

**Farmer to Farmer East Africa**

**Volunteer Assignment Scope of Work**

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| **Assignment Summary** |
| **Assignment Code** | UG136 |
| Country | Uganda |
| Country Project | Flex Assignment |
| Host Organization | Rwenzori Farmers’ Cooperative Society |
| Assignment Title | Marketing  |
| Type of Volunteer Assistance: | Business /Enterprise development (**E**) |
| Type of Value Chain Activity: | Marketing (**M**) |
| Assignment objectives | To provide a road map for Rwenzori farmers’ Cooperative Union to address the challenges of marketing for coffee and cocoa with clear understanding of the pre requisites of access to fair trade markets.  |
| Desired skills | Formal qualification in marketing studies with vast experience in market linkages with specific preference to fair trade markets for coffee and cocoa in cooperatives. |
| Assignment preferred dates | December, 2017 |

1. **Background**

Rwenzori Farmers’ Cooperative Union (RFCU) **(**formerly the Mubuku Vanilla Farmers Association), is an umbrella organization representing 14 community-based farmers’ groups who specialize in vanilla, coffee and cocoa cultivation. RFCU has 2,500 farmer members with a presence in four districts of Western Uganda: Kasese, Kabarole, Karugutu and Bundibugyo across the Rwenzori mountain range. RFCU has made great strides over the past two years to build their capacity and professionalize. They have changed their legal status from an association to cooperative union. The fourteen community based organizations under the RFCU umbrella have registered themselves now as cooperative societies at the regional and national level. They have diversified the cash crops produced and marketed beyond vanilla to include cocoa and coffee, and have already developed high value, Fairtrade market relationships for the two new crops.

The overall strength of RFCU has been in the few business relationships, loan services, and new products 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. It is therefore important to ensure that the success of RFCU as a business entity is guided by a strong and well developed marketing function in terms of relationships, strategy, product management, field marketing and a persuasive social media.

1. **Issue Description**

 Rwenzori farmers’ cooperative is currently struggling facing challenges with of who farmers lose all or most of their vanilla to theft. With prices so high, thieves steal highly immature beans, months before they’re ready since they already fetch high prices from other buyers. The urgency and coordination of thieves has risen in the recent past. This often leaves the union with less to sell to Ndali which translates into fluctuation of revenues and premiums as indicated above.

The crisis in vanilla trading is coupled limited access to markets for cocoa and coffee. This is as a result of lack of linkages to the right customers, knowledge on the requirements of the different markets as well as lack of knowledge in the rightful specifications for products that fetch profit. RFCU is at a level of producing and managing 40 and 25MT of coffee and cocoa respectively as per the records of 2017. The organization however has the capacity of producing 4 times the above amounts of products basing on the current membership (farmers) registered under the highlighted crops.

The basic reason for low supplies made to the union is the lack of reliable markets for the crops and the low capacity of RFCU to handle the products in terms of infrastructure (store and equipment).

The board members expressed the desire to have a volunteer (technical assistance) to empower the team at RFCU in establishment of a brand of products that can meet international and fair trade standards. Additionally, the board and the marketing unit of the union needs clear understanding on how to do promotions for products of the union, being able to lay strategies to meet the specific needs of the different customers for a profitable business.

1. **Objectives of the Assignment**

The volunteer technical assistance will focus on achieving the following objectives:

1. Streamline the marketing and proper alignment of the roles and responsibilities of the different players in the marketing chain.

2. To create proper understanding of the pre requisites of fair trade markets for cocoa and coffee.

3. To create knowledge on how to properly brand products for the international markets

4. To help in setting up the marketing structures that promotes penetration of the products to new customers in the market.

The marketing technical assistance will capitalise on empowering the team with appropriate skills which will among other things focus on the following topics, among others:

* Fair trade standard for cocoa and coffee
* Product Branding; quality control, packaging and brand utility
* Market linkages and price information flow
* Product promotion through social media advertisement, website and marketing campaigns
* Price determination and comparison, pricing and marketing strategy to help maintain competitive position in the market

The specificities of the daily activities will be discussed with CRS and RFCU staff upon volunteer’s arrival and activities adjustment can be made in agreement with the host, but the deliverables and results will remain.

The volunteer will provide training on the above mentioned topics to the RFCU management team, board members and the staff directly concerned with marketing of cocoa and coffee.

Ben & Jerry staff and host cooperatives have committed to mobilize the board membership to the trainings to be conducted by the volunteer. The marketing personnel of RFCU will also avail key personnel to work closely with the volunteer, during the preparations and actual trainings, to ensure that key staff are trained and will continue training other members even after the assignment is completed especially as leaders’ term of office expires.

1. **ANTICIPATED RESULTS FROM THE ASSIGNMENT**

The technical assistance will help improve the market assessment, planning brand management, value proposition development. The key player of Rwenzori farmers’ cooperative Union will be able design customer loyalty programmes, manage customer communication and consumer community. The assignment will help to broaden awareness of the unit within the targeted markets and audiences while increasing pipeline through proactive demand generation.

In addition to the above, the technical assistance provided to will strengthen the leadership and management system due to:

* Marketing oriented organisation through proper alignment of roles of the different chain players.
* The team should be able to do market, competition analysis, and segment marketing
* Designing a marketing objectives and strategies
* Establishment of profitable marketing relationships with key customers while focussing reduced costs of production.

The anticipated deliverables include:

* Assignment report
* Registers of people trained
* Manuals of the training
* Marketing plan with channels of price information flow indicated from the customers to the producers.

**Nature of training participants:**

The anticipated participants for this training are the board, marketing staff of, management and the technical staff of RFCU. The targeted team is literate with abilities to read and write with no need for translations. Trainings will be conducted in centralised venues which will in most cases be the board room. The board members will be facilitated with transport and lunch allowance for the days they will be invited to participate in the interaction with the volunteer.

The detailed programme will be shared with the team at RFCU when the volunteer arrives after the knowledge of the number of days of the assignment.

1. **Schedule of Volunteer Activities in Uganda**

**SCHEDULE OF VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES**

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| Day | Activity |
| Day 1 | Meetings with F2 F team, Ben & Jerry’s project team, HOP in Kampala & travel to Kasese |
| Day 2 | Meeting with RFCU management in Kasese to plan for the assignment |
| Day 3 | Review of RFCU existing marketing structures/infrastructure and plan/strategy with RFCU team  |
| Days 4-5 | Visit selected coffee and cocoa farmers for acquaintance with business  |
| Day 6-13 | Volunteer work with the team on objectives 1-4 |
| Day14 | Presentation of draft plan/strategy to senior management and selected board members for review/comments/feedback. 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 15 | Volunteer travels back to Kampala |
| Day 16 | Debriefing meeting with F2F team, Ben & Jerry’s project team and HOP |
| TBD |  |
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1. **Desired Volunteer Qualifications**
* Demonstrated qualifications in Business and marketing related studies
* Extensive knowledge in cooperative development, administration and management.
* Experience in fair trade markets preferably for cocao and coffee or related crops
* Financial management skills
* Monitoring and evaluation skills
* Good writing and analytical skills, including good interpersonal and communication skills.
* Other necessary skills include knowledge in group dynamics and experience working in developing countries.
1. **Key Contacts**

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