



To express interest in this assignment please email [emily.keast@crs.org](mailto:emily.keast@crs.org)

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

Summary Information			
Assignment Code	BJ301		
Country:	Benin		
Country Project:	Cashew		
Host Organization:	Agbara-Oluwa		
Partner:			
Date of baseline data collection:	2/4/2022		
Date of host agreement signing:	01/11/2022		
Number of previous volunteer assignments:			
Volunteer recommendations given (Total):	9	Volunteer recommendations applied (Total):	4
Assignment Title:	Communication and Marketing Strategies		
Objectives of the assignment:	Facilitate the development of an effective communication, marketing strategies and tools to guide the cooperative in profitability and increase in the market share		
Assignment preferred dates:	January-February 2022		
Desired volunteer skill/expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing and Communications expert in fast moving consumer goods.</li> <li>• Solid experience in coaching on market strategies and negotiation skills</li> <li>• Experience in developing digital advertising tools</li> <li>• French speaking skills is desired but not compulsory</li> </ul>		
Type of Volunteer Assistance	Organizational Development = O		
Type of Value Chain Activity	Information and Input support services (S)		
PERSUAP Classification <sup>1</sup>	III		
Number of people to be trained	Men	Women	Youths
	2	15	8
Will the assignment address gender gaps?	Yes		
Will the assignment address climate change?	No		

<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.



## **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 support is usually provided in-person by American volunteers but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, currently, some missions are carried out by pairs of volunteers; a volunteer recruited locally paired with an American volunteer remotely. The F2F project has been implemented in Benin since September 2018 by CRS to support the cashew and soybean value chains over 5 years.

Agbara-Oluwa women cooperative processes cashew apple and nut (mainly) but also other agricultural products such as mangos, pineapple, tamarind, baobab, ginger, and soybean. 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. Through the leadership of the Chairperson of this cooperative, Agbara-Oluwa has made significant contribution in the diversification of value-added products contributing to improved incomes for the producers of the raw materials, preserving produce through processing and making available diverse food products to meet food and nutrition needs of the rural community. They currently have broadly five types of products. The first four are produced at commercial scale.

- Fruit juices: cashew apple juice is the main product. Other juices include baobab, pineapple, tamarind, ginger, mango and watermelon.
- Cashew almond nuts, which are primarily roasted and salted nuts
- Pre-cooked rice: a rich meal that is enriched with mixed vegetables
- Gari: a ready to eat cassava derived meal.
- Soyabean Products – the host is in the process of introducing soyabean products into the market. They received F2F technical support on soybean product development, and have started processing soya meat, soya yoghurt, which is enriched with coconut, soya biscuits as well and roasted soyabean.

## **B. ISSUE DESCRIPTION**

Agbara-Oluwa has an established presence in the Dassa area of Benin, and has a market reach in the Dassa region, Cotonou and surrounding areas. They also have access to markets in Niger, in particular for the cashew juice product. The demand for the products is increasing, but this also comes with other demands.



In the case for Niger, the company desires to procure canned cashew juice, which is now only packaged in glass bottles. The main production season for the cashew apple juice is during the harvest period. The leadership has a network of cashew apple farmers as suppliers, have developed good working relationships and are currently in the process of drafting formal contracts to be signed during the next cashew apple production season. This also comes at a time when the company is planning to expand the volumes of production and have already acquired a new site.

Since inception, Agbara-Oluwa has managed to reach out to their customers using informal and formal channels to market their produce. This worked well in the early stages as the volumes were low and demand was high. With several products processed at the factory, the planned expansion and with a potentially increase in the market share, Agbara-Oluwa recognizes the need to develop a marketing and communication plan, that will guide them in this next phase of growth. They do not have the necessary skills or expertise to develop this and have therefore requested for F2F technical support. The cooperative is not also present on social media to develop digital and communication strategies.

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

The objective of this assignment is to facilitate the development of an effective marketing and communication strategies and tools for Agbara-Oluwa, and thereby strengthen the capacity of the cooperative leadership to not only increase their market share, but also retain the already existing market share for their products. This will also include: developing digital marketing strategies, the production of advertising materials such as some a short demonstrative video, flyers among others, and training key staff on the management of digital marketing through the social media.

### **D. HOST CONTRIBUTION**

The contribution of Agbara-Oluwa to this assignment will consist of mobilizing its members and other participants to closely with the volunteer. It will then support the commuting, transportation, and the feeding fees of the participant. The host will also provide necessary materials and inputs that will be used for practical sessions of the assignment. However, for the production of the communication video and other materials, the volunteer is expected to come along with his/her materials.

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

Through this assignment, Agbara Oluwa will have an operational marketing and communication strategy that will be used as the framework for all marketing and communication planning. It is anticipated that this will contribute to increased volumes of marketed products, increase in annual gross sales, annual net incomes for the members of Agbara Oluwa, but also improved earnings for the farmers who are the key suppliers.



## F. DELIVERABLES

- Volunteer final report due BEFORE departure.
- Group presentation with local stakeholders at the end of the assignment in-country.
- Volunteer outreach activities in the US and in-country.
- Training manuals and customized tools developed for the company’s management.
- Social media page (Facebook page)

## G. SCHEDULE OF VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

Days (not date)	Activities
Day 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travel from the US and arrival at Benin International Airport, pick-up and check-in at Livingstone Hotel</li> </ul>
Day 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteer’s welcome and orientation at CRS office in Cotonou for assignment and security briefing and signing of administrative documents. Any necessary hand-outs will be prepared at CRS offices.</li> <li>• Travel to Dassa and check at the eco Hotel</li> </ul>
Day 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of the volunteer to the host organization by F2F team:</li> <li>• General orientation with the host</li> <li>• First-hand briefing on the main objectives and modality of the assignment.</li> <li>• Detailed Work Plan covering all activities required.</li> </ul>
Day 4 to 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate the development of the communications and marketing plan, materials and tools.</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> <li>• Submit volunteer reports, training attendance sheet, PPT presentation and any reference materials to CRS F2F team.</li> </ul>
Day 14	Volunteer’s Travel back to Cotonou
Day 15	Debriefing with CRS and USAID testing for COVID (if required) and material release, submit final documents
Day 16	Travel back to the USA

## H. DESIRABLE VOLUNTEERS SKILLS



As described above, the desired volunteer for this assignment must have relevant education knowledge and professional skills and experiences in SME management. Especially, he/she must

- Be an enterprise/Business management expert with relevant and solid experience
- Have experience managing SME in the agribusiness sector in west Africa is desired,
- Have some experiences and knowledge in accounting and finance management
- Have experience in human resources management, especially in workers management in processing or industrial factory (will be an asset)
- Ability to train adults and work with people with low education level
- French speaking skills is desired but not compulsory

## I. ACCOMMODATION AND ANOTHER IN-COUNTRY LOGISTICS

In Cotonou, volunteers will stay at Livingstone hotel, near the CRS office and not far from the airport. In Dassa, the volunteer will stay at Jeco hotel and will be going to Agbara-Oluwa's factory near Dassa town. In Dassa, CRS will hire a local translator for the volunteer's work. Agbara Oluwa will contribute to the volunteer 'commuting as well as mobilizing and supporting its members for training sessions. The cooperatives's leadership will work closely with the volunteer, during the preparations and the training sessions, to ensure that key persons are trained and that the assignments goal are achieved. Travel arrangements, adhering to COVID-19 safety precautions, will be made by CRS. Volunteers are encouraged to bring N95 masks and Covid-19 TDR tests with them if possible.

## J. RECOMMENDED ASSIGNMENT PREPARATIONS

### ▪ Targeted trainees' Description

The participants for this assignment are Agbara Oluwa staff and cooperative members who have to relevant education level to effectively understand and implement tools and knowledge to be receive from the assignment. Volunteer will also interact with other technical and support staffs most of whom have a low educational level.

### ▪ Training Materials

The volunteer should prepare documents that can be printed at the CRS office in Benin prior to travel. Flipcharts, markers and masking tape can be obtained from the host's office in case the volunteer wishes to do illustrations. If possible, the volunteer should bring a laptop with him/her. However, if it is not possible, CRS will provide a spare laptop for the volunteer to use during the assignment Electricity, internet, cellphone signal, key security, health issues

In general, electricity supply, internet connectivity and cellphone signal are stable in Dassa. The hotels and the training venue have stable access to electricity and internet connectivity even though the internet



signal is sometimes weak. Cellphone reception is good for both mobile networks (MTN and Moov) available.

Although security levels in Benin and Dassa are good, the volunteer will be instructed about security measures and safeguarding before going to the host organization. The volunteer is advised to bring with them any regular medications they take, in order to prevent health issues.

- **Working Environment and culture**

**Recommended Reading**

CRS strongly recommends that the volunteer become familiar with this SOW, read documents on processing SME management and their organizations/operation in Benin and West Africa. We also recommend reading about the national policies regarding agricultural processing unit development. The volunteer can read some books or reports on related areas, especially in agri-business subsector. some additional orientations could also be given by the host before assignment starts.

- **Weather Appropriate Clothing**

The weather appropriate clothing is light and not dark clothes. In the Center of Benin, the weather is a bit hot and dry with some temperatures varying between 28 to 42 Celsius degrees. It is also a sunny weather with end of the raining season by October . It is currently the raining season and rainfall are often heavy in the region. Daily weather conditions in the department of Collines (Hills) can be found [here](#).

**K. 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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