

The Standards and Trade Development Facility

# Mid-Term Review

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**Final Report**

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Submitted by:

**SAANA CONSULTING**

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## List of Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AfDB	African Development Bank
AfT	Aid for Trade
APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
AUC	Africa Union Commission
BAHA	Belize Agricultural Health Authority
CABI	Centre for Agricultural Bioscience International
CIDA	Canadian International Agency Approach
COLEACP	Europe-Africa-Caribbean-Pacific Liaison Committee
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DTIS	Diagnostic Trade Integration Studies
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EDF	European Development Fund
EIF	Enhanced Integrated Framework
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FSCF	Food Safety Cooperation Forum
GFSP	Global Food Safety Partnership
IAS	Invasive Alien Species
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IICA	Inter-American Institute for Cooperation
IPPC	International Plant Protection Convention
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCDA	Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis
MTR	Mid-Term Review

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OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OIE	World Organization for Animal Health
OIRSA	International Regional Organization for Plant and Animal Health
OLICs	Other Lower Income Countries
OLIEs	Other Low Income Economies
PCE	Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation
PG	Project Grant
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
PPPs	Public Private Partnerships
PVS	Performance of Veterinary Services
RBM	Results based management
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
SECO	Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SMART	Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary
STDF	Standards and Trade Development Facility
TFF	Trade Facilitation Facility
ToR	Terms of Reference
WG	Working Group
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the results of the third Mid Term Review (MTR) of the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF). The STDF supports developing countries in building their capacity to implement international SPS standards, guidelines and recommendations as a means to improve their human, animal and plant health status and ability to gain and maintain access to markets. In doing so, it contributes to sustainable economic growth, poverty reduction, food security and environmental protection in developing countries. More specifically, the STDF increases awareness, mobilizes additional resources, strengthens collaboration and identifies and disseminates good practice to enhance the effectiveness of SPS assistance. The STDF also provides support and funding for the development and implementation of projects that promote compliance with international SPS requirements.

The STDF is a global partnership established by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), the World Bank, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). Other organizations involved in SPS-related technical cooperation, donors contributing funds to the STDF and developing country experts participate actively in the Facility's work. The STDF is managed and hosted by the WTO.

The purpose of the MTR was to provide an independent assessment of progress in the implementation of STDF's current strategy against the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact; to review the performance of the STDF Secretariat, the STDF's governance structure and operation systems, its funding and staffing levels; to capture success stories and lessons learned and to promote feedback and knowledge-sharing among all STDF partners, donors, developing country experts and beneficiaries. The period of the review from 2009 to 2013 overlaps the Medium Term Strategy 2007-11 and the current Medium Term Strategy 2012-16.

The evaluation team consisted of two persons supported by a back stopping team. It was carried out in three phases between July and November 2013. It was conducted in accordance with the evaluation terms of reference and the OECD best practice guidelines for evaluations. The first phase included a documentation review, extensive consultation with the STDF Secretariat and interviews with WTO stakeholders. The second phase comprised interviews with members of the STDF Working Group including donors, partners, developing countries, observers and other relevant stakeholders. This was followed by further documentation review and consultations with the STDF Secretariat. The findings of both phases were then collated, analysed and synthesised in accordance to the DAC criteria, after which this draft report was prepared.

Measured against the aims of the Medium Term Strategy 2007-11 and the mandate of the Medium Term Strategy 2012-16 the STDF has made good progress in the period under review. The results are impressive and a testament to the effective operation of the STDF WG approval process as well as the support provided by the STDF Secretariat. The major success of the STDF has been as a funding mechanism for project grants (PGs) and project preparation grants (PPGs). A total of 31 PGs were approved for funding in the period 2009-12 with a value of value of USD15.3 Million exceeding the STDF target of 24. In value terms 55 per cent of the projects addressed food safety issues, 23 per cent general SPS issues, 19 per cent plant health issues and 3 per cent animal health issues. The projects have covered over 40 countries with good geographical coverage. The projects addressed public and private sector capacity deficits, both institutional and technical, which were acting as constraints to gaining and or maintaining market access. 21 projects completed implementation within the review period totaling a value of USD 12.3 Million. Projects were

considered highly relevant to the needs of the beneficiaries and to the policies of partners and donors. Projects were generally considered effective in that they produced most of the deliverables as planned. Most projects were efficient delivering planned outputs on time and within budget. Time extensions were granted for about 30 percent of the grants, but these were justified by circumstances outside the control of the projects themselves. The long-term sustainability of results is likely for many projects, but inevitably was an issue for others due to reasons including high staff turnover at the recipient organization, a lack of operational funding at project completion, and lack of local ownership of the deliverables. Regional approaches were particularly successful for a project in Latin America to strengthen institutional SPS structures across the region at national level, and in two projects in West Africa: one to improve performance in fisheries management and the other to control fruit flies. It is currently too early to assess impact, but emerging evidence suggests that there is potential for significant impact where outcomes can be sustained.

The PPG program addressed an exigent need of beneficiaries particularly in least developed countries (LDCs) and other lower income countries (OLICs). The support provided to applicants during the application process built significant capacity in project identification and design on SPS issues related to institutional strengthening as well as technical competence and capacity evaluation. The skills developed are likely transferable and replicable. A total of 24 PPGs were approved for funding in the period 2009-12 totaling USD 733,000. Preparation of PPGs was supported in a wide range of countries and regions. The number of PPGs developed as PGs and approved by the STDF has increased from 14 per cent in 2009 to 50 percent in 2012 and is expected to increase further in 2013. The cost of the PPG program was considered a good investment by the donors, nearly all of whom cite the PPG program as a key benefit of the STDF and a justification for their continued support. Over 50 percent of total project grant funding went to projects originating in LDCs or OLICs exceeding the performance target of 40 percent.

In the coordination area the STDF has successfully established itself as a coordination forum for the exchange of information and dissemination of best practice in relation to SPS standards compliance necessary to gain and maintain market access. It is a key part of the WTO support infrastructure to LDCs through its cooperation with the Enhanced Integration Framework and as part of the WTO-led Aid for Trade Initiative. STDF has identified SPS issues of concern to partners, donors and developing countries and prepared background studies, papers and briefing notes to disseminate information on them. It has coordinated an ongoing collaborative discussion of the problems at well-attended workshops, which have highlighted the need for coordinated responses by partners, donors, developing countries and other stakeholders. The issues addressed have included Aid for Trade, Climate Change; Fruit fly control in West Africa; Public-Private Partnerships and International Trade and Invasive Alien Species. The EU believes that coordination is a key role of the STDF. Its role as a coordination forum was cited as a significant value added by most members of the STDF WG and a reason for their continued support and participation. It was relevant to the goals of partners, donors and developing countries. However, the long-term sustainability of some of the results of enhanced collaboration in SPS related technical cooperation was questionable. This was highlighted for activities where ownership was uncertain or where the outputs of the activities were insufficient to effect sustainable change. Ownership and sustainability was higher where a series of prolonged coordination activities targeted a specific response such as in the case of fruit fly control at regional level in West Africa.

The performance of STDF Secretariat was considered efficient and cost effective in managing both the grant funding program and the coordination activities. Efficiencies and value for money were achieved in logistics and in effective use of technology. Donors noted that the grant funding program allowed them to extend the range of their technical assistance programs on SPS issues at a fraction of the cost than if they were to do it themselves. This was a critical factor in their decision to support the STDF. The Secretariat's

participative and consultative approach to the implementation of the coordination activities enhanced effectiveness in implementation.

A number of constraints were identified which hampered progress towards achievement of purpose under both strategies. The lack of a detailed results based management (RBM) framework for activity design as part of work program preparation and implementation reduced STDF efficacy in reaching targeted outcomes in the coordination area. Better design could help identify high performing indicators, increase ownership, and apply more effective solutions, which yield stronger and more coherent outcomes. Monitoring of coordination activities, feedback and reporting could be improved with a more practically applicable RBM framework. The procedures for review and approval of PPGs and PGs in the WG were time consuming and limited the time available in the WG for the STDF to fulfill its role as a coordination forum. The high workload of Secretariat was straining effectiveness in project monitoring and in support provided to PPG applicants. Recommendations to address these issues are:

### ***1. Reviewing the Medium Term Strategy and strengthening the Results Based Management Framework to guide STDF's activities and become a useful tool for the Secretariat when managing the facility.***

- The STDF should review its current strategy within a RBM framework in the context of preparing work plans for 2015 and 2016, beginning with a detailed problem identification exercise and developing a clear **intervention logic** to frame the problems and respective solutions. High performing indicators should be set for results and be SMART<sup>1</sup>, wherever possible. As the Secretariat currently lacks internal resources for this kind of input, the exercise should be carried out with the support of an external consultant through an inclusive process including WG members as well as the Secretariat. Careful consideration should be made to ensure that any revision exercise only produces tools that are practicable for the Secretariat and does not put any more constrain on them than already exists.
- Activities should be identified and **prioritized for inclusion in the work programs based on their contribution** to the achievement of the targeted outcome and purpose and the resources available to the STDF. Clear objectives for these activities should be included in the annual work programs, as well as a roadmap to achieve these objectives (including detailed activities, milestones, and high performance indicators with baselines). It would be useful for the STDF to also delineate more clearly between core coordination and thematic activities.

### ***2. Increased and improved cooperation with regional and global players***

- Building on the lessons learned, the STDF should increase the focus on addressing SPS issues at the **regional level** and bolster ties with the relevant regional actors for coordination, project identification and implementation (e.g. IICA and OIRSA and regional AfT vehicles such as TradeMark East Africa as well as the regional development banks).
- Coordination and cooperation with the Global Food Safety Partnership (GFSP) should be strengthened. Better collaboration would allow the STDF to identify best practice in project and program design, as well as harness synergies that strengthen impact and improve sustainability. The World Bank in its role as a founding Partner of the STDF should facilitate coordination with the GFSP to ensure complementarity and reduce for the risk of overlap. The STDF should liaise more closely with One Health initiatives to improve coordination and collaboration on food safety and public health issues and to

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<sup>1</sup> Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant And Time-bound

improve design and sustainability of its own coordination activities

- The STDF should strengthen its voice in the **global Aid for Trade initiative**, including advocating for mainstreaming prioritization of SPS issue and related quality infrastructure as a pillar of the AfT initiative. Further cooperation with the EIF would be valuable in order to maintain and bolster the inclusion of SPS issues in DTIS reports and country strategies.
- The STDF should carry a survey of WG members and other relevant stakeholders to assess demand and/or willingness to submit documents to the **virtual library**. Where there is a demand, the STDF should raise the profile of the library and ensure more systematic cooperation from key partners.

### **3. Strengthening the STDF Secretariat's capacity and ensuring effective management of the facility**

- The Secretariat's human resources should be strengthened with the appointment of two additional full-time staff members to address the current heavy workload of the Secretariat.
- The STDF should distinguish clearly between final independent and 'ex-post' evaluations or impact evaluations. Final evaluations should be carried out at the same rate as currently: 50 percent of completed projects selected at random. They should be carried out just before the projects are scheduled to complete. Ex-post or impact evaluations should be carried out on selected projects from 3-5 years after completion. The projects for impact evaluations shall be proposed by the STDF Secretariat and approved by the STDF WG. Ex-post evaluations shall cover up to 25 percent of the total projects completed.
- To strengthen efficiency and reduce potential turnover the WTO/STDF should issue staff contracts for up to five years where multi-year funding commitments from donors permit.
- The WG should discuss whether there is a need to amend the current review and approval process for PPG and PG applications. To facilitate this, the Partners should define their minimum technical criteria for approval of PPGs and PGs and advise the WG accordingly.
- To increase effectiveness within the WG and in the implementation of coordination activities, the FAO, IPPC and the STDF Secretariat should seek to improve their working relationship.
- To increase the national and regional benefits of the PPG programme the STDF should introduce an explicit provision in the Operating Rules favoring PPG proposals that address harmonization of SPS policies in a national context between competent authorities or in a regional context between national authorities.
- The STDF WG should clarify its objective in regard to funding qualifying PG proposals that originate from PPGs. It should state if funding such PG proposals will be prioritized over other PGs proposals or if all funding decisions will be made using identical criteria.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

1. This document is the Draft Final Report of the Mid Term Review (MTR) of the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF). The MTR was initiated under the Operational Rules of the STDF, which require that the Facility to be evaluated by an external reviewer appointed by the World Trade Organization (WTO) at least every five years, normally one year before the end of the Medium Term Strategy, unless decided otherwise by the STDF Policy Committee. In January 2012, the Policy Committee decided to conduct a mid-term review of the Facility in 2013, with a more complete evaluation towards the end of 2015 to feed into the development of a new strategy, as appropriate<sup>2,3</sup>.
2. The STDF was set up to improve the effectiveness of the aid provided by its partner organizations, donors and other stakeholders to developing countries to build capacity to meet the provisions of the SPS agreement. As such it is eligible for review and evaluation using the standard OECD DAC evaluation criteria.
3. The evaluation team consists of Mr. Colm Halloran, Independent Evaluator and Team Leader for the MTR, and Mr. Arturo Ortiz, supported by the Project Management Unit at Saana Consulting.

### 1.1 Purpose and objectives of the Review

4. The purpose and objectives of the MTR are set out in the Terms of Reference (ToR) as follows:
  - To undertake an independent review of whether the STDF is performing in such a way as to achieve its strategic results, identify challenges and opportunities and recommend adjustments in strategy and implementation, if and where appropriate;
  - To assess progress made in the implementation of STDF's current strategy;
  - To assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impacts and sustainability of the STDF programme, including a review of the performance of the STDF Secretariat, the STDF's governance structure and operation systems, and its funding and staffing levels;
  - To capture success stories and lessons learned and promote feedback and knowledge sharing among all STDF partners, donors, developing country experts and beneficiaries.

### 1.2 Scope and time frame

5. The MTR review is focused on the period 2009 (i.e. starting from the last external evaluation) to the present and is global in scope.
6. The review was carried out in three phases. Phase I focused on the development of evaluation tools, including an evaluation matrix and interview templates, a desk review of documentation and preliminary interviews with STDF Secretariat staff. Phase II focused

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<sup>2</sup> Paragraph 108 STDF Operational rules.

<sup>3</sup> Mid-term reviews are mid-way between monitoring and evaluation, as they involve a fresh look at the objectives, design and performance of a project. Compared to evaluations, reviews are more limited in scope, time and focus. Reviews are used to verify the relevance, sustainability and efficiency of the project, and that the project is going in a direction where the intended effects and impacts will be reached. There is, however, less emphasis on lessons learned or accountability.

on primary data collection, including in-depth interviews with STDF Working Group (WG) Members and stakeholders. Phase III consisted of analysis, collation and synthesis of the findings of the first two phases and preparation of the draft final report.

7. The Team started its work in June following an introductory meeting between Mr Melvin Spreij, Secretary to the STDF and Mr. Petteri Lammi, Senior Project Manager, Saana Consulting on June 20th 2013 during which the methodology and proposed work plan were discussed. Mr. Spreij provided the team with relevant key documents for the documentation review. These included:
  - Previous STDF evaluation reports;
  - Annual reports, reports to the WTO Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Committee;
  - STDF's Business Plan 2004, Medium-term Strategies for 2007-11 and 2012-16, current and previous Operational Rules documentation;
  - Summary reports of WG and Policy Committee meetings as well as relevant documentation circulated to the WG and Policy Committee (all meetings held since 2009);
  - Templates and guidance notes on project development/funding; and publications, briefing notes, outreach materials, reports of STDF workshops and seminars etc;
  - Copies of the applications for PPGs and project grants, project proposals, progress reports and project evaluation reports of STDF fund projects.
8. The review also took into account key policies and capacity development strategies of STDF partners and donors including recent evaluations of trade-related assistance. A full list of documents included in the review may be found in Annex 2. A copy of the evaluation Terms of Reference is attached in Annex 3.
9. The Team Leader carried out a first mission to the STDF in Geneva from July 6<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> July and held preliminary interviews with STDF Secretariat staff and other available WTO stakeholders. Access was provided to additional STDF documentation in order to obtain additional information for the documentation review. These included:
  - Summary documents related to consultations carried out as part of the strategy formulation process for the Medium-term Strategy 2012-16.
  - STDF framework agreements with its partners.
  - Correspondence with its partners, donors and other stakeholders, and PPG application case studies.
10. The schedule and work plan for phase II of the MTR was also agreed with the Secretariat, a list of stakeholders that should be interviewed during phase II was identified and a tentative interview schedule was prepared in consultation with the Secretariat.
11. In Phase II the Team Leader interviewed a total of 29 key stakeholders in a series of face-to-face meetings from October 14<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> 2013. Most informants were interviewed in Geneva with a schedule arranged to coincide with the second annual STDG WG meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> October 2013. The Team Leader also briefly attended the meeting to observe the proceedings. An additional 8 stakeholders were interviewed by telephone in the same period by the Team Leader, the SPS expert or by the Saana Consulting team. In total 49 informants were interviewed using a semi-structured template during Phases I and II. Interviewees included STDF partners, donors and observers as well as Secretariat staff, a full list of which may be found in Annex 1.

12. Once the interviews were completed, the findings from the documentation review and interviews were collated and assessed in line with the evaluation matrix that was structured according to the OECD DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact. Following a synthesis process, this draft report was prepared.

## 2. FINDINGS

### 2.1 Relevance

13. This section addresses the extent to which the STDF is suited to the priorities and policies of the partners, donors and beneficiaries.

*Q. Are the objectives, purpose and intended results of the STDF Medium Term Strategies consistent with the needs and priorities of the intended beneficiaries and with the policy environment of the STDF Partners and donors on SPS and the Aid for Trade (AfT) initiative?*

14. The STDF is a partnership which includes international organizations with complementary technical skills on SPS issues, donors with technical assistance programs varying in scope, size and prioritization of SPS issues and beneficiaries who share the need for similar types of capacity building on SPS issues but may differ in terms of capacity and priority needs. All the members share the common goals of sustainable economic growth, poverty reduction, food security and environmental protection and are in broad agreement that the STDF's vision and mandate is consistent with their overall policies on SPS issues. To this end the partners and donors are committed to supporting developing countries in building their capacity to implement international SPS standards, guidelines and recommendations as a means to improving their human, animal and plant health status within the multilateral trade framework of the WTO SPS Agreement. The creation of the STDF partnership was a policy response to achieving this goal and the continued participation of partners, donors and beneficiaries is evidence of its continuing relevance to their own policies on SPS issues.

15. There was a broad consensus among STDF WG members that the aims of the 2007-11 Medium Term Strategy and the vision and mandate of the 2012-16 Medium Term Strategy were relevant to their policies.

#### 2.1.1 STDF as a funding mechanism

16. The STDF partners commented favourably on the relevance of the STDF activities as a funding mechanism for their own development policies<sup>4</sup>, the STDF activities as a funding mechanism complement the International Plant Protection Convention's (IPPC), World Organization for Animal Health's (OIE) and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' (FAO) work in the SPS area. The OIE's Fifth Strategic Plan: 2011–2015 notes that role of the STDF was assisting the delivery of capacity-building projects in the cross-linked areas of animal health and animal production food safety. This is in line with the OIE objective of acting as a catalyst for other bodies, international or regional, public or private, to invest in building the capacities of the national veterinary services of its Members<sup>5</sup>. The IPPC's National Phytosanitary Capacity Development Strategy notes that the STDF is a key partner in supporting the development of capacity in national phytosanitary management, in coordinating national stakeholders and in maximizing the effectiveness and use of the funds available from various sources<sup>6</sup>. However, the OIE

<sup>4</sup> The term 'partners' is used in the report to refer to the FAO, IPPC, OIE, WHO and WTO. The World Bank, although also partner did not make any representative available for interview during the MTR.

<sup>5</sup> Paragraph 122, Fifth Strategic Plan: 2011–2015 (78 SG/20) OIE, Paris, France 2011.

<sup>6</sup> IPPC National Phytosanitary Capacity Development Strategy, March 2010, Revised in 2012

questions the prioritization of projects for funding noting that projects focused on animal health receive less than projects focused on food safety, plant health or general SPS issues (Animal health projects received less than seven percent of total grant funding in the period under review. See section 2.2.1).

17. The donors interviewed noted that the activities supported by the STDF funding mechanism complemented their own technical assistance programs within donors' respective AfT strategies. The Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) representative noted that the STDF focus on market access was in line with SECO's development goals. SECO's partner countries mostly are OLICS's and upper middle income countries (UMCs). Synergies occurred between SECO's projects and STDF supported activities in OLIC's as well as when applying regional approaches. The STDF focus on LDCs also allowed SECO to engage in these countries. Other donors including the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) observed that the STDF project grant program extended the reach of their national programs by allowing them to invest in building capacity in developing countries on SPS issues in a cost effective manner. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) noted it enabled them to provide assistance to countries not directly assisted under their partnership programs. Irish Aid commented that the STDF's performance goal of allocating 40% of total project grant funding to LDCs and or OLICs and the STDF support to the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) on SPS issues met a key criterion for their support. They also noted that many of the PGs complement Irish Aid support in their partner countries in LDCs in Africa and South East Asia.
18. Several donors (but not including the EU) also stressed their belief that technical assistance and capacity building needs on SPS issues are more efficiently addressed through the STDF's grant program than could be through their own technical assistance programmes<sup>7</sup>. For all donors, with the exception of the European Union (EU), project funding was a de facto conditionality of their support for the STDF. The EU on the other hand believed that the STDF should mainly focus on coordination activities but accepted they were in a minority position on this. Most the developing country representatives interviewed acknowledged the importance of the STDF coordination function, but saw the primary role of the STDF as a funding mechanism to meeting their needs in building capacity on SPS standards compliance to gain and maintain market access. For SIDA the project funding by itself was not a primary condition for the support to STDF. SIDA believed that the strength of STDF is the mix of coordination and project funding, and both are equally important. Observers interviewed such as Instituto Interamericano de Cooperación para la Agricultura – Inter-American Institute for Cooperation (IICA) and Organismo internacional regional de sanidad agropecuaria - the International Regional Organization for Plant and Animal Health (OIRSA), Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux International (CABI), Europe-Africa-Caribbean-Pacific Liaison Committee (COLEACP), and Michigan State University noted that STDF coordination activities benefited both the design and formulation; and implementation of projects by disseminating information on best practice in addressing SPS issues (including both technical and institutional capacity deficits and highlighting the need for increased collaboration).
19. There was also a general consensus among STDF members that the support provided to beneficiaries to prepare PPGs is of significant value even where the project is not subsequently funded as it builds local capacity in project identification and design. This learning effect is also thought to be replicable at local level. A number of donors expressed concern about the high number of project proposals developed under PPGs that were not funded by the STDF or external sources. However during the review period

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<sup>7</sup> In this regard it is worth noting that the EU fund similar SPS related projects to those of the STDF through its EU Framework Contracts programmes.

the share of PPG projects receiving funding has risen from 14 percent in 2009 to 50 percent in 2012 (see section 2.2.1). There are some indications that especially regionally focused projects designed as outputs of STDF PPGs are attracting external funding. For example Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) recently received funding from the African Development Bank (AfDB) to support work on SPS and trade facilitation based on the project proposal developed by funding from STDF<sup>8</sup>.

### 2.1.2 STDF Coordination activities

20. During the MTR interview process partners, donors and developing countries stressed the unique value added of the STDF when it acted as a forum for the coordination of responses on SPS issues through the exchange of information on the needs and priorities of beneficiaries in relation to SPS standards compliance, best practice in meeting these needs, and for raising awareness of existing or planned donor interventions. Participation in the STDF WG informed partners' and donors' strategies on the delivery of technical assistance to developing countries on SPS issues, and enabled better design and increased effectiveness of their programs. The developing country representatives interviewed noted that participation in the STDF WG kept them informed of best practice in needs assessment and strengthening capacity in SPS standards compliance to achieve and maintain market access for export and imports of agricultural produce and food products, while at the same time maintaining a high level of consumer and environmental protection in line with the WTO SPS agreement. They also noted that the high transparency of the STDF extends its reach and relevance to developing countries not directly participating in the STDF WG.
21. All STDF partners, donors and observers interviewed agreed that the STDF focus on emerging SPS issues in thematic activities included in the STDF work program were relevant to their own policies. As expected in any partnership, views varied on the degree to which different thematic activities addressed their strategic concerns. There was general agreement on the relevance of activities clearly within the STDF mandate such as the West African Fruits Fly Control, Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) or the activities to strengthen the focus of SPS issues under the EIF program or the AfT initiative. There was less consensus in other areas. The OIE and IPPC disagreed with the approach to the International Trade on Invasive Alien Species (IAS) workshop although they subsequently collaborated in preparing the report and the IPPC scheduled it for inclusion in a side event at their next annual conference in 2014. The United States of America questioned the relevance of the IAS to the STDF mandate as in their view it was covered under the Convention on Biological Diversity and not the WTO SPS agreement. The United States of America is not a signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity. However, other donors who are signatories thought it relevant to the STDF mandate as it overlaps with the SPS agreement.
22. There was considerable discord with the decision to devote significant resources to the development and advocacy of the Multi-criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA) Tool. The FAO and IPPC held strong views that its primary focus on the economic value of exports to prioritize resource allocation would negatively impact their efforts (and that of the STDF) to promote best practice in the use of the OIE Evaluation of Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) and IPPC Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) tools to assist capacity building for compliance with SPS standards necessary to achieve and maintain market access. However, donors and beneficiaries considered it relevant to the needs of developing countries as it met an exigent need to optimize the use of scarce resources in addressing SPS constraints on export market access. The evaluator

<sup>8</sup> This funding also allows enables the number of countries benefiting from the project to be increased from 7 in COMESA to all the 26 countries of the tripartite block (EAC-COMESA-SADC)

concluded there was validity to both positions. The concerns of the IPPC and FAO could be addressed in the guidelines being developed for the use of the tool. It is questionable to what extent the development of the MCDA tool was within the STDF mandate. Much of the development work took place under the 2007-11 Medium Term Strategy, which did not envisage the development of such tools as part of the coordination activities. However paragraph 13 in the 2012-16 Medium Term Strategy facilitated its development, although it is difficult to see how well paragraph 13 aligns with the STDF's broader mandate to *increase awareness, mobilize resources, strengthen collaboration, identify and disseminate good practice*<sup>9, 10</sup>.

23. The WHO noted that while various coordination activities address food safety issues, the related public health aspects are insufficiently addressed (although Article 69 in the STDF Operating rules required that when projects address food safety requirements for market access, 'consideration should be given, where practical, to improving the public health situation in domestic markets through compliance with Codex standards').<sup>11 12</sup>
24. The increased emphasis on 'enhanced collaboration' in the Medium Term Strategy 2012-16 was not supported by all members of the WG, although this may be due to a lack of clarity as to the meaning and scope of 'collaboration'. The intervention logic needs further articulation as the Strategic Result does not directly appear to capture the outputs (and outcomes) of many of the coordination activities.<sup>13</sup> The WHO commented that STDF does not act as catalyst to increase their collaboration with partners and donors on food safety outside the STDF, as such collaboration already exists in the WHO work programs. On the other hand the OIE noted that the personal relationships and contacts developed through active participation in the STDF WG facilitated increased cooperation outside STDF activities. For many donors, observers and developing countries participation in the STDF WG and activities informed their cooperation with other stakeholders on SPS issues and is therefore relevant when a need arises to coordinate their activities in this area.

### 2.1.3 Changes in the policy environment

25. One major change in the policy environment noted was the establishment of the Global Food Safety Partnership (GFSP) Multi Donor Trust Fund in 2012 by the World Bank Group in cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders (including government, industry, educational institutions, and regional stakeholders). This initiative is aimed at improving the understanding and technical competencies that underpin the effective management of food safety throughout the food system, from farm to fork. It builds on the work of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Food Safety Cooperation Forum (FSCF). APEC includes 21 member economies accounting for approximately 41 percent of the world's population and nearly half of the world's food production. Since 2007 the APEC FSCF and its Partnership Training Institute Network have been undertaking a series of

<sup>9</sup> The identification of good practise is not the same as the development of good practise. There is a far higher risk and cost to development rather than identification.

<sup>10</sup> See also the FAO comment to the Draft Final report on this issue on this issue where the FAO again noted in detail their disagreements on the utility and application of the MCDA tool: Comment 19 Annex 3

<sup>11</sup> STDF Operational Rules, STDF139 rev3, 2011, STDF, Geneva, Switzerland

<sup>12</sup> In response to a query on this issue the STDF secretariat noted that to address this deficit the STDF has commissioned a study in 2012 on to identify spill-over effects of export-oriented SPS technical cooperation on domestic food safety. The study was cancelled in October 2013. .

<sup>13</sup> This report follows broadly CIDA 's approach to RBM in defining activities, outputs and outcomes. Outputs are direct products or services produced from bundles of activities. Outcomes are the results i.e the changes or effects that result from use of the outputs at three levels immediate (result), intermediate (purpose) and ultimate (impact). Impact is however is however used instead of ultimate.

capacity building programs, including the development of freely available reproducible capacity building modules. In May of 2011 the World Bank and the APEC FSCF signed a Memorandum of Understanding to scale up food safety capacity building in the APEC region with a view towards taking capacity building modules to other parts of the world. The GFSP will act as:

- A vehicle for awareness raising on the importance of food safety capacity building.
- A source for policy and economic analysis on the efficacy, costs and benefits of potential interventions in food safety systems with respect to desired outcomes, and requirements for robust investments in food safety systems as well as mitigation that targets specific high priority risks.
- A point of coordination among food safety experts, capacity building providers, and those in need of capacity building.
- A source for identifying best practices in capacity building program and investments in food safety, including metrics as well as monitoring and evaluation systems that can inform the design of new programs.
- A vehicle to mobilize public and private funding to develop, coordinate and deploy capacity building and analysis.

26.Plans are in place for the GFSP to raise at least \$45M for the implementation of a 5-year roadmap.

27.The STDF attended two GFSP meetings and provided extensive comments, notably in terms of how GFSP could complement and build on what has already been achieved by the STDF, and how the programmes could collaborate in the future. However, there was no significant reaction from the WB on STDF's comments and suggestions.<sup>14</sup>

#### **2.1.4 Strategic Design and Logframe**

28.This MTR covers the Medium Term Strategies 2007-11 and 2012-16, which are considered in this section separately.

##### ***Medium Term Strategy 2007-11***

29.The Strategy stated STDF's "aims" as follows:

- To assist developing countries in enhancing their expertise and capacity to analyze and implement international SPS standards, so improving their human, animal and plant health situation, and thus ability to gain and maintain market access.
- To act as a vehicle for co-ordination among technical co-operation providers, the mobilization of funds, the exchange of experience and the dissemination of good practice in relation to the provision and receipt of SPS-related technical co-operation.

30.The first bullet point could be judged as a purpose/impact level statement in relation to the PPGs and PG program. The second bullet point could be seen as an outcome, or lower, level statement in relation to the coordination area, highlighting a discord in the intervention logic between the two work streams.

31.The strategy 'emphasized' five areas of activity: (i) Re-enforcing the STDF's co-ordination function; (ii) Building on linkages established with other programmes (iii) Greater use of PPGs (iv) Continued grant financing for projects and (v) Strengthening the STDF

<sup>14</sup> For more information, see <http://go.worldbank.org/PP4YMOLKJ0>

Secretariat. The design allowed for the inclusion of activities through the annual or biannual work-programs. For example, a key performance target of allocating at least 40 percent of STDF resources to LDCs and other low income economies (OLIEs) was established for the project grant program.

32. This suggests that, in effect, the initial formulation of the 2007-11 Medium Term Strategy did not have clearly defined results or a well-articulated intervention logic covering all the work streams. At the same time, the operating rules required that applications for PGs “normally include a logical framework matrix”, which proposals generally did. This meant that while activities under the PPG and PG program generally followed a defined pathway of change, the coordination area did not.

33. The 2010-11 work-plan retrofitted a logical framework on the 2007-11 strategy. This strengthened the intervention logic. A development goal appropriate to the STDF aims was defined as:

- To contribute to improved food safety, animal and plant health, economic growth, poverty reduction and food security in developing countries.

The purpose or outcome were defined as:

- To improve the capacity of developing countries to meet international SPS requirements, and;
- To increase effectiveness and synergies in the provision and delivery of high-quality SPS technical cooperation.

34. The first part of the purpose restated an aim of the STDF. The second part is an immediate outcome rather than an intermediate outcome and contributes to the first part, confusing the expected causal linkages within the facility’s results chain. The logframe also defined five separate ‘outputs’. Despite some weakness in definitions, there was reasonable coherence in the intervention logic from outputs to outcomes to impact.

35. However, the logframe didn’t seem to be able to clearly facilitate capture of results from all project activities, for example the work in support of regional coordination on the control of the fruit fly in West Africa or the activities necessary to strengthen the coordination mechanism in line with the aims of STDF.

36. The logical framework introduced new performance indicators for output and outcome levels. The indicators were generally SMART but could have been improved for Output 1 and 2 linking them specifically to changes resulting from the respective activities.<sup>15</sup> This would have strengthened the intervention logic and enabled more effective subsequent monitoring. Linking activities more clearly to targeted outputs and demonstrating the logic of their contribution on the outcome would have also improved clarity in design. Synergies between the coordination area and the PPG and PG program were only marginally targeted with an implicit objective to leverage lessons learnt in the coordination area into the design of PPGs and PGs.

### **Medium Term Strategy 2012-16**

37. The purpose statement for the Strategy expands on Purpose 1 in the 2010-11 logframe and is appropriate to the achievement of the Goal of STDF. Building on the previous strategy, the 2012-16 Medium Term Strategy puts greater emphasis on the need to:

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<sup>15</sup> SMART: *Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound*:



- (i) promote increased collaboration and interaction among STDF partners, donors, recipients and other relevant organizations in the provision and delivery of SPS-related technical cooperation; and
  - (ii) further strengthen the STDF as a "knowledge platform" for information exchange, sharing experiences, and the identification and dissemination of good practice'.
38. While the Strategy noticeably shifts the emphasis of STDF towards coordination and collaboration, with all related activities clustered under Strategic Result 1: 'Enhanced collaboration in SPS related technical cooperation', "collaboration" remains to be clearly defined. Key informant interviews suggest that various stakeholders hold differing, and sometimes conflicting views of what "collaboration" may, or may not, entail.
39. The Strategy applies some of the basic principles of a RBM approach and is accompanied by a logical framework that builds on the design of the previous logframe. However, there is an absence of performance indicators and related targets for the outcome (purpose) and impact (goal) levels. There is also a lack of clearly articulated causal linkages from output level upwards, making it more difficult to undertake a contribution analysis based on the assumptions of how the facility is supposed to contribute towards higher level results. At output level performance indicators and targets have been established, although most indicators are activity or process driven, reducing the potential utility of the logframe as a strategic management tool.
40. In the 2012 annual report all coordination activities were reported as contributing to enhanced collaboration, suggesting a very broad definition of collaboration.
41. Strategic Results 2 & 3 focus on the operation of the STDF as funding mechanism and correspond to Outputs 4 & 5 in the previous Strategy.
42. Most donors expressed concern about the lack of a clear RBM approach to the design, implementation and monitoring of activities. SIDA indicated that the application of a RBM framework will be a pre-condition for their continued support of the STDF.

## 2.2 Effectiveness – achievement of purpose

43. This section measures the extent that objectives were achieved and benefits delivered to stakeholders as planned. When a strong intervention logic exist and the planned activities have been completed, outputs delivered and immediate outcomes achieved, it is reasonable to assume that (i) benefits have been delivered as planned; and (ii) project implementation is effective. This assessment is made chiefly against the target outputs in the 2010-11 logframe applied retrospectively to 2009. Increased coordination is also assumed to be an implicit outcome level result in line with the STDF aims.

*Q. Did the earlier Medium Term Strategy 2007-11 achieve its objectives in the period under review?*

*Q. Is the STDF making progress towards the achievement of its Medium Term Strategy 2012-16?*

### 2.2.1 STDF as a funding mechanism

44. As the targeted outcomes for the PPG and PG program under both strategies are similar this section covers the period 2009-12.

## PPGs

**Output 4** *Beneficiaries of STDF projects have improved capacity to analyze and implement international SPS requirements (as per specific project objectives).*

45. A core function of the STDF Secretariat in delivering the PPG and PG program is to assist developing country stakeholders prepare applications for PPGs in accordance with its operational rules and best practice in project design and formulations to meet the SPS related needs of the beneficiaries. Once applications are prepared they are submitted to the STDF WG for funding approval. The STDF WG reviews the applications and provides technical comments where necessary to strengthen the design. Financing for PGs in this period 2009-11 was provided to a maximum of USD 30,000 per PPG. This was increased in the period 2012-16 to USD 50,000. Applications were encouraged from organizations in LDCs, which targeted specific SPS needs prioritized in Diagnostic Trade Integration Studies (DTIS) prepared by the EIF. Applications were also encouraged from OLIEs, or for projects, which adopted a regional approach to address SPS issues.
46. In the 3-year period between 2009-11 the STDF received a total of 26 PPG applications. A total of 19 applications were approved for funding (to a value of approx USD 603,000) exceeding the STDF target of six per annum. The number of applications increased to 22 in 2012 showcasing growing demand and awareness of the Facility. However only three were approved in 2012 mainly due to the ineligibility of applications. In value terms 43.7 percent of PPGs targeted general SPS, 31.8 percent plant health, 18.5 percent food safety, and 6.5 percent animal health. The geographical spread was 12 in Sub Saharan Africa, two in Latin America, two in Central America and the Caribbean, one in Central Asia, three in South Asia, one in South East Asia and one in the Pacific. As the support to prepare applications extends in many cases over a year the STDF was providing technical assistance for up to 15-20 stakeholders at any one time
47. The number of PPGs developed as PGs and approved by the STDF has increased from 14 per cent in 2009 to 50 percent in 2012 and is expected to increase further in 2013. The number not receiving funding was of concern to developing country representatives. This issue was discussed at length with the Secretariat whose view is that donors should provide external funding for the PGs prepared under the STDF program but not funded by the STDF. The donors' reply was that this did not take into account the reality of how their bilateral technical assistance projects were formulated and managed. Most donors did not have the flexibility to provide responsive project grants outside the mandate of the individual programs.
48. The STDF coordination activities, particularly the STDF's engagement with, and assistance provided to, the EIF and the broader WTO-led AfT Initiative, supported the achievement of this output (see section 2.2.2).
49. There was a general acceptance among donors, partners, and developing country members that this output was satisfactorily achieved and significant benefits were delivered to stakeholders. They see PPGs as a mechanism for ensuring synergy with other on-going initiatives and in particular alignment with the EIF's objective of support for LDCs and the DTIS reports. A STDF survey of PPG beneficiaries in 2012 found that 80 percent of respondents were satisfied with the capacity building benefits provided. The EU recommended (in order to increase the effectiveness of the PPG program in support of the STDF's aims as a coordination body) that the PPGs should focus on projects that harmonize SPS policies at national and regional level. This could also leverage potential synergies of the STDF's dual mandate.
50. The PPG program accounts for about 25 per cent of STDF's human resource costs but this was considered money well spent by the donors. Nearly all of the donors cite the

PPG program as a key output of the STDF and a justification for their continued support.

51. Furthermore, emerging findings suggest that regionally focused PPGs are attracting increased external funding. For example COMESA has received funding from the African Development Bank to support the work on SPS and trade facilitation based on the project developed with the STDF PPG. While the STDF project was to benefit 7 countries, the AfDB project will benefit 26 countries of the tripartite block (EAC-COMESA-SADC).

## **PGs**

**Output 5** *Improved performance of beneficiaries of STDF-funded projects (as per specific project objectives).*

52. The review and approval of applications for PGs is also a core function of the STDF WG supported by the Secretariat. As with PPGs, applications were encouraged from organizations in LDCs and OLIEs and for projects that adopted a regional approach to address SPS issues.

53. In the period 2009-12 the STDF received a total of 57 applications. A total of 31 applications were approved for funding in this period totaling about USD 15.3 Million. This exceeded the STDF target of six per annum. Of this, in value terms, 55 percent targeted food safety, 23.3 percent general SPS, 19 percent plant health, and three percent animal health. The portfolio represents a reasonable geographical spread with two grants in Sub Saharan Africa, six in Central America and the Caribbean, six in South East Asia, four in South Asia, one in Latin America, and two Global. Seven projects were considered regional projects a value of USD 3.3 million, of which four were approved in 2012 with a value of USD 2 Million.

54. Over 50 percent of project grant funding in value terms was for projects in LDCs or OLICs, easily meeting the STDF performance target of 40 percent. Moreover, the 50% figure does not include funding to regional projects, all of which also included an LDC, an OLIC or both. This further underlined the effectiveness of the STDF program with regards to supporting countries most in need.

55. A total of 19 projects began implementation in the period under review: eight in 2009, nine in 2010, four in 2011 and 11 in 2012 with a total value of USD 15.7 Million.

56. In the same period 25 projects were completed: four in 2009, eight in 2010, eight in 2011 and five in 2012 with a total value of USD 9.85 Million. 18 of these launched between 2007-11 and seven started between 2009-11. Seven were regional projects with a value of USD 2.75 Millions. Three were focused on fruit fly control in West Africa with a value of USD 1.3 Million.

57. Five projects were implemented by FAO, three by IICA and two by CIRAD (Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement – Center for international Cooperation and research in agriculture for development). The remainder were implemented by a range of international, public and private sector associations. The completed projects are:

**2009**

- STDF/PG/069: Improved capacity to ensure safety and quality of Yemeni seafood products, Yemen.
- STDF/PG/079: Quality information on SPS issues – a prerequisite for capacity building, Cameroon.
- STDF/PG/133: Building capacity to use the PCE Tool in the Pacific, South Pacific - **Evaluated**
- STDF/PG/145: Rwanda Horticulture Export Standards Initiative, Rwanda - **Evaluated**

**2010**

- STDF/PG/134: Capacity building to improve fish trade performance of selected West African countries, Benin, Mauritania, Senegal, Sierra Leone and The Gambia - **Evaluated**
- STDF/PG/146: Strengthening phytosanitary controls in Mali (with a focus on mango exports).
- STDF/PG/065: Develop a private/public safety control system for the horticultural export sector, Guinea.
- STDF/PG/108: Developing institutional capacity of countries in the Americas to participate in the SPS Committee, Latin America & Caribbean.
- STDF/PG/170: Strengthening the capacity of government SPS officials in Nepal.
- STDF/PG/171: Centre of Phytosanitary Excellence, Kenya and East Africa.
- STDF/PG/246: Development of SPS Action Plan for Cambodia - **Evaluated**
- STDF/PG/255: Regional initiative on the fight against fruit flies in West Africa , Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Mali, Senegal, and the Gambia- **scheduled for evaluation**

**2011**

- STDF/PG/287: Information sharing initiative on the actions to control fruit flies in Sub-Saharan Africa; **scheduled for evaluation**
- STDF/PG/313: Continuation of the West African Fruit Fly Initiative, West Africa; **scheduled for evaluation**
- STDF/PG/230: Establishment of Pest Free Areas for Lethal Yellowing Disease in Coconuts, Mozambique.
- STDF/PG/048: Improving shea and cashew nut production in Benin through the application of good agricultural practice, Benin;
- STDF/PG/062: Strengthening food safety, Cameroon;
- STDF/PG/127: SPS information system in Benin:
- STDF/PG/126: Establish the Horticulture Development Council of Tanzania; **scheduled for evaluation**
- STDF/PG/116: Development and implementation of a traceability system in the livestock sector in Costa Rica - **Evaluated**

**2012**

- STDF/PG/155: Nicaragua Market-Oriented Training Service on Standards Application;

**scheduled for evaluation**

- STDF/PG/238: Development of accredited HACCP certification schemes for processed food products in Guatemala.
- STDF/PG/259: Strengthening Vietnamese SPS Capacities for Trade – Improving safety and quality for fresh vegetables through the value chain approach in Viet Nam.
- STDF/PG/283: Strengthening capacity to address SPS risks in the mango value chain in Mali; **scheduled for evaluation**
- STDF/PG/365: Application of the Multi Criteria Decision Analysis Tool to inform SPS decision- making in Belize.

58. All of the above projects started and finished within the review period. All of the projects addressed public and/or private sector capacity deficits which were acting as constraints to gaining and or maintaining market access. Independent evaluations have been completed on two regional projects and three national projects, with one of the evaluation reports for a regional project being finalized and not available for review. Three additional regional projects in West Africa are scheduled for evaluation but these have not yet been carried out. The three national projects evaluated were:

- in Rwanda (STDF/PG/145) on the application of horticultural standards in the export sector;
- in Costa Rica (STDF/PG/116) to implement a traceability system for cattle, and;
- in Cambodia (STDF/PG/246) to develop an SPS Action plan<sup>16</sup>.

59. Based on these reports and a brief review of the final or most recent project progress reports of the other projects completed, the evaluator concluded that the three projects represented a reasonable sample of all national projects completed in the period in terms of the relevance and efficiency of projects. However, the evaluator also concluded there was a wider variation in efficiency and higher sustainability rate in regards to the projects which were not evaluated.

60. All evaluated projects were highly relevant to the needs of the beneficiaries. In Rwanda the project contributed to establishing a sound SPS management system with a particular focus on plant health management to expand Rwanda's exports of fruits, vegetables and flowers. In Costa Rica the project provided the right answer to the needs of the beneficiary for a mandatory nationwide system for group traceability and mobilization control. This was necessary to improve epidemiological surveillance, facilitate actions to counter sanitary incidents and improve overall food quality/safety, relevant in both domestic and export markets. In Cambodia a SPS Action Plan was prepared with the independent evaluator noting it would certainly be appropriate to use the concept of a comprehensive SPS action plan to meet the clearly evident need for greater focus on and coherence in SPS capacity-building.

61. All evaluated projects were effective in that they delivered the general results as planned. However a small reservation was noted in one deliverable in Rwanda as the predicted involvement of the private sector did not materialize and in Cambodia a lack of ownership by key government decision makers negatively impacted effectiveness.

62. All projects were deemed efficient in delivering the planned outputs on time and within budget. However in the non-evaluated project reports about 30 percent received time

<sup>16</sup> The evaluation report STDF/PG/I34 Capacity building to improve fish trade performance of selected West African countries, Benin, Mauritania, Senegal, Sierra Leone and The Gambia was being finalized and not available for review.

extensions for completion. These were generally justified and did not negatively impact benefits delivered. One exception was STDF/PG/065 'Develop a private/public safety control system for the horticultural export sector in Guinea' where, after numerous extensions were granted over a 3-year period due to civil disturbances, the project completed without fully implementing its planned activities. Even so, the project was judged successfully implemented given the exceptional circumstances.

63. Long-term sustainability of the benefits and outcomes was a concern in one of the three evaluated projects. Although too early to verify in the evaluation report, it was considered likely that sustainability would be achieved in Costa Rica due to the changes in access to export markets, although it was not clear that operational funding was secured as yet for the long term. The potential for long-term sustainability was also judged good in Rwanda as the institutional structure developed by the project remained in place and action plans continued to be implemented after the project has completed. Staff turnover posed a potential but small risk in Rwanda. Conversely this posed a very high risk in the Pacific Islands grant, where staff turnover was considered to be much higher. The results were not sustainable in Cambodia as the Action Plan was not implemented. This was likely due to the lack of ownership already noted above. Risks to sustainability were similar in the other completed national projects. The main risks appeared to have risen from a lack of ownership of the outcome, high staff turnover and a lack of funding for operational activities once the project was completed. An example of the last risk is STDF/PG/126: 'Establish the Horticulture Development Council of Tanzania' which does not appear sustainable as the institution appears fully dependent for its day-to-day operations on project funding. There does not seem to have been any other source of operational funding in place once the project ended. A review of the documentation indicated that this issue could have been addressed more fully during implementation. A planned output, i.e. a written sustainability plan ratified by the Council to fund the on going operation of HODECT Limited' under its own stewardship (and this presumably contribute to the Council), does not appear to have been delivered. This should have been picked up by the ITC that was contracted under a provision for supervisory arrangements as part of their routine monitoring but appears to have been overlooked.
64. Long-term impact was thought likely in Costa Rica and Rwanda but the evaluation reports were still too close to the end to assess this conclusively. There was no evidence of achieved impact in Cambodia. It is also too early to assess impact of the outcomes in the other completed projects.
65. The one regional project evaluated was in the Pacific islands (STDF/PG/133) on capacity building in the use of the IPPC PCE tool by public sector stakeholders. The project was very relevant as it enabled the local phytosanitary authorities to carry out capacity needs assessment to determine the requirements needed to improve the phytosanitary capacity to facilitate export of plant products. It achieved its purpose; stakeholders generally expressed satisfaction with benefits received as planned. It was also cost efficient delivering outputs in time and within budget. However due to high staff turnover additional support is likely to be required to ensure sustainability. It is too early to determine impact but without establishing sustainability it is unlikely to be achieved.
66. The other regional projects completed are likely to be success stories. STDF/PG/134: Capacity building to improve fish trade performance in Benin, Mauritania, Senegal, Sierra Leone and The Gambia was implemented by FAO and appears to have been highly relevant and effective in achieving its outputs as planned and efficient in delivering on time and within budget. Based on the evaluation report, the project was successful:

- In providing training to fish inspectors and processors in fish handling, processing and trade; Codex Codes of Practices, standards and their implementation; and fish inspection and certification, as well as the regulatory requirements for market access in international markets.
  - In building a team of trained fish inspectors in these countries, able to take the implementation of fish safety and quality systems forward and capable of delivering training for the national staff and to various operators in the value chain.
  - Constructing a technical and trade information database that makes the international regulations readily available for fish inspectors and the processing industry. The project was also successful in developing a network among the fish inspectors and fish processors in the region, which should be helpful for sharing experiences and sustaining.
67. An indication of the project's success is that, during the course of the project, EU Food and Veterinary Office inspection missions were conducted in all five countries, following which Benin, Mauritania and Senegal were successful in obtaining EU approval for the export of fishery products. The fish inspectors acknowledged that the STDF project was a major contributor to the success of these countries. This bodes well for sustainability and impact.
68. The one regional project in Latin America and Caribbean has the potential to have significant impact in terms of its reach, although it is too early to assess results fully. Moreover, it is not possible to assess sustainability based on the desk review. The project STDF/PG/108: 'Developing institutional capacity of countries in the Americas to participate in the SPS Committee' was implemented by IICA. It was very relevant in addressing institutional capacity deficits across 26 countries. It was implemented in two phases: (a) the application of PVS-SPS capacity evaluation tool; preparation of 26 national agendas for SPS measures, and preparation and implementation of four regional sub-projects based on the national agendas (b) The implementation of specific actions for implementing the regional sub-projects. The project appears to have achieved its purpose. It was completed within budget with a time extension of about 9 months, which was justified given the wide range of countries involved in implementation.
69. The West Africa projects scheduled for evaluation are focused on regional approaches to control the fruit fly, STDF/PG/255: Regional initiative on the fight against fruit flies in West Africa, STDF/PG/287: Information sharing initiative on the actions to control fruit flies in Sub-Saharan Africa; and STDF/PG/313: Continuation of the West African Fruit Fly Initiative. A review of the project documents suggests that these projects are a success story for the STDF. They combine targeted activities to increase coordination in response to a specific SPS issue at a regional level with STDF funding of PGs to support the outcome of the discussions. Sustainability in the short term was assured with this funding and in the long term with EU funding. The STDF, the World Bank and the ECOWAS began advocacy of a coordinated multi-stakeholder approach to control fruit flies in West Africa in 2008 which resulted in the preparation by COLEACP of a five-year Regional Action Plan to control fruit flies in West Africa, budgeted at €25 million and endorsed in a joint STDF/ECOWAS stakeholder meeting in Bamako, Mali, in 2010 by representatives of national governments, research institutes, the private sector, civil society and development partners. This includes recommendations to governments and donors to prioritize the control of the fruit fly in national and regional planning and budgetary frameworks, and to include fruit fly as a topic for discussion at the planned regional ECOWAS AfT event in 2010. However, when delays in implementation threatened sustainability, the STDF funded three projects to control the fruit fly in West Africa as an interim measure (with grants totaling USD 900,000). The

EU is expected to carry on supporting the initiative under the 11<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund (EDF) program for African, Caribbean and Pacific countries in 2014-2020.

70. The potential economic and social impact of the initiative is enormous. The STDF notes fruit exports from West Africa to the EU provide incomes for small farmers and exporters, as well as those employed in packing plants. However, since 2004, the success and future of this trade has been threatened by the rapid spread of fruit flies. This pest has resulted in a rise in interceptions and destruction of fruit exports destined for the EU market. Between 2006 and 2007, seizures and destructions linked to fruit flies increased by 23 per cent. Mango has been the main product affected in terms of production losses, export volumes and value. One study in 2008 estimated that fruit flies generated losses of up to 85 per cent of mango production in West Africa, depending on fruit varieties and the harvest period. In a region affected by persistent above-average food prices, extreme weather events and civil insecurity, fruits are an essential part of a nutritious, balanced diet. Mango is widely consumed and one mango provides up to 60 per cent of daily Vitamin A needs as well as other nutrients. Controlling the fruit fly is therefore also essential for food security.

71. Based on the above, one can conclude that the STDF project grant program and operations were successfully implemented and contributed positively to the aims and purpose of the STDF under both Medium Term Strategies.

## 2.2.2 STDF Coordination activities

### *Medium Term Strategy 2007-11*

72. The STDF made significant progress in achieving the second part of the STDF aim under this strategy in the period between 2009-11 i.e.

- To act as a vehicle for co-ordination among technical co-operation providers, the mobilization of funds, the exchange of experience and the dissemination of good practice in relation to the provision and receipt of SPS-related technical co-operation.

73. The value added of the STDF as a coordination forum was stressed by all WG members. The section reviews the key 'core' coordination activities implemented to achieve the above aim in this period. The activities were in accordance with the STDF operational rules on coordination and dissemination<sup>17</sup>. The implicit objective of the core activities was to create an enabling environment to strengthen coordination in the provision of technical assistance for capacity building on trade related SPS issue to gain and maintain market compliance. These activities are common to both the 2007-11 and 2012-16 strategies. In terms of the 2010-11 logframe these also contributed directly to the achievement of the targeted Outputs 1,2 and 3 as well as indirectly to 4 and 5.

74. A series of 'thematic activities' were also initiated to highlight SPS issues of concern to partners, donors and beneficiaries. The core coordination activities were complementary to the thematic activities and supported their design and implementation. The findings below are evidenced from interviews with WG partners, donors, observers the STDF Secretariat, EIF and AfT Secretariats as well as STDF annual reports and other documents reviewed as part of the MTR process. A full list of people interviewed may be seen in Annex 1. A full list of documents reviewed may be

<sup>17</sup> Section III. Coordination And Information Dissemination, Operational Rules, STDF 139 rev2, STDF 2009.



seen in Annex 2.

## Core Activities

75. The core activities included:

- *Coordination with partners and donors in the WG:* the exchange of information on SPS-related initiatives and best practice in the application of SPS standards was facilitated with presentations by partners, donors, invited guests and the Secretariat.
- *Coordination with Enhanced Integration Framework* – a two way exchange of information developed which strengthened the EIF on SPS issues resulting in an increased focus on trade related SPS issues in the new and updated DTIS studies and the STDF's capacity to maintain a pipeline of PPGs from LDCs.
- *Coordination with WTO-led Aid for Trade Initiative* – a two-way exchange of information, which increased the focus on SPS issues in the AfT Initiative and updated the STDF on progress in the implementation of the AfT agenda.
- *Consultations with regional economic communities, regional associations such as IICA, OIRSA and technical assistance providers and coordinators such as COLEACP and CABI* – a two way exchange which strengthens regional focus on the benefits of coordination and best practice in response to SPS trade related needs and informs the STDF on regional priorities and needs.
- *Consultations with other organizations and initiatives in the SPS area* – a two-way exchange that allowed the STDF to monitor developments, share experiences and identify potential areas where synergies could be created from increased coordination and collaboration<sup>18</sup>.
- *Consultation with Regional Development Banks* – the STDF engaged with the African Development Bank (AfDB); Asian Development Bank (ADB); the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB); and the Islamic Development Bank to promote participation in the STDF and to keep updated on the work the banks are doing in areas covered by the STDF mandate.
- *Information dissemination* – a ongoing series of activities which included:
  - publication of a newsletter in 2008, widely circulated to stakeholders with 12 issues published by December 2011;
  - the development of the STDF website as an user friendly portal; for all STDF newsletters, reports, studies, briefing notes, project reports etc;
  - promotional film in six languages, and
  - development of the virtual library.
- *Reporting to the SPS Committee, Codex, OIE and IPPC Meetings:* this increases the transparency of the STDF and keeps the STDF updated on the trade related concerns of WTO members in relation to the WTO SPS agreement.

76. The management and implementation of the core activities by the Secretariat greatly contributed to the success in establishing the STDF as a coordination forum and is

<sup>18</sup> This includes initiatives of partners, donors, observers and other stakeholders such as World Animal Health and Welfare Fund, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the World Bank Trade Facilitation Facility, the Global Food Safety Initiative as well as WTO SPS Committee regional seminars, the EU-funded Better Training for Safer Food as well as global and regional seminars and workshops organized by the SPS Committee.

arguably a key source of its value proposition to members. These core activities also clearly contributed towards the achievement of Output 3 and to a lesser extent of Output 2. Although it seems clear that the activities produced the required results, it is difficult to accurately quantify the level of any contribution, or indeed the level of achievement of the outputs themselves. Moreover, it seems reasonable to expect that the core activities contributed towards the outcome of 'increased coordination in the provision of technical cooperation on SPS issues' covered by the STDF mandate. The strength of this contribution (and the degree to which the outcome was achieved) again is not clear as there are no specific indicators to measure.

## Thematic Activities

77. In addition to the core activities the STDF developed a series of 'thematic activities' and some other activities. The objective was to identify and disseminate best practice as well as to develop sources of information on emerging SPS issues of concern to STDF WG to partners, donors, and in so doing contribute to Output 1 and 2. STDF monitoring data in the 2010 and 11 annual reports show these outputs were achieved. However, the outcome of '*To increase effectiveness and synergies in the provision and delivery of high-quality SPS technical cooperation*' was also implicitly targeted. This was partly achieved with each completed activity contributing to some degree, but the strength of the contribution of each activity and output varies. Some approaches were more effective than others, arguably because of better focus and design. These are discussed further below.

78. The thematic and other activities included:

- *SPS indicators*: A draft study was prepared in cooperation with OECD in 2010 with inputs from partners. However the work has yet to be not finalized.
- *Aid for Trade*: this activity was in addition to regular consultations as part of the core activities. The objective was to increase the focus on SPS issues in national country AfT's strategies by raising the profile of SPS issues as "supply side" constraints for developing countries in international trade, and notably for LDCs. It included regional studies and surveys to identify SPS issues and workshops to promote prioritizing them in AfT country strategies.
- *Climate Change*: The STDF in cooperation with the World Bank held a seminar titled "Climate Change and Agricultural Trade: Risks and Responses", in 2009. A study was subsequently prepared on the effects of climate change<sup>19</sup>. There were no recommendations in the study.
- *Fruit fly control in West Africa*: The STDF, the World Bank and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) began advocacy for a coordinated multi-stakeholder approach to control fruit flies in West Africa in 2008. This continued over 2 years and culminated in the preparation of a five-year Regional Action Plan to control fruit fly in West Africa by COLEACP, budgeted at €25 million. The design was funded jointly by the STDF and World Bank.
- *Participation of African Nations in Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standard-setting Organizations EU funded project*: The project supported the Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources from May 2008 to December 2011 and worked in close collaboration with the African Union Inter-African Phytosanitary Council as well the seven RECs in Africa. The STDF provided strategic and technical advice and training support to the AU-led project and was a member of the Steering Committee.

<sup>19</sup> Climate Change and Trade: The Link to SPS Standards, September 2011, STDF, WTO, Geneva Switzerland.

- *National and regional SPS coordination mechanisms in Africa*: Effectively a follow-up to the PAN SPSO, the STDF commissioned a follow-up study in 2011: "National SPS Coordination Mechanisms: An African Perspective"<sup>20</sup>.
- *Public Private Partnerships (PPPs)*: A workshop was organized in October 2010, organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality of The Netherlands and the World Bank Institute. The objective was to raise awareness concerning the potential value and role of PPPs in enhancing SPS capacity and to provide practical guidance to facilitate and promote PPPs for SPS capacity development. It was attended by 95 people from the public and private sector, 31 of which were sponsored by the STDF (from developing countries). A desk study was published<sup>21</sup>.
- *Development of the Multi Criteria Decision Analysis tool*: The initiative began in 2009 and continued under the new 2012-16 strategy. The MCDA tool is a new decision-support tool based on a MCDA approach and methodology to help decision-makers prioritize and make choices between competing SPS investments. A draft MCDA guidebook was prepared and tested at workshops in Mozambique and Zambia and a regional training workshop in South Africa in 2011. A report was also prepared and published, reviewing experiences with the use of economic analysis to guide priority-setting for SPS capacity building in developing countries, and highlighting the challenges faced<sup>22</sup>.
- *Trade Facilitation*: two background papers were prepared in 2009-10 exploring linkages between SPS and trade facilitation initiatives.
- *Invasive Alien Species*: The project began in 2011 and continued into 2013 under the 2012-16 strategy, in collaboration with the Inter-agency Liaison Group on IAS, the IPPC, OIE and WTO. The objective of the project was to raise awareness about the detrimental effects of the introduction and spread of IAS for human, animal and plant health, and the importance of coherence and dialogue among SPS and environmental institutions at the national level in the development of strategies to control trade-related IAS.
- Briefing notes were also prepared and published on most thematic activities.

**Output 1:** High-quality tools and information resources to support SPS capacity building are developed by the STDF Secretariat and used by beneficiaries, donors and other organizations involved in the provision and delivery of SPS technical cooperation, and applied in countries.

79. Nearly all the thematic activities contributed in some way to the achievement of this output as studies and briefing notes act as easily accessible information sources.

80. The development of the MCDA tool was well received by donors, observers and developing countries but not by all partners. The work stream consumed about 25 percent of resources allocated to coordination activities in the period under review and it is not clear that this optimised the use of STDF's resources given the higher risk involved in the development of a tool rather than in the identification and dissemination of best practice tools.

<sup>20</sup> 'National SPS Coordination Mechanisms: An African perspective', January 2012, STDF, WTO, Geneva, Switzerland.

<sup>21</sup> Public-Private Partnerships to enhance SPS capacity: What can we learn from this collaborative approach? April 2012, STDF, WTO, Geneva Switzerland.

<sup>22</sup> 'Use of Economic Analysis to Inform SPS-related Decision-Making', November 2011, STDF, WTO, Geneva, Switzerland.

**Output 2:** Experiences and good practices in SPS capacity building are disseminated and discussed at the national, regional and international levels

81. The core activities and in particular the dissemination activities, in addition to the studies and briefing notes prepared as part of the thematic activities, contributed towards this output. The STDF monitoring data indicates many of the performance indicators were met in 2010.

**Output 3:** Trade capacity building programmes (e.g. EIF, AfT, TFF, etc.) at the country level address SPS issues and priorities,

82. The AfT activities contributed to the achievement of Output 3 on AfT. The Second Global AfT Review in 2009 highlighted SPS issues as a possible constraint on trade in the context of trade facilitation. It also includes examples of developing country strategies to address these constraints<sup>23</sup>. The Third Global Review in 2011 noted the efforts of developing countries to achieve SPS standards compliance necessary to gain and maintain market access and stressed the need for adequate quality infrastructure to support compliance with public and private sector SPS requirements<sup>24</sup>. However the targeted output on AfT was also arguably a low benchmark. A higher benchmark would be to set a target of mainstreaming SPS issues (including the quality infrastructure necessary to support compliance) so that it appeared as an additional pillar of national/regional AfT strategies given that the most of developing countries' exports are agricultural produce and/or food products.

83. The core EIF activity contributed to the achievement of the output on trade related SPS issues in the new and updated DTIS studies. The STDF 2010 annual review notes three new studies.

84. The goal in relation to the TFF was partly achieved. Progress towards the goal is noted in the STDF 2009 and 2010 reports and reference is made to proposal for further cooperation in the 2011 report. However there is no mention of any further cooperation in the 2012 report.

85. **Outcome 2:** 'To increase effectiveness and synergies in the provision and delivery of high-quality SPS technical cooperation'.

86. The *Fruit fly control in West Africa* activity supported the achievement of this outcome. It complemented earlier projects funded by the EU in 2007 and brought together a range of actors. The plan was endorsed in a joint STDF/ECOWAS stakeholder meeting in Bamako, Mali, in September 2010 by representatives of national governments, research institutes, the private sector, civil society and development partners. The Bamako Declaration was adopted outlining a roadmap to implement the Regional Action Plan. The Action Plan included recommendations to governments and donors to prioritize fruit fly in national and regional planning and budgetary frameworks. This is a major success story for the STDF and contributed towards STDF aims in the 2007-11 strategy. This case provides a strong example of how synergy between the two mandates of the STDF as a coordination body and a funding mechanism can be created to better achieve its goals.

87. The activities '*International Trade and Invasive Alien Species*' and '*National and regional SPS coordination mechanisms in Africa*' may have had the potential to make a contribution to the outcome, but were not completed and were carried over into the 2012-16 strategy.

<sup>23</sup> Aid for Trade At a Glance: Maintaining Momentum, 2009, WTO, Geneva, Switzerland

<sup>24</sup> Aid for Trade At a Glance: Showing Results, 2011, WTO, Geneva, Switzerland

88. There is no evidence of sustainable contribution from the other activities to this outcome. This appears to be for a number of reasons:

- No one has been able to identify a specific SPS issue within a target country or region that could be addressed through a coordinated response such as ‘fruit fly control in West Africa’ or ‘One Health Initiative targeting a coordination response to transboundary zoonotic diseases in Central Asia’<sup>25</sup>.
- The lack of a project champion in the form of a partner or donor that could push the coordination agenda and actively advocate for necessary actions to implement it – none of the WG members interviewed claimed ownership of a thematic activity.
- Some activities were designed to be limited in scope and only to increase awareness of a single issue rather than coordinate a broader response. This includes the thematic activities on Climate Change and PPPs. In response to a query about this, the Secretariat said it was up to the WG Members to take individual work streams further.<sup>26</sup>

89. The references made to the STDF as a partner in the OIE’s Fifth Strategic Plan for 2011–2015 and the IPPC’s National Phytosanitary Capacity Development Strategy to the STDF indicate policy change and can be viewed as indicator of progress towards achieving the overall outcome.

### **Medium Term Strategy 2012-16**

#### **Core Activities**

90. In 2012 the STDF continued to effectively implement its core activities to support the operation of the STDF as a coordination forum to enhance collaboration and the exchange of information on SPS issues, and establishing it as a knowledge centre. In support of its function as a coordination mechanism to strengthen the STDF as a knowledge platform for information exchange, sharing experiences and the identification and dissemination of good practice, it changed the emphasis from coordination to collaboration although it is not clear what effect this had if any in practice. It strengthened its information and dissemination activity via its website. The STDF 2012 annual report stated that this appears to have been effective as the number of visitors to the website recorded a 63% year on year increase. The STDF also began email distribution of its newsletters and by year-end had a subscription base of 920 persons. The report also noted that 82 percent of the WG participants and over 55 percent of PPG and PG beneficiaries distributed and/or used STDF information products at over 90 events. The STDF Virtual Library project was completed and at year’s end had about 800 publicly available SPS-related documents, most of which were STDF publications. Many of the STDF WG members question the objective of establishing the STDF as a central repository of all Member’s project documents on trade related SPS issues. They don’t believe this is realistic or that sufficient demand exists to justify the investment. They also doubt whether the STDF has the resources to provide active content management, which some believe is necessary if the library was to have real utility for stakeholders.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> For example see ‘Analysis of the food safety situation and development of a regional action plan, Central Asia Regional Action Plan, August 2011, commissioned by the Central Asia Regional “One Health” Project part of the Central Asia AIDS Control Project, funded by Avian & Human Influenza Facility Trust Fund administered by the World Bank under the Eurasian Economic Community.

<sup>26</sup> Paragraph 108 STDF Operational rules.

<sup>27</sup> SECO noted in a comment to the Draft Final report that they were ‘surprised by the negative feedback on the virtual library. The proposal was discussed and approved by the WG, which would also have been the time to question the objective and practical implementation of the work’.

## Thematic activities

91. The STDF carried over a number of thematic activities from the 2007-12 strategy and introduced two more:

- *International Trade and IAS*: The overall objective was restated as 'to promote increased collaboration between the SPS and the Convention on Biological Diversity "communities" at both the regional and national levels, notably in developing countries where resources are often limited. A seminar on International Trade and IAS was held in Geneva attended by 110 participants from the SPS and biodiversity "communities" to consider the objectives of the WTO SPS Agreement. A study was prepared and published in cooperation with the OIE and IPPC based on the discussions, findings and results of the seminar and published in 2013<sup>28</sup>.
- *Application of the MCDA tool*: The STDF Secretariat continued to advocate the use of and provide advice on the MCDA tool. The tool was applied with the support of the STDF in cooperation with COMESA and/or United States Department of Agriculture USDA/USAID, in a number of African countries, in Vietnam and in Belize. The STDF organized a regional MCDA training workshop in Bangkok in 2012 which was attended by 41 SPS officials from government authorities and regional organizations in the Asia & Pacific Region.
- *National and regional SPS coordination mechanisms in Africa*: A first joint meeting was organized with the African Union Commission (AUC) in 2012 to discuss how to implement the recommendations of the 2010 STDF study. The STDF funded the participation of 16 SPS officials from AU-IAPSC, AU-IBAR, COMESA, ECOWAS, IGAD and SADC which was also attended by from Codex, IPPC, OIE, FAO, CABI and the WTO representatives also attended.
- *International Trade and Domestic Food Safety*: this new activity was introduced in 2012 in cooperation with the FAO and WHO. A study was planned for 2013 but has subsequently been removed from the work plan.
- *Trade Facilitation*: this activity was reintroduced. A study is planned on identifying experiences and good practices to improve the implementation of SPS controls in a way that ensures the appropriate level of health protection, while minimizing trade transaction costs.

92. **Strategic Result 1**: 'Enhanced collaboration in SPS-related technical cooperation'.

93. There are some indications that the thematic activities '*International Trade and IAS*' and '*National and regional SPS coordination mechanisms in Africa*' will support achievement of the output.

94. The collaborative response of the OIE and IPPC in preparing the IAS study is a positive, albeit low-level result, as it was facilitated by the STDF. Based on discussions with the IPPC, the cooperation in preparing the workshop and study seems to have increased their ownership of the outcomes thereby potentially increasing the sustainability. The IPPC has also included the IAS study as standard material in its training workshops and a side-event on IAS is scheduled at IPPC's annual meeting in 2014 which is indicative of a possible change in policy to facilitate increased coordination or collaboration on this issue.

95. Under the 'National and regional SPS coordination mechanisms in Africa' activity

<sup>28</sup> 'IAS International Trade and Invasive Alien Species', June 2013, STDF, WTO, Geneva.

participants from the AU and the RECs agreed that the AUC would draft preliminary ToR for the establishment of a continental SPS WG and distribute them to key stakeholders for consultation and approval. This decision was also an indicator of policy change, which supports achievement of increased coordination and collaboration.

96. The STDF 2012 annual report noted that over 90% of WG participants were involved in 'collaboration' (i.e. joint activities or events, projects, information exchange) as facilitated by the STDF, a low level indicator. It also reported potential joint collaboration efforts outside the STDF citing the IDB/IPPC/IICA cooperation on Pest Risk Analysis Programme and the IDB/USDA Regional Program on Pesticide Maximum Residue Limits but it is not clear if these examples are attributable to participation in the STDF.

### 2.2.3 Factors enhancing or constraining progress

*Q. What factors are enhancing or constraining progress towards intended outcomes?*

97. The high level of participation in the WG by partners, members, observers and beneficiaries has contributed to it being an effective coordination forum for the exchange of information and knowledge. Participation in the WG was cited by partners, donors, observers and developing countries alike as a key example of how the STDF adds value. The assistance and support of the Secretariat to the WG was also identified as important in enabling the WG to operate effectively. However a few issues were raised as potential risks to its continued effectiveness. These were:

#### ***Partners' working relationship ion the Secretariat***

98. Discussions with the WG member including partners, donors, observers and developing countries during the MTR process suggested that the working relationship with the FAO, IPPC and to a lesser extent the OIE and WHO was difficult. This may become a significant constraint on the WG in the future. As the STDF was originally structured to coordinate technical input from the partners into the design of PPGs and PGs to optimize their relevance, effectiveness and impact, implementation requires a close working relationship with the Secretariat.

99. The FAO and IPPC were critical of the fact that most donors do not assign technical representatives although it is designated a 'technical level' WG in STDF Operation Rules<sup>29</sup>. They contended that this weakened the role of WG as a technical body for the approval of PPGs and PGs and increased the partners' workload. Donors disagreed noting that the STDF was structured to leverage the technical expertise of the partners to optimize the PPG and PG design and they are happy to defer to the partners' advice in this regard. Most donors did not believe it necessary to send technical representatives and in any case noted that they did do not have the resources at hand to do so. Many donors assign the responsibility for attendance to the trade or agricultural councilors at their embassies in Geneva. Donors would prefer if the PPG and PG technical details were discussed by a technical sub-committee rather than by the WG itself as they believe this will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of WG meetings. In response to a query on this the FAO, IPPC, and OIE representatives said that it was an option but it would stretch the current resources available to them for STDF matters.

<sup>29</sup> The Operational Rules state that the WG consists of technical level representatives of the partners, donors currently contributing funds to the STDF and developing countries, and includes participation by the Secretariats of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex) and the IPPC.

## **Membership of the WG**

100. The structure of the WG is predicated on leveraging the technical expertise of the FAO, IPPC, OIE, WHO, WB and WTO to increase effectiveness in project design and implementation through the grant funding programs as well as to strengthen the effectiveness of coordinated responses to SPS issues of concern to Members and thereby increase the benefits of their capacity building programs to beneficiaries programs. The active engagement of all partners, donors and developing countries in the WG as a coordination forum enables it to work effectively. The current apparent lack of engagement by the World Bank as a partner, noted by many Members during the interview process, could be a constraint on effectiveness. A number of developing countries thought that the STDF's focus on developing needs in this area could be increased with a wider representation. However given the current limited resources of the STDF it is not clear that this would improve achievement of its purpose. Similarly extending the Membership to include other donors such as IDB and ADB could extend the reach of the STDF but would need additional resources for project grant funding as well as in human resources to maintain current effectiveness in implementation.<sup>30</sup>

## **Secretariat**

101. There is general consensus among donors, observers and developing country members, and the WTO, that the participative approach adopted by the STDF Secretariat to the management of the coordination and thematic activities was effective in strengthening ownership by partners, donors and beneficiaries in activities and extending the reach of the STDF. Similarly the Secretariat's consultative approach to the delivery of technical assistance to beneficiaries in developing countries to prepare applications for PPGs including use of the EIF DTIS studies to identify and prioritize projects in LDCs was effective in building capacity and a pipeline of PPGs. The increase in the number of PPGs receiving STDF funding as PGs also contributed to its effectiveness. The performance of the Secretariat was highly rated by nearly all WG members and was considered a positive factor in increasing effectiveness and enhancing progress towards the aims and goals of both medium term strategies. The FAO and IPPC were an exception citing the poor working relationship with the Secretariat.

## **Results based management framework**

102. Current procedures for the design and inclusion of activities in the work program do not prioritize them in terms of their expected contribution to the outcome at immediate or intermediate level. Although the activities are set within an expanded logical framework for each work plan, not all of the activity level performance indicators linked up to the indicators for the strategic results. As a result the coordination activities appear activity driven rather than directed towards the achievement of results, which negatively impacts achievement of purpose<sup>31</sup>.

<sup>30</sup> It is assumed that if the ADB and IDB became members they would contribute additional funding to STDF. The expansions in funds available would allow the STDF to fund more projects and expand coordination activities. The increased volume of activity would require additional human resources to manage.

<sup>31</sup> Activity driven is not the same as demand driven. When a program becomes activity driven the intervention logic breaks down. Activities are included without consideration of the contribution of the output to the achievement of purpose. Demand driven presumes that the intervention still pertains and only activities relevant to achievement of purpose are included and in projects with limited resources, are prioritized on the basis of their contribution.



## Monitoring and Evaluation

103. While the STDF WG has oversight responsibility of the project grant program the Secretariat has responsibility for monitoring the performance of PPGs and PGs through a review of project inception, progress and final reports.
104. An 'ex-post' final evaluation is also required for 50 percent of completed projects selected at random. No final evaluations were carried out in 2011 and only one was undertaken in 2012. The Secretariat noted that this was due to the high current workload, which was putting stress on the system.
105. The objective of the 'ex-post' evaluation carried out on STDF projects requires clarification. From current operating procedures it is not clear as to whether the evaluations are intended to be 'final project evaluations' that measure a project's performance or an 'impact assessment'. Best practice requires a final evaluation to be carried out just before the project ends, whereas an impact evaluation is usually not done before 3-4 years after the project has been completed. In the period under review evaluations of projects had been carried out in a range of 4 to 29 months after project completion.

## Other issues

106. The objectives of establishing the Virtual Library need to be clarified. The annual report noted that the 'library allows the Secretariat to better manage a large amount of documentation and further facilitates STDF's role as a knowledge platform for exchanging information and disseminating good practices'. However, it also advised partners, donors and other stakeholders to 'start submitting relevant documents (e.g. final project reports, project evaluations, capacity assessments, training materials, research papers, articles, etc.) for inclusion in STDF's Virtual Library'. Most donors interviewed commented that this was an unrealistic objective. One donor questioned the demand for it and suggested that the Secretariat should survey WG members to assess if there was need for it. Another said that the current search engine and apparent structure of the database did not facilitate easy retrieval of information and that effective content management is required to improve its utility<sup>32</sup>.

### *Q. Are there any unintended positive or negative outcomes from the STDF's activities?*

107. Given that the development of the MCDA tool was not explicitly envisaged under the 2007-11 Medium Term Strategy, its successful development and positive reception as a decision making tool by developing countries can be considered a positive unexpected outcome for STDF. Paragraphs 109-111 illustrate some of these benefits:
108. At a regional MCDA training workshop, organized in Bangkok in 2012, which was attended by 41 SPS officials from government authorities and regional organizations in the Asia & Pacific Region, participants agreed that the MCDA framework:
- presents a useful and powerful tool to guide and support SPS decision-making;
  - is likely to work best in countries where there is already dialogue and coordination among public and private stakeholders involved in SPS matters; and
  - provides a useful snapshot of the potential trade impacts directly associated with investments in the SPS capacity building.

109. According to the Belize Agricultural Health Authority (BAHA) the MCDA tool was also

<sup>32</sup> See also footnote to paragraph 90

successfully applied in Belize under project STDF/PG/365: Application of the MCDA tool, to inform SPS decision-making in Belize in 2012. The final project report noted that the application of the Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis Framework in Belize resulted in the identification of eight (8) capacity building options which included: Animal health controls for live cattle exports, animal health and hygiene controls for beef exports; animal health and hygiene controls for chicken exports; plant health controls for pitahaya exports; food safety controls for papaya exports; laboratory testing for pesticide residues and veterinary drugs and veterinary pesticide residues; laboratory testing capacity for heavy metals and plant health controls for citrus pulp exports.

110. The report also noted that one of the prioritized options, animal health controls for live cattle exports, is already in the implementation phase however additional funding will be required to fully complete the programme. Plans are in effect to try to seek resources locally for at least three of the top four options, which require minimal investment but have impact on product diversification and on small farmers. The other options will be included in the Aid for Trade Strategy particularly as the information generated by the application of the MCDA has pointed out clearly the upfront investment needed and the potential impact these would have once addressed. The MCDA tool has the flexibility of being applicable whenever the availability of new data calls for it. Additionally it can even be applied to any given section in the organization (plant health, animal health, quarantine, food safety), which may desire to prioritize activities even further, but at the departmental level.
111. These properties are of significant benefit to BAHA given the fact that as programmes are completed or new resources allocated, it will be necessary that the tool be applied and reapplied so that at any given point the results with prioritized options reflect the current situation, as opposed to simply having a static report with outdated information. Plans are also in place to apply the tool with the objectives of using the information to assist in developing a strategic plan for BAHA. Since the Ministry of Natural Resources and Agriculture and Belize Trade and Investment Development Service (BELTRAIDE) are also keen in applying the MCDA, Belize will certainly benefit greatly from this framework. BELTRAIDE would be focusing on prioritized areas for intervention in their work with micro and small and medium size enterprises. The Agriculture Department on the other hand would be looking at programmes that should be prioritized under two major headings: Food and Nutrition Security and Foreign Exchange Earnings.

## 2.3 Efficiency

112. This section assesses the outputs -- qualitative and quantitative -- in relation to the inputs in terms of cost efficiency.

*Q. Have the STDF's grant funding program and coordination activities been implemented in a cost efficient manner? How has value for money been achieved in expending resources to deliver outputs? Have the activities been completed in a timely manner?*

113. Management of the project grant funding program at Secretariat level was considered cost effective and efficient by donors and observers with many donors commenting that the STDF was far more cost efficient than trying to incorporate this type of project into their own bilateral technical cooperation programs.
114. All of the independent evaluations of PGs completed in the period under review concluded that the projects were implemented in a cost efficient manner. A portfolio analysis of the other completed projects suggests the same applies across the PG portfolio. Although about 30 per cent of projects are granted time extensions these were invariably justified.

115. The coordination activities were also efficiently implemented. There was a focus on value for money with core activities coordinated with each other and thematic activities to reduce costs of travel and participation. Technology was also used to reduce costs with the introduction of email distribution of the newsletter and use of questionnaire software to assess opinions of Members on performance.

116. The evaluation team reviewed the project account summary included in the Annual Reports, which lists budgeted and actual expenditure by budget line in accordance with WTO accounting procedures and International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS).

**Table 1 STDF Operation Expenditures 2009-12 (USD)**

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2009-12
Technical missions	75,137	110,571	88,273	110,531	384,513
STDF WG meetings	36,904	57,789	59,436	71,423	225,552
Co-ordination Activities	485,906	304,018	119,677	336,945	1,246,546
STDF staff expenditures	737,439	755,574	852,776	816,628	3,162,417
Miscellaneous	8,053	12,246	28,100	20,931	69,330
<b>Sub-total 1</b>	<b>1,343,440</b>	<b>1,240,199</b>	<b>1,148,262</b>	<b>1,356,458</b>	<b>5,088,358</b>
PPG - Development	210,768	117,530	221,453	55,583	605,334
Project Funding	1,537,585	4,406,952	670,398	3,864,105	10,479,040
Project Evaluations	37,405	-807	19,887	13,411	69,896
<b>Sub-total 1</b>	<b>1,785,759</b>	<b>4,523,675</b>	<b>911,737</b>	<b>3,933,099</b>	<b>11,154,270</b>
<b>Sub-totals 1 &amp; 2</b>	<b>3,129,198</b>	<b>5,763,874</b>	<b>2,059,999</b>	<b>5,289,557</b>	<b>16,242,628</b>
Overheads	406,796	749,304	267,800	687,642	2,111,542
<b>Overall total</b>	<b>3,535,994</b>	<b>6,513,177</b>	<b>2,327,799</b>	<b>5,977,200</b>	<b>18,354,170</b>

117. The STDF appears to have been efficient in securing funds from donors to cover the costs of its grant funding program, coordination activities and operation costs. See Table 2 below.

**Table 2 Funding of the STDF 2009-12 (CHF)**

Country	2009	2010	2011	2012	2009-2012	%
Australia	653,850				653,850	3.2
Canada	182,448		1,888,552	917,095	2,988,095	14.8
Denmark	616,746	360,038	331,230	321,903	1,629,917	8.1
European Union	375,900	250,229	399,511	437,164	1,462,804	7.2
Finland	613,600	545,600	491,200		1,650,400	8.2
France					0	0.0
Germany	227,700	196,650	183,300	180,150	787,800	3.9

Ireland	301,600	163,000	148,250	222,305	835,155	4.1
Italy					0	0.0
Japan	303,143	291,471	187,398	100,196	882,207	4.4
Netherlands	500,000	981,997		981,997	2,463,994	12.2
Norway		168,663	237,624	245,559	651,845	3.2
Sweden	1,007,839	1,011,318	1,008,210	1,015,560	4,042,927	20.0
Switzerland	700,000		500,000		1,200,000	5.9
Chinese Taipei		78,720	73,680		152,400	0.8
United Kingdom					0	0.0
United States	364,350	256,500	89,600	106,259	816,709	4.0
World Bank					0	0.0
WTO					0	0.0
<b>Total in CHF*</b>	<b>5,847,176</b>	<b>4,304,185</b>	<b>5,538,554</b>	<b>4,528,188</b>	<b>20,218,103</b>	100
<b>Total in US\$*</b>	<b>5,389,102</b>	<b>4,107,047</b>	<b>6,265,333</b>	<b>4,837,808</b>	<b>20,599,290</b>	

\*including pledges

*Q. Are the governance, financial and operational oversight arrangements for the STDF fit for purpose?*

118. The STDF is part of the WTO and it operates within their rules and procedures, which are carried out in accordance with IPAS. Operational oversight of the STDF is the responsibility of the STDF WG. See section 2.2.3 for further findings related to operational issues.

## 2.4 Sustainability

119. Sustainability is concerned with measuring whether the benefits of STDF are likely to continue after funding has been withdrawn.

*Q. Are the outcomes of the STDF funding program and coordination activities sustainable? What factors are influencing sustainability?*

### PPGs and PGs

120. There was a general consensus among partners, donors and observers that capacity built in project design and formulation in developing countries, and particularly in LDCs, was a key benefit and result of the STDF program. Since this was developed at both organisational and personal level within the partner country, ownership of the outcome was thought to be strong. Moreover, the result was also considered to be transferable and replicable. Both these factors suggest that any such results in question are likely to be sustainable even where a PPG is not funded. The rate of funding of PGs developed from PPGs has increased from 13 percent in 2009 to 50 percent in 2012, which significantly strengthens the sustainability of PPGs. While it would be preferable that all the designed projects were funded by STDF, a donor, partner or other source, it is not clear how this could be achieved.

121. As outlined in section 2.3, the sustainability of the national and regional projects completed in the review period can be considered to be reasonably good for most of

the projects, perhaps in excess of 70 percent of them. The key factors influencing sustainability were ownership, institutional strength, future benefits, staff turnover and viability of operations once the project ended. In terms of the three national projects, evidence of expected long-term sustainability was absent in one i.e. in Cambodia due to a lack of ownership of deliverables and results by the relevant authorities in Government, without which implementation of the SPS Action Plan could not occur. In Rwanda the establishment of a National Plant Protection Organization and its continued funding by the Government of Rwanda clearly enhanced the sustainability of the outcome. In Costa Rica the potential increase in earnings following a successful implementation of a traceability system for the livestock sector, helped ensure sufficient operational funding from the public and private sector to make the long-term operation of the system sustainable. Other risks for long-term sustainability include high levels of staff turnover, as was the case in the regional project on capacity building on use of the PCE tool in the Pacific Islands, and lack of internal sources for operational funding once the project end. This may be the case with the PG to support Horticulture Development Council of Tanzania. Operational funding was also a threat to sustainability of the three regional projects on fruit fly control in West Africa but this has been alleviated by a commitment by the EU to support implementation of the Regional Action Plan under the EU 11<sup>th</sup> EDF programme.

### **Coordination Activities**

122. Most stakeholders thought it likely that the many of the benefits delivered under Outputs 1 and 2 in the 2007-11 strategy, in terms of high quality tools and information on best practice, were sustainable in the long term without the continued support of the STDF. This included the development of the MCDA tool. This was because of their utility in addressing exigent needs of beneficiaries and presumed completion of the output. Where an output was not completed, as in the case of the work on SPS indicators, then sustainability cannot be established.
123. The sustainability of benefits from the increased focus on SPS issues under the WTO-led AfT Initiative and EIF are dependent on this focus being retained. This looks likely in the case of EIF but it is not so clear in the former, as the focus on SPS issues lessened in the Fourth Global AfT Review in 2013. The work of the STDF on the performance of selected SPS-related PPPs was noted. SPS measures as constraints on trade were also noted in the context of trade facilitation and regional economic agreements but there were few if any references to how developing countries were addressing the issues in their national strategies<sup>33</sup>.
124. There was general agreement that, subject to additional funding from the EU to implement the Regional Action Plan, the activity on fruit fly controls in West Africa should be considered sustainable. Opinion among WG Members was varied or non-committal when asked about the sustainability of the results of the STDF's thematic activities. This reflects that some of the thematic activities included in the work program suffered a lack of ownership or defined specific objectives that were based on clear problem identification and achievable.
125. All WG members agreed that the existence of the STDF as a coordination forum for the exchange of information on SPS issues was a key enabler of the sustainability of the focus on SPS issues at regional and global levels. The current momentum towards increased coordination and collaboration in this area among WTO Members would be significantly reduced without the STDF.

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<sup>33</sup> AfT at a Glance: Connecting to Value Chains, 2013, WTO, Geneva, Switzerland

## 2.5 Impact

126. It is too early to assess the impact of intervention in the period. However a number of questions on effectiveness and sustainability which are a necessary condition for impact to occur can be reviewed to assess the potential for impact to be achieved.

*Q. Has the STDF Project programme strengthened developing countries capacity to plan interventions? Develop projects? Implement projects?*

127. As noted in section 2.2 and 2.3, there was general agreement among STDF Members on effectiveness and sustainability of the benefits delivered in capacity building for project design and formulation particularly in LDCs. Both are criteria that must be met before an impact can be achieved. This is likely to be realized from the capacity developed acting as a catalyst in a ripple effect resulting in SPS trade related constraints being more effectively addressed. This in turn would result in sustainable economic growth and reduced poverty in line with the STDF vision. However given the extensive time lag involved in the achievement of impact, it is likely to be dependent on maintaining the focus on SPS issues in the AfT and EIF to ensure the continued and increased mobilization of funds necessary to implement the projects particularly in LDCs and OLICs.

*Q. Will any increased coordination and/or collaboration achieved by the STDF programme between STDF's partners and donors be maintained in the long term (i.e. become part of the standard operating procedures of the partners & donors)?*

128. As noted above the references to the STDF as a partner in the OIE's Fifth Strategic Plan: 2011–2015 and the IPPC's National Phytosanitary Capacity Development Strategy to the STDF envisage continued participation in the STDF. However, it is too early to say if the momentum will be maintained to generate impact outside the focus of the STDF funding grant programs or the focus of its coordination activities. At the moment most WG Members believe the continuation of the STDF as a coordination body is necessary to maintain this momentum.

*Q. Has the STDF coordination activities strengthened developing countries capacity to develop coherent SPS policies with AfT strategies that identify and prioritize their needs, and at the same time take account of emerging risks that need to be addressed in the future?*

129. The STDF has been successful in increasing the focus on SPS issues at the core of the AfT Initiative as well as in the DTIS reports commissioned by the EIF. The STDF has the potential to create significant impact in a cost effective manner as strategies and development programs are implemented but there will be a time lag of at least 3-5 years before any discernible impact from this can be evidenced.

## 3. CONCLUSIONS

*Q. Are the objectives, purpose and intended results of the STDF Medium Term Strategies consistent with the needs and priorities of the intended beneficiaries and with the policy environment of the STDF Partners and donors on SPS and AfT initiative?*

130. The overall parameters of the 2007-11 Medium Term Strategy and the Medium Term Strategy 2012-16 are appropriate to the aims and mandate of the STDF.

131. All partners and beneficiary considered the PPG and PG programs as relevant to their own development goals and policies. Many donors also cited the performance target of allocating 40 percent of support to LDCs and OLICs and the support provided to the EIF in the preparation of DTIS reports as a critical condition for their continued support.

The OIE and WHO were however concerned about the relative low levels allocated to animal health and public health projects respectively, which may lead the organizations to disengage with the STDF if not addressed.

132. Through the cooperation activities with the EIF and the broader WTO-led AfT Initiative, the STDF is seen as a key part of the WTO's support infrastructure to LDCs. This work provides significant value added and is relevant to the goals of donors and one key reason for their continued support and participation in the STDF.
133. Moreover, the STDF has identified SPS issues of concern to partners, donors and developing countries. It has played an active coordination role and increased collaboration on the issues, including at well-attended workshops where participants have jointly identified and advocated best practice in addressing key constraints. The STDF has prepared background studies, papers and briefing notes to disseminate information on the results of well-coordinated responses by partners and donors. The issues covered have included AfT, Climate Change; fruit fly control in West Africa; PPPs and IAS. All WG members agreed that these activities were relevant to their own development goals, although the degree varied depending on the individual issue.
134. Although there has been some effort over the evaluation period to adopt a RBM approach and develop a RBM framework, it has not been very successful. The framework in use does not fully adhere to best practice principles. It was not used by the STDF Secretariat in preparing the annual or bi-annual work programs or for the day-to-day management of the facility. The lack of an appropriate RBM framework made it not only more difficult for donors and partners to assess the success of the program, but provides a clear existential risk for the STDF as well: SIDA accounted for about 20 percent of funding in the period under review and has red-flagged the adaptation of a more clearly defined RBM framework across the entire management system as a condition for their continued support to the STDF.

*Q. Did the earlier Medium Term Strategy 2007-11 achieve its objectives in the period under review?*

*Q. Is the STDF making progress towards the achievement of its Medium Term Strategy 2012-16?*

135. This Review judges STDF against the above two questions on the basis of the component success of (i) its PG and PPG portfolio; (ii) its coordination activities; and (iii) the level of complementarity between the two work streams.
136. With regards to the success of the portfolio of PPGs and PGs, the results are impressive and a testament to the effective operation of the STDF WG approval process as well as the quality of support provided by the STDF Secretariat. Projects were deemed highly relevant to the needs of the beneficiaries. The interventions were also generally effective in that they delivered most of the benefits as planned. About 70 percent of projects are very efficient in producing the planned deliverables on time and within budget. About 30 percent of projects have required extensions for implementation but these were generally justified by circumstances outside the control of the project. Sustainability was judged an issue in a number of the projects primarily due to high staff turnover. Other factors negatively impacting sustainability included the non-viability of the organization due to a lack of core funding at project end; SPS quality infrastructure not being in place (which is outside the control of the STDF); and a lack of local ownership of the results. While early indications of long-term impact exists, as noted by individual project evaluations, it is too early to assess impact of the STDF in terms of market access or achieving its other broader development goals.

137. A total of 24 PPGs were approved for funding in the period 2009-12 totaling USD 733,000, which reaches the STDF target of 6 per annum. However the STDF fell short of the target in 2012 when only 3 out of 22 PPG applications were approved due to the ineligibility of many applications. The support provided to PPG applicants builds their capacity in project identification and design as well as covering issues in relation to institutional strengthening. It also supports the development of technical competencies and capacity evaluation. This addressed an exigent need of beneficiaries particularly in LDCs and OLICs and the skills developed are likely to be transferable and replicable. Preparations of PPGs were supported in a wide range of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia, South East Asia, South Asia, Central America and the Caribbean, Latin America and the Pacific Islands. The spread of the PPG portfolio was relatively even, although animal health issues may have been slightly underrepresented. The number of PPGs developed as PGs and approved by the STDF has increased from 14 per cent in 2009 to 50 percent in 2012 and is expected to increase further in 2013. However the number of PPGs not receiving follow-on funding by STDF or other donors is of concern and a potential threat to the sustainability of the program. The PPG program accounted for about 25 per cent of STDF costs but this was considered a good investment by the donors, nearly all of whom cite the PPG program as a key benefit of the STDF and a justification for their continued support. A STDF survey of beneficiaries in 2012 also found that 80 percent of respondents were satisfied with the capacity building provided by the facility.
138. A total of 31 PGs were approved for funding in the period 2009-12 with a total value of USD 15.3 Million. This exceeds the STDF target of 24 projects. As with PPGs the portfolio was specifically underrepresented by projects related to animal health. The PGs represented a good geographic spread. 21 projects with a total value of USD 12.3 million completed implementation within the evaluation period. The PGs addressed both institutional and technical capacity deficits within the public and private sector, which were acting as constraints to gaining and or maintaining market access. Independent evaluations were completed on four of these projects in the period under review. While it was outside the scope of the MTR to carry out further detailed evaluations of individual completed projects, the results of the portfolio analysis allows to conclude that the evaluated results of the four projects are a reasonable approximation of the overall performance PGs within the PG program.
139. Over 50 percent of total value of STDF project funding was allocated to PPGs and PGs originating from LDCs and OLICs in the period 2009-12. This excludes funding to regional projects which could include LDCs or OLICs. STDF has met its the performance target of 40 percent of support must go to the poorest developing countries.
140. Being able to conclusively report on the success of STDF in the coordination area is more challenging due to the opaque nature of the strategic design and weaknesses in the supporting M&E systems of the two Medium Term Strategies. Measured against aims of the Medium Term Strategy 2007-11 and the Medium Term Strategy 2012-16, the STDF has made progress in the period under review. It initiated a series of core activities, which have established the STDF as a coordination forum for the exchange of information and dissemination of best practice in relation to SPS standards compliance necessary to gain and maintain market access. The STDF has strengthened its online presence by developing a user friendly website and virtual library as a central repository for SPS related documents contributing towards wider information sharing. However, a number of donors question whether the goal set for managing a virtual library is realistic.
141. The purpose level results targeted in the 2010-11 logframe were for the most part



achieved. Information resources to support SPS capacity building were developed and were actively used by stakeholders including donors and beneficiaries in developing countries. Similarly experiences and good practices were disseminated and discussed at the national, regional and international levels facilitated by the STDF core activities. SPS issues and priorities are more adequately addressed at country level in the EIF and AfT initiatives than before, although the strength of the achievement in the broader AfT initiative is questionable. It has also facilitated a coordinated regional response in cooperation with ECOWAS to the control of the fruit fly in West Africa, which is not necessarily captured by the logframe<sup>34</sup>. Although it is not practicable to measure the attribution effects of individual STDF activities within the set results framework, by applying the principles of contribution analysis, it is reasonable to suggest that between 2009-11 STDF contributed to some degree towards increased effectiveness and synergies in the provision and delivery of SPS technical assistance.

142. The lack of a fully elaborated RBM framework, which would include clearly articulated causal linkages (and related assumptions/risks), makes it, again, difficult to assess achievement of the purpose level results in implementation of the Medium Term Strategy 2012-16. Achievement at output level can be verified with a number of well-received collaboration-related activities evidently taking place. Ascertaining positive results at higher levels of the results chain will require either establishing performance indicators at the appropriate level or, following a theory based approach, articulating how change from output level translates to change at outcome level and beyond. For example, a higher-level indicator could be the level of STDF WG members in joint initiatives independent of the STDF (with related assumptions to establish some level of attribution to STDF).

143. Moving from the Medium Term Strategy 2007-11 to the new Strategy, there has been a significant shift in emphasis of STDF towards collaboration. With it, a major factor in the success of the STDF is arguably how well it can create synergies between its role as a coordination body and funding mechanism. A powerful example of this is the Control of the Fruit Fly in West Africa, which is reviewed in section 2.2.1.

*Q. What factors are enhancing or constraining progress towards intended outcomes?*

144. Donors interviewed noted that the STDF Secretariat's management of the PPG and PG program was very efficient and extremely cost effective. It allowed the donors to extend the range of the technical support on SPS issues at a fraction of the cost compared to them doing it themselves under bilateral arrangements. This was a critical factor in their decision to support the STDF.

145. At the same time, there is concern that the workload of the Secretariat was too high and unless additional staff was appointed, it could hamper the efficient and effective operations of the Secretariat. Another concern regarding the Secretariat was that the restrictions on employment contracts to one year placed needless stress on management and staff as the lack of security increases turnover which impacts negatively on institutional memory and ultimately the efficiency of the Secretariat.

146. The Secretariat's participative and consultative approach to the implementation of the coordination activities enhances the effective implementation of STDF's coordination activities, but the difficult working relationship between the Secretariat and FAO and IPPC is an issue. It forms a potential threat to the effective and efficient operation of the facility.

<sup>34</sup> The Regional Action Plan developed as a result of this initiative was not subsequently implemented which negatively impacted its sustainability.

147. Although the Medium Term Strategy is fairly clear on the objectives of the STDF (answering the questions “what is the STDF trying to achieve?”) with most partners agreeing on the issues, it does not fare as well on mapping how these results should be achieved. Any weakness in the intervention logic opens up the program to critique from partners. Having a clearly articulated results chain linking activities to output, (immediate and intermediate) outcome and impact level results would enable a more precise description of the expected results with accompanying indicators and targets at each level.

*Q. Are there any unintended positive or negative outcomes from the STDF’s activities?*

148. There were positive results deriving from the development of the MCDA tool that may not have been envisaged in the development of the 2007-11 Medium Term Strategy (see paragraphs 107 through to 111).

*Q. Have the STDF’s grant funding program and coordination activities been implemented in a cost efficient manner? How has value for money been achieved in expending resources to deliver outputs? Have the activities been completed in a timely manner?*

149. The performance of the STDF Secretariat in program implementation is very efficient. Coordination related and project funding activities and outputs are generally delivered on time and within budget. The STDF sought value for money in the implementation of activities and applied technology where possible to reduce costs. The Secretariat was highly rated for its efficiency.

*Q. Are the governance, financial and operational oversight arrangements for the STDF fit for purpose?*

150. Governance, financial and operational oversight arrangements are fit for propose, although there is scope for improvement in the management systems.

151. The STDF WG has principle oversight responsibility for monitoring STDF’s performance. This is exercised through a review and approval of the annual reports, discussion in the WG and independent evaluations of the STDF. While these procedures are reasonably effective, they could be improved through the adoption of a more functional RBM framework that uniformly permeates through all levels of planning, monitoring and reporting.

152. Many donors believed that the extended discussion in the STDF WG on the technical merit of individual PPGs and PGs is inefficient. The donors would prefer that the technical discussion of PPGS and PGs be carried out in a Technical WG prior to the full meeting of the STDF. Some of the partners argued that the STDF WG is designated a ‘technical’ WG in the STDF Operating Rules and that the donors should send technical experts to the meeting. The donors noted that the STDF is structured to leverage the technical expertise of the partners to optimize PPG and PGs design and that they were happy to defer to the partners technical expertise. Most donors did not send technical experts to the WG for this reason and do not intend to do so in the future due to resource constraints.

*Q. Are the outcomes of the STDF funding program and coordination activities sustainable? What factors are influencing sustainability?*

153. The sustainability of the STDF is itself dependent on the continued funding by donors and the program is reliant on a very small group of donors. Noticeably, there is no support from some large donors such as France and the United Kingdom.

154. The sustainability of the results for the 2012-16 Strategy is likely to be high in areas

where a high degree of ownership has been established by the beneficiaries and participants. The long-term sustainability of one-off initiatives such as the workshop on climate change is less clear.

*Q. Has the STDF Project programme strengthened developing countries capacity to plan interventions? Develop projects? Implement projects?*

*Q. Will any increased coordination and/or collaboration achieved by the STDF programme between STDF's partners and donors be maintained in the long term (i.e. become part of the standard operating procedures of the partners & donors)?*

155. The Review has found anecdotal evidence of behavioral change in beneficiaries, although within the limitations of the evaluation exercise it was not possible to independently verify this at country level. Moreover, it is too early to assess impact level results achieved, or their sustainability, during the period under review.

*Q. Has the STDF coordination activities strengthened developing countries capacity to develop coherent SPS policies with AfT strategies that identify and prioritize their needs, and at the same time take account of emerging risks that need to be addressed in the future?*

156. The STDF as a coordination forum has provided a platform for discussion and exchange of information on SPS issues. This has increased the availability of capacity assessment tools and information sources on best practices in applying SPS standards to gain and maintain market access. The coordination activities have also highlighted the need for concerted coordination and collaboration at national and regional level to address new and emerging issues. The evidence from the issues being addressed by the PPGs and PGs suggests that these STDF coordination activities are contributing to the creation of an enabling environment in development countries for the development of more coherent SPS policies with AfT strategies. The increased focus on SPS issues in the EIF DTIS reports supported by the STDF has also contributed to this.

## 4. LESSONS LEARNT

### *Regional and targeted approach*

157. The success in coordinating a response to the control of the fruit fly in West Africa suggests that having a narrower focus and coordinate a response to a specific emerging issue is more effective than tackling a very broad issue. This can achieve more sustainable results and potentially generate more immediate impact.

158. Other successful examples of regional targeted approaches include the project implemented by IICA in Latin America to strengthen institutional SPS structures at national level and improving performance in fisheries management across West Africa.

### *Ownership*

159. A high level of ownership of thematic activities by the targeted stakeholders is necessary to produce sustainable results. This has been evidenced in several projects, but most notably in the work done with the fruit flies and with the IAS.

### *Design and scope of activities*

160. The design and scope of activities must be appropriate to achieving the desired outcomes. Activities that target low performance indicators are likely to produce less sustainable results. For example, targeting *strategic change in the AfT initiative to mainstream capacity building on trade related SPS issues and related quality*

*infrastructure* to become a pillar of the AfT strategy, if achieved, is likely to have a higher impact and be more sustainable than simply targeting an *increased focus on SPS issues*. Similarly one-off events such as the workshop on climate change are unlikely to produce sustainable results without follow-up activities that target the achievement of high performing indicators.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation Framework**

161.A RBM framework based on clearly defined SMART indicators at all levels of the intervention logic and results chain is essential for the effective design, implementation and monitoring of a programme. If properly implemented by the STDF, a RBM framework would also allow for stronger strategic linkages to be formed within the work program between the coordination activities and the grant funding program. This would ensure that the design and inclusion of activities in the work program is optimized and prioritized in terms of contribution to the output, outcome and impact level results. It would make it easier to judge if activities are outside the STDF mandate and whether they should be included in the work program. It would also facilitate monitoring of key activities and related deliverables through the inclusion of relevant provisions in all strategic and operational documents, such as development plans and business plans.

## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. Reviewing the Medium Term Strategy and strengthening the Results Based Management Framework to guide STDF's activities and become a useful tool for the Secretariat when managing the facility.**

- The STDF should review its current strategy within a RBM framework in the context of preparing work plans for 2015 and 2016, beginning with a detailed problem identification exercise and developing a clear **intervention logic** to frame the problems and respective solutions. High performing indicators should be set for results and be SMART, wherever possible.<sup>35</sup> As the Secretariat currently lacks internal resources for this kind of input, the exercise should be carried out with the support of an external consultant through an inclusive process including WG members as well as the Secretariat. Careful consideration should be made to ensure that any revision exercise only produces tools that are practicable for the Secretariat and does not put any more constrain on them than already exists.
- Activities should be identified and **prioritized for inclusion in the work programs based on their contribution** to the achievement of the targeted outcome and purpose and the resources available to the STDF. Clear objectives for these activities should be included in the annual work programs, as well as a roadmap to achieve these objectives (including detailed activities, milestones, and high performance indicators with baselines). It would be useful for the STDF to also delineate more clearly between core coordination and thematic activities.

### **2. Increased and improved cooperation with regional and global players**

- Building on the lessons learned, the STDF should increase the focus on addressing SPS issues at the **regional level** and bolster ties with the relevant regional actors for coordination, project identification and implementation (e.g. IICA and OIRSA and regional AfT vehicles such as TradeMark East Africa as well as the regional development banks).
- Coordination and cooperation with the Global Food Safety Partnership (GFSP) should be strengthened. Better collaboration would allow the STDF to identify best practice in project and program design, as well as harness synergies that strengthen impact and improve sustainability. The World Bank in its role as a founding Partner of the STDF should facilitate coordination with the GFSP to ensure complementarity and reduce for the risk of overlap. The STDF should liaise more closely with One Health initiatives to

<sup>35</sup> Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant And Time-bound

improve coordination and collaboration on food safety and public health issues and to improve design and sustainability of its own coordination activities.

- The STDF should strengthen its voice in the **global Aid for Trade initiative**, including advocating for mainstreaming prioritization of SPS issue and related quality infrastructure as a pillar of the AfT initiative. Further cooperation with the EIF would be valuable in order to maintain and bolster the inclusion of SPS issues in DTIS reports and country strategies.
- The STDF should carry a survey of WG members and other relevant stakeholders to assess demand and or willingness to submit documents to the **virtual library**. Where there is a demand, the STDF should raise the profile of the library and ensure more systematic cooperation from key partners.

### **3. Strengthening the STDF Secretariat's capacity and ensuring effective management of the facility**

- The Secretariat's human resources should be strengthened with the appointment of two additional full-time staff members to address the current heavy workload of the Secretariat.
- The STDF should distinguish clearly between final independent and 'ex-post' evaluations or impact evaluations. Final evaluations should be carried out at the same rate as currently: 50 percent of completed projects selected at random. They should be carried out just before the projects are scheduled to complete. Ex-post or impact evaluations should be carried out on selected projects from 3-5 years after completion. The projects for impact evaluations shall be proposed by the STDF Secretariat and approved by the STDF WG. Ex-post evaluations shall cover up to 25 percent of the total projects completed.
- To strengthen efficiency and reduce potential turnover the WTO/STDF should issue staff contracts for up to five years where multi-year funding commitments from donors permit.
- The WG should discuss whether there is a need to amend the current review and approval process for PPG and PG applications. To facilitate this, the Partners should define their minimum technical criteria for approval of PPGs and PGs and advise the WG accordingly.
- To increase effectiveness within the WG and in the implementation of coordination activities, the FAO, IPPC and the STDF Secretariat should seek to improve their working relationship.
- To increase the national and regional benefits of the PPG programme the STDF should introduce an explicit provision in the Operating Rules favoring PPG proposals that address harmonization of SPS policies in a national context between competent authorities or in a regional context between national authorities.
- The STDF WG should clarify its objective in regard to funding qualifying PG proposals that originate from PPGs. It should state if funding such PG proposals will be prioritized over other PGs proposals or if all funding decisions will be made using identical criteria.

## ANNEX 1 PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

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## ANNEX 2 DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

	Document
1	Aid for Trade At a Glance: Maintaining Momentum, 2009, WTO, Geneva, Switzerland
2	Aid for Trade At a Glance: Showing Results, 2011, WTO, Geneva, Switzerland
3	'Analysis of the food safety situation and development of a regional action plan, Central Asia Regional Action Plan, August 2011, commissioned by the Central Asia Regional "One Health" Project part of the Central Asia AIDS Control Project, funded financed by Avian & Human Influenza Facility Trust Fund administered by the World Bank under Eurasian Economic Community.
4	Climate Change and Trade: The Link to Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards, September 2011, STDF, WTO, Geneva Switzerland.
5	Fifth Strategic Plan: 2011–2015 (78 SG/20) World Organization For Animal Health (OIE), Paris, France 2011.
6	IPPC National Phytosanitary Capacity Development Strategy, March 2010, Revised in 2012
<b>STDF Documents:</b>	
7	Back-to-office reports
8	Guidance Note for Applicants
9	Documentation of approved projects and PPGs (final proposals, inception, progress, final and evaluation reports, contracts, etc.)
10	PPG application case studies
11	Project and PPG applications received
12	Reports on STDF to the WTO SPS Committee (G/SPS/GEN)
13	Reports on STDF to other WTO Committees, e.g. Trade and Development
14	Reports on STDF to the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)
15	Review of the STDF - Report Triple Line Consulting (1 December 2005)
16	Review of the STDF – Report by Stuart A. Slorach (14 November 2008)
17	STDF Annual Reports
18	STDF annual and bi-annual Work Plans
19	STDF Business Plan (2004) and subsequent versions of the STDF Operational Rules
20	STDF framework agreements with its partners; correspondence with its partners, donors and other stakeholders,

21	STDF Medium Term Strategy (2007-2011)
22	STDF Medium Term Strategy (2012-2016)
23	STDF information resources (publications, briefing notes, fact sheets, brochures, etc)
24	STDF DVD - Trading Safely: Protecting health, promoting development
25	STDF templates (project and PPG applications, Secretariat reviews, etc.)
26	Summary documents related to consultations carried out as part of the strategy formulation process for the Medium-term Strategy 2012-16
27	Summary reports of STDF Working Group meetings
28	Summary reports of STDF Policy Committee meetings
29	Workshops & training materials

## ANNEX 3 TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR MTR

### Overview

1.1. The WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement) sets out the basic rules for food safety and animal and plant health standards. Its basic aim is to maintain the sovereign right of WTO Members to provide the level of health protection they deem appropriate, but to ensure that this right is not misused for protectionist purposes and does not result in unnecessary barriers to international trade. The Agreement encourages Members to use the international standards, guidelines and recommendations adopted by the joint FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission (for food safety), the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE, for animal health) and the FAO International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC, for plant health).

1.2. In recognition of the fact that developing countries face difficulties in implementing international SPS standards, guidelines and recommendations, the Heads of five international organizations (FAO, OIE, World Bank, WHO and WTO) issued a joint communiqué at the Doha WTO Ministerial Conference in November 2001. In the communiqué they agreed to jointly explore new technical and financial mechanisms for SPS coordination and resource mobilization and to build alliances between standard setting bodies and the implementing and financing agencies so as to ensure the most effective use of technical and financial resources. The five organizations formally established the STDF in August 2002 as a partnership and trust fund.

1.3. The STDF partnership became operational in 2004 with the formal adoption of a Business Plan. Following a first external evaluation in 2005<sup>1</sup>, membership of the STDF was expanded to include donors contributing funds to the STDF Trust Fund as well as SPS experts from developing countries.<sup>2</sup> Various other organizations implementing SPS-related projects and programmes and willing to share information on their activities also participate in the STDF. A second external evaluation in 2008 judged the overall performance of the STDF to be good, and very good in many important areas.<sup>3</sup>

1.4. The STDF consists of three main bodies. The STDF Policy Committee consists of high-level representatives of STDF's partners, three donor representatives and three developing country experts. It is responsible for setting policy guidelines and oversight and the overall direction of the Facility. The STDF Working Group consists of technical-level representatives of STDF's partners, donors and six developing country experts. The Working Group meets at least twice a year to share information, experiences and good practice in SPS-related technical cooperation.<sup>4</sup> It is responsible for preparing and overseeing the implementation of annual work plans and has final responsibility for allocating grants. The STDF Secretariat is housed and administered by the WTO and is responsible for implementation of the work plans and day-to-day operations of the Facility.

1.5. The mandate of the STDF is two-fold:

- increase awareness, mobilize resources, strengthen collaboration, identify and disseminate good practice in SPS capacity building; and
- provide support and funding for the development and implementation of projects in developing countries that promote compliance with international SPS requirements.

1.6. The principles and strategic priorities that guide the work of the STDF and the use of its resources are outlined in a five-year strategy (2012-2016), with an annual target level of funding of US\$5 million. The overall goal, purpose and strategic results of the STDF are summarized in a logical framework. Results are being pursued in a coordinated and mutually reinforcing manner, recognizing that the need for better and more effective coordination among providers of SPS-related technical cooperation is the "raison d'être" of the STDF.

### Goal

1.7. The goal of the STDF is to contribute to sustainable economic growth, poverty reduction, food security

and environmental protection in developing countries.

#### Purpose

1.8. The purpose of the STDF is to improve the human, animal and plant health status of developing countries and their ability to gain and maintain access to markets.

#### Strategic results<sup>5</sup>

1.9. Three strategic results, or outputs, have been identified:

- I. Enhanced collaboration in SPS-related technical co-operation;
- II. Improved capacity of beneficiaries to identify and prioritize SPS needs and formulate project proposals that are able to secure funding from STDF or external funding sources;
- III. Improved performance of beneficiaries of STDF-funded projects (as per specific project objectives).

1.10. Details related to STDF's activities and outputs to accomplish each of these results are defined in annual work plans and budgets.

1.11. Over the years, the STDF has developed into a knowledge platform for discussion of past, on-going and planned SPS projects and programmes, highlighting experiences and lessons learned, identifying good practice, and liaising with other Aid for Trade initiatives. Practical research and joint events have been organized at global and/or regional level on various cross-cutting thematic topics of common interest to partners, donors and beneficiaries of SPS technical cooperation, for instance on the use of economic analysis to inform SPS-decision-making, SPS risks and climate change, public-private partnerships in support of SPS capacity, SPS needs assessment and priority-setting, and international trade and invasive alien species. Conclusions and recommendations of this work are summarized in publications and short briefing notes to encourage adoption and replication of good practices.

1.12. The STDF generally acts as a helpdesk on SPS project development and funds project preparation grants (PPGs) to assist beneficiaries in the articulation of their SPS needs and the development of technically sound and sustainable project proposals. Proposals should be consistent with the conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned in all areas of STDF work and reinforce and complement the technical cooperation work undertaken by partners, donors and other relevant organizations and initiatives.

1.13. Finally, the STDF funds several projects per year, in line with beneficiary countries' priorities. In particular the following type of projects is given favourable consideration:

- Projects relevant to the identification, development and dissemination of good practice in SPS technical cooperation, including projects that develop and apply innovative and replicable approaches;
- Projects linked to STDF work on cross-cutting thematic topics of common interest;
- Projects that address SPS constraints through regional approaches; and
- Collaborative and inter-disciplinary projects focused on the interface / linkages between human, animal and plant health and trade, and benefiting from the involvement of two or more partners or other relevant organizations.

1.14. Since its establishment, the STDF has funded 53 PPGs and 63 projects. Overall, the STDF has devoted 43 per cent of project resources to least-developed countries (LDCs) and other low-income countries (OLICs).

1.15. These Terms of Reference are for undertaking a review of the STDF mid-way through the current five year strategy (2012-2016). This mid-term review (MTR) will focus on providing feedback and sharing lessons learned through an assessment of the STDF processes and operations in an effort to improve and strengthen the future implementation of the STDF.

### **Rationale and Objectives**

1.16. The Operational Rules of the STDF stipulate in paragraph 108 that the Facility be evaluated by an external reviewer appointed by the WTO after consultation with the Working Group at least every five years, normally to be concluded one year before the end of the Medium Term Strategy, unless decided otherwise by the STDF Policy Committee. In January 2012, the Policy Committee agreed to conduct a mid-term review (MTR) of the Facility in 2013, with a more complete evaluation towards the end of 2015 to feed into the development of a new strategy, as appropriate.

#### Objectives

1.17. The purpose of the MTR is to undertake an independent review of whether the STDF is performing in such a way as to achieve its strategic results, identify challenges and opportunities and recommend adjustments in strategy and implementation, if and where appropriate. More specifically, the objectives are to:

- assess progress made in the implementation of STDF's current strategy;
- assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impacts and sustainability of the STDF programme, including a review of the performance of the STDF Secretariat, the STDF's governance structure and operation systems, and its funding and staffing levels; and
- capture success stories and lessons learned and promote feedback and knowledge-sharing among all STDF partners, donors, developing country experts and beneficiaries.

### **Scope and Methodology**

1.18. The MTR will assess all elements of the STDF programme in the three strategic result areas, i.e. enhanced collaboration in SPS-related technical cooperation, project development and project implementation, as well as assess the alignment/intersection between them. In doing so, it will situate the STDF in the context of the wider Aid for Trade initiative as well as other relevant programmes and initiatives, for instance focusing on agricultural development.

1.19. The MTR is expected to lead to recommendations for future programming. The review will focus on the period 2009 (i.e. starting from the last external evaluation) to the present and be global in scope.

1.20. This tender is to identify a consultant to conduct the MTR. The consultant will elaborate on the proposed methodology, including data collection and analysis through desk reviews, skype/telephone and/or physical interviews in Geneva with STDF Secretariat staff, STDF partners, donors and developing country experts, surveys of beneficiaries and any other means deemed necessary.

1.21. The STDF Secretariat will coordinate the MTR process and manage administrative aspects. It will act as the main point of contact for the consultant and provide background information and documents, set up meetings as required and provide other logistical support. The STDF Secretariat will also organize a meeting of the Policy Committee on 12 December 2013 where the draft MTR report will be presented by the consultant and discussed by members.

#### Methodology

1.22. The review will be guided by these terms of reference and conducted in a participatory manner involving all STDF stakeholders. This will include direct contact with STDF partners, donors, developing country experts and other organizations regularly participating in the Working Group, as well as

contact with selected representatives of STDF beneficiaries. As objectively and methodically as possible the MTR will address questions that determine the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the STDF.<sup>6</sup> The consultant will be requested to prepare an interim report following the desk review of relevant documents and materials and his/her first visit to Geneva to further define the specific questions to be considered within the evaluation framework.

1.23. Information collected, analysed and presented will be of both a quantitative and qualitative nature, involving stakeholders' perceptions. The review will consist of a combination of desk-based reviews and interviews. It should include, but not be limited to:

### *Document review*

1.24. Familiarization with key documents (published and unpublished, in English, French and Spanish) including previous STDF evaluation reports; annual and progress reports on the operation of the Facility, including reports to the WTO SPS Committee; STDF's medium-term strategy and Operational Rules; summary reports of Working Group and Policy Committee meetings; templates and guidance notes on project development/funding; and other relevant STDF documents (publications, briefing notes, outreach materials, reports of STDF workshops and seminars, etc.). A list of key documents is attached (Annex 1). Copies of these documents and any other relevant materials will be made available to the consultant.

### *Portfolio review*

1.25. This will involve an analysis of selected applications, STDF-funded PPGs and projects at different stages of development, implementation and evaluation. It will also involve an analysis of the reviews conducted by the STDF Secretariat and of the discussions and approvals of proposals in the STDF Working Group. Beneficiaries of projects can be contacted by e-mail/skype/telephone, or through surveys.

### *Stakeholder interviews*

1.26. This will involve consultations and (face-to-face/skype/telephone) interviews with STDF partners, donor members, developing country experts and other organizations participating in the STDF, as well as with STDF Secretariat and relevant WTO staff.

## Overview of Tasks

### Phase I:

1. Conduct a first mission to Geneva for preliminary interviews with STDF Secretariat staff and to obtain documentation (**up to one week in July/August 2013**);
2. Review all available published and unpublished STDF documents and materials, including the STDF strategy, annual work plans and the STDF Operational Rules (see Annex 1 for list of documents);
3. Conduct a desk review of the portfolio of applications, STDF-funded PPGs and projects;
4. Prepare and submit an interim report (hard copy and electronically) by **6 September 2013**, containing a preliminary analysis of STDF's strategy, work plans, Operational Rules and other relevant documents and materials. The report should also:
  - Identify the main stakeholders to be consulted during phase II of the MT
  - Elaborate the detailed questions to be used with STDF stakeholders during interviews and survey questionnaires, based on the standard evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, and key lessons learned;

- Describe and justify the proposed methodology, including an identification of the methods and tools (e.g. survey questionnaires, interviews, data analysis techniques) to be used during phase II of the MTR.
- Provide a detailed work plan (including scheduling interviews and travel plan, etc.) for implementation of the MTR.

1.27. After discussion of the interim report with the STDF Secretariat, it will be approved by the chairperson of the STDF Working Group by **13 September 2013**.

Phase II:

5. Conduct a second mission to Geneva to attend and observe the STDF Working Group meeting on 15 and 16 October 2013 and hold consultations and interviews with STDF partners, donors, developing country experts and other relevant organizations participating in the Working Group (**week of 14-18 October 2013**);
6. Hold consultations and interviews with representatives of other STDF stakeholders, including applicants and beneficiaries, through survey questionnaires and/or by skype/telephone, as appropriate;
7. Conduct overall analytical work of the MTR on the basis of all the information collected and feedback received from the various stakeholders consulted and prepare a draft report, including conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned;
8. Submit a draft report (hard copy and electronically) by **7 November 2013**; The STDF Secretariat will subsequently circulate the draft report to the STDF Working Group for comments (to be received by the Secretariat in writing on **21 November 2013**), and will forward any comments received to the consultant.
9. Incorporate, where feasible and appropriate, comments received from the Working Group and submit a final draft report (hard copy and electronically) by **28 November 2013**. The Secretariat will subsequently circulate the final draft final report to the members of the STDF Policy Committee.

Phase III:

10. Attend the STDF Policy Committee meeting on **12 December 2013** to present the conclusions and recommendations of the final draft report, and obtain and discuss comments received from members;
11. Based on the comments received in the Policy Committee, revise, finalize and submit the final report (hard copy and electronically) by **20 December 2013**.

1.28. The STDF Secretariat will make the report publicly available through circulation to the WTO Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Committee), the STDF website, and other fora, as appropriate.

**Time Frame and Deliverables**

*Time frame*

1.29. The MTR is projected for a period of six months starting in July 2013 and ending in December 2013.

*Deliverables*

1.30. The MTR deliverables include:

- Interim report (by 6 September 2013);
- Draft report (by 7 November 2013);
- 5Final draft report (by 28 November 2013);
- Final report (by 20 December 2013).

1.31. It is essential that the interim, draft and final reports are succinct and focus on analysis rather than lengthy descriptions. It should provide clear, justified conclusions and recommendations and be written in a clear and understandable manner.

### Competencies of the Consultant

1.32. The MTR will require the services of an experienced consultant with the following experience and skills:

- Good knowledge of trade-related project and programme formulation, implementation and coordination processes and issues, including knowledge of Aid for Trade capacity building initiatives;
- Good knowledge and understanding of problems faced by developing countries in the implementation of international standards and the WTO SPS Agreement;
- Good knowledge of institutional issues related to development programming (including funding and administration and the role of donors, agencies and partnerships);
- Experience working with multi-donor/partner/beneficiary initiatives, including understanding of the political and diplomatic dimensions, and managing an evaluation/review process in that context;
- Experience in monitoring and evaluation, including data collection (including through survey questionnaires, consultations and interviews involving multiple organizations and participants);
- Excellent analytical, drafting and communication skills in English (working level in French and/or Spanish for surveys and interviews is desirable);

### Submitting Proposal Selection Process

1.33. Please refer to the instructions set forth in the letter of invitation part I.A Administrative procedure - Submissions of proposals.

1.34. Technical proposals should contain the following elements:

- Introduction (which must demonstrate a clear understanding of the STDF and the general expectations of the MTR);
- Interpretation and understanding of the requirements of the MTR (which must demonstrate a clear understanding of the terms of reference);
- Proposed approach and methodology for the MTR, focusing on the objectives;
- Proposed work plan for the MTR (start and end dates, processes and deliverables);
- Detailed profile of the service provider, highlighting expertise and experience relevant to the MTR of the STDF (statement of capability);
- CVs of the proposed consultants (***maximum two***) for the MTR including: (i) short profile highlighting relevant qualifications, expertise and experience; (ii) full CVs - to be attached as an annex; and (iii) signed letter stating the availability of the consultant during the relevant time-periods of the MTR cycle.

1.35. After the selection of the consultant, he/she will be briefed by the STDF Secretariat (by phone) in preparation for the desk review and to plan for his/her first visit to Geneva in July/August 2013.

**Table: Overview of main dates**



Phase:	Dates:	
Phase I	July/August 2013 (up to one week)	First mission to Geneva (interviews with STDF Secretariat staff and document collection/review)
	6 September 2013	Submission of draft interim report
	13 September 2013	Approval of interim report by chairperson of STDF Working Group
Phase II	Week of 14-18 October 2013	Second mission to Geneva (attend STDF Working Group on 15-16 October + interviews with partners, donors, developing country experts, other organizations, etc.)
	7 November 2013	Submission of draft report (for circulation to STDF Working Group)
	21 November 2013	Deadline for comments by STDF Working Group
	28 November 2013	Submission of final draft report (for circulation to STDF Policy Committee)
Phase III	12 December 2013	Third mission to Geneva (presentation of draft report to STDF Policy Committee)
	20 December 2013	Submission of final report

### Conflict of Interest

1.36. The consultant(s) will be independent and will respect ethical standards with respect to conflict of interest, confidentiality and transparency. Consultants are requested to declare any potential conflicts of interest that may be inherent in their submissions. Consultants that have implemented assignments for the STDF in the past are requested to indicate the nature of these assignments, the number of working days involved and payments received.