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**To express interest in this assignment please email [maria.figueroa@crs.org](mailto:maria.figueroa@crs.org)  
CRS Farmer to Farmer Program  
Volunteer Assignment Scope of Work**

Summary Information	
Assignment Code	BJ277
Country	Benin
Country Project	Soybean
Host Organization	Association for Fight against Illiteracy in Benin (ALCA-Benin)
Assignment Title	Ecological cropping systems and improved technologies for pineapple production
Assignment dates	January 2022
Objectives of the assignment	<p>Strengthen the capacities of pineapple farmers on the agroecological production of fresh pineapples. Specifically, this assignment will be about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Training the participants on the good agroecological production practices including integrated soil fertility and pest management in pineapple production</li> <li>- Helping participant to access the characteristics of productive cropping system with less impact on the environment through guidelines on farm design</li> <li>- Training participants on production standards and minimum quality requirements for export (sizing, maturity, color, etc...)</li> <li>- Conduction practical demonstrations of some technics discussed.</li> </ul>
Desired volunteer skill/expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agronomist with hands on experience in pineapple (or similar crops) cropping systems in tropical zones</li> <li>- Specialist in crop production, soil fertility management and integrated pest management</li> <li>- Ability to train adults, especially farmers with low education level</li> </ul> <p>Familiar to participatory approaches</p>
Type of Volunteer Assistance	Technology Transfer =T
Type of Value Chain Activity	Farm Production = F
PERSUAP Classification <sup>1</sup>	II

<sup>1</sup> USAID precisely classifies PERSUAP in four categories; **PERSUAP Type I** assignments directly related to pesticides

## **A. BACKGROUND**

The "Farmer-to-Farmer" (F2F) program is an American initiative that provides technical assistance from highly qualified volunteers to farmers, farmer groups (cooperatives and associations), agribusinesses, research institutes and other organizations in the agricultural sector in developing countries and countries in transition. The supports are usually provided by American volunteers but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, currently, the missions are carried out by pairs of volunteers; a volunteer recruited locally and an American volunteer. F2F project has been implemented in Benin since September 2018 by CRS, to support the cashew and soybean value chains over 5 years, both approved by the USAID mission in Benin.

ALCA-Benin is a Nongovernmental Organization (NGO) created in 2004 with its head office in Porto-Novo. It works to support community members, mostly farmers, with no or little education and have developed economic activities. ALCA-Benin's activities include education of Professional Agricultural Organizations (OPA) members to improve their activities and to guarantee better livelihoods, helping OPA and young people to design and execute income-generating activities, and supporting the promotion of agricultural value chains. ALCA-Benin also informs, educates, and communicates on climate and environmental issues. In the pineapple value chain, ALCA-Benin works with farmers from the current main pineapple production area including the communes of Zè, Allada, Toffo, and Tori-Bossito. The services provided to these farmers aim to improve and disseminate cropping practices in order to increase production and incomes. ALCA-Benin, in its support to farmers, has difficulties reaching many farmers in different production areas and therefore could not develop all the necessary basic training or good agricultural practices (GAP) package.

## **B. ISSUE DESCRIPTION**

As climate-related issues are becoming more relevant, leading to reduction in yields in pineapples, it has become important to train farmers on best ecological crop production practices for adaptation and mitigation of climate change issues. Many farmers desire to export their product and access better markets but cannot. This is due to the difficulties they face in complying with required standards, owing to the production conditions and practices that are not respectful of the environment, which also contribute to poor quality and low yields. As an example, fresh pineapple from a conventional cropping system rot faster after harvesting compared to organically produced crop. Conventional production practices also heavily lead to soil and environmental degradation. Farmers have difficulties in observing or applying ecological cropping practices as they lack awareness of those practices to control their production environment. Also, the lack of support from qualified technicians leads to ignorance of production methods and techniques that respect agroecological principles.

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

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recommendations, **Type II** as assignments indirectly related with pesticides, **Type III** assignments related to curriculum review and designing, business plan development and strategies development and **Type IV** as assignments associated with other USAID projects and collaborators.

The main objective of this mission is to strengthen the capacities of pineapple farmers in the agroecological production of fresh pineapple. Specifically, this assignment will be about:

- Training the participants on the good agroecological production practices including integrated soil fertility and pest management in pineapple production
- Helping participant to access the characteristics of productive cropping system with less impact on the environment through guidelines on farm design
- Training participants on production standards and minimum quality requirements for export (sizing, maturity, color, etc...)
- Conduction practical demonstrations of some technics discussed.

#### **D. HOST CONTRIBUTION**

With the support of the ATDA's (Territorial Agencies for Agricultural Development) Communal Cells of Allada and Tori-Bossito, ALCA-Benin will provide training hall and materials for this assignment. The host will also mobilize and support the commuting, lodging and feeding of the participants to the training sessions.

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

After this assignment, pineapple producers trained will have more knowledge of the best agroecological production practices to develop in pineapple production. This will improve the quality of fresh pineapple producers for national and regional markets. Also, the application of the technics by the farmers will participate in environmental protection by reducing soil degradation and environmental pollution with chemical products. Participants will pass on the technics to other farmers in the area.

#### **F. DELIVERABLES**

1. Vol final report due BEFORE departure
2. Group presentation with local stakeholders at the end of the assignment in country
3. Volunteer outreach activities in the US and in country
4. Training manuals,
5. Debriefing with F2F and USAID local Mission

#### **G. SCHEDULE OF VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES**

Days	Activities
Day 1	Volunteer's welcome and orientation at CRS office in Cotonou and signing of administrative documents Travel to Porto Novo and Introduction of the volunteer to the host organization by CRS Benin F2F team. The volunteer will review and finalize the work-plan and discuss any other arrangement for the work
Day 2	Travel to Allada and checking at Hotel Make a quick diagnosis and SWOT analysis with farmers to better understand issues and difficulties

Day 3 to 6	Hold training sessions at Allada and discuss guidelines on organic pineapple production with participants
Day 7	Travel to Tori Bossito and checking at Hotel
Day 8 to 11	Hold training sessions at Tori-Bossito and and discuss guidelines on organic pineapple production with participants
Day 12-13	Write a guideline on organic pineapple production based on the farmers knowledge and resources and information from the training session to be shared with the host organization for other farmers, Report
Day 14	Debriefing with CRS Benin F2F staff and host organization

## H. DESIRABLE VOLUNTEERS SKILLS

The desired volunteer for this assignment should be/have:

- An Agronomist with hand experience in vegetable cropping systems in tropical zones
- Specialist in crop production, soil management, integrated pest management,
- Experience in ecological farming systems development
- Have the ability to train adults, especially farmers with low education level
- Familiar to participatory approaches.
- Experience with the pineapple production will be an asset

## I. ACCOMMODATION AND ANOTHER IN-COUNTRY LOGISTICS

The volunteer will work in the communes of Allada and Tori-Bossito in the southern part of Benin. The work will be done in the town center of the municipality. There are hotels in the localities where the volunteer will be accommodated. F2F will pay for accommodation as well as volunteers transportation from Allada to Tori-Bossito.

## J. RECOMMENDED ASSIGNMENT PREPARATIONS

### ▪ Targeted Trainees' Description

Participants in this training will be made up of members of the Pineapple Producers Cooperatives of Allada (30) and Tori Bossito (30). Some have a minimum of primary or secondary educational level and others are illiterate. Most of them they can read and write in French or in local language Fongbé

### ▪ Training Materials

The volunteer should prepare documents that can be printed at the CRS office prior to travel. Flipcharts, markers, masking tapes can be obtained from CRS offices in case the volunteer wishes to do illustrations. For PowerPoint presentations, ALCA-BENIN can provide a video projector.

### ▪ Electricity, internet, cellphone signal, key security, health issues

In general, electricity supply, internet connectivity and cellphone signal are stable in Benin's towns. The hotels and the training venue have stable access to electricity and internet connectivity even though the

internet becomes very weak sometimes outside Cotonou. The cellphone reception is good for both mobile networks (MTN and Moov) available in the country.

About security, even though the security level in Benin and in the area of assignment is high, the volunteer will be instructed about security measures and safeguard before going to the host organization. It is advised that volunteer take necessary precautions like coming along with their usual medicines, to prevent health issues.

- **Working Environment and culture**

The locality is located in southern Benin, about 35 km from Cotonou. In these two communes, Fongbé is the dominant local language. One can record other spoken languages such as Tori, and people are Christians, Muslims and Animists. The people there are very nice and respectful, especially towards foreigners; they are social and open to collaboration with strangers.

- **Recommended Reading**

CRS strongly recommends that the volunteer become familiar with this SOW, read the documents on ecological and environmental production techniques, quality production characteristics, current pineapple production system in Benin. The volunteer can read materials on pineapple markets in Africa and processing and sales activities. CRS also strongly recommends that the volunteer access the F2F digital library [CRS' F2F Digital Resource Library](#) for resources available on agroecological production technics.

## **K. REMOTE/LOCAL VOLUNTEER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Both volunteers participate in a call to discuss objectives and collaboration approach at the start of the assignment. Collaboration platforms vary depending on the assignment and connectivity. The most frequently used platforms are MS Teams and WhatsApp. The volunteers are highly encouraged to visit [CRS' F2F Digital Resource Library](#), and search for resources that they could use or customize for training. Upon completion of your assignment, volunteers are requested to send any resources they would like to contribute to the library (whether created or found) to [farmertofarmer@crs.org](mailto:farmertofarmer@crs.org).

The local volunteer is responsible for assignment design, preparation, training, developing assignment reports, conducting action planning with hosts and outreach in country, and achieving the assignment objectives. The local volunteer works directly with the host with assistance/input from the US volunteer. Assignments usually last up to 2 weeks; Sometimes extending beyond two weeks due to pending follow up visits, emails etc. Local Volunteers are asked to track assignment hours per day, to stay under 112 hours (14 days x 8 hrs).

Virtual support from a paired US volunteer helps provide supplementary training resources, fill in the gaps for technical areas, and share creative ideas and solutions. Two specific responsibilities are to: (i) complete the outreach component of the assignment and (ii) support the in-country volunteer as needed. US Volunteers typically put in 4-8 hours per week, depending on the nature of the assignment and collaboration.

## L. 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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