Voluntary Third-Party Assurance Programmes: Pilot Project in Belize

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Outline

- General Overview
- Beneficiaries
- Expectations
- Challenges
- Opportunities

STDF Project (STDF/PG/682)

- **Objective:** "to pilot, test, assess and learn how the voluntary Third-Party Assurance (vTPA) approach set down in the draft Codex guidelines works in practice when implemented by government authorities in Belize and Honduras;
- 3 components: Legislative, Food Business Operators and Dissemination and Learning;
- Timeframe of 3 years: 12 Oct 2020 to 11 Oct 2023
- In Belize will focus on poultry, beans and coconuts.

General Overview

- The Food Control System in Belize (three agencies involved)
- Knowledge on vTPA is limited among the competent authorities;
- At the national level, we do not have vTPAs operating in Belize.
- **Private sector:** the exporting community is knowledgeable of vTPAs e.g. Shrimp (British Retail Consortium; Best Aquaculture Practices); banana (GlobalG.A.P.), papayas (GlobalG.A.P.); citrus (BRC).

Expectations

- Identifying the framework that would enable the use vTPAs to strengthen the food control system in developing countries;
- Through the use of vTPAs – leveraging more resources to needed areas since the use of this management approach should result in more efficient use of limited resources;
- Greater opportunities for market access –increased uptake and use of standards will result in greater compliance with food safety requirements;
- Enhanced collaboration amongst the competent authorities involved in the national food control systems;

Challenges

- Limited knowledge on/use of Third-Party Assurance as part of the risk management system
- Implementation of the Project due to Covid-19 related measures
  - Delivery of capacity building initiatives
  - IT limitations
  - Commitment /investment costs (private sector suffering loss due to covid-19 restrictions)
- Enabling Legislative Framework (entire process).

Opportunities

- Test the CCFICS guideline in a few developing countries (Africa and Central America);
- Technical Cooperation amongst developing and developed countries;
- Public/Private partnership to improve food safety outcomes;
- Modernize the national food control management system (risk-based);
- Increase market access;
- Visibility campaign – promoting the importance of food safety– contributing towards the creation of a food safety culture;