

<b>23 February 2022</b>	
<b>3rd vTPA Partnership Platform</b>	
Participants: Marlynne Hopper (STDF), Morag Webb (COLEACP), Mike O’Neill (UK FSA), Colin Christmas (Eagle certification Group), Mario Vargas (IICA), Joao Stein (IFS), Martha Byanyima(Land O’Lakes), Jan Kranghand (LRQA), Fayçal Bellatif (Eurofins), Cor Groenveld (FSSC 22000), Daniela Apu (IICA), Moslem Barrac (ARAC), Alfredo Villalta (BRCGS), Marcel le Roux (IOSH), Brian Bedard (Alinea International), Kefilwe Moalosi (Nepad), Jon Murthy (BRCGS), Ali Badarneh (UNIDO), Gabor Molnar (UNIDO), Ismail Al Basha (UNIDO), Marie Michelle Sarr (NPC VTPA West Africa project), Natalia Fernandez (UNIDO)	
<b>Agenda</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of new partners</li> <li>• Brief update on the recently approved Principles and Guidelines for the assessment and use of vTPA by Mike O’Neill</li> <li>• Introduction of new vTPA project in the MENA region</li> <li>• Update on the project progress in the pilot countries</li> <li>• Upcoming field capacity building activities in West Africa</li> <li>• Potential engagement of partners for the pilot initiatives</li> <li>• Round table discussion on any other topic</li> </ul>
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	The discussion started with a round of introduction of the attendants. Colin Christmas, Moslem Barrac, Jon Murthy and Alfredo Villalta are new partners of the platform.
<b>Approved vTPA Guidelines</b>	Mike O’Neill, expert from the UK Food Standards Agency gave a brief update about the Principles and Guidelines for the assessment and use of voluntary third-party assurance programs finally adopted in 2021.
<b>New vTPA project in the MENA region</b>	Ali Badarneh announced that a new vTPA pilot project will be started in the MENA region to support ARAC member states to recognize third-party food safety certificates and track the performance of inspection services.
<b>Project progress in pilot countries</b>	<p>Mario Vargas from IICA updated on the progress of the vTPA project in Belize and Honduras including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Belize steering committee;</li> <li>- Risk based inspection meeting coordination and training;</li> <li>- Sector diagnostic survey for both countries;</li> <li>- Review of existing framework and national workshops.</li> </ul> <p>Natalia Fernandez from UNIDO updated on the progress of the vTPA project in Mali and Senegal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- steering committee for Senegal,</li> <li>- Risk based training and surveys for both countries;</li> <li>- Gender study for both countries.</li> </ul> <p>Regulators from both Central America and West Africa attended workshops where IFS, GlobalG.A.P., FSSC 22000 and BRCGS presented their scheme. In addition, food safety management systems expert, Colin Christmas presented his Top 10 predictions for auditing food systems in 2030.</p> <p>The UK Food standards Agency and competent authorities from Germany and the Netherlands presented the experiences and lessons learned from the use and recognition of vTPAs and answered questions raised by regulators from the pilot projects.</p>
<b>Upcoming field capacity building</b>	Natalia Fernandez informed about the activities and trainings to be organized in West Africa in the coming months, including a training on the ABCs of a scheme and potential in depth trainings on vTPAs by vTPA owners.

<b>activities in West Africa</b>	Ali Badarneh informed about the development of a dummy food safety scheme and related material that will serve for training purposes for regulators on how to assess a scheme. The development of a specific scheme for mango might follow depending on the interest from the mango associations and the possibility to upgrade a national or regional scheme for mango in West Africa.
<b>Potential engagement of partners</b>	Ali Badarneh called for ideas and contribution from the partners, emphasizing that half of the members have already collaborated in a certain way and opened the floor for questions and suggestions.
<b>Open discussion</b>	<p>Participants raised questions and commented on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The idea of implementing the vTPA project in West Africa and Central America was reinforced as a pilot programme to learn from, with a view to supporting local producers in complying with food safety standards and not just looking to export. Cor Groenveld from FSSC 22000 made reference to the global market programs that could be also approved by competent authorities if they agree.</li> <li>- In relation to the dummy scheme to be developed for West Africa, Ali Badarneh explained that this training material will consider a new scheme of cooperation between national inspectors and auditors of certification bodies. The idea of competent authorities inspectors accompanying vTPA auditors was supported by Mike O'Neill. Fayçal Bellatif from Eurofins and Jan Kranghand from LRQA expressed their interest to support with training for auditors especially from an assessment point of view and not inspection of a production line.</li> <li>- Ali Badarneh invited all participants to reach out to any other potential partners who share the same interest and commitment.</li> <li>- The idea of bringing WHO and FAO to the group was discussed as a possibility.</li> <li>- Bilateral meetings will be held as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Brian Bedard to discuss about ongoing project on mango in Vietnam and a possible collaboration with exchange of information and training material.</li> <li>- Fayçal Bellatif and Jan Kranghand to discuss possibilities to support in the upcoming activities in the pilot countries.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Date for next vTPA platform</b>	The date for the next vTPA platform remains open. Information will be sent in due time. In the meantime, bilateral or tripartite sessions will be organized to follow up on topics discussed during this platform.