Farmer Advisor

Full-time
Type of Work: Field based position
Number of Positions: 2
Base Location: Nanpara, Bahraich district, Uttar Pradesh
Start Date: 3rd June 2024

About Oorja

Oorja (www.oorjasolutions.org) is an award-winning social enterprise based in New Delhi. We are on a mission to empower 1 million farmers globally by 2030 with the agricultural solutions they need to sustainably increase their income and quality of life.

Oorja is a Farming-as-a-Service company working at the intersection of sustainable agriculture and renewable energy. Our 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 finance, install and maintain decentralised solar energy systems for community use. Oorja sells solar irrigation and milling affordable services on a pay-per-use basis to smallholder farmers, without any upfront cost to them. We also offer offline and digital advisory services to strengthen climate resilience. 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, farmer-centric business model and a diverse and driven team with shared passion for sustainable development. Some of our funders and partners in this mission are:



Role Background

As a Farmer Advisor, you will be travelling among Oorja's rural sites and interacting with farmers on a daily basis. This is a 100% field role and candidates with an agricultural or rural background originating from Uttar Pradesh will be preferred. Your responsibilities will focus on delivery of farmer advisory services through workshops, field demonstrations and test plots to train them on crop diversification, moving from 2 to 3 cropping seasons, climate resilient agriculture and input preparation. You will also be selling soil health testing, inputs and other agricultural products and services to the same farmers. Finally, you will support the other field teams with collection of customer feedback through surveys and informal interactions, in order to improve Oorja's services. You should own a motorcycle or scooty and have a valid driver's license. Candidates with their own laptop will be preferred. You will be joining a dynamic and passionate team working together to make a difference to farmers' income and well-being.

Roles and Responsibilities

For this position, you will be expected to serve a key role in our Farmer Advisory team. Your responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

Farmer Training

- 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
- Support in the preparation and implementation of yearly training calendar for Farmer Advisory
- Organise and deliver participatory workshops and trainings for farmers in each village, following the curriculum set by the Impact Manager: liaise with farmers to organise community meetings; conduct participatory trainings, oversee video screenings, distribute handouts, organise venues, refreshments and other logistics
- Promote the introduction of new crops, including high-value crops, high-yielding varieties and climate-resilient varieties; promote crop diversification from only growing staples, with the ultimate objective of increasing utilisation of solar pumps
- Introduce agronomic and scientific agriculture methods, such as direct sowing, system of rice intensification (SRI), system of wheat intensification (SWI), etc.
- Promote natural farming methods, including production of natural fertilisers and pesticides to reduce the use of chemical fertilisers and agro-chemicals
- Promote climate-smart practices and tools to increase climate resilience of farmers
- Introduce and provide training on digital agriculture tools/applications (both Oorja's and third-party) to farmers for information dissemination
- Develop test plots to demonstrate and 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.

Sale of Farmer Advisory Services

- Sell and collect payments for Oorja's digital and offline farm advisory packages
- Sell soil testing services provided by Oorja to farmers and provide written report and customised advisory to customers for the next growing season
- Recommend and sell high-quality inputs (seeds, fertilisers, insecticides/pesticides) recommended by Oorja, or link farmers with reputed local suppliers for procurement of inputs
- Keep adequate financial records related to sale of Farmer Advisory products and services.

Improving Sales and Utilisation of Solar Irrigation

- Hold customer service meetings and feedback sessions to gather data and insights for use in continually improving Oorja's services and increasing sales
- Act as a mobiliser: seek and convince new customers to sign up and use solar irrigation services regularly
- Sign up new customers at existing solar project sites; maintain their membership records
- Identify and communicate to Sales team new opportunities to increase irrigation sales
- Work in close coordination with the Sales team to address customer issues on a daily basis
- Report technical faults promptly to the Engineering team

Other Responsibilities

- Maintain detailed records, files, and field data and submit timely and accurate reports and digitise data on a regular basis
- Actively collate data, photos and stories from the field about Oorja's customers and share with the Communications Team for external communication
- Conduct surveys with farmers for need and demand assessment through online tool KoboToolbox
- Participate in the functional and organisational team meetings and contribute towards team learning.

Qualifications

- 1-2 years of experience working with farmers and implementing agriculture related activities
- B.Sc. in Agriculture or Diploma in Agriculture (preferred)
- Confident mobilisation and sales skills
- Mature, professional and respectful behavior with ability to interact with customers with sensitivity, empathy and respect
- Go-getter; positive mindset and keen interest in growing the business
- Track record of producing results in a fast-paced environment
- Excellent communication skills in Hindi; self-identified "people-person"
- Attention to detail, highly organised and efficient
- Proficiency with MS Office and smartphone apps will be very useful.

What We Offer

- A highly enthusiastic, self-driven international team
- A melting pot of diverse talents – development professionals, researchers, engineers, farmers, scientists and community mobilisers
- Competitive remuneration package
- Comprehensive health and accident insurance
- Interesting field of work where you will build your understanding of solar technology and the development sector
- Close mentorship for career development
- A flat and open work culture and friendly work environment
- Experience and responsibility at an award-winning company in the renewable energy and agri- tech industries, among the fastest-growing segments of the global economy
- The change to make a difference and to help improve people's lives.

How to Apply

If this exciting opportunity appeals to you, please send your application by filling the brief online application form before 24 May 2024 – www.oorjasolutions.org/apply-now.

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 yourroots, religion, age or gender.