



To express interest in this assignment please email [mireille.ngokion@crs.org](mailto:mireille.ngokion@crs.org)

**Farmer to Farmer Benin  
Volunteer Assignment Scope of Work**

Summary Information	
Assignment Code	<b>BJ202</b>
Country	Benin
Country Project	Cashew subsector
Host Organization	URPA Oueme-Plateau
Type of Volunteer Assistance	<b>Organizational Development (O)</b>
Type of Value Chain Activity	<b>Information and Input support services (S)</b>
Assignment Title	Strategic plan designing
Assignment preferred dates	March 2019
Objectives of the assignment	Contribute to the design of URPA Oueme-Plateau’s strategic plan
Desired volunteer skill/expertise	Skills and working experiences in strategic plan designing, organizational capacity reinforcement, farming management

**A. BACKGROUND**

The Regional Union of Cashew Producers of Ouémé-Plateau (URPA-OP) is a Cooperative Society with Board of Directors (COOP / CA) created on March 12, 2013 but officially registered on May 03<sup>rd</sup>, 2018 in compliance with the Uniform Act of the Organization for the Harmonization of African Business Law (OHADA) on the law of Cooperative Societies. It comprised of two founding members that are the

Common Unions of Cashew Producers (UCPA) of the communes of Kétou and Adja-Ouèrè which include eighteen (18) Village Cooperative of Cashew Producers (CVPA).

The URPA Oueme-Plateau network covers 599 members, including 472 men and 127 women with an area of 1225.25 hectares of cashew trees in production. The URPA-OP is endowed by FENAPAB with a technical staff. This staff consists of a coordinator, an office secretary and an agricultural advisor. Its main mission is to boost cashew production at regional level by providing advice to producers, setting up quality plant material, adapted production tools and organizing the marketing of raw cashew nuts through group sales system.

The Regional Union of Cashew Producers of Ouémé and Plateau (URPA / OP) is a service cooperative for the benefit of UCPA members. Its purpose is to:

- represent the cashew producers of Ouémé and Plateau at the local, national, sub-regional and international levels towards the public authorities and partners;
- defend the material, financial and moral interests of its members;
- coordinate the activities of the UCPA members;
- support cashew producers to develop professionalism in their organizations;
- provide technical assistance to cashew farmers through their activities;
- organize exchange experiences trips for the benefit of the cashew farmers;
- support the implementation of the policy of promotion of the cashew subsector at the local level;
- facilitate access to credits to the members;
- facilitate access to technical support for cashew nut producers;
- facilitate supply of specific inputs to cashew nut producers;
- contribute to build the organizational and management capacity of the members;
- seek partners and funding for the development of cashew farmers' activities;
- develop an information and communication system on the activities of the Union;
- look for outlets for cashew nuts selling;
- encourage all initiatives contributing to the development of the sector and the improvement of the living and working conditions of the producers members;
- lobby and advocate towards the partners.
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During the 2017-2018 marketing year, the URPA Oueme-Plateau sold 140.329 tons of cashew nuts in a grouped system.

## **B. ISSUE DESCRIPTION**

The URPA Oueme Plateau is the only one in the country and in the cashew subsector that has no donor supporting them. In addition, it is the one recently officially registered and is at the beginning of the services delivering to the members.

Among the difficulties they have, some are listed below:

- inexistence of a strategic plan for the Union;
- lack of partners to support the organization;

- delay in the official launch of the group sale;
- insufficiency / lack of materials and equipment (jute bags, tricycles, GPS);
- absence of woods park;
- lack of nurserymen trained in improved techniques of grafting and lack of adequate equipment (lack of drilling, shade, etc.) for the success of this activity;
- Inorganization of nurserymen.

Some of their needs are the following:

- Strategic Development Plan;
- Training of the technical agents and the farmers on the rehabilitation of plantations techniques,
- Installation of wood parks, pest and disease management;
- Training on project proposal designing and fundraising,
- Training on grafting techniques.

### **C. OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSIGNMENT**

The main objective of this assignment is to help the URPA OP to design their five-year strategic plan.

The assignment is intended to:

- Explore all the components and the activities of the Union
- Make an organizational and institutional diagnosis of the Union,
- Help to define the vision, mission of the Union,
- Help to define the strategic objectives,
- Help to define and plan all the required activities to be carried out over the next five years that will help them to achieve goals,
- Help to draft a budget for all the required activities
- Help to design the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms of the strategic plan

### **D. HOST CONTRIBUTION**

The contribution of the URPA OP to this assignment will consist of mobilizing, supporting the commuting, the lodging and the feeding fees of the participants to the diagnosis and validation sessions. In addition, the URPA OP promises to take in charge the roundtrip commuting of the volunteer from his or her hotel to its headquarters every day.

### **E. ANTICIPATED RESULTS FROM THE ASSIGNMENT**

With volunteer technical assistance, all the decision-making process of the URPA-OP will greatly be improved as well as the fundraising activities. In addition, the strategic plan will help them to improve the adhesion of other farmers and to expand their activities to other communes like Adjohoun, Bonou, etc. In addition, this technical assistance will be useful for improving cashew nuts group sales as well as increasing the market part from 5% to 20%

### **F. DELIVERABLES**

The deliverables expected from this assignment are the follows:

- Finalize the organizational and institutional diagnosis of URPA,
- Finalize the five years strategic of the URPA,
- Finalize the monitoring and evaluation guide for the strategic implementation,
- Debriefing with USAID and in country staff after assignment
- Provide activity report

#### G. SCHEDULE OF VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES IN COUNTRY (DRAFT)

Day	Activity
Day 1	Travel from home to US international airport
Day 2	Arrival at Benin International Airport, picked up and check in at Livingstone Hotel.
Day 3	At 9.00 am, the volunteer is greeted at the hotel by CRS staff and thereafter go to CRS office for introductions and orientations (briefings including host brief), logistics and expectations and anticipated outcomes. Any necessary hand-outs will be prepared at CRS offices and Travel to Ketou and check in The Residence Celines Hotel. CRS Benin F2F team introduces the volunteer to URPA's staff and the administrative board.
Day 4	The volunteer will review and finalise the work-plan and discuss with them on any other arrangement for the work
Days 5	Visit to the Communal Union of the cashew producers
Day 6-8	Conducting diagnosis activities
Day 9-10	Drafting the diagnosis report
Day 11	Presentation of the diagnosis report and collecting inputs from the participants
Day 12	Revise vision, mission and strategic objectives
Day 13-14	Define results, activities and indicators
Day 15-16	Design a budget and the M&E guide
Day 17	Strategic plan validation
Day 18-19	Strategic plan finalizing
Day 20	Wrap up the meetings with URPA's representatives, debriefing with CRS Benin F2F staff, actions plan and recommendations review and travel back to Cotonou
Day 21	Debriefing at CRS office with USAID Mission and CRS staff. Volunteer will finalize his/her reporting at CRS office and fill out all necessary M&E forms as well finalize advances and expenditures with finance
Day 22	Depart for USA
TBD	Outreach event in the US

## **H. DESIRABLE VOLUNTEERS SKILLS**

As described above, the ideal volunteer for this assignment will have relevant professional skills and practical experiences in strategic plan designing. Especially, he or she must be an:

- Expert in organizational and institutional diagnosis making,
- Expert in development planning and budgeting,
- Experienced in M&E mechanisms of strategic plan
- Results oriented
- Working experience in the cashew subsector is an asset

## **I. ACCOMMODATION AND OTHER IN-COUNTRY LOGISTICS**

In Cotonou, the volunteer will stay at Livingstone Hotel, whereas at Ketou, the volunteer will stay at the Residence Celines Hotel. CRS will pay for hotel accommodation and provide volunteer with per diems to cater for meals and other incidentals. In addition, a local network SIM card will be provided to the volunteer as well as a spare computer if needed at his or her arrival in Cotonou. In Ketou, CRS may hire a local translator for the volunteer's work and The URPA will contribute to the volunteer's commuting as well as mobilizing and supporting its members for the required sessions. Mr. Alphonse Hodonou Dekounde who is the president of the administrative board of the Union and Mr. Romaric Dessou, the Coordinator of the Union, will work closely with the volunteer during the preparations and his/her work to ensure that the assignment goals are being achieved.

## **J. RECOMMENDED ASSIGNMENT PREPARATIONS**

### **1. Training Materials**

The volunteer should prepare handout materials which can be printed at CRS office in Benin. Flip charts, markers, and masking tape can be obtained at the CRS offices in case the volunteer requires it for their sessions.

### **2. Working Environment**

The URPA Oueme-Plateau is headquartered in Ketou, an area very close to Nigeria Federal Republic. The Nigerian border is at about 17 km. Ketou is also at 150 km from Cotonou, the biggest city of Benin and at 100 km from Porto-Novo, the capital of Benin. People of Ketou are mostly Christian and some are Muslim but all of them are well involved in indigenous religions. It is an area where the indigenous ceremonies to worship the 'revenants' are vibrant and with many freedom restrictions mainly for women during the period of August. The main language is Nagot. People are open to collaborate with foreigners.

### **3. Recommended Reading**

The volunteer may read some documents on cashew plantations and cashew nut marketing.

### **4. Weather Appropriate Clothing**

The weather appropriate clothing is light and not dark clothes. In the south of Benin, the weather is a bit hot and humid with some temperatures varying between 23 to 36 Celsius degree. It is also a sunny weather with some rains fall from March.

**K. KEY CONTACTS**

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<p><b>Host Organization:</b></p>	
<p>Mr Alphonse Hondonou Dekounde  President of the Administrative board of URPA  Oueme and Plateau  Tel: 65145527 or 91678749</p>	<p>Mr Romaric Desou  Coordinator of the URPA Oueme and Plateau  Tel: 95532378 or 96175578  Email: <a href="mailto:romaricdessou@gmail.com">romaricdessou@gmail.com</a></p>