

Terms of Reference
Vegetable Business Development Consulting Team
GROW Liberia

Reports to: Senior Intervention Manager for Vegetables, GROW

Also involved: Team Leader, Monitoring & Results Measurement Manager, Market Development Specialist

Primary location: Monrovia, Liberia, with some travel to rural Liberia

Consultancy duration: up to 50 working days

Start date: August 2016

The Programme

GROW is a Sida-funded market development initiative utilising the 'Making Markets Work for the Poor' (M4P) approach to facilitate sustainable, pro-poor economic growth and stability across Liberia. Currently working in the oil palm, rubber, vegetable, cocoa and aquaculture sectors, the programme seeks to contribute to sustainable peace and poverty reduction through inclusive and integrated economic development in Liberia. Its objective is substantially increased incomes and employment opportunities for a large number of poor women, men and youth, created through agricultural market system change.

The focus of GROW's work in the vegetables sector is on supporting vegetable traders to gain access to finance in order to expand their businesses through forward contracts with farmers. The vegetable traders supply local markets and institutional buyers (supermarkets, hotels and restaurants) throughout Monrovia with produce from farmers located in Montserrado, Bong, Margibi and Nimba counties that are supported with inputs and extension advice. To complement this intervention, GROW is developing a Trader Growth Programme to improve the bankability of vegetable traders. This training programme aims at improving the business management skills of vegetable traders, including issues such as business planning, financial management and record-keeping.

The Role

GROW is seeking the services of a firm/team of consultants that can provide hands-on support to 3 traders in business planning and business operations, and assess their internal capacity and training needs in this area. The service provider will map out the formal and informal relationships the traders are engaged in to help GROW better understand the dynamics of their business operations, and assist in the process of signing forward contracts with farmers for produce. The service provider will use the insights gathered through the close interaction with the 3 traders to outline the content of a training module around business planning and management that can be used as part of a Trader Growth Programme that is currently being developed by GROW.

A list of areas in which the service provider will be required to work is outlined below.

Activity 1: Support 3 vegetable traders in signing of forward contracts with farmers

The service provider will guide and deliver on-the-job training for 3 traders who are in the process of signing forward contracts with farmers who will supply them with vegetables. The largest trader deals with around 70 farmers, the other two traders deal with around 20 and 50 farmers respectively.

This involves providing guidance to the traders in the preparatory phase prior meeting with farmers, including determining quantities and types of inputs to be supplied in close collaboration with an input retailer and supporting the traders in compiling and documenting relevant information. The service provider will also be present at (and probably initially facilitate) meetings between traders and smallholder farmers where the conditions of contracts, types, quality and quantities of vegetables to be supplied by smallholder farmers, and types and quantities of inputs to be supplied by traders, will be agreed upon.

Activity 2: Map out all relationships 3 traders are engaged in

In parallel to Activity 1, the service provider will conduct a network analysis for the 3 traders, mapping out all formal and informal relationships the traders are engaged in. Especially, this involves mapping out and understanding the traders' entire network of buyers and suppliers, including estimating the intensity and quality of relationships. It also includes mapping out and assessing relationships with other business partners, such as input retailers, transporters, financial institutions. Much of this information will be gathered through observing the traders' day-to-day operations and interactions with other stakeholders.

Activity 3: Diagnose internal structure and organisation of 3 traders

The service provider will assess the traders' internal structure and organisation. This also involves assessing the traders' business management skills and capacity building needs, which should be used as a basis to outline the content of a training module for traders in relation to business planning and management.

Deliverables:

- › Signed contracts between 3 traders and the farmers supplying them (final figure to be confirmed)
- › Written network analysis for 3 traders
- › Summary of challenges faced by traders; assessment of their internal structure and organisation, as well as their business planning and management skills
- › Outline of content and topics to be covered in training module on business planning and management

Timeframe and duration

The assignment will consist of up to 50 working days divided between the members of the consulting team, including travel days between Monrovia and Montserrado, Bong, Margibi and Nimba counties. The service provider is expected to start the assignment in August 2016.

Qualification and skills

The service provider is expected to present a team that covers the following qualifications and skills:

- › Extensive experience in business management, particularly for low capacity, small-scale businesses
- › Extensive knowledge of and experience in the Liberian agricultural sector, especially in the vegetables sector, including hands-on interaction with smallholder farmers and small-scale traders
- › Experience in developing simple business plans and providing business development support for small-scale businesses, especially agribusinesses
- › Experience in facilitating linkages between small-scale agricultural actors such as traders and smallholder farmers, including negotiation of contracts and agreements
- › Extensive experience in conducting surveys and studies, using qualitative and quantitative methods
- › Experience in delivering practical and hands-on trainings for small-scale businesses
- › Fluency in English, both written and spoken

Inquiries and submission of offers

For clarifications on the ToR, please contact cleopatra.johnson@growliberia.com. The deadline for submitting inquiries is the 10th of August 2016.

As part of your expression of interest and offer, please submit the following:

- Technical proposal, outlining your approach to the various phases of the assignment and the composition of your proposed team of consultants for each phase
- CVs of involved experts
- Profile of company
- References of company
- Indicative budget for the assignment

Please submit your offer as either pdf, Word or Excel files, and by email to cleopatra.johnson@growliberia.com.

The deadline for submitting offers is the 14th of August 2016.