USAID-Funded
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Farmer-to-Farmer Program F2F

Request for Technical Assistance
Scope of Work Outline

Market Niches

Executive summary: The majority of producers' organizations do not have market information for their products. This is due, in large part, to the prevailing method of products with low added value entering the market through intermediary buyers. One of the main objectives of F2F Colombia is working to develop a regional food hub, PROTOS – Market for Life. The main principles and basic characteristics of PROTOS have been determined, but there are critical gaps related to market opportunities and niches where the food hub should be focused for long-term success. This assignment will, from a market perspective, examine market alternatives and the relationship between producers and consumers in Meta to outline strategies for PROTOS to develop.

The work done by F2F volunteers has identified individual producers and associations that are selling products with added value including: yogurt, cakes, chocolate, cheese, and other processed products. These producers are looking to identify other ways to increase their sales and to get more consumers interested in products coming directly from producers and in a sustainable local market. They need support to improve their market strategies. It is important to address logistical issues for alternative marketing and to achieve an efficient relationship between producers and consumers. The main problems are:

- Farmers do not have market information for their products
- Farmers' organizations do not have procedures for to collect market information
- Lack of marketing strategies for PROTOS Market for life

The volunteer should be has academic background in economics, business management or a related field. S/he should have experience with market studies for local food hubs and knowledge about market strategies for small farmers' products.

Background: The so-called modernization of agriculture in South America, since the middle of the last century, has polarized the production structure; on one extreme are the commercial enterprises, on the other one are the family farms at different stages of development (Chumacero, 2013). Despite its high relevance in food production, especially for local consumers, rural employment generation, land use efficiency, and others, family farming has been less favored by most agricultural policies in the region than industrial and commercial farming (Araujo, 2009; FAO, 2012). One of the more important challenges for smallholder farmers as they seek economic development is market opportunities. Small and medium farmers produce 50 – 60% of the all food in Colombian, but intermediary buyers and market monopolies concentrate the profits. There is typically no contact between producers and consumers, and the agricultural market is unstable with inconsistent prices, supplies and deliveries. These variabilities affect small-scale farmers' stability and profitability. At the same time, consumers demand higher quality and regular deliveries. These interests overlap when agricultural products are returned to the local market where small famers interact with consumers, one of the goals of PROTOS.

The PROTOS Market for Life is a strategy to change the status quo and improve the link between small and medium-scale farmers and the market. By using the internet and a purpose-built software platform, PROTOS will provide the organizational structure to connect consumers with producers. F2F Colombia has had two related assignment, VP-4 Local Food Market and VP-13 Market for Life.

Host Information

Host Organization Name: Cooagrolam	**Address:** Mesetas
Phone: 3105537328	**Email:** cooagrolam@outlook.com
Primary Contact Name: Mireya Cavieles	**Secondary Contact Name:** N/A
Phone: 3105537328	**Phone:** N/A
Email: cooagrolam@outlook.com	**Email:** N/A
Title: Business manager	**Title:** N/A
Gender: Female	**Gender:** N/A
Host Type: Association	
Have we worked with this host before? No. If yes, please include a recent assignment number: N/A	

Host Organization Name: Chocoartesano	**Address:** Puerto Gaitan
Phone: 3156166551	**Email:** chocoartesano@yahoo.com
Primary Contact Name: Carolina Ramirez	**Secondary Contact Name:** N/A
Phone: 3156166551	**Phone:** N/A
Email: chocoartesano@yahoo.com	**Email:** N/A
Title: Agronomic engineer	**Title:** N/A
Gender: Female	**Gender:** N/A
Host Type: Processing enterprises	
Have we worked with this host before? No. If yes, please include a recent assignment number: N/A	

Host Organization Name: Unillanos	**Address:** Villavicencio, Meta
Phone: 3203439104	**Email:** producciontropicalsostenible@unillanos.edu.co
Primary Contact Name: ConstanzaYunda	**Secondary Contact Name:** N/A
Phone: 3203439104	**Phone:** N/A
Email:cyundar@gmail.com	**Email:** N/A
Title: Agronomic engineer	**Title:** N/A
Gender: Female	**Gender:** N/A
Host Type: Formal Institution	
Have we worked with this host before? Yes If yes, please include a recent assignment number: VP-13	

Are there local partner organizations collaborating on this assignment?
No

Host Organization Profile.
Cooagrolam
Cooagrolam is a young organization founded in 2015. It is located in Mesetas, in the Macarena region. This area is characterized by the natural reserves and smallholder farm production. It is a cooperative with 20 members of which 30% are female. The majority of members are milk producers. Cooagrolam works with members on market strategies, best practices for milking and added value for farm products (pigs, fruits and milk). Its long-term objectives are: to build a dairy factory, to increase its offerings of food products and to certify all associated farms in livestock best practices. The weaknesses of this organization include: low investment capability, poor infrastructure for milking, and low milk production. Some of their strengths include: several members have a university-level education in agriculture and business, project management skills and advocacy skills. Currently its only added value product is smoked cheese. Operationally, the host does not have office space. Instead, they work at member farms and the local school. They have access to electricity, water and fuel, and they have a regular connection to stable internet.

ChocoArtesano
ChocoArtesano is a company that produces and processes cocoa (*Theobroma cacao*) in bars for a hot chocolate drink (see the picture below). The main characteristic of the product is natural production without additives or preservatives; the price is $3 USD per box (Picture 1). The basic production process is to grind dry cocoa seeds and to make the bars into a mold. Chocoartesano has a unique mill for this process. At the present time, 50 boxes are produced per month for 5 clients. The clients are shops in Villavicencio, the capital of the Meta region. Chocoartesano does not have electronic technology. The company has received technical and financial support from the National Service-Learning organization, SENA (technical education institution of the national government), and has participated in various calls for support for entrepreneurs. Its long-term objectives are: to improve the cocoa transformation process, to deliver new marketing options for producers, to develop new marketing strategies to increase sales, and to develop new products based on cocoa. The weaknesses of the company include lack of technical knowledge and no specialized machinery to process raw materials. Chocoartesano requests support from the F2F project in developing marketing studies and in training in cocoa transformation to developing new products and improve the quality of their current product.

Bars for hot chocolate drink, a product of Chocoartesano

Unillanos (Master's Program of Sustainable Tropical Agriculture)
The master's program founded in 2010 is an academic effort to develop a tropical approach within the agricultural systems in the Orinoquia region. The academic objective is the study, analysis and development of tropical production systems with the goal of increasing the productivity and sustainability of the region. The program has an academic team composed of a principal, two professors for direct academic support and a secretary. The program's leadership is 75% female. Operationally, the program is located in academic offices with electricity, computers and access to internet. Currently, the master's program has 11 students (36% female) studying the tropics, sustainable systems of tropical production, and rural development and sustainability. The master's program has connections with other Colombian universities (Universidad Javeriana and Universidad Uniminuto) and NGOs that work on agro-ecological training such as Fundacion la Cosmopolitana. The strategic plan of the master's program is to strengthen research on sustainable

tropical production and to increase the advocacy capacity of rural development institutions and farm organizations.

<u>Assignment Information</u>
Number of Volunteer Experts Requested: 1
Expertise of Volunteer Experts Requested:

- Academic background in economics, business management or a related field
- Experience with market studies for local food hubs
- Knowledge of market strategies for small farmers' products

Objectives of the Assignment

- To draft a market strategy for PROTOS Market for Life
- To motivate the hosts to use the market information in their practices
- To support the design of market researches for the hosts' products.

Duration and dates of assignment: 15 days; dates TBD

Expected beneficiaries:

- Estimated number of assignment participants: 12
- Estimated % of women: 60%
- Average skill and education level: bachelor's degree
- English-language capability: Low
- Any prior training on similar topic: No

Task to be performed:

- Pre-arrival: Communicate with F2F Field Team by email to obtain additional information needed to prepare for assignment.
- Meet with the F2F Field Team: In this meeting the volunteer will discuss the details of the assignment, address any last minute suggestions for the assignment, and review the upcoming assignment.
- Meetings with the F2F team and master's program team: During these meeting, the volunteer and host will discuss market strategy needs for PROTOS.
- Meetings with local stakeholders: The host and the volunteer will collect useful information for the market strategy.
- Visit the hosts (Cooagrolam and Chocoartesano): The volunteer will understand the production context of the hosts' products and will collect information for the training.
- Workshops: The volunteer will train the hosts about marketing, market research and market strategy.
- Assignment Evaluation: The Field Team, Purdue Team and volunteer will assess the training sessions and the goals and challenges of the assignment. Together they will discuss the recommendations.
- Assignment Report: The volunteer will complete an End of Assignment (EoA) Report, including the recommendations discussed with the F2F team.

Activities	Location	Dates
Depart USA/Arrive Colombia	Bogota	Day 1 (Suanday)
Work with UNILLANOS team to review work plan and finalize assignment details	Villavicencio	Day 2
Meetings with the F2F team and master's program team	Villavicencio	Day 3
Meetings with local stakeholders	Villavicencio	Day 4
Meetings with the F2F team and master's program team: information processing and to draft the market strategy	Villavicencio	Day 5
Visit the farms involved in PROTOS	Lejanias	Day 6
Break	Villavicencio	Day 7 - 8
Workshop (Host A)	Mesetas	Day 3
Visit Farms Host (Host A)	Mesetas	Day 4
Workshop (Host B)	Puerto Gaitan	Day 5
Visit to farms (Host B)	Puerto Gaitan	Day 6
Delivery EoA Report	Villavicencio	Day 13
Travel to Bogota	Bogota	Day 14
Travel to USA	Bogota	Day 15
Total number of days		**15 days**
Delivery date of the EoA report	**Day 13**	

End of assignment report and other deliverables required:

- PowerPoint presentations or others files used in the training.
- EoA report with the volunteer recommendations and the all information required to implement recommendations
- Document with useful links/contact information that may be useful for F2F Colombia
- Special report about market strategy for PROTOS

Host Plans for dissemination or replication of F2F training:
The hosts have periodic meetings where the information about the trainings and methods will be transmitted to other members.

F2F Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safer Use Action Plan (PERSUAP):
Type 3 (the assignment will probably not have any pesticide issues)
The volunteer shall review the F2F Environmental Brochure and be aware of F2F's legal requirements regarding the provision of assistance for the procurement or use of pesticides. The volunteer shall not recommend or provide advice on specific pesticides.

Follow-up Impact Survey:

- Sales and income changes
- Changes in the products or marketing strategies
- Number of clients

Working/Living Conditions and Materials Needed for Assignment:
This assignment will take place in Puerto Gaitan and Mestas. Puerto Lopez is 365 meters above sea level with a hot climate (average of 30 degrees Celsius). Mesetas is 852 meters above sea level with a moderate climate (average of 25 degrees Celsius). Please send all materials that require translation to the F2F Colombia team (aocampo@unillanos.edu.co and jclavijo@unillanos.edu.co) two weeks before to start date of the Assignment.

Volunteer Outreach: USAID and Purdue University encourage all F2F volunteers to participate in public outreach. An important objective of the program is to increase awareness of Americans' good work in developing countries. Volunteers should select *at least one* outreach activity from the list below, to be completed *within two months* of return to the US:

- ☐ Write an entry for the Colombia F2F Facebook page
- ☐ Post a photo, video, or text related to the F2F assignment on a personal website, blog, Facebook page, Twitter, or other social media site.–And send a link to F2F Program Manager (charlebois@purdue.edu)
- ☐ Send a press release to local newspaper(s) in the volunteer's home town. (Purdue University can provide a template)
- ☐ Write something for alumni or professional association newsletter, or other publication. (Purdue University can help as needed)
- ☐ Give a presentation about the F2F assignment to colleagues, students, church/temple/mosque group, rotary club, etc.
- ☐ Send an email about F2F to friends, family, or colleagues
- ☐ Other