

**Farmer to Farmer East Africa**

**Volunteer Assignment Scope of Work**

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| **Summary Information** |
| Assignment Code: | UG48 |
| Country: | Uganda |
| Country Project: | Maize Country Project |
| Host organization: | Nkoma Area Cooperative Enterprise (ACE) |
| Type of Volunteer Assistance: | **Environmental Conservation (C)**Sustainable Land Management Practices |
| Type of Value Chain Activity: | **On Farm Production (F)** |
| Preferred assignment dates: | May, 2015 |
| Objective: | The overall objective is building capacity among farmers, of Nkoma ACE, to use and conserve land/soils through sustainable land management practices.  |
| Desirable Volunteer qualifications, Knowledge and Skills:  | * Soil scientist with practical hands-on experience in soil conservation management practices. Specialized expertise in soil management practices for crop production under tropical conditions is a plus.
* Formal qualifications in Crops Agronomy/Soil Management and Plant growth conditions (preferably cereal/grain crops)
* Wide experiences in cereal/grain crops production (including maize) acquired through either own farming activities or working with farmers/farms
* Other knowledge/skill areas may include soil fertility and productivity management in tropical conditions; good field/extension experience with excellent- hands-on training and communication skills gained with mixed adult (rural) audiences (women, men, youth)
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1. **BACKGROUND**

Nkoma Area Cooperative Enterprise was formed in 2006 with the overall objective of improving smallholder farmer incomes and livelihoods through improved productivity and access to markets. The ACE is a legally registered cooperative involved in production and marketing activities along the maize value chain. In addition, Nkoma ACE members are farmers, whose main source of livelihood is derived from cultivation of other crops such as beans, sorghum and groundnuts. Farming is practiced on small land parcels and yields are low, averaging between 1.0 to 1.8 tons per acre. The cooperative has a total membership of 1,810 members, including 1,024 women, and organized into Rural Producer Organizations (RPOs) which form the ACE’s constituents. There are seven 7 Rural Producer Organisations (RPOs).

The ACE is comprised of farmers as members and representatives from these farmer groups form the annual general meeting, which is the apex body of the organization. The board is democratically elected and works closely with the membership and a three-member supervisory committee elected to oversee organization activities on behalf of the board. The supervisory committee oversees the manager and reports back to the board. The farmer members are engaged in two major enterprises: maize and beans, but coffee is an upcoming enterprise the coop is encouraging. Services offered to the members include farmer trainings, input supply to farmers at subsidized rates, bulking, marketing of farmer produce and setting up demonstration plots.

There are several constraints identified in the maize value chain in Uganda, which limit the productivity and diminish the ability of smallholders to earn incomes from maize farming. Constraints include a lack of producer knowledge of farming as a business, poor agronomic practices poor natural resource management -- with little or no emphasis on controlling soil erosion, inappropriate post-harvest handling practices, weak farmer association leadership and little regard for gender mainstreaming. Nkoma received a previous F2F Volunteer for farm record keeping, leadership and management skills. The current technical assistance assignment will focus on sustainable land management.

**ISSUE DESCRIPTION**.

Soil is a critical component in crop production. Crops depend on soil for both physical support and physiological purposes whereby the soil provides water and nutrients necessary for best possible performance. Soil management is critical for optimum soil productivity and is therefore a key element in crop production. A major problem facing the areas already under cultivation is soil degradation and loss of soil fertility due to indiscriminate misuse of agricultural lands, forest and pastures. Routine crop production practices involving removing weeds, mixing soil with amendments like fertilizers, shaping the soil into rows and making furrows for irrigation and preparing the surface for seeding. These practices are associated with negative effects in relation to soil building properties, including increased evaporation rates, increases in water runoff and soil erosion, reduction in organic matter content, reduced biological activity in the soil and increased soil compaction.

In Kamwenge district, where Nkoma ACE is located, practices in crop and animal farming have resulted in the degradation of previously fertile land. Lack of crop rotation, unsuitable cultivation techniques, the abuse of natural pastures and forests, extending cultivation into marginal and sub-marginal lands, mono-cropping and the permanent use of land are all responsible for the present situation of widespread soil degradation. The result of this is low soil productivity, hence low yields require an immediate technical intervention. Soils cannot support healthy plant growth.

Nonetheless a combination of cultural practices such as crop rotation, intercropping, use of compost manure, mowing, seeding dates and rates, fertilizer placement, and cover crops with herbicides (to increase successful weed control) offers a possibility for no-till. It should also be noted that no-till without or with little mulch is not a sustainable practice as almost all environmental benefits of no-tillage are due to the mulch cover at the soil surface.

In recent past, there is an increased adoption of conservation tillage management practices in Uganda, such as minimum tillage and no-till farming. These practices entail growing crops from year to year with minimal disturbances to the soil. It is worth noting that the trend towards conservation tillage has seen a growing adoption by farmers as well as concepts of sustainable agriculture, notably organic farming.

Recognizing that the implementation of soil conservation programs requires special expertise covering many disciplines, not normally available within the Ugandan extension service, Nkoma ACE has requested F2F technical assistance to provide the necessary expertise to address the escalating problem of soil depletion and associated farming challenges.

1. **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSIGNMENT**

The objective of this assignment is to provide a roadmap for Nkoma ACE members to address the challenges of soil degradation in a sustainable manner using locally available resources at farm levels. Specific activities will include technical support in the topical areas:

* Demonstration or making compost manure using locally available materials and develop a manual for these procedures.
* Use of intercropping in soil conservation
* Training in approaches to building and maintaining soil fertility
* Care for the vegetation cover of forested areas
* Introduce minimum tillage as a measure to enhance soil conservation
* Create awareness on other soil erosion control measures

The volunteer will provide training on the above mentioned topics to farmer trainers who are personnel of each of the 7 Rural Producer Organizations (RPOs). These trainers will extend the intervention by carrying on the training after volunteer assignment is completed. The training will include representative farmers from each of the RPOs, a total of 30 – 40 farmers per training day. It is anticipated that this activity will take about 2 days for each RPO. The volunteer is expected to train at least 80 trainers, and selection criteria will be include the ability to train others.

The majority of training participants are illiterate or semi-illiterate and the volunteer is advised prepare training materials with this in mind. Focus will be on practical demonstrations, pictorials, illustrations and a lower emphasis on theory. Training venues are usually at a school, in a local church, under a tree or in the garden.

1. **ANTICIPATED RESULTS FROM THE ASSIGNMENT**

The session of coaching trainers and management team of the ACE will help to achieve greater productivity in a way that promotes improved sustainable land use. Anticipated deliverables include the following:

* Trainings conducted and people trained
* Compost manual developed
* A comprehensive manual covering all topics trained for use by trainers for future trainings
* Debriefing with USAID and in country group presentations after assignment
* Field trip report and expense report
* Outreach activity, press release or a media event back in US
1. **SCHEDULE OF VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES IN UGANDA**

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| Day | Activity |
| Day 1:  | Travel from home to US international airport |
| Day 2  | Arrival at Uganda Entebbe Airport, picked by hotel shuttle to Kampala and check in at Fairway Hotel. |
| Day 3 | At 9.00 am the volunteer is greeted at the hotel by CRS staff and thereafter taken to CRS office for briefing and finalise with logistics. Any necessary training material will be prepared at CRS offices before travel to the field.  |
| Day 4 | Travel to Kamwenge district to commence the assignment.  |
| Day 5 | In the morning CRS introduces the volunteer to the Nkoma ACE management team and board members.Together with CRS and the management, the volunteer will review the SOW and develop the action plan. The host will give an update on previous volunteer assignments and farmer adoption of best practices. In the afternoon, Visit some of the RPOs from Nkoma ACE. |
| Days 6 | Rest day for volunteer |
| Days 78- 10- | Training 1st RPO representatives on topics 1-6 above  |
| Days 9-10 | Training2nd RPO representatives on topics 1-6  |
| Days 11-12 | Training 3rd RPO representatives on topics 1-6 |
| Days 13-14 | Train 4th  RPO representatives on topics 1-6 |
| Days 15- 16 | Training5th RPO representatives on topics 1-6 |
| Day 17 -18 | Training 6th RPO representatives |
| Days 19-20 | Train TOTS and management of the ACE and develop a training guide/ manual together with them for future trainings |
| Day 21 | Wrap up meetings, whilst emphasizing key concepts of the assignment. Participants evaluate the training and together with the volunteer discuss final report recommendations. End of assignment presentation. |
| Day 22 | Travel back to Kampala  |
| Day 23 | Debriefing at CRS office with USAID Mission and CRS staff.Volunteer finalizes his/her reporting at CRS office and fill out all necessary M&E forms as well as finalise liquidations with finance. |
| Day 24 | Depart for the US |
| TBD | Outreach event in the US |

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

In Kampala, the volunteer will stay at Fairway Hotel & Spa ([www.fairwayhotel.co.ug](http://www.fairwayhotel.co.ug)) and while in Kamwenge s/he will be accommodated at Club Afreka Hotel Ltd (P. O. Box 1449 Kamwenge, clubafreka2002@yahoo.com).

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 will have to be cleared before departing from Uganda. For more information, please refer to the country information that will be provided.

**Host contribution** – Nkoma ACE has committed to mobilize the RPOs members to attend the trainings. The host 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 farmers even after the assignment is completed. The host will also provide translation services.

1. **RECOMMENDED ASSIGNMENT PREPARATION**
* The volunteer should prepare materials for hand-outs, 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. Depending on the training venue the volunteer may use a laptop and projector for power point presentations. However if the training venue is in the community, it will be difficult to use PowerPoint. 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 strongly recommends that the volunteer becomes familiar with the maize country project description prior to arrival in the country as well as country information that will be provided.
* Knowledge on land management practices and soil types and acceptable pesticides use in Uganda or developing countries, in general, is also advised.
1. **KEY CONTACTS**

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