

STDF OVERVIEW

CPM-19 MEETING, 17-21 MARCH 2025

1 OVERVIEW

1.1. The [Standards and Trade Development Facility](#) (STDF) promotes improved food safety, animal and plant health capacity in developing and least developed countries to meet sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) requirements for trade, based on international standards. It operates as a funding mechanism and global platform for dialogue, learning and good practice on SPS capacity development, bringing together diverse stakeholders from across agriculture, health, trade, and development. STDF's founding partners are the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), the World Bank, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), including the Codex and IPPC Secretariats. In 2024, the [STDF Working Group](#) was chaired by Ms Sarah Brunel from the IPPC Secretariat. Ms Marie-Luise Rau from the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) of Germany is the chairperson in 2025.

1.2. This document provides a brief update on relevant STDF activities and projects since CPM-18. Table 1 provides an overview of on-going STDF project grants (PG) and project preparation grants (PPGs) in the plant health area, some of which benefit from the involvement and technical guidance of the IPPC Secretariat.

1.3. A new STDF Strategy "Facilitating Safe Trade to Meet the Global Goals" for the period 2025 to 2030 was finalized in December 2024, following extensive engagement with STDF founding partners, donors, developing country experts and other members. The Strategy builds on STDF's track record and the findings of the last external [STDF programme evaluation](#) (May 2024) and recommendations approved by the STDF Policy Committee. It maintains STDF's focus on safe trade facilitation and support to meet international standards (Codex, IPPC and WOH), based on the WTO SPS Agreement.

1.4. In 2024, the STDF celebrated 20 years of safe trade results for sustainable development. A special [publication](#) was launched to commemorate the partnership's 20th anniversary, showcasing STDF's evolution and results since 2004.

1.5. The STDF launched a new [website](#) with enhanced features in September 2024 to provide a more user-friendly experience. Improvements include streamlined content, good practices, and a new page for project applications and portfolio. It includes highlights on project stories such as the one in [Togo](#), which strengthened the phytosanitary system to tackle plant quarantine pests and ensure pest-free trade with the EU.

1.6. IPPC delegates are encouraged to visit the STDF website, and [subscribe](#) to the STDF newsletter to receive regular updates on the STDF.

2 GOOD PRACTICE

2.1. The STDF identifies and promotes good practices across a range of cross-cutting thematic topics to improve SPS capacity development outcomes. This work draws on the input of all STDF partners, donor members and beneficiaries and aims to influence SPS capacity development work more broadly. Outputs include practical briefing notes, user-friendly knowledge products (publications, films, etc.), global and regional client-facing events, practitioner groups, etc.

a) Good regulatory practice

2.2. Good Regulatory Practices (GRPs) are processes and tools to help improve quality and effectiveness of SPS measures to protect human, animal, or plant life or health, without creating unnecessary barriers to trade. Using [GRPs](#), such as internal coordination of regulation, stakeholder engagement, and regulatory impact assessments, improve compliance with the SPS Agreement,

including greater alignment with international standards. The STDF launched a practical [GRP Guide](#), offering a handbook for using GRPs when designing, developing, and reviewing SPS measures to ensure that they are "fit for purpose".

b) Prioritizing SPS investments

2.3. The [P-IMA framework](#) is an evidence-based approach to help inform and improve SPS planning and decision making, and mobilize public, private and/or donor resources for SPS investments, including to improve phytosanitary capacity. The framework is currently applied in several STDF and other projects, leading to additional investments in plant health. The Secretariat is following up on the recommendations of the [external P-IMA evaluation](#), including through meetings with founding partners and other relevant stakeholders to discuss synergies with their capacity evaluation tools and other initiatives.

c) Reducing trade costs

2.4. The increasing attention on trade facilitation as a means to stimulate economic growth and competitiveness has generated a renewed focus on SPS measures, how they are applied to imports, exports and transit goods, and the extent to which, if any, these measures unnecessarily increase the costs of doing business. Implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), which applies to all border agencies, is key in this regard. As part of this agenda, the STDF continues to promote and support the transition to paperless SPS systems in developing countries, including the use of [electronic SPS certificates](#) (SPS e-cert), to improve traceability in SPS supply chains, cut trade times and costs, reduce fraudulent certificates, and build trust among trading partners.

2.5. STDF's flagship [ePhyto project](#), implemented by the IPPC Secretariat and completed in 2020, continues to catalyse the transition to paperless trade. It builds on the findings of an external [evaluation](#) and benefits from ongoing support by partners globally including the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation (GATF).

d) Public-Private Partnerships (PPP)

2.6. Many STDF projects promote [PPP approaches](#) to leverage expertise and resources and support longer-term impact and sustainability. In 2024, the STDF finalized a PPP Guide, authored by Peter Stanbury (STDF Consultant) with members of the STDF PPP Practitioner Group. This paper compiles practical experiences and learning about PPPs aimed at improving food safety, animal and/or plant health for safe trade facilitation. It draws on the knowledge and insights of STDF partners and other stakeholders who have extensive, hands-on experience with PPPs in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean. These lessons offer valuable guidance that can help to create, develop and successfully run PPPs that strengthen sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) systems and facilitate safe trade, and are complemented by a series of PPP case stories on the [STDF website](#).

e) Environment, biodiversity, climate change

2.7. In September 2024, the STDF published an external assessment to learn how (and to what effect) the environment, biodiversity and climate change have been integrated across STDF's work. The assessment found that the STDF has been a pioneer in looking at the connections between of SPS issues/capacity and the environment, biodiversity and climate change, and that STDF's focus on this topic from the perspective of SPS capacity development ensured relevance to SPS stakeholders and promoted coherence with the work of its partners. The assessment learned from relevant work carried out by STDF founding partners and others. The findings and recommendations will be used to improve mainstreaming of environment, biodiversity and climate change into STDF's work and may also inform mainstreaming in SPS capacity development work more broadly. The report is available on the [STDF website](#).

f) Gender mainstreaming

2.8. In 2023, the STDF issued a [Gender Action Plan](#) that outlines how the STDF promotes a more inclusive approach to improve the results and impact of STDF's work in facilitating safe trade. The plan aims to advance and support women's capacity to meet SPS requirements and promote greater attention to gender mainstreaming in SPS capacity development work led by members of STDF's

global partnership and other organizations. Gender analyses have been carried out or are underway under more than 10 projects since 2023. The 2025 STDF work plan includes development of practical training materials to address needs identified in gender analyses conducted as part of STDF projects.

3 FUNDING

a) Project Preparation Grants

3.1. The STDF provides advice and support to beneficiaries on SPS project development. Project preparation grants (PPGs), normally up to US\$50,000, are available to help beneficiaries in developing countries to articulate their SPS needs and develop technically sound and sustainable project proposals. PPGs can be used to: (i) apply SPS capacity evaluation and prioritization tools; (ii) conduct feasibility studies to assess the potential impact and economic viability of proposals in terms of costs and benefits; and (iii) develop project proposals for funding by STDF or other donors.

3.2. Since its inception, the STDF approved **135 PPGs**. In 2024, six PPGs were approved. In November 2024, three new PPGs relevant to plant health were approved: (i) Assessing the centre of phytosanitary excellence (COPE) to scale phytosanitary capacity and increase market access in Africa ([STDF/PPG/968](#)); (ii) Promoting Market Access in the Cashew Nut Value Chain in Cambodia and Viet Nam ([STDF/PPG/1010](#)); (iii) Mitigating Aflatoxin contamination in peanuts in India ([STDF/PPG/1027](#)).

b) Project Grants

3.3. The STDF also finances projects that promote compliance with international SPS standards and requirements. Preference is given to projects that: (i) identify, develop and disseminate good practice in SPS-related technical cooperation, including the development and application of innovative and replicable approaches; (ii) apply regional and cross-cutting approaches to address SPS constraints; and (iii) implement collaborative approaches across food safety, animal and plant health, and trade. Beneficiaries must contribute to STDF projects from their own resources, either in the form of financial or in-kind contributions such as staff time, use of premises, vehicles or other existing assets.

3.4. Since its inception, the STDF approved **128 projects**, of which **53%** addressed plant health and cross-cutting SPS issues, with a total value of **US\$39.5 million**. In 2024, seven projects were approved. In November 2024, the STDF approved a project aimed at improving the implementation of SPS best practices for export-oriented vegetables in Bangladesh ([STDF/PG/831](#)). **Table 1** (below) provides an overview of selected STDF projects addressing plant health and trade issues.

3.5. The STDF encourages funding applications that benefit and involve NPPOs. Proposals can be submitted all year round but should be received at least 60 working days prior to each Working Group meeting to be considered at that meeting. The next deadline, which will be announced on the STDF website in due course, is in **August** for applications to be considered in November 2025.

RECOMMENDED STEPS TO FOLLOW WHEN SEEKING PG OR PPG FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES WITH THE STDF:

1. Browse the [funding webpage](#) for information (aims, eligibility criteria, etc.) on PPGs and PGs.
2. View [examples](#) of previous projects.
3. Consult relevant stakeholders in the country/region.
4. Send a brief concept note of your potential project for comments to: STDFSecretariat@wto.org
5. Fill out the application form and submit it online before the deadline.

Table 1: Selected ongoing STDF projects and PPGs with focus on plant health

Link	Project Title	Beneficiaries	STDF Contribution (US\$)	Total Project Value (US\$)
STDF/PG/577	Coordinating management of cadmium levels in cocoa in Latin America and the Caribbean	Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago	381,946	550,948
STDF/PG/681	Mitigating high levels of cadmium in cacao in Colombia and Ecuador	Colombia, Ecuador	516,989	617,999
STDF/PG/751	Strengthening the phytosanitary and food safety system in key value chains	Dominican Republic, Haiti	554,180	692,980
STDF/PG/753	Mitigating pesticide residues in Latin America using biopesticides	Bolivia, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru	900,473	1,839,373
STDF/PG/755	Strengthening phytosanitary compliance to boost seed trade in the Asia Pacific	Bangladesh, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Nepal, Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam	899,335	1,131,637
STDF/PG/768	Harmonizing the phytosanitary legislative framework in Central Africa	Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon	1,019,966	1,403,195
STDF/PG/770	Using digital tools to facilitate safe food trade in West Africa	Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Niger, Mali, Senegal, Togo	844,469	1,406,727
STDF/PG/786	Enhancing aflatoxin management in Ghana's maize and groundnuts	Ghana	969,607	1,220,347
STDF/PG/807	Managing scale insects in fresh fruits in East Africa	Burundi, Kenya, Uganda	885,116	1,001,816
STDF/PG/809	Managing invasive potato pests in Eastern and Southern Africa	Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe	999,634	1,196,844
STDF/PG/831	Improving the Implementation of SPS Best Practices for Export-Oriented Vegetables in Bangladesh	Bangladesh	895,786	1,006,771
STDF/PG/838	Regional Center for Phytosanitary Intelligence of the Andean Community	Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru	1,000,000	2,643,852
STDF/PG/842	Piloting a vTPA programme in East Africa to improve food safety in horticulture and fisheries	Rwanda, Uganda	699,013	888,457
STDF/PG/880	Enhancing SPS capacity and market access for Grenadian Soursop exports	Grenada	298,691	728,861
STDF/PG/946	Strengthening phytosanitary capacity to promote exports of horticulture products from Senegal	Senegal	680,000	900,000
STDF/PPG/859	Strengthening Burkina Faso's sesame and cashew export capacity	Burkina Faso	49,750	49,750

Link	Project Title	Beneficiaries	STDF Contribution (US\$)	Total Project Value (US\$)
STDF/PPG/944	Preparation of a project proposal to facilitate market access through enhancing phytosanitary capacity in Uzbekistan	Uzbekistan	50,000	50,000
STDF/PPG/945	Evaluating Phytosanitary capacity in Ethiopia	Ethiopia	50,000	50,000
STDF/PPG/968	Assessing the centre of phytosanitary excellence (COPE) to scale phytosanitary capacity and increase market access in Africa	Kenya, Uganda	50,000	50,000
STDF/PPG/969	Improving SPS practices in cacao in Cameroon	Cameroon	50,000	50,000
STDF/PPG/1010*	Promoting Market Access in the Cashew Nut Value Chain in Cambodia and Viet Nam	Cambodia, Viet Nam	49,810	49,810
STDF/PPG/1027*	Mitigating Aflatoxin contamination in peanuts in India	India	50,000	50,000

*Awaiting