

## STDF Working Group Meeting

Geneva, 6 – 7 November 2024

### Updates from UNIDO

- The upcoming EU-funded Africa Trade Competitiveness and Market Access (ATCMAP) project will be jointly implemented by UNIDO and ITC, with UNIDO entrusted to lead the Quality Infrastructure-SPS component across the five Regional Economic Communities (RECs). The project aims to enhance intra-African trade by harmonizing standards, improving quality infrastructure, and establishing efficient certification and accreditation systems. Key activities under UNIDO's leadership include strengthening SPS coordination mechanisms, developing electronic SPS certification systems, enhancing the skills of food safety inspectors, and implementing the voluntary third-party assurance (vTPA) approach.
- We have recently launched a project in the ASEAN and CPTPP regions funded by Australia's Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, which focuses on improving food safety regulatory outcomes through the strategic integration of digital solutions, data-driven approaches, and remote audit and inspection practices including electronic certification.
- UNIDO is set to launch a major food safety-focused project in Liberia, funded by the EU (€7 million). This holistic project tackles food safety issues at the micro, meso, and macro levels. Currently in its inception phase, it will officially launch by the end of November. FAO is subcontracted for Liberia's food control system assessment.
- In June this year, UNIDO organized a Dialogue on Benchmarking of Voluntary Third-Party Assurance schemes to address the absence of a global best practice governance framework for the vTPA system. The Dialogue led to the formation of two working groups: one focused on Benchmarking Requirements and the other on Benchmarking Processes. These groups, comprising over 50 partners from various sectors and organizations, are working together to develop a comprehensive global benchmarking system by next year.
- About the vTPA partnership platform, the new community we have for the Benchmarking will serve as the extended vTPA partnership Platform which will be open to any interested parties.
- UNIDO will host the Vienna Food Safety Forum from June 10 to 12, 2025. The focus will be on the latest developments, best practices and innovations in food safety, covering key topics such as traceability, food fraud, electronic SPS certification. An official invitation, along with further details, will be shared in due course.
- Finally, next week, on the 12<sup>th</sup> of November we will participate in the SPS Thematic Session on Monitoring International Standards, where discussions will focus on implementing vTPA principles and guidelines developed by CCFICS.