

Agronomist

Full-time

Base Location: Nanpara, Bahraich district, Uttar Pradesh

Reporting Line: Operations Associate

Earliest Start Date: 1 September 2021

Apply By: 31 July 2021



Access ○ Inclusion ○ Impact

About Oorja

Oorja is an award-winning social enterprise based in New Delhi, tackling some of the most pressing challenges in the off-grid energy sector today: renewable energy expansion and energy poverty.

Oorja's focus is on powering beneficial appliances that help users to generate stable incomes, create jobs, and mitigate carbon emissions. Despite urgent need, around 90% of marginal farmers cannot afford to invest in solar technology for their farms. Oorja wants to close this gap. We install, operate and maintain decentralised solar energy systems for community use and sell irrigation, milling and refrigeration as affordable *services* on a pay-per-use basis to marginal farmers, without any upfront cost to them. We operate in rural areas of northern India where farmers are currently reliant on polluting and expensive diesel motors for their energy needs.

Our core strengths are our inclusive, customer-centred business model and a diverse and driven team with shared passion for sustainable development. We are determined to scale up access to essential services among marginalised communities. Some of our supporters and partners in this mission are:



Role Background

As part of Oorja's new agricultural services offered to increase farmer yield and income, we seek an Agronomist to provide field training and demonstration to improve agricultural practices. For this role, you should have at least 2-3 years of field experience in agricultural extension or similar work. You must be a knowledgeable, thorough agronomist able to identify and solve problems related to plant or soil nutrition, pest damage, weather or climate changes, and accordingly develop techniques and suggest varieties and inputs to improve quality and yield. You should also have strong persuasive and capacity building skills.

Key Duties

- Develop and disseminate training materials (video and print) suited to farmers' needs to ensure best agricultural practices followed through entire crop cycle
- Conduct field level demonstrations and grower workshops to promote a package of practices, provide technical assistance, formulate and implement agri innovations
- Recommend new crops, inputs and tools; support farmers with access to markets
- Prepare SMS to send farmers data on crops, weather and market prices
- Keep training records and prepare reports for project monitoring and evaluation

Roles and Responsibilities

The Agronomist will be expected to serve a key role within our Operations team. Your responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Assess farmers' needs and accordingly develop training modules to ensure best agricultural practices are followed through the entire crop cycle (crop and input selection, cultivation practices for field and horticultural crops, intercropping, multicropping, yield enhancement, plant and soil health, pest and disease control, weather and climate change, efficient irrigation methods, post-harvest storage and processing, sustainable agricultural practices, agricultural innovations, etc.)
- Research and develop new techniques and innovations for farming so that new and useful crops can be grown; recommend and introduce new crops or varieties according to local suitability and market demand; assist farmers with obtaining quality inputs and tools
- Develop or get access to training and capacity building materials (video and print) suited to farmers' needs, with sensitivity to the needs of smallholders, women and marginal groups
- Organise and deliver participatory workshops for farmers in each village: liaise with farmers to organise community meetings; oversee video screenings i.e. arrange audiovisual equipment, handouts, venues, refreshments and other logistics; coordinate and facilitate refresher trainings as needed
- Develop test plots to showcase best practices and organise immersion and exposure visits for demonstration to farmers
- Conduct field level demonstrations and grower workshops to promote a package of practices; provide technical assistance to farmers one-on-one or in small groups; resolve farmers' queries
- Regular farm visits and monitoring to promote the adoption of better agricultural practices and techniques leading to increase in farmer productivity and income
- Provide guidance and training on suitable post-harvest storage conditions (under refrigerated and ambient conditions); support farmers with market linkages

- Keep records of attendance on farmers trained; ensure data collection and entry into MIS for monitoring and evaluation of training and capacity building activities; send monthly Training Report to Management
- Maintain networks of collaboration with external trainers, agricultural institutes, local NGOs and capacity building agencies to gather information and promote awareness of new agricultural products and technologies
- Prepare short messages to communicate with customers via SMS or specialized software to send information on crops, weather, irrigation, sowing and harvesting, inputs, market prices, and other useful agricultural and market information

Qualifications & Competencies

- Relevant field experience of at least 2-3 years in the planning, organisation and implementation of agricultural extension, rural development or agricultural innovation programmes
- Ability to work in an outdoor environment
- Bachelor's degree in Agronomy, Agriculture or related field
- Excellent active listening and verbal and written communication skills
- Strong communicator with good persuasion and capacity building abilities and tact
- Sales and presentation skills are a major plus
- Expert knowledge of field and horticultural crops specific to eastern UP region, agricultural value chains, extension and livelihood challenges and opportunities
- Awareness of industry trends, technology and developments
- Proficiency with computers, especially MS Office; experience working with mobile apps or online platforms for agriculture is an advantage
- Good organisational and documentation skills
- Native speaker of Hindi; knowledge of local dialects of eastern U.P. and Bihar is desirable
- Passion to make a change and willingness to deliver quality results to achieve company's ultimate aims
- Ability to work independently, confident character with the ability to interact effectively and with sensitivity with people from various backgrounds
- Should have own laptop and motorcycle, valid driver's license

Benefits

- Exciting high-impact assignments
- A collegial and creative work environment
- Attractive wages
- You will join a dynamic and passionate team of professionals
- Opportunity to thrive and grow within flat hierarchies in pursuit of an inspiring mission.

How to Apply

If this exciting opportunity appeals to you, please send your application by filling the online application form before **31 July 2021** – www.oorjasolutions.org/apply-now.

Application Process

Oorja conducts a 3-stage evaluation process. First, a short preliminary interview (45 min) about your background, experience and motivation. Second, a longer interview (2-3 hours) is arranged including assignments to further assess your skills and adequacy for the role, interactions with the team and fit within the organisational culture. Third, a final interview (30 min) with Oorja's external advisors to assess your long-term aspirations and alignment of your learning and growth objectives with the company's mission and goals. Successful candidates in each stage will be notified by email.

Equal Opportunities and Non-Discrimination Statement

Oorja Development Solutions India Private Limited is an equal opportunity employer that values and respects the importance of a diverse and inclusive workforce. It is the policy of the company to recruit, hire, train and promote persons in all job titles without regard to religion, race, caste, gender, place of birth, sexual orientation, marital status or disability status. Oorja endeavours to provide a safe, diverse and comfortable workplace. Oorja will not adversely discriminate, and prohibits other adverse discrimination at the workplace, against any person on its premises, whether that person is in its employment or otherwise. If you can contribute to our organisation, you are welcome, regardless of your roots, religion, age or gender.