



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



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**CRS Farmer to Farmer Program  
Volunteer Assignment Scope of Work**

Summary Information	
Assignment Code	BJ283
Country	Benin
Country Project	Cashew
Host Organization	Agbara Oluwa
Assignment Title	Business linkages between farmers and processing unit for cashew apple supply
Assignment preferred dates	Last week of February 2022
Objectives of the assignment	Improve Agbara-Oluwa's cashew apple supply system: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Enhance farmers and farmers' groups knowledge on the importance of cashew apples, the quality of apples sought by processing units, and the techniques for collecting quality apples;</li><li>- Help the cooperative to improve and formalize its partnership with farmers' groups by evaluating and addressing the issues in the partnership;</li><li>- Evaluate weekly cashew apples demand of processing cooperative, and weekly supply capacities of farmers and farmers' groups;</li><li>- Provide supply management tools and train the Agbara's dedicated staff on its use</li></ul>
Desired volunteer skill/expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Business advisor and business development expert</li><li>- Expert in the agricultural supply chains</li><li>- Solid experiences in linking companies and farmers</li><li>- Experience with cashew products (apple and/or raw nuts) is an asset</li><li>- Abilities to train and work with cashew farmers</li><li>- Speak the local languages of the department of hills (an asset for the local volunteer)</li></ul>
Type of Volunteer Assistance	Business Development
Type of Value Chain Activity	S

PERSUAP Classification <sup>1</sup>	III
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## 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.

Agbara-Oluwa women cooperative processes cashew apple (mainly) and other agricultural products into juice. It is made up of 17 members and is a member of the Union of Cashew Apple Processing Cooperatives of Benin. Installed in the commune of Dassa-Zoume (in the center of Benin), Agbara-Oluwa has been operating since 2013 and its flagship product is cashew apple juice. Other products are pineapple, ginger, baobab and tamarind juices. Its cashew apple juice is also consumed in some countries of the sub-region such as Niger, Burkina-Faso, and Togo, and there has been an increase in demand in the domestic market. The cooperative's current turnover, after the relaunch following the COVID-19 pandemic, is approximately \$45,000 annually and produces at least 25,000 bottles of apple juice, which is about 20 tons of processed cashew apples; and with its other juices, the cooperative reaches 500,000 bottles of juice annually. It also produces other products derived from the cashew apple such as spirits and is currently planning to start producing biscuits with cashew apple flour. The host is actively promoting the benefits of cashew apple juice consumption to Beninese consumers.

## B. ISSUE DESCRIPTION

Cashew apple is abundant in cashew growing areas but also highly perishable. The processing units are therefore looking for suppliers of cashew apples of high quality and large volumes to meet their juice production demands. Since farmers do not value or care about apples, it is sometimes difficult for processing units to access quantity and quality of apples readily. Since transportation is expensive and degrades the quality of apples from the fields, it is important for units to ensure adequate cashew apple supplies in their coverage area.

For its supply, Agbara-Oluwa buys from cashew farmers, but they are unable to honor commitments in terms of quality and quantity. Despite the large quantity of apples available during the production season, the cooperative sometimes lacks raw material for processing. For this year's campaign, which has just started, the cooperative has planned to produce 200,000 bottles of apple juice, which correspond to more than 160 tons of cashew apples to be processed. Currently they have produced just 12,000 bottles of cashew apple juice while the mean production period in their area will end in less than three months. The cooperative therefore faces difficulties in the supply while they would like to ensure during the key period of abundant production. Its partnership approaches with farmers do not really succeed due to the fact that farmers do not attach importance to apples and the few who manage to supply the cooperative do not offer

<sup>1</sup> USAID precisely classifies PERSUAP in four categories; **PERSUAP Type I** assignments directly related to pesticides recommendations, **Type II** as assignments with 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.

quality apples. These apple supplies are mostly and predominantly made by children and some women and not considered by men (mostly owners of the plantations). In addition, the cooperative members are semi-literate and illiterate women, who lack knowledge and skills to appropriately and successfully partner and work with farmers' groups. They also do not have a supply chain manager.

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

The objective main of this assignment is to Improve Agbara-Oluwa's cashew apple supply system. Specifically, this assignment is going to:

- Enhance farmers and farmers' groups knowledge on the importance of cashew apples, the quality of apples sought by processing units, and the techniques for collecting quality apples;
- Help the cooperative to improve and formalize its partnership with farmers' groups by evaluating and addressing the issues in the partnership;
- Evaluate weekly cashew apples demand of processing cooperative, and weekly supply capacities of farmers and farmers' groups;
- Provide supply management tools and train the Agbara-Oluwa's dedicated staff on its use

The volunteer will ensure with the cooperative the timely delivery of the first quantities of cashew apple by the linked farmers.

### **D. HOST CONTRIBUTION**

The contribution of Agbara-Oluwa to this assignment will consist of mobilizing a team that will work closely with the volunteer to reach farmers. The host will support the commuting, transportation and the feeding fees of the team that will work with the volunteer.

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

Through this assignment at least five staff of Agbara-Oluwa and 80 farmers are reinforced in cashew apple supply system. Also, farmers will know more about the quality apple to offer and how to get that quality to operationalize the partnership with the host and other units. These farmers will also get additional income from their sales of cashew apple. Agbara-Oluwa will ensure the production of its targeted cashew apple juice quantity for this and future production campaign.

### **F. DELIVERABLES**

1. Volunteer's final report due BEFORE departure
2. Draft contracts agreement for Agbara-Oluwa and potential cashew apple suppliers
3. Group presentation with local stakeholders at the end of the assignment in country
4. Volunteer outreach activities in the US and in country
5. Staff Training Manuals, list of farmers and farmers' groups linked, format of contract proposed

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

<b>Days (not dates)</b>	<b>Activity</b>
Day1	Volunteer welcome and orientation at CRS office in Cotonou and signing of administrative documents.

	Travel to Dassa-Zoume and check-in at Jeco Hotel
Day2	Introduction of the volunteer to the host organization Assess the cashew apple supply chain of the host
Day3-13	Implement assignment activities
Day14	Debriefing, actions plan and recommendations review with host and F2F
Day15	Report submission and Volunteer's return

## **H. DESIRABLE VOLUNTEERS SKILLS**

As described above, the desired volunteer for this assignment must have relevant professional skills and practical experiences in farmers linkage to other organizations, especially processing factories. He/she should have/be:

- Business advisor and business development expert
- Expert in the agricultural supply chains
- Solid experiences in linking companies and farmers
- Experience with cashew products (apple and/or raw nuts) is an asset
- Abilities to train and work with cashew farmers
- Speak the local languages of the department of hills (an asset for the local volunteer)

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

In Dassa-Zoume the volunteer will stay at Hotel Jeco and will be going to the cooperative's unit and farmers villages for the assignment activities. The volunteer will also be providing communication airtime to cover the communication needs during the assignment. The host organization will contribute to the volunteer commuting as well as mobilizing and supporting its team for training sessions and field work with the volunteer. The management will also work closely with the volunteer, during the preparations and the implementation, to ensure that the assignments goal are achieved.

## **J. RECOMMENDED ASSIGNMENT PREPARATIONS**

### **Targeted trainees' Description**

The participants for this assignment are members of the cooperative and cashew farmers in diverse village of the commune of Dassa-Zoume. Most of the participants are not academically educated and cannot read French.

### **Training Materials**

The volunteer should prepare documents that can be printed at the CRS office in Benin prior to arrival. Some training materials such as flipcharts, markers, masking tapes can be obtained from CRS if needed to conduct working session with farmers.

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

In general, electricity supply, internet connectivity and cellphone signal are stable in Dassa-Zoume. The hotels and the cooperative headquarter have stable access to electricity and internet connectivity even though the internet becomes very weak sometimes in Dassa-Zoume. The cellphone reception is good for

both mobile networks (MTN and Moov) available. About security, even though the security level in Benin and in Dassa 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 city of Dassa (Chief town of the Hills Department) is in the Center of Benin. Volunteer will work at the cooperative's factory and in some villages and will interact with staff and cashew farmers. The main local language in Dassa is Idatcha and most of the people are Christians and Muslims, but volunteers may also meet animists.

### **Recommended Reading**

CRS strongly recommends that the volunteer becomes familiar with this SOW, read documents on farmers' organizations in cashew sector in Benin or West Africa. It is also recommended to read about cashew apple processing unit operation and supply in raw materials. The volunteer can also visit the Farmer-to-Farmer digital library for relevant documentation about similar work.

## **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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