

Integrated Seed Sector Development (ISSD) Ethiopia Programme

MSc Thesis Research Grant for 2014 budget year
Call for concept note: ISSD MSc grant

Background

Integrated Seed Sector Development (ISSD) Programme in Ethiopia envisions the development of a vibrant, commercial and pluralistic seed sector so that quality seed of superior varieties are available to a larger number of farmers, thereby contributing to agriculture for food security and economic development in Ethiopia.

The ISSD Programme is implemented by Bahir Dar University, Haramaya University, Hawassa University, Mekelle University and Oromia Seed Enterprise, with a technical support from Wageningen UR Centre for Development Innovation. The programme is funded by the Dutch Directorate General for International Cooperation through the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Addis Ababa. The Programme Management Unit of ISSD is hosted by Haramaya University and located in Addis Ababa.

The ISSD Programme is implemented through strengthening the development and operation of regional, national and international seed companies; consolidating and scaling up of local seed businesses (i.e. seed producer cooperatives); promoting partnerships and innovations; and supporting the development of enabling policies and institutions as well as by sharing knowledge and experiences learnt by using multiple communication channels.

Pertinent to this call for concept note, support has also been given for capacity building through funding a number of MSc thesis researches relevant to ISSD programme so that ISSD interventions are evidence-based.

To this effect, the ISSD Programme will support MSc thesis research for graduate students interested to do their researches in one of the research thematic areas and meeting the requirements listed below.

Thematic areas

A. Effect of quality seed on crop productivity (5)

ISSD plans to support five MSc thesis research, focusing on replicated crop productivity trials using quality seed vs. local seeds of wheat, barley, tef and potato. There is a need to engage five trials distributed in Amhara, Oromia, SNNPR and Tigray.

B. Seed treatment (5)

Seed treatments such as seed priming, upgrading, disinfection, seed coating/dressing, application of active ingredients and additives contribute very much for uniform germination and early stand establishment, protecting seeds and seedlings from soil borne diseases and insect pests. As a result there is increase in crop productivity per hectare. Five MSc thesis will be supported and the trials are to be conducted in Amhara, Oromia, SNNPR and Tigray.

C. Seed marketing approaches of private and public seed: Lessons to be learnt (1)

One MSc thesis to be supported, which will be analyzing different marketing strategies of private and public seed enterprises as well as local seed business (seed producer cooperatives), with emphasis on direct marketing.

D. Seed delivery mechanisms (1)

ISSD plans to support one MSc thesis, which will investigate seed delivery mechanisms in Ethiopia, covering different crop seeds and regions. How farmers are really get seed and how efficient is each delivery mechanism. What are the merits and demerits of each mechanism? Which delivery mechanism is suitable for which crop seed and why?

E. Determinants of seed and varietal replacement (1)

It is presumed that most farmers recycle seed from both open/self-pollinating cultivars and even hybrid maize for periods beyond recommended period. What are the determinants of seed saving behavior, i.e. seed and varietal replacement (for example, relative to wealth/income, market access/distance, or risk/ ambiguity preferences) as well as promotion of use of improved seed? What are the yield implications of seed saving, frequent seed and varietal replacement? How

does saved seed compare to certified seed that is supplied annually by public and private seed enterprises as by seed producer cooperatives in terms of germination rates, purity, storage/packaging, or other indicators of quality. The experiment is expected to have wide coverage in terms of regional distribution and crop types.

F. Optimizing early generation seed supply (1)

Early generation seed (breeder, pre-basic and basic) supply is always low and often indicated as one of the major problems in seed supply in Ethiopia. ISSD wants to support one MSc thesis, which will investigate why early generation seed supply is low and how the supply can be optimized in sustainable ways. The experiment is expected to have wide coverage in terms of regional distribution as well as types of seed suppliers (public, private, cooperatives, and cooperative unions)

G. Seed storage conditions (1)

Maintaining optimum seed storage conditions is one of the requirements in successful seed supply. Often inadequate seed storage is indicated as one of causes for poor quality seed supply in Ethiopia. However, scientific evidence is lacking. ISSD will support one MSc thesis, which will explore and analyze different seed storage conditions and their effects on seed quality. The experiment is also expected to have wide coverage in terms of regional distribution as well as types of seed suppliers (public, private, cooperatives, and cooperative unions) and crop types.

Requirements

1. Location

The research work should be attached to operational areas of ISSD Program based at Bahir Dar University in Amhara, Haramaya University and Oromia Seed Enterprise in Oromia, Hawassa University in SNNPR and Mekele University in Tigray. In a sense, it is highly desirable to develop the research proposals in consultation with regional ISSD units located at the above organizations.

2. Number of grants

For 2014 budget year a total of 14 MSc grants will be made available that would be conducted in Amhara, Oromia, SNNPR and Tigray.

3. Amount of grant

Each successful candidate will receive a maximum grant of ETB 30,000 for her/his research activities.

4. Applicants

Applicants are those graduate students currently registered and more likely finish their course work by June 2014 at Bahir Dar University, Haramaya University, Hawassa University and Mekele University and pursuing their MSc/MA in such programs like seed science technology, plant breeding, agronomy, agricultural economics, agribusiness and value chain development, cooperatives, agricultural marketing and agricultural extension.

5. Research topic

The topic of the thesis must include the above-mentioned research thematic areas

6. Affiliation

The MSc thesis research needs to be associated with ISSD in Amhara at Bahir Dar University, in Oromia at Haramaya University and Oromia Seed Enterprise, in SNNPR at Hawassa University or in Tigray at Mekelle University.

Applicants are required to develop their research topics with clear research questions and develop concept note in close consultation with their advisors and the regional ISSD unit coordinators (Dr. Dereje Ayalew at Bahir Dar University, Dr. Nigussie Dechassa at Haramaya University, Dr. Hussien Mohammed at Hawassa University, Dr. Fetien Abay at Mekelle University, and Ato Kedir Nefo at Oromia Seed Enterprise).

7. Content and size of the concept note

The content of the concept includes background, rationale of the problem, objectives, research question and general methodology. The concept note should also have a title page, which includes complete address of the candidate and her/his major advisors, including email and cell phone number. The concept note should not exceed a maximum of 2 pages, 1.5 spaced and written in Times New Roman font.

8. MOU

Those candidates who won the grant should sign memorandum of understanding with one of the regional ISSD units located at one of the above mentioned universities. In addition to submitting periodical technical and financial report to ISSD regional unit, the successful candidates should present her/his findings at workshops to be organized by ISSD Programme and publish results in scientific journals/workshop proceedings, acknowledging ISSD Ethiopia Programme. A final copy of the MSc thesis must be submitted to ISSD-PMU.

Deadlines

Applicant needs to be ready to start her/his research as of July 2014.

Concept note submission: Eligible candidates are required to submit concept note before or on 31 March 2014.

Announcement of successful candidates: ISSD-PMU would communicate promising candidates to develop their full proposals by 15 April 2014.

Briefing on ISSD goals and objectives and coaching will be arranged for successful candidates in May 2014.

Full proposal development: Promising candidates develop their full proposal and defend by the end of July 2014.

Full proposal submission & grant release: Successful grantees will submit their defended theses proposal with approval letter in August 2014.

Important address

Submit concept notes/full proposals electronically using the following e-mail address:

aga.amsaluayana@gmail.com