

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A CASE STUDY ON REACHING WOMEN FARMERS IN BENINCAJU

1. Background

TechnoServe is a US-registered 501 (c) iii nonprofit development organization operating in globally and in Benin. TechnoServe's mission is to create income, employment and opportunity throughout the developing world. This is accomplished via an integrated value chain approach, catalyzing the activities of diverse actors serving defined markets, in order for low income and economically excluded communities to be empowered to take advantage of the opportunity that those markets represent.

The Cashew Integration and Acceleration Program (BeninCajú), implemented in partnership with Catholic Relief Services and funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is a multi-year, industry-wide initiative to strengthen and expand the cashew sector in Benin into a more productive, competitive, and inclusive industry by working with farmers, processors, and policymakers. BeninCajú conducts trainings on improving farm management and post-harvest handling for producer groups; provides technical assistance for new and existing processing facilities; facilitates financing and market linkages for processors; and builds the capacity of industry associations and public sector agencies. Recently, BeninCajú received additional funding that will allow the project to extend into 2024 to expand the reach and deepen the impact of the program.

PROGRESS TO DATE:

- The project is on track to reach at least 40% women among the trained producers. Implementing partners – CRS, DEDRAS, CRADIB, and FENAPAB – lead the initial efforts on training. One of the challenges that emerged in reaching women producers was the criteria in many organization's policies that producers had to have at least a quarter hectare of land in their name to be able to participate in cooperatives and receive services. This criterion created a barrier for the women to participate since many do not meet the land-ownership requirements and put at risk the project's ability to reach its target.
- The project invested in the conducting a gender analysis to identify gender-based constraints that would reduce the project's ability to reach and benefit women. It developed an action plan to identify specific strategies the project could take to meet its objectives. The action plan included strategies like identifying gender focal points at the key partner institutions, including ATDA4, which also updated its performance indicators for focal points to include measures of whether individuals are reaching women in their communes.
- Actions have also been taken in improving women's access to finance. The Services de Financement Decentralises have received gender awareness training and have also explored opportunities for how to support women's production activities.
- With respect to cashew processing, actions have also been taken to improve the processing industry and create jobs, 70% of them for women. BeninCajú is also working with four factories to advocate for improved working conditions. In these factories, which employ over 1,900 people—nearly 1,300 of them women, all are providing ventilated workplaces, childcare services, and mechanized processing, and three are providing meals on site and transportation for staff.

- At the start of 2019, BeninCaju had trained more than 30,000 producers and more than 680 members of technical staff in processing firms, had created more than 800 new jobs, supported 8 cashew nut processors, and launched a new cashew apple product with 11, mainly women-managed, processors. Additional results show:
 - Women represent 34% of farmers trained
 - Women account for 72% of the personnel trained at processing plants
 - Women represent 38% of all project beneficiaries.

2. General Purpose of the Case Study

The BeninCaju project has, from its beginning, made efforts to ensure it is implemented in ways to address gender inequalities and support women's economic empowerment. The project conducted a gender analysis and has a gender action plan that outlines the action areas across the cashew value chain. It targets women as farmers and members of cashew associations and women as employees in processing plants to advance their economic opportunities, as well as the women and men involved in the various private and public sector institutions that make up the cashew value chain.

In line with TechnoServe's corporate target, the project aims to ensure that 40% of project beneficiaries are women. Over the course of the project, BeninCaju has steadily increased the share of women farmers among its beneficiaries to 34%. This progress has been achieved through a range of activities including but not limited to adopting inclusive recruitment practices, working with key actors, like FENAPAB and municipal governments, to address barriers in access to land and cooperatives, and developing the capacity of staff across the project and its partners.

These activities are led by a Rural Finance and Gender Specialist, working in close collaboration with other team members.

This case study will analyze BeninCaju's women's economic empowerment approach and document the process, results, and lessons learned gained through its efforts to reach and benefit women across the cashew value chain. The case study will examine constraints and opportunities at multiple levels and across the value chain, including those associated with the context and the project. The consultant should draw conclusions about the critical ingredients for the project's progress in advancing women's economic empowerment.

3. Specific tasks:

3.1 Key stakeholder interviews

Given current restrictions and limitations on travel, the consultant will need to design a data collection process that can be implemented remotely with support from the BeninCaju team.

- 3.1.1 Interview and gather perspectives from key BeninCaju staff at Technoserve and other implementing partners, involved in supporting and implementing efforts to reach women.
- 3.1.2 Interview and gather perspectives from staff at key organizations in the cashew value chain (e.g., FENABAP, ATDA4).

- 3.1.3 If possible, coordinate with BeninCaju staff to conduct focus groups and/or interviews with a representative set of women and men cashew farmers and cooperative leaders.

3.2 Data Review and Analysis

- 3.2.1 Review data, including sex-disaggregated data, to be provided by BeninCaju partners, including attendance at training, adoption of practices, participation in cooperatives, and other.
- 3.2.2 Review published sex-disaggregated data available and other literature on men's and women's participation in the cashew sector in Benin.

3.3 Supervision

- 3.3.1 The consultant will coordinate the final report production and content with the Gender and Rural Finance Specialist for BeninCaju in coordination with TechnoServe's Global Gender Director.

4. Case Study content expected (10 – 15 pages):

- 4.1 Brief context of gender issues in agriculture and within the cashew value chain in Benin, and to the extent necessary, within West Africa. This should highlight the specific gender-based constraints that restrict or limit women farmer's participation in and access to benefits from the cashew value chain in Benin.
- 4.2 Detailed description and timeline of the evolution of the project's work to reach and benefit women
- 4.3 Challenges and responses in the context and within the project
- 4.4 Lessons learned and success factors
- 4.5 Best practices for reaching and benefitting women farmers

5. Conditions of the Engagement:

The case study is expected to require approximately 1 month of full-time engagement of which:

- 5.1 One week to review existing literature, project documents, develop questionnaires, and train Benin-based data collection team
- 5.2 One week to conduct interviews and coach field staff remotely
- 5.3 Two weeks to analyze data and produce a final report

6. Deliverables

- 6.1 Work plan with outline for case study and questionnaires
- 6.2 First draft of case study
- 6.3 Final draft of case study

7. Academic Background

Graduate Degree in Gender Studies, Anthropology, Sociology, International Development, Economics or closely related disciplines.

8. Experience

- Demonstrated experience and knowledge of gender issues in agriculture, ...
- Demonstrated experience developing best practice guides or case studies
- Excellent communication and teamwork skills
- Well-organized and detail-oriented
- Interest in development
- Ability to work independently, flexibly and responsively, with a strong commitment to excellence
- Able to communicate precisely and effectively
- Able to prioritize and meet deadlines
- Proficiency in English and French.

9. Knowledge of the local conditions

Must have general understanding of the economic, social and cultural characteristics of developing countries and preferably West Africa

10. Other Characteristics

- i. Professional:
 - Must have the ability to interact with people of different social strata.
 - Must have strong analytical skills.
 - Must have knowledge of the social sector and sense of support to the community.
- ii. Personal:
 - Commitment to social development
 - Availability to travel internationally

11. Nature of Contract

Consultancy. Please refer to contract.

12. Recruitment process

- Request CVs and writing sample
- Collect CVs
- Contact consultant candidates for interviews
- Conduct telephone or face to face interviews
- Committee to select candidate
- Formally offer consultancy to the selected consultant

13. Cost of the Consultancy and Form of Payment

Consultant fees will be paid as follows:

1. 40% paid upon contract signature
2. 60% upon delivery of the final report.