

TechnoServe Fellows Program

Volunteer consultants developing business solutions to poverty



Since 1996, TechnoServe has engaged more than 1,000 Fellows on 3 to 12-month assignments throughout Africa, India, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Our program offers Fellows the unique chance to contribute their skills to help those living in poverty, develop more global perspectives, and join an alumni community passionate about transformative change on a global scale.

This document provides examples of the typical projects Fellows have tackled. Please use this document as a resource to understand the skills and capabilities frequently required of Fellows and how those skills and capabilities are applied on the ground. Please keep in mind that the examples that follow are not exhaustive, and that no two projects are exactly alike.

Project Categories:

1. [Value Chain/Market Assessment](#)
2. [Client Services: Business Strategy and Capital Raising](#)
3. [Client Services: Operational Efficiency and/or Capacity Building](#)
4. [Research, Communications, and Marketing](#)
5. [Project and Proposal Design](#)
6. [Other](#)

PROJECT TYPE 1: VALUE CHAIN/MARKET ASSESSMENT

Sample Project: Dairy Value Chain Assessment and Industry Strategic Plan

Location: Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, with travel to peri-urban and rural locations

Duration: Five months

Project Purpose/Objectives

1. TechnoServe Tanzania's country program is aiming to develop a number of Industry Strategic Plans (ISPs) which will enable us to design our interventions in key sectors. Dairy is one sector for which we need to evaluate and prepare a TechnoServe engagement strategy.
2. TechnoServe is working with Heifer International and the International Livestock Research Institute to implement the East Africa Dairy Development Project (EADD) in targeted districts in Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda. Coming to the close of Phase 1 of the program, there is an opportunity to scale out to new countries including Tanzania. Development of a comprehensive model of the Tanzania dairy value chain is necessary to inform EADD design.

EADD will move smallholder farmers out of poverty by improving their participation in the dairy value chain. The vision of success for the EADD is that the lives of 179,000 families – or approximately one million people – will be transformed by doubling household dairy income by 2018 through integrated interventions in dairy production, market access, and knowledge application. The dairy ISP will enable TechnoServe to identify priority impact areas where we can best employ our market-oriented approach and competencies to improve the livelihoods and wellbeing of Tanzanian smallholder dairy farmers.

Project Description

The Fellow will be responsible for conducting a thorough study on the dairy industry. The Fellow will:

- Assess the current state of the dairy industry in Tanzania, developing an in-depth understanding of the sector and relevant issues.
- Produce a thorough analysis of the Tanzania dairy value chain, from milk production to transportation and retail, detailing the roles of each segment of the chain, major players, and the relationships between them.
- Conduct detailed analysis of the capacity, cost structure, and key opportunities and constraints for each segment in the chain.
- Recommend how to increase the competitiveness of the industry and the value chain, and specifically identify value-added opportunities in milk for smallholder farmers in Tanzania.
- Assess the scope for impact of dairy interventions on poverty and identify priority impact areas for TechnoServe within dairy (e.g. how many smallholder farmers could we impact, what are the types of beneficiary benefits that could be delivered).

Tasks

1. Structure Project Work Plan.

- Develop work plan and submit to the Tanzania Country Director and Regional Dairy Manager for input and approval.

2. Conduct Desk Research.

- Review previous studies and analyses of the dairy industry and value chain.
- Identify government, industry, and other data sources for the dairy sector in Tanzania and East Africa as a whole, and gather relevant data where possible.
- Develop and maintain a physical and digital archive with all relevant studies and data, and create a comprehensive resource base of organizations, individuals, reports, and other sources of information. Summarize key takeaways of relevant studies.
- Analyze existing data to obtain a preliminary estimate of the size of each segment of the value chain along with the relative importance of its major players, in terms of both volume and revenue.
- Analyze the model of economics for each segment within the value chain. Compare and contrast revenue and cost structures relative to similar segments of the value chain across the East Africa region.
- Determine knowledge gaps.

3. Present Preliminary Findings and Structure Primary Research.

- Present preliminary model of the Tanzania dairy industry – identifying key learnings to date and remaining knowledge gaps – to the TechnoServe Regional Dairy Manager and TechnoServe Tanzania Country Director.
- Present research plan and incorporate feedback.

4. Conduct Key Informant Interviews.

- Interview dairy industry stakeholders, including: farmers, dairy association representatives, chilling plant managers, processors, retailers, the Dairy Board, Business Development Service providers, government ministries, NGOs, and raw milk bulking businesses other than those with a chilling plant (e.g. traditional market sites), among others.
- Develop and maintain a map of value chain stakeholders for future engagement.

5. Produce a Comprehensive Value Chain Model.

- Break each segment of the value chain down into distinct components for in-depth analysis: feed; livestock and other production input markets; milk production; milk bulking; chilling and processing; packing and transportation; retail; and consumer.

6. Produce an Industry Strategic Plan (ISP) for Dairy in Tanzania.

- Submit ISP (Word and PowerPoint documents with supporting documentation in appendices) with:
 - Analysis of the dairy industry, market, and value chain, identifying barriers along the value chain.
 - Historical overview of dairy industry: How has the industry developed over the past 50 years? When did it peak? What is the forecast?
 - Market demand: current and future domestic market and export potential.
 - Current supply: summary of current supply landscape including profiles of key players and map of industry dynamics.
 - Cost structure of current and potential industry versus imports and global best practices.
 - Analysis of the state of supporting industries, for example inputs and transportation.
 - Key barriers to growth, including an understanding of which of these are addressable by TechnoServe (as opposed to structural barriers that cannot be addressed in the short term).
 - Future vision for industry, including job creation and goods purchased from rural poor.
 - Recommendations on how to grow the value of the dairy industry.

Expected Deliverables

- Approved work plan
- Gaps in knowledge for discussion with solicited feedback from the Regional Dairy Manager and East Africa Business Development Manager
- Comprehensive value chain model of the dairy industry in Tanzania (a minimum 25-page summary)
- PowerPoint document with supporting documentation
- Comprehensive ISP, PowerPoint and related files

- Knowledge transfer sessions with TechnoServe Staff in Tanzania outlining lessons learned and way forward
- Handover pack, including list of key industry stakeholders, interview notes, and supporting documents

Qualifications

- Strong analytical skills and ability to plan and prioritize quantitative and qualitative data collection and assessment
- Strong written and graphical presentation skills
- Strong financial modelling skills
- Ability to transform evidence-based assessments into operational strategy
- Ability to structure and manage complex tasks
- Proven ability to develop an industry or client strategy (including familiarity with developing issue trees, prioritization matrices, etc., to guide approach)
- Ability to interact effectively and diplomatically with a diverse range of stakeholders
- Ability to work independently

PROJECT TYPE 2: CLIENT SERVICES: BUSINESS STRATEGY AND CAPITAL RAISING

Sample Project: Peak Trading Client Services

Location: Zimbabwe

Duration: Four months

Project Purpose/Objectives

Peak Trading is an agricultural trading business that operates stationary depots as well as mobile buying stations (MBS) in rural areas of Zimbabwe. Peak Trading was selected as an AgroInnovation Zimbabwe winner, receiving a grant of \$50,000 as well as \$10,000 in technical assistance.

As its involvement with remote contract farmers increases, Peak Trading is interested in the support of a Fellow to: create a business plan for obtaining further funding, develop a contract farming framework, and to assess the opportunity to build online capabilities for interactions with smallholder farmers.

Project Description

The Fellow will work together with Peak Trading to develop a detailed business plan and an Excel financial model for use in raising further capital. In addition, the Fellow will support Peak Trading's development of a smallholder farmer data capture system.

Tasks

1. *Develop a detailed multi-year business plan and financial model.*
 - Detailed market analysis: What are realistic sales targets for Peak Trading based on the number of trucks Peak Trading has at hand?

- Location analysis and sourcing strategy: How should Peak Trading refine its opportunity identification approach in order to maximize small farmer and Peak Trading profits? Which areas of the country and crops represent the greatest opportunity?
 - Analysis of benefits of contract farming versus sourcing from open market, both immediately and over time: Does an opportunity exist for Peak Trading to incorporate contract farming into its process? If so, what would such an opportunity look like in scale, location, and structure? How could contract farming be introduced over time?
 - Assessment of value addition opportunities: What opportunities exist for Peak Trading to expand its operations into value-added products? What is the size of the market and the opportunity for one or two prioritized products? How and when should Peak Trading implement this plan?
2. *Develop investment memo based on the financial model.*
 3. *Develop training material and Peak Trading contract farming extension plan (if contract farming model selected).*
 - What are key considerations and success factors for contract farming? What templates (example contracts, M&E templates) can be provided to maximize Peak Trading's chances of success? Provide assistance in developing selection criteria and selecting farmers.
 4. *Create a data capture/database system to track smallholder farmer performance in the field.*
 5. *Based on Esoko Fellow work, evaluate the opportunity for Peak Trading to build its online capabilities and/or participate in a wider information-sharing platform.*
 - Review models designed for outreach to smallholder farmers.
 - Develop a platform of timing and approach options for Peak Trading to develop online capabilities and/or participate in a wider information-sharing platform, including costing out each of the options.
 - Determine which schedule to implement in partnership with Peak Trading.

Expected Deliverables

- Excel-based, five to 10-year financial model, including value-addition module
- Two to five page investment memo
- Contract farming recommendations and toolkit
- Data capture/database system
- Recommendations on building online capability and implementation plan

Qualifications

- Strong analytical skills and ability to plan and prioritize quantitative and qualitative data collection and assessment
- Strong written and graphical presentation skills
- Proven ability to devise creative solutions to business problems and design business plans
- Strong financial modelling skills

- Ability to transform evidence-based assessments into operational strategy
- Ability to structure and manage complex tasks
- Ability to interact effectively and diplomatically with a diverse range of stakeholders
- Ability to work independently

PROJECT TYPE 3: CLIENT SERVICES: OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY/ CAPACITY BUILDING

Sample Project: Economic Development Alliance for San Martin Program – Peru

Location: Tarapoto, San Martin, Peru, located in the northeast of the Peruvian Amazon rainforest

Length: Five months

Project Purpose/Objectives

Among the challenges facing the current cocoa and coffee value chains in San Martin is lack of understanding about: (1) market demands; (2) weak producer organizations with poor cooperative governance and financial management; (3) low producer loyalty and quality control; (4) existence of few businesses that can provide supporting or value adding services (i.e. transport, processing); and (5) frequent arms-length transactions between farmers and both exporters and cooperatives that prevent the creation of shared value between the value chain parties. At the same time, the San Martin region has tremendous opportunities – and incentives – to develop its cocoa and coffee value chains and tap into related niche markets that command premium prices.

To address these needs and opportunities, TechnoServe Peru launched the “*Economic Development Alliance for San Martin Program*,” a 3-year, \$7 million initiative that seeks to consolidate and accelerate the transition of the San Martin Region into a licit, prosperous and sustainable economy, increasing incomes and employment in a region new to TechnoServe, with a sustainable stewardship of environmental resources. Building on USAID’s alternative development efforts in the region, the Program will drive to full potential the currently fragile but promising coffee, cocoa and oil palm value chains in San Martin through three major components:

- Improve smallholder business group governance and implement best agricultural practices
- Strengthen linkages to global and high value markets for smallholder business groups
- Promote small and medium enterprise (SME) creation and growth in value addition, support services and innovation for the region’s key value chains

Project Description

TechnoServe will leverage Fellows’ expertise to improve the institutional strength and management capacity of smallholder producers– as part of a formal or informal group – and the SMEs – existing or start-ups – that provide them with services in order to consolidate San Martin’s value chains and transform the region into a reliable and robust marketplace for buyers. Addressing these needs will enable host organizations to increase their “bankability” to access financing and make necessary investments to improve or expand their operations, leverage the value of well-managed, well-functioning producer groups, develop the capabilities to market their goods and access new buyers, and promote the development of an ecosystem of supporting service providers.

TechnoServe will field five Fellows for five months each to help strengthen the business and organizational capacity of 30 producer groups or SMEs to assist them in transforming into reliable, competitive suppliers of quality agricultural products or services in key value chains. Fellows will support the host organizations in development of strategies for accessing financing and markets and promoting organizational development and best management practices. They will also work individually with clients to assess their specific needs as related to these areas and support the implementation of corresponding recommendations.

Tasks

Fellows focusing on the following three cross-functional areas will be supported by USAID's Farmer to Farmer Program, which has the objective of promoting the provision of U.S. based Fellow expertise to farmers, farmer groups, and agribusinesses in developing and transitional countries:

1. Organizational Strengthening and Improved Business Management

The goal of strengthening smallholder producer organizations and SMEs is fundamental to the development objectives for San Martin. TechnoServe is providing organizational training – including leadership, good governance, management, transparency – to producer organization leaders. In conjunction with this training, reinforcement of business management practices will strengthen organizations' capacity to optimally manage their limited resources and conduct sound business decisions that take into account long term goals. Groups that wish to formalize and consolidate will be evaluated and supported in the process as well. To conduct these activities, TechnoServe will deploy one Fellow with relevant experience in business management and start up to:

- As part of the broader TechnoServe program implementation team, develop and deliver workshops on good governance and management to leaders of producer associations
- Provide follow-on support in the application of these practices and management tools to at least 10 host organizations

2. Access to Finance

In order to upgrade production and pursue new market opportunities, smallholder producers and SME providers of supporting services will require significantly greater access to finance. To serve this need, TechnoServe will work with diverse local financial service institutions, private equity and public sector sources to broker finance with producer organizations and SMEs. While sources of financing are available in the region, there is currently little coordination or support to connect demand and supply, with producers uninformed or unable to access these mainly traditional sources. To enable producers and nascent supporting businesses to access credit, two Fellows under this component will work with the program team on:

1. Identifying and analyzing the supply of financing in the region
2. Determining and segmenting the financial needs of host organizations; and incorporating the needs of non-program organizations with similar attributes

3. Liaising with financial institutions to facilitate or improve the link between their products and producer and business needs; and coordinating with financial entities to develop new financial products as necessary
4. Conducting general training on basic financial management for host organizations and other program participants as appropriate
5. Conducting due diligence on the approximately 10-15 organizations to be selected for individual follow- on coaching
6. Supporting the selected host organizations to prepare their applications for financing
7. Training host organizations – to include both SMEs and producer organizations - to work independently with creditors and financial institutions

3. *Improving Market Readiness*

A strategic, market-driven approach underpins all TechnoServe activities in San Martin, driven by a fact-based analysis of the unique market opportunities and constraints faced by smallholder producers. As part of supporting value chain development, TechnoServe will implement a series of activities – including business round tables and road shows – to attract new private sector partners and buyers to the region and to facilitate market linkages with producers and SME service providers. To make the most of these opportunities and position the region’s producers and SMEs as ready and able suppliers of goods and services, two Fellows will assist a minimum of 10 host organizations as follows:

- Rapid analysis of local, regional and national markets for the value chains with the most economic importance and program participant interest, to ensure Fellows’ understanding of the local context and opportunities
- Support the selection of a minimum of 10 host organizations to receive individual support
- Design marketing strategies, including product positioning
- Design implementation plans for both the short term – with execution to be supported by the Fellow - and the medium term – to enable continued implementation of marketing strategies by the host organizations
- Delivery of group training sessions on topics including web site development and management for SMEs, and identification of markets and negotiation for the broader group of program participants

Qualifications

- Very strong analytical skills and ability to plan and prioritize quantitative and qualitative data collection and assessment
- Strong written and graphical presentation skills
- Proven ability to devise creative solutions to business problems and design business plans
- Strong financial modelling skills
- Ability to transform evidence based assessments into operational strategy
- Ability to structure and manage complex tasks
- Ability to interact effectively and diplomatically with a very diverse range of stakeholders
- Ability to work independently

PROJECT TYPE 4: RESEARCH, COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

Sample Project: Coffee Initiative: Sharing Programmatic Lessons Learned

Location: Kigali, Rwanda

Duration: Three months

Project Purpose/Objectives

TechnoServe has agreed with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to develop a set of lessons learned from TechnoServe's Coffee Initiative Phase 1 Project (2008 – 2011). These lessons learned will be disseminated to global coffee industry stakeholders and to the development community in a concise format that contains sufficient detail to provide useful guidance to the reader. The lessons learned have been selected due to their importance and perceived impact through the transfer of knowledge beyond TechnoServe staff. The dissemination of these learnings will impact the global coffee industry and development community well beyond the life of TechnoServe's Coffee Initiative project.

Tasks and Expected Deliverables

1. Conduct field visits and interviews with TechnoServe clients, partners, and staff.
2. Develop short papers and, where appropriate, summary brochures on the following topics:
 - *Fixing cooperative governance – a successful partnership between the Rwandan government and TechnoServe:* Poor cooperative governance practices, whether unintentional (e.g., bad investment decisions) or intentional (e.g., corruption), discourages farmer participation in cooperatives. In Rwanda, TechnoServe partnered with the Rwandan government to develop a model implementing accountability and transparency practices to tackle poor cooperative governance. Accountability was established through performance contracts that incentivized local governments to hold cooperative leaders accountable, while TechnoServe's financial transparency sheets provided the information that government officers needed to identify specific cooperative weaknesses. This partnership led to the dramatic turnaround of a number of failing cooperatives, a result that will grow as coffee exporters assume responsibility for creating annual financial transparency sheets for their supplier cooperatives.
 - A short paper will present recommendations to other East African nations on how to implement this cooperative accountability-transparency model.
 - *Increasing the participation of women in rural training programs:* Many development programs struggle with how to ensure the participation of women in project activities. TechnoServe has been able to effectively recruit women to its agronomy training programs at the outset as well as grow women's participation over time, (e.g., Tanzania: 20 percent participation in year 1 to 37 percent in year 2).
 - A short paper will describe the practices – along with their results – that can assist other projects in determining successful approaches to enhance the participation of women in rural communities.
 - *Building human capacity for industry development:* Launching a large regional project results in many challenges, particularly involving the recruitment and training of more than 300 staff members. At the outset of the Coffee Initiative Phase 1 Project, TechnoServe committed to both private and public coffee industry partners that the project would limit hiring of staff from industry

partners. This required TechnoServe to develop innovative approaches to training fresh graduates, resulting in the creation of a new cadre of coffee professionals.

- A short paper will describe the various approaches used to: recruit staff; build staff capacity; manage and retain talent; and performance improvement. The paper will also discuss these approaches' benefits and consequences pertaining to industry performance and the development of employment opportunities for young professionals.

Qualifications

- Excellent communication and written and graphic presentation skills
- Proven ability to work independently, delivering high-quality products
- Strong knowledge of business fundamentals
- Proven ability to structure and manage complex and high quantities of information quickly, and to convey that information effectively
- Strong interviewing skills and the ability to gather information effectively in a multi-cultural environment
- Strong research skills and proven project leadership
- Experience with marketing a plus

PROJECT TYPE 5: PROJECT AND PROPOSAL DESIGN

Sample Project: Business Development and Program Design

Location: Accra, Ghana

Duration: Six to nine months

Project Purpose/Objectives

TechnoServe has been striving to improve the lives of smallholder farmers and small business owners in Ghana for 40+ years. In 2012, the organization will be revisiting the role and position TechnoServe plays in the development of Ghana. The goal is to design a future-proof positioning and project portfolio. The Fellow will support strategy development, business development and program design for the organization. S/he will work closely with the Country Director and Deputy Country Director for Ghana, in conjunction with TechnoServe staff on existing programs. Key activities will include:

1. Contributing to the design of the TechnoServe-Ghana funding strategy
2. Developing strategic plans and program designs for selected topics
3. Supporting the marketing and selling of existing rice and cowpea concepts
4. Creating compelling material on TechnoServe-Ghana success stories
5. Other projects as agreed by Country Director and Fellow

Tasks

1. *Contributing to the design of the TechnoServe Ghana funding strategy*

TechnoServe-Ghana works to enhance the lives of Ghanaians through the development of agricultural and small-scale businesses. TechnoServe is now re-defining how it will fund these activities going forward. The Fellow will map the donors and nonprofit organizations currently active in Ghana. Furthermore, the Fellow

will analyze the agri-business industry and funds available for the development of smallholder farmers and small businesses. These analyses will be used to define the TechnoServe-Ghana funding strategy.

2. Developing strategic plans and program designs for selected topics

TechnoServe-Ghana has identified a number of areas in the agri-business and entrepreneurship spaces that have development needs TechnoServe can address successfully. Activities include:

- Entrepreneurship: analyze the causes of the lack of start-ups and entrepreneurship in general in Ghana, and design a program with identified partnerships to address these causes.
- Making Markets Work for the Poor (M4P): define markets that bear potential for the poor population of Ghanaian society and design strategies to open up these markets.
- Financial gaps in rural finance: define the ideal state of rural finance in Ghana, analyze the current rural financial system, and perform gap analysis. Suggest potential successful interventions and partnerships.
- Staple crop enhancement in North Ghana: Analyze constraints in the value chain and propose intervention programs.

3. Supporting the marketing and selling of existing rice and cowpea concepts

TechnoServe-Ghana has developed program concepts to enhance the value chains of rice and cowpea for smallholder farmers in Ghana. The Fellow will assist with the marketing and selling of these concepts to donors in and outside of Ghana. Work may include the tailoring of the concepts to the needs of particular donors as well as presenting the concepts to interested parties.

4. Creating compelling material on TechnoServe Ghana success stories

TechnoServe-Ghana has an overview of local success stories that are used for marketing and fundraising purposes. The Fellow will develop this into compelling material that can be used with various stakeholders. In particular, TechnoServe-Ghana seeks to develop a new overview of success stories in 'mining linkages' programs.

Deliverables

- Thorough analysis of agri-business industry and funds available for the development of smallholder farmers and small businesses in Ghana.
- Strategic plans and recommendations for entrepreneurship, M4P, rural finance and/or staple crop interventions in Northern Ghana.
- Written briefs on all partner, stakeholder and industry expert interviews.
- PowerPoint decks detailing summary findings and recommendations.
- Compelling marketing material.

Qualifications

- Excellent communication and written and graphical presentation skills
- Strong research skills and proven project leadership
- Proven ability to structure and manage complex and high quantities of information quickly and convey that information effectively

- Strong interviewing skills and the ability to gather information effectively in a multi-cultural environment
- Proven ability to work independently, delivering high-quality end products
- Good knowledge of business fundamentals
- Experience with proposal/program design, a plus

PROJECT TYPE 6: OTHER

Other projects available from time to time may include, but are not limited to:

- Business plan competition design and implementation
- Strategic research and analysis
- Impact assessment/monitoring and evaluation
- Training curriculum design and delivery
- Risk assessment and mitigation strategies

