 

**Farmer-to-Farmer East Africa**

**Volunteer Assignment Scope of Work**

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| **Summary Information** | |
| Assignment Code | ET81 |
| Country | Ethiopia |
| Country Project | Grain production and Sector Support |
| Host Organization | Gion Farmers’ Cooperative Union |
| Assignment Title | Computerized financial management system |
| Assignment preferred dates | Flexible preferably April/May, 2017 |
| Assignment objective | * Develop a data management system that enhances efficiency * Facilitate the development of computerized accounting system for the purpose of:  1. auditing 2. loan disbursement and collection; 3. faster and efficient processing of information; and 4. automatic generation of accounting documents |
| Desired volunteer skills/ expertise | Experience in IT, financial accounting system, and accounting software package and experience working with farmer group organizations. |

1. **BACKGROUND**

The Farmer-to-Farmer (F2F) East Africa program leverages US volunteer’s expertise to assist small holder farmers and small scale processors in East Africa to improve their business practices through volunteer assignments conducted with host organizations. Through F2F intervention, CRS will improve the livelihoods and nutritional status of significant numbers of low income households by: i) broadening their participation in established commodity value chains as producers and service providers; ii) strengthening community resilience to shocks such as droughts that adversely affect livelihoods; and iii) preserving/enhancing natural resources upon which most rural communities depend. CRS will also increase the American public’s understanding of international development programs and foster increased cross-cultural understanding between host countries and US volunteer.

Compared to all grown crops in Ethiopia, the grains had the greatest share in 2012/13 both in area coverage (91%) and production share (79%)[[1]](#footnote-1). Among grain crops in 2012/13, teff is the first, maize (17%) the second, sorghum the third, and wheat (13%) is the fourth most widely cultivated cereal. Maize (corn) is the first (27%), teff the second, sorghum the third, and wheat is the fourth (15%) in production contribution3. Pulses are also important in Ethiopian agriculture and food security, accounting for 15% of land coverage and 12% of production share3. Grain farming in Ethiopia is predominately subsistence rain fed agriculture.

The host organization Gion Farmers’ Cooperative Union (GFCU) was established in 2010. Currently it has a member of 76 primary multipurpose farmers’ cooperatives having a total of more than 139,000 individual farmers’ members. The union mainly deals with the marketing of grains (wheat, chickpea, sesame, fava bean, and haricot bean) and provision of agricultural inputs like soil fertilizer and improved seed. The host is located at 230km from the capital, Addis Ababa, in the north western part of the country at Dejen town, East Gojam zone of the Amhara region. The region is one of the four USAID’s Feed-the-Future (FtF) and Agricultural Growth Program-I (AGP-1) regions of the Ethiopian government.

Though it has been eight years since its establishment, the union is growing fast in terms of its member, business and services provision. Moreover, it is also playing a role in the export market by supplying grain. Despite this the host is managing its financial transaction using manual accounting system in which they are recording all the business transactions and bookkeeping by hand (paper and pencil accounting system). This manual accounting system challenges the union to provide an effective and efficient service to its members and stakeholders. Thus, the union is striving to change this paper based accounting system to a computerized system. Therefore, they requested CRS for a Farmer to Farmer volunteer expert to facilitate the development of an Information Technologies, IT, based financial management system.

1. **ISSUE DESCRIPTION**

Gion farmers’ cooperative union is an emerging and one of the fastest growing cooperative unions in the country. Despite this, the union is using a manual accounting system which involves the use of paper ledgers and journals to record financial transactions. As a result they are taking more time to complete tasks. This is because checking account balances and reviewing information and copying are difficult and accountants need to search multiple documents to locate information requested. Due to this in most of the time the union unable to be prepared for audit checks as per the program.

In addition, because of the paper based accounting system, the union is usually subject to errors like entering information into incorrect accounts, incorrect recording of a transaction, and incomplete recording of a transaction etc. Furthermore, the system has no internal checks and balances and hence, accountants researching errors often spend several hours to locate and correct entries and longer to generate reports and also subject to embezzlement (misuse). Sometimes the records in a paper based accounts system are also exposed to damage by water and fade of the ink. In general the union is processing and recording the company’s incomes, expenses, profits, losses, and reconciliation by hand which is creating much room for error repeatedly.

1. **OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSIGNMENT**

The main objective of this assignment is the development of computerized accounting system that provides effective and efficient loan disbursement as well as collection, sales of goods, inventory and auditing purposes. This computerized system will allow the union to process and maintain accounting transactions, records and the generation and printing of reports. So that the service provided by the host will become faster and more efficient in processing of information; enables for automatic generation of accounting documents like print and reprint customer orders, invoices, and all other accounting transactions as required.

Specific activities may include provision of training on accounting software packages or other important skill which helps the union to set up computerized business system. The total number of beneficiaries for this assignment will be 12 – 16 staff and committee members of the union especially the finance unit. Three members of the board of directors will participate in specific training sessions to get an insight how the system works since they are responsible for approval of different financial documents.

**Host contribution** – The host will support the volunteer in accomplishing the overall assignment objectives. The host will select the right beneficiaries from its staffs for the said face to face and/or hands on training and advices. The host will also assign a counterpart/focal person to the volunteer, who will facilitate the volunteer during her/his assignment period and also act as translator/interpreter and advise him/her on the culture of the local community. The host will also provide an office space and furniture for the volunteer as required, and facilitate the volunteer to stay at hotel at Dejen town. The host will also avail transport for fieldwork during the assignment period and maybe consult with CRS for car rent/fuel reimbursement in pursuance to CRS’s financial/admin regulation.

1. **Anticipated Results from the Assignment**

A computerized accounting system will be facilitated and the employer will have a smoother record-keeping and balancing process, and able to store and access and retrieve information dating from years back.

The anticipated deliverables that can be accomplished by the volunteers can also include:

* Technical assistance provided
* Accounting software package introduced
* Initial presentation done (outlines of topics of the course, plan, approach, etc.),
* Preferably, training handouts/guidelines (for TOTs) is developed by the volunteer and submitted,
* Debriefing with CRS and/or USAID in Addis
* Field trip reports with recommendations to host organization and CRS are submitted;
* All logistics and advances (if any) are reconciled at CRS;
* Outreach events conducted upon return to the US by the volunteer.

1. **SCHEDULE OF VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES IN ETHIOPIA**

| **Day** | **Activity** |
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| Days 1 | Arrival to Ethiopia. The volunteer will be met at Bole Airport by CRS’s client hotel Churchill ([**churchillhotel@ethionet.et/**](mailto:churchillhotel@ethionet.et/)**info@churchillhoteladdis; phone # 0111111212**) or another client hotel with a placard bearing “CRS logo and volunteer name”. |
| Day 2 | * Introduction with and welcoming by CRS management and briefing meeting (security, general orientation, logistics, reporting, etc) at CRS office. Discuss anticipated outcomes and work plan. |
| Days 3 | * Travel to Dejen 230 km from Addis Ababa to North West * Introduction with manager and board members of the union * First hand briefing on the main objectives and modality of the assignment and adjust the agenda for the coming days (work planning session). |
| Days 4 | * Further identify and asses the skill and training gaps and major constraints and expectation of the union Based on information gathered and gaps identified, enrich the prepared training materials * Firsthand information/data collection by volunteers as applicable. |
| Day 5-7 | * Conduct providing technical assistance. * Assess and refine the quality of trainings/assistance through feedback and observations. |
| **Day 8** | **Rest day.** |
| Days 9-14 | Continuation of the trainings and technical assistances. |
| **Day 15** | **Rest Day** |
| Day 16 | * Wrap-up session with the host organization in the presence of CRS F2F * Group debriefing presentation to the host in the presence of CRS. * Travel back to Addis Ababa |
| Day 17 | * Volunteer also finalizes his/her reporting and submit training M&E forms to CRS F2F staff. * Finalize reimbursement and liquidations (if any) with finance. * Debriefing at CRS office with USAID Mission and/or CRS staff. * Depart for USA in the evening |
| TBD | Outreach event when back in the US could include: presentation with a local group/organization, press release, media event and/or speaking tour. |

1. **ESIRABLE VOLUNTEERS SKILLS**

* Graduate in computer science, ICT, business development and related
* Demonstrated experience in computer skill, ICT based financial management system, financial accounting system, and accounting software package
* Experience of working with farmers organizations/ cooperatives,
* Ability and preparedness to use relevant teaching aids and audiovisuals,
* Easily adapting ability to local situations of the various developing world,
* Good communicator and interpersonal skills.

1. **ACCOMMODATION AND OTHER IN-COUNTRY LOGISTICS**

* Before travelling to the host at the assignment place (Dejen), the volunteer will stay in Addis Ababa at one of the CRS’s client hotels Churchill ([churchillhotel@ethionet.et](mailto:churchillhotel@ethionet.et) info@churchillhoteladdis; phone # 0111111212) or another client hotel that will be communicated prior to volunteer.
* In Addis Ababa, the hotel usually has rooms that include services such as airport pickup and drop-off, breakfast, wireless internet, etc.
* The hotel or CRS will arrange a vehicle for short travel from the hotel to CRS and vice versa while in Addis Ababa.
* All required materials will be prepared ahead of time and will be provided to the volunteer. CRS Ethiopia will provide the volunteer with a laptop computer, local internet dongle (modem/EVDO) and mobile phone with charged local SIM-card.
* Any other required logistics and facilities can also be requested by the volunteer during her/his stay in Addis Ababa.
* CRS will arrange transport service and accompany the volunteer to the place of assignment.
* During her/his assignment period, the volunteer will be booked and stay in a hotel at Dejen town.
* CRS Ethiopia will cover the lodging bills against receipts.
* CRS HQ will provide the volunteer with a per-diem advance to cater meals.
* CRS Ethiopia will also reimburse the volunteer with laundry costs against receipts. Before departing from Ethiopia, the volunteer will also liquidate if s/he received any advances in Ethiopia.
* For more information, please refer to country information that will be provided.

1. **RECOMMENDED ASSIGNMENT PREPARATIONS**

* Although CRS F2F has developed such hinting SOW, the volunteer can fine-tune through her/his professional qualifications to successfully carry out this ICT based financial management system assignment.
* Prior to travel, the volunteer is advised to prepare necessary training and demonstration aids and written handouts. Softcopies of the handouts and any other paper materials can be printed for immediate use at the CRS office in Addis Ababa on request by the volunteer;
* If the volunteer requires use of simple training aids like flip charts, markers or tapes/he should make the request and collect from the CRS office in Addis Ababa prior to travel to the assignment place.
* Translation of handouts to local languages can be done at CRS or in the locality of the assignment, if required.
* Depending on the meeting places and availability of electric power and LCD projector, the volunteer may use a laptop and projector for power point presentations.

1. **KEY CONTACTS**

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| **CRS Baltimore** | **CRS East Africa Regional Office** |
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| **Host Organization** | |
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1. *Report of the 2012/2013 by the Ethiopia Central Statistics Authority (CSA)*  [↑](#footnote-ref-1)