

**TERMS OF REFERENCE (TORs)**  
**Improving SPS Capacity in Zambia to Grow Regional Seed Trade**  
**STDF/PPG/1044**

## **I. BACKGROUND**

Zambia is a recognized leader in regional seed trade, exporting over 11,000 metric tons of seed annually to key markets including Kenya, Tanzania, Angola, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Favorable agro-ecological conditions, supportive seed policies, and growing demand in the \$3.1 billion African seed market have positioned Zambia as the continent's largest seed exporter. However, despite this market leadership, regulatory and technical barriers, particularly around Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) compliance, continue to hinder Zambia's ability to fully capitalize on regional trade opportunities. Addressing these challenges is critical for maintaining Zambia's strategic role in Africa's seed trade and promoting broader regional food security and agricultural productivity.

Aflatoxin contamination, quarantine pest outbreaks, and the circulation of counterfeit seeds represent the most pressing SPS issues affecting Zambia's seed sector. Aflatoxin contamination alone causes estimated economic losses of \$100 million annually and contributes to the rejection of up to 30% of smallholder seed lots. Quarantine pests such as Maize Lethal Necrosis and bacterial wilt have triggered export rejections and trade bans, while weak post-harvest handling and poor storage conditions further compromise seed quality. The proliferation of fake seeds, which can account for up to 50% of seeds in informal markets, undermines farmer trust and productivity and exposes Zambia to increased scrutiny from importing countries.

The Project Preparation Grant (PPG) application entitled "*Improving SPS Capacity in Zambia to Grow Regional Seed Trade*" (STDF/PPG/1044)<sup>1</sup>, was submitted to the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) by the Zambia Seed Trade Association (ZASTA), with support from the Plant Quarantine and Phytosanitary Service (PQPS), the Seed Control and Certification Institute (SCCI) and the Zambia Agriculture Research Institute (ZARI).

The STDF Working Group, at its meeting on 24 June 2025, approved this application for funding, subject to some revisions. Members broadly welcomed the relevance of the proposed topic and noted that the application was demand-driven and well supported by key stakeholders. They also commended its strong alignment with international standards (IPPC and Codex), as well as its potential contribution to enhancing seed trade and agricultural resilience in the region. Some members provided detailed recommendations including: (i) better defining the seed types on which the project will focus and clarifying and prioritizing the specific topics mentioned in the application (such as food fraud, aflatoxins, and Maize Lethal Necrosis); (ii) ensuring coordination with ongoing initiatives and partners, particularly given the significant investments already made in aflatoxin-related work in East Africa; (iii) strengthening links with relevant existing regional frameworks and bodies (e.g. AFSTA, AU-IAPSC, COMESA, SADC); (iv) facilitating regional collaboration by exploring the harmonization of border quarantine procedures and risk-based inspection protocols; (v) establishing an inclusive and sustainable public-private partnership (PPP) model; and (vi) incorporating cross-learning from the STDF's ongoing seed project in the Asia-Pacific region ([STDF/PG/755](#)). The Working Group further recommended that detailed Terms of Reference for the PPG be developed, in close consultation with relevant stakeholders, to ensure these elements are thoroughly incorporated into the development of the project proposal.

## **II. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS**

The purpose of this PPG is to prepare a project proposal to improve SPS Capacity in Zambia to Grow Regional Seed Trade. It will support Zambia in consolidating its position in key regional export markets while expanding to new ones. An international Consultant will implement this PPG. They will carry out this work in very close collaboration with relevant public and private sector stakeholders and competent authorities in Zambia, regional bodies, and the STDF, among others.

---

<sup>1</sup> See PPG application attached.

### III. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONSULTANT

The international consultant will undertake the following tasks:

- Familiarize themselves with the original PPG application and carefully review the comments from members of the STDF Working Group during its meeting in June 2025.
- Familiarize themselves with STDF's Strategy 2025 – 2030<sup>2</sup>, particularly on the innovation and scalability aspects.
- Review and analyze existing relevant documentation on seeds in Zambia including current trade issues at the regional level.
- Research and document past and ongoing projects and programmes related to seeds conducted by national authorities, research institutions, and/or international organizations, to identify lessons learned and potential synergies. These include, among others:
  - The Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA)
  - The International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA).
  - The EU-funded project "Enterprise Zambia Challenge Fund" (EZCF)
  - The STDF's ongoing seed project in the Asia-Pacific region ([STDF/PG/755](#)), identify and incorporate elements which might be relevant to Zambia and could be incorporated in the project proposal.
- Identify and hold one-on-one virtual consultations with relevant stakeholders in the country to better understand the SPS challenges facing the actors of the seeds value chain, and to determine the priorities for training and implementation of food safety and plant health standards and practices.
- Undertake a field mission to Lusaka and to a selected region in the country.
- Conduct meetings and national workshops with stakeholders including the competent authorities, private sector entities (associations), farmers' and value chain actors' organizations, scientists and academia, to scope potential project activities.
- Consult regional and international bodies such as ISF, AFSTA, AU-IAPSC, COMESA, and SADC and other development partners and donors involved in the seeds value chain, to find out about their programmes, particularly given the significant investments already made in aflatoxin-related work in East Africa, and avoid overlaps.
- Link with relevant STDF developing country experts with expertise on the region and topic<sup>3</sup>.
- Assess and prioritize the key SPS problems affecting seeds, such as aflatoxin contamination, limited phytosanitary inspection and certification, insufficient laboratory accreditation, and inadequate post-harvest handling, among others. Evaluate the need, feasibility and sustainability of addressing these issues, and determine whether they should be included in the resulting project proposal.
- Clearly define the seed types on which the project will focus and clarify and prioritize the specific topics mentioned in the application (such as food fraud, aflatoxins, and Maize Lethal Necrosis) and which would be covered under the resulting project.
- Explore opportunities to strengthen regional collaboration, such as through the harmonization of border quarantine procedures and the adoption of risk-based inspection protocols, as appropriate.

---

<sup>2</sup> See: [standardsfacility.org/sites/default/files/2025-03/STDF\\_strategy\\_2025-2030\\_Eng.pdf](https://standardsfacility.org/sites/default/files/2025-03/STDF_strategy_2025-2030_Eng.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> See: [Developing country experts | Standards and Trade Development Facility \(standardsfacility.org\)](#)

- Integrate "innovation" and "scalability" in the resulting project proposal, in accordance with the STDF Strategy 2025-2030<sup>4</sup>.
- Assess gaps in prior regulatory and capacity building programmes and training needs in food standards and good practices for seeds
- Develop a capacity-building programme that targets priority areas to be addressed and form an integral part of the resulting project proposal.
- Assess the costs and benefits of establishing an inclusive and sustainable public-private partnership (PPP) model for the resulting project, taking into account the STDF work in the area.<sup>5</sup>
- Consider potential challenges and opportunities related to climate change and environmental aspects. Please refer to the STDF briefing note.<sup>6</sup>
- Consider the gender needs, opportunities and challenges related to the seeds value chain in the participating countries. Please refer to the STDF Action Plan and external assessment.<sup>7</sup>
- Develop a project document to draw out the proposed action plan, activities, along with objectives and expected outcomes.
- Organize a final virtual consultation workshop with all the key stakeholders to present the first draft of the Project and gather feedback from participants.
- Integrate the comments received into the draft Project Proposal and prepare a consolidated version to be sent to STDF. Receive feedback from the STDF Secretariat (several rounds are expected) and finalize the Project Proposal.

#### **IV. QUALIFICATIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONSULTANT**

The international consultant should meet the following requirements and possess these qualifications:

- Advanced degree (PhD or Masters) in agriculture, plant health, food sciences or related field.
- Experience in project preparation, monitoring and evaluation, including data collection (through questionnaires, surveys, consultations, and interviews involving multiple organizations and participants); knowledge and experience in results-based project management, logical frameworks and theory of change.
- Experience and knowledge of the challenges faced by developing countries in implementing international food safety and/or plant health standards to gain and maintain market access.
- Knowledge of projects related to the food safety and plant health sectors in general, and particularly to the agricultural sector and seed systems, including seed certification and trade in the developing countries, including in Africa.
- Excellent analytical, writing and communication skills in English.

#### **V. KEY DELIVERABLES**

The International Consultant shall deliver the following outputs:

- 1) A project proposal in STDF's format. It will:
  - Identify the SPS-related challenges and needs along the seed value chain including the seeds type, prioritization of the key SPS challenges, compliance, capacity building, awareness raising, trade facilitation and technical assistance.
  - Develop applicable recommendations to address identified issues.

---

<sup>4</sup> See: [standardsfacility.org/sites/default/files/2025-03/STDF\\_strategy\\_2025-2030\\_Eng.pdf](https://standardsfacility.org/sites/default/files/2025-03/STDF_strategy_2025-2030_Eng.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> See: [Public-Private Partnerships | STDF](#)

<sup>6</sup> See: [STDF Briefing note Climate Change EN.pdf \(standardsfacility.org\)](#)

<sup>7</sup> See: [Gender mainstreaming | Standards and Trade Development Facility \(standardsfacility.org\)](#)

- Focus on developing the capacities of value chain actors to ensure better compliance with international standards (IPPC and Codex).
  - Elaborate the purpose, scope, specific objectives, and expected outcomes, outputs and activities of the proposed project, based on a coherent logical framework with Monitoring and Evaluation indicators to measure performance, according to STDF guidelines<sup>8</sup>
  - Define the "innovative" and "scaling" aspects to be included in the resulting project proposal, in accordance with the STDF Strategy 2025-2030<sup>9</sup>.
  - Outline a practical mechanism for project implementation and management according to STDF guidelines<sup>10</sup>
  - Clearly identify the roles and responsibilities of all concerned public and private stakeholders in Zambia.
  - Describe the role of regional bodies.
  - Consider cross-cutting issues related to gender and environmental aspects of the proposed project.
  - Identify linkages, synergies and complementarities to relevant (past/ongoing/planned) activities and projects supported by donors and development partners.
  - Identify Zambia's contribution to the project and explore co-funding options available for the implementation of the resulting project, based on discussions with the private sector, and also bilateral and multilateral donors (including other international organizations).
  - Include a detailed estimate of the budget required to implement the proposed project activities (e.g. an activity-based budget).
  - Include a detailed work plan and timetable for project implementation.
  - Identify and assess the possible risks and challenges faced when implementing the proposed project, as well as risk mitigation strategies to ensure its success and sustainability.
  - Include relevant letters of support from the public sector (Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Commerce, Export Promotion Agency, others), the private sector (associations) and any relevant letter (from academia, civil society, etc.).
- 2) **A PPG implementation report:** A brief report describing the process of implementing the PPG (i.e. drafting the project proposal), using the STDF format, and including references on data sources, summaries of consultations held, bibliography of the consulted documents (with links and electronic copies where possible), estimated budget vs real expenditure under the various budget lines, and a contact list of the people and organizations consulted. Survey questionnaires and other relevant data collection tools used during the project formulation phase should also be included as annexes. The report shall be provided within four weeks after the final version of the Project Proposal has been accepted by the STDF Secretariat.

---

<sup>8</sup> See: [STDF MEL Framework Final English.pdf](#)

<sup>9</sup> See: [standardsfacility.org/sites/default/files/2025-03/STDF\\_strategy\\_2025-2030\\_Eng.pdf](https://standardsfacility.org/sites/default/files/2025-03/STDF_strategy_2025-2030_Eng.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> See: [STDF MEL Framework Final English.pdf](#)

**VI. SCHEDULE**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Date</b>
Signature of contract	December 2025
Start date	12 January 2025
<b>1) PPG implementation - Project development</b>	
Desk review and initial virtual consultations	January 2026
Scoping visits and discussions (in-person and virtual)	February 2026
1 <sup>st</sup> in-person workshop with participating countries	February 2026
First draft of project proposal to STDF	March 2026
Review and comments	March 2026
Second draft of project proposal to STDF	April 2026
2 <sup>nd</sup> validation (virtual) by participating countries	May 2026
Submission of Project Grant (PG) to STDF with support letters	30 June 2026
<b>2) PPG Final implementation Report</b>	
Draft PPG final implementation report to STDF for comments	10 July 2026
Final report of PPG	20 July 2026
End date	30 July 2026