



**To express interest in this assignment please email**  
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**CRS Farmer to Farmer Program  
 Volunteer Assignment Scope of Work**

Summary Information	
Assignment Code	BJ285
Country	Benin
Country Project	Soybean
Host Organization	Association for the Fight against Illiteracy in Benin (ALCA-Benin)
Assignment Title	Sustainable land management practices in pineapple production
Assignment preferred dates	Early April 2022
Objectives of the assignment	<p>Strengthen the capacities of pineapple producers on the land management practices to improve the sustainability of their farming systems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve producers' knowledge on fertilization and soil management practices in pineapple production.</li> <li>• Assess sustainability and efficiency of current land management practices implemented by farmers and provide guidance for better results in the pineapple farms.</li> <li>• Train the participants on the good land management practices adapted to their area and soil respecting the agroecological transition requirements, and advise them on the legal land ownership system.</li> <li>• Conduct practical demonstrations of some practices discussed and provide farmers with some samples of fertilizer crops seeds.</li> </ul>
Desired volunteer skill/expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agronomist and specialist in crop production, soil fertility and sustainable land management.</li> <li>• Have strong knowledge of pineapple cropping system (or similar crops).</li> <li>• Ability to train adults, especially farmers with low education level and be familiar to participatory approaches.</li> <li>• Excellent facilitator and communicator (in local language will be an asset for local volunteer).</li> </ul>
Type of Volunteer Assistance	Technology Transfer =T
Type of Value Chain Activity	Farm Production = F
PERSUAP Classification <sup>1</sup>	Type II

<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

## 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 Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) established in 2004 with its head office in Porto-Novo, the politic capital of the country. It works to support community members, mostly farmers, with no or little education and who 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. ALCA-Benin has a keen interest in supporting pineapple farmers since its creation, even before the sub-sector became one of the priority crops identified by the Ministry of Agriculture through the Strategic Plan for Agricultural Sector Development (PSDSA). In the pineapple value-chain, ALCA-Benin works with farmers from the current main pineapple production areas, including the communes of Zè, Allada, Toffo, and Tori-Bossito. The services provided to these farmers aim to improve and disseminate improved farming technologies for increased yields, incomes and scale up of agribusinesses.

## B. ISSUE DESCRIPTION

A lot of research has been carried out in the context of restoring vegetation cover in agricultural sectors, particularly in pineapple production. Thus, in the target area, as in most agricultural production areas, agricultural extension was questioned on its ability to respond to new and diversified demands of agricultural holdings (organic fertilization, fodder crops, legume cereal associations, agroforestry, etc.). The sustainable management of land and soil fertility is, as in all agricultural sectors, one of the challenges that pineapple producers face daily. Currently most pineapple farmers in the intervention area are facing soil degradation and depletion issue as most farms are under intensive use since years without proper attention to their restoration. In addition, there is high pressure on available farmland since some large public projects are under implementation in the area and have taken part of the production lands especially in the commune of Zè. Some of the farmers also have issues with erosion with heavy rain and even lost parts of the production. Soil depletion through the impacts of climate change, negatively affect the production and the food security of pineapple producers' households. Pineapple production systems are

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review and designing, business plan development and strategies development and **Type IV** as assignments associated with other USAID projects and collaborators.

heavily affected with low technical and economic performance due to general poor soil fertility. Even though the area is the main pineapple production area and more new pineapple farmers are coming out due the recent high interest in the sector, most of the land has been under use for years and need restoration through good land management practices. The poor soil fertility coupled with the land pressure due to the urbanization and installation of the industrial zone, push some producers to abandon the production of pineapple as it requires good land. In this context, producers are unaware of the importance of soil restoration and conservation in pineapple production through a good implementation of good agricultural practices in the current process of agroecological transition in the agricultural sector. This training is a way to address these issues.

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

Strengthen the capacities of pineapple producers on the land management practices to improve the sustainability of their farming systems.

Specific objectives:

- Assess sustainability and efficiency of current land management practices implemented by farmers and provide update and guidance for better results in the pineapple farms.
- Improve producers' knowledge on fertilization and soil management practices in pineapple production.
- Train the participants on the good land management practices adapted to their area and soil respecting the agroecological transition requirements.
- Conduct practical demonstrations of some practices discussed and provide farmers with some samples of fertilizer crops seeds.
- Develop guidelines for sustainable pineapple production systems.

### **D. HOST CONTRIBUTION**

ALCA-Benin will mobilize the participants for this training. With the support of the communal agricultural agency of Zè and Tori-Bossito, they will also ensure that the venue, local training aids and other teaching materials are in place. Also, the host will mobilize and support the commuting, lodging, and feeding of the participants to the training sessions: They also agree to provide farmers with samples of some fertilizers and seed and identified some farms where practical sections will be conducted as 80% of this support will be on farm training.

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

Pineapple production can be increased by enhancing the farmers capacity on applying of relevant sustainable soil management practices. It will be an asset for them to choose and follow up input services, good agroecology practices and with the effective use of local resources to raise yield in pineapple production. Through this assignment at least 45 pineapple producers, members of the Pineapple Producers Cooperatives, will be trained. This assignment will contribute to:

- Increase the knowledge and skills of the participants in good sustainable land management practices to improve their yields.
- Improve the pineapple production through the depleted land restoration. Indeed, this will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of pineapple production. Producers would also be more motivated to indulge in pineapple production.
- Increased land under improved production technologies

## **F. DELIVERABLES**

- Volunteer final report due BEFORE departure.
- Participants' attendance list
- Debriefing with USAID and F2F country staff.
- Group presentation with local stakeholders at the end of the assignment in country.
- Volunteer outreach activities in the US and in-country through social media, journal, radio, TV, etc.
- Training manuals and tools developed during the sessions.

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

<b>Days</b>	<b>Activities</b>
Day 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteer welcome and orientation at CRS office in Cotonou and signing of administrative documents.</li> <li>• Travel to Zè and checking at the hotel for first training session.</li> <li>• Introduction of the volunteer to the host organization by F2F team: General orientation with the host, first-hand briefing on the main objectives and modality of the assignment and adjustment of the agenda for the coming days (work planning session).</li> </ul>
Day 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of the volunteer to the participants</li> <li>• Make a quick diagnosis with farmers and assess their knowledge and skill gaps to comprehensively update training materials for fruitful intervention</li> </ul>
Day 3 to 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold training sessions and farm activities</li> </ul>
Day 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travel to Tori-Bossito and check in at the hotel for second training session.</li> <li>• Introduction of the volunteer to the participants</li> <li>• Make a quick diagnosis with farmers and assess the knowledge and skill gaps of the participants comprehensively update training materials for fruitful intervention</li> </ul>
Day 8 to 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold training sessions and farm activities</li> </ul>
Day 12 to 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare reports and recommendations for the host.</li> <li>• Debriefing with CRS Benin F2F staff and host.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit volunteer reports, training attendance sheet, PPT presentation and any reference materials to CRS F2F team.</li> </ul>
Day 14	Volunteer travel back

## H. DESIRABLE VOLUNTEERS SKILLS

To complete this assignment, the volunteer should be/have:

- An agronomist.
- Specialist in crop production, Soil fertility and sustainable land management.
- A good knowledge of pineapple cropping system (or similar agricultural subsector).
- Ability to train adults, especially farmers with low education level. Familiar to participatory approaches.
- Excellent facilitator and communicator (in local language will be an asset).

## I. ACCOMMODATION AND ANOTHER IN-COUNTRY LOGISTICS

The volunteer will work and be accommodated in the communes of Zè and Tori-Bossito located in the south 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. In addition, the communication networks are very good with excellent security situation. Travel arrangements, adhering to COVID-19 safety precautions, will be made by CRS. The volunteer will be paid a per diem to cover meals.

## J. RECOMMENDED ASSIGNMENT PREPARATIONS

### ▪ Targeted Trainees' Description

Participants in this training will be made up of members of the Pineapple Producers Cooperatives of Zè and Tori-Bossito. 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 in Benin prior to arrival. Flipcharts, markers, masking tapes can be obtained from CRS offices in case the volunteer wishes to do illustrations. If possible, for the mission, the volunteer can bring a laptop with them, but it is possible to get a spare on site. For PowerPoint presentations, ALCA-Benin or one of its partners can provide a video projector. The translation of handouts to the local language can be done in the locality of the assignment, if required.

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

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

internet becomes very weak sometimes outside Cotonou. The cell phone reception is good for both mobile networks (MTN and Moov) available in the country. In these towns, the volunteer will be accommodated, the electricity supply and the internet are more stable.

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**

Zè and Tori-Bossito are peri-urbans communes of Benin located in the south of the country in the department of Atlantique. Historic and religious town, Allada is located at about 44 km from Cotonou while Tori-Bossito is located at about 37 km from Cotonou. *Fongbé* is the main and dominant local language in both communes. Other spoken languages can be recorded (like *Tori* and *Adja*), and the people are Christians, Muslims, and Animists. They are very nice and respectful, especially towards foreigners; they are also social and open to collaboration with foreigners.

- **Recommended Reading**

CRS strongly recommends that the volunteer familiarizes themselves with this SOW, and read the documents on: profitability analysis and design of operating account in pineapple production; the cropping activities and resources in pineapple production. The volunteer can read materials on the pineapple production in Benin, West Africa, Africa and somewhere else. Some materials may be found in the [CRS' F2F Digital Resource Library](#).

- **Weather Appropriate Clothing**

Clothing suitable for the weather is light, not dark clothing. In the southern part of Benin, the climate is hot and humid. During the dry season (November-February), average temperatures reach between 25-30 °C.

## **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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