

MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

1 BACKGROUND

1. This document presents the elements of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework of the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF). It is the result of an ongoing consultative process involving STDF partners, donors, developing country experts and the STDF Secretariat. It represents a key element in addressing the recommendations of the third independent mid-term review (MTR) of the STDF completed in January 2014. The MTR specifically recommended a review of STDF's medium term strategy (2012-16) and a strengthening of the Results Based Management (RBM) framework to guide STDF's activities and become a useful tool for the Secretariat when managing the Facility.

2. This document takes the existing M&E activities of the STDF a step further by establishing a practical monitoring and evaluation system, which not only reports on activities, but also tracks progress in terms of achieving results. The document may be revised through a consultative process as needs arise or circumstances change to ensure its effectiveness and efficiency.

2 OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

3. Fundamental to STDF's M&E framework is its focus on results, rather than on activities and management. The objectives of the framework are to:

- track the results of the STDF and show to what extent objectives have been reached;
- provide feedback on the management of the Facility;
- provide the basis for communicating and reporting on STDF's achievements to internal and external stakeholders; and
- provide the basis for producing the annual or bi-annual work plans of STDF.

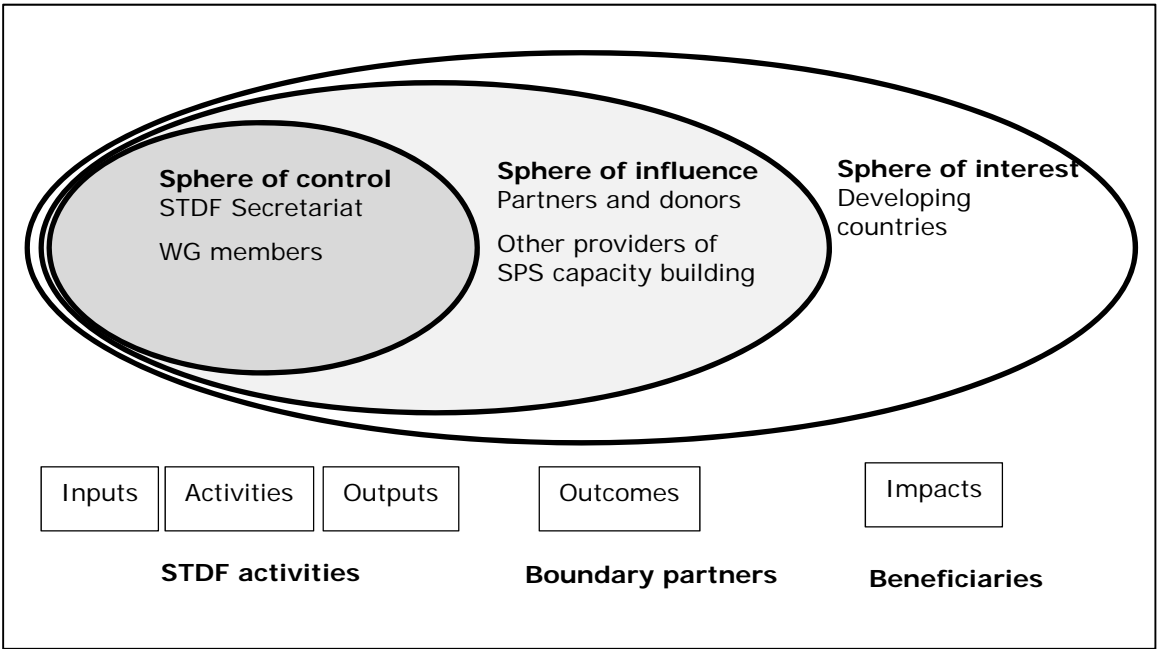
4. It is expected that the main parties interested in the information coming out of STDF's M&E framework are:

- the Policy Committee and Working Group of the STDF;
- current and future donors;
- stakeholders involved in SPS management and capacity building at national, regional and international levels;
- stakeholders interested in the results and best practice of Aid for Trade; and
- the STDF Secretariat.

5. When determining the scope and design of STDF's M&E framework, a starting point has been to consider the degree of control STDF has over the different levels of its results chain. The diagram below distinguishes between STDF's sphere of control (over which STDF has direct control), sphere of influence (in which STDF has only indirect control and needs to influence the behaviour of its boundary partners in order to reach its ultimate objectives) and sphere of interest (which includes the ultimate beneficiaries of STDF's activities). These three spheres correspond to the expected outputs, outcome and programme goal/vision of the STDF.

6. The STDF relies on a trust fund with limited financial means and a small Secretariat to manage its activities. This means that its sphere of direct control is relatively small and that the outputs need to be formulated accordingly. In contrast, STDF's sphere of influence is very wide. The STDF is founded on a global partnership among the key actors in SPS standard setting and capacity building, including STDF's five core founding partners - the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), the World Bank, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) – donors, developing country experts and other organisations and stakeholders with which STDF collaborates. They constitute STDF's boundary partners in the diagram below. STDF's sphere of interest is also very wide since it has a global mission to support developing countries in building their SPS capacity. Given the limitations of its sphere of direct control, this mission can only be fulfilled by working through and influencing the behaviour of the boundary partners.

Diagram: STDF's results-chain



7. Another aspect that has been considered when designing STDF's M&E framework is the high degree of complexity involved in its operations.¹ This complexity arises from the fact that building SPS capacities in developing countries relies on a multitude of factors and contexts, involve a high degree of uncertainty as to the link between causes and effects, and is influenced by multiple actors, perspectives and relationships. The indicators used in tracking progress need to be tailored to suit such a complex context, while taking into account the limited resources in the STDF Secretariat and ensuring that there is value for money.

3 STDF'S EXPECTED RESULTS

8. The priorities that guide the work of the STDF are set out in the medium-term strategy (2015-2019) of the Facility. These priorities have been operationalised into a logical framework (log-frame) matrix that includes STDF's vision, programme goal, outcome and outputs. The logical framework is annexed to the medium-term strategy.

9. Projects submitted and funded by the STDF should also include a proper log-frame matrix. The matrix should include the overall project goal and the expected lower-level results of the project. It should distinguish between the expected outputs and outcomes of the project. Indicators to measure progress at different results-levels should be included, as well as the key risks and

¹ For further references on monitoring in complex contexts see for example Ongevalle et al (2012), *Dealing with complexity through "actor-focused" Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation (PME)*, PSO Thematic Learning Programme on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation of Complex Processes of Social Change, and USAID (2013), *Complexity-Aware Monitoring*, Discussion Note.

assumptions. Projects may be subject to an external independent ex-post evaluation (2-3 years after project completion), if decided by the STDF Working Group.

10. Because of the diverse nature of the STDF-funded projects, no common mandatory result formulations or indicators have been identified for projects. Instead, a subjective assessment of the degree to which the projects have successfully reached their objectives will be made part of the M&E system presented below. The rating should reflect a realistic and candid assessment of the projects' achievements on the basis of project-specific data and information. The rating may be done by beneficiaries, external evaluators, the Working Group and/or the STDF Secretariat.

4 STDF'S MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEM

11. The core of STDF's M&E framework is a set of indicators at output and outcome level. In the selection of indicators, attention has been given to the availability and feasibility of data collection and compilation. Efforts have been made to keep the number of indicators low and their design simple in order to keep the monitoring system practical and cost-effective in view of the MTR's recommendation that any system developed should not put additional strain on the STDF Secretariat.

12. The indicators are included in the logical framework, annexed to STDF's medium-term strategy. Overall, no baselines or targets have been determined for most indicators. Instead, what is important is that the results and trends are analysed and commented upon. If there are obvious deviations from expectations, deeper investigation is necessary.

13. Assessing results at various levels requires different approaches in terms of the extent of data collection and analysis and the corresponding resources needed. It becomes more demanding to assess the contribution of the STDF higher in the results hierarchy, since more external factors come into play to achieve the desired results. For efficiency reasons, regular monitoring of STDF activities is confined to the output level and aspects of the expected outcome. Gauging STDF's contribution at impact level (programme goal, vision) will be left to external evaluations of the Facility.

14. STDF's M&E system consists of the following elements:

- Monitoring consists of collecting and analysing the data required to compile and assess the indicators of the STDF log-frame. The indicators will be reported in STDF's annual report. The annual report will be results-oriented and follow the basic structure of the log-frame. The annual report will include the following components:
 - (a) the contribution to the expected outcome of the STDF log-frame;
 - (b) the activities and outputs achieved under the relevant annual or bi-annual STDF work plan;
and
 - (c) the progress, final and evaluation reports on individual projects.
- Evaluations of STDF projects will be produced by external evaluators for a selection of projects in accordance with STDF's Operational Rules.
- Independent external evaluations of the Facility will be undertaken by an external reviewer, appointed by the WTO after consultation with the Working Group, at least every five years, normally to be concluded one year before the end of STDF's medium term strategy (unless decided otherwise by the Policy Committee). After circulation to and discussion in the Working Group and Policy Committee, the report will be made available in a public document circulated to the SPS Committee. Evaluations should focus on the extent to which the Facility has made a contribution to its programme goal and vision.

5 ROLES, RESOURCES AND LEARNING

15. The following actors are involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the STDF:

Policy Committee	Evaluate reports on progress of the Facility Consider the results of external evaluations of the Facility and make recommendations on appropriate actions
Working Group	Approve the annual report and work plans prepared by the Secretariat; Monitor STDF activities and implementation of work plans on an ongoing basis Prepare reports on progress for the Policy Committee
Partners	Provide strategic advice on the implementation of STDF's M&E framework Provide information as required to monitor the indicators of the STDF log-frame for compilation by the Secretariat
Donors	Provide information as required to monitor the indicators of the STDF log-frame for compilation by the Secretariat
STDF Secretariat	Prepare annual reports on achievements and the financial situation of the Facility Collect and analyse data including preparation and distribution of surveys