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**CRS Farmer to Farmer Program  
In-Person Volunteer Assignment Scope of Work**

Summary Information			
Assignment Code	BJ2110		
Country:	Benin		
Country Project:	Soybean		
Host Organization:	Pineapple processors' network of Benin (ReTAB)		
Partner:	DEDRAS		
Date of baseline data collection:	10/15/2021		
Date of host agreement signing:	11/29/2021		
Number of previous volunteer assignments:			1
Volunteer recommendations given:	4	Volunteer recommendations applied (Total):	2
Assignment Title:	Improvement of pineapple juice production planning and management for 25 ReTAB member units.		
Objectives of the assignment:	Assess the organizational and operational capacity of ReTAB's member units to propose an improved organizational and production plan for greater competitiveness.		
Assignment preferred dates:	Early December/ January		
Desired volunteer skill/expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expert in the development of small and medium-sized agri-food processing enterprises with a good knowledge of the functioning of "Economic Interest Groups<sup>1</sup>" network/association</li> <li>Experience and skills in food processing business assessment, planning and market-oriented production.</li> <li>Experience with pineapple processing SMEs in West Africa and understanding of juice production process.</li> </ul>		
Type of Volunteer Assistance	Organizational Development		
Type of Value Chain Activity	Information and Input support services (S)		
PERSUAP Classification <sup>2</sup>	Type III		
Number of people to be trained	Men	Women	Youths
	25	50	20
Will the assignment address gender gaps?			Yes

<sup>1</sup> A legal term for this type of collective group. Other terms for different groups include "association" and "cooperative". The statutes and regulations differ for the various types of group.

<sup>2</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.



Will the assignment address climate change?	No
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## 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.

The Pineapple Processors' Network of Benin (Réseau des Transformateurs d'Ananas du Benin - ReTAB) is made up of 25 pineapple juice processing units and was established in 2020 with the support of the NGO DEDRAS (Organization for Sustainable Development, Strengthening and Self-promotion of Community Structures) which supports these entrepreneurs in the organization of the pineapple juice value chain to supply local and regional markets. The network officially registered as an Economic Interest Group in February 2021. The founding member units are mostly women's cooperatives and are located in the major pineapple production areas of Benin (Zè, Allada, Torri-Bossito). The Network's mission is to be an organization that works with professionalism to promote the economic and inclusive development of its member enterprises and partners. The elected management team plans to recruit more members (processing units) from other regions. The network has its headquarters in the commune of Ze, where others crop such as soybean and vegetables are grown for nutrition and food security. As a new organization, ReTAB's current needs are technical, financial, material, and human resources for its proper functioning. Before its official registration, the network received a F2F volunteer assignment on marketing through DEDRAS NGO and, consequently, was able to significantly increase its sales through exports. In addition to that they also received, after official registration, another assignment focused on management which improved their understanding of how the network must function and be organized, leading to a redistribution of roles in the management team after the assignment.

## B. ISSUE DESCRIPTION

The pineapple processing units (members of the network) deliver a significant quantity of juice to the local market in Benin and other neighboring countries such as Burkina Faso and Niger. In line with the increase in demand, it is necessary to analyze the actual production potential and capacities of the units to establish a good production plan that can help to best meet demand. Demand is often not met, despite the units seem to have the capacity to meet it. Underuse of equipment and production capacities, in addition to weak or lack of production planning are some reasons for this low production performance, while opportunities exist and are multiplying. Furthermore, production management is weak; these small



units, which are mostly women-led cooperative, do not have production managers. An assessment is therefore necessary to provide: conclusive data on the level of production of each member unit of the network in relation to their real production capacity; data on the organization and planning of juice production by each unit; and data on demand management (relationships between units/network and raw material customers and suppliers). The units and the network more broadly lack the necessary expertise to reorganize the production management system at the level of each unit to respond effectively to demand.

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

The main objective of this assignment is to assess the organizational and operational capacity of ReTAB's member units according to the type of unit (individual enterprise, cooperatives, etc.) to develop a better production management plan to achieve the network's objectives and improve its competitiveness. Specifically,

- Assess the causes of the low production performance of the processing units and the network as whole
- Assess each processing unit, the appropriate use of planning and production tools and resources and to meet market demand
- Assess the use, by each ReTAB processing unit, of essential enterprise management documents
- Assess the production level of each ReTAB processing unit
- Develop a work/production plan to boost juice production for each unit and at the network level. (The plans at the unit level will be more operational while the one at the network level will be more strategic and will be a combination of the units' production objectives.)

### **D. HOST CONTRIBUTION**

For the achievement of this assignment, DEDRAS and ReTAB will provide the volunteer's transport between his/her hotel and the training venue. They will cover the rental cost of the meeting room and the cost of transporting participants to the group sessions. They will also ensure that local training aids and other teaching and working materials are in place. ReTAB will organize key and relevant members to work closely with the volunteer and ensure the assignment meets its objectives.

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

After this assignment, pineapple processing units, members of ReTAB, will have a better understanding of their current production challenges and how to realize their production potential and better use their resources. The network will also have a good production plan based on each unit's capacity to satisfy the growing demand for pineapple juice. This will lead to an increase in the network's pineapple juice



production and increase sales (especially in neighboring countries' markets). At least 50 persons, including 30 women will be trained on production planning and management to meet demand.

## F. DELIVERABLES

- Volunteer final report due BEFORE departure.
- Group presentation with local stakeholders at the end of the assignment.
- Volunteer outreach activities in the US and in-country, and on social media page (Facebook, etc.)
- Training manuals/customized tools/plans developed.
- Assignment related photos.
- Separate assessment report containing: an inventory of the organization and operation of the 25 processing units, an inventory of the production level per unit for the last two years, and a market-oriented production plan to boost the production of pineapple juice per unit.

## 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 security briefing. Any necessary hand-outs will be prepared and printed at CRS offices.</li> <li>• Travel to Abomey-Calavi and check in at Le Royal Space Hotel. 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; Detailed work plan covering all activities required.</li> </ul>
Day 3 - 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment of the network's organization in relation to their objectives</li> </ul>
Day 5-14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment of the juice production, production capacities, organization and operation of processing units; development of individual plans</li> </ul>
Day 15-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of data collected and sharing of the findings with the network</li> <li>• Work with the network on the proposed production management and acceleration plan</li> </ul>
Day 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report drafting</li> </ul>
Day 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wrap-up meetings with F2F staff and representatives of DEDRAS and ReTAB's members; discuss the report and final recommendations,</li> </ul>
Day 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Debriefing with CRS and USAID; material release, submit final documents</li> <li>• Volunteer departure</li> </ul>



## **H. DESIRABLE VOLUNTEERS SKILLS**

The desired volunteer for this assignment should have formal qualifications and strong experience in agri-food processing and SME production management. He/she should

- Be an expert in the development of small and medium-sized agri-food processing enterprises with a good knowledge of the functioning of “Economic Interest Groups” or;
- Be experienced and skilled in food processing business assessment, planning and market-oriented production plan.
- Have experience with SME pineapple processing units in West Africa and an understands of juice production.
- Have relevant experience in SME or factory production management and planning
- Be used to adult training and familiar with participatory approaches
- Being skilled in organizational management and financial and accounting management of small units is an asset.

## **I. ACCOMMODATION AND ANOTHER IN-COUNTRY LOGISTICS**

In Cotonou, on arrival and the following night, as well as at the end of the assignment, volunteers will stay at [Livingstone hotel](#), near the CRS office and not far from the airport. For the rest of assignment period for the work with the host organization, the volunteer will stay at the Royal Space Hotel of Abomey-Calavi and will travel back and forth to the different working areas with the translator and host’s team. In the field, CRS will hire a local translator for the volunteer’s work. The host’s management 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 main participants in this assignment are processors from the different processing units that are members of ReTAB and an advisor hired by DEDRAS to work daily with the network. Most of the participants do not have a high level of academic education and will need clear and basic explanations of some concepts. Some of the units are individual privately-owned units while most of them are women-led cooperatives. Their workforce is made up of local workers with no formal education. Some



processors (cooperative members) are also pineapple farmers. A local translator will work with the volunteer to ensure proper communication with participants.

- **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 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. For PowerPoint presentations, DEDRAS will provide a video projector.

- **Electricity, internet, cellphone signal, key security, health issues**

In general, electricity supply, internet connectivity and cellphone signal are stable in Abomey-Calavi and other communes of the assignment. The hotel in Abomey-Calavi has stable access to electricity and internet connectivity even though the internet signal is sometimes weak. The volunteer will also be given a cellphone with local sim card and data bundle that can be used to access internet when out in the field. Cellphone reception is good for both mobile networks (MTN and Moov) available. Although security levels in Benin are generally good, the volunteer will be instructed about security measures and safeguarding before going to the host organization. The volunteer is advised to bring along (in their hand luggage) any regular medications they take, to prevent health issues.

- **Working Environment and culture**

The volunteer will work in the communes of Ze, Toffo and Torri-Bossito where the processing units are located. These communes are in the southern part of Benin, about 40, 80, and 38 km from Cotonou respectively. The local language is Fongbe and most people are Christian, but the volunteer may also meet Muslims.

People are very nice and respectful, especially towards foreigners; they are social and open to collaborating with foreigners.

- **Recommended Reading**

CRS strongly recommends that the volunteer become familiar with this SOW, read documents on the SME Agri-food processing unit operation and production management in west Africa and in Benin. We also recommend reading about the pineapple sector in Benin and pineapple juice production, as well as the development and organization of Economic Interest Groups. The volunteer is encouraged to visit the [F2F library](#) for any relevant materials available. Some additional orientations could also be given by the host before assignment starts.



- **Weather Appropriate Clothing**

The weather appropriate clothing for the area is light (not dark) clothes. In the south of Benin, the weather will be relatively warm during the assignment period with some temperatures varying between 23 to 30 degrees Celsius. It will likely be sunny. December and January are usually dry with cold wind called Harmattan in December. Daily weather conditions in the department of Atlantique 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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