

IEE ATTACHMENT B: ENVIRONMENTAL GUIDELINES FOR FARMER-TO FARMER VOLUNTEERS (F2F)

Why do we need Environmental Guidelines?

A healthy environment and sustainable use of natural resources are essential to long-term economic growth. As with all USAID financed programs, the Farmer-to-Farmer Program is required to comply with USAID environmental regulations found in Title 22 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 216.3, specifying that the environment is to be safeguarded from adverse consequences in the implementation of all program activities. If not planned and implemented wisely, even the best intentioned assistance programs can have very real adverse impacts on real people's lives including not only their personal health but also the sustainability of the natural resources on which their present and future livelihood depends.

Within this framework, it is USAID's policy to:

- Ensure that the environmental consequences of USAID financed activities are identified and considered by USAID and the host country prior to a final decision to proceed, and that appropriate environmental safeguards are planned, adopted, implemented, and monitored;
- Assist developing countries to strengthen their capabilities to appreciate and effectively evaluate the potential environmental effects of proposed development strategies and projects, and to select, implement and manage effective environmental programs that mitigate potential adverse effects;
- Identify and mitigate impacts resulting from USAID actions upon the environment, including those aspects of the biosphere which are common and cultural heritage of all mankind; and
- Define environmental limiting factors that constrain development and identify and carry out activities that assist in restoring the renewable resource base on which sustained development depends.

Regardless of the type of their assignment, volunteers are expected to study the environmental impact assessment documents that were developed for their programs by USAID, their home organization, and the host government. The purpose is to enable volunteers to be able to consider the potential environmental consequences of their work and to promote active environmental stewardship. Volunteers have a tremendous opportunity to disseminate a uniform and consistent message to promote environmentally sound practices throughout the agricultural communities in which they work.

Disclaimer: The purpose of these guidelines is not to provide the volunteer with technical standards and procedures for food production, processing, storage, etc. The guidelines are to serve as a benchmark for the volunteer in reflecting on how his/her recommendations, advice, and efforts can serve to instill environmental stewardship and promote environmentally sound solutions.

Volunteer Responsibility & Good Practices:

Promoting Ecologically Sound Solutions

While the environmental impact assessment and other project design documents provide an important framework, volunteers are encouraged to think of ways in which, through their individual assignments, they can promote sustainable solutions to agricultural production, processing, and distribution issues

while maintaining an ecological equilibrium in those communities. To identify solutions to certain environmental problems, a series of questions need to be asked and answered.

- *What is the source of the environmental problem?*
- *What is the magnitude and impact of the problem?*
- *What measures will help avoid or reduce the problem?*
- *How to implement these measures?*

Volunteers are encouraged to consider environmental impacts and issues that indirectly relate to the agricultural sub-sector, as well as long-term and cumulative impacts on the local, regional, and global environments. As they consider their ideas for new kinds of interventions, volunteers must discuss them with their home organization's managers, their USAID manager, and host country counterparts to ensure that they have considered all potential impacts and that there will be a good chance for achieving the hoped for results.

Will my recommendations and efforts promote....

- soil and water conservation?
- protection of water, soil, air, and food from contamination? pollution prevention? ▪ ecologically sound management and disposal of wastes?
- integrated pest management (particularly alternatives to chemical inputs—the last resort)? ▪ the importance of occupational health and safety both on the farm and in the industry? → better bathroom facilities with soap for employees?
- awareness of environmental health risks?
- reform of government policies and regulations to better manage and protect natural resources?
 - reform of government policies and regulations to better protect farmers and other agricultural industry workers from environmental hazards?
- procedures for measuring, assessing, monitoring and mitigating the environmental impact of unsound practices currently in use?
- the emergence of an indigenous agricultural research capacity committed to developing processes and environment-friendly technologies?
- enabling agricultural exports by ensuring no inappropriate pesticides were used in production

Adverse Environmental Conditions and Protecting Your Health & Safety:

When we send volunteers on their assignments, we want to ensure that all volunteers are aware of severe environmental pollution problems and health risks that exist in certain areas. These hazards can be localized or regional. They can arise both from existing contamination and from the lack of adequate information, education, and regulatory controls.

Volunteers must exercise caution when actively participating in any of the agricultural production, processing, or distribution practices. Volunteers should be conscious of the general lack of enforceable environmental protection regulations and the prevalence of antiquated and defective equipment and machinery. Due to the lack of financial resources for maintenance and upkeep of equipment, training, and the provision of proper storage facilities, volunteers should use discretion when visiting farms and observing practices that involve machinery and facilities such as these.

With regard to pesticides, USAID's Environmental Compliance Procedures state that "all proposed projects involving assistance for the procurement or use, or both, of pesticides shall be subject to the procedures prescribed..." These procedures are jointly completed by USAID, the host government and partner organizations. Depending on the details of an activity, you may encounter such reviews with titles of Initial Environmental Examination, Environmental Assessment, or Pesticide Evaluation Review – Safe Use Action Plan (PERSUAP). These reviews are prepared prior to implementation of an activity in order to identify and understand potential environmental repercussions of proposed activities and to ensure mitigative actions are incorporated into the activities. The term 'pesticide' refers to any chemical or biological substance that is used to kill or repel pests. It is the generic term that includes insecticides (insect killers), herbicides (weed killers), rodenticides (rodent killers), fungicides (fungus killers), etc. Volunteers must understand and appreciate that all pesticides are poisons and many also can cause cancer, birth defects and other long term illnesses or even death. Some pesticides are more dangerous than others and the environmental impact assessment that is conducted on an activity selects the safest ones possible while creating requirements for expert training in their application and handling. The analysis evaluates the economic, social and environmental risks and benefits of the planned pesticide use, prescribes a limited list of pesticides that may be permitted to be purchased and/or used (even if they are purchased with non-activity funds) in an activity while establishing safety protocols and ensuring local health clinics have trained staff and antidotes to identify and treat pesticide poisonings. Volunteers may encounter situations where pesticides are being used that have not been approved for procurement or use in the activity.

In such cases the volunteer should immediately report the situation to their program manager and to the local USAID manager to jointly develop a solution to the problem. In all cases, volunteers need to:

- Take care of their own health first and if necessary, do not participate in that activity; ▪ Note possible negative effects on the environment;
- If a volunteer comes across inappropriate or misapplication of an approved pesticide and the volunteer is trained in pesticide use and safety, open the discussion up to alternative practices based on the findings of the approved environmental impact assessment that is in place for the activity; then report on the situation to their program manager and the USAID manager;
- If a volunteer is asked to recommend a pesticide and the volunteer is fully trained in pesticide application and safety and has studied the approved environmental impact assessment documents for the activity, the volunteer should recommend the appropriate approved pesticide from the assessment along with the approved training of the people who will use the pesticide.
- If the volunteer is not fully trained in pesticide application and safety, the volunteer should refer the request to their program manager and USAID manager with a request that a pesticide expert visit their site to provide the appropriate recommendation and training.

Volunteers should consider bringing with them: First aid kit, copies of passport, personal health card (shots, allergies, etc.), emergency phone numbers, contact names, allowable medications, cell phone, and technical support material.

Key Recommendations:

It is highly recommended that volunteers compile a general environmental evaluation for their individual assignments to gauge any potential negative (or positive) impacts. Discussion should concentrate on

environmental degradation, health and safety risks to the environment and humans, and recommendations for monitoring the project after assignments have been completed. This brief assessment should be included in the volunteers' final report. The following are helpful tools in this assessment process; USAID Environmental Compliance Procedures; and review of baseline information, if provided. If not provided, conduct a basic baseline survey to support your interventions.

Specific and detailed Environmental Guidelines include USAID/Africa Bureau's *Environmental Guidelines for Small-Scale Activities in Africa*, *LAC's Environmental Guidelines for Development Activities*, and the *Asia/ME Sectoral Environmental Guidelines*.

The Africa Bureau's 18 sectoral environmental guidelines can be found in Section II of the <http://www.encapafrika.org/egssaa.htm>. Section III covers Micro- and Small Enterprises.

Information sources on environmental health and safety:

- Hughes, J. Donald, *The Face of the Earth: Environment and World History*, 2000. ▪ Marrs, Timothy C., Ballantyne, Bryan, *Pesticide Toxicology and International Regulation*, 2004.
- Pavlinek, Peter, *Environmental Transitions: Transformation and Ecological Defense in Central and Eastern Europe*, 2000.
- Younes, Maged, et al, *International Food Safety Handbook: Science, International Regulation, and Control*, 1999.
- State Dept., International Travel Information: http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel_1744.html. ▪ CDC, Travelers' Health (by destination): <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>.
- Regulating Pesticides, International Issues: <http://www.epa.gov/oppfead1/international/#13> ▪ The International Programme on Chemical Safety (IPCS): <http://www.who.int/ipcs/en/>.