

The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA)

Director, Market Access Program

Job Title : Director, Market Access Program	Reporting to: President of AGRA
Location: Nairobi	Contract terms:

Organizational overview

The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) is a dynamic partnership working across the continent to assist millions of small-scale farmers and their families in lifting themselves out of poverty and hunger by increasing the productivity and profitability of their farms. To achieve this goal, AGRA addresses critical challenges across the African agriculture value chain; from seeds, soils and water, to markets, agricultural education, and policy. Established with initial funding from The Rockefeller Foundation and The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation AGRA, works closely with African governments, donors, NGOs, the private sector and African farmers, to significantly and sustainably improve the productivity and income of resource poor farmers. AGRA is headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya, and funds activities in selected countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

Position overview

A major challenge facing agricultural development in Africa is the limited access to output markets for agricultural commodities and higher value products.

In Africa agricultural markets are poorly developed, weakly coordinated, have high risks and transaction costs, and are non-competitive due to poorly developed market infrastructure and supporting institutions. In the past, many agricultural development initiatives have increased smallholder farmer productivity, but translating gains into increased incomes has been difficult. Limited market access and weak demand often leads to depressed price incentives for farmers, limiting the uptake of new agricultural technologies.

AGRA's objectives are: to create market opportunities for farmers; to develop new market institutions to improve the efficiency of agricultural markets; to reduce transaction costs and risks facing poor farmers; to expand income opportunities from value added market activities; and to lower the price of food for consumers, especially for poor net-buyers of food in rural and urban markets. The goal is to link at least 5 million smallholder farmers in eight years to profitable local, regional and international markets, ultimately expected to improve the lives of 25 million people.

AGRA is seeking a Director for Market Access who will report to the AGRA President and direct and supervise the work of a team of program officers. S/he will manage a significant budget to develop and implement a holistic and impact-driven strategy to link African smallholder farmers to markets and create opportunities for economic transactions that generate income. Through a targeted program of grant making, s/he will work closely with local, national, regional and international agricultural research and development organizations.

Responsibilities

Work with the President and the leadership team to contribute to the development of national crop

intensification plans.

Provide high-level intellectual leadership for a team of program officers to develop, implement and scale-up agricultural output market access approaches that directly benefit smallholder farmers.

Work with the AGRA policy team in the office of the Vice President (Policy and Partnerships) to develop appropriate policies to promote regional agricultural trade and facilitate linkage of smallholder farmer productivity with demand mechanisms e.g. school feeding programs.

Develop an approach to reform national and regional policies and institutions to facilitate agricultural market development and trade.

Develop and support innovative value chain approaches that increase the participation of smallholder farmers in local, regional and global trade flows.

Identify and steer efforts that enable smallholder farmers to sell their products and capture value from downstream activities. This includes market information systems.

Lead efforts to facilitate economic transactions between value chain players and smallholder farmers in Africa.

Develop and support multi-disciplinary networks of individuals and organizations that promote linking smallholder farmers to markets.

Develop and support programs for training the next generation of agri-business leaders in Africa.

Personal traits

An effective planner and manager able to conceive and communicate a compelling strategic vision to improve market access for smallholders.

A results-oriented, accountable and proactive leader able to represent AGRA effectively to a wide range of stakeholders.

A self-motivated 'doer', able to work both with autonomy and with a team, in diverse cultural contexts.

A demonstrated capacity for working within multi-disciplinary teams for collective success.

Intellectually curious and hungry to learn, embodying a spirit of continuous improvement, informed by rigorous monitoring and evaluation.

An outstanding and demonstrated sense of personal integrity, high ethical standards and professional accountability.

Excellent communication skills.

Academic qualification

An advanced degree in Business, Agricultural Economics or related disciplines.

Experience

A proven entrepreneur able to develop and implement innovative solutions to markets and develop agribusiness linkages which serve poor farmers.

At least 12 years of experience, leading agri-businesses and development efforts, at least partially in Africa.

Experience managing multinational initiatives in the private and/or public sector.

Solid understanding of agricultural markets, commodities and higher value products.

Solid understanding of farmer incentives that influence the adoption of technologies and market linkages

and ability to work with national and regional agricultural institutions to accelerate technology uptake.

Proven ability to lead effective and high impact teams and partnerships.

Sound knowledge of, and experience in agricultural trade development at national, regional and/or international levels.

Experience in working with key stakeholders to reform national and regional policies and institutions.

Sound understanding of underlying demand and supply challenges in Africa, and ability to lead program officers to implement high-impact programs to solve these challenges.

Ability to interact at the highest level with business, political and community leaders.