



6 | Standards and Trade Development Facility

The Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) is a global partnership that facilitates safe, inclusive trade and development outcomes in support of the UN's 2030 agenda. Established by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), the World Bank Group (WBG), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the WTO, the STDF promotes improved food safety and animal and plant health capacity in developing countries, to help imports and exports to meet SPS requirements for trade based on international standards. By convening and connecting diverse stakeholders from across its projects and other work, and by piloting and learning from innovative, collaborative and cross-cutting approaches, the STDF influences and acts as a catalyst for SPS capacity development work globally, including in Africa (STDF, 2019).

In 2020, the STDF launched a new five-year strategy (2020-24) under which countries in Africa will continue to be eligible to apply for SPS project and project preparation grants.¹ Emerging trends and developments that will underpin the STDF's work in the coming years include the growth in agri-food value chains and in regional and South-South trade. Reducing SPS-related trade transaction costs, ensuring that SPS measures are "fit for purpose", and enhancing the competitiveness of MSMEs, including for women and young people, will be critical in increasing the flow of agri-food commodities in the new AfCFTA.

The COVID-19 pandemic and its negative effects on the African economy, small-holders and MSMEs, in particular, has generated additional momentum for this work. Also in this

context, the STDF peer-reviewed and provides support for the implementation of Africa's SPS Policy Framework (2019-24), an initiative led by the African Union's Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture.

Recent STDF work has sought to identify, analyse and foster dialogue on experiences, lessons learned and good practices to improve the implementation of SPS controls in ways that facilitate safe trade while minimizing transaction costs. In addition, the STDF has conducted work on electronic SPS certification (SPS e-Cert)² since 2016 and funded the "ePhyto" project,³ in the broader context of facilitating paperless trade. Through the ePhyto Hub, established under the project, 46 countries currently exchange over 50,000 electronic phytosanitary certificates each month. Countries in Africa, including Ghana, Kenya and Morocco have seen time and costs reduced in the trade of plants and plant products. The STDF funded a similar project to explore opportunities for electronic veterinary certification ("eVet"), with case studies in Nigeria, Swaziland and Nigeria.⁴

The STDF is also helping countries in Africa to inform and improve their SPS planning and decision-making processes, and to mobilize new resources for SPS investments, using an evidence-based approach called "P-IMA" (i.e. "prioritizing SPS investments for market access"). Through an STDF project co-financed by the EIF, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda and Uganda aim to mainstream SPS investments within their national and regional agricultural, environment and trade investment plans, including the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP).⁵

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In 2019, TradeMark East Africa (TMEA), together with the STDF, trained public- and private-sector stakeholders from Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda to apply the P-IMA framework in order to strengthen SPS dialogue and collaboration at national levels and improve intra-regional trade flows. The International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) used the P-IMA framework to deliver a feasibility study for an inter-regional livestock trade initiative between the Horn of Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. The STDF also organized a workshop in Madagascar⁶ to help public- and private-sector stakeholders to prioritize their SPS investments. This resulted in new financing through the Europe-Africa-Caribbean-Pacific Liaison Committee (COLEACP) to address phytosanitary challenges facing pepper exports to the European Union.

Another example of an innovative, collaborative STDF project benefiting Africa is in Burkina Faso, where a project developed with support of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) is raising awareness on the use of a biological product to combat aflatoxin contamination (Aflasafe BF01).⁷ Specifically, the project helps maize producers to apply good agricultural practices pre-harvest, during production and post-harvest, to prevent aflatoxin contamination and ensure public health and food security and to increase the incomes of maize exporters.

Other examples of ongoing STDF projects benefitting Africa include the following:

- Enhancing the capacity of Uganda's fruit and vegetable sector to comply with phytosanitary requirements for export;⁸
- Strengthening Zambia's phytosanitary capacity for plant exports;⁹
- Improving capacity to facilitate livestock and meat exports in Ethiopia;¹⁰
- Upgrading the safety and quality of Sudanese sesame seeds;¹¹ and
- Strengthening Togo's SPS system and facilitating fruit and vegetable exports.¹²

In 2020 the STDF developed a project to strengthen sanitary capacity in the shellfish sector in Senegal.¹³ In Cameroon, the STDF initiated a project to improve the safety and quality of Penja pepper,¹⁴ maintain and diversify exports, and improve the livelihoods of small-scale producers in the value chain. In Guinea, the STDF is supporting a project to improve the competitiveness of Guinean agricultural products.¹⁵ The two latter projects, in Cameroon and Guinea, are the result of applications made by participants in the WTO Advanced SPS Course, which benefits African countries, and in which the STDF actively participates.

In 2020, several new STDF projects were launched, including assistance to South Africa and Mozambique in establishing pest free areas to promote fruit production and exports,¹⁶ a regional project to promote regulatory harmonization of biopesticides in the SADC region,¹⁷ and a project to help Mali and Senegal make use of voluntary third-party assurance programmes in their official food control systems.

1 See: https://standardsfacility.org/sites/default/files/STDF_Strategy_2020-2024.pdf.

2 See: <https://www.standardsfacility.org/SPS-eCert>.

3 See: <https://www.standardsfacility.org/PG-504>.

4 See: <https://standardsfacility.org/PG-609>.

5 See: <https://standardsfacility.org/PG-606>.

6 See: <https://standardsfacility.org/PPG-575>.

7 Aflatoxin is a potent mycotoxin, i.e. a naturally occurring toxin which is produced by certain moulds or fungi, which can be found in food, and which can pose a serious health threat to both humans and animals (see also <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mycotoxins>).

8 See: <https://standardsfacility.org/PG-543>.

9 For more information, see <https://www.standardsfacility.org/PG-481>.

10 See: <https://standardsfacility.org/PG-477>.

11 For more information, see <https://www.standardsfacility.org/PG-435>.

12 See: <https://standardsfacility.org/PG-375>.

13 See: <https://standardsfacility.org/PPG-672>.

14 See: <https://standardsfacility.org/PG-593>.

15 See: <https://standardsfacility.org/PG-498>.

16 See: <https://standardsfacility.org/PG-567>.

17 See: <https://standardsfacility.org/PPG-694>.