

# ISSD TIGRAY



**ISSD**  
Ethiopia

## Brief

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# Introducing Quality Declared Seed System in Tigray



## **Vision Statement of ISSD Ethiopia**

Through a vibrant and pluralistic seed sector, quality seed of superior varieties are available and affordable to a large number of farmers; thereby contributing to agriculture for food security and economic development in Ethiopia.

## **Objective of ISSD Ethiopia**

To strengthen the development of a vibrant, commercial and pluralistic seed sector in Ethiopia.

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## Background

Tigray is characterized as an agrarian economy with diverse agro ecological zones which are suitable to grow different types of field crops and vegetables. In addition, the agricultural sector is largely characterized by small scale subsistence farming and low production and productivity. This is partly due to limited and delays in timely availability of adequate quantities and quality of improved seed which was a result of similar problems in the early generation seed phase. As result, the informal seed supply system (or informal seed system) plays an important role in supplying more than 80% of the seed supply (BoARD : 2008 E.C).

Thus, to enhance farmers to have physical access to quality seed of sufficient quantity at the right time, and at affordable price and in a sustainable way an alternative seed system, i.e., Quality declared seed (QDS) is incorporated by the Federal seed law proclamation number 0. Furthermore the region government has developed and published an implementation procedure/guideline in 2016 (Procedure number 1/2007). More over, QDS is viewed as a potentially powerful step for the development of Ethiopian seed system in the Roadmap towards the Transformation of the Ethiopian Seed System document (ATA January 2012)

### What is QDS

Seed produced by a registered seed producer which conforms to the minimum standards for the crop species concerned and which

has been subject to the quality control measures outlined in the Guidelines.

The system is designed to provide quality control during seed production, which is less demanding on government resources than other more developed seed quality seed systems, but is adequate to provide good quality seed both within countries and in international trade.

The purpose of QDS is to offer an alternative, which can be used for those crops, areas and farming systems in which highly developed seed quality control activities are difficult to implement or make relatively little impact. In particular, it may more easily accommodate varieties of crops, which, for different reasons, do not easily fit within a conventional seed quality control scheme. Being implemented primarily by seed producers, it also facilitates local seed production initiatives, which have advantages for many of the staple grain crops. These crops often present problems for seed supply because the premium, which can be charged for seed over the grain price, is limited by the option of farm-saved seed.

According to the implementation guideline of BoARD (2008 E.C) article 4 sub article 3, the QDS scheme do not cover

- a) Hybrid seed production
- b) Farmer to farmer seed exchange
- c) Forest seed
- d) Seed used for research
- e) Seed produced by registered formal seed producers such as public enterprises and private seed producer

## Advantages of QDS

System wise QDS have the following advantages:

Despite the advance of technologies in seed and variety testing, QDS is still a practical system, which is relatively easy to apply.

QDS attempts to reconcile the continuing need to improve seed supply to farmers with the desire to reflect and accommodate the diversity of farming systems, particularly in the more difficult areas where highly organized seed systems do not function well.

QDS is a relatively open scheme, which meets the needs of farmers in a flexible way but without compromising basic standards of seed quality.

Contribute to the wider policy objective of diversifying the seed supply system so that farmers may have more choice.

Furthermore, the advantages of QDS for small-scale crop producing farmers are:

Farmers can choose the crops of interest for their markets and target areas where certified seed is not available.

Farmers are introduced to new varieties and/or new market opportunities through demonstrations. Farmers choose their varietal preferences and are introduced to new technologies when they use quality seed, needed for stable crop production and food security.

All farmers in the QDS production area are in good contact with other stakeholders in the seed chain including wholesalers and grain buyers.

Farmers could be potential seed producers for seed companies, starters of seed associa-

tions, retailers or future seed traders or owners of seed companies or owners of other businesses.

QDS enhances the development of the farmers' wider knowledge and demand for different varieties and good seed quality. QDS production also offers female farmers good possibilities to start up small businesses.

To improve the quality of seed being offered for sale in countries where human and physical resources for quality control are limited FAO has introduced the 'quality declared seed' system, which makes use of resources already available in seed production organizations. The system is designed to provide quality control during seed production, which is less demanding on government resources than other more developed seed quality seed systems, but is adequate to provide good quality seed both within countries and in international trade.

According to FAO, The system is based on four principal points:

1. A list of varieties eligible to be produced as QDS is established.
2. Seed producers are required to register with Tigray an appropriate regional authority.
3. The regional authority will check at least 10 percent of the seed crops.
4. The regional authority will check at least, 10 percent of the seed offered for sale under the designation of QDS. Seed.

## Implementation of QDS in Tigray Region

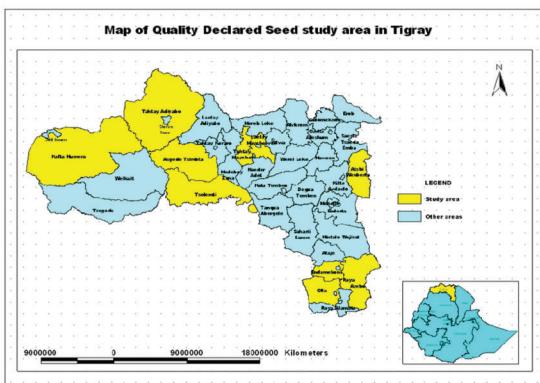
Mekelle University (MU) Integrated Seed Sector Development (ISSD) Ethiopia program aims to contribute to strengthen the development of a vibrant, commercial and pluralistic seed sector in Ethiopia in partnership with regional seed sector multistakeholders. To make its and other stakeholders efficient, effective and systematic it works under the regional seed core team which comprises BoARD, TARI, MU, Cooperative Agency, ATA and other stakeholders represented by the head/deputy head of the respective organizations. The team plans, coordinates, monitor and evaluate the overall regional seed sector development.

Among other development interventions, the regional seed core team believed the importance of introducing QDS scheme in an attempt to resolve the shortage of seed supply to farmers and to address the diversity of farming systems in the region. To this effect starting September 2012 stakeholders were paying an important role by making task division to realize the implementation of QDS system in the region. MU College of Dry Land Agriculture and Natural Resource (CoDANR), BoARD and with the involvement of Tigray Agricultural Research Institute (TARI) has been engaged in developing QDS technical guidelines for standards and procedures in Tigray Region.

The technical guideline study sets alternative ways for crops, areas and farming systems for which the standard seed quality control

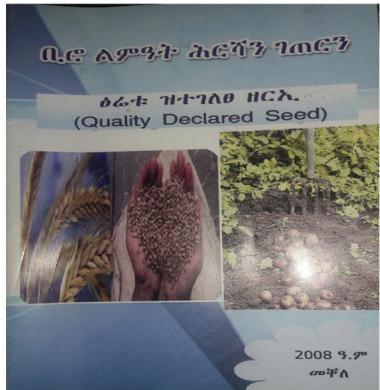
activities are difficult to implement or make relatively little impact. The stakeholders nominated a senior seed expert and a senior researcher to develop the technical guideline.

The following Tigray region map depicts ten districts or weredas (yellow shade) where QDS study was conducted to identify crops and varieties.



The study indicated major crops and varieties to be produced and distributed under the QDS regime and the types of laboratory analysis to be used. Furthermore, the team of experts explored experiences in other countries and QDS practices in the region implemented by TARI on potato. They also analysed the legal and policy frameworks of the region.

Most importantly, recently, the regional government has endorsed an implementation guideline in 2008 E.C (2016) under Guideline number 1/2007 to guide the sustainable implementation of the QDS system in the region.



## Way Forward

Senior research from MU and TARI are undertaking field researches on Characterization, evaluation and presentation of outstanding preferred local varieties for QDS through MU ISSD value chain project grant.

The research's objective are

- To characterize agronomic traits of 2-3 sorghum and sesame local varieties
- To present the access of 2-3 registered local varieties of sorghum and sesame to seed producing cooperatives

Identification of strategic land races and improved varieties and areas for QDS

Awareness creation training to farmers, experts and wereda and regional officials

The registration, and certification of the newly established informal seed groups

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