



Call for Applications:

The Centre for Rural Development in Berlin (SLE) is looking for an experienced team leader for a Joint International Research Project (JIRP) in Benin 2026 – project currently in preparation

Project Title: INFRACOOP - The role of cooperatives for agri infrastructural development: Lessons from Benin

About the project

The project focuses on sustainable agricultural development through infrastructure and cooperatives, assessing interventions in lowland development, storage facilities, rural access, and advisory services. It aims to generate evidence-based recommendations for enhancing productivity, market access, livelihoods, gender inclusion, and long-term sustainability in rural communities.

About the role

The SLE is looking for a qualified team leader to guide the preparation phase and support the conceptual and methodological development of the JIRP. The team lead will be responsible for the planning, implementation and documentation (inception report) and presentation of project design.

The team leader will work closely with a team of interdisciplinary Young Professionals and support the development of a robust, field-ready research design. The JIRP team consists of six interdisciplinary and international Young Professionals from the SLE Postgraduate Programme “International Cooperation for Sustainable Development” and a team leader (this position).

Key responsibilities

- Conduct a preparatory mission to Benin (approx. 1–2 weeks)
- Guide and support the team during the preparation phase in Berlin
- Facilitate the refinement of research questions, methodology and work plan
- Coordinate with cooperation partners and relevant stakeholders
- Support the revision of the project proposal following the preparatory mission
- Develop the inception report outlining the conceptual framework, methodology and timeline
- Deliver the following outputs:
 - Presentation of findings and proposed approach to SLE staff
 - Revised project proposal
 - Inception report
- Participation in the field phase in Benin is optional and subject to agreement.



Qualifications and experience

- Advanced degree (MSc/PhD) in agricultural economics, engineering, rural development, development studies or a related field
- Experience with research (incl. data analysis) to guide policies in rural development, cooperatives, organisational development, social innovations
- Excellent leadership, stakeholder engagement and team management skills.
- Experience in training or capacity building, preferably in an international environment
- Experience working in West Africa
- Strong analytical, facilitation and report-writing skills
- Excellent communication skills in English and French, German desirable
- Residence in Berlin-Brandenburg as full time presence is required in June and July with no travel budget involved.

Team management experience and very good communication skills required:

The team leader bears a high degree of responsibility for team management, financial oversight, and the final content of the study. This process requires experience in guiding research teams, a confident and respectful attitude in a multicultural context, respect for and recognition of learning processes, high motivation and social competence, the capacity to work independently as well as within a team, experience in the preparation of publications and scientific rigour.

General information about the team leader position at SLE:

Team leaders work closely with the Young Professionals and SLE while receiving institutional support. The collaboration requires approx 3 months of work input, stretched across May – August 2026. Remuneration follows SLE honorary regulations. Travel and subsistence costs are reimbursed separately.



Team management includes the following areas of responsibility:

Content management of the project, guidance of the team members and monitoring of the group's learning process, communication with cooperation partners, ensuring organisation and logistics, financial planning, responsibility for the timely preparation of high-quality reports and presentations as well as joint quality control with the SLE review board.

The team leader will work with the team on the study concept and methodological approach from the beginning of June to the beginning of August 2026 and is expected to be present at SLE in Berlin. If necessary (to be decided together in the process), the team leader will visit the team in Benin as short-term travel arrangement.

Time commitment and on-site requirements:

We expect the Team Leader to be available during the key preparation phase of the project:

- **Benin (April/May 2026)** – the team leader will conduct a trip (1-2 weeks) to Benin to prepare the project on the ground.
- **Berlin (June, July, August 2026)** – for preparation, team coordination, and methodology finalisation.

Optional: participation in the field phase during August 2026 in Benin upon agreement.

Applications should be sent in one PDF file to: Prof. Dr Markus Hanisch, Centre for Rural Development (SLE), Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Hessische Straße 1-2, 10115 Berlin, **please send an e-mail to hanischm@hu-berlin.de and in cc to sle@agrar.hu-berlin.de.**

Deadline for applications: April 14, 2026; interviews will take place on 16 and 17 April.

We look forward to your applications!