

Project Title	Piloting the use of Third-Party Assurance (TPA) Programme in East Africa (Uganda and Rwanda) to improve food safety outcomes for public health and trade (STDF/PG/842)
Objective	<p>This pilot project seeks to drive up compliance with national food safety standards and regulations through better targeting of official resources to facilitate improved public health outcomes and trade opportunities.</p> <p>It will pilot, test, assess and learn how the voluntary Third-Party Assurance (vTPA) approach (set down in the Codex Guidelines) works in practice when implemented by government authorities in Uganda and Rwanda.</p>
Budget requested from STDF	USD699,013
In-kind contribution	USD189,444
Total project budget	USD888,457
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I. BACKGROUND & RATIONALE

1. Relevance for the STDF

This pilot project – developed through an STDF/PPG/665 – is of relevance to the STDF for several reasons:

- It will support implementation of the Codex Principles and Guidelines for the Assessment and Use of Voluntary Third-Party Assurance (vTPA) Programmes, developed by the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS).
- It focuses on testing, piloting and learning from the use of vTPA programmes to improve food safety outcomes in selected value chains in Rwanda and Uganda, complementing ongoing STDF regional pilot projects in West Africa and Central America. The vTPA approach aims to construct a modernized, risk-based regulatory system that is more agile and targeted, by integrating industry controls and data into regulatory plans in order to ensure the best use of available resources, and support improved outcomes. While some developed countries have moved in this direction and are making use of reliable data/information generated by vTPA programmes in different ways, this approach is not widely used in developing countries.
- It will generate practical experiences and learnings that can inform ongoing global discussions – with Codex, the SPS Committee and other Government to Government (G2G) and Government to Business (G2B) meetings – on a topic that has stimulated diverse (and differing) opinions, i.e. how in practice regulatory authorities in developing countries can cooperate with the private sector to improve food safety outcomes by leveraging vTPA programmes.
- It builds on previous work by the STDF (and STDF partners) on PPPs and is an excellent fit for STDF's role in piloting and learning from innovative, collaborative and regional projects involving diverse stakeholders.

Food business operators (FBOs) have the primary role and responsibility for managing the food quality and safety of their products and for complying with regulatory requirements relating to those aspects of food under their control. Competent Authorities require FBOs to demonstrate that they have effective controls and procedures in place to protect the health of consumers and ensure fair practices in food trade. As a result, many FBOs use quality assurance systems, including voluntary third-party assurance (vTPA) programmes, to reduce supply chain risks and confirm food safety outcomes.

Voluntary third-party assurance (vTPAs) programmes are formal, documented food safety systems to improve food safety outcomes. The Codex Committee on Food Import Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS) defines a voluntary Third-Party Assurance Programme as a "non-governmental or autonomous scheme comprising of the ownership of a standard that utilises national/international requirements; a governance structure for certification and enforcement, and in which FBO participation is voluntary".¹ In most cases, the private sector develops and manages these programmes.

Interest in the use and potential benefits of vTPA programmes has grown in recent years, as evidenced by the adoption of the Codex Guidelines on vTPA programmes in 2021. Some competent authorities are taking account of and/or using information and data generated by vTPA programmes to better inform their risk profiling of food businesses, inform the implementation of risk-based inspection and more effectively target resources within their national food control system. These trends started in developed countries. For instance, in 2017, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) issued a policy³ enabling CFIA to use the results of private certification schemes to inform its risk-based inspection activities. Private certification was identified as one of several factors that CFIA will consider in its modernized approach to risk-based oversight. In Europe, a principle of the EU's Official Control Modernisation Programme is that all available sources of information (including data from private assurance programmes) should be taken into account by regulators. The UK, The Netherlands, Belgium and France have piloted or implemented approaches to recognize certain private assurance programmes and integrate the results of certification into their risk-based national food control systems. The UK, for example, has introduced a reduced inspection frequency (earned recognition) for compliant members of approved assurance schemes in three areas: primary production (2006); dairy hygiene (2011) and animal feed (2014). In the United States, the Food and Drug Administration's Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA)² highlights the increased focus on PPPs.

Some developing countries have also taken steps to pursue greater collaboration with the private sector, including increased reliance on private assurance schemes. In Latin America, for instance, in 2017 the Mexican National Service of Health, Food Safety and Agro-Food Quality (SENASICA), announced a new public-private partnership that enables vTPA programmes to act under Mexican regulation in addition to the Certification of the official scheme. It has also resulted in the publication of a voluntary Mexican standard, allowing further recognition of GFSI⁴ benchmarked standards. In Africa too, there is growing interest in the use of vTPA programmes, reflecting increased awareness on the vTPA topic related to the new Codex Guidelines. Interest in the use of vTPA approach catalysed by STDF's work has been expressed by African countries participating in the WTO SPS Committee session on use of vTPA approaches.

Some stakeholders have pointed to the potential benefits (increased efficiencies, better targeting of resources for inspection, reduced inspections for better performing businesses, improved outcomes, etc.) of increased public-private collaboration including through reliance on vTPA programmes. Yet others have identified a number of important concerns (e.g. conflict of interest, free-rider problem, loss of transparency, unclear accountability). In the past, concerns were expressed in the SPS Committee that such schemes sometimes included standards that are more rigorous than Codex standards, increasing the cost of compliance and negatively affecting the ability of developing countries to trade, or that they promoted dual food control systems in developing countries. These issues were discussed in the aforementioned thematic session on the use of vTPA programmes for SPS Committee members in the SPS Committee's thematic session of 3 November 2020.

Following work in CCFICS (chaired by the UK, and co-chaired by Canada and Mexico), Codex adopted Guidelines on vTPA programmes on the 9th of November 2021 of the Codex Alimentarius Commission's virtual meeting.

These Guidelines provide a framework and criteria for assessing the integrity of and credibility of the governance structures and the reliability of data/information generated by such programmes to support national food control system objectives. The Guidelines are based on the premise that reliable vTPA information/data may be used in general to better risk profile sectors and in some cases individual FBOs. This may lead to smarter data-driven prioritization of official resources, while FBOs participating in robust vTPA programmes may benefit through an appropriate risk-based reduction in the frequency / intensity of regulatory controls (e.g. inspection, sampling). Conversely, poorly performing FBOs, or sectors, may be subject to increased official regulatory controls based on trends identified through the information/data shared by the vTPA owner.

The Guidelines do not oblige competent authorities to use vTPA programmes outcomes, nor do they mandate the use of vTPA data/information from FBOs. The Guidelines made clear that vTPA programmes certifying to a regulatory standard are out of scope. That in part addresses fears that the role of the competent authority is being privatised (or compromised) because in such circumstances, the competent authority that has authorised the third party should already have access to the information/data generated by that programme as it is in effect part of the official control system.

This project has been developed through an STDF project preparation grant (PPG). It complements regional projects to pilot the use of vTPAs in selected countries in West Africa (STDF/PG/665) and in Central America (STDF/PG/682), both approved in April 2020. Finalization of the project proposal for East Africa was delayed by the Covid pandemic. Restrictions were put on all travels and the development of the project had to be continued through desk work and Zoom meetings. This new virtual modus operandi created so many challenges that not all countries initially included in the pilot project were able to adapt. This was the case with Kenya which was very active during the face-to-face period of the preparation of the project but was later unable to participate in the planned virtual meetings and unable to provide the required information that at the end withdrew itself from the participation in the project.

The Codex guidelines remain relatively generic on how the relevant authorities can make use of the data collected. During the development of this project application and across CCFICS discussions, many questions were raised on the capacity of developing countries to participate in a constructive dialogue concerning vTPAs. These questions included: i) effectiveness of accessing the information that would be of interest to developing countries (confidentiality conditions); ii) cost/benefit analysis of participating in these vTPAs for the private sector (small and medium-sized enterprises); and iii) the possible impact on the private sector through using a form of public recognition of vTPA competences.

This project will help to discuss these issues and better understand the responses and options that exist for the competent authorities in Uganda and Rwanda. In addition to analysing these matters from the point of view of

competent authorities, it will focus on current and real constraints for the private sector involved in the pilot projects and possibly identify the gaps that may potentially be addressed by the adoption of vTPAs.

The East Africa pilot project tests the relevance and feasibility of the vTPA approach in a different linguistic and economic context to the STDF pilot projects in West Africa and Central America. Contrary to the West Africa region, the East African Community (EAC) represents one of the fastest growing regional economic communities in the world. The EAC is considered to have a more advanced integration model due to the fact that it is the only REC in Africa that operates a Customs Union with a Common External Tariff (CET). ECOWAS is still a Free Trade Area (FTA) and hasn't attained the EAC level of integration. Several investments and pilot projects from various partners (USDA, TIMEA, EU, WB, IFC, etc) to improve the capacity of member states and the private sector in food safety and SPS related projects are being implemented in this region. This presents an excellent opportunity to explore how the proposed pilot project could link and build synergies with current initiatives going in that region.

Moreover, this EAC pilot project is very timely as the EAC SPS protocol has just been ratified (September 2021) and both Rwanda and Uganda are currently undertaking reforms in food control systems. The proposed pilot will influence the many technical assistance projects that have been initiated to support food safety capacity building in the EAC, and generate learning that will have wider relevance for other countries in East and Southern Africa. Linkages with the STDF projects in West Africa and Central America, and the engagement of diverse public and private sector stakeholders, will provide a platform, linked to the STDF's mandate, to promote cross-regional public-private dialogue and learning. This will create a knowledge base and opportunities for wider impacts and scaling-up.

Finally, this proposed pilot project should be considered in the broader context of the implementation of the African continental free trade agreement (AfCFTA). As policy options for its implementation in addressing SPS challenges, the African Union Commission has developed the AU SPS Policy Framework and to operationalize it, three sectoral continental strategies were developed including the Food Safety Strategy for Africa (FSSA). This continental food safety strategy that was adopted at the Heads of states' February meeting of 2022 highlights the importance of a stronger collaboration between the regulators and the private sector to improve public health and trade outcomes and this proposed project will help achieve these stated goals.

2. SPS context and specific issue/problem to be addressed

Limited resources are a driver for regulatory modernization in many countries, and the vTPA approach proposed here helps to prioritize and better target that limited resource. In Uganda and Rwanda, the regulatory authorities responsible for food safety face a number of ever-increasing and critical challenges. The large number of small producers and FBOs needing regulatory oversight, and increasing demands and expectations regarding the safety, quality and reliability of food products on markets, many times exceed the capacities of the regulatory agencies. At the same time, the resources available to the public sector for food control are increasingly limited. As a result, inspection resources, for instance, tend to be targeted at exported products, with much less attention to companies producing for the local market, which are not inspected as regularly as they should be. With little official data available to food safety regulatory authorities, and no access to data generated by vTPA programmes, it is extremely difficult to profile food safety risks and businesses, and set inspection priorities accordingly, especially for FBOs that serve the local market. This creates a two-tier system, which benefits consumers in export markets at the expense of food safety in the domestic population.

The authorities in Rwanda and Uganda wish to explore the opportunities arising from the use of vTPA programmes to improve (not to replace or diminish) the national food control system. The use of vTPA is seen as a potential opportunity to move towards a better (more agile and targeted), modernized approach that allows greater coverage of the whole food control system on a risk-based approach. The food safety regulatory authorities have questions about how to do this in practice, about the different options that exist, possible risks and challenges, requirements, etc. While the competent authorities in the applicant countries have some experience of public private partnerships (including in animal health programmes and plant health activities), there is limited understanding on how this partnership would work in the food control system.

Additional queries from the regulators include which mechanisms would need to be in place to take account of and/or use information and data from vTPA programmes to better inform their risk profiling of food businesses,

inform the implementation of risk-based inspection and more effectively target resources within their national food control system. They would like to understand what this means in practice for their authority and the way it operates. This pilot project is seen as an opportunity to learn about the different models and options that exist, and to work with other food safety regulators to better understand how the CCFICS guidance can be relevant for – and applied in their countries.

With increasing demand of supply chains becoming more global and vertically integrated and from the perspective of the firm, vTPA programmes and related certification schemes are becoming significant features of international food trade and marketing. Their use is becoming more common in efforts to provide the necessary assurance of food safety and quality in complex supply chains. Whilst voluntary, some FBOs choose certification to vTPA programmes for commercial reasons to help facilitate and grow trade with an increased number of buyers. Certification provides the “burden of proof” that products meet certain standards. However, where multiple certifications are required by different buyers, leading to multiple audits, FBOs – especially the smallest ones – face additional costs. The Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) was created to help address this issue. GFSI's benchmarking system aims to foster harmonization and mutual acceptance of GFSI-recognized certification programmes across the industry, based on the principle of ("once certified, accepted everywhere").

Most large retailers and buyers require that their suppliers use vTPA programmes to improve traceability, standardization of products from a range of suppliers, and transparency of production processes. In cases where these retailers/buyers are present in developing countries, the parent company may be in a position to offer technical assistance to its subsidiaries, thereby enabling the smaller company to implement their standards as part of an internal process. In this case, the cost of compliance is not seen as a deterrent. However, in countries (like Rwanda and Uganda) where these large retailers/buyers do not have a physical presence in the country, smaller companies and suppliers bear the full burden of compliance, without any technical assistance or other support.

Selected value chains for the pilot project

The pilot project in Uganda and Rwanda will focus on selected sectors / value chains. These value chains – largely employing small and medium-sized producers in these countries – have their own challenges, including limited resources and capacity. This is representative of the food sector in developing countries, where SMEs constitute approximately 90% of FBOs. Strengthening the capacity of FBOs is therefore essential to ensure that food produced for human consumption is safe.

Uganda, the pilot project will be undertaken in aquaculture. The fisheries subsector contributes 2.5% to the National GDP, 12% to the Agricultural GDP and is a direct source of livelihood for more than 3 million Ugandans. In addition to being the leading supply of dietary animal protein in the country estimated at 50% of animal protein food. The industry through backward and forward linkages supports other sectors such as oil and petroleum, beverages, transport and airline industry. Fish contains omega-3 fatty acids which have health benefits including control of cholesterol levels in blood and can reduce the current heart and other health problems in the country. However, its per *capita* consumption is at 10 kg which is far below 18.5 kg as recommended by World Health Organization.

For the capture fish, while the value of exports has increased over the last 10 years, there is a general decline in volumes since 2005. This trend seems to be a consequence of declining catches, falling stocks, over-fishing, rampant harvest of immature fish, insufficient management and monitoring and expanse of both domestic and regional demand for food fish. Therefore, in the advent of declining wild stocks coupled with escalating demand for fish, aquaculture becomes the remedial tangible alternative to bridge the gap of both demand and overexploitation of the capture fisheries.

Aquaculture production is estimated to have increased from about 5,000 MT in 2004 to over 100,000 MT in 2014, representing an increase of some 16% per annum since 2000. The introduction of cage fish farming in the major water bodies and commercial fish farming in the country has boosted aquaculture production. The target is to raise production from aquaculture to 1,000,000 MT by 2025. The present production from aquaculture includes mainly production from small-scale fish farmers, emerging commercial fish farmers and stocked community water reservoirs and minor lakes. The prevailing business opportunities have created a

recent expansion in aquaculture, which has transformed about 30% of the ponds into profitable small-scale production units.

The aquaculture sector has attracted a significant number of local and foreign investors who can be supported to ensure mass production. However, the current challenges facing aquaculture mainly include: limited access to quality fish seed, feed and aquaculture extension services as well as start-up capital among others.

The design and implementation of Good Aquaculture Practices was identified as a priority option for investment in Uganda during P-IMA analysis carried out under the COMESA led regional project (STDF/PG/606), supported by the STDF in partnership with the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF).

Rwanda, the pilot project will be implemented in the Horticulture sector, which is an important part of the overall agriculture sector and economy. It is contributing about 29% of the national GDP and 68% of the labour force are employed in Agriculture. The horticulture sector consists of a number of value chains such as French beans, snow peas, sugar snaps, eggplant, carrots, cabbage, sweet pepper, chilli, red and white onions, tomato, leeks, garlic, cauliflower, lettuce, courgette, cucumber, avocado, tree tomato, banana, passion fruits, mango, oranges, flowers, and macadamia nuts. In 2017-18, horticulture products (vegetables, fruits and flowers) occupied 6% of total agricultural export. Exports of horticultural products grew rapidly from US\$10 million in 2013-14 to US\$23 million in 2017-18, at a compounded annual growth rate of 18%. Continued growth in horticulture high-value fresh products for export is a national priority. This includes exports of French beans, snow peas, passion fruits, chillies, and cut flowers for international markets (mainly Europe and Middle East) and regional markets. DRC being the largest importer of Rwanda's fresh fruits (75.2%) and vegetables (69.1%).

There is also growing domestic demand for safe and fresh horticulture products, linked to growth of an urban middle class and tourism industry with hotels and restaurants. Rwanda targets 46,314 tonnes of horticulture harvest and an annual export revenue of 130 million by 2024 according to the projections of the Ministry of Agriculture

3. Links with national/regional development plans, policies, strategies, etc.

The pilot project in East Africa will contribute towards the goals and objectives that have been set in national developments plans in Uganda and Rwanda.

Uganda

The National Food Control system in Uganda is managed centrally by three Ministries: The Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives (MTIC). Within MAAIF, the Department of Animal Production is responsible for the safety of food of animal origin, the Department of Crop Production manages the safety of food of plant origin, while the Department of Fisheries Control, Regulations and Quality Assurance is responsible for the safety of fish and fish products. In the Ministry of Health, the Food Desk at the National Drug Authority coordinates and facilitates public health (especially in regards to food hygiene, food sanitation and environmental health linked to food), conduct food hazards exposure assessments, conduct public awareness campaigns and issue consumer alerts on food with potential human health effect. The MTIC through its Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS) is in charge of food safety standards development. UNBS is also the Uganda Codex Contact Point. Local governments are responsible of food safety control in their areas of jurisdiction in collaboration with relevant departments and agencies in the central government.

The project will contribute to Objective 3: Increase Market access and competitiveness of agro-industry products of the agro-industrialization programme of the current National Development Plan (III) 2020/21-2024/25 with a goal to increase commercialisation and competitiveness of agricultural production and agro-processing. Increasing the total export value of processed agricultural commodities and fish among others is one of the key results to be achieved over the next five years. Objective 3 focuses on strengthening enforcement and adherence to product quality requirements including food safety requirements, etc. This includes attention to enforce product certification, train farmers and manufacturers on sanitary and phytosanitary standards, renovate, build

and adequately equip certification laboratory facilities in various strategic locations, and regulate cross border informal trade in agro-products.

Rwanda

The overall agricultural sector is coordinated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI). It has the mission of promoting the sustainable development of a modern, efficient and competitive agriculture and livestock sector, in order to diversify production, promote food security and boost agriculture exports for economic development.

MINAGRI leads the formulations of policies and regulations and monitor their implementation. The implementation of these policies and regulations is done through different institutions affiliated to it i.e., National Agriculture Export Development Board (NAEB) and Rwanda Agriculture and Animal Resources Development Board (RAB) and others which have crosscutting role and the official mandate to implement some agriculture regulations, even though, they are not directly affiliated to it. This is the case of Rwanda Inspectorate Competition and Consumer Protection Authority (RICA) which is affiliated to the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MINICOM).

Rwanda Agriculture and Animal Resource Development Board (RAB)

RAB is a public institution responsible for agriculture research and technology transfer. It is mainly involved in the development of well adapted horticultural plant varieties, expansion of land for cultivation through hillside transformation by soil erosion control and increasing soil fertility to boost the land productivity on some selected sites, as well as develop water retention dams for hillside irrigation.

National Agriculture Export Development Board (NAEB)

NAEB is a public commercial institution created in 2011 under the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources with the Board of Directors undertaking strategic oversight and fiduciary responsibility. It aims to increase the country's agricultural export volumes and revenue by attracting private sector investments in the production, processing and value addition of both traditional and non-traditional agricultural commodities for export.

NAEB's mandate is to drive Rwanda's agri-exports revenues growth by supporting exports sector actors across production, value addition, marketing, and policy interventions. NAEB's mandate is focused on advising and implementing agricultural export policies, actively supporting quality production and processing of agricultural exports and diversification into new agricultural exports, enforcing quality standards checks and supporting exporters in getting the required certificates, and promoting regional and international market penetration. NAEB relies on the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal resources for policy guidance, resources mobilization, sector capacity building and coordination in the delivery of its mandate.

Rwanda Inspectorate, Competition and Consumer Protection Authority (RICA)

Rwanda Inspectorate, Competition and Consumer Protection Authority "RICA" was established by the Law N° 31/2017 of 25/07/2017 and began to implement its activities in the beginning of 2020. RICA also serves as the National Plant Protection Organization.

RICA is responsible for carrying out inspection of quality and standards conformity for plants and plant products, process and mode of production and delivery to consumers of those products among others. In addition, RICA has the responsibility for inspection, registration, and issuance of licenses related to import and export seeds and other plant and plant products. The government of Rwanda has set a 7 years (2017-2024) National Strategy for transformation (NST1) that prioritizes Agriculture modernization and increasing agricultural productivity and promotion of trade among others. The Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources is leading the NST1 agriculture related interventions and they are being implemented through the Strategic Plan for Agriculture Transformation (PSTA 4 2018 - 2024).

With respect to increasing production, under the PSTA 4, the Government of Rwanda envisage to support the private sector expanding the area for flowers from 20ha to 500ha; the area for vegetables from 20,000 ha to 100,000 ha; and the area for fruits from 6,500 ha to 9,000 ha.

In addition, PSTA 4 focuses on facilitating private sector investment in fruit and vegetable production through upgrading provision of SPS/quality standards to meet export standards requirements. The implementation of the proposed pilot project and the use of vTPA will complement other ongoing initiatives under PSTA 4 and

increase the capacity of the private sector to meet trade related SPS requirements as well as improve efficiency and capacity of official controls.

4. Past, ongoing or planned programmes and projects

This pilot project complements a number of previous and ongoing projects working in Rwanda and Uganda, as well as the regional level in East Africa.

The planned pilot project will use among others, lessons from a recent COMESA project implemented in 2015-2016 with the support of Investment Climate Facility (ICF) and USAID; named, the Local Sourcing Project with a focus on building the capacity of SMEs to integrate into regional supply chains of larger businesses and supermarket chains, focusing on the COMESA Free Trade Area (FTA). The project utilized GFSI's Global Markets Program to increase food safety compliance amongst local SMEs and create market access linkages through partnerships with supermarket and hotel chains that have a regional presence. The project was piloted in six selected COMESA countries namely, Ethiopia, Malawi, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, and Zambia. In 2017, and was further extended to include three more countries (Madagascar, South Africa and Tanzania) focusing on the Tripartite FTA, with funding from the African Development Bank (AfDB) Tripartite Capacity Building Programme (TCBP). This project promoted the GFSI Global Markets approach (previously not widely used in East Africa) as a pathway towards global food safety certification. The key lesson is that by focusing on strengthening the inclusiveness of local SMEs into regional value chains through targeted capacity building based on private standards and certification schemes, it is possible to integrate local SMEs into the competitive supply chain network of corporate companies and supermarket chains.

Another USDA funded Trade of Agriculture Safely and Efficiently in East Africa (TRASE) project is supporting regulatory authorities in Rwanda and Uganda to undertake reforms in the national food control systems. The Food Safety Law is under review, while inspection and certification systems are being revamped to incorporate risk-based approaches as well as explore areas of collaboration with the private sector and greater use of private standards. Utilizing Globalgap's primary farm assurance standard (also known as Localgap), TRASE helped to establish public-private partnerships in Rwanda and Uganda, between the horticulture apex bodies and the regulatory authority, to increase implementation of Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) amongst small holder farmers, as well as establish risk based inspection protocols – the pilot project will build on lessons and experiences from the public-private partnership model developed through TRASE to identify opportunities and ingredients for success

UGANDA

Uganda is implementing a commodity value chain approach where fish is one of the key priority commodities targeted in order to contribute to the country's social and economic transformation agenda. These are the Aquaculture value chains (seed, feed, production systems and post-harvest) in Uganda. March 16th 2022, the Presidential Advisory Committee on Exports and Industry Development (PACEID) was launched by President Museveni to provide a mechanism that will facilitate stronger private sector advocacy on policy and regulatory issues that affect trade. Key sectors that have been prioritized by the committee for reforms in the food safety inspection and certification system include; aquaculture, grains, beef, dairy and horticulture. This project will help to inform the committee on the required reforms and approaches that will enable a risk-based food inspection and certification system.

One project in Uganda that is particularly relevant for the requested vTPA pilot project is the "Support to Promoting Environmentally Sustainable Commercial Aquaculture" project started in January 2017 supported by the European Development Fund (EDF) and the government of Uganda. This project aims to support the development of a competitive, job-intensive, environmentally-sustainable and climate-resilient aquaculture value chain while targeting national and regional markets, and focusing on smallholders and their associations.

The Sustainable Commercial Aquaculture project targets results, which are relevant for the proposed pilot project, notably: (i) improvements to the policy and regulatory frameworks; (ii) improved production and productivity based on locally-developed practices and formation of producer groups; and (iii) improved post-

harvest handling and marketing of aquaculture fish and fish products. To date, Good Aquaculture Practices (GAP) have been reviewed, SMEs and Producer organisations capacity was built and still on on-going.

Other projects have also supported the aquaculture sector. Under Commonwealth Standards Network Project (implemented by UNBS and DiFR), GAPs were translated, printed and disseminated, and capacity of Quality Assurance Managers and Inspectors improved. These projects have carried out work to build capacity of the official controls and private sector players to overall improve food safety management measures in the aquaculture sector, which provides a sound basis on which the requested pilot project can build.

RWANDA

With the objective to promote food safety along the entire food value chain, RSB has developed Rwanda Good Agriculture Practices (GAP), a national standard that is aimed at promoting food safety culture among farmers while providing affordable services towards Rwanda GAP certification.

In addition to this program, Trade Mark East Africa (TMEA) has developed a capacity building program for the private sector and has adopted the vTPA approach to drive SPS implementation in EAC member countries that includes Rwanda. Through the first phase of its project support TMEA has provided a capacity building program that made a significant contribution in the current third-party certification schemes operated by RSB. The schemes referred to include ISO 9001 QMS, ISO 22000 FSMS and HACCP. Moreover, both FSMS and HACCP schemes were accredited by the Dutch Accreditation Council (RvA) since 2017. The scope covered by the accreditation so far includes the Food Manufacturing and Farming of Plants food value chains.

In the TMEA phase 2 project support to RSB and the private sector, the food value chains supported to implement food safety standards requirements towards certification include: hotels (mass catering), logistics (transport and storage facilities) and as well as animal feed manufacturing. This capacity building program provided by TMEA offers an excellent opportunity for synergies with the planned STDF project that will focus on the regulatory aspects to test how regulatory authorities perceive, approach, recognize, and/or decide to make use or not of vTPA programmes. A framework with commercial incentives based on the level of certification (basic-intermediary...etc) of the food suppliers enrolled in the certification process linking them to buyers such as supermarkets, restaurants, hotels tourism industry could be developed and tested.

IFC and Land O Lakes through its Trase project funded by the USDA have also capacity building programmes provided mainly to RFDA on food regulatory reform including the development of a food safety policy and a food safety law. The timing of this proposed STDF project could not be better because it will allow inclusion and clarification of what will be the place and the role of the vTPA in the new regulatory framework.

5. Public-public or public-private cooperation

The pilot project in East Africa will promote and strengthen public-public and public-private cooperation, at the national and regional level and across-regions. This would include:

- cooperation between government authorities responsible for food safety in Uganda and Rwanda, and private sector stakeholders (including cooperatives, FBOs, buyers, retailers, etc.) in the selected value chains.
- cooperation between the competent authorities responsible for food safety in Uganda and Rwanda, and other government authorities with a role in food safety regulators in other developing countries through the other two STDF supported pilot projects in West Africa and Central America.;
- cooperation between Uganda and Rwanda, and their (importing and exporting) trading partners on official standards, regulations, industry guidance documents

The Partnership Platform established by UNIDO for the STDF pilot projects in West Africa and Central America will provide opportunities for dialogue with international organizations and private sector partners

that may leverage support for the public and private sector stakeholders in the East Africa pilot. Once the project initiated, Rwanda and Uganda will be enrolled and participate in this UNIDO platform.

6. Ownership and stakeholder commitment

The pilot project was developed in close coordination with the applicant organizations in Uganda and Rwanda, and discussed with a wide range of public and private sector stakeholders in the two countries, in order to ensure that it fits their local needs and is adapted to the local context. A PPG mission was conducted in Uganda followed because of the Covid pandemic by Zoom meetings with stakeholders in Rwanda. The list of public and private sector stakeholders that were consulted and expressed their commitment and support to the project is provided below.

Regulatory authorities in Uganda and Rwanda – the applicants – welcome this pilot project as a means to understand the different types of models of using vTPA programmes, analyse their relevance and feasibility to strengthen the national food control system and food safety outcomes, based on Codex guidance, as well as to understand how the use of these vTPA programmes can support their mandates and results, for instance by improving risk-profiling of food businesses, facilitating an improved better prioritization of available resources for food inspection.

Government authorities in both countries have identified several linkages to other ongoing national-led programmes and initiatives, and believe this pilot will contribute to other development impacts in their countries, including private sector development and economic growth.

Private sector stakeholders involved in the agro-and aquaculture sectors in both countries believe this project will help to increase the competitiveness of their products in regional and international markets. They also see the potential of the project to help them achieve increased confidence in their levels of compliance with regulatory requirements, and to improve food safety outcomes at the industry / sector level.

Uganda, the following public institutions and agencies and private sector stakeholders support this project:

Public sector:

- Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry & Fisheries (MAAIF)
- Directorate of Fisheries Resources
- Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives (MTIC)
- Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS)

Private sector:

- Private Sector Foundation Uganda (PSFU)
- Uganda Fish Processors and Exporters Association (UFPEA)
- Walimi Fish Cooperative Society (WAFICOs)

Rwanda, the following public institutions and private sector stakeholders support this project:

Public sector:

- Ministry of Trade and Industry (MINICOM)
- Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI)
- Rwanda Inspectorate Competition and Consumer Protection Authority (RICA)
- National Export Development Export Development Board (NAEB)

Private sector:

- Horticulture Exporters Association of Rwanda (HEAR)

During the PPG work, a number of other stakeholders such as certification program owners and development partners expressed interest in the STDF pilot projects in Africa and Central America, including during discussions on the margins of Codex meetings, and in the G2G and G2B meetings organized alongside the GFSI conference.

During these meetings, regulatory authorities involved in CCFICS work were consulted (e.g. the UK Food Standards Agency, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, and the Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority) on the pilots. These regulators have since shared their expertise with stakeholders involved in the West Africa and Central America pilot projects, and this is expected to also support the East Africa pilot. Regulators from the UK, Germany and other CCFICS members are recording online training sessions, which can also benefit the beneficiary countries in East Africa. The vTPA Partnership Platform would be used to explore additional inputs and contributions from relevant government and private sector partners to the pilot project in East Africa. Subject to further discussions, and based on the specific needs identified by Uganda and Rwanda, additional inputs may be requested from other food safety regulatory authorities, for instance:

- Support to create, develop and/or use sector-specific vTPA programmes for food safety and to integrate these vTPA programmes into food safety regulatory oversight mechanisms. For instance, the UK's Red Tractor programme¹ provides an interesting model to learn from and possibly (subject to further discussions and national buy-in) also adapt as part of the regulatory component of the pilot project (e.g. as a not-for profit organization that benefits from economies of scale to provide affordable premiums for smaller businesses)
- Expert advice, including guidance and training on implementation, maintenance and auditing of food safety practices in accordance with national and/or international/Codex standards.

II. PROJECT GOAL, OBJECTIVE, OUTPUTS & ACTIVITIES (LOGICAL FRAMEWORK)

7. Project Goal / Impact

The overall goal of the pilot project is to improve compliance with national food safety standards and regulations for public health and trade.

The project will contribute to this goal by enabling regulatory authorities responsible for food safety in the two countries to work with each other, and other relevant public and private sector stakeholders, to pilot an alternative approach, based on public-private collaboration, and proactively investigate and learn how vTPA programmes may be used in practice to improve food safety outcomes for protection of consumers and best practices in food trade. This will be achieved through activities under three main pillars:

1. **Regulatory component:** Activities under the pilot project will generate evidence to help the regulatory authorities in Uganda and Rwanda better understand the options (including challenges, risks, requirements, etc.) that exist for them to make use of appropriate vTPA programmes, linked to their particular national context, the CCFICS guidance, and the experiences of other countries that have moved in this direction. For instance, it will enable them to analyse and understand which if any changes are needed (e.g., related to food safety policy frameworks, legislation, training for regulators/food inspectors, staffing and resource allocations, support on risk management, etc.) to take into account the use of vTPA programmes in their risk profiling of business operators so that they can focus their limited inspection resources on areas of higher risk. Concerns were expressed about the capacity of CAs of developing countries to enter into a constructive dialogue with CPOs about the required information for sharing and legal constraints related to the confidentiality of information detained by FBOs. By including targeted dialogue and mentoring activities, the pilot project will enable regulatory authorities in Uganda and Rwanda to benefit from the knowledge and experiences of regulators in other countries. This component will result in a conducive enabling regulatory environment for improved food safety outcomes, based on public-private partnerships as well as improved cooperation between the diverse national authorities responsible for food safety. In this way, the pilot will facilitate efforts to introduce

¹ Established in 2000, Red Tractor is now the UK's biggest farm and food standards scheme, covering all of animal welfare, food safety, traceability and environmental protection.

strategic changes to the national food control management system, based on Codex principles and guidelines.

2. **FBO component:** In addition to engaging government authorities responsible for food safety, the pilot project will improve food safety compliance of participating FBOs in the selected value chains in each country, using a voluntary TPA programme. At the outset, the pilot will assess the robustness of existing vTPA infrastructure in the selected countries to determine whether existing scheme(s) meet the relevant criteria in the draft Codex Guidelines. If the existing scheme(s) is found to not fulfil the Codex Guidelines 'criteria, the pilot will help to move it towards the required standard. In a value chain where there is not a suitable scheme, it may be necessary to develop something new. The final decision should come from the pilot countries as owners and future implementers of these approaches, following further awareness raising on the potential benefits and requirements to be able to select any of these options. The implementing organization in collaboration with other project partners will provide the required guidance to enable the regulatory authorities in the beneficiary countries to make an informed choice.

An appropriate voluntary food safety capacity building programme training on the model of the old version of GFSI's Global Markets' Programme (basic and intermediate levels – i.e., pre-certification) will be selected to meet the needs of the FBOs targeted. This component is expected to create win-win opportunities to build food safety capacity to promote private sector growth, open up new business opportunities, and also benefit consumers. Dialogue and mentoring/coaching will be promoted between FBOs at different levels of development (linking smaller, less developed FBOs in the pilot country with larger, more established enterprises, high-value retail chains, restaurants, etc.). This will help smaller businesses to develop their food safety systems and also promote linkages with potential buyers. Testimonies from companies that benefited from vTPA programs or companies that for example won GFSI global markets award in Nigeria and Ethiopia and used them to expand their markets will be invited to share their experiences and help FBOs from Uganda and Rwanda participating in the pilot project to better understand how to choose the most appropriate vTPA and what is the cost/benefits analysis of using them. Public sector stakeholders will be engaged in this component to encourage dialogue and trust with private sector. Involving regulators and inspectors will improve their knowledge about the scope, operation and implementation of vTPA programmes, including how they might be used to improve food safety outcomes and benefit the national food control system. This is expected to help identify opportunities for the future recognition and/or greater use of vTPA programmes, while analysing the challenges and risks that exist and how to address them.

Dissemination and learning component: Based on the results achieved under the pilot project, activities under the third component will document and disseminate the experiences, challenges and learnings so that all the knowledge that is generated can be of use and value to food safety regulators elsewhere, as well as other interested stakeholders. This knowledge and learning gained through the pilot is expected to be of significant interest regionally and globally, linked to ongoing and future discussions and work, including in CCFICS and Codex more broadly, as well as during the G2B and G2G meetings. In particular, it will respond to concrete and practical questions on how public-private partnership approaches, and in particular the use of vTPA programmes, can help to support improved food safety outcomes in developing countries in a way that does not diminish or threaten the role of the official government authorities responsible for the national food control system.

The African Green Revolution Forum (AGRF) established the Food Safety Network (FSN) as a regional platform of technical partners including Land O Lakes Venture 37, private sector and regional economic communities (RECs) supporting implementation of the AfCFTA. This platform will facilitate learnings and dissemination of project outcomes, particularly lessons to guide implementation of the AU continental food safety strategy and Annex 7 of the AfCFTA.

8. Target Beneficiaries

In the two pilot countries, the beneficiaries of the proposed pilot project will include food safety regulators and competent authorities in particular RICA in Rwanda and MAAIF in Uganda, as well as private sector stakeholders involved in the selected value chains. In addition, consumers in Uganda and Rwanda and beyond will benefit from access to food that is safe and of higher quality.

Through the pilot project, food safety regulatory and competent authorities will benefit from cooperation with the private sector to enhance trust, build understanding about their respective roles and responsibilities in food safety, and identify areas where they can work together to improve food safety outcomes. As described above, through the pilot project, the food safety regulators in Uganda and Rwanda will be better able to understand if and how they can make use of vTPA programmes to strengthen the outcomes achieved by the national food control system.

In Uganda, government agencies that will participate and benefit directly from the pilot project will include: the Department of Fisheries Resources, the Department of Veterinary Services and the Uganda Bureau of Standards. In Rwanda, the main government institutions that will benefit from the pilot project will be the Rwanda Inspection and Certifications Authority (RICA), the Rwanda Agriculture Board with the Veterinary Services, the Rwanda Bureau of Standards and the Rwanda Food and Drug Authority. In the two countries, the participating agencies will benefit from capacity building activities and technical assistance, including on risk profiling and management, to improve performance and support a more efficient use of national resources for food safety management, and strengthen the national food control system in general.

In the two countries, the pilot project will benefit diverse private sector stakeholders involved in the selected value chains, with a particular focus on micro and small and medium-sized enterprises. Private sector stakeholders to benefit will include farmer organizations and cooperatives, FBOs working in the selected value chains. By participating in the pilot, they will develop new competencies and improve their food safety knowledge, skills and management systems, which will help them to increase their revenues, reduce waste, increase sales to higher-value domestic markets (retail, hotels, etc.), as well as exports markets in the region and beyond.

During the inception phase of the project, the private sector stakeholders to be involved, including small-scale FBOs, as well as larger companies/buyers/retailers, etc. that would be ready to mentor and work with the beneficiary FBOs, will be identified. At this stage, detailed selection criteria for the participating FBOs will be defined and agreed upon based on discussions between the government authorities, private sector and implementing organization. They may include the following (not exhaustive):

- Some existing minimum implementation of Good Agricultural Practices and/or Good Manufacturing Practices
- Nomination of one person to be responsible for food safety management for the FBO (or a group of FBOs or very small companies)
- Evidence of clear commitment to follow the capacity building programme and implement the needed improvements
- Yearly participation / registration fee to be confirmed at the project inception.

Training activities carried out under the pilot will have value for other actors in the selected value chain (e.g. auditors, assessment and certification bodies, distributors, retailers) who will also benefit from improved food safety knowledge and expertise in FBOs.

Importantly, consumers at the country level (and in export markets) will also benefit from safer food.

Finally, the experiences, results and lessons learnt from this pilot project will have value for other developing countries that face similar challenges and resource constraints to improve food safety outcomes. It will provide evidence, learnings and good practice recommendations that other countries can use to improve how they implement Codex standards, guidelines and recommendations. This will inform and add value to ongoing and future Codex work, including in CCFICS.

(a) Gender-related issues

The project will pay attention to gender-related aspects and how vTPAs take into consideration the various activities and outputs. In the broad context, men are generally owners of agriculture and aquaculture farms and food businesses operations, while women tend to be involved as labour workers on those farms, in pre- and

post-harvest activities and in food enterprises. In some instances, women are also involved in the collection, transportation and retail sale of products.

The project will pay attention to these different gender roles in the targeted value chains, while also seeking to assess gender constraints to women's participation in trade and the opportunities that exists for working women or women owned FBOs in the selected value chains to develop their food safety knowledge and skills in a way that enables them to grow, for instance into new positions in their enterprises, or for women-headed businesses to expand and grow their operations and generate increased revenues. Having the potential to unlock and expand markets, not only locally but also regionally and internationally, it is expected that women involved in the project will see their economic power significantly increased.

A gender specialist will be contracted at the project inception to analyze gender aspects in the development and implementation of food control systems, regulatory/institutional frameworks, and food safety management systems in the participating FBOs, paying attention to women in food business operations and export trade. The gender specialist will make policy and strategic recommendations to increase gender equality and gender responsiveness in project implementation.

In Uganda for instance, women represent 60-70 % of the workers in processing plants for aquaculture or agriculture.

In Rwanda, 76% of economically active Rwandan women are engaged in farming activities. Similarly, women represent a significant share of workers involved in the production, harvesting and packaging of fruits and vegetables.

The pilot project will generate measurable data on the gender-related aspects of the vTPAs. For instance, do vTPA programmes have a positive benefit on women, including women producers, women-headed businesses, women employees in the food sector, etc.? Does the use of vTPA programmes have any unintended consequences for gender equality? Under what conditions, can women engage and/or benefit more from vTPA programmes? Monitoring and evaluation activities will aim to track gender dimensions, and to use gender-disaggregated data, wherever possible. This gender-based approach is being implemented by UNIDO in the pilot project for West Africa and will be adopted for the East African project.

9. Project objective, outputs and activities (including logical framework and work plan)

The logical framework sets out the theory of change for the pilot project, with details on the outcomes, outputs and activities, as well as the indicators, risks and assumptions.

Outcome 1 Regulatory Component: Increased awareness of regulatory authorities on how to assess and use data/information generated by vTPA programme in pilot countries

Work carried out under this outcome will be anchored on the Codex Principles and Guidelines for the Assessment and Use of Voluntary Third-Party Assurance (vTPA) Programmes, which are intended to assist competent authorities within their national boundaries in the effective assessment and transparent use of reliable information/data generated by vTPA programmes in support of their national food control system objectives. The vTPA approach is enabled through the Codex Principles and Guidelines for National Food Control Systems (CAC GL 82-2013) which states that "where quality assurance systems are used by food business operators, the national food control system should take them into account where such systems relate to protecting consumer health and ensuring fair practices in the food trade" (para 54). Within this framework, the project will analyse the political, legal, technical and economic context as well as the current capacities and practices of competent authorities regarding risk profiling and inspection.

Output 1.1: National policy papers / strategies drafted in pilot countries on implementation options for the potential use of vTPA programmes as part of the national food control system.

The policy paper / strategy would be tailored to the specific in-country context. It would be developed by staff of the national regulatory authority, with technical guidance from external experts (including selected competent authorities elsewhere that have already moved in this direction). It would be based on the learning, analysis and evidence generated under the pilot project, as well as a series of public-private training workshops and consultations to increase understanding about options for the national food control system to make use of reliable data/information generated by appropriate vTPA programmes. The analysis to assess the integrity and credibility of vTPA programmes (where they exist) would be based on the Codex principles and guidelines so that the regulatory authority would be able to gain confidence in vTPA programmes, subject to the findings. This analysis would provide a better understanding of the nature and quality of vTPA programmes operating in the chosen sectors, and would map any relevant industry standards against the existing regulatory requirements. It would assess the robustness of the existing vTPA infrastructure in the two countries, including whether existing vTPA programmes fulfil the relevant criteria in the CCFICS Guidance document. It would also identify any important gaps or issues that might need to be considered as part of the work to be carried out under the pilot project.

The national policy paper / strategy would consider the required steps for the pilot countries to be able to follow the principles of the Codex guidelines, based on the gaps and needs identified during the environment scan. It would : i) analyse the potential risks associated with the use of vTPA programmes, and how to mitigate and manage them; ii) clarify the current structure of the food regulatory system, describing the capacities and practices of competent authorities related to the selected value chains; iii) explain the recognition process and the related institutional and legal framework that should be in place for competent authorities to evaluate and recognize vTPA programmes; and iv) outline the type of M&E mechanism that competent authorities can use for ongoing monitoring of recognized vTPA programmes.

Activities:

- **Conduct virtual meetings/webinars** to enable officials from the pilot countries to learn and openly engage with food regulators from other relevant countries (e.g. Canada, Mexico, the Netherlands, UK) on how they have implemented vTPA programmes as part of their NFCS, including the challenges faced, experiences, results, etc. These virtual meetings will be open to all relevant and interested officials from government agencies in the pilot countries, which will raise knowledge about the use of the vTPA approach and help to increase buy-in and commitment for the pilot project.
- **"Learning visit" (where possible, given the global pandemic) of two government officials from each of the pilot countries, plus one person from the implementing organization 5 persons in total) to observe, discuss and understand how food safety regulators in other countries make use of reliable data and information from vTPA programmes as part of their national food control system**, based on Codex principles and guidance. Regulators in the UK and The Netherlands have agreed to host such a "learning tour" in principle subject to further discussions to agree on the specific programme, timing, etc. If a learning visit is not possible, given the pandemic, this will take place virtually.
- **Conduct environment scan / review on the national food safety system.** This scan / assessment will look at the existing institutional framework for food safety, roles and responsibilities, relevant legislation / regulations, inspection procedures and capacity, existing vTPA programmes being used in the selected value chains in the country and how they address gender aspects. It will identify and compare any existing vTPA requirements (standards) in the selected value chains against the national/international requirements (as per Codex guidelines on the use of vTPAs).
- **National workshop for government officials in pilot countries to increase understanding and knowledge about different regulatory approaches and options to make use of data generated by vTPA programmes as part of their national food control systems.** The workshop would invite selected experts from selected developed (e.g. Belgium, Canada, France, Netherlands, UK, US) or developing countries (Ecuador, Chile, Mexico, etc.) to share their experiences on their approach to assess and use data/information generated by vTPA programmes as part of their national food control systems. This would help to increase understanding in the pilot countries about any capacity gaps or challenges (e.g. related to the institutional arrangements, legislative framework, staff competency) to be addressed or considered during the pilot project.

- **Develop a process / roadmap for competent authorities in pilot countries to evaluate and recognize vTPA programmes, to complement their national food control system:** The aim would be to identify needs and requirements (e.g. regulatory changes, new knowledge/skills/training, operating procedures, investment needs, potential partnerships, etc.) for the government authority to make use of vTPA programmes as part of the official food control system.
- **Mentoring/coaching** to enable officials from regulatory authority in pilot countries to engage in regular exchange (by Skype) with selected regulators in other countries making use of vTPA programmes.

Output 1.2: Risk-based inspection capabilities piloted for selected value chains

The pilot project will support the regulatory authority to develop and implement a risk-based inspection approach for the selected sectors/value chains. Use of a vTPA programme would be one of the factors considered during the risk profiling. The outcome may be to divert official resource away from some exporting FBOs if through the use of a vTPA programme(s) they are able to demonstrate good compliance rates (even if they would still need an official certificate if the exported products are of animal origin or a phytosanitary export certificate for food of plant origin). In this case, the role of the regulator would shift slightly as resource is used to monitor the performance of the vTPA programme (where it overlaps with national food safety requirements) allowing the relevant government authority to reduce its official inspection frequency and divert resource to higher risk sectors (whether FBOs serving the export or local market).

Activities:

- Assess and review existing government inspection procedures (frequency, risk profiling, etc.) in the selected value chain/sector
- Identify the needs and requirements in different areas (legislation, risk profiling, operating procedures, information and data exchange, technology/IT, human resources, etc.) to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate a risk-based inspection approach in the selected value chain that takes into account (based on the country context) the particular vTPA approach/model selected by the government.
- The project will further analyse the effective capacity and conditions for competent authorities to access information relevant for risk profiling. Key issues to be addressed will consider i) what types of data could effectively be shared by VTPAs, ii) under what conditions, ii) analysis of confidentiality clauses, practical and/or legal limits to such sharing, iv) position of operators concerning such sharing, and v) capacity of competent authorities and operators to take charge of and make use of such information and data (including any technology / IT requirements, issues, etc.). Training for government inspectors on risk-based inspection practices. This may involve developing and setting a standard for government inspectors/auditors to build capacity in this area (for instance, if relevant and applicable, the Government might, for example, look to set a standard that aligns with the standards used by vTPA auditors).
- Training for government inspectors and auditors on vTPA programmes, with the inclusion of a session on accompanied audits
- Workshops on data sharing between vTPA owners and authorities, including sharing of experiences of regulators from other countries on how to integrate such data / information into risk profiling models.

Outcome 2: Improved food safety compliance of FBOs in selected value chains based on the use of a voluntary food safety capacity building programme

Public and private sector stakeholders in the pilot countries will be engaged on the development and/or deployment of a customized (voluntary) food safety capacity building scheme for the selected value chains. Existing vTPA programmes (even if not yet fully functional or completely fulfilling the criteria in the Codex Guideline) that are already being used in the selected sector / value chains will be used as a starting point (rather than seeking to build new vTPA programmes from scratch). Depending on the country context and needs, the voluntary programme that is used in the pilot project may differ. An appropriate training program similar to the

old version of the GFSI's Global Markets' Programme (competency-based, step-wise, aimed at supporting small-scale FBOs to improve their food safety management systems at the basic and intermediate levels) will be selected to meet the needs of the many small-scale FBOs covered in the pilot project, particularly those selling to domestic or regional markets that usually do not require certification. Available training resources and tools (including UNIDO training materials on GMPs, IFC's Global Markets Toolkit, etc.) will be used and customized as necessary. The pilot project will focus on what is needed to move these vTPA programmes in the selected sectors towards the standards set out in the Codex Guidelines.

Regulators will be involved as observers to ensure their understanding about the scope, operation and implementation of the selected vTPA programme. This will help to promote dialogue and trust between the public and private sector on food safety compliance. It may also encourage and/or identify opportunities for the government to recognize and/or adopt this voluntary scheme at a national level to support food safety capacity building. In addition to public-private dialogue and cooperation, this component of the pilot project will promote dialogue and mentoring/coaching between FBOs and enterprises at different levels of development (i.e. linking smaller, less developed companies in the pilot country with larger, more established companies, high-value retail chains, restaurants, etc.) to help smaller businesses develop their food safety systems and also promote linkages with potential buyers.

Output 2.1: Voluntary food safety capacity building programme developed and piloted among food business operators from selected value chains

The voluntary food safety capacity building programme may focus on primary production and/or manufacturing, as relevant to the selected value chain in the pilot countries. It will be developed/adapted based on existing experiences and lessons in the development and rolling out of similar voluntary food safety capacity building programmes targeted at FBOs. Building on existing materials, additional modules will be developed as required for localization and to meet the needs of buyers, based on the specific context in Uganda and Rwanda (including existing agri-food production and sales to high-value local/regional markets, as well as exports). Available training resources and tools (including UNIDO training materials on GMPs, IFC's Global Markets Toolkit, etc.) will be used and customized as necessary. The localisation of the scheme in the pilot country will be achieved through a PPP engaging the food safety regulators, industry / private sector association, vTPA programme owners and members, and all other relevant parties involved.

The pilot project may help some of the more advanced FBOs to reach certification (i.e. beyond the pre-certification basic or intermediate level within the Global Markets programme), if the conditions are right and the resources are available. However, in keeping with the voluntary nature of the TPA programmes, FBOs involved in the pilot will not be required to obtain certification, and certification of FBOs is not a specific objective. FBOs will learn and benefit from experiences of other FBOs who used vTPAs to expand their markets such as companies in Ethiopia and Nigeria that are award winning of the GFSI Global Market Program Award.

As part of this output, national financial institutions in the two countries will be made aware of the pilot project so that they may also be able to consider participation in the pilot project as part of their assessment of eligibility for financing – for instance by considering more favourably funding requests from participating FBOs (based on their ability to meet the selection criteria for participation in the project). Organizations such as the World Bank have micro-financing schemes for farmers, through national financial institutions, and these opportunities should be explored to harness these options to help participating FBOs get the financing they need to upgrade their food safety management systems/infrastructure, etc. in parallel to capacity development and training on skills, competencies, etc.

From the start of the pilot project, particularly under Outcome 2, outreach and communications will be important for visibility purposes in order to encourage farmers to commit to the process and also sensitize consumers to the production practices utilized to produce safe food. Efforts will also be made to align small-scale producers and FBOs with local supermarkets and tourist destinations within the pilot countries, creating new market opportunities with higher prices for better products that can demonstrate food safety and quality.

Activities:

- During the inception phase, the project will develop selection criteria for FBOs to participate in the pilot training and mentoring. Linkages between less developed companies and larger, more established FBOs, high-value retail chains, restaurants, etc. will help smaller businesses develop their food safety systems and create linkages with potential buyers who will be encouraged to purchase from FBOs that are using vTPA programmes to improve their food safety management systems in order to be compliant with national regulations.
- Conduct targeted value chain mapping in the pilot countries focusing on compliance issues along the value chain to get a better understanding on the different food safety schemes (regulatory and private) that are currently applied and used in the value chains.
- Localize / Adapt the voluntary food safety capacity building scheme for the pilot countries based on existing international best practices. The adapted vTPA programme will be localized to the country context and may, as relevant, integrate additional components required by the local market. The localisation will include also all needed guides for assessment and auditing taking into consideration the role of the regulatory bodies.
- Conduct joint training-of-trainers (ToT) programmes for food safety practitioners from the public and private sector on vTPA programmes. ToT programmes will target auditors from certification bodies, as well as inspectors from local agencies and local food safety experts and professionals. This may include specialized training for local auditors to raise their competencies and capacity.
- Deliver training to selected food business operators and establish linkages between FBOs and buyers (including high-value retail and hotels/tourism in the country, as well as multinational companies and other buyers in export markets).
- Establish linkages between FBOs and financial lending institutions to explore the feasibility of the development of a risk lending system that takes into consideration the use of vTPAs.

Outcome 3: Increased awareness of food safety regulators on the application of vTPA approaches in other countries

Output 3.1: Regional and global events on vTPA programmes organized with the participation of pilot countries Activities:

- Regulators from Uganda and Rwanda will be invited to participate in an annual pilot project meeting (with the implementing partners, other relevant public/private stakeholders, STDF Secretariat, etc.). This meeting will be organized on the margins of another planned meeting, for instance, the annual G2G and G2B meeting prior to the GFSI Global Food safety Conference or a Codex meeting. This will facilitate regular dialogue and exchange on the implementation of the pilots, encourage the development of a network of practitioners from developing countries on the topic of vTPAs, identify opportunities for linkages and synergies with other relevant future programmes, activities, etc. It will also enable the regulators involved in the pilot countries to engage with and receive additional guidance and inputs from food safety regulators elsewhere.
- Organize a regional workshop on the use of vTPA programmes linked to Codex guidance, under the concept of South-South cooperation. This workshop, organized at the end of the pilot project, will gather public and private sector representatives from Uganda and Rwanda and other African countries to take stock of, share and disseminate results, experiences, learnings and good practices. It would be planned on the margins of an existing regional meeting (such as CCAFRICA) to reduce costs.
- Develop knowledge and communication products to disseminate experiences, results, lessons and good practices that emerge from the regional pilot project (e.g. case studies, short film, other materials) to use in the dissemination process.

- Support food safety regulators from Uganda and Rwanda to share their experiences and lessons on vTPA programmes, data-sharing, etc. more widely with other regulators and stakeholders at the regional and global level. For instance, information sessions and side-events may be organized on the margins of CAC meetings, CCFICS meetings, SPS Committee meetings, etc.

Attached:

- (i) **A logical framework** summarizing what the project intends to do and how, what the key risks and assumptions are, and how outputs and outcomes will be monitored and evaluated (Appendix 1).
- (ii) **A detailed work plan** indicating the start and completion date of the project, as well as sequence in which activities would be carried out (Appendix 2).
- (iii) **Terms of Reference (TORs)** for key national/international experts to be involved in implementation of activities included in the work plan.

10. Environmental-related issues

For primary production related component of the proposed project such as the horticulture sector, a better control and usage of pesticides will have an impact not only for consumers from the public health perspective, but also on the reduction of occupational hazards for the operators and finally also have a positive impact on the environment. Similarly for the aquaculture sector, a better control use and usage of antimicrobials will have an impact not only for consumers from the public health perspective but also on the reduction of the appearance and spread of antimicrobial resistant strains in the environment.

For FBOs engaged in food processing, improved control of products used in the cleaning and maintenance of building and equipment is also expected to have a positive impact on the environment.

11. Risks

A risk matrix is presented below. Continuity of involvement of the public and private sector will be important to contribute to the success of the project.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation strategy
Continuation of the Covid-19 Pandemic	High	High	<p>The implementation approach and workplan will be reviewed and adapted in the inception phase given the ongoing risks related to COVID-19. Concerning the different studies planned to be implemented during the start-up phase, the project will facilitate remote collaboration between local and international experts given the current travel restrictions. COVID-19 has pushed the status quo into a new reality where the number of remote/online meetings is starting to increase, creating opportunities for more sustainable exchanges between the different actors.</p> <p>Covid-19 has created an increased awareness of hygiene measures, which may contribute to increased interest in food safety. The project will seek to use and develop these trends and re-adjust as necessary the project work plan to ensure progress and deliverables despite the possible continuation of travel restrictions. This may include attention to remote (virtual) expertise, increased use of local consultants, etc.</p>
Lack of political commitment and high-level support for food safety improvements in the pilot countries	Medium	High	<p>Ongoing efforts to advocate and increase awareness among political and other high-level decision-makers about the importance of the necessary support to improve food safety capacity in both the public and private sector, linked to national and regional objectives, trade, job creation and economic growth, etc. This will help to build awareness and commitment for any food safety regulatory adjustment required at the national level to strengthen implementation of a risk-based approach, including for any changes that might be required to legislation, food safety inspection, etc.</p>
Lack of understanding among staff of the food safety regulatory body and other relevant government authorities about vTPA programmes, and/ or a tendency to perceive these programmes as threatening	Medium	High	<p>The PPG work in the pilot countries created some understanding about the role of vTPA programmes, and how they might potentially be used to support evidence-based decision-making at competent authority level. During the pilot project, ongoing dialogue and communications on the potential benefits (and possible risks), and sharing of experiences from other countries, would help to increase awareness about vTPA programmes and how they might be used (in a non-threatening way) to leverage value for the national food control system. This will create a situation that facilitates the use and/or recognition of vTPA programmes by the governments in the pilot countries, should the government decide to move in this direction</p>

Commitment and capacity of FBOs and regulators to make and sustain the necessary investments (resources, time, staffing) to improve their food safety management systems	Low/Medium	Medium	<p>FBOs to benefit from the pilot project will be selected using pre-identified criteria. Cost-sharing will help to select FBOs that are truly committed, and that understand and are more likely to be able to manage the ongoing costs to improve food safety.</p> <p>Improving record-keeping of participating FBOs will help to monitor and track the benefits of investments in improved food safety capacity (e.g. reduced rejections, less waste, increased revenues, increased sales to higher-value customers), which show the value and financial return of making the investment in food safety, and why this positively impacts revenues and profits.</p> <p>At the inception phase, options will be explored for the participating FBOs to access complementary finance/grants, etc. from other sources (e.g. local financial institutions banks, other projects/NGOs, national government agencies, etc.).</p>
Lack of food safety services, particularly certification bodies, at a local level	Low/Medium	Low/Medium	In case there is a very limited number, or no certification bodies operating at local level, competent authorities might face the issue of no data being available for better risk-profiling of sectors
Market demand for high-quality and safe food	Low	Medium	Outreach and advocacy to buyers, large companies active in the country (local supermarkets/retail, hotels, etc.) will increase awareness about the efforts of the participating FBOs help to improve food safety management systems. This will create opportunities for the participating FBOs to sell more to these higher-value customers, etc.

12. Sustainability

The Governments in Uganda and Rwanda are keen to ensure sustainability from the outset. The project will pilot and innovate a new approach to improve food safety outcomes, based on public-private partnership. The active commitment and close engagement of the regulatory authorities, as well as other relevant parts of Government, will help to ensure that the findings, learnings and recommendations generated through this pilot can result in outcomes that are followed up by relevant Government agencies at the national level for longer-term sustainability and impacts.

Initiatives will be put in place to help to harness greater commitment from the participating companies. Inclusion of a financial contribution from the participating private sector entities in the pilot countries is expected to ensure greater commitment and improve sustainability. Such incentives may include a mix of the following (to be further discussed and agreed upon during the inception phase): i) payment of a registration fee by participating FBOs at the start of the project; ii) financial contribution as a form of commitment – this could either be a fixed fee (e.g. US\$100/company, to be confirmed) or pro-rated depending on the size/revenue of the enterprise).

In addition, the introduction and use of a badge or label – linked to use of the vTPA programme promoted – would create branding and recognition, which would create an additional incentive for participating FBOs. Such a badge/label/banner would differentiate those recognized as following good food safety practices, from other companies that do not. Over time, this would be expected to promote good practices and improve food safety in other enterprises, and it would make it easier for consumers to distinguish higher quality products on the market.

One of the most important selection criteria for farmers/FBOs wishing to participate in the project will be a commitment to invest the resources needed to improve food safety. This commitment will reinforce the sustainability of the project. It is also expected that the participation of farmers and FBOs in the project will open new local, regional and international markets, which will demonstrate the financial returns from improved food safety systems and encourage sustainability.

Finally, it is expected that the project will strengthen the existing public-private collaboration on improving food safety and fair-trade outcomes, where issues will be early identified and receive attention both from the private sector and the regulators and consequently increasing the sustainability of the project

III. BUDGET

13. Estimated budget

See appendix 3.

14. Cost-effectiveness

Improved use of limited resources has been one of the main drivers pushing countries to make use of data and information from vTPA programmes as part of their national food control systems. The Codex Principles and Guidelines for National Food Control Systems foresee competent authorities taking into account quality assurance systems in their national food control systems. As per the newly adopted Codex Guidelines on vTPAs, reliable vTPA information / data may be used in general to better risk profile sectors (and in some circumstances individual FBOs), which is expected to lead to smarter data-driven prioritization of official resources, while FBOs participating in robust vTPA programmes may benefit from an appropriate risk-reduction in the frequency / intensity of regulatory controls. On the other hand, poorly performing FBOs may be subject to increased controls.

This pilot project provides a cost-effective approach to test and learn – in a limited number of sectors – how the approach outlined in the Codex Guideline on vTPAs works in practice in selected developing countries. The benefits of the pilot project, and learning generated, will be of relevance, and interest for developing countries globally, as well as Codex members more broadly, which will ensure that the project experiences and results have much wider value (i.e. beyond the two participating countries).

Implementation of the pilot project by Land O Lakes Venture³⁷ with substantial expertise and previous work in the two countries, will further enhance cost-effectiveness. In addition, and importantly, cost-effectiveness will be assured through the engagement and involvement of food safety regulatory authorities in other parts of Africa, and beyond, in order to learn as much as possible from their previous experiences (positive and negative).

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION & MANAGEMENT

15. Implementing organization

Land O Lakes Venture37 (V37) is proposed to implement this pilot project in East Africa (see letter in Appendix 5) due to the extensive track record of successfully implementing food safety capacity building programs across the public and private sectors using vTPA programmes. Through the TRASE Project, Land O Lakes Venture 37 has SPS Advisors in Uganda and Rwanda working with the private sector and government regulators to build SPS capacity and improve trade performance and competitiveness of countries' exports through use of public-private sector collaborative approaches and vTPA programs. These human and technical resources will be deployed in order to benefit more broadly from the vast experience and know-how gained by Land O Lakes Venture 37 during implementation of similar projects in East Africa, Egypt, Lebanon, Bangladesh and Georgia.

Land O Lakes Venture37 will establish a project steering committee in each country to supervise the implementation of the project and that will work collaboratively with the Food Safety and Nutrition Technical Working Group (FSN TWG) established by the Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and the UNIDO platform to exchange experiences, explore synergies and work on resources mobilization. The FSN TWG is a stakeholders' platform, constituted by technical partners, private sector and regional economic communities (RECs) who support implementation of the AfCFTA. The membership of this platform includes Land O Lakes Venture37, Government representatives, and technical partners who support food safety work in Africa such as USDA, USAID, EU, Rockefeller, TMEA, Gates Foundation and FCDO.

16. Project management

Venture 37 will implement the project in close cooperation with the applicant organizations in Uganda and Rwanda. Consultants may be contracted by Venture 37 based on the specific expertise and skills required – to support the implementation and delivery of the project outputs. Detailed ToRs would be prepared prior to the recruitment of consultants. These consultants would be expected to have the relevant technical skills, prior experience in working with regulatory authorities and/or the private sector on the use of vTPA programmes, language skills, etc. For the regulatory component, consultants will need to demonstrate expertise and experience working directly with food safety regulatory authorities in other countries that are making use of vTPA programmes. Consultants will be expected to have an excellent knowledge of Codex standards and to be knowledgeable about the Codex Guidelines on the use of vTPAs. Consultants will be hired and agreed upon by the country Steering Committee supervising the implementation of the project. The project applicants would be expected to approve any consultants selected. Land O Lakes Venture37 has also budgeted a project field coordinator to ensure practical support, coordination and reporting.

A small committee comprising the key stakeholders involved in the project – notably representatives of the applicant organizations and the implementing organization – will convene regularly (virtually, and face-to-face, if possible, on the margins of any project workshops / meetings, etc.), to review and oversee the implementation of the project, address any unexpected challenges, issues, share experiences from the country activities, etc. The STDF Secretariat will be invited to participate in these meetings, wherever appropriate and possible, to help ensure synergies and information exchange with the pilot project in East Africa. Other stakeholders (such as UNIDO, the implementing organization for the proposed pilot project in West Africa and IICA, the implementing organization for Latin America) may be invited to participate in these meetings as observers, as relevant and useful.

At a country level, a Steering Committee will supervise the management and implementation of the project activities at the national level. This Committee will include representatives of all relevant government departments, as well as the private sector.

III REPORTING, MONITORING & EVALUATION

17. Project reporting

As Implementing Organization, Land O Lakes Venture37 will be responsible for reporting under the project and submission of reports to the STDF Secretariat. An inception report will be produced within three months of launching of the project, and a final report will be produced at the end of the Project. Progress reports will be produced every six months (January-June and July-December) and submitted via the STDF online LogAlto M&E Tool. Progress reports will provide the basis for systematically monitoring progress made in the project and give the Secretariat an opportunity to make substantive comments on any anticipated issues that require attention.

The project logical framework will incorporate relevant indicators from the STDF's programme-level results framework to enable results on the project to be aggregated at the STDF programme level. The indicators to track progress will be aligned as far as possible to the indicators used in the Central America and West Africa projects to facilitate cross-regional learning.

18. Monitoring and evaluation, including performance indicators

The logical framework shows the indicators that will be monitored at the result/output level. The project budget includes provision for an independent end-of-project assessment – prior to the project end date – that will provide data for assessing the project results, reporting on indicators at the result and purpose level. This end-of-project assessment will be contracted by Venture 37 and attached to the final project report.

The implementing organization will budget for MEL activities, based on its internal procedures and linked to the STDF MEL Framework. This will include attention to undertake a baseline survey at the project inception, to help track and measure the results of the project at mid-term and at the end of the project (using the key performance indicators in the logical framework). As part of the MEL framework for this project, the implementing organization will monitor on an ongoing basis implementation of annual workplan, levels of beneficiary participation and physical delivery of the intended project outputs.

Ensuring adequate record keeping of the participating FBOs will be crucial to be able to track the performance achieved, particularly under the FBO component.

It is expected that M&E will make use of a mix of quantitative and qualitative indicators. The indicators will be further improved at the inception phase if the pilot project is approved):

- Implementation of government risk profiling of FBOs taking into account vTPA
- Number of government inspectors trained in vTPAs
- Number of auditors trained
- Number of vTPA programmes recognized, and/or MOUs/agreements in place
- The number of FBOs enrolled in the project
- Increased compliance of participating FBOs with national food safety regulations
- Improved food safety management systems in participating FBOs (measured through their ability to implement a vTPA programme, as well as reduced food/product losses, reduced market rejections, increased sales to high-value domestic markets, regional and/or international markets, etc.)
- Increased trust between the food safety regulatory authority and participating FBOs (measured through a survey, qualitative case stories, etc.)

19. Dissemination of the projects results

The results, experiences and lessons learnt from the pilot project will be published and widely disseminated different media including print/web (e.g. leaflets, blogs, news articles in the pilot countries, Venture 37 and STDF websites, etc.), as well as outreach at relevant regional and global events (CCAFRICA, EAC, Codex, GFSI, G2B, etc.). Feedback and experiences will be shared at meetings in the pilot countries, as well as at other relevant

regional meetings (e.g. CCAFRICA, EAC), discussions and side events at international events (e.g. CCFICS, CAC, GFSI meetings), as well as workshops organized by STDF partners (e.g. FAO, WBG, IFC) working on food safety capacity building. They will also be widely shared using the Codex and STDF websites, and relevant blogs and websites published by other organizations.

In particular, the project activities, lessons and outcomes will periodically be communicated and disseminated through the AGRA led Regional Food Trade Coalition and the newly established Food Safety and Nutrition Thematic Working Group constituted by donors and key stakeholders (including USAID, FCDO, Rockefeller, V37 and Gates).

A short film may be produced under the STDF Secretariat coordination and leadership and in close cooperation with UNIDO and IICA, implementers of the two other projects in West Africa and Latin America to illustrate the results achieved by the projects, with special attention on lessons learnt from the new cooperation and partnership between the private sector and the regulators in the use of vTPAs to improve food safety and trade outcomes.

In the beneficiary countries of Uganda and Rwanda, communication of the results will be planned with the full engagement of all partners involved, which will also help to profile the importance of improving food safety capacity for domestic health and trade, and recognize the improvements made by participating FBOs. Uganda and Rwanda are part of the East African Community (EAC), which provides a mechanism to further disseminate and share the experiences of this pilot project within the region. An improved, practical understanding on the use of vTPA programmes, based on evidence, is also expected to be very relevant to other African countries member of the African Union.

ATTACHMENTS

- Appendix 1:** Logical framework (see attached template)
- Appendix 2:** Work Plan (see attached template)
- Appendix 3:** Project Budget (see Excel sheet attached)
- Appendix 4:** Letters of support from organizations that support the project request
- Appendix 5:** Written consent from an STDF partner that agrees to implement the project **OR** evidence of the technical and professional capacity of another organization proposed to implement the project.

APPENDIX 1: Logical Framework2

	Indicator	Sources of verification	Assumptions
Goal: Improved compliance with national food safety standards and regulations for public health and trade			
OBJECTIVE: Improving compliance with national food safety standards and regulations for public health and trade	# of FBOs with economic gains (additional sales) Baseline: Target: X	Survey on the sales of the selected FBOs prior to the project activities and during project closure	<p>Assumptions: Pilot countries have the political will to define the potential way forward for the application of the Codex guidelines on the use and application of data generated by vTPA programmes.</p> <p>Risk: Lack of political will from competent authorities to use information for improved / data-driven regulatory decision-making.</p> <p>Means to address: The project will enhance awareness of regulators on the potential benefits of integrating available data in their decision-making on risk profiling.</p>
	# of people living below the poverty line who have access to products of guaranteed quality Baseline: X Target: X	Survey on the number of firms with an increase in exports, Statistical report on export	
	# of additional jobs created and jobs retained in selected sectors Baseline: X Target: X	Survey on the number of people employed prior and after the interventions among the selected enterprises, national statistical bureau	

	Indicator	Sources of verification	Assumptions
<p>Outcome 1: Increased awareness of regulatory authorities on how to assess and use data/information generated by vTPA programme in pilot countries</p>	<p>Cumulative number of new policy papers / strategies on vTPA validated by policymakers Baseline: 0 Target: 2</p> <p># of competent authorities strengthened in its regulatory decision-making for risk-profiling Baseline: 0 Target: 2</p> <p># of regulators from pilot countries engaged on the vTPA programme Baseline: X Target: X</p>	<p>Minutes of Meeting on the validation of policy papers</p> <p>Progress / final report on the number of competent authorities</p> <p>List of participants / attendance sheet on the meetings</p>	<p>Assumptions: Policy-makers and regulators committed to work with international partners and examine how new approaches (based on the use of information from vTPA programmes) can be used in practice to inform food safety policy and decision-making at different levels.</p> <p>Risk: Lack of resources and existing infrastructures at local level to establish a conducive enabling environment for the use of data used from vTPA programmes.</p> <p>Means to address: The project will define the required additional resources and support the governments in defining required follow-up actions in parallel with this pilot project and beyond.</p>

	Indicator	Sources of verification	Assumptions
<p>Output 1.1: National policy papers / strategies drafted in pilot countries on implementation options for potential assessment and use of data generated by vTPA programmes as part of the national food control system</p>	<p># of national policy papers / strategies drafted / prepared to define roadmap / process for the possible application / utilisation of data from vTPA programmes Baseline: 0 Target: 2</p> <p># of workshops / consultative session for policy formulation organized Baseline: 0 Target: X</p> <p># of analyses produced to scan local enabling environment Baseline: 0 Target: 2</p> <p># of capacity building provided on best practices as per Codex guidelines & principles (biannual mentoring / coaching provided) Baseline: 0 Target: 6</p>	<p>Draft policy papers are available Minutes of the meetings of the policy formulation Reports available on the enabling environments Memo of the mentoring sessions</p>	<p>Assumptions: The relevant stakeholders (competent authority, vTPA owners, certification bodies and the private sector) are willing to work together, actively involved and able to contribute to the design of the national policy/strategy document.</p> <p>Risk: Relevant stakeholders are excluded from stakeholder consultations, do not trust each other and/or are reluctant to support cooperation between the public and private sectors. Government authorities are unwilling to support the proposed policy on vTPA programmes.</p> <p>Means to address: The project will conduct an environmental scan to map all relevant stakeholders with an interest/role in vTPA programmes and will actively seek to involve them from the outset of the intervention.</p>
<p>Key activities</p>	<p>Activity 1.1.1: "Learning visit" of two government officials from each of the pilot countries (4 persons in total) to observe, discuss and understand how food safety regulators in other countries make use of reliable data and information from vTPA programmes as part of their national food control system.</p> <p>Activity 1.1.2: Conduct environment scan/review on the national food safety system, looking at the existing institutional framework, vTPA programmes being used in the country if any, etc. – in the selected value chains and compare against the national/international requirements</p> <p>Activity 1.1.3: Gender expert to conduct a gender analysis and make recommendations for the mainstreaming of gender in food safety policy, regulation and conformity assessment, in order to enhance gender equality in trade.</p> <p>Activity 1.1.4: National workshop for government officials in pilot countries to increase understanding and knowledge about different regulatory approaches and options to use vTPA programmes as part of their national food control systems</p>		

	Indicator	Sources of verification	Assumptions
	<p>Activity 1.1.5: Develop a process / roadmap for competent authorities in pilot countries to assess and/or make use of data generated by vTPA programmes, to complement their national food control system</p> <p>Activity 1.1.6: Biannual mentoring/coaching to enable officials from regulatory authority in pilot countries to engage in regular exchange (by Skype) with selected regulators in other countries making use of data/information generated by vTPA programmes</p>		
<p>Output 1.2: Risk-based inspection capabilities piloted for selected value chains</p>	<p># of assessments on national inspection capacities produced Baseline: 0 Target: 2</p> <p># of capacity building provided on risk-based food inspection and vTPA programmes Baseline: 0 Target: X</p> <p># of national workshops organized on data sharing Baseline: 0 Target: 2</p>	<p>Reports on national inspection capacities available</p> <p>Programme of the capacity building events and workshops</p> <p>List of participants</p>	<p>Assumptions: Inspectors have a better understanding of the differences between official inspection and certification compared to third party audits.</p> <p>Risk: Relevant competent authorities might struggle to apply /scale up the gained knowledge for other value chains.</p> <p>Means to address: The project will assess the competences of inspectors as part of activity 1.2.2 and support the government in developing proposals for additional capacity building from internal or external resources.</p>
<p>Key activities</p>	<p>Activity 1.2.1: Assess and review existing government inspection procedures (frequency, risk profiling, etc.) in the selected value chain/sector</p>		
	<p>Activity 1.2.2: Identify the needs and requirements in different areas (legislation, risk profiling, operating procedures, information and data exchange, human resources, etc.) to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate a risk-based inspection approach in the selected value chain that takes into account particular vTPA approach/model selected by the government.</p>		
	<p>Activity 1.2.3: Train government inspectors on risk-based inspection practices</p>		
	<p>Activity 1.2.4: Train government inspectors and auditors on vTPA programmes, with the inclusion of a session on accompanied audits</p>		
	<p>Activity 1.2.5: Conduct workshops on the possibilities of data sharing between vTPA owner and authorities and share experience of regulators from developed countries (e.g. UK, Canada, etc.) how to integrate them into risk profiling models</p>		

	Indicator	Sources of verification	Assumptions
<p>Outcome 2: Improved food safety compliance of FBOs in selected value chains based on the use of a voluntary food safety capacity building programme</p>	<p># of food business operators with improved food safety management practices Baseline: 0 Target: X\$ of new investments leverage from the private sector to improve food safety practicesTBC</p> <p># of protocol / guideline for voluntary food safety capacity building programme recognized by the Government Baseline: 0Target: X</p>	<p>Survey of participating food business operators</p> <p>Government document on the adoption of the voluntary food safety capacity building programme</p> <p>Website of the competent authorities</p>	<p>Assumptions: The developed voluntary food safety capacity building programme will provide additional data on the compliance capacities of food business operators and improve the understanding of the decision-makers on risk profiling of the selected value chain sector.</p> <p>Risk: There is a lack of commitment from the private sector to use the developed voluntary capacity building programme to allow decision-makers to use the data for improved regulatory decision-making.</p> <p>Means to address: The private sector will be included in the development process of the local application of the Codex Guideline to clarify potential misunderstandings or receive consent on information / data sharing.</p>

	Indicator	Sources of verification	Assumptions
Output 2.1: Voluntary food safety capacity building programme developed, customized and piloted among food business operators from selected value chains	# of assessment on value chain gaps in terms of food safety compliance produced Baseline: 0 Target: X	Reports on value chain gaps available	<p>Assumptions: Competent authorities and food safety practitioners are in a position to implement the voluntary food safety capacity building programme, and food operators are interested in engaging in this programme to improve their food safety practices and capacities.</p> <p>Risk: Lack of financial resources and thereby willingness from the private sector to improve their food safety management systems.</p> <p>Means to address: The project will select enterprises based on their readiness to invest in the upgrading of their operation.</p>
	# of toolkits and guidelines produced / customized Baseline: 0 Target: X	Toolkits and guidelines are publicly available on the competent authority's website	
	# of capacity building activities on vTPA programmes provided Baseline: 0 Target: X	Programme and participant list on the ToT training available Progress report	
Key activities	Activity 2.1.1: During the inception phase, develop selection criteria for FBOs to participate in the pilot training and mentoring.		
	Activity 2.1.2: Conduct targeted value chain mapping in the pilot countries focusing on compliance issues along the value chain including analysis of the conditions, reservations and specific problems of FBOs to participate in the vTPA approaches.		
	Activity 2.1.3: Localize / Adapt / Develop a voluntary food safety capacity building programme for the pilot countries based on existing international best practices		
	Activity 2.1.4: Conduct joint training-of-trainers (ToT) programmes for food safety practitioners from the public and private sector on vTPA programmes and auditors		
	Activity 2.1.5: Deliver training to selected food business operators and establish linkages between FBOs and buyers (including high-value retail and hotels/tourism in the country, as well as multinational companies and other buyers in export markets).		
	Activity 2.1.6: Workshop with financial lending institutions and FBOs to explore the feasibility of a lending system that will use vTPAs in their risk assessment		

	Indicator	Sources of verification	Assumptions
<p>Outcome 3: Increased awareness of food safety regulators on the application of vTPA approaches in other countries</p>	<p># of actors gaining awareness / knowledge on evidence-based policy-making through the utilisation of data generated by vTPA programmes Baseline: 0 Target: X</p>	<p>Lists of participants for workshops / events Feedback / surveys of food safety regulators (Qualitative indicators TBC)</p>	<p>Assumptions: Relevant stakeholders are able to participate in relevant international events to gain further understanding on the best practices how to apply the Codex Guideline and share their own experiences on the application of the Codex guideline.</p> <p>Risk: There is a lack of understanding on the principles and guidelines of the Codex guideline and how the pilot projects support the countries towards its application.</p> <p>Means to address: The project will engage stakeholders in sharing experience and support key regulators to be engaged with regulators played a key role in the development of the Codex Guideline.</p>
<p>Output 3.1: Regional and global events on vTPA programmes organized with the participation of pilot countries</p>	<p># of regional workshop / Steering Committees / GFSI side event / CCFICS meeting / SPS committee organized Baseline: 0 Target: X</p> <p># communication tools (case studies, blogs, presentations, fact sheets, videos) developed on the project Reference information: 0 Target Objectives: X</p>	<p>Programmes of regional workshop, GFSI, SPS Committee, CCFICS meetings and side events</p> <p>Websites of relevant organizations: GFSI, WTO, UNIDO, IICA and Codex Alimentarius</p>	<p>Assumptions: Relevant stakeholders are able to participate in relevant international events to understand better best practices on how to implement the Codex Guidelines and share their own experiences on its application. Regulators in the pilot countries are ready to learn from the use of the vTPA approaches by other countries. Developing country regulators participate in global events, share experience and dialogue.</p> <p>Risk: Lack of engagement from competent authorities in developed countries who already piloted the application of vTPA.</p> <p>Means to address: Key stakeholders (competent authorities and vTPA owners) will be identified in the inception phase in order to engage with them in the dissemination or exchange of experience / knowledge.</p>

	Indicator	Sources of verification	Assumptions
Key activities	Activity 3.1.1: Regulators from Uganda and Rwanda will be invited to participate in an annual pilot project meeting (with the implementing partners, other relevant public/private stakeholders, STDF Secretariat, etc.).		
	Activity 3.1.2: Organize a regional workshop on the assessment of vTPA programmes and the utilisation of their data linked to Codex Guidelines on the use of vTPAs, under the concept of South-South cooperation		
	Activity 3.1.3: Develop knowledge and communication products to disseminate experiences results, lessons and good practices that emerge from the regional pilot project (e.g. case studies, short film, other materials) to use in the dissemination process		
	Activity 3.1.4: Support food safety regulators from Uganda and Rwanda to share their experiences and lessons on vTPA programmes, data-sharing, etc. more widely with other regulators and stakeholders at the regional and global level. For instance, information sessions and side-events may be organized on the margins of CAC meetings, CCFICS meetings, SPS Committee meetings, etc.		

APPENDIX 2: Work Plan3

Activity	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Output 1.1 National policy papers / strategies drafted in pilot countries on implementation options for potential assessment and use of data generated by vTPA programmes as part of the national food control system												
Activity 1.1.1: "Learning visit" of two government officials from each of the pilot countries (4 persons in total) to observe, discuss and understand how food safety regulators in other countries make use of reliable data and information from vTPA programmes as part of their national food control system.												
Activity 1.1.2: Conduct environment scan/review on the national food safety system, looking at the existing institutional framework, vTPA programmes being used in the country if any, etc. – in the selected value chains and compare against the national/international requirements.												
Activity 1.1.3: Gender specialist to conduct a gender analysis and make recommendations												

Activity 1.1.4: National workshop for government officials in pilot countries to increase understanding and knowledge about different regulatory approaches and options to use vTPA programmes as part of their national food control systems.												
Activity 1.1.5: Develop a process / roadmap for competent authorities in pilot countries to assess and/or make use of data generated by vTPA programmes, to complement their national food control system.												
Activity 1.1.6: Biannual mentoring/coaching to enable officials from regulatory authority in pilot countries to engage in regular exchange (by Skype) with selected regulators in other countries making use of data/information generated by vTPA programmes.												

Activity	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Output 1.2 Risk-based inspection capabilities piloted for selected value chains												
Activity 1.2.1: Assess and review existing government inspection procedures (frequency, risk profiling, etc.) in the selected value chain/sector.												
Activity 1.2.2: Identify the needs and requirements in different areas (legislation, risk profiling, operating procedures, information and data exchange, human resources, etc.) to develop, implement,												

monitor and evaluate a risk-based inspection approach in the selected value chain that takes into account particular vTPA approach/model selected by the government.												
Activity 1.2.3: Train government inspectors on risk-based inspection practices.												
Activity 1.2.4: Train government inspectors and auditors on vTPA programmes, with the inclusion of a session on accompanied audits.												
Activity 1.2.5: Conduct workshops on the possibilities of data sharing between vTPA owner and authorities and share experience of regulators from developed countries (e.g. UK, Canada, etc.) how to integrate them into risk profiling models.												
Output 2.1 Voluntary food safety capacity building programme developed, customized and piloted among food business operators from selected value chains												
Activity 2.1.1: During the inception phase, develop selection criteria for FBOs to participate in the pilot training and mentoring.												
Activity 2.1.2: Conduct targeted value chain mapping in the pilot countries focusing on compliance issues along the value chain including analysis of the conditions, reservations and specific problems of FBOs to participate in the vTPA approaches to												

Activity 2.1.3: Localize / Adapt / Develop a voluntary food safety capacity building programme for the pilot countries based on existing international best practices.												
Activity 2.1.4: Conduct joint training-of-trainers (ToT) programmes for food safety practitioners from the public and private sector on vTPA programmes.												
Activity 2.1.5: Deliver training to selected food business operators and establish linkages between FBOs and buyers (including high-value retail and hotels/tourism in the country, as well as multinational companies and other buyers in export markets).												
Activity 2.1.6: workshop with financial lending institutions to develop a risk-based framework using vTPA												

Activity	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Output 3.1. Regional and global events on APTv programmes organized with the participation of pilot countries												
Activity 3.1.1: Regulators from Uganda and Rwanda will be invited to participate in an annual pilot project meeting (with the implementing partners, other relevant public/private stakeholders, STDF Secretariat, etc.).												

<p>Activity 3.1.2: Organize a regional workshop on the assessment of vTPA programmes and the utilisation of their data linked to Codex Guidelines, under the concept of South-South cooperation.</p>												
<p>Activity 3.1.3: Develop knowledge and communication products to disseminate experiences results, lessons and good practices that emerge from the regional pilot project (e.g. case studies, short film, other materials) to use in the dissemination process.</p>												
<p>Activity 3.1.4: Support food safety regulators from Uganda and Rwanda to share their experiences and lessons on vTPA programmes, data-sharing, etc. more widely with other regulators and stakeholders at the regional and global level. For instance, information sessions and side-events may be organized on the margins of CAC meetings, CCFICS meetings, SPS Committee meetings, etc.</p>												

APPENDIX 3: Budget (US\$)

See Excel sheet