

**Farmer to Farmer East Africa**

**Volunteer Assignment Scope of Work**

**NOTE: THIS SCOPE OF WORK AWAITING FINAL EDITS**

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| **Summary Information** | |
| Assignment Code: | UG118 |
| Country: | Uganda |
| Country Project: | Oil seed crops (soyabeans, sunflower, sesame and ground nuts) |
| Host organization: | Bukawa Area Cooperative Enterprise |
| Type of Volunteer Assistance: | **Soil conservation and fertility Management (C)** |
| Type of Value Chain Activity: | **On Farm Production (F)** |
| Preferred assignment dates: | June (critical time to prepare farmers for second season), 2017 |
| Assignment Objective: | Creating awareness and building the capacity of local farmers on soil health, and management for improved crop productivity, increased incomes and sustainable conservation of natural resources |
| Desirable Volunteer qualifications, Knowledge and Skills: | * Soil scientist with practical hands-on experience in soil conservation management practices. * Other knowledge/skill areas may include soil fertility and productivity management in tropical conditions; good field/extension experience with excellent- hands-on training and communication skills gained with mixed adult (rural) audiences (women, men, youths) |

1. **BACKGROUND**

Bukawa area cooperative enterprise is a cooperative registered by the registrar of cooperatives in Uganda in 2004. It is a secondary cooperative composed of 9 Rural Producer Organization (RPOs) with membership of between 30- 200 farmers in each RPO, operating in 2 sub counties of Nakiigo and Gombe. This is a member owned organization operating on cooperative principles. The board is comprised of 5 members who are elected at the AGM with term limit of two years per the by-laws. The management staff comprised of 4 members- manager, accounts assistant, agricultural extension staff (contracted on as basis depending on availability of training resources), and store keeper. These are responsible for the day-to-day operational activities of the organization. The main objective of the cooperative is to increase the quantity and quality of cereal crops and oilseed crops produced and bulk marketed, to increase rural household incomes for its members.

The cooperative’s major activities include; farmer mobilization to form organised farmer groups, enterprise selection and promoting the most profitable enterprise for its members, training of members in GAPs, post-harvest handling techniques, bulking and marketing of farmers’ produce, analysis and dissemination of market information, bulk purchase of Agro-inputs and rice milling. The enterprises engaged in are; maize, rice, ground nuts, soy bean and coffee- mainly for income generation and some for household food security.

Bukawa ACE has previously received volunteer technical assistance in areas of Ground nuts agronomy for improved production yields, farming as business training, Aflatoxin management in ground nuts. Farmers have made significant progress in implementation of the volunteer recommendations, however the challenge is still with soil fertility management across all enterprises to achieve improved crop productivity and profitability and for enhanced environmental conservation. This formed the basis for ACE management to request for volunteer technical assistance for a soil fertility and conservation assignment.

1. **ISSUE DESCRIPTION**.

Soil management is critical for optimum soil productivity and is therefore a key element in crop production. A major problem facing the areas already under cultivation is soil degradation and loss of soil fertility due to indiscriminate misuse of agricultural lands, forest and grazing lands. Routine crop production practices involving removing weeds, mixing soil with amendments like fertilizers, shaping the soil into rows and making furrows for irrigation and preparing the surface for seeding. These practices are associated with negative effects in relation to soil building properties. These include, among others, increased evaporation rates, increases in water runoff and soil erosion, reduction in organic matter content, reduced biological activity in the soil and increased soil compaction due to excessive grazing of animals on the same piece of land.

Farmers of Bukawa Area cooperative enterprise are no exception to the plight of farmers in Uganda. There has been a registered decline in crop yields particularly attributed to changes in climate conditions, depleted soils due to poor agronomic practices, surface run off along steep slopes, flooding along flat land scapes. The drastic climatic changes have resulted into prolonged drought periods which have exacerbated outbreak of rare pests and diseases attacking maize grains and other cereals in the region- main staples and income sources for rural poor households. All these factors have contributed to reduced crop productivity and hence reduced farm incomes and increased food insecurity in Uganda. Most of the changes leading to depletion of soil organic matter have resulted from farmers not understanding soil properties and that soil is part of a living ecosystem that needs to be cared for. Human activities such as tree cutting for charcoal and brick burning, poor cropping systems- mono cropping, excessive use of the same piece of land- which is attributed to scarce/unavailable land for cultivation resulting from rapidly growing populations.

The management and farmers of Bukawa ACE have realized the effects of poor soil management practices and poor agricultural practices on crop productivity, its negative impact on climate change, and ultimately their livelihoods- hence the request for volunteer technical assistance to help create awareness among its membership about soil health and management, covering aspects of SMART agricultural practices to revive fertility of the soil while promoting sustainable conservation practices to realize better yields and incomes for their households.

1. **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSIGNMENT**

The main objective of this volunteer assignment is to create awareness among the farmers of Bukawa ACE about soil health and its management, with emphasis on causes of soil degradation and together identify local, sustainable solutions that will help to address these challenges while improving soil fertility for improved crop production and increased incomes.

The specific activities will include technical support in the areas of but not limited to:

1. Introducing concepts about soil health and impacts of poor agricultural practices
2. Introducing concepts of a soil health management system that contribute to increase in crop productivity and profitability while conserving the environment; such concepts can include but not limited to; crop rotation/intercropping, cover cropping, minimum/zero tillage practices, mulching, nutrient management – specifically focusing on soil testing to determine suitability of soils for specific nutrients and how intercropping plays a role in helping address some of the nutrient deficiencies while providing other multiple purposes such as mulching, and weed suppression, leverage on the use of compost through a compost demonstration
3. Soil erosion control measures especially for farmers cultivating on steep slopes

The volunteer will provide training on the above-mentioned areas to selected farmer groups and for purposes of sustainability and cascading of the trainings to reach all the farmer groups, the volunteer will provide more detailed training to RPO leaders/ lead farmers and village agents who will act as ToTs. Emphasis should be placed on hands on field demonstrations at all levels- farmers learn more by doing and there is higher knowledge/information retention, given their low education levels. It is anticipated that this activity will take about 2 days for the ToT session and similar duration at each identified farmer group location.

1. **ANTICIPATED RESULTS FROM THE ASSIGNMENT**

With the implementation of volunteer recommendations; farmers will adopt simple and local solutions to addressing issues of soil fertility management, the knowledge and practices acquired will help in rebuilding lost soil ecology, soil texture, understanding of the type of fertilizers to apply after the soil testing practical demonstrations- hence lowering production costs and ultimately leading to increased crop yields and farmer household incomes. The ACE will also be able to increase the quantity of produce bulked at the warehouse and this will be a motivation to look for larger and better paying produce buyers.

The anticipated deliverables include:

* Trainings conducted and people trained
* Simple training guidelines on best soil management practices and soil testing procedures developed to facilitate future trainings
* Compost training manual developed
* Assignment related photographs
* Debriefing with USAID and in country group presentations after assignment
* Field trip report and expense report
* Outreach activity, press release or a media event back in US

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

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| Day | Activity |
| Day 1: | Travel from home to US international airport |
| Day 2 | Arrival at Uganda Entebbe Airport, picked by hotel shuttle to Kampala and check in at Fairway Hotel. |
| Day 3 | At 9.00 am the volunteer is greeted at the hotel by CRS staff and thereafter taken to CRS office for briefing and finalise with logistics. Any necessary training materials will be printed at CRS offices before travel to the field. |
| Day 4 | Travel to Iganga district to commence the assignment. |
| Day 5 | In the morning CRS introduces the volunteer to Bukawa ACE management team and board members.  Together with CRS and the management, the volunteer will review the SOW and develop the action plan. The host will give an update on previous volunteer assignments and farmer adoption of best practices.  In the afternoon, visit some of selected farmer fields to familiarise with current farming practices and soil fertility challenges. |
| Days 6-7 | Train selected ToTs and RPO leaders on all areas above, giving appropriate recommendations |
| Day 8- 16 | Training selected RPO representatives on all topics above |
| Day 17 | Wrap up meetings, whilst emphasizing key concepts of the assignment. Participants evaluate the training, together with the volunteer review the training guide and its implementation for refresher and future trainings.  Discussion of assignment recommendations and develop an action plan |
| Day 18 | Travel back to Kampala |
| Day 19 | Debriefing at CRS office with USAID Mission and CRS staff.  Volunteer finalizes his/her reporting at CRS office and fill out all necessary M&E forms as well as finalise liquidations with finance. |
| Day 20 | Depart for the US |
| TBD | Outreach event in the US |

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

In Kampala, the volunteer will stay at Fairway Hotel & Spa (www.fairwayhotel.co.ug). While in Iganga, the volunteer will stay at Hotel Continental or Mum Resort based on volunteer preference. Both hotels have running water and electricity with expected power fluctuations.

CRS will pay for hotel accommodation, and provide the volunteer with per diems to cater for meals and other incidentals. The volunteer will get an advance, which will have to be cleared before departing from Uganda. For more information, please refer to the country information that will be provided.

**Host contribution** – The management of Bukawa ACE has committed to mobilize the RPO members to attend the trainings and identification of potential village agents and lead farmers who will act as ToTs to support with cascading trainings to reach farmer groups not accessed by the volunteer. The host will also avail one key personnel to work closely with the volunteer and conduct translations, during the preparations and actual trainings, to ensure that key staff and farmers are trained and will continue training other farmers even after the assignment is completed.

1. **RECOMMENDED ASSIGNMENT PREPARATION**

* The volunteer should prepare materials for hand-outs, which can be printed at CRS office in Kampala before commencement of the assignment. Flip charts, markers, masking tapes can be obtained at CRS offices in case the volunteer wishes to make some illustrations. Depending on the training venue the volunteer may use a laptop and projector for power point presentations. However if the training venue is in the community, it will be difficult to use PowerPoint. In this case the volunteer will be expected to prepare training materials and have hand-outs printed at CRS offices for distribution to the participants.
* CRS strongly recommends that the volunteer becomes familiar with the oil seed crops country project description prior to arrival in the country as well as country information that will be provided.
* Knowledge on land management practices and soil types and acceptable pesticides use in Uganda or developing countries, in general, is also advised.

1. **KEY CONTACTS**

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