

23 June 2022 4th vTPA Partnership Platform	
Participants: Marlynn Hopper (STDF), Hyunjin Kim (WHO), Morag Webb (COLEACP), Benoit Gnonlonfin (ECOWAS), John Duffill (vTPA work on SAFEGRO project in Vietnam), Moslem Barak (ARAC), Marc Cwikowski (FSSC Foundation), Martha Byanyima (Land'O Lakes), Mario A. Vargas (IICA, implementing vTPA project in Belize and Honduras), Ismael Al-Basha and Shaïmaa Amasha (UNIDO, implementing vTPA project in MENA region), Gabor Molnar (UNIDO), Natalia Fernandez (UNIDO), Marie Michelle Sarr (vTPA NPC in Senegal).	
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of partners • Update on the project progress in pilot countries (West Africa, Central America, MENA region) • New project in East Africa • Round Table Discussion
Topic	Comments
Introduction	The discussion started with a round of introduction of the new partners. Hyunjin Kim from WHO, Benoit Gnonlonfin from ECOWAS and John Duffill from the SAFEAGRO project in Vietnam, joined the session for the first time.
Update on the project progress in pilot countries	<p>Mario Vargas from IICA updated on the progress of the vTPA project in Belize and Honduras in the last months, which included a survey to private sectors to check on the impact of COVID 19 in the sectors involved in the project, as well as to get information on their understanding and involvement with vTPAs. Mario informed also about the recruitment of a consultant to improve the communication about the activities of the project and the understanding of the vTPA programs to the government and private sectors.</p> <p>Shaïmaa Amasha from UNIDO, implementing the vTPA pilot project in the Arab region updated on the vTPA project there, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the formulation of the Arab technical working group with the membership of the relevant regional organization (AIDSMO & AOAD) , private sector (ARABFFI), the Arab Accreditation body (ARAC), the Arab Task Force on Food Safety (ATF) and selected countries (Egypt & Morocco). The group is now up and running. It is guided by the international expertise liaised by UNIDO and discussing the current status in the region, studying its readiness and what is needed to start adopting a regional framework for the vTPA. - a regional forum on the vTPA approach and modalities taking place at the end of August. The forum will bring together the Arab regulators representing the accreditation bodies, food safety competent authorities, along with the private sector, for an interactive workshop aiming at sharing theoretical and practical knowledge about the vTPA development and its implementation in other countries. More importantly, the forum shall allow touching base on the readiness of the region, what are the required preparations, who are the national and regional competent authorities to

	<p>join efforts with, as well as the appropriate approach to be adopted or customized for the Arab region. This will secure broader out-reach and will get more political and technical involvement from within the region.</p> <p>Natalia Fernandez from UNIDO presented the progress of the vTPA project in Mali and Senegal, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The conduct of the project steering committee meetings for Senegal and Mali in May in Dakar; - A 4-day in-person training in Dakar with the participation of 81 persons from the competent authorities and inspectors from Mali and Senegal, from companies producing or processing mangoes and other horticultural products, and from consulting firms supporting producers and processors with the preparation towards different certifications. The trainings were conducted in a conference room in Dakar on: vTPA guidelines by the international food safety management systems expert Cor Groenveld; on the FSSC 22000 programme by Marc Cwikowski, on the IFS programme by Joao Stein, and on the BRCGS programme by Alfredo Villalta, who presented virtually. Marc Cwikowski highlighted the awareness and interest that Senegalese producers and processors showed during the training, as well as the concerns and the limits due to certification costs. Joao Stein expressed in writing his enthusiasm at having the opportunity to train so many involved stakeholders and mentioned the challenges it can be now to develop resources (trainers, auditors, certification bodies etc.) for operationalization. - The development of a Model (Dummy) Food Safety Scheme, which is in its final phase and will serve to train regulators from Mali and Senegal on how to assess a vTPA. The training will take place during the second part of the year.
<p>Open discussion</p>	<p>New vTPA project: Marlynne Hopper from STDF reported on a recently approved project. This new vTPA pilot project, similar to the ones in Central America and West Africa, will be implemented in East Africa. It will be interesting to install an informal exchange across the different pilots from different countries and industries. The new project will be implemented in two countries by Land O'lakes, a non profit organization based in the USA with experience in vTPAs; in Rwanda it will be focused on the horticultural sector and in Uganda on the aquaculture sector. Martha Byanyima represents Land'O Lakes in the vTPA partnership platform.</p> <p>Upcoming coaching sessions: Gabor Molnar from UNIDO informed about the cooperation with Mexico and Canada to share experience and information on their vTPA programs. Sessions for regulators will be organized in the upcoming months and can be open to all vTPA pilot countries.</p> <p>Vienna Food Safety Forum: Gabor Molnar also announced that an agreement has been signed with the government of Australia on remote audits and inspection and that a Food Safety Forum will be organized in Vienna from 3-5 October 2022. Some of the pilot countries could assist in</p>

	<p>person or online during discussions. Rwanda and Uganda could also participate, as suggested by Marlynne Hopper.</p> <p>vTPA guidelines: Gabor Molnar announced that the translated vTPA guidelines will be available soon.</p> <p>vTPA recognition: Morag Webb talked about a request in the past to support with the creation of a regional scheme but that was more seen as a checklist. John Duffil, coordinating the vTPA work on SAFEGRO in Vietnam, talked about the local vTPA in Vietnam that was dropped. He and Mario Vargas mentioned the issue and difficulty to obtain information when having certificates recognized in one country, which have been granted by certification bodies coming from other countries. The need of local accredited certification bodies was emphasized by Gabor Molnar, who mentioned that this was one of the West Africa project's objectives, to engage the local consulting companies with the potential of becoming certification bodies in the future. A follow-up meeting with Morag Webb, John Duffill, Marlynne Hopper and UNIDO will be organized to continue discussions</p>
<p>Date for next vTPA platform</p>	<p>The date for the next vTPA platform remains open. Information will be sent in due time.</p>