

**STDF WORKING GROUP
29 NOVEMBER - 1 DECEMBER 2022
VIRTUAL MEETING**

SUMMARY REPORT

1 OPENING

1.1 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

1. The STDF Working Group met virtually on 29 November to 1 December 2022 from 14.00 to 17.00 (CET), using Zoom. The meeting was chaired by Kelly McCormick from the United States Food and Drug Administration (USFDA).
2. The chairperson welcomed participants and explained the modalities of the meeting. She informed members that the Minor Use Foundation (MUF), ITC, COLEACP, CABI and TradeMark East Africa were attending the meeting as observers.
3. Members adopted the agenda without amendments. Under item 5 (Other Business), the Netherlands suggested discussing the possibility of having a written description of the procedures and processes of the different STDF decision-making bodies.
4. The list of participants is provided in Annex 1. All presentations made to the Working Group are available on the STDF [website](#).

2 OPERATION OF THE FACILITY

2.1 Staffing and financial situation

5. The Secretariat updated members on STDF's staffing situation. It introduced and welcomed two new recruits: Chenge Nyagweta, who joined the Secretariat on 1 October 2022 as Communications Officer, and Aichetou Ba who joined the Secretariat on 1 November 2022 as MEL Officer. The Secretariat announced the departure of Ezinne Anyanwu (December 2022) and intern Myriam Hammadi (September 2022) and thanked them for their contributions to the work of the STDF. A new intern will be joining the team in January 2023. The Secretariat will continue to benefit from the services of Charles Njemo who is a WTO Young Professional until June 2023.
6. Referring to **Annex 2** of the annotated agenda, the Secretariat summarized the financial situation of the STDF Trust Fund. In 2022, the STDF received contributions from Australia, Canada, European Commission, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, The Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the United States for a current total of US\$5.1 million. The Secretariat is still to receive US\$400,000 from the United States, which would bring the total to US\$5.5 million. An additional multi-annual contribution of €2.85 million is also expected in 2022 from Germany (on top of an existing €2.6 million contribution). Thus, the total amount expected to be received in 2022 is approximately US\$6.2 million, which is still below the amount of US\$6.9 million required by the STDF to fully implement its 2022 Work Plan.
7. The Secretariat informed members that there is approximately US\$2 million available for the Working Group to allocate to new projects and PPGs under agenda item 3. Given the current demand on the STDF and the budget constraints, the Secretariat alerted members that they may be required to prioritize projects under this agenda item.
8. The Secretariat further explained that demand for projects continues to be high and that expenditures have picked up considerably in 2022 after the pandemic. The Netherlands mentioned it aims to continue and increase its contribution to the STDF for the period 2023-2024.

2.2 Selection of new developing country experts (2023-2024)

9. The chairperson updated members on the recent selection of three new developing country experts for the period 2023-2024: (i) Jaime Ricardo Romero Prada (Colombia); (ii) Martin Epafras Kimanya (Tanzania); and (iii) Mary Grace Rivere-Mandigma (Philippines). The experts nominated for the period 2021-2023 will continue to serve the STDF in 2023, i.e., Sithar Dorjee, Juliet Goldsmith and Unesu Ushewokunze-Obatolu. The term of three experts – Visoni Timote, Mirian Bueno and Lucy Namu - will end on 31 December 2022.

2.3 Selection of vice-chairperson of the STDF Working Group (2023)

10. The chairperson reminded members that Gillian Mylrea (WOAH), vice-chairperson in 2022, will become chairperson of the Working Group in 2023. Members accepted and welcomed Sarah Brunel (IPPC) as the new vice-chairperson in 2023, and hence chairperson in 2024.

2.4 STDF 2023 Work Plan

11. The Secretariat guided members through STDF's proposed [2023 Work Plan](#), which provides information on STDF's planned activities, expected outputs and the inputs required to achieve STDF's outcomes and goals under each of STDF's three workstreams (global platform, knowledge work, funding mechanism). The plan includes information on how it will be delivered, including in relation to Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL), Communications (COMMS), as well as the human and financial resources required.

12. The new plan focuses on expanding the reach and use of existing knowledge work. Collaboration among STDF members and other stakeholders will be deepened through continued engagement in STDF's practitioner groups and with the thematic groups supporting implementation of the MC-12 SPS Declaration. A global event will be organized to share knowledge and learning on innovative and digital approaches to improve SPS capacity, as well as a regional event in Africa on Good Regulatory Practice (GRP), in partnership with regional actors involved in regional integration and trade facilitation. Some members (Canada, EC, FAO) identified areas of their own work, which are relevant to the planned GRP event and requested to be engaged. A cross-cutting assessment of STDF work focused on the environment including climate change and biodiversity is also proposed and planned.

13. In response to questions, the Secretariat clarified that no date had been set yet for the next Policy Committee meeting, which would be held virtually in the first half of 2023. Approval of the Terms of Reference for the next external evaluation of the STDF programme is expected to be one of the agenda items. On a question regarding cross-cutting issues, the Secretariat referred members to the [STDF Strategy \(2020-2024\)](#), emphasizing that besides gender, most of the proposed areas such as environment, biodiversity and climate change, are covered. One member queried about the budget available for external project evaluations. The Secretariat mentioned that it will review and potentially increase budget allocations in the future to ensure that evaluations are well developed and implemented. The Secretariat also agreed to elaborate on risk management in the proposed plan.

14. Members approved STDF's 2023 Work Plan budget (with inclusion of additional information on risk management). It also agreed on the schedule for the STDF Working Group meetings in 2023, i.e., 13-15 June (in-person) and 21-23 November (in person or virtually, to be confirmed).

2.5 Communications (COMMS)

15. The Secretariat provided an update on the implementation of STDF's [Communications Plan](#) and reminded participants of its goal to raise awareness of STDF's global platform and promote the uptake of STDF knowledge products and project support in developing countries. In this context, the Secretariat's core products include news items, results stories, newsletters, briefing notes, videos and photos shared through events, publications, and digital media. Work on redesigning the [STDF website](#) started in 2022 and will be completed in 2023. The informal group of communications officers across partners and other stakeholders will continue to meet in 2023 to identify and leverage opportunities and enhance the visibility of STDF's work and projects. Work on a new STDF Results Book and STDF's 2022 Annual Report also started in 2022.

2.6 Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)

2.6.1 Gender assessment

16. The Secretariat reported on the virtual meeting on 28 November, which enabled members to discuss the key findings, conclusions and recommendations of the [Gender Assessment Report](#). Members discussed the recommendations and proposed follow-up actions in small breakout groups, following a presentation by STDF's gender consultant, Ms Ignacia Simonetti. There was broad agreement on the need to improve gender mainstreaming across all STDF's workstreams to improve the results and impact of STDF's work. As recommended by the assessment, members agreed for the Secretariat to work with the gender consultant, and interested Working Group members, to draft a gender action plan for consideration by the Working Group in 2023. Some members (IPPC, WOA, France) noted the relevance of STDF's ongoing work on gender. Some participants noted that the report was catalytic to mainstreaming gender in their own trainings (i.e., in the phytosanitary capacity building evaluation course), while others noted that some of its findings would be very useful to inform bilateral or support SPS programmes and help to develop gender policy at an organizational level.

2.6.2 Implementation of LogAlto tool

17. Members were informed about ongoing work on LogAlto, STDF's off-the-shelf online tool to support results-based management. Following training in the pilot phase (January – September 2022), eight project implementing organizations have submitted progress reports for the first half of 2022 using the new system. Initial feedback is encouraging, and LogAlto is providing an opportunity for dialogue to improve MEL with implementing partners. Training is ongoing to onboard other ongoing STDF projects, populate project dashboards and input related data (logframes, activity plans), map project indicators to the STDF programme indicators, and further configure the platform to align with STDF's needs. All ongoing projects are expected to be included in LogAlto by the end of 2023. The Secretariat plans to organize an online meeting to present LogAlto to Working Group members in early 2023.

2.6.3 Assessment of STDF's P-IMA Work

18. The Secretariat reminded members that the STDF 2022 Work Plan included provision for an external assessment of one STDF knowledge topic (STDF's work on evidence-based approaches to prioritize SPS investments for market access, or P-IMA, was selected), budgeted at US\$50,000, for delivery in 2023. This assessment will consider how (and to what effect) STDF's work on P-IMA has delivered results and impacts linked to STDF's theory of change, and identify key findings, conclusions, and recommendations to inform and improve future knowledge work. The Secretariat identified a qualified external consultant - in consultation with the chairperson of the Working Group - to carry out the assessment. Terms of Reference (TOR) for the assessment will be shared with members after the meeting for comments and feedback.

2.6.4 Ex post evaluation of ongoing and new STDF projects

19. The Secretariat informed that two ongoing external ex-post project evaluations ([STDF/PG/502](#) and [STDF/PG/504](#)) will be completed by mid-2023.

20. The Secretariat reminded members that in June 2022 the Working Group agreed to select projects completed in 2021 and 2022 for an external ex-post evaluation at this meeting. One project was completed in 2021, and 13 projects were completed (or will be) by the end of 2022. Members were requested to share their views on the selection of projects for external ex-post impact evaluation (normally carried out 2-3 years after project completion). The Secretariat reminded members that while the selection is normally made randomly, the STDF Operational Rules also allow for a non-random selection (e.g., selection of certain projects for a joint thematic evaluation, etc.).

21. Several members discouraged a fully randomized selection and instead supported the option of a thematic evaluation (e.g., focused on value chain projects, innovation, projects in a particular sector, etc.). Suggestions were made to consider projects with greater impact or learning potential, or projects implemented by organizations that have not yet benefitted from project evaluations. It was noted that a meta-thematic evaluation would generate more lessons but would also require a

larger budget. It was suggested that such a meta-evaluation could also be included as an integral part of the next STDF programme evaluation.

22. Members agreed for the Secretariat to provide them with options and criteria (via email) to select projects for the next impact evaluations, while considering the upcoming programme evaluation.

23. The Secretariat noted that all external impact evaluation reports and end-of-project assessments are published on the relevant project pages on the STDF website. These documents may be regrouped and made available in a new MEL section on the new STDF website. The Secretariat regularly organizes events to share the key findings of external evaluations with the Working Group and/or other relevant stakeholders.

2.7 External evaluation of STDF partnership

24. The Secretariat reminded members that in accordance with the [STDF Operational Rules](#) the partnership is evaluated every five years by an external reviewer appointed by the WTO after consultation with the Working Group. This evaluation is normally concluded one year before the end of the STDF Strategy, in this case early 2024, unless decided otherwise by the STDF Policy Committee. Members were informed that the next evaluation should therefore commence in 2023, for delivery early 2024. The Secretariat referred members to the last 2019 [STDF evaluation](#) conducted by Nathan Associates. As previously reported to the Working Group, the recommendations have largely been implemented or are ongoing.

25. Members met in six virtual breakout rooms to have an initial discussion on purpose, scope, and delivery of the next programme evaluation. Some members noted that the last evaluation was comprehensive and relatively recent and recommended the next evaluation to be more targeted and focused on impact (using the OECD-DAC criteria). Other considerations put forward by members included: (i) the extent to which STDF's delivery model is fit for purpose and sufficiently flexible linked to challenges posed by the pandemic; (ii) relevant emerging SPS issues and strategic opportunities to strengthen the partnership; (iii) STDF's value-added, success in scaling-up and ability to address wide-ranging needs given the relatively limited number of projects; (iv) results achieved based on the needs and perspectives of LDCs and small island developing countries; and (v) results of knowledge work and projects. Recommendations also focused on the use of innovative evaluation methods, engagement of beneficiaries, and value-for-money considerations. Some donors noted the importance of this evaluation in order to continue their support to the STDF and emphasized the need to communicate findings in a user-friendly manner.

26. The Secretariat thanked members for the comments received, which it will use to prepare a first draft of the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the external evaluation. The draft TOR will be shared with the Working Group for review and comments early 2023, prior to finalization and approval by the Policy Committee. The WTO procurement process for the evaluation would begin soon afterwards.

3 PPGs AND PROJECTS

3.1 Overview of ongoing and completed projects and PPGs

27. The Secretariat referred members to document STDF/WG/Nov22/Overview, which contains an overview of the implementation status of ongoing projects and PPGs. Members approved two no-cost extensions to complete project activities ([STDF/PG/681](#) and [STDF/PG/517](#)).

3.2 Overview of new project and PPG applications not tabled for consideration

28. The Secretariat introduced document STDF/WG/Nov22/Review, which lists and documents all PPG and project applications tabled for consideration by the Working Group, as well the applications not tabled at this meeting. France requested additional information on one PPG (STDF/PPG/873) and two project (STDF/PG/883 and STDF/PG/886) applications, not tabled for consideration.

3.3 Consideration of new PPG applications

29. The chairperson requested members and organizations that have or will be involved in the development or implementation of specific applications to refrain from participating in the decision-making process on PPGs and projects.

STDF/PPG/850 – Strengthening India's horticulture sector using GAP

30. The Working Group **did not approve** this application. Members recommended that the applicant revise and resubmit the application. Members welcomed the PPG's approach to promote safety and quality of horticultural products by adopting Good Agriculture Practices and appreciated its strong public-private partnership approach. Members made several recommendations to improve the proposal including: (i) clarifying its outcome, i.e., feasibility study or project proposal, (ii) clarifying how the international consultant would implement this PPG, i.e., specific tasks and associated budget, (iii) providing more information on how small-scale farmers benefit from this approach; (iv) ensuring the link with international standards (Codex) and exploring the inclusion/consideration of other products (spices).

STDF/PPG/858 – Piloting One Health to manage aflatoxin in Asia

31. The Working Group **approved** this PPG application. The EC welcomed the focus on One Health and suggested that final selection of the countries should be made based on demand from stakeholders, partner organizations and severity of the issue. It also encouraged possible synergies with projects under the Better Training for Safer Food (BTSF) Programme through which projects on aflatoxin contamination, including in Indonesia are financed. Given One Health's linkages with ministries of health, trade/commerce and agriculture, FAO suggested that the proposal should specify Government counterparts and ensure that they are included in the consultations. The WHO recommended inclusion of practical risk management options such as local farmer/handler training, storage maintenance and strengthening surveillance system in different regulatory environments. The Secretariat will ensure adequate attention is paid to the points raised by members during PPG implementation.

STDF/PPG/859 - Improving SPS measures to enhance sesame & cashew nuts exports in Burkina Faso

32. The Working Group **approved** this PPG application. The Secretariat noted that the comments received from members in writing prior to the meeting could easily be integrated into the final proposal. Sweden noted synergies with EIF-support and raised some concerns on the political context and risk. The Secretariat informed members that the political context has not affected the implementation of a project currently under implementation but that political risks will be considered in the development of the ToRs and during the implementation of the PPG.

STDF/PPG/860 - Reducing histamines in Pole-and-Line and Handline caught Tuna in Indonesia

33. The Working Group **approved** this PPG application on the condition that the Indonesian Ministry of Marine Affairs & Fisheries provides a letter of support. The Secretariat highlighted some written comments received from members and questions posed by WHO, FAO and the EC. Tuna fishing can take place near the coast in Indonesia and there are many small-scale fisheries operating close to and within sight of the shore, especially in areas where there are steep drop-offs into deeper water nearby. In addition, small-scale fisher associations that become International Pole and Line Foundation (IPNLF) members do so at zero financial cost. The Secretariat noted that it would encourage the PPG to build synergies with ongoing and future initiatives such as the EU-funded ARISE+ programme in Indonesia. Germany shared that it had cooperation agreements with IPNLF and considered them to be an effective implementing partner.

STDF/PPG/866 - Strengthening SPS compliance capacity building in Ghana

34. The Working Group **did not approve** this PPG application and recommended that it be revised and resubmitted. Members encouraged the applicant to coordinate with agencies and development partners working in Ghana to ensure complementarity with existing and planned plant health initiatives, and with the Ghana offices of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, FAO, and USAID. The EC added that in addition to targeted value chains - pineapples, yam, shea, cashew, curry leaves, bitter gourds, the proposal

should consider other value chains such as mangoes or cassava (also supported by WACOMP programme).

35. The IPPC Secretariat recommended that relevant e-learning courses on Phytosanitary Inspection and Export Certification be used by PPRSD to further develop existing inspectors' expertise. Project development should also pay attention to implementation of selected ISPMs, particularly ISPM 7 (Export Certification System), and ISPM 23 (Guidelines for Inspection). In addition, it noted that the applicant may consider conducting a Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) as part of the resulting project, including provision to update Ghana's phytosanitary legislation.

STDF/PPG/869 - Strengthening food safety control capacities in Cape Verde

36. The Working Group **approved** this PPG application. FAO recognized that the proposal is timely and aligns with ongoing initiatives related to food safety and SPS issues in the country and emphasized the need to prioritize key sectors during implementation. The US supported the PPG application and highlighted that implementation should keep regional harmonization efforts in mind, including those through the West Africa Pesticide Regional Committee (WAPRC), the West Africa Food Safety Convergence Forum, the Africa Continental Free Trade Area, and the work of the regional Codex Committee for Africa (CCAFRICA).

STDF/PPG/871 - Developing Vietnamese pork sector

37. The Working Group **did not approve** this PPG application. Members failed to see the sanitary problem and market access links in a country that presents a net trade deficit. They found that the rationale and relevance for this PPG should be better justified. WOAHA shared information about a few projects in Vietnam related to the pork industry, as well as several diagnostic studies, that could overlap with the requested PPG. Members also shared concerns regarding ownership of the project, i.e., how well engaged national government agencies and private-sector partners were, as no letter of support was attached to the application. If the PPG were to be pursued, the EC suggested to consider and include sustainable practices (i.e., addressing methane emissions).

3.4 Consideration of new PG applications

STDF/PG/809 - Managing potato pest in Eastern and Southern Africa

38. The Working Group **approved** this project highlighting its timeliness in the wake of global food crisis, its regional approach and potential of lessons learned being scaled to other regions. The IPPC Secretariat and the US suggested that references be made to the relevant international standards (ISPMs), and to IPPC guides and training materials and beyond compliance tools, in particular: ISPM2 (framework to pest risk analysis); ISPM11 (pest risk analysis for quarantine pests), and the guide for establishing and maintaining pest free areas. Relevant IPPC guides and training materials can generally be found [here](#). The EU encouraged the use of bio/eco-friendly means such as bio pesticides, introduction of natural enemies and good agricultural practices. The EU also encouraged to build synergies with ongoing EU funded initiatives, in particular in SADC (STOSAR), Malawi (DESIRA) and Tanzania.

STDF/PG/716 - Improving capacity of food safety risk analysis Latin America

39. The Working Group **approved** this project, with the suggestion that implementation should enhance regional visibility and incorporate lessons learned and results from previous projects. Sweden stressed the importance of ensuring that analytical work will be translated into actions. The US recommended that the project explore the possibility of involving IICA in this effort and urged that links with USDA's ongoing regional work be identified to boost complementarities and avoid duplication. They also suggested that implementing partners relate to JIFSAN, the FDA/CFSAN Risk Team & FDA/CFSAN Produce experts. The EC emphasized the importance of including lessons learned and results from previous STDF funded regional projects in the region with national food safety competent authorities.

STDF/PG/761 - Managing pesticide residue in Armenia

40. The Working Group **did not approve** this project. The Secretariat requested members to consider - exceptionally - a waiver of the 60% in-kind contribution normally requested from Upper Middle-Income Countries (UMICs), as the PPG work for this project had started in 2021 (when Armenia was still classified as Lower Middle-Income Country (LMIC)). Some members expressed

discomfort with a waiver and considered that Armenia should contribute at least 60% of the STDF contribution, in accordance with the STDF Operational Rules.

41. FAO pointed out that for more successful outcomes, the applicant should clarify the purpose and scope of activity 2.8 - pesticides risk assessment (PRA). It is not clear whether the development of a PRA system is necessary for national standard-setting, while there are available resources in risk assessment and risk mitigation guidance of chemicals from the Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR) and Codex committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR). It added that considering the limited budget activities under each objective should be reduced. Assessment of gaps between EU MRLs (i.e., the relevant market) and actual residue levels in Armenia should be added.

STDF/PG/845 - Promoting export through pesticide residue management in Nigeria

42. The Working Group **did not approve** this project application and recommended that it be revised and resubmitted. The Secretariat highlighted some of the written comments provided by members prior to the meeting. FAO suggested to add activities such as the use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and biopesticides to the GAP training. The EU suggested that the project should increase its scope to include the management of pathogenic microorganisms such as salmonella. The US suggested that Nigeria should consider prioritization of data generation for submission to Codex to set international standards.

43. The US noted that more information was needed on how this project would avoid duplicating efforts under the Zero Reject project which is funded by USAID and the EU. It also highlighted that more preliminary work may be needed to explore the available alternatives and tools for Nigerian farmers to avoid MRL issues in cowpeas and sesame before the envisioned outreach is viable. Canada supported the concept but asked whether the scope could be broadened to include other products.

STDF/PG/880 – Improving SPS capacity for Soursop exports in Grenada

44. The Working Group **approved** this project with some recommendations. Members acknowledged the relevance of the project aimed at maintaining and increasing exports of Grenada soursop and welcomed its objective of promoting diversification into new markets. They also recognized that it would be the first time that Grenada benefits directly from STDF support, which is expected to have positive spill-over effects in the Caribbean region. Members made recommendations to further strengthen the work to be carried out under this project. The US suggested that all activities should reflect the link to solving the specific pest/phytosanitary issue as opposed to activities only focusing on branding/marketing. IPPC recommended that its tools and materials be taken into account for training purposes (the [guide](#) on Surveillance and reference IPPC prevention, preparedness and response [guidelines](#) for *Spodoptera frugiperda* and IPPC [materials](#) on export certification). FAO suggested that the proposal obtain and reference the Pest Risk Analysis performed on soursop pests, which may contain relevant information for pest prevention. It also shared recommendations to be considered when developing good agricultural practices for the project, related to the occurrence of anthracnose.

3.5 Decision on prioritization and funding new project applications

45. The Secretariat informed members that US\$2 million was available for the Working Group to support new projects and PPGs. It also flagged that, due to COVID-19, some completed, or near-completed projects present unspent resources and savings (currently totalling US\$250,000), which will be returned to the STDF early 2023. It noted that the PPGs and PGs approved at this WG meeting amounted to approx. US\$2.5 million in STDF funding. In view of the expected savings in early 2023, the Secretariat informed that no prioritization is necessary and that the Working Group can approve all PPGs and PGs.

4 KNOWLEDGE WORK

4.1 Information exchange

46. The International Trade Centre (ITC) [presented](#) its new [ITC/UNECE guide](#) which contains information for border regulators on integrated risk management. This publication offers a roadmap for regulatory agencies in developing countries on how to build modern, integrated risk management and compliance systems at the border. The guide aims to improve the efficiency of border control and import compliance to facilitate international trade, and to help agencies expedite trade flows in

the post-pandemic world, while ensuring compliance with and the safety of cross-border trade procedures.

47. Members appreciated the usefulness of the guide to inform cross border compliance to facilitate international trade and capacity development efforts. Some members inquired about the investment needed for integration of cross border infrastructure (i.e., laboratory and cold storage system) and about the financial sustainability of the integrated risk management tool. Other members requested more information about plans for dissemination to enhance visibility of the tool. In response, ITC mentioned that implementation of the tool is work-in-progress, and that visibility and information dissemination will be enhanced through networks of beneficiaries, partners, agencies and interested stakeholders, beyond ITC.

4.2 Report by Secretariat on ongoing work

4.2.1 Good Regulatory Practice (GRP)

48. The Secretariat reported on ongoing efforts to disseminate the [STDF Guide on GRPs](#) and related [Briefing note](#). The Secretariat invited members to share suggestions on additional opportunities to disseminate the [GRP Guide](#) via their ongoing/planned work and networks. Members thanked the Secretariat and expressed commitment to support wider dissemination of the GRP Guide.

4.2.2 Prioritization of SPS Investments for Market Access (P-IMA)

49. The Secretariat highlighted increasing interest in the [P-IMA](#) framework in developing countries, and updated members on an STDF [event](#) (co-organized with AGRA and the Food Trade Coalition for Africa) on the use of innovative evidence-based approaches to leverage food safety investments for regional trade, in the margins of the African Green Revolution Forum (AGRF). It also highlighted work in Ghana to prioritize aflatoxin-related interventions in food and feed ([STDF/PPG/786](#)) and drew attention to the next meeting of the P-IMA Practitioner Group on 6 December 2022 to share the experiences of this work. Planning is underway to use P-IMA in Bangladesh ([STDF/PPG/831](#)), engaging STDF partners and donors (including World Bank, IFC, FAO, USDA, USAID) to build on their SPS work. STDF partners (IPPC, FAO, WOA) identified opportunities to develop stronger linkages better the P-IMA framework to their sectoral capacity evaluation tools. Partners agreed to organize a meeting on this topic in 2023.

4.2.3 Public Private Partnership (PPP)

50. The Secretariat updated members on ongoing work on PPPs, including [STDF PPP case stories](#). It was noted that core members of the [PPP Practitioner Group](#) had met to discuss how to strengthen the Group based on the findings of the internal assessment, and decided to alternate smaller meetings of core members to advance new joint work on PPP products (e.g. checklists, publications) with webinars to share PPP cases with a wider audience. The Practitioner Group will host a webinar on 12 December 2022 to share the GreenCert PPP in [Tanzania](#).

51. The Secretariat provided an update on the UNIDO/STDF/Australia [Vienna Food Safety Forum](#) (3-5 October 2022), attended by over 400 public, private and other stakeholders (150 in Vienna), which shared experiences on digital transformation of food safety practices (including e-certification, voluntary third-party assurance (vTPA) programmes, and remote audit and inspection). Contributing the resources budgeted for an STDF PPP event in 2022 towards this event was considered to increase the reach and impact of STDF's funds. Public and private sector members of the [vTPA Partnership Platform](#) (an initiative launched by UNIDO linked to ongoing STDF vTPA pilot projects) met in the margins in a workshop, chaired by Steve Wearne (Codex Chairperson).

52. In response to a question raised by the Netherlands, the Secretariat pointed out that the STDF is engaged with private sector at the local level, through local industry associations. Members were encouraged to share information on ongoing work on PPPs in Africa and other countries.

4.2.4 SPS electronic certification

53. The Secretariat updated members on ongoing work on [e-Cert](#). This included participation in several events, such as: (i) the WTO LDC Sub-Committee in May 2022, which featured the

implementation of [ePhyto in Madagascar](#) as a success story; (ii) the ePhyto Industry Advisory Group (IAG) organized in September, in the margins of the International Plant Health Conference (IPHC); (iii) the Vienna Food Safety Forum 2022 in October, organized jointly with UNIDO and Australia; (iv) the APEC Workshop on the Application of Electronic Veterinary and Phytosanitary Certificates in October; and (v) the WTO Working Group on Trade and Transfer of Technology in November 2022.

54. In addition, the Secretariat informed members that a short meeting with some members of the ECAC took place in June 2022 to discuss the findings of the internal assessment of Practitioner Groups and options to strengthen the work of the ECAC. Members agreed to: (i) review and clarify ECAC's objective and operations to facilitate collective work on topics of interest to core members; (ii) develop a project to pilot and learn about options for increased integration and harmonization on eCert across the SPS area; and (iii) identify opportunities to link eCert to larger digitalization initiatives.

55. A second wider [meeting](#) took place in November 2022, which saw a presentation by the Trade Logistics Information Pipeline (TLIP) system, developed by the IOTA Foundation. Opportunities and challenges in linking the TLIP system with the ePhyto system were discussed.

4.3 Information exchange

4.3.1 Minor Use Foundation (MUF)

56. The MUF – which was established in 2019 with STDF support - presented its ongoing [work](#), serving minor use growers around the world, providing technical assistance and helping set standards that allow them to access international markets. In particular, the MUF aims to provide a coordinated mechanism to gather and prioritize pest control data at global level, and to coordinate residue data generation projects among multiple countries to establish Codex MRLs across Africa, Latin America, and South-East Asia.

57. Members recognized the relevance and usefulness of the work of the MUF as a resource to meet and breach data gaps in reviewing issues related to pesticides and to build synergies with agro-chemical companies. They wondered whether the MUF had done work on generic pesticides due to the rising concerns of the cost of pesticides in most developing countries. In response, the MUF informed members that there is no current project on generic pesticides - but expressed willingness to explore and integrate generic pesticides in the work of the foundation.

4.3.2 Other new/emerging SPS initiatives/issues

58. The WHO shared information on its [Global Strategy for Food Safety \(2022-2030\)](#) publication and informed members that the next meeting of the [Technical Advisory Group](#) on food safety to discuss implementation of the new strategy would be held between 13-15 December 2022. It also informed members on the [One Health joint plan of action](#) (2022–2026), which includes a focus on expanding capacities to manage food safety risks.

59. The FAO mentioned a new 2-year €5 million [project](#) to improve food safety and phytosanitary control throughout 12 African countries in the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) region - with training sessions scheduled for stakeholders in Comoros. The project will also strengthen food safety and plant health, strengthen governance, build capacity, and improve strategic planning of participating countries around food safety and plant health.

60. The IPPC Secretariat gave a brief update on its involvement in the [SPS Transparency Champion course](#) in October 2022 and on the thematic session on pest risk analysis held during the last WTO SPS Committee meeting. IPPC also took part in joint One Health projects.

61. The WTO informed members about a recent increase in training activities, which meant more opportunities to refer to STDF materials. It also mentioned that a significant number of activities will be planned in 2023, which will soon be covered in the annual overview document on technical assistance for the SPS Committee early 2023 (G/SPS/GEN/997/Rev.13).

62. The US announced its new [Food Safety for Security \(FS4FS\) initiative](#) between USAID, USDA and FDA, which constitutes a new phase of its food safety partnership. The programme will run from

October 2022 until September 2027 and will support safe trade in food products as a means for economic development and food security in developing countries. It will build on food safety networks and creating an enabling environment for SPS systems in Feed the Future countries.

5 OTHER BUSINESS

63. In response to a request from The Netherlands for a description of the procedures and processes of the STDF Policy Committee and Working Group, the Secretariat agreed to develop and share this document with the Working Group early 2023, for comments. Once approved, this document could be added to the STDF website.

64. The Secretariat thanked all members and participants, and in particular the outgoing chairperson of the Working Group, as well as the outgoing developing country experts, for their excellent contributions to the work of the STDF over the years. It reminded members that a draft summary report of the meeting will be circulated to members in December, for comments by mid-January 2023. The Secretariat will also share the draft TOR for the external P-IMA evaluation for comments. The Secretariat reminded members of the dates of: (i) the upcoming practitioner groups meetings, namely P-IMA (6 December) and PPPs (12 December); and (ii) the STDF Working Group meetings in 2023, namely 13-15 June (in-person) and 21-23 November (in-person or virtual, to be confirmed).

6 CLOSURE

65. The chairperson thanked all participants for their active engagement and closed the meeting at 16:21.

ANNEX 1

**STDF WORKING GROUP
29 NOVEMBER – 1 DECEMBER 2022**

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