**ARIAS Society**

**Government of Assam**

***Draft* Terms of Reference (ToR)**

**For Seed Multiplication Expert (Individual Consultant) to be positioned in the Project Coordination Unit (PCU) of ARIAS Society**

1. **BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES**
2. 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 a **Seed Multiplication Expert**  under APART (hereinafter referred as **SME**) as Individual Consultant out of the loan proceeds, to be positioned in the Project Coordination Unit (PCU) of ARIAS Society, as per the terms given hereunder.
3. 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 districts[[1]](#footnote-2) of Assam.
4. 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**.
5. 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.
6. 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 Agricultural University, District Agricultural Technology Management Agencies (ATMAs), Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) and Research Stations, among others to address the seed value chain issues.
7. 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. One of the key roles of SMEs would be to work closely with such FPCs to 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).
8. **OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSIGNMENT & SCOPE OF WORK**
9. The **SME** will report to the **State Project Director (SPD), ARIAS Society** andwill support the Project in achieving the Project Development Objective as per Project Appraisal Document (PAD), Project Implementation Plan (PIP) and Annual Work Plans (AWPs). In particular theresponsibilities of the **SME** include the following:
	1. Work closely with the **Directorate of Agriculture and Directorate of Horticulture & Food Processing, Assam Agricultural University, District ATMAs, KVKs, Research Stations and Crop based FPCs supported by APART** with regards to quality seed production, availability and distribution.
	2. Work closely with the Project Coordination Unit (PCU) of ARIAS Society and crop related international agencies engaged by APART i.e. IRRI, CIP and WorldVeg with regards to seed production by FPCs.
	3. **Training and capacity building** of FPCs supported by APART on seed varietal selection, 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 SME. These include district level staff of APART working with the FPCs i.e. District Horticulture Coordinators (DHCs), District Agri Marketing Coordinators (DAMCs), Seed Certification Assistants (SCAs), staff of KVKs, ATMAs etc. SME may also recommend, exposure visit cum study tours to leading seed producing FPCs in other States for the purpose of training and capacity building.
	4. **Monitoring and reviewing** the progress of 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 SME under intimation to the appropriate authority.
	5. **Recommending necessary improvements in the FPC seed production Program**: SME will ensure that progressively sufficient additional number of FPCs 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 SME. Also, based on the results of monitoring and review of the Program, SME will recommend and initiate necessary modifications in the Program modalities.
	6. **Explore opportunities for FPCs’ seeds business in other North Eastern States**: As the FPC seed production program scales up, there is likely to be a surplus of seeds in certain crops. In that case, SME would explore seed business opportunities for FPCs, outside the State i.e. in other North Eastern States. SME will reach out to concerned officials in the relevant Departments/ Agencies in these States to discuss and take forward the feasible options.
	7. **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 the FPCs, so that the Program continues even after the Project. To this end, the SME 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 SME will also prepare an **exit strategy** for APART to egress from the FPC seed production initiative towards the end of the Project, at the same time ensuring the spontaneity of the Program even after the Project.
	8. 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), Assam Seeds Corporation Limited (ASCL). Need based visits may be undertaken to these organizations/ Departments.
	9. Documenting success stories, case studies, innovative business models, contributing to the APART Newsletters and disseminating at various forums as directed.
	10. Perform any other related task assigned by the SPD.
	11. **Travel Requirements:** The **SME** 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.
10. **QUALIFICATIONS, EXPERIENCE, SKILLSET, AND AGE ETC.**
11. **Educational Qualifications:** The **SME** should hold a **Masters degree in Agriculture preferably in Genetics & Plant Breeding or Seed Science & Technology or a closely related field** from any recognized University/ Institution. *A Doctorate/ Ph.D. degree in the relevant field will be an added advantage.*
12. **Working Experience: SME** must possess at least **7 (seven) years** of professional experience working in seed production/ seed multiplication including paddy any public/ private sector organization.
13. **Computer Skills & Language:** The **SME** must have proficiency in the use of Internet based applications, Graphics, MS Word, MS Excel and MS Power Point and other related applications.
14. **Language**: Fluency in English & Hindi. Knowledge of local language would be an added advantage.
15. **Age**: Age of the candidate should not be more than **50 years as on 1st January, 2022**.
16. **DURATION OF CONTRACT, NOTICE PERIOD ETC.**
17. The tenure of **SME** is intended for the entire duration of APART and co-terminus with the project period of APART. However, continuity of the **SME** 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.
18. The contract with **SME** 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. 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 shall not undertake any responsibility for subsequent deployment of the incumbent.
19. The **SME** 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 **SME** will have to serve the assigned office on full time basis under overall command of SPD and provide services from PCU, ARIAS Society. However, during the assignment period **SME** may be transferred to any other office of the Project either at HQ (Guwahati) or in the Districts.

 **(E) REMUNERATION, PAYMENT TERMS AND LEAVE ETC.**

1. 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. 11.40 lakh** to **Rs. 19.20 lakh** per year. *A higher start may be considered in case of exceptionally talented candidates, as decided by SPD.* However, in case the selected candidate’s current remuneration with 30% enhancement comes below Rs. 11.40 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 on an Annual Basis, as per provisions in the HR policy of ARIAS Society.
2. The remuneration will be given in equal monthly installments and the Performance-Linked-Incentive (PLI) will be given quarterly based on the performance and achievement against the mutually agreed deliverables by the **SME**. Taxes shall be dealt with as per applicable laws.
3. Travelling, Boarding, Lodging and Food expenses for approved official tours outside Guwahati will be reimbursed as per HR Policy of ARIAS Society.
4. The provisions of leave would be as per provisions of HR Policy of ARIAS Society.
5. 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 **SME** by the Project.
6. **REPORTING AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW**
7. The **SME** will report to the State Project Director (SPD), ARIAS Society on a day-to-day basis. Quarterly/Half yearly/Annual performance review will be done by the Reporting officer.
	* 1. **FACILITIES TO BE PROVIDED TO FSHS**
8. The **SME** will be given access to all documents, reports, correspondence, contacts available with ARIAS Society, OPIU-Agriculture and any other information available, as deemed necessary for smooth accomplishments of tasks assigned. The **SME** 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* ***SME*** *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.*

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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 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)