

Draft Terms of Reference (ToR)
For Seed System Experts (2 Nos.) to be positioned in Assam Seeds Corporation Ltd. Khanapara, (a Govt. of Assam Undertaking) under the World Bank financed Assam Agribusiness & Rural Transformation Project (APART)

(A) BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

1. The Government of Assam (GoA) through Government of India (GoI) has received a loan from the World Bank (IBRD: International Bank for Re-construction and Development) for the Assam Agribusiness and Rural Transformation Project (APART). The Project Development Objective (PDO) of APART is to “add value and improve resilience of selected agri value chains focusing on smallholder farmers and agro-entrepreneurs and to advance Assam’s COVID-19 response”. The Assam Rural Infrastructure and Agricultural Services (ARIAS) Society, an autonomous body of the Govt. of Assam, is the apex coordinating and monitoring agency for the Project. ARIAS Society now intends to hire **two Seed System Experts (SSEs)** under APART (hereinafter referred as **SSE**) as Individual Consultant out of the loan proceeds, to be positioned in Assam Seeds Corporation Ltd. Khanapara, under the World Bank financed APART, as per the terms given hereunder.
2. The APART will achieve the PDO by: **(i)** promoting investments in agri-enterprises, reducing the business and transaction costs, facilitating access to finance for agribusiness entrepreneurs, and, where appropriate, push for process, regulatory and/or policy change; **(ii)** supporting the development of a modern agri supply chain; improved information communication technologies (ICT) based farm information and intelligence services, and alternative marketing channels; and **(iii)** improving producers’ access to knowledge, technologies and infrastructure so that they are able to respond to market opportunities and climate variability **(iv)** supporting the State Health Society (SHS) in addressing the COVID-19 challenge. To achieve the PDO, the project is adopting clusters (production and enterprise) and value chain approach. The project is being implemented in 25 districts¹ of Assam.
3. There are four components of APART: **The first component is Enabling Agri Enterprise Development**, with sub components being (i) enhancing state capacity to attract private investments, (ii) Setting up an Agribusiness Enterprise Development and Promotion Facility (EDPF) (iii) Agribusiness Investment Fund (AIF) support (iv) establishing stewardship councils. **The second component is Facilitating Agro Cluster Development** with subcomponents being- (i) support establishment of cluster level Industry Associations (IAs), (ii) supply chain support. **The third component is Fostering Market Led Production and Resilience Enhancement** with sub components being (i) promoting climate resilient technologies and their adoption (ii) facilitating market linkages through market intelligence and product aggregation (iii) facilitating access to and responsible use of financial services. **The fourth component is project Management, Monitoring & Learning.**
4. Component-C of APART aims at enabling producers of the priority value chains, in the targeted clusters, to take advantage of the rapidly changing market demand, and enhance resilience of agriculture production systems for increasing production and managing risks associated with climate change. This would be achieved by: **(i)** improvements in production technologies and management practices through climate resilient solutions; **(ii)** facilitation of collective-action by producers by supporting the establishment of farmer producer organizations (FPOs); **(iii)** improving value realization at the farm level through improved cleaning, grading and packing of produce through Common Service Centers (CSCs) managed by FPOs; **(iv)** facilitation of market linkages through market information and intelligence; and (v) facilitating access to a broad set of financial services and their responsible use by producers. The component adopts a cluster based value-chain approach for providing support to producers for sustainably increasing their production and productivity; linking the producers with emerging supply chains, modernized wholesale agriculture markets and warehouses, under component B; and facilitating partnership opportunities with strategic and potential anchor and leading firms, supported under Component A.

¹ Nagaon, Sonitpur, Barpeta, Karbi Anglong, Kamrup, Dhubri, Golaghat, Kokrajhar, Lakhimpur, Darrang, Cachar, Sivasagar, Jorhat, Goalpara, Morigaon, Nalbari, Hojai, Biswanath, West Karbi Anglong, Kamrup Metro, Mankachar, Charaideo, Dhemaji, Bongaigaon and Majuli

5. Among the various agricultural inputs, seed is one of the very important and critical areas under APART. The Project has also engaged three international agencies i.e. International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), International Potato Centre (CIP) and World Vegetable Centre which are working closely with the Directorate of Agriculture, Directorate of Horticulture and Food Processing, Assam Seeds Corporation Ltd. , Assam Agricultural University, District Agricultural Technology Management Agencies (ATMAs), Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) and Research Stations, among others to address the seed value chain issues.
6. As a first step, to make the State self sufficient in seed production, particularly for the key commodities like paddy, the Project has started paddy seed production with three Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs) from the Sali season of 2021 with the technical support of IRRI and AAU, which is planned to be scaled up substantially in the coming years. Further initiative has been taken to enhance the production in the farms under Assam Seeds Corporation Ltd. and in the fields of the farmers of the state. One of the key roles of the **SSE** would be to work for increase of production in the farms of Assam Seeds Corporation Ltd. and also to work closely with other stakeholders of seed production and would review the progress under the seed production program, recommend necessary improvements, undertake necessary trainings and suggest the way forward beyond the Project's closing date (Sep. 2024).

(B) OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSIGNMENT & SCOPE OF WORK

7. The **SSE** will report to the **Managing Director, Assam Seeds Corporation Ltd.** and will support Assam Seeds Corporation Ltd. in achieving the objective of maximum production in the farms of the corporation and also in the farmer's field. In particular the responsibilities of the **SSE** include the following:
 - a) Work closely with the **Directorate of Agriculture and Directorate of Horticulture & Food Processing, Assam Agricultural University, District Agriculture Offices, KVKs, Research Stations and Assam Seed Organic Certification Agency.** with regards to quality seed production, availability and distribution.
 - b) SSE shall provide technical contribution to strengthening of seed farms of Assam Seed Corporation
 - c) Work closely with the Project Coordination Unit (PCU) of ARIAS Society and crop related international agencies engaged by APART i.e. IRRI, CIP and World Veg with regards to seed production by FPCs and local farmers of the state.
 - d) **Training and capacity building** of the technical staff down the line of Assam Seeds Corporation Ltd, farmers of the state and FPCs on seed varietal selection as per demand of the state, seed production, processing and certification (through Assam Seed and Organic Certification Agency: ASOCA) and also seed testing. Training and capacity building of other stakeholders involved in the process shall also be undertaken by the SSE. These include district level staff Assam Seeds Corporation Ltd. working in farms in different districts, , Seed Certification Assistants (SCAs), staff of KVKs, Dist Agriculture Offices etc. SSE may also recommend, exposure visit cum study tours to progressive seed producer farmers and leading seed producing FPCs in other States for the purpose of training and capacity building. He would work for increasing seed production in the fields of the farmers by motivating and training the farmers of the state.
 - e) **Monitoring and reviewing** the progress of production under farms of Assam Seeds Corporation Ltd., farmers of the state and FPC seed production program under APART, right from selection of beneficiary member farmers, supply of parent seeds, plot selection, land preparation, other inputs supply, package of practices including isolation distance, timely rouging, data collection and documentation, post harvest supervision, processing, seed sampling, testing & reporting etc. Progress review shall also assess whether the seed multiplication is being scaled up as per requirement of commercial seed and availability of parent seed. In case of lack of adequate scaling up of the Program, necessary corrective measures need to be initiated by the SSE under intimation to the appropriate authority.
 - f) **Recommending necessary improvements in seed production Program:** SSE will ensure that progressively sufficient additional number of FPCs and farmers are enrolled into the seed production program. Necessary availability of requisite varieties of breeder/ foundation seed from AAU or other sources through IRRI, CIP, WorldVeg as the case may be shall be ensured by the SSE. Also, based on the results of monitoring and review of the Program SSE will recommend and initiate necessary modifications in the Program modalities.
 - g) **Explore opportunities for farm's seeds, famer's seeds business in other North Eastern States:** As

the seed production program scales up, there is likely to be a surplus of seeds in certain crops. In that case, the SSE would explore seed business opportunities , outside the State i.e. in other North Eastern States. SSE will reach out to concerned officials in the relevant Departments/ Agencies in these States to discuss and take forward the feasible options.

- h) **Suggest way forward beyond APART:** As APART would be closing in September 2024, it is important that a suitable sustainability plan for the seed production initiative is put in place involving all the stakeholders , so that the Program continues even after the Project. To this end, the SSE will work on a **Perpetuity Plan** with AAU and Directorate of Agriculture which would include necessary profitability analysis and sources of viability gap funding, if any required and qualified & experienced manpower resource planning to manage and run the beyond closure of APART. In addition, the SSE will also prepare an **exit strategy** for APART to egress from the seed production initiative towards the end of the Project, at the same time ensuring the spontaneity of the Program even after the Project.
- i) To liaise closely with other key stakeholder organizations/ Departments of Central & State Govt like Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare, Indian Institute of Seed Science (IISS), Mau, UP and National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NBPGR), New Delhi, Assam Seed and Organic Certification Agency (ASOCA), Need based visits may be undertaken to these organizations/ Departments.
- j) To liaise with GOI for new schemes that may be implemented by Assam Seeds Corporation Ltd.
- k) Documenting success stories, case studies, innovative business models, contributing to the APART Newsletters and disseminating at various forums as directed.
- l) Perform any other related task assigned by the Managing Director, ASC Ltd..
- m) **Travel Requirements:** The SSE may be required to undertake field-visits and tours to project sites, FPCs, concerned Central and State ministries, Departments, Agencies, Institutes with the approval of the reporting officer.

(C) QUALIFICATIONS, EXPERIENCE, SKILLSET, AND AGE ETC.

- 6. **Educational Qualifications:** The SSE should hold a **Masters degree in Agriculture preferably in Genetics & Plant Breeding or Seed Science & Technology or Agronomy** from any recognized University/ Institution.
- 7. **Working Experience:** The SSE must possess at least **5 (five) years** of professional experience working in seed production/ seed multiplication including paddy any public/ private sector organization.
- 8. **Computer Skills & Language:** The SSE must have proficiency in the use of Internet based applications, Graphics, MS Word, MS Excel and MS Power Point and other related applications.
- 9. **Language:** Fluency in English, Assamese & Hindi.
- 10. **Age:** Age of the **candidate** should not be more than **50 years as on 1st July, 2022.**

(D) DURATION OF CONTRACT, NOTICE PERIOD ETC.

- 11. The tenure of **SSE** is intended for the entire duration of APART and co-terminus with the project period of APART. However, continuity of the **SSE** beyond one (1) year from the date of signing the agreement will depend upon his/her performance. The decision of the SPD shall be final and binding in this regard. The contract management shall be done as per the Project rules. Depending upon the sustainability of the initiative, Assam Seed Corporation may engage the services of SSE beyond the Project period through its own funding and resources.
- 12. The contract with **SSE** may be terminated by either side at any point of time during the contractual period by serving a 30 days' notice without assigning any reason and without thereby incurring any liability to the Govt. of Assam/ PCU/ ARIAS Society/ Assam Seeds Corporation Ltd. The assignment is purely contractual in nature and shall not, under any circumstance, be extended beyond the APART's closing date. The Govt. of Assam/ PCU/ ARIAS Society/ Assam Seeds Corporation Ltd. shall not undertake any responsibility for subsequent deployment of the incumbent.
- 13. The **SSE** shall not assign or sub-contract, *in whole or in part*, his/her obligations to perform under this ToR, except with the reporting officer's prior written consent. The SSE will have to serve the assigned office on

full time basis under overall command of Managing Director and provide services normally from the Office of the Assam Seed Corporation.

(E) REMUNERATION, PAYMENT TERMS AND LEAVE ETC.

14. Depending on *the qualifications*, experience, competencies, recent remuneration, etc. of the candidate, the consolidated annual remuneration for **the FSHS** will be in the range between **Rs. 6.60 lakh- Rs 10.80 lakh** per year. *A higher start may be considered in case of exceptionally talented candidates, as decided by the SPD. However, in case the selected candidate's current remuneration with 30% enhancement comes below Rs. 6.60 lakh/year, the lower remuneration will be offered.* The annual remuneration will be inclusive of performance-linked-incentive, communication allowance, health/service related allowance, all taxes, cost of accommodation and food at Guwahati, conveyance to attend the office etc. The remuneration may be enhanced by the MD, Assam Seed Corporation, on an Annual Basis, as per provisions in the HR policy of ARIAS Society.
15. The remuneration will be given in equal monthly installments and the Performance-Linked-Incentive (PLI) will be given quarterly by the MD, Assam Seed Corporation based on the performance and achievement against the mutually agreed deliverables by the **SSE**. Taxes shall be dealt with as per applicable laws.
16. Travelling, Boarding, Lodging and Food expenses for approved official tours outside Guwahati will be reimbursed as per HR Policy of ARIAS Society.
17. The provisions of leave would be as per provisions of HR Policy of ARIAS Society.
18. No house rent allowance or any other allowance shall be paid by the Project. No other payment whatsoever (except reimbursement of official travelling expenses) shall be made, except as agreed with the **SSE** by the Project.

(E) REPORTING AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW

19. The **SSE** will report to the Managing Director, Assam Seeds Corporation Ltd. on a day-to-day basis. Quarterly/Half yearly/Annual performance review will be done by the SPD.

(F) FACILITIES TO BE PROVIDED TO the SSE

20. The **SSE** will be given access to all documents, reports, correspondence, contacts available with Assam Seeds Corporation Ltd, ARIAS Society, OPIU-Agriculture and any other information available, as deemed necessary for smooth accomplishments of tasks assigned. The **SSE** will be provided with one office cubicle/workstation in the PCU or OPIU Agriculture, along with computer, printer, computer/office consumables, and internet access. *The SSE however will not be provided with any clerical assistance.*

Notes:

1. *This is a draft ToR and SPD, ARIAS Society reserves the right to change, update or modify this ToR at any stage till recruitment process is completed.*
2. *ARIAS Society is an equal opportunity employer and women candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.*
