



Federal Republic of Somalia

Ministry of Agriculture & Irrigation

Terms of Reference for Consulting Services

for

**Consultant to Establish the National Performance Trials (NPT) and
Distinctness, Uniformity, and Stability (DUS) Testing Framework for SARIS**

Ref No: *MoAI/DEP/HR,C&PR/118/2025*

Submission date: September 6th, 2025

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The Somali Agricultural Regulatory and Inspection Service (SARIS) is a national agency responsible for official controls of plant pests and disease, seed quality and agricultural inputs, including pesticides and fertilizers, in Somalia. It has been established under Law (No. 32/2024) as the National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO) for Somalia with mandate to enforce Plant Protection and Quarantine Law (No. 34/2024), Seed and Variety Release Law (No. 35/2024) and Agrochemicals Control Law (No. 33/2024). It has the legal mandate to regulate seed certification, plant variety release, and breeders' rights in accordance with national legislation and international obligations. A critical requirement in fulfilling this mandate is the establishment of robust systems for National Performance Trials (NPT) and Distinctness, Uniformity, and Stability (DUS) testing. Currently, nearly 95% of farmers in Somalia rely on uncertified seed sources, with about 46% purchasing seed from informal local markets, 38% using saved seed, and the remaining 13% depending on aid distributions. This widespread use of uncertified or informal seeds leads to unpredictable crop performance, undermines yield reliability, and exposes farmers and the national seed system to quality risks and limited access to regulated seed markets.

1.2. The Ugbaad Project (GCF-Funded)

The Climate Resilient Agriculture in Somalia (Ugbaad) Project is a seven-year program (2024–2031), financed by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) with a grant of USD 79.7 million and implemented by FAO in partnership with the Federal Government of Somalia. Ugbaad is Somalia's first GCF-funded, single-country investment dedicated to strengthening agricultural resilience.

The project's development objective is to enhance climate-resilient livelihoods and food security through:

- Restoration of 40,000 hectares of productive landscapes.
- Rehabilitation of irrigation canals and rural access roads.
- Improved access to water for over 900,000 people.
- Climate information services reaching nearly 1 million farmers and pastoralists.
- Strengthened institutional capacity to deliver climate-smart agriculture and seed system reforms.

The seed supply initiative under this ToR falls within Ugbaad's component on sustainable input access and seed system strengthening, designed to ensure Somali farmers benefit directly from certified, climate-resilient seed varieties while building long-term demand for improved seed.

1.3. Rationale of DUS and NPT

Somalia currently lacks an operational framework for National Performance Trials (NPT) and Distinctness, Uniformity, and Stability (DUS) testing. The absence of NPT and DUS exposes

Somalia's seed sector to significant risks, including the inability to safeguard farmers from poor-quality seeds, weak assurance of seed standards, and exclusion from regional and international markets.

NPT ensures that new plant varieties are rigorously evaluated for agronomic performance, adaptability, and market-preferred traits across Somalia's agro-ecological zones. This guarantees that only high-yielding, resilient, and farmer-accepted varieties are released for commercial use. Complementing this, DUS testing provides scientific assurance that varieties are truly distinct, uniform in their traits, and stable across successive generations, thereby protecting farmers, consumers, and breeders' rights. Neighboring countries such as Kenya, Ethiopia, and Uganda already run structured NPT/DUS systems through multi-location trials, farmer participation, and harmonized protocols, providing models Somalia can adapt.

Together, NPT and DUS provide a transparent, science-based framework for variety release and registration. They also enable Somalia to meet international obligations under UPOV, ISTA, COMESA and EAC harmonized seed regulations. Their establishment will enhance food security, support innovation and investment in plant breeding, and strengthen Somalia's competitiveness in regional and global seed trade.

1.4. Purpose of this Terms of Reference (TOR)

The purpose of this TOR is to engage a consultant to support SARIS, a newly established institution, in developing and operationalizing a comprehensive framework for National Performance Trials (NPT) and Distinctness, Uniformity, and Stability (DUS) testing in Somalia. As these systems have not yet been implemented in the country, SARIS requires specialized technical expertise that is currently unavailable internally. By drawing on the experience of experts from neighboring countries such as Kenya (KEPHIS), where well-established NPT and DUS systems are in place, the consultancy will ensure the development of credible, science-based procedures aligned with national laws, regional harmonization, and international standards for the registration and release of superior plant varieties.

1 Objective of the Assignment

1.2 Overall Objective

To design, operationalize, and institutionalize the NPT and DUS testing framework for Somalia in line with international standards and regional best practices.

1.3 Specific Objectives

- Develop clear operational guidelines, SOPs, and regulatory instruments for NPT and DUS testing.
- Propose an institutional and governance structure for conducting trials across Somalia's agro-ecological zones based on the international best practices

- Provide a framework for concurrent NPT and DUS testing to expedite release without compromising quality.
- Build technical and institutional capacity within SARIS and partner institutions for long-term sustainability.
- Ensure alignment with UPOV principles, ISTA protocols, COMESA, IGAD and EAC harmonization frameworks.

2 Scope of Work

The selected consultant in collaboration with SARIS will undertake the following tasks:

a) Policy and Institutional Review

- Review national seed legislation and SARIS establishment law to ensure alignment of NPT/DUS guidelines with legal mandates.
- Benchmark against IGAD, COMESA and EAC harmonized seed regulations, UPOV technical guidelines, and ISTA standards.
- Map existing institutional and human resource capacity gaps for trial implementation.

b) National Performance Trials (NPT) Framework

- Develop SOPs for submission of varieties, trial setup, and data collection.
- Define minimum trial requirements: multi-location, multi-season testing, with check/control varieties in line with international best practices
- Establish evaluation protocols covering yield, agronomy, adaptability, and market-preferred quality traits.
- Design mechanisms for farmer participatory evaluation (NPT tours, surveys).
- Draft TORs for the National Performance Trials Committee (NPTC) and National Variety Release Committee (NVRC) with clear decision-making criteria.

c) Distinctness, Uniformity, and Stability (DUS) Framework

- Develop SOPs for DUS testing based on UPOV guidelines.
- Establish data collection protocols for morphological, reproductive, and growth traits.
- Define species-specific thresholds for uniformity and off-types.
- Propose collaboration arrangements with regional testing authorities (e.g., KEPHIS) during Somalia's capacity transition.

d) Integration of NPT and DUS Processes

- Develop procedures for concurrent or sequential NPT and DUS testing.
- Propose standard templates for breeder applications, evaluation reports, and release certificates.
- Recommend integration of NPT/DUS data into the SC&PVP automated seed certification system.

e) Capacity Building

- Prepare practical field manuals and training modules on NPT and DUS implementation.

3 Deliverables

Milestone	TIMELINE																													
	WEEK 1					WEEK 2					WEEK 3					WEEK 4					WEEK 5					WEEK 6				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Draft and consult on NPT Guidelines & SOPs.	■	■	■	■	■																									
Finalize NPT Guidelines & SOPs; begin drafting NPT Evaluation Framework.						■	■	■	■	■																				
Finalize NPT Evaluation Framework; prepare Governance Framework for Variety Release.											■	■	■	■	■															
Develop DUS Testing Protocols (SOPs, descriptors, thresholds, templates).																■	■	■	■	■	■									
Draft Integrated Variety Release System; develop Capacity Building Package (manuals, field guides, workshop materials).																					■	■	■	■	■					
Consolidate all outputs into Final Report with actionable recommendations; validation with SARIS/MoAI; submit final version.																										■	■	■	■	■

4 Duration

The consultancy will be carried out over **30 working days** within a one-month period.

5 Consultant Qualifications

The consultant must demonstrate:

- Minimum Master degree in Plant Breeding, Seed Science, Agronomy or Agricultural Science.
- Minimum 7–10 years of proven national, regional and international experience in seed systems, variety evaluation, and regulatory frameworks.
 - **National level:** Minimum **3–4 years** of proven experience in seed systems, variety evaluation, and regulatory frameworks within Somalia or comparable national contexts.
 - **Regional level:** Minimum **2–3 years** of experience working with regional institutions, networks, or harmonization frameworks (e.g., EAC, IGAD, COMESA).
 - **International level:** Minimum **2–3 years** of experience engaging with global seed sector standards and organizations (e.g., UPOV, ISTA, OECD), or contributing to international projects/initiatives on variety evaluation and release.
- Prior experience in establishing NPT and/or DUS systems in Africa or internationally.
- In-depth knowledge of UPOV, ISTA, IPPC, and EAC seed harmonization frameworks.
- Strong training and capacity-building skills, with a record of producing technical manuals.
- Proven ability to work with governments, regulatory authorities, and development partners in fragile contexts.

6 Reporting and Supervision

The consultant will report to the Director General, SARIS, and work closely with the Seed Certification & Plant Variety Protection Department. The role will also require coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, as well as engagement with regional and international partners (ISTA, OECD, UPOV) and alignment with regional standards frameworks such as EAC, IGAD, and COMESA.

7 Payment Schedule

Deliverable / Milestone (with Conditions)	Payment %
Inception Report – methodology, detailed work plan, and timeline. <i>Payment will be made upon submission and formal approval by MoAI/SARIS confirming completeness, clarity of methodology, and feasibility of the work plan.</i>	20%
Draft NPT & DUS Guidelines and Training Materials – draft guidelines, training manuals, field guides, and related materials. <i>Payment will be released upon submission of acceptable drafts of sufficient quality for internal and partner review.</i>	40%
Final Report and Framework – consolidated deliverables (NPT & DUS Guidelines, Evaluation Framework, Governance Framework, Integrated Variety Release System, and Capacity Building Package). <i>Payment will be made after official acceptance by MoAI/SARIS, confirming that all deliverables are complete, of satisfactory quality, and incorporate feedback from internal and external reviews.</i>	40%

NB: MoAI/SARIS may withhold or delay payments for late, incomplete, or substandard deliverables, while timely and satisfactory submissions may allow faster processing.

8 Application Procedure

Interested candidates/consulting firms are invited to submit:

- A cover letter expressing interest and suitability for the assignment.
- Technical proposal outlining methodology and work plan.
- Financial proposal indicating consultancy fees and related costs.
- Curriculum Vitae (CV) of the lead consultant and team members (if applicable).
- Evidence of relevant assignments previously undertaken.

Applications should be submitted electronically to hr@moa.gov.so and CC: Projectcoordinator@ugbaadqcf.gov.so no later than **September 16, 2025**. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

9 Evaluation Criteria

9.1 Technical Proposal Evaluation

The Technical Proposal will carry a weight of 70% of the overall score and will be evaluated against the following criteria:

- Understanding of the TOR and proposed methodology- 20 points
- Expertise and experience of the consultant- 20 points
- Consultant qualifications- 15 points
- Work plan and timeline- 15 points

9. 2 Financial Proposal Evaluation:

The Financial Proposal will carry a weight of 30–40% of the overall score. It will be evaluated based on competitiveness and value for money.

The lowest-priced, technically compliant bid will receive the maximum financial score, with other bids scored proportionally according to the following formula:

Financial Score = (Lowest Priced Bid ÷ Price of Bid Under Evaluation) × Maximum Financial Points

Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (MoAI)
Somali Agricultural Regulatory and Inspection Services (SARIS)

Date: September 6, 2025