 for all the network enablers).

Figure 16: Future Value of the PPP Practitioner Group using the CLI Network Enablers (on a scale of 1-5)⁶

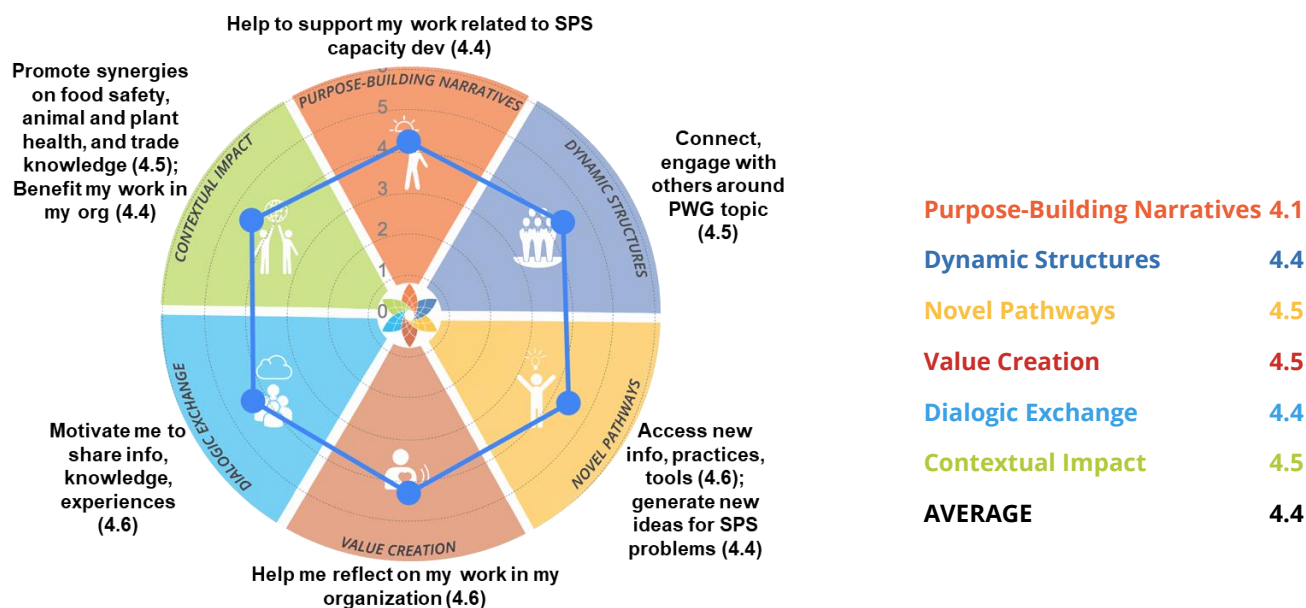
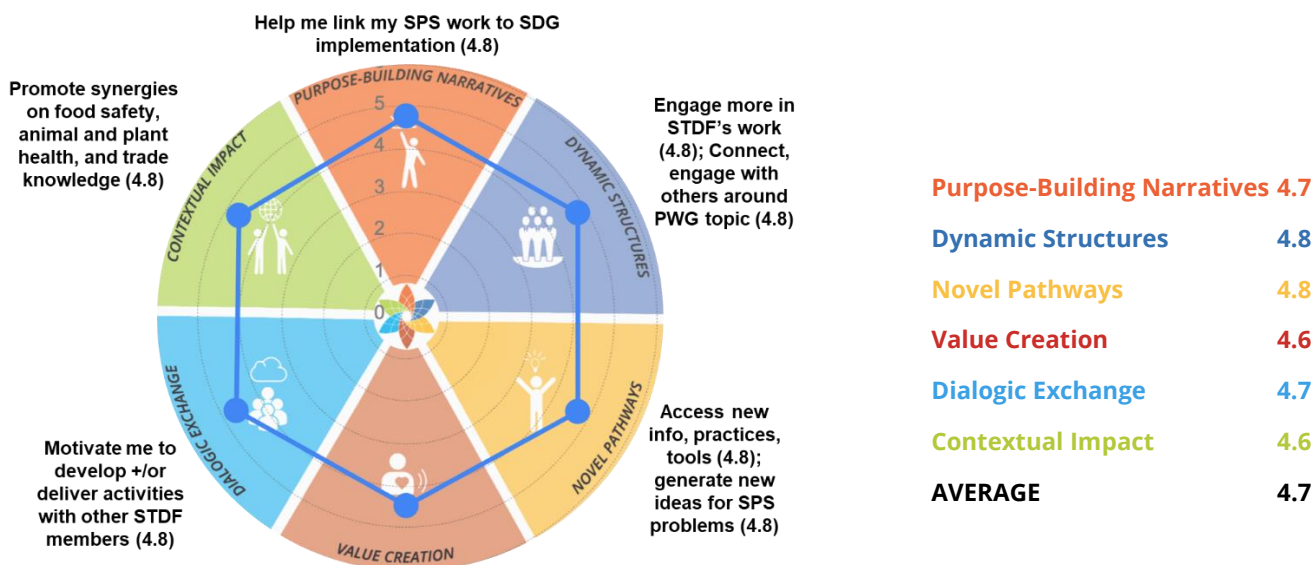
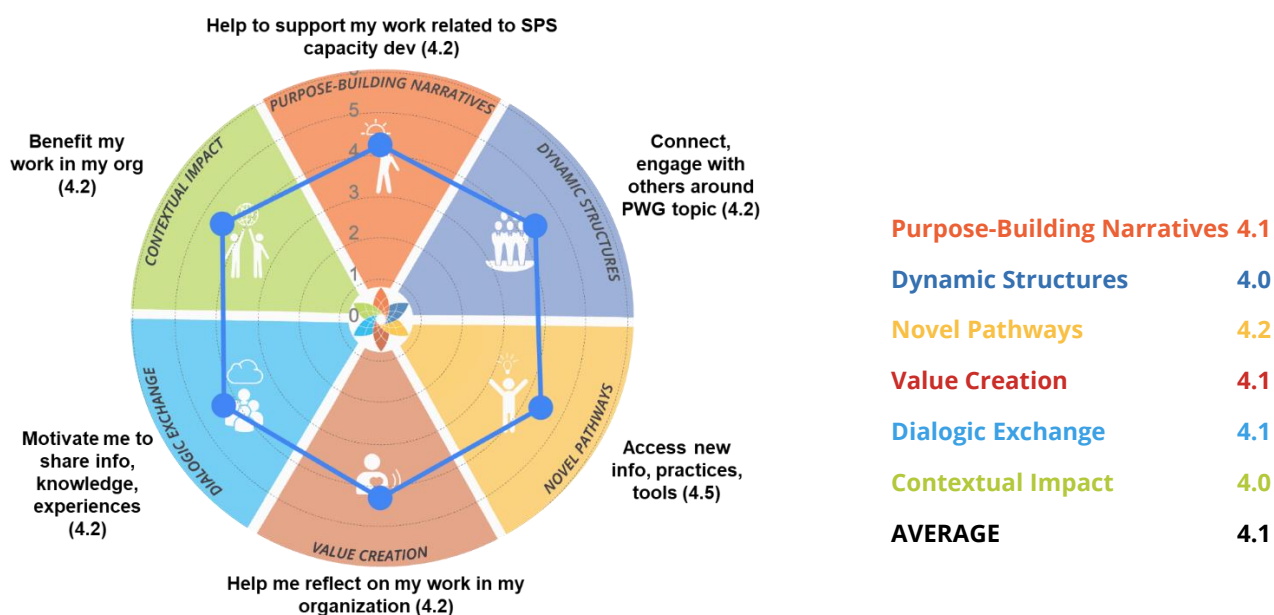


Figure 17: Future Value of the P-IMA Practitioner Group using the CLI Network Enablers (on a scale of 1-5)



⁶ The text around the edges of the pie refers to additional comments provided by survey respondents. The number in brackets refers to the average score for questions in this category in the online survey.

Figure 18: Future Value of the ECAC using the CLI Network Enablers (on a scale of 1-5)



VI. KEY CONCLUSIONS

32. Since they were launched in 2020, the three Practitioner Groups have succeeded in mobilizing a relatively large number of participants from STDF Working Group members, as well as organizations implementing STDF projects and PPGs, and other organizations involved in SPS capacity development. While still relatively new, the Practitioner Groups appear to be evolving as Communities of Practice (CoP)⁷ that connect STDF members and others on knowledge topics across organizational boundaries in a way that enables members to address areas of shared interest, to share good practices, knowledge and experiences in an atmosphere of mutual respect, build understanding and promote learning.

33. Initial experiences indicate that – while the Practitioner Groups are still relatively new and can still be further improved – they contribute to synergies and collaboration that can help to drive catalytic improvements in SPS capacity in developing countries (STDF Outcome 1), as well as increased access to and use of good practices and knowledge products at global, regional and national level (STDF Outcome 2).

34. The assessment confirms the current strengths and expected future value of the Practitioner Groups for many of the members. This reflects feedback already shared by some members during the STDF Working Group, and/or directly to the STDF Secretariat. For instance, some Working Group members have shared examples of how the Practitioner Groups have provided access to new knowledge, facilitated the emergence of new collaborative activities, and/or provide content to inform their own work. For instance, the OIE representative of the PPP Practitioner Group indicated that "Experiences shared through the PPP Practitioner Group were instrumental in developing the OIE's partnership strategy and processes. The meetings were valuable to cross-pollinate experiences and ensure our activities potentially synergize." IFC and UNIDO collaborated on an IFC/UNIDO Learning Week for the Bangladesh Food Safety Authority in 2021, with the IFC representative indicating that the idea for this collaboration emerged during participation in STDF meetings.

⁷ Communities of practice (CoPs) are defined as a group of people who "share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly". Etienne and Beverly Wenger-Trayner. 2015. ["Introduction to communities of practice - A brief overview of the concept and its uses"](#).

35. The assessment also highlighted some aspects of the Practitioner Groups where members consider that improvements could be achieved. Some of these relate to questions or concerns previously raised by Working Group members (e.g. understanding about the objectives, issues related to the time and inputs required, etc.). While the Working Group has agreed on Terms of Reference for the e-certification, and concept notes were prepared for the P-IMA and PPP Groups, participants in the internal assessment identified opportunities to achieve more clarity in the role and expectations of these Groups, including the expected concrete deliverables (if any) beyond simply facilitating an exchange of information. Effectively achieving these improvements and expectations will require additional inputs and resources (time) from the members of the Practitioner Groups, as well as the STDF Secretariat in its role as a support for the work of the Groups.

36. Participants in the focus group discussions identified opportunities for their Practitioner Group to move beyond sharing information and experiences to work collaboratively on the creation of practical new knowledge products. For instance, members of the PPP Group identify an opportunity to develop guidance on how to develop SPS-related PPPs in the PPP Practitioner Group. Members of the ECAC have identified an opportunity to work collaboratively on development of a tool on e-cert readiness for SPS authorities.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

37. The focus group discussions generated several recommendations targeted at each of the Practitioner Groups. These are summarized below:

Recommendations for enlivening collaboration in the PPP Practitioner Group

- **Dynamic structures:** Review the meeting agenda to identify key questions for consideration by members with a shared agenda (from the perspective of different public/private stakeholders). Innovate with new approaches to encourage brainstorming and deepen interactions and exchange within the Practitioner Group, for instance via the use of breakout rooms to encourage a more intentional conversation across more members.
- **Novel pathways:** Use the Practitioner Group to identify, analyse and learn from different scenarios utilized by different stakeholders to develop PPPs. Identify opportunities to replicate PPP approaches.
- **Value creation:** Identify specific topics and/or key questions on PPPs of interest to members where multi-stakeholder dialogue and collective knowledge can facilitate a "deeper dive" that leads to new knowledge and learning. Engage stakeholders involved in implementing relevant STDF projects (with PPP aspects) in this work to learn from their specific cases as examples.
- **Dialogic exchange:** Deep dive into practical PPP examples to generate insights and learning about what works to develop, implement and sustain PPPs, benefitting from the collective intelligence of members.
- **Contextual impact:** Contextualize and frame the PPP discussions in a broader context linked to other relevant initiatives at global, regional and/or national level.

Recommendations for enlivening collaboration in the P-IMA Practitioner Group

- **Purpose-building narrative:** Clarify and strengthen linkages with other larger transformations and initiatives (e.g. SPS Policy Framework for Africa, CAADP) to leverage additional resources for SPS capacity development.
- **Dynamic structures:** Consider how to engage government ministries and departments responsible for finance and planning into conversations on P-IMA. Make stronger links in the Practitioner Group to country/regional experiences on P-IMA to promote learning. Identify specific topics of Practitioner Group meetings (e.g. decision criteria, different methods to use P-IMA to encourage more substantive dialogue and learning. Better and more advance planning of meetings.
- **Novel pathways:** Encourage out-of-the-box thinking not only anchored on the use of P-IMA (alternative risks related to SPS measures). Better communicate the results, experiences and lessons of P-IMA use in different settings to promote wider learning.
- **Value creation:** Use P-IMA's evidence-based approach to encourage participation from both the public and private sector after the utilization of P-IMA. Enable experts who have used P-IMA in one country/region to share their knowledge and experiences with others involved in new P-IMA applications.

- **Dialogic exchange:** Identify alternative tools/platforms to facilitate communications among members of the Practitioner Groups, in-between meetings. Offer more training on P-IMA in the Group to encourage more consistent knowledge and skills across members. Better linkages between the Group's meetings and work on P-IMA at the country/regional level.
- **Contextual impact:** Use the multi-stakeholder participation facilitated through the P-IMA approach to promote linkages with larger transformations and multi-stakeholder initiatives, including One Health, continental/regional SPS capacity development initiatives and process in Africa, building on relationships with the AUC and organizations like Akademiya2063.

Recommendations for enlivening collaboration in the ECAC

- **Purpose-building narrative:** Review and clarify the objective of ECAC to enable the Group to more fully address opportunities to advance collective work and promote further harmonization of approaches on SPS e-certification. For instance, as a first step, consider a survey to identify the main problems faced by traders and consider how ECAC could apply the collective intelligence of its members to promote the wider use of e-certification to address such challenges.
- **Dynamic structures:** Set-up more regular meetings and ensure more clarity on upcoming meetings and plans. Encourage more involvement of members in planning and agenda-setting. Consider having different members chair ECAC meetings on a rotating basis.
- **Novel pathways:**
 - Setup smaller sub-groups within ECAC to advance substantive work on specific topics or activities (that link back to ECAC's purpose and are connected to the STDF Working Group).
 - Host specific ECAC sessions to discuss and take stock of innovations on SPS e-certification, and document the findings. Carry out further analysis on the costs and benefits of exchanging e-Phyto certificates and draw experiences and lessons that may be relevant for the electronic exchange of food safety and animal health certificates.
 - Consider the development of a new project to pilot and learn about options for increased integration and harmonization on e-certification across the SPS area.
 - Use ECAC to facilitate public-private dialogues (including with donors) on the value of SPS e-certification.
- **Contextual impact:** Identify opportunities to link e-certification to larger transformations beyond trade (e.g. food fraud) where digitalization is also likely to add value.

38. Building on the brainstorming in the focus groups, the following recommendations may be envisaged to improve the organization and delivery of the three Practitioner Groups under the remaining period in the STDF Strategy.

- I. Purpose and expected deliverables of the Practitioner Groups
 - i. Review and clarify the objective of the three Practitioner Groups, based on an open discussion with relevant members. This discussion should address and clarify whether the Group exists to share information and experiences, or whether it would also in the future seek to develop collaborative work among interested members on a specific knowledge product.
 - ii. As part of this process, consider the Group's membership and whether it is appropriate (too wide/diverse, not wide/diverse enough) given the objective, and if/how some or all members will be involved on any such particular knowledge product. To facilitate any such work, it may be that some members decide to come together to work on a particular product, and seek inputs from the wider Group at key points (e.g. as a peer review to get feedback, discuss challenges, etc.).
 - iii. Discuss and clarify expectations related to roles and responsibilities of members of the Groups and the STDF Secretariat. For instance, consider ways to enable greater involvement of members of the Practitioner Group in the planning and delivery of the Group (see also below).
 - iv. In cases where Groups decide that they would like to carry out joint work on a new knowledge product or tool, it will be essential to agree on the expected deliverable, and the processes and expectations to achieve this, including the role and responsibilities of (which) members.

- II. Planning, organization and delivery of meetings
 - i. Review the ideal frequency and duration of meetings.
 - ii. Create a schedule for planned Practitioner Group meetings over a 12-month period so that all members are aware about the planned schedule topics to be addressed, etc.
 - iii. Clearly identify the purpose of each meeting.
 - iv. Make the meetings more interactive and participatory (using breakout groups to enable more members to participate). Consider opportunities to hold some meetings of the Practitioner Group in person (possibly on the margins of an STDF/other meeting), subject to interest, expected added-value and resources of members to travel, etc.
 - v. Consider how to better share roles and responsibilities across the Practitioner Groups so that members feel and assume more ownership of the process. For instance, request one member to lead on the agenda and/or moderation of the Practitioner Group meetings, in consultation with the STDF Secretariat (so that meetings are not always moderated and facilitated by the STDF Secretariat as currently happens).
 - vi. Where relevant or seen as useful, consider organizing smaller meetings or sub-groups with those who are committed to share their time and expertise to take forward new collective and substantive work in a more efficient and practical way (e.g. on new knowledge products linked to the objective of the Practitioner Group). These smaller Groups could update the larger Practitioner Group on their progress, and share any draft documents, guidance, etc. produced for review and feedback by other members of the Practitioner Group.

- III. Follow-up to Practitioner Group meetings and ongoing engagement
 - i. Consider if there is a need to use any online tools, platforms (e.g. GoogleDrive) to facilitate and enable engagement and collaboration in-between the Group meetings, particularly if a Group decides to take forward work on some collaborative activity.
 - ii. Consider the process to report on the Practitioner Group meetings, and how this could be simplified (it was not clear during the assessment whether members ever visit the content on Practitioner Groups on the STDF website).

VIII. NEXT STEPS

39. Working Group members are invited to share any comments or suggestions on the findings of the draft assessment report. The draft report is also being shared with members of the Practitioner Groups (including participants in the focus group discussions) for comments and feedback. As a next step, it is proposed that each Practitioner Group discuss the draft findings and recommendations in more detail, in order to determine which recommendations they may wish to address in the short and medium-term, and how to do this in practice.

ANNEX 1: Participants in the Focus Group Discussions for the Practitioner Groups

PPP Practitioner Group Focus Discussion

1. Rolando Alcala (WTO)
2. Sarah Brunel (IPPC Secretariat)
3. Delilah Cabb (Belize, former STDF developing country expert)
4. Isabelle Dieuzy-Labayé (OIE)
5. Natalia Fernandez-Cedi (UNIDO)
6. Mumbi Gichuri (AGRA)
7. Jean Kamanzi (STDF PPG Consultant)
8. Kelly McCormick (US FDA, STDF Working Group Chair)
9. Gabor Molnar (UNIDO)
10. Suzanne Neave (CABI)
11. Rolf Schoenert (Independent consultant)
12. Morag Webb (COLEACP)
13. Marlynne Hopper (STDF Secretariat)
14. Roshan Khan (STDF Secretariat)
15. Simon Padilla (STDF Secretariat)

P-IMA Practitioner Group Focus Discussion

1. Isaac B. Gokah (AGRA)
2. Spencer Henson (University of Guelph, Canada)
3. Fatima Kareem, Akademiya 2063
4. Mary Lucy Oronje (CABI)
5. Chiluba Mwape (SADC)
6. Ruben Sarukhanyan (ERDSC, Armenia / STDF PPG Partner)
7. Ramon Clarete (Winrock International, The Philippines)
8. Vinod Pandit, CABI India
9. Walter Hevi CABI)
10. Christopher Worrel (Bahamas Agricultural Health and Food Safety Authority, BAHFSA)
11. Marlynne Hopper (STDF Secretariat)
12. Roshan Khan (STDF Secretariat)
13. Simon Padilla (STDF Secretariat)

ECAC Monday 11 April, 15.00-16.30 CET

1. Tom Butterly (GATF)
2. Constantin Ciuta (UNCTAD)
3. Craig Fedchock (IPPC Secretariat)
4. Bill Gain (World Bank)
5. Salehin Khan (CITES)
6. Ines Knapper (GATF)
7. Gabor Molnar (UNIDO)
8. Markus Pikart (UNECE)
9. Shane Sela (World Bank)
10. Rose Souza Richards (ISF)
11. Jacinta Mwau (IGTC)
12. Marlynne Hopper (STDF Secretariat)
13. Roshan Khan (STDF Secretariat)
14. Simon Padilla (STDF Secretariat)
15. Melvin Spreij (STDF Secretariat)

ANNEX 2: SWOT Analysis for the Practitioner Groups⁸

SWOT Analysis for PPP Practitioner Group

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge sharing platform • Role as network of practitioners to share ongoing/planned work on PPPs, as well as practical experiences and lessons, across many different organizations involved in STDF's global partnership • Members participate and share openly in their individual capacity (not pegged to organizational or official positions). This informal space facilitates dialogue and exchange that is not scripted, and inspires collaboration and learning. • Relevance and usefulness of the topics covered in the presentations and discussions • Breath and inclusiveness of PPPs on the agenda for meetings • Increasing guest speakers and cross-pollination of experiences • Well-organized, not-too-frequent and strong facilitator • Learning from others facing similar constraints and issues • Exposure to work of other organizations • Getting exposed to perspectives of experts in other organizations 	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record better how info shared in the Group is used • Create new resources and tools to support SPS-related PPP • Stronger social network • How to share PPP knowledge, resources down to PG level? (surgery to unlock bottlenecks) • Clarify and leverage linkages between PPPs and larger transformations (e.g. UN Food Systems approach, UN SDGs) • Opportunity to do a deeper dive into topical issues
<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content and pace of all presentations not consistent • Relevance of learning shared may not be aligned to work by all members 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenging workload reduces meaningful and active participation • Proliferation of virtual meetings • Limited Internet access/bandwidth in developing countries limits participation from developing countries

⁸ Based on responses to the online surveys and discussions during the focus group session.

SWOT Analysis for ECAC Practitioner Group

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expertise and knowledge of key stakeholders involved (STDF partners, national governments, donor-supported initiatives) with expertise on SPS e-certification. • Sharing experiences and lessons from e-Phyto to inform future work on e-certification for food safety or veterinary certificates. • Inclusive atmosphere welcoming diverse perspectives • Identifying and finding solutions to shared challenges, drawing on diverse perspectives • Leveraging scaling-up results of ePhyto via the STDF network • Demonstrate what's working, share lessons to support further work • Strong and active engagement of members of the ECAC 	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing interest in digitalization and e-certification at global, regional and national level (including in many developing countries) • Opportunities to pivot on different aspects / sub-themes of e-certification • Promote greater harmonization of e-certification processes. across food safety, animal and plant health to strengthen implementation of SPS measures in developing countries. • Growing demand from authorities in developing countries and development partners for new tools to support SPS e-certification (e.g. simple checklist for countries to assess if e-certification ready). • Finding synergies to create more holistic value and stronger results • Greater involvement of private sector in ECAC meetings and work •
<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of clarity among members on strategic role and focus – share information on SPS e-certification vs develop new collaborative activities that result in knowledge products, or both? • Inability to meet in-person 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time (members, STDF Secretariat) to actively prepare for, participate in and contribute to activities carried out collectively by the Group. • Growing membership may negatively impact ability of group to setup and deliver on substantive work (if group becomes too large to be practical)

SWOT Analysis for P-IMA Practitioner Group

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network for experience-sharing and learning on P-IMA approach • Inclusive, open membership with a wide geographic spread • Ability to speak freely and to share views (not pegged to official positions) • Brings together experts who have used P-IMA and others who have not, creating an opportunity for learning • Learning about STDF-supported work on P-IMA at regional/country level • Access to innovative approaches and ideas • Regional and continental organizations (AUC, Akademiya2063, RECs) have identified potential of P-IMA to inform policy-making and leverage support for SPS capacity development linked to AUC SPS Policy Framework and African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) 	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote new collaborations on P-IMA at country or regional level • Opportunities to share experiences on P-IMA across regions and to include more SPS practitioners from other regions for geographical balance • Share P-IMA reports and analysis via STDF website • Clarify how P-IMA contributes to food systems approaches and other cross-cutting topics (such as AMR) via use of P-IMA's to facilitate multi-disciplinary engagement across food safety, animal and plant health and trade) • Reach other stakeholders at the country/regional level who could advocate for and benefit from P-IMA (e.g. ministries/departments of planning, finance, etc.)
<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of physical interaction and limitations of Zoom for building strong relationships • Infrequent meetings • Dialogue is mainly among the same group of experts who have used P-IMA (many members in listening mode) • Limited news/updates in-between meetings • Absence of clear objective and direction • Limited attention to monitor results of using P-IMA at national/regional level 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges to organize meetings at a time that suit participants in different time-zones • Ability to engage members to share and contribute their time and expertise (beyond their own organizational roles and responsibilities)