

**CRS Farmer to Farmer Program**

**Volunteer Assignment Scope of Work**

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| **Summary Information** |
| **Assignment Code** | **UG204** |
| Country | Uganda  |
| Country Project | Agribusiness Country Project  |
| Host Organization | Rwenzori Farmer’s Cooperative Union (RFCU) |
| Assignment Title | Market Analysis and Strategy development  |
| Assignment preferred dates | March – April, 2019 |
| Objectives of the assignment | To conduct a detailed market analysis and provide a road map for RFCU for addressing existing marketing challenges and tap into international fair-trade markets for its products (Coffee and Cocoa) |
| Desired volunteer skill/expertise | * Marketing specialist with agribusiness experience and understanding of pre-requisites for accessing fair trade markets for cocoa, coffee and vanilla
* Adult literacy and facilitation skills
* Good communication skills
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| Type of Volunteer Assistance | Business/Enterprise Development (E) |
| Type of Value Chain Activity | Marketing (M) |
| PERSUAP Classification | Type IV |

1. **BACKGROUND**

CRS Farmer -to-Farmer program (F2F) is a USAID funded program that will be implemented for five years (2019- 2023) with a primary goal of reducing hunger, malnutrition, and poverty across six countries: Benin, East Timor, Ethiopia, Nepal, Rwanda and Uganda. The program aims at achieving this goal through advancing inclusive and sustainable agriculture led growth aimed at generating sustainable, broad-based economic growth in the agricultural sector. The program’s secondary goal is to increase US public understanding of international development issues and programs and share the knowledge back in the US. To achieve its goals, F2F program provides volunteer technical assistance to farmers and farmer groups (associations and cooperatives), private agribusinesses, agriculture education institutions in developing countries like Uganda to address host identified technical needs in selected agricultural value chains. F2F volunteers are pooled from abroad range of US agricultural expertise, from private farmers with varied experience, University professors, bankers/certified accountants, animal health and nutrition specialists, soil scientists, agronomists who support local host organisations F2F program introduces innovation and develops local organisations capacity for more productive, profitable, sustainable and equitable agricultural systems while providing an opportunity for people- to-people interactions within the agricultural sector. In Uganda F2F program will focus its technical interventions in the livestock and agribusiness value chains

Rwenzori Farmers’ Cooperative Union (RFCU) is an umbrella organization consisting of 14 primary cooperative societies from the districts of Kasese, Bundibugyo, Ntoroko and Kabarole all in Rwenzori region. It is a member-owned cooperative union limited by shared capital and jointly owned by 2500 registered smallholder farmers who grow vanilla, coffee and cocoa in the 4 districts mentioned above. These farmers grow and trade their vanilla and other commodities under RFCU, which is fair-trade, registered and certified to trade in high quality organic vanilla, coffee and cocoa. The union has developed high value, Fairtrade market relationships for the two new crops.

The overall strength of RFCU has been in acquired grants, few business relationships, loan services, and new products (Coffee and cocoa) which however need to be branded to be successful over time. RFCU has had fluctuations in the incomes from its Fairtrade sales, member levies and Fairtrade premium payments especially for the vanilla which is stolen right from the field before maturity forcing farmers to sell immature vanilla fetching low prices. It is therefore important to ensure that the success of RFCU as a business entity is guided by a strong and well-developed marketing strategy to guide its operations in terms of relationships, strategy, product management, field marketing and a persuasive engagement to sell its products through online marketing channels.

1. **ISSUE DESCRIPTION**

Farmer Cooperatives /Unions play a significant role in a country’s economic development, especially in rural areas where absence of large spending power does not attract private investment to harness local skills and resources that can uplift the local economy living standards besides exporting produce to distant customer locations in cities. Farmers Cooperatives enable consolidation of fragmented land, investment in mechanization and irrigation, better bargaining power to buy seeds and fertilizers at subsidized prices, bulk larger produce volumes, arrange for proper common storage and greater bargaining power in selling farm produce to traders which also makes banks comfortable in providing agricultural credit, thereby improving the productivity of agriculture and improving the incomes of cooperative members. However, to achieve these good benefits, farmer cooperative/unions must operate like profitable business entities and this involves providing quality goods and services in a way that supports effective and efficient business operations. Achieving profitability of business operations requires developing robust marketing strategies through a well conducted market analysis and understanding of who existing competitors are, product quality specifications to meet changing consumer needs, and pre-requisites for accessing international markets- certifications become key either fair trade or organic certifications to have local products access the export markets and for the cooperatives/unions to benefit from associated benefits.

RFCU currently produces and markets three crops- Vanilla, Coffee and Cocoa, however volumes of vanilla have been heavily reduced due to ever increasing thefts. The failure to raise required volumes for the buyer has frustrated both the union and Ndali (vanilla buyer). This has resulted into price, revenue and premium fluctuations. As a coping strategy, RFCU is strengthening its activities in coffee and cocoa- increasing production volumes, in 2017 the union bulked 40 and 25 metric tons of coffee and cocoa respectively with a potential to produce four times more depending on market availability and demands. Currently, the union is struggling to strengthen its sustainability amidst the challenges and widening the market base for coffee and cocoa requires an understanding of the market, who are the current producers/competitors, buyers (existing markets local, regional and international markets), product specifications and standards for accessing those markets. And the use of such information to design a robust market strategy with an implementation plan will be an essential tool for RFCU in achieving its objective. As a fair-trade certified organization – the goal is to widen market access for fair trade certified products, beyond local and regional markets.

1. **OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSIGNMENT**

The main objectiveof this volunteer assignment is toconduct a detailed market analysis of the coffee and cocoa value chains and provide a road map for RFCU to address existing marketing challenges and tap into regional and international fair-trade markets for its products.

**Specific assignment objectives are:**

* An assessment of the current players and their roles in the coffee and cocoa market chain
* What are some of the potential markets – especially international markets that RFCU can tap into – what are the specific requirements in terms product specifications, product branding and packaging for local/regional and international markets, certification requirements for RFCU to better position its self.
* Highlight and provide in depth discussions around fair trade markets for cocoa and coffee
* Train RFCU board and management on how to develop a marketing strategy
* Work with the RFCU board and management team to develop a marketing strategy that promotes the penetration of its products to new markets and a road map for addressing marketing challenges, hows of discovering and maintaining sustainable and attractive markets relationships
1. **ANTICIPATED RESULTS FROM THE ASSIGNMENT**

 Through this volunteer assignment and the host adoption and implementation of the volunteer recommendations, its anticipated that the union will be able to establish new relationships with diversified pool of buyers – local, regional and international buyers, have a better understanding of market product requirements in terms of quality and volumes and work with the primary cooperatives to improve product quality, maintain profitable and long-term relationships with buyers, better bargaining power for better prices resulting into increased incomes at farmer level.

1. **HOST CONTRIBUTION**

RFCU has committed to mobilize its staff and board members to attend the trainings conducted by the volunteer and participate in the marketing strategy training and development process. RFCU will avail one key personnel to work closely with the volunteer during the preparations and actual trainings and ensure that the volunteer accesses relevant information needed for the assignment.

1. **DELIVERABLES**
2. Volunteer assignment final report due BEFORE departure
3. Group presentation with local stakeholders at the end of the assignment
4. A finalized marketing strategy for RFCU
5. Training attendance lists
6. Debriefing at CRS office
7. Assignment related photos
8. **SCHEDULE OF VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES IN ETHIOPIA**

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| Day | Activity |
| Day 1 | Arrival at Uganda Entebbe Airport picked by Fairway Hotel shuttle to Kampala and check in at Hotel |
| Day 2 | Volunteer will be met at Fairway Hotel by CRS staff and there after travel to the CRS office in Kampala for briefing meeting with F2 F team, Vanilla and Coffee PM, HOP Any assignment preparations desired before field travel will be done then. |
| Day 3 | Travel to Kasese |
| Day 4 | Meeting with RFCU management in Kasese to plan for the assignment and finalize with assignment scheduleIn the afternoon, have an orientation of RFCU activities and processes related to produce bulking and marketing, existing market linkages and market structures in place |
| Day 5- 6 | Volunteer interaction with RFCU – current buyers (Ndali and any others), at least 2 primary cooperatives dealing in all three crops, processors if any and other key value chain actors with in Kasese region. The volunteer will conduct a SWOT analysis for each to provide opportunities that can be tapped into by RFCU |
| Days 7-8 | Training of RFCU staff and board members on market analysis/assessment processes, and how to develop a marketing plan. The volunteer can tailor these sessions in a more appropriate manner to facilitate a participatory approach throughout the entire process |
| Day 9-11 | Volunteer work with key staff from RFCU to start developing the marketing plan/strategy |
| Day 12 | Presentation of draft plan/strategy to senior management and selected board members for review/comments/feedback.  |
| Day 13 | Volunteer finalizes with the final plan/strategy, including all key components as per host request. Discussion of the implementation plan and developing an action plan. Key participants: Board members and Management teams  |
| Day 14 | Volunteer travels back to Kampala |
| Day 15 | Debriefing meeting with F2F team, HOP and USAID representative |
| Day16 | Travel back to US |
| **Note**: ***This is a draft schedule that will be finalized based on volunteer actual dates of availability, Sundays are typical rest days and working on Saturday is, per the host’s request*** |

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

In Kampala, the volunteer will stay at Fairway Hotel & Spa (www.fairwayhotel.co.ug).In Kasese, the volunteer will stay at Santon Hotel which is located with in Kasese town. The volunteer will mostly work with staff and board at RFCU offices which are with in Kasese town, less than a Kilometer drive on Mbarara road.

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

1. **RECOMMENDED ASSIGNMENT PREPARATIONS**

The volunteer should prepare materials for hand out 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.

CRS strongly recommends that the volunteer becomes familiar with Uganda’s agriculture sector plans and priorities, the agribusiness country project and fair-trade market channels for Ugandan agricultural commodities. Details on weather, security and appropriate clothing are included in the country visitor’s information pack.

1. **KEY CONTACTS**

**To express interest in this assignment, please email the CRS Baltimore contact listed below. To find out additional information about the host, issue description or field conditions, please email the country contact provided below, copying the CRS Baltimore contact**.

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| **Host Organization:** |
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