

Market Information System (MIS) for Vegetable Sector Consultancy Terms of Reference

Reports to: Senior Intervention Manager for vegetable sector, GROW

Also involved: Team Leader, Market Development Specialist, GROW

Location: Monrovia, with travel to rural counties when necessary

Duration of engagement: 60 working days

Start date: April 24, 2017

Background

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 and cocoa 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 vegetable sector in Liberia is largely limited to home consumption of indigenous vegetables, with the vast majority of 'exotic' vegetables such as tomatoes, onions or lettuce sourced through imports. Liberia has strong potential to supply the domestic market with fresh exotic vegetables, but significant constraints exist in use of inputs, equipment, access to finance, buying/selling relationships, and market information. This is underscored by a general lack of trust between actors at different levels in the value chain, creating a reticence by many to make investments in the sector. The perceived fairness and transparency of prices are a major stumbling block to effective commercial relationships between traders and farmers in the vegetable sector.

To mitigate this, GROW is partnering with the Monrovia Vegetable Sellers Association (MVSA) and Farmers Union Network (FUN) to support the development, testing, implementation and scale-up of a Market Information System (MIS) that is relatively low-tech, easy to maintain, and accessible to traders and farmers in the vegetable sector. The MIS is intended to change the way that prices of vegetables are determined, oriented around dialogue and cooperation between MVSA and FUN, and thereby allow traders and farmers to build trusting relationships and engage in mutually beneficial sales of vegetables leading to increased income for all parties. As farmers increase production and traders provide a credible source of supply, more institutional buyers are expected to take an interest in sourcing local produce, allowing traders to expand to more farmer groups.

However, given the low capacity of the MVSA and FUN to identify and set up the right MIS platform, GROW, in collaboration with both organizations, is seeking an experienced Market Information System (MIS) expert to design, and develop a robust but yet simple Market Information System (MIS) and Membership Database for both organizations.

The Role

GROW is seeking the services of a MIS development specialist to work with MVSA and FUN to design and develop a robust but simple MIS and membership database for both organisations. The consultant will work closely with GROW, MVSA and FUN to design, develop, test and train dedicated staff of the two organizations to manage and operationalize the platform.

Responsibilities

Key responsibilities are as follows:

1. Hold meetings with MVSA and FUN to understand the background, needs and current situation surrounding the dissemination of information, including pricing;
2. Recommend an appropriate MIS and database platform;
3. Develop and test the MIS system and mobile platform and develop membership database for MVSA and FUN;
4. Train staff of MVSA and FUN to manage and implement/roll out said platforms;
5. Provide ongoing mentorship and monitoring of the use of the MIS.

Key Deliverables:

1. Initial report – detailing constraints and opportunities for the successful implementation of the MIS + mobile platform and membership database systems.
2. A low-tech, tested, easy to maintain and access MIS platform + mobile platform for traders and farmers.
3. Functioning membership database, with operational manual.
4. Capacity building report to be submitted to GROW.
5. Mentorship and monitoring report.
6. End of consultancy report – detailing all activities undertaken.

Skills and Experience:

- Recent experience of developing MIS systems;
- Expertise in developing a mobile platform for information dissemination;
- Experience of successfully engaging and consulting with different stakeholders, including large commercial farmers, local communities, smallholder farmers and Government officials;
- Experience in capacity building initiatives related to MIS within the agriculture sector, especially working with farmers and traders;
- An excellent command of written and spoken English, strong communication skills and attention to detail;
- Proven ability to manage databases and create innovative solutions for database management;
- Academic qualifications or equivalent work experience in Information Technology, database management and Management Information Systems;
- Experience of working with stakeholders in the vegetable sector (desirable).

Applicants should submit a CV and covering letter outlining their relevant experience and technical capacity required to undertake the consultancy to opportunities@growliberia.com. Please entitle the email "Vegetable MIS Application". The closing date for applications is 7th April 2017.