

Vacancy for Internship

'Mapping of ICT (agro) solutions suitable and affordable for small holder agricultural cooperatives'

Country: The Netherlands

Client: Agriterra

Period: April-July 2020

Deadline for application: 13 March 2020

Number of students we need: 2

Background of the assignment

Agriterra emphasises the importance of Sustainable Service provision by cooperatives and farmer organisations. We support them in providing meaningful and affordable advisory services in order to improve the production and productivity. Amongst others, the services embed the promotion of climate smart solutions/approaches allowing for ecological sustainable productivity increase.

Core principles of sustainable advisory services

Cooperative Advisory Services are provided in a way that the system is financially sustainable; farmer- led and future proof. The services embed the promotion of climate smart solutions/approaches allowing for (ecological sustainable) productivity increase.

Agriterra's goal is to create compatible and competitive farmers businesses. The 3-way approach, farmer business, services and lobby are the pillars of Agriterra. Goal of the services pillar is "Increase agricultural production, quality and productivity at farmer level resulting in increased supply to the cooperative for further business (marketing, value addition etc.)." Agriterra believes that ICT based agro solutions that are provided as a service to members can contribute to an increase in quality and quantity of production and member commitment.

Three sub-goals are:

1. Cooperatives work towards more effective and efficient productivity including record keeping at farmer level and making use of applicable ICT (agro) solutions
2. Business approach to services: extension services are part of the business model and financed from own resources in as much as possible
3. Address climate change through suitable adaptation and mitigation measures (such as carbon credits)

This assignment will contribute to the first sub goal. But the second goal "business approach to services" will be addressed as well.

One under-explored element in advisory service provision is the use of ICT based (agro) solutions. ICT can ease data collection, data use and information sharing to farmers through cooperatives (or other service providers). The assumption is that with ICT based agro solutions many more farmers should get access to knowledge and tools that supports the sustainable productivity improvement; reduction of production cost; hence resulting in a better income for the farmers.

It is estimated that only 4% of the farmers worldwide have access to information and knowhow (advisory services). Information and communication technology in agriculture (ICT in agriculture), also known as e-agriculture, focuses on the enhancement of agricultural and rural development through improved information and communication processes. ICT can be used to reach out many more members in a financially affordable way. Many companies have developed ICT solutions, often linked with geodata, for agriculture, but the companies struggle to find the market/uptake in the focus countries of Agriterra. Almost all farmers have a mobile phone; the more entrepreneurial farmers often have a smart phone and the coverage of network is growing rapidly. Hence a large part of the farming community can access the internet.

This research will further be built upon an internship conducted in 2018: 'Farmer and field data in the global agricultural value chain' by Matty Vink, in which she explored especially the needs from Agriterra clients, in terms of data collection. One of the conclusions was that "basic membership databases are usually missing, so how can cooperatives get involved in advanced information and communication technologies? Satellites, drones and scanners may be useful for more advanced cooperatives, but these are the minority of the client base."

Main objectives

- 1. Explore suitable and affordable ICT (agro) solutions that can be accessed by agricultural cooperatives in order to improve the productivity in a climate smart way and**
- 2. Explore and identify a suitable and affordable ICT based membership data registration system at cooperative level, that can be maintained by the members themselves and that includes production data that can be aggregated at cooperative level.**

Internship details

- Composition of the Agriterra assignment team:
 - 2 interns
 - Supervision and guidance by Bertken de Leede, business advisor Agriterra Arnhem
- Duration of the assignment: The time frame of the assignment will be 3 to max 4 months (preferably starting in April 2020)
- Arrangements: Agriterra will offer office space and access to its information systems in the Netherlands. Agriterra will facilitate in getting connected with the relevant network and clients (through our country based business advisors)

Student Profile

- Third or fourth year BSc student or MSc student WUR, HAS, Van Hall Larenstein, TU Delft, TU Twente, UU etc.
- Keen interest in working with farmer organisation in emerging economies
- ICT background and interest in understanding the ICT ecosystem in relation to agriculture

- Passionate about exploring options to connect (and adapt) ICT solutions to less developed rural parts of the world
- Preferably some field experience in rural area in Africa or Asia
- Good communication and networking skills

Application

Send your CV and a short motivation letter to Agriterra to the attention of Ms Berken de Leede, to vacancy@agriterra.org

Introduction Agriterra

We are Agriterra, a Dutch agri-agency that provides business development services to ambitious cooperatives and farmer organisations in developing and emerging economies. We assist them with advice and training through locally based business advisors and by deploying practitioners from the Dutch and international farmer organisations and (cooperative) companies; the so-called Agripool experts. We apply a three-track approach: we make cooperatives bankable and create real farmer-led companies, we support organisations to improve extension services to their members and we enhance farmer-government dialogues. Our advisory practice covers the full range of services on Management & Organisation, Financial Management, Governance, Business Development and Lobby & Advocacy.

Agriterra has local offices in a large number of countries. We work with self-steering teams, so our employees are challenged to use every bit of determination, creativity and strategy to achieve our compelling goals. Being a self-steering organisation makes Agriterra an inspiring and challenging environment for professional growth and development.

Agriterra has an annual turnover of approximately 15 million euros, is ISO certified and has over 160 employees, both in the Netherlands and in more than 20 countries abroad. See also www.agriterra.org.