**Farmer-to-Farmer East Africa**

**Volunteer Assignment Scope of Work**

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| Summary Information |
| Assignment Code | **SL23** |
| Country | Sierra Leone  |
| Country Project | Horticulture Project |
| Host Organization | Gbampaneh Agriculture Business Centers (ABC) |
| Assignment Title | Strategic business plan development |
| Assignment Preferred Dates | December 2017 – March 2018 |
| Objectives of the Assignment | The objective of this assignment is to provide technical assistance on business plan development to Gbampaneh ABC to enable it to execute their business plans as financially sustainable institutions with an identified viable business operating model. |
| Desired Volunteer Skill/Expertise | Formal qualification or qualifying experience in business management, business administration and any other related qualifications and experience in business plan development capacity building for farmer based organizations, farmers’ cooperative, agro enterprises, etc. |

# BACKGROUND

Catholic Relief Services Sierra Leone Country Program, in partnership with Fresh Salone and West Africa Rice Company is implementing USAID-funded Feed the Future Sierra Leone Entrepreneurial Agriculture for Improved Nutrition activity which is scheduled to end in 2018. The goal of this five-year initiative was to improve the agricultural and food security situation of Sierra Leone’s population by sustainably reducing rural poverty and improving nutrition through the integration of agriculture and nutrition interventions. This goal was supported by two Intermediate Results which fosters drivers of economic growth through value chain development and improved nutritional status of at least 30,000 farming households (180,000 people) across all the 11 Chiefdoms of Tonkolili District. The first Intermediate Result is IR 1: Increased incomes led by strategic value chain investments, and; the second Intermediate Result is IR2: Improved nutritional status, especially among women and children.

Now that the activity is ending in May 2018 instead of September 2021, the goals of FY18 is on one hand to ensure the return on investment made in satellite (rice and maize) and demo farms (horticulture) in FY17 is as high as possible and on the other hand to sustainably hand over as well as possible the demo farm operations to the Agri-Business Centers. During FY18 the activity will focus on IR1 and not on IR2.

IR1 is supported by two components: 1) improving agricultural productivity and post-harvest technologies of rice maize and horticulture crops and 2) expanding market access.

The Feed the Future activity consortium works very closely with other Feed the Future implementing partners, like Africa Lead (DAI), Feed the Future Sierra Leone Scaling up Aquaculture Production activity (World Fish), SPRING and with Peace Corps, Tonkolili District council; Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS) and the Ministry of Health and Sanitation at national and district levels. The collaboration will result in capacity building of government officials and extension agents, Agri-Business Center staff and leadership.

**About the Host Organization ––Gbampaneh ABC**

Gbampaneh Agri-Business Centers (ABCs) was formed in 2010 by FAO and Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS). ABCs are a multi-purpose facility/institution providing rural communities with a place to process their agricultural produce, buy inputs and sell products, as providing an interface between farmers and rural service providers as well as serving as hub for social interaction. Each ABC is designed to deliver services like sale of inputs, rental of agricultural tools and equipment, storage of agricultural produce, transportation of harvest to markets, access to communication and information technology. Each ABC is managed by a Board of seven members (Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, Public Relations Officer, two Organizers, and a Women’s Leader). This board is elected every three years during an annual general meeting which is monitored by MAFFS. All board members are selected from member Farmer Based Organizations (FBOs). Gbampaneh ABCs has four FBOs affiliates within its catchment area. The ABC is mandated to support their FBO member farmers with a wide range of services like input supply, storage, processing, marketing.. The main crops for the ABC are rice and maize, but other crops especially horticulture crops are slowly being introduced by projects like Feed the Future Sierra Leone Entrepreneurial Agriculture for Improved Nutrition activity because of their high market value.

Each FBO is managed by a committee which include key positions like Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. The FBO can add other members in the committee depending on complexity and scale of their operations. Many capacity building activities for the ABC board were conducted by FAO since 2010 in the areas of leadership, management and financial management. FAO assisted the ABC with business plan training and development in 2010. Since then, both Gbampaneh Agri-Business Center (ABC) did not review its business plan.

FAO’s assumption was that MAFFS would mobilize resources to continue supporting and sustaining ABC business. FAO withdrew support for the ABCs in 2010, and in 2014 MAFFS took over ABCs supporting restructuring and management. Since 2014 this support has been ongoing.

**Fresh Salone** (Feed the Future Consortium Partner) has been working with Gbampaneh ABC to transfer high yielding technologies and associated good agricultural practices to improve productivity of nutritious and high value horticultural crops. Fresh Salone is linking the farmers groups to these two ABCs through agribusiness and agronomy training for improved horticulture production using Fresh Salone’s model of demonstrations plots and ‘open fields kits’, including irrigation system and introduced production of nutritious and locally adapted varieties of vegetables such as pepper, french beans, squash, orange fleshed sweet potatoes, zucchini, pumpkin, hot pepper, okra and papaya to raise incomes, food security and nutrition of farmers and their families.

# ISSUE DESCRIPTION

Gbampaneh ABC is a multi-purpose facility/institution providing its 8 FBO member farmers with a place to process their agricultural produce, buy inputs and sell products, as providing an interface between farmers and rural service providers as well as serving as hub for social interaction. The ABC is designed to deliver services like, sale of inputs, rental of agricultural tools and equipment, storage of agricultural produce, transportation of harvest to markets, access to communication and information technology

Since 2010, Gbampaneh Agri-Business Center (ABC) have been facing several business and management problems (see table below) emanating from an outdated business plan; inability implement a viable business model that ensure services needs of the member farmers are adequately addressed at affordable costs; failure to generate sufficient revenue to hire professional staff and maintenance of ABC infrastructure and assets.

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| **ABC Business and Management problems**  |
| 1. The ABC developed business plans which were not updated since 2010. the plan is now outdated and not being followed. There is need for guidance to the ABC to update its business plan to reflect current needs by their member farmers. They need short/medium profitable business plans.
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| 1. Weak aggregation of inputs and produce; and services provision like mechanization, storage, spraying, transport, etc. to FBOs by ABC. The effect is that FBOs are no longer doing business (buying inputs, storage, and produce selling) with ABCs. Also, there are very few new FBOs are joining the ABC because of limited economic incentives
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| 1. ABC is failing to generate funds to pay staff salaries. In most cases they hire staff with no professional capacity and management capacity to operate ABC as a business (profit/ loss basis).
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| 1. No job descriptions for workers employed by ABC
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| 1. Records keeping system not in place. Record keeping is supposed to be reviewed together with the business plans.
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| 1. Most of the staff were trained by FAO in 2010 on enterprise management. Most of the people currently working at ABC are either new or volunteers, and require similar training on enterprise development, business management and operations of ABC, and operations of different ABC equipment.
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Based on the above, it’s clear that there is need for technical support to develop business plans. The specific needs to address are:

* Revise or adjust the existing business plan objectives and clearly identify new medium to long-term objectives of the ABC
* Improvements in professional capacities of ABC to implement a business plan, at the same time ensuring that services need of the member farmers are adequately addressed at affordable costs.
* Professionalism and improvements in quality management systems of the ABC to adequately meet the needs of the member farmers
* A clear action plan with follow on actions for business plan finalization and execution support for the 2 ABCs.

Tawopaneh and Gbampaneh ABC have requested CRS to provide them with Technical Assistance through the Farmer to Farmer interventions to update their existing strategic business plans formulated in 2010. In addition, they have requested training in business and marketing skills.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSIGNMENT**

The objective of this assignment is to provide technical assistance on business plan development to Gbampaneh ABC to enable them to execute their business plans as financially sustainable institutions with an identified viable business operating model. A total of 30 participants will be trained (15 per ABC).

Specifically, during this technical assistance assignment, the volunteer will execute the following activities with Gbampaneh Agri-Business Centers (ABC) staff:

* train ABC board members and staff on principles of business planning and management - human resources management, business operations, marketing, finance and risk management skills; as well as periodic business performance evaluation;
* Facilitate the review and adjust their business plan, and focus on the next five years (2017 – 22). The plan should address the varying demand and needs being expressed by the beneficiary farming community of each ABC;
* Develop tactical plans for business plan finalization and execution support for the in different areas of the plan by the 2 ABCs;
* Develop a business plan review and evaluation framework.

# HOST CONTRIBUTION

Fresh Salone, a partner in the Feed the Future consortium, works with the two ABCs and together with the ABC leadership, Fresh Salone will mobilize farmers to participate in the trainings. They will also organize logistics, such as training venues, farmer field visits, etc.

Fresh Salone will also provide one Farmer Connector (Staff) versed in local language throughout the period of this assignment with the two ABCs. The Farmer Connector will accompany the volunteer throughout the duration of the assignment and provide any further logistical support. Gbampaneh ABC will contribute the following:

* Development of the scope of work;
* Mobilizing relevant staff to work with the volunteer in the process of conducting the assignment;
* Providing prompt inputs as required during the assignment and comments /views as sought for the success of the exercise;
* Providing investments to implement the proposed plan;
* Providing training venues for the entire duration of the assignment.

# ANTICIPATED RESULTS FROM THE ASSIGNMENT

Below are expected results from this assignment:

* A 3-5-year strategic business plan which is fully drafted and understood by the ABC board members and staff with input from members (FBO leadership) and ready to be executed;
* Professionally managed ABC and FBOs with fewer conflicts, more tangible services to FBOs, and also more profitable business processes;
* Reference training material on business plan and management.

# DELIVERABLES

1. Trainings conducted to participants (19 people), including FBO leaders, and four MAFFS block extension agents;
2. Photos taken during assignment;
3. Training manual or communication tools (e.g. guidelines, flyers, brochures) to facilitate training;
4. Recommendations and action plan drafted in collaboration with participants;
5. Volunteer presentation as a debrief;
6. Manual on business plan implementation;
7. Volunteer report with recommendations and action plan drafted in collaboration with participants;
8. Outreach activity (press release or media event) in US.

# SCHEDULE OF VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES IN SIERRASIERRA LEONE

Below is a Tentative Schedule.

* Travel from USA (2 days);
* Travel from Airport to (Makeni Briefing, and travelling to) Mile 91 for briefing (1 day);
* Training of Tawopaneh ABC (80 days);
* Travel to Makeni and briefing (1 day);
* Departure to Airport and USA (2 days);
* Total in country days = 10 days; travel days = (4 days)

# DESIRABLE VOLUNTEERS SKILLS

* Formal qualification or qualifying experience in business management, business administration and any other related qualifications and experience in business plan capacity building for farmer based organizations, cooperatives, agro enterprises, etc.;
* Experience in building capacity in management and leadership skills of (African) farmers’ cooperatives and associations;
* Facilitation, mobilization, and training skills within the context of adult learning; good interpersonal skills
* Ability to adapt to new working environments, e.g. work through an interpreter in a rural, foreign environment;
* Experience in training/mentoring of (Africa) farmers and farmers’ cooperatives and association leadership is an added advantage;
* Flexibility to work with people of varying literacy levels;
* Resilient, in good health, and able to walk on steep, uneven (possibly muddy) terrain.

# ACCOMMODATION AND OTHER IN-COUNTRY LOGISTICS

Volunteers arriving at the airport before 4 pm will be taken by a CRS driver from airport to Magburaka town for accommodation at CRS Guest House. When the volunteer arrived after 5:00 pm, CRS will take the guest to the Lungi International Airport Hotel, E-mail: (management.lungihotel@hotmail.com) for overnight. The volunteer will have a dinner and breakfast at this hotel. In the morning around 8, the volunteer will be taken by a CRS car to Magburaka where he/she will stay at the CRS Guest House, for conducting the assignment in Tonkolili. The guest house is equipped with accommodation and cooking facilities, with breakfast food provided on self-catering. If the volunteer has special breakfast needs, he/she must let CRS in advance. For lunch and dinner CRS will provide transport to descend nearby food outlets. The volunteer has an option to buy food and prepare for him/herself in the guest house whilst staying in Magburaka.

For this assignment, the volunteer will travel to **Mile 91 (**still in Tonkolili district), approximately 250km where he/she will be based for the entire period of the assignment, based at a Hotel to be booked by CRS. CRS will pay bed and breakfast every day, and will provide a vehicle and driver to assist the volunteer to look for lunch and dinner. CRS will have a vehicle and driver everyday assisting the volunteer to the different areas of assignments of this scope of work.

CRS will provide the volunteer with per diem in the form of advance which will have to be cleared before departing from Sierra Leone, to cater for meals and other incidentals during the stay. For more information, please refer to the country information that will be provided.

1. **RECOMMENDED ASSIGNMENT PREPARATIONS**

The volunteer should prepare materials for hand-outs in advance before travelling to Sierra Leone, which will be printed at CRS office in Magburaka 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, as all the trainings will be conducted in communities’ halls with no electricity. 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 will also provide a laptop to the volunteer, if he/she does not have one.

CRS strongly recommends that the volunteer becomes familiar with the Sierra Leone Feed the Future Entrepreneurial Agriculture for Improved Nutrition Activity prior to arrival in the country as well as country information that will be provided.

1. **KEY CONTACTS**

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| **CRS Baltimore** |
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