

**LINKING SMALL HOLDER FARMERS TO THE MARKET
(LINKSFARM)
IN VALDERAMA, ANTIQUE, PHILIPPINES**

1. Brief Description of CLI

The CIRDAP Contact Ministry (CM) in the Philippines is the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) involved in the distribution agricultural lands to landless farmers, provision of support services and agrarian legal assistance.

The CIRDAP Link Institute (CLI) is the Bureau of Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Development (BARBD) from DAR. BARBD leads in the establishment of functional organizations and viable communities of agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) through the delivery of gender equitable and sustainable social and economic infrastructure support.

2. Innovative Rural Development Practices

The LINKSFARM Project is an agro enterprise development initiative focused on group marketing business of organized farmers, where they actively work with market chain actors, having relationships with buyers of their products and business development services (BDS) providers that support the movement of their product in the market chain at a profit.

This a new approach for the farmers: from production–focused to market opportunity responsive. The agro enterprise development (AED) aims to: i) make farming profitable; ii) farmers works with both traditional and institutional markets; and iii) capture more “value” for small farmers from value chain by being organized as a cluster of producers and collective marketing their produce.

The agro enterprise facilitators (DAR personnel, Local Government Agriculturist and Farmer Leaders are trained in the 8 steps clustering approach towards agro enterprise development: i) Site Selection, Partnership Building and Cluster Formation; ii) Product Selection and Product Supply Assessment (PSSA); iii) Market Chain Study; iv) Cluster Commitment Setting; v) Agro-Enterprise Planning and Mobilization; vi) Product Supply Organizing; vii)Test Marketing; viii) Sustained Enterprise. The AED training is conducted within 6 months comprising of 3 courses for AE Facilitators (DAR and LGU personnel) involving classroom and market visits. After every course, application is done to identified sites with the farmers by the AE Facilitators. The farmers leaders are also trained to be involved in the organizing of the farmers into cluster to undertake product selection and product supply assessment; conduct market chain study; development of policies and agreement on cluster commitment (volume of produce committed to be part of collective marketing; development of market plan, supply plan, management plan and financial plan; product supply organizing for actual deliveries to institutional market; and sustained the enterprise for succeeding cropping season with more farmers participating.

The AE Facilitators are certified as professional facilitators recognized globally. The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) undertake examination and

assessment of the skills of the Facilitators before certification is done. At present there are 56 certified NC 3 or 4 AE Facilitators. For the 120 farmer leader facilitators, the certification will be done this year.

There are existing 98 sites spread in different regions and in 5 years, there will be 200 sites involving 12,000 farmers wherein 80% of them are involved in collective marketing. The crops covered by LINKSFARM are rice, corn, lowland vegetable, high value vegetables, cacao, chili, peanuts, flowers, egg layering, coconut, mongo, citronella oil, banana among others. The income of the farmers increased from 10-30%.

The benefits of the clustering of the farmers are: i) better market access and greater bargaining power; ii) lower cost of doing business with economies of scale; iii) increased income as a result of attaining higher prices, reduced post-harvest losses and product recovery in market interactions assured and more stable markets; iv) better relations among producers in working and helping one another; v) improved unified image in the business community; and vi) organized way of relating in resource providers.

The benefits of clustering for buyers and BDS providers are: i) increased capacity of the clusters to meet buyers and BDS providers procurement requirements; ii) organizational structure for more efficient transaction with buyers and BDS providers; iii) traceability of produce sources through product labelling of clusters and farmers; iv) assurance of steady supply of market product volume and quality at reasonable price; and v) faster communication of market feedback or preference for quick responses or adjustments.

The benefits of clustering for development service institutions are: i) more efficient utilization of project resources and services; ii) wider project coverage; iii) enhanced farm productivity support with market-based assistance; and opportunity to build equity of farmers for sustainability.

3. Ways in which CIRDAP and other CLIs can collaborate

CIRDAP and DAR can expand AED implementation other countries through: i) classroom training of potential AE facilitators; ii) make it an on-line course; iii) documentation of the AED implementation; iv) Certification of the AE facilitators.

The Video presentation show AED process of LINKSFARM and the benefits derived by the clusters of farmers.

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