

## Piloting Models of ISARD: Strengthening Linkages among Farmers, Government, and Industry Sector for Inclusive and Sustainable Rural Development in Inopacan, Leyte

### BACKGROUND

Under SEARCA's *Piloting and Up-scaling Effective Models of Inclusive and Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development* program, the pilot project in Inopacan, Leyte, which is being co-implemented by the Visayas State University (VSU), Visayas Consortium for Agriculture and Aquatic Resources Program (ViCAARP) and the Local Government of Inopacan, Leyte (LGU Inopacan), aims to strengthen linkages among commodity and industry players, local markets and government institutions.

Inopacan is a third class municipality in the province of Leyte in the Eastern Visayas Region of the Philippines. It has a population of approximately 20,550 (2015 Census) and most are dependent on agriculture for their livelihood. As of 2015, the main crops grown are coconut, corn, banana and root crops, while minor crops are vegetables and fruits. Aside from crops, residents also raise livestock such as swine, native chicken, ducks and goats.

In a recent Participatory and Rapid Rural Appraisal (PRA/RRA) on growers, which was conducted by the Visayas State University (VSU), involving four of the upland barangays of Inopacan, the following agricultural problems include inadequate irrigation systems, lack of arable land and fertile open farms since coconut are planted in relatively fertile areas, disinterest in farming among the youth, low commodity farmgate price, and local food insecurity.

Cognizant of these problems, SEARCA aims to pilot test agricultural and rural development models that can potentially enhance and improve the prevailing socio-economic conditions in the area, particularly food insecurity and high poverty incidence. Specifically, the project intends to expand the area of production of vital commodities, which have recognizable market potential. One of these is jackfruit for which Inopacan has recently become a major source of for processors located in the adjoining town of Baybay. This product expansion can play a significant role in meeting the increasing demand for processed jackfruit in the Eastern Visayas Region which, in turn, can raise household income. In addition, banana which is a staple crop in the entire province, is also a target for expansion due to its growing demand as a product ingredient for breakfast cereals. The project is also engaged in cassava production and tilapia culture, as these activities potentially provide supplementary household income and enhance community food security. For environmental sustainability, the project will establish rainforestation plots consisting of dipterocarps and other native and indigenous tree species to reduce soil erosion and as a climate change mitigation and adaptation strategy, and bamboo to provide income for the growers.

Given these concerns, there is a felt need to strengthen the linkages among agriculture, government and industry sectors in Inopacan, Leyte to foster inclusive and sustainable development pathways.

The project period is from 01 March 2016 to 28 February 2019.

### OBJECTIVES

The broad objective of this Program is to pilot-test the ISARD model – an approach intended to attain food sufficiency and reduced poverty in Inopacan.

The specific objectives are:

1. To increase and improve farm production, agricultural productivity and household income from growing selected high value crops through market-oriented agriculture using better knowledge management, and provision of production and technical support;
2. To organize growers and increase their linkages to markets and other stakeholders in the Agriculture and Rural Development sector; and



### PROJECT PARTNERS



## ABOUT SEARCA

The Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) is one of the 21 regional centers of excellence of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO). Founded on 27 November 1966, SEARCA is mandated to strengthen institutional capacities in agricultural and rural development in Southeast Asia through graduate scholarship, research and development, and knowledge management. It serves 11 SEAMEO member countries, namely: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor Leste, and Vietnam. SEARCA is hosted by the Government of the Philippines on the campus of the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) in Laguna, Philippines. It is supported by donations from SEAMEO member and associate member states, other governments, and various international donor agencies.

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3. To improve the capability of both the growers and agricultural technicians of Inopacan in production, processing and marketing of selected commodities.

## PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Stakeholders are provided with technical assistance and advisory services on the following areas: (a) quality seedlings; (b) production techniques; (c) processing of jackfruit, banana, and cassava; (d) aqua-culture; (e) and reforestation. Guidance and advice from agriculture experts of VSU and member-agencies of ViCAARP are made available in the setting up of farms, handling of propagules, cultural care and post-harvest handling.

A series of training is being provided to growers in availing assistance under the ISARD project. The training program includes (a) cultural care of jackfruit and jackfruit production technology, (b) cooking banana production technology, (c) cassava production, (d) tilapia culture, (e) bamboo reforestation, and (f) processing banana into fried chips. This is being implemented following a linking-counterparting scheme with the LGU and ViCAARP-member agencies. The trainings are designed to improve technical capabilities of target individuals and associations.

This ISARD project is partnered by the regional consortium-ViCAARP, to which the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) is a member of, to assure effective and sustainable knowledge management through the Techno Gabay Program- a modality of capturing knowledge from research and sharing the same to extension workers and other users. Dissemination of video and communication materials especially on the priority commodities of the project is enhanced. School-on-the-air programs of ViCAARP and VSU will also be designed to support the project. Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping and Experts Systems developed by ViCAARP will also be deployed to support the project and growers in their decision-making processes.

Technical Assistance Office for ISARD (TAO sa ISARD), composed of agri-business professors and other experts of VSU, was established. The TAO sa ISARD provides business development services to agri-enterprises of growers' associations in this project, and assist them in crafting business plans and proposal preparation to increase their chances of accessing funds or other support from government line agencies and other development aid organizations. It also provides business guidance and training on the areas of community organizing, financial management and product marketing, as well as networking and brokering services to link growers' associations with markets by organizing market "encounters" and trade fairs.

## EXPECTED OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

The overarching goal of the project is to attain social and economic inclusive and environmentally sustainable agricultural and rural development in the Municipality of Inopacan, through increased farmers' linkage with key stakeholders and existing and potential markets, and enhanced capability of agricultural workers.

The Project is expected to produce the following outcomes:

1. Increased number of civil society organizations able to avail of funding and financial assistance from government line agencies and development aid organizations;
2. Farmers' agri-enterprises established;
3. Increased and improved production and processing of jackfruit and banana;
4. Increased number of producers of cassava;
5. Increased number of tilapia growers;
6. Increased number of adopters of reforestation for environmental sustainability and other small-scale land management objectives;
7. Banana, jackfruit, tilapia, cassava, and tree growers adopting recommended growing and processing technologies;
8. Accessible and available planting materials for crops, tree species seedlings for trees and fingerlings for tilapia; and
9. Cheaper and more accessible protective structures or local fabrication of protective structures.