



## **BeninCajù | Farmer Support and Processing Components**

### **Organic Certification Project**

**Selection of an Expert Consultant in Organic Cashew Certification**

Terms of Reference

March 2021



**Title:** Selection of an Expert Consultant in Organic Cashew Certification

**Responsible for the activity:** Farmer Support Manager & Processing Manager

**Location:** Cotonou with possible travel in the north of Benin.

**Deadline for submission:** May 22, 2021

## **I. Presentation of TechnoServe**

TechnoServe, Inc. ([www.technoserve.org](http://www.technoserve.org)) is an international nonprofit organization founded in 1968 and dedicated to economic development around the world. Its mission is to work with enterprising people in the developing world to build competitive farms, businesses and industries.

In order to create sustainable solutions, TechnoServe helps people at the base of the pyramid not only to increase their income, but also to recover from difficult situations by using their new skills and knowledge. The benefits of this type of development ripple through families and communities, promising a better future for those facing poverty.

TechnoServe works in more than 29 countries across Africa, Latin America and Asia, helping thousands of businesses and transforming approximately 10 million lives.

BeninCajù is a five-year project funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) through its Food for Progress Fund (FFPr). It is implemented by TechnoServe in partnership with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and local organizations in Benin. BeninCajù uses a sector-wide approach that aims to improve the cashew sector in Benin in order to achieve more productive, diversified and inclusive economic growth for the benefit of Benin and its people.

Over the life of the project, BeninCajù will increase yields and incomes for 35,000 smallholder nut farmers, triple national processing capacity, catalyze the development of the nascent by-product market, and set the sector on a path to growth and success. The project began its main activities in August 2016 through five components.

## **II. Context and justification of the mission**

Organic agriculture is booming in the world. The global organic market has been undergoing considerable change and growth in recent decades. The number of organic farms counted worldwide increased by almost 118,000 in 2017 compared to 2016 (+4.3%).<sup>1</sup>

In African countries, the development of organic agriculture often raises the issue of securing food for a rapidly growing population.

In Benin, 80% of the 11 million inhabitants depend on agriculture<sup>2</sup>. However, the vast majority of these producers practice conventional and subsistence agriculture, cultivating small plots of land, without the infrastructure or means to counteract climatic hazards and crop failure, and often with low incomes.

Faced with this situation, organic agriculture is a real opportunity for development in the country. The practice of organic agriculture allows producers to meet the high demand for organic products in OECD countries<sup>3</sup>. It thus favors an increase in the income of small producers and the improvement of their living conditions thanks to obtaining premiums for organic certification, the promotion of good agricultural practices, the marketing of food products of good nutritional and sanitary quality.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.agencebio.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Carnet\\_MONDE\\_2019-1.pdf](https://www.agencebio.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Carnet_MONDE_2019-1.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Source: World Food Programme (WFP) data

<sup>3</sup> Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

In addition to cotton and other advanced crops in organic production in Benin, the market for organic cashew nuts has great potential. It constitutes a niche opportunity for small producers and buyers (processors, exporters) who are actively seeking organic cashews on the local market.

However, the quality requirements for nuts are high, certification through external audits is costly and the certification process for return on investment can be lengthy.

In order to effectively support the creation of a national organic cashew market, TechnoServe, through the BeninCajù project, wishes to work alongside producers and buyers in the development and implementation of an organic certification project for more than 11,000 cashew producers.

In order to successfully design, implement and easily replicate this project, TechnoServe would like to engage the services of a consultant with expertise in organic cashew certification.

The present terms of reference are designed to specify the modalities for the recruitment of the Expert Consultant.

### **III. Objectives of the mission**

Organic certification consists of issuing an authorization to market products in the organic sector, if the production system complies with the necessary regulations.

This certification involves the granting of a certificate authorizing a product to be marketed as "organically grown" and to refer to the name and code number of the inspection body.

Through the development of an organic certification project, BeninCajù hopes to certify organic at least 5650 tons of cashew nuts by 2023, with more than 11250 small producers affected.

In general, the Consultant's mission will be to work alongside the team in charge of managing the organic project, in order to support its design, implementation, achievement of results and sustainability of achievements.

More specifically, the Expert Consultant will be expected to contribute to:

- Define the project implementation strategy;
- Plan and budget the activities identified in the strategy;
- Conduct field activities as part of the certification process;
- Support buyers' supply chain security strategy;
- Identify and facilitate relationships between different stakeholders.

### **IV. Expected results**

At the end of the Consultant's mission, the following results are expected:

- The project implementation strategy is clearly defined;
- Activities leading to the certification of 5650 tons of cashew nuts are identified, planned, budgeted and implemented;
- Field activities for producer certification are conducted and documented;
- The supply chain of partner buyers is secured;
- Communication between the various stakeholders is transparent, constructive and cost-effective.

### **V. Consultant's activities**

Under the responsibility and in close collaboration with the Farmer Support and Processing component managers, the cashew organic certification consultant will have to conduct activities related to

- **To the development of the project**

- Provide expert advice in defining the strategy of the organic certification project;
- Contribute to the identification of activities useful to the achievement of the objectives;
- Provide sound advice in the planning and budgeting of identified activities;
- Support the identification and facilitate exchanges with partner buyers and stakeholders.

- **To the implementation of the project activities**

- Support the certification application process for producers with expert advice;
- Facilitate the relationship with a certification body (or bodies)
- Organize and implement the white audit;
- Check inspection reports;
- Contribute to the review of the documents developed;
- Evaluate the audit report in order to verify the conformity of the collected data with the rules established by the international standards in terms of organic agriculture;
- Contribute to the training of trainers;
- Provide expert advice on tools and software to use;
- Organize and carry out, in agreement with the project team, the organic audits with clients in accordance with the mission orders and the audit schedule;
- Support by phone, email, online and/or in person as needed with buyers and/or cooperative organizations, individual producers and other stakeholders;
- Give instructions for the removal of non-conformities and the obtaining of certificates
- Participate effectively in the implementation of project activities.

- **Monitoring project activities**

- Support the conduct of follow-up assessments to obtain and maintain certification
- Contribute to the development of natural phytosanitary products.
- Produce an evaluation report of the activities carried out, as required.
- Prepare and deliver comprehensive audit reports
- Evaluate system plans and corrective actions.
- Verify and validate the labeling and the reference to organic agriculture of the products.

## **VI. Deliverables**

The Consultant will submit a mission report outlining the activities conducted, difficulties encountered and recommendations to the project team. The general report is due at the end of the mission and must be sent in physical and/or electronic form to TechnoServe no later than one week after the end of the mission.

However, monthly reports will be due and will condition the payment of the Consultant's fees.

All the documents and/or tools that the Consultant will have elaborated during the month concerned will be annexed to these different reports.

Content and copies of materials used during the mission will be made available to the project coordination team in electronic format (editable).

In particular, at the end of my assignment, the consultant will provide:

- Consulting report on the implementation of operational activities

- Literature review report
- Audit report
- Review of documents to be completed for the certification body
- Proposal report following corrective actions requested by the certification body...

## **VII. Qualifications required: Consultant expertise and profile**

The Consultant should have at least ten (10) years of effective and varied experience in supporting the organic certification of small-scale cashew producers directly linked to buyers:

- Graduate degree with a minimum of 4/5 years of higher education from a school of agronomy, management, business administration, project management or equivalent;
- Experienced in conducting certification, audit, inspection and related processes;
- Good knowledge of the procedures in the field of Organic Agriculture at national and international level;
- Good knowledge of production rules and certification procedures,
- Organic agriculture inspector,
- Have performed at least 10 inspections on behalf of a certification body,
- Have accompanied at least 5 structures to organic certification,
- Good grasp of the parameters of certification cost billing
- Good computer skills and ability to work with online systems;
- Good ability to build relationships and converse effectively with farmers, leaders of agricultural organizations ;
- Ability to conduct an interview: creativity in questioning, retaining information, probing and understanding the dynamics in a conversation;
- Good writing skills;
- Understand the basics of cooperative business and management on issues such as governance, financial management, business planning
- Results-oriented, professional, rigorous and autonomous;
- Good knowledge of the cashew industry, its national economic environment, the organization of cooperatives and good agricultural practices would be an asset;
- Be a good teacher and have good communication (oral and written) and interpersonal skills;
- Be impartial;
- Good command of French.
- Good knowledge of office automation (MS Office / Windows).

## **VIII. Period of execution of the mission**

The organic certification project runs until 2023.

The Organic Certification Expert Consultant will support the project implementation team in the first year of the project to certify at least 3,000 tons of cashew nuts.

The mission is planned to be executed over a period of one year.

The number of consultation days is set at 24 days of intervention, at a rate of two days per month.

## **IX. Terms and Conditions**

- All submissions to this RFP must be received by the date and time indicated. Any late submissions will not be considered.
- Any bid not complying with this request will be rejected.

- All contracts will be initially contracted with TechnoServe and are contingent upon continued funding from the lessor.
- TechnoServe reserves the right at any time to accept or reject any bid or to cancel the contracting process without justification. TechnoServe shall have no liability for the cancellation or rejection of the contracting process to any bidder.
- TechnoServe reserves the right to accept all or part of the bid at the time of contract.
- All information provided by TechnoServe in this RFP is made in good faith. The information in this solicitation is subject to change. TechnoServe is not responsible for the use of the information submitted by bidders, nor for any liability or damages related thereto.
- TechnoServe reserves the right to request direct agreement with any bidder.
- Bidders are solely responsible for paying any and all costs of any nature whatsoever that are related to the bid and may be charged to the bidder or a third party. All bids and other bid support documents will become the property of TechnoServe and will be kept confidential with respect to those bids and support documents that have been clearly marked confidential by the bidder.
- The RFP is not and will not be considered an offer by TechnoServe.

## **X. Form and content of the submission**

All submissions must be in French and contain:

- A letter of application;
- A technical offer including:
  - Legal existence documents
  - Tax documents up to December 31, 2019
  - A brief overview of the company (Full legal name, jurisdiction and address of the company, full legal name and nationality of the CEO/Director or other senior managers of the company, year the company was established);
  - Understanding the mission;
  - Work methodology;
  - The Activity Timeline;
  - Execution schedule;
  - Consultant's Curriculum Vitae;
  - Three (3) to five (5) technical references from the consultant or firm;
  - Certificates of completion for similar assignments.
- A financial bid that shall specify:
  - the total lump sum of fees and reimbursable expenses in XOF ;
  - shall mention the details of the global lump sum with the taxes/fees clearly mentioned (travel expenses, per-diem, working days, etc);
  - Provide information on payment methods and conditions.
- A calendar of events.

Questions regarding the terms of reference may be directed [offresbenin@tns.org](mailto:offresbenin@tns.org), and must be received no later than April 15, 2021. Responses to questions will be distributed to all interested parties by the same day.

The cost of the consultant's fee will be set forth in the service contract to which these terms of reference will be attached.

The consultant may also comment on the content of the present ToR, and possibly modify the number of days of consultation at the level of activities by providing a precise justification for this modification.

## **XI. Applications**

Qualified and interested candidates may submit their application directly with a CV, cover letter and proposed daily fee to the following [offresbenin@tns.org](mailto:offresbenin@tns.org), or to our website: <https://tnsbenin.workable.com> no later than May 22, 2021.