

NIA DIGEST

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NIA Moving Forward

Participatory Irrigation Development Project

National Irrigation Sector Rehabilitation and Improvement Project

Umagay River Irrigation Project

Jalaur River Multipurpose Project

Balog-Balog Multipurpose Project

NIA Big Ticket Projects





KITCHARAO SMALL RESERVOIR IRRIGATION PROJECT

BRGY. MAHAYAHAY
KITCHARAO, AGUSAN
DEL NORTE
AREA TO BE IRRIGATED.
550 HECTARES



On going Dam Embankment



Completed Dam Embankment

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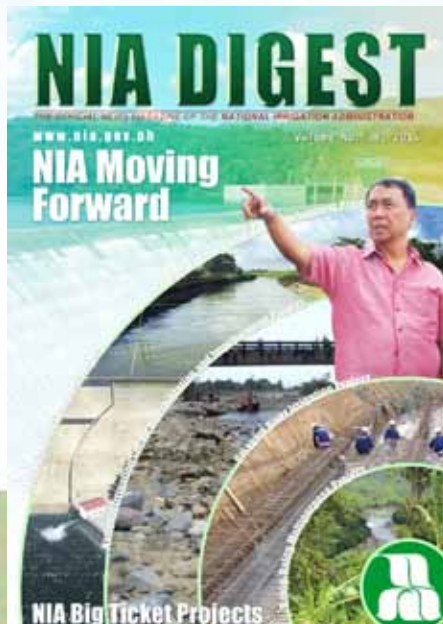
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ABOUT THE COVER

This issue's cover portrays NIA's core and significant role in generating sustainable growth through irrigation service delivery in the country. NIA, as the central agent in attaining this goal, radiates its vision by providing sufficient and high-impact projects for the Filipino farmers. This is shown in the cover by making it seem that NIA creates a rippling effect and the "ripples" are comprised of six of the agency's big ticket projects – Balog-Balog Multipurpose Project (BBMP), Umayam River Irrigation Project (URIP), National Irrigation Sector Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (NISRIIP), Participatory Irrigation Development Project (PIDP), Jalaur River Multipurpose Project (JRMP), and Agno River Irrigation System Extension Project (ARISEP). The ripples also represent the flaring effort of the agency in strengthening its grasp in improving irrigation that would benefit millions of farmers nationwide. Also shown in the cover is NIA Administrator Florencio F. Padernal who leads the agency in moving forward en route to growth and improved lives of farmers.

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Editorial

NIA CONTINUES to **BOOST** FARMERS' LIVES

Embracing its vision, NIA has been a dependable partner of farmers in improving their quality of life and an effective contributor in the country's comprehensive growth. This is through the provision of irrigation services by constructing irrigation facilities to supply farmlands with water and engaging farmers in various institutional development activities. Through the agency's initiatives, farmers are also given the opportunity to participate in the decision making during the conception up to the implementation, operation, and maintenance of irrigation projects. Moreover, NIA has been in the forefront serving the farmers by continuously establishing partnerships with other government agencies, LGUs, and the private sector in line with creating more ways in improving the agency's services and strengthening other support mechanisms to boost the lives of farmers.

As proof that NIA is steadfastly concretizing its vision for the agricultural sector, the agency achieved the following: 1) mass turn-over of more than 400 newly completed irrigation projects to Irrigators

Associations nationwide covering a total area of 124,633.54 hectares with 48,234 farmer-beneficiaries; 2) approval by the President of the immediate implementation of Balog-Balog Multipurpose Project Phase II (BBMP-II) in Tarlac after three decades of deferment (this project aims to irrigate 34,410 hectares benefiting 23,000 farmers); 3) convergence initiatives with other government agencies such as the DPWH to construct farm-to-market roads, canals, and cisterns; 4) development of mini-hydropower projects along identified irrigation canals not just to augment NIA's income but also to provide additional sources of affordable power to farmers and their communities; and, 5) the construction of the peace project in the historic Mamasapano, Tukanalipao, Maguindanao which was commenced in May and will be finished in October to cover 182.25 hectares of farmlands with 132 farmer-beneficiaries.

In lieu of these worthy accomplishments, NIA is also determined to be a relevant agency in the constantly changing time. The administration is currently pursuing the formulation of the Ten-Year Irrigation Development Master Plan.

This document will guide the agency in effectively planning and implementing irrigation projects and other support services to accelerate irrigation development nationwide.

All of these efforts are in congruence with what the President aims for the irrigation sector which was contained in his message and delivered by former OPAFSAM Secretary Francis Pangilinan during the mass turnover of irrigation projects in July 2015: *"Umasa po kayo na sa susunod pang panahon, mararagdagan pa ang mga sakahang napapatubigan at mga buhay na napapaganda natin. Magpapatuloy ang mga serbisyong tututok sa kapakanan ng mas nakararami."*

The agency will continue to prove its undeniable significance in uplifting the whole agriculture sector while maintaining its financial viability as a government corporation. These initiatives and achievements are but a proof of NIA's untiring commitment as a service-oriented agency that will continue to remain as a potent force in empowering the Filipino farmers through irrigation.



Five IAs bag DA's Agri-Pinoy Rice Achiever's Awards

By: Rocielle Harlette E. Navarro, Administrative Services Assistant, OSDA



ALBATANA BLUCON MALABIS IA

Agri Pinoy Achievers Awardee, Albatana Blucon Malabis Irrigators Asso., Inc represented by its IA President Cherlito dela Cruz (center). Among the others, from L-R Engr. Bayani Ofrecio, IDD Manager; Engr. Manuel Rañeses, DA RFU XI Remelyn Recoter, former NIA Board member, Davao del Sur Gov. Claude Bautista, NIA Senior Deputy Adm. Felix M. Razo, NIA-XI Regional Manager Alejandro L. Alberca and IA Officers

Five Irrigators Associations (IAs) were hailed as among the top rice producers for 2014 in the recently held Department of Agriculture's Agri-Pinoy Rice Achievers' Award (APRAA). In a fitting ceremony held on March 5-7, 2015 at Resorts World Manila, IAs from Davao del Norte, Davao del Sur, Isabela, Bukidnon and Cotabato received a plaque of recognition and one million pesos as incentive for their exceptional performance.

In the NIS category, APRAA recognized San Isidro Farmers IA, BacNor IA and Patag-Corona IA for their notable performance, while Bulacanon IA and Albatana Blucon Malabis IA were declared outstanding in the CIS category. These IAs were carefully selected from a number of candidates from the Regional Offices for their exceptional achievement in the following category: attaining very high average palay yield, efficient Irrigation Service Fee (ISF) collection, sizeable profits from income-generating projects, trained seed growers, and model O & M policies and regulations.

Cont. reading on page 5

Regional Manager Julius S. Maquiling (4th from right) has joined Patag-Corona IA President Abraham C. Sendiong (with sash) after receiving the plaque and one million check as prizes for being chosen as one of the Outstanding Rice Achievers awardees under the National Irrigation System (NIS) category. Joining them are Bukidnon IMO Manager, Engr. Jimmy L. Apostol (2nd from right), EOD-OIC, Engr. Leonila E. Tenes-trante, (rightmost), Engr. Belna Acoba, Sr. IDO (leftmost) and Ms. Cerelina Arellano, IA Secretary (in red dress).



PATAG CORONA IA

PADANUM



MARIIS and LGU Luna celebrate Dry Crop 2015 Harvest

By: Melissa C. Agbisit, PRO, MARIIS

Luna, Isabela – More than a thousand rice farmers in the Magat River Integrated Irrigation System gathered here on March 11, 2015 for the Padanum Harvest Festival 2015 organized by MARIIS-Division IV and the municipal government of Luna.

Confederation of Irrigators Associations in MARIIS (CIAM) President Nemesio F. Yadao said the event came about for MARIIS to show that it is one of the top rice producers in the country. “Itong lugar natin ay isa sa nakapagbibigay ng sapat na pagkaing bigas sa ating mga kababayan sa buong Pilipinas,” he said.

For NIA-MARIIS and LGU Luna, it was a way to thank the farmers and honor them for being a significant partner in nation building. Luna Mayor Jaime Atayde said it is an honor for the municipality to host such a festival for the farmers.

Ceremonial harvest and demo on agricultural modernization

A ceremonial harvest was held at Junction IA in Barangay Dadap, Luna, Isabela. The event was attended by MARIIS officials together with Luna Vice Mayor Andy Domingo, National Food Authority Region II Director Mario M. Gonzales and representatives from the Department of Agriculture Region 2 Office and its line agencies.

A techno-demo on agricultural modernization was also conducted in the area. A farm tractor, rice transplanters, and combined thresher-harvester were showcased.

Mechanization is playing a key role in modern agriculture, Engr. Fidel Cabantac from the DA-RO2 office said this gives farmers an advantage. “Implements for production and post harvest equipment minimize losses and improve the quality of the harvest,” he said.

Great things happen when we work together

MARIIS Acting Operations Manager Wilfredo C. Gloria said Luna’s harvest for Dry Crop 2015 is truly remarkable. MARIIS serves 2,200 hectares of ricelands in the municipality of Luna, Engr. Gloria said. “Most of them are end-check areas which are the last to receive irrigation water. Thus it is remarkable that despite this, our farmer-partners in the area were able to plant early and are now harvesting,” he shared.

“This is a result of our unity and cooperation and responsibly doing our respective roles (for the success of the cropping season),” he said.

For every cropping season, MARIIS is in close coordination with the LGUs and the Department of Agriculture and all attached agencies for the efficient delivery of irrigation and support services.

“We will accomplish great things if we work together,” Engr. Jose G. Soliven, MARIIS Division IV Manager, said.

FESTIVAL



Production is good, prices are low Local Government Support

Palay production in MARIIS for DRY Crop 2015 is off to a good start, prices, however are not as high as during the previous cropping. National Food Authority Region 02 Director Mario M. Gonzales admitted that current market prices for rice are volatile. "But all our warehouses and buying stations are open and we will now start buying palay," he said.

He shared that NFA was not able to procure sufficient palay for buffer stocking during the wet crop 2014 as market prices were very competitive but hopefully they would be able to buy more this season with their current price of P17.

Following Director Gonzales' pronouncement, Isabela Governor Faustino "Bojie" G. Dy III who has been consistent in his support to the Isabelino farmers, announced that he will be preparing the fund for the price support for farmers which start at P2.50 plus P.50 for the pantawid-pamasahe program.

He also called on the NFA to allow farmers to use their drying facilities especially that the current price for wet palay is only P14. "The provincial government provides funds for concreting of roads which are used as solar drying pavements but sometimes these roads are not enough," he added.

He recognizes that agricultural modernization is rapidly taking place and shared that the local government is gearing up to assist farm laborers who may be displaced. The provincial government together with the Technical Education Skills Development Authority (TESDA) is preparing skills training courses for laborers, he said. "We can offer carpentry, masonry, welding, and other courses so they can have other sources of income between planting and harvest time," he added.

He called on everyone to unite. "Magsama-sama po tayo sa mas masaya, mas masigla, at nagkakaisang lalawigan ng Isabela," he closed.

BIG EVENT

Five IAs bag Da's Agri-Pinoy Rice Achiever's Awards, from Page 2

APRAA was also bestowed to selected provinces, cities and municipalities, Small Water Impounding System Associations, Agricultural Extension Workers, and Local Farmer Technicians who also received plaques and cash incentives.

Spearheading the ceremonies were DA Undersecretary Antonio A. Fleta and Assistant Secretary Edilberto De Luna, who both expressed their appreciation of the event and of the awardees. NIA Senior Deputy Administrator Felix M. Razo graced the occasion and personally congratulated the winners as he handed out the plaques and cash prizes to the IA honorees.

APRAA is a part of DA's intervention and incentive mechanism to promote and recognize meaningful contribution of farmers' associations, local governments and agricultural extension practitioners towards rice self-sufficiency. Incremental increases in rice harvests, average yield per hectare, surpassing previous year's target, amount of budget devoted to rice projects, number of beneficiaries and degree of quality of seed utilization served as barometers in choosing award recipients.



AgriPinoy Achievers Awardee, San Isidro Farmers Irrigators Association (SIFIA), Inc. represented by its IA President Jovanil Combate (with sash). With him are (from center to right) USec Emerson Palad: Senior Deputy Adm. Felix M. Razo; NIA-XI Regional Manager Alejandro L. Alberca; Davao del Norte (DN)IMO Manager Cornelio M. Bautista, Jr.; Operations Chief Saug RIS, DN Bonifacio S. Ysalina; IDS Supervising Officer Lani M. Sumabat; NIA-XI RCIA President Saturnino Simbajon and Aida Paraiso, Davao Norte IMO Senior IDO. (from center to left) former NIA Board member Antonio Fleta; Supervising IDO Rene Cosmod, DN IMO; Operations Chief Larry Franada; Senior IDO Ester Clavesillas and EOD Manager Ramon A. Bugacia.



Mr. Joel Abinsay, the Bulacan IA Vice President, (4th from left) receives a trophy and check worth P1M from DA USec for Admin. & Finance Antonio A. Fleta (3rd from left). Joining onstage are, from left to right: ASec. and National Rice Coordinator Edilberto M. De Luna, USec for Operations Emerson U. Palad, NIA Senior Deputy Adm. Felix M. Razo, Region XII RIM Ali S. Satol, CIMO IDS Chief, Dr. Antonio C. Hilario, Ms. Jean Marie Fe D. Bansag of CIMO, Ms. Maribel Rico, Bulacan IA Secretary and Ms. Jocelyn Decena, IA Board of Director.

BACNOR IA recognized as Outstanding IA is represented by IA President Rolando Dallego (with sash). joining him are Senior Deputy Administrator Felix M. Razo (4th from left), MARIIS Acting Operations Manager Wilfredo C. Gloria (4th from right), IDD Manager Bayani P. Ofrecio (3rd from right), MARIIS Division III Manager William B. Oppuer (3rd from left) and officers of NDC-5 CIA of which BACNOR IA is a part of.



NIA – To a Greener Renaissance

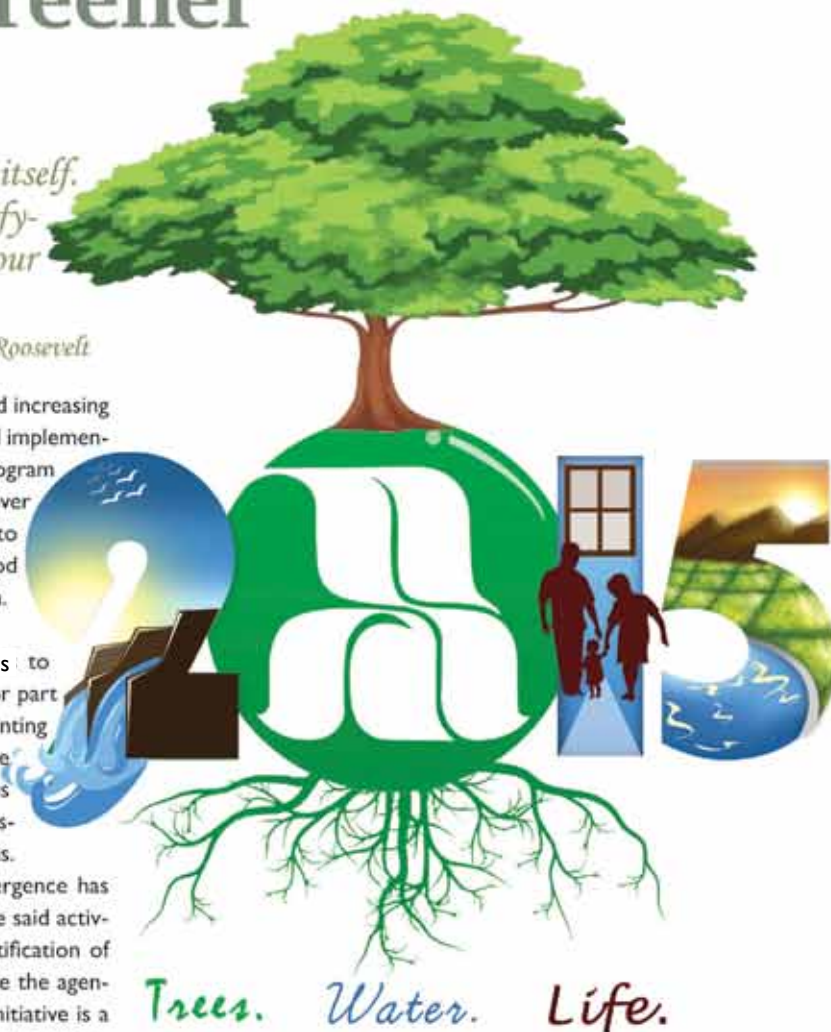
By: Maria Luisa A. Frias, PAIS, C.O.

"A nation that destroys its soils destroys itself. Forests are the lungs of our land, purifying the air and giving fresh strength to our people."

—Franklin D. Roosevelt

Realizing the impacts of climate change, deforestation, and increasing incidence of poverty in the country, thus, the issuance and implementation of the National Greening Program (NGP). The program shall lead in the planting of 1.5 billion trees that will cover 1.5 million hectares in a period of 6 years (CY 2011 to 2016) and aims to attain the stability of the country's food security, poverty reduction and climate change mitigation.

The program doesn't want to just raise trees, it aims to change the way we think about trees and forests. A major part of this undertaking goes beyond mere tree planting, pointing to the poverty alleviation, food security and even value formation of Filipinos on looking at the country's precious forest resources as the strength of the program that assures its viability and continuation in the next generations. National Irrigation Administration, as part of the convergence has collaborated on the arrangement and preparation for the said activity which includes the acquisition of seedlings and identification of planting sites and mobilization of different sectors before the agency's annual simultaneous nationwide tree planting. This initiative is a great support in the success and clearer directions in the implementation of the program.



from (L-R) Engr. Larry Ballesteros (PAMBAT IMO Manager), Madam Pilipina P. Bermudez (PAIS), Madam Estrella E. Icasiano (Deputy Administrator for Administrative and Finance), Atty. Ailyn C. Agtuca-Selda (Administrative Department Manager), Cong. Susan Yap (Tarlac, 2nd District), Tarlac Gov. Victor Yap, Atty. Genever Dionio (Legal Department Manager), Administrator Florencio F. Padernal, Alexander Coloma (CMIPP Project Manager) during the Tree Planting Activity

Participants will only plant in tenured areas, meaning, where there are communities who will take care of the trees planted. In this regard, NIA regional offices have partnered with peoples' organizations to take care of the planted seedlings since the benefits of the planted seedlings will accrue them. Nurturing plays a key role in this program adding that it will also spur the country to achieve wood sufficiency to meet the demands of industry, manufacturing handicraft and furniture industry.

On its fourth year of implementation, the National Irrigation Administration takes pride in accomplishing 386,350 hardwood and fruit bearing trees to 756, 18 hectares and 59 kilometer service road planting sites.

Truly, it is a great honor to be an integral part of the nation's green renaissance.

BIG EVENT

NIA's National Tree Planting Program



CAR Manager John L. Socalo



Region 3 Manager Josephine B. Salazar



UPRIIS Manager Reynaldo D. Puno



Region I Manager John N. Celeste



Administrator Florencio F. Padernal, DPA



MARIIS Manager Wilfredo C. Gloria



Region 4A Manager William P. Ragodon



Region 9 Manager Diosdado A. Rosales



Region 7 Manager Mario H. Sande



MMIP Manager Noldin S. Oyod



Region IX: Soaring High, Going the Extra Mile

By Maria Teresa A. Empleo, PRO



Labangan, Zamboanga del Sur – Regional Irrigation Office (RIO) employees wave in unison as they pose for a group picture backdrop against the new RIO building.

A year and ten months back, change of management from Regional Manager Alejandro L. Alberca to then Region VII Acting Regional Manager Engr. Diosdado A. Rosales was held at Mardale Hotel, Pagadian City. While the region's new manager accepted the yoke of responsibility, he addressed the anticipating NIA-IX crowd, "This I promise, that my every decision will always be for your own good and for the higher good of the office," was his first message.

Fast forward to the present, with an even bigger crowd now applauding his remarkable performance in the Zamboanga Peninsula's irrigation development, Engr. Rosales received his well-deserved accolade being the Best Performer for the Regional Manager of the Year Award Category last June 24, 2015 during NIA's 52nd Founding Anniversary at NIA Central Office, Quezon City. For the second time around and a full-fledged Regional Manager at that, Engr. Rosales remained true to his words when he implemented many programs and reforms in the region that led to become what it is now – a cohesive, viable, and strong contributor to economic growth.

Leveling Up

Since his stint as a Regional Manager, things had taken into a different new level. The most obvious one is the relocation of the Regional Irrigation Office (RIO) to its new and convenient building at NIA Compound, Labangan, Zamboanga del Sur. Employees in the Regional Office used to occupy two floors of a rented building with only a floor area of 600 sq. m. and a home appliance store at the ground floor. Apart from its costly monthly rental, the staff endured the wall-to-wall set up of the office for five years since its transfer from Zamboanga City to Pagadian City in 2008.

Inaugurated last October 7, 2014, the RIO Building which was every RIO employee's wish was finally made possible under his leadership. Both employees and farmer clients now enjoy the comfort of a parking space, a conference room, a function hall, employees' quarters, basketball and volleyball courts, and not to mention a good working space for everyone to operate at its best.

Not only his reforms were shown in new edifices or imprinted in the satisfied smiles of his employees, but more importantly in the breakthroughs of engineering and institutional activities in the region.

On Revenue Generation, the region's ISF Collection for the past five years can average to 25M only while in 2014, it shoot up to 36M. As of June 2015, it has already reached 60% of its 40M target this year. Various strategies were carried out such as the Annual Raffle Draw come December 2015, the intensified

Collection Campaign, capacity building for both the IAs and the NIA staff, the improvement of irrigation systems, and the annual IA Congresses conducted to facilitate the sharing of best practices among the Irrigators Associations (IAs) in the region.

Moreover, in the Engineering Division, projects under Contract Work which posts unwarranted delays in the project delivery was taken over by Administration Work to fast track project implementation for all projects downloaded in the region.

Partners in Progress

But NIA, with all its structures and activities, is nothing without the farmers. The lifeblood of NIA will always be the farmers. The success of the agency can only be gauged by the impact of its irrigation service to the improvement of the quality of life of its farmer stakeholders. Hence, we can say that IAs mirror NIA. Its



Dipolog City- Engr. Salvio Retes (center-left), Chief of Operations Section NIS of Zamboanga del Sur IMO with RIM Diosdado A. Rosales (center-right) as he receives his award as No. 1 in Revenue Generation for his Labangan River Irrigation System (LABRIS) office, together on stage are the Division Managers for Engineering and Operations Engr. Chita O. Lim (left), and Mr. Cesario M. Ruizal, CSEE for the Admin and Finance (right)

ability to achieve is greatly dependent on the ability of the agency's leaders to deliver well. And mirroring it well is exactly what the feat of Engr. Rosales as the Best Performer for the Regional Manager Category means, his achievement resonated and was given more meaning when LOWTIPTAM IA of Lower Tiparak, Tambulig, Zamboanga del Sur was conferred as the Most Outstanding IA 1st Runner-Up National Level for the year 2014 under the NIS Category on the same ceremony last June 24, 2015. True partners, indeed.

In their formal Barong Tagalog, both achievers shake hands with NIA Administrator Florencio F. Padernal and OPAFSAM Secretary Francis N. Pangilinan whilst receiving their respective plaques of recognition. A symbol of repute and success which can only be best achieved through persistent hard work, genuine commitment, and steadfast cooperation among its stakeholders. Likewise, displaying the quality of a true leader: creating and building more leaders.



NIA Central Office, Quezon City – Region IX Manager Diosdado A. Rosales (Center-R) poses for a pictorial with his lovely wife Ms. Hermie Rosales (Center-L), OPAFSAM Sec. Francis N. Pangilinan (L) and NIA Administrator Florencio F. Padernal (R) after being conferred as the Best Performer for the Regional Manager Award Category CY 2014 during the 52nd Founding Anniversary of NIA last June 24, 2015.

The Challenge After

“You are as good as your last piece,” says the master to his protégé.

With everything that has been done, Regional Manager Rosales had certainly laid the foundation for success for Region IX. There can be no other way but up -- to soar high.

The challenge that lies ahead in all of these is to be able to sustain over time the quality ser-

vice that led the region to be where it is now. To keep performing and improving in all levels possible, becoming more aware of the significant impact the irrigation projects are making to the lives of our farmers are just some of the many goals to aim on.

“Let us not stop that we have performed better, let us always choose to go the extra mile when situation calls for it,” Regional Manager Rosales said in his opening message during the NIA Anniversary Celebration in Dipolog City.

Soaring high is going the extra mile. An invitation as much as a challenge to each employee in the region that no matter how small you think your work is when put together will significantly contribute to the overall performance of the region.

NIA Region IX have soared this high, it is now on everybody's shoulder the impetus to keep going the extra mile.



NIA Central Office, Quezon City – LOWTIPTAM IA President Crispo L. Jakosalem (Center-R) together with his IA Secretary and Treasurer receive its Most Outstanding IA 1st Runner-Up National Level under NIS Category during the NIA 52nd Anniversary last June 24, 2015, joining them on stage are NIA Region IX Manager Diosdado A. Rosales, ZDS IMO Head Joel C. Atay and LABRIS Head Salvio B. Retes with PAFSAM Sec. Francis N. Pangilinan (Center-L), NIA Administrator Florencio F. Padernal and his Senior Deputies.

JRMP conducts tech assessment, NGOs voice support for Jalaur

By: Geraldine J. Galeno, JRMP II-IEC



*NIA Region 6 Manager
Gerardo P. Corsiga
delivering his speech*

Filipino and Korean dam experts, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), and Government agencies convened for the Technical Assessment on Jalaur River Multi-Purpose Project Stage II (JRMP II) on April 22, 2015.

Present were Korean Experts of the Korean Rural Community-Joint Venture (KRC-JV) led by Dam Designer Engr. Seung-ha Ryu, NIA dam expert Engr. Josias Pacolor, NIA Regional Manager Gerardo P. Corsiga and NIA Regional Office Division Manager for Engineering Engr. Jesus L. Dato-on. Also present were Dr. Leilani Suerte of the Mines and Geo-Sciences Bureau (MGB) and Mr. Bonifacio Enorme, Jr. of the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB). Integral too is the support of the Provincial Government of Iloilo through Legal Officer Atty. Dennis Ventilacion and Planning Officer Engr. Mario Nillos.

Requested by the Green Forum-Western Visayas, the assessment focused on engineering and environmental measures undertaken by the National Irrigation Administration for JRMP II. Specific topics discussed include physical integrity of the ridges that separate the watershed of Jalaur River from Pan-ay River; and, engineering and environmental measures to prevent siltation in JRMP dams. Also discussed were engineering measures to minimize damage or protect structural integrity of the high line canal, and pre and post-disaster protocols to protect people living downstream in unlikely event of a man-made or natural disaster.

In the forum, representatives of present NGOs expressed support and anticipation for JRMP II.

Signpost Philippines, Inc. Director Ms. Febie Ibojos expressed her support to the project. "After considering all those suggestions, the technicalities, the social impact, I think NIA is also positive into taking into ground those suggestions. Let's move forward on this project and support this as long as the climate change, environmental and social aspects can be addressed," she said.

"For us businessmen, we really support this project. We will also monitor and won't allow displacement of IPs," said Ms. Donna Rose Ratillo of Philippine Chamber of Commerce Inc. – Iloilo.

Ms. Lea Lara, Iloilo Economic Development Foundation (ILED) Executive Director said that a lot of people is looking into the project and feels that the project is long overdue. "We want a project that supports overall/total development. ILED strongly supports this project," she said.

As for the IT industry, Mr. Joeven Tan said that the IT industry in Iloilo City is the biggest in terms of job creations and most of IT implementers are looking for means to lower the cost of electricity and food supply. "We are supporting this kind of endeavour... we have to start now. Please, with your help, let us proceed with all our activities in the City of Iloilo," he said.

Engr. Corsiga explained that the delay in the project activities was due to processes and policies imposed by the banking institution, the Korean Eximbank, which NIA has to comply. "Everything has already been forwarded to Korea as we need their concurrence before procuring the project. The concurrence has not yet been given. I hope you will all understand the delay as everyone wanted this project to commence immediately," he said in closing.

The project is envisioned to provide a year-round irrigation to 31,840 hectares of farm lots in the Province of Iloilo and to increase the annual production of rice from 140,000 to 300,000 metric tons.



Recognizing excellent performances

By: Ma. Theresa Lee, CARP-IC

To some, the 22nd of June 2015, was just a normal day. To CARP, it was more than that. Much, much more than that.

It was Wednesday afternoon, and CARP was greatly filled with excitement, pride and honor. It was the day the agency has most awaited---the day which would most certainly speak of great determination and hard work.

It was NIA's 9th CARP Most Outstanding Award Ceremony. The event took place at the NIA Central Office, and no doubt was the place crowded. The event recognizes Irrigators Associations (IA) with their respective Irrigation Managers and Irrigation Management Officers which contributed well for the excellence of their performances and success of their projects and everyone just needed to recognize and thank those which regions came out as most outstanding in their fields.

"This award is given every year to inspire the IAs who seek progress and uplift lives of the farmer beneficiaries in the Agrarian Reform Communities," said proudly by CARP PM Delsy Revellame. She even highlighted CARP's insight of how IAs should work for the higher possibility of fulfilling their goals for development and improvement.

Personalities such as former Sec. Kiko Pangilinan, Adm. Florencio Padernal, Sr. Deputy Felix Razo, Deputy Estrella Icasiano, Deputy Erdolfo Domingo and NIA Board member Mr. Silvestre Bonto Sr. took part by handing out the plaques of recognition and cash awards to the top three IAs which showed exemplified effort to bring honor to the program as well as the agency.



The awardees are the following

Bulacan IA, Inc., Cotabato, Region XI,	Most Outstanding
Gravity Irrigators Service Association, Inc., Davao del Norte Region XI	1st Runner Up
Hingatungan IA, Inc., Southern Leyte, Region VIII	2nd Runner Up

While the Regional Outstanding IAs are:

MICAVICE IA, Inc., Cagayan, Region II,
Cabago IA, Inc., Region III
Anilorcu, IA, Inc., Oriental Mindoro, Region IV-B
San Agustin-San Ramon Agrarian Reform Farmers Coop. Camarines Sur, Region V
Buenavista IA, Inc., Bukidnon, Region X
Awao Communal IA, Inc., Compostela Valley, Region XI
KAMALAKA IA, Inc., Agusan del Norte
Buyaan IA, Inc., Surigao del Sur, both in Region XIII



(left to right) Engr. Helsy S. Bermudez, former CARP-IC Project Manager; Engr. Delsy J. Revellame current Project Manager; Hon. Francis N. Pangilinan; Administrator Florencio F. Padernal; NIA Board member Silvestre Bonto; Deputy Administrator for AFS Estrella E. Icasiano; Senior Deputy Administrator Felix M. Razo; and Deputy Administrator for EOS Erdolfo B. Domingo during the ceremonies recognizing the Awardees.

Farmers All Set to Co-Manage Masidem SRIP with NIA

By: Oscar S. Navata, PRO, Region I and
Juan M. Ellana, Senior IDO, PIMO



RARING TO TAKE CHARGE. The Board of Trustees (BOT) of the Bani SRIP Farmers Irrigators Association, Inc. (BSFIA) headed by its President Engr. Voltaire Cave (standing at the middle) came in full force during the initial briefing on Irrigation Management Transfer (IMT) conducted by NIA Personnel. The officials gamely posed near the impounding dam that provides the basic need of the farmers.

Used to be a small Communal Irrigation System (CIS) in Bani, Pangasinan, constructed under Participatory Approach Program by the National Irrigation Administration in 1982, the Masidem Small Reservoir Irrigation Project (SRIP) was managed by then Masidem Irrigators Association (MIA), a SEC-registered farmers' association irrigating about 60 hectares of farmland. But as years passed by, the service area was gradually reduced to 35 hectares due to deterioration of water shades in the surrounding area of the irrigation system.

During the mid 1990s, the farmers' group passed a resolution seeking for assistance from NIA and the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Bani concerning the possible construction of irrigation reservoir to be located in the old Masidem CIS to augment the diminishing water supply in the adjoining barangays of Calabeng, Arwas, Masidem, Poblacion, San Jose, Tugue Grande, Tugue Norte, and Luac. The NIA-PIO immediately responded to the joint IA and LGU request and fielded in a team of technical survey personnel to gather the required agro-economic data. After a thorough study on the proposed project which was found to be feasible, strategies and timelines were set in consideration with funding constraint.

In 1997, the Masidem SRIP came to realize when all the necessary requirements were prepared, submitted and approved including Right of Way (ROW) in collaboration with the Municipal Government of Bani and the multi-million estimated budget was finally approved. The reorganization of the MIA was also carried out due to the expansion of service area with a potential of 651 hectares with 450 famer beneficiaries. The IA reorganization which gave birth to the Bani SRIP Farmers Irrigators Association (BSFIA) on April 11, 2013 was also in preparation for the construction of the project and for its eventual symbolic turnover to the farmers.

On January 27, 2009, the construction of Masidem SRIP began and members of the BSFIA and some residents within the area were recruited as laborers. The Project which has a cost estimate of

Php 365,689,741.55 was inaugurated in April 2009 with the full support of Bani LGU and the Irrigators Association. Surprisingly, no formal turn over yet has taken place since the completion of the project in January 31, 2012 up to present. Nevertheless, the Pangasinan Irrigation Management Office (PIMO) gave the directive for a trial operation of the SRIP. In order to efficiently manage the irrigation system, the service area was divided into three sectors and consequently, the BSFIA organized a small farmers association headed by a Sector Chairman while the operation and maintenance personnel were designated under the supervision of the IA President who acts concurrently as O&M Chairman.

Necessarily, various institutional development trainings such as basic leadership, financial management and system management were conducted by the NIA to further capacitate the IA to perform its crucial task. For its part, the IA had to develop its operation and maintenance plans such as cropping calendar and pattern, water delivery and distribution, system maintenance, conflict management and financial and internal O&M policies for the efficient implementation of the IA activities in coordination with the NIA. In addition, information and dissemination of said plans and policies were carried out through sectoral and general assembly meetings.

The advent of the Masidem SRIP paved the way for the farmers' bounty harvest in eight barangays of Bani. They usually have Main Crop and Second Crop annually and they are also able to produce other crops along canal lines. Idle lands are properly utilized by them during summer. The farmers had an average yield of 90 to 100 cavans per hectare. While 600 hectares is considered a potential service area for the IA, only 300 hectares or barely 50% of rice land is currently irrigated. Hence, it is estimated that this gap will be gradually reduced to acceptable level when the basic irrigation facilities which are components of the Project under contract such as sub-lateral canals, farm ditches, turn outs, and canal lining will be installed. Fishery in the dam reservoir has also a promising economic contribution in the farming community.

The Bani LGU through its aquatic program envisions that agricultural industry as well as eco-tourism will help uplift the economic condition of the people of Bani to a certain extent because of the enormous benefits being derived from the SRIP coupled by the sustained greening of the dam's surroundings, accentuating its hilly and topographic view of the rice paddies, traversed by winding irrigation canals.

Indeed, the implementation of the project paved way for employment opportunities in the town of Bani especially during the construction period. With the IA's 2- year "trial experience" under the supervision of the PIMO, there seem to be no better course for the IA but to enter into IMT partnership contract with NIA to ensure a more efficient and effective management of the Masidem SRIP.



BSFLA Officials are also grateful to NIA for the eventual turnover of the NIA-IA SRIP Office in Calabeng, Bani, Pangasinan which they intend to utilize to sustain and strengthen their association.

TESTIMONIALS:

"The Filipino Farmers' success is our success."

It is really overwhelming to hear words of gratitude from our stakeholders—the farmers. We've gathered some of them to inspire us more to work harder and do better.

"Nalipay gid kami nga may irigasyon na kami (we are very happy to have irrigation)", she said. "Sang may irigasyon na dire, naka-kaon nag gid man kami sang kan-on. Sang una talagsa lang kami gakaon kan-on, kalabanan root crops lang pero subong nga may irigasyon na, pirme na kami gakaon sang kan-on (When we had the irrigation, we were finally able to eat rice. Before, we seldom eat rice, we eat root crops more often, but now that there is irrigation, we eat rice all the time)." – Nanay Medios (Don Salvador Benedicto, Negros Occidental)

"Noong wala pang irrigation ang NIA dito sa Loog, isang beses lamang kami nakakapagtanim sa loob ng isang taon at saktong lamang po ang aming kita para pangtustos ng pamilya sa pang-araw-araw. Ngayon na may irrigation na at sa tulong ng IRPEP sa pagkumpuni ng mga kanal, dalawang beses na sa isang taon kami nakakapagtanim. Umaabot hanggang 40-60 sako na ang among ano. Marami ang magagandang naidulot nito sa aming pamilya: nakapag-pagawa kami ng bahay at nakapagpa-aral ako ng aking mga anak – Yung panganay, 4th year college na sa EVSU Tacloban City, Civil Engineering yung kinuhang kurso at yung pangalawa naman ay 1st year college at EVSU Tacloban din nag-aaral, Industrial Engineering naman ang kinuhang kurso." – Mang Panoy (Loog, Basey, Western Samar)

"I am so busy but am grateful for this opportunity to be of service to the farmers. I am so in love with the participatory approach program of NIA that educating each farmer through the IAs becomes a personal conviction. Seeing every farmer paying his Irrigation Service Fee (ISF) or doing his assigned canal clearing task brings great pleasure to my heart." – Rosemary R. Caunca, President, League of Negros Occidental FIA

"...Because of irrigation, production of rice has improved in many areas. People have been given the privilege not to be hungry anymore. I salute this program of the government and thank God for blessing agriculture..." – Fr. Fernando Buyagan, an IA leader of Abra

"Lahat kami sa Ifugao, saludo kami sa NIA, sa lahat ng kanyang ginawa para sa aming mga magsasaka. Talagang ginampanan nito ang kanyang mandato na mag-construct, mag-restore at mag-rehabilitate upang mapaganda ang serbisyo ng patubig..." – Darlito Morales, Ifugao IA leader

"Dahil sa tulong ng NIA sa pag-iimprove ng mga irigasyon, na-improve din po ang mga sakahan namin sa Tabuk. Kami po mismo sa aming pamilya, inaabot po namin ang 255 cav/ha dahil nagkaroon ng tubig ang aming sakahan. Hanggang ngayon po, sa tulong ng NIA hindi po napapabayaang ang mga pasilidad, andiyan po ang pondo para ma-rehab ang mga nasisira ng bagyo." – Michael Lumas-i, Gawad Saka Awardee 2010 for Hybrid Rice Category

"Mula sa isang sinilong hanggang sa naging 22 hektarya ng palayan, maliban pa sa 23 hektarya ng maisan, napalago namin ito gamit ang irigasyon. Hangga't nandyan ang NIA na kaagapay ng magsasaka, hindi kami mawawalan ng pag-asa. Ang dugong nana-laytay sa aming katawan ay dahil sa NIA," Layno, Bantug Bayabo Irrigators Association

"Noon, kung wala nang sahod-ulan, hindi na tayo makakapagtanim. Ngayon, sagana na ang tubig na dumadaloy sa mga kanal ng NIA, dalawang beses na tayong makaka-ani, lalo na ngayon at may 5-in-2 pa. Salamat sa suporta!" – Samuel M. Lugo, Samahan ng mga Magpapatubig sa Lambak ng Cagayan (SMLCI)

Under Director Vicente R. Vicmudo, Ph. D. NIA Bicol Is Striving Together For The Better

By: Ed G. Yu, Public Relations Officer, NIA Region V

Veni, vidi, vici.

He came, he saw, he conquered in a snap the hearts of Bicolano and Bicolana officials and employees of NIA Bicol the first time he set foot in its regional office as its new director one September morning in 2014.

Unlike the Roman emperor Julius Caesar, to whom the Latin phrase is attributed, Director Vicente R. Vicmudo came, saw, and conquered Bicolandia not with swords and chariots of soldiers but with his boundless and contagious smile emanating deep within his gracious heart. With a doctorate in Rural Development, countless distinguished awards and recognitions and vast experience as a manager, Director Vicmudo straightaway hit the ground running by coming up with a catchphrase STRIVE NIA Region 5 to let his people know his vision for the region.

STRIVE stands for Strategic Reforms and Initiatives for Viability Enhancement. To get the support and rally his people to share this vision and direction, he launched a slogan making contest that produced the official motto "NIA Region 5: Striving Together for the Better."

He also composed a credo titled "I Believe" to ensure that NIA personnel will internalize the

slogan instead of just paying lip service to it like most employees do in some government agencies and offices.

With that organizational vision firmly in place, Director Vicmudo, the only high-ranking NIA official who uses Facebook as a management tool to constantly keep in touch with his people, also initiated meaningful physical improvements inside the regional office compound, which in turn inspired other NIA offices in Bicol to follow suit.

Premised on the principle that a beautiful and comfortable working environment is conducive to increased productivity, he caused the repainting of roofs and fences, repairs of restrooms, improvement of parking spaces and undertook a cleanliness drive within the various offices and vacant lots in the compound. He also spearheaded the planting of some 200 mahogany trees inside the 2.5 hectares NIA compound in Naga City, which are now fast growing as they are well-cared for.

Furthermore, he likewise gave the façade of the regional office with a new look by putting up a mural and signages, including the eight pillars welcoming employees and visitors as they pass by the pedestrian gate.



True to his words of transforming the NIA office into a "Paraiso para sa mga magsasaka," the good-natured and well-loved director put up three brand new huts, which he named "Kubo kan Paraoma" as a concrete tribute to the strong partnership between NIA and the farmer-irrigators.

The latest addition or shall we say attraction of sort inside the regional office compound is a mini-waterfalls, its clear continuous falling water according to Chinese Feng Shui, symbolizes life and abundance.

For Director Vicmudo, who made the mini-waterfalls a reality, its rushing water, flowing with vigor and power, represents the determination and perseverance of the men and women behind NIA Region 5 to strive together for the better.

Meeting the Challenge, Head-on

By: Rosalinda A. Segocio, Ph.D., Acting Administrative Services Officer, NIA-Caraga



His management skills and accomplishments made him the best candidate to head a region beset with many problems: unmet targets, slow moving projects, low ISF collection, alleged corruption investigation, political intervention, media interference, lack of funds for project-charged manpower, and other organizational problems. He faced these challenges head-on.

Mgr. C'zar M. Sulaik was transferred to NIA Caraga in October 2014. His first two months was focused on assessing the real situation of the region- the organization, its key personnel, the employees, status of project implementation, relationship with the media, and interagency

linkages. He identified the problems by conducting series of meetings with different sectors, listening to complaints, issues and problems. Undaunted, he addressed each issue and never failed to update higher management and asked assistance when needed.

Problems with the media were handled through press conference in February 2015. Requests from media to visit particular projects like the controversial MAP and Andanan RIS which was destroyed by flood were facilitated. A media tour was organized and held. A schedule for quarterly meeting with the media was established to ensure transparency and balanced reporting. Relationships with the local government units were also strengthened, project implementation were fast tracked, regular regional management conferences held, and meetings with problem contractors were called. An open communication between management and employees was encouraged. Problem with lack of manpower due to lack of funds was also brought to the attention of the central office by requesting for daily-COB charged personnel, which was positively answered.

Cont. reading on page 15

KABULNAN RIS - MAMASAPANO EXTENSION PROJECT

By: Alvin Marie P. Delos Santos,
Engineering Assistant, Maguindanao IMO

Once the word “Mamasapano” is mentioned or heard, what brings to mind is the ferocious battle that occurred on January 25 and hugged the spotlight as it claimed lives from all quarters- government troops, rebel groups, and innocent civilians.

Mamasapano, Maguindanao is a place where agriculture is the means of livelihood for its hard working people for the land is perfect for raising crops such as rice and corn. Now the place is given a chance to be more developed and productive.

Barely three months after the incident, PAFSAM Sec. Francis “Kiko” Pangilinan and Administrator Florencio F. Padernal launched an irrigation project, Kabulnan River Irrigation System (KRIS)-Mamasapano Extension Project, with Deputy Administrator Estrella E. Icasiano, NIA R12 Acting Regional Manager Ali S. Satol and Maguindanao IMO (MIMO) Acting Division Manager Norodin S. Kalang. Present in the momentous event were ARMM Gov. Hon. Mujiv S. Hataman, officials from other government agencies, NIA personnel, members of Irrigators Associations (IAs), media men and the people of Tukanalipao, Mamasapano, Maguindanao.

A site investigation ensued at Tukanalipao, Mamasapano, Maguindanao headed by Engr. Suharto A. Singgon, Chief of KRIS with Engr. Haron Joefariz L. Dawi, MIMO head of Design and Staff in coordination with the farmer-beneficiaries. Pimbalkan Creek being the water source can support the service area of 182.25 hectares benefitting 132 farmers. On April 14, 2015, KRIS – Tukanalipao IA Inc. was organized and elected its IA President, Mr. Ibrahim A. Ali. With the on-going project implementation, the KRIS staff conducted a Basic Leadership Development Course and Irrigation Management Transfer orientation to equip the officers and members of KRIS – Tukanalipao IA at Tacurong City on May 19-21, 2015.

With the government’s full support, the project implementation started in May and scheduled for inauguration on October 29, 2015. May the accomplishment of KRIS-Mamasapano Extension Project not only signify a better life for the farmers of Tukanalipao in Mamasapano but also a medium to remove traces of violence in the past.



KRIS - Tukanalipao IA



KRIS - Tukanalipao IA attend the Basic Leadership Development Course & IMT Orientation



Access Road

“Naga-pasalamat kami na ang NIA naghatag ug dakong pag-tagad ug suporta aron mahimo kaming tabang sa programa sa rice self-sufficiency.” (We are thankful that NIA has generously paid attention to us and supported us so that we become helpers to the program on rice self-sufficiency.)
— Alvin Gaspar, KOPIA

From Page 14: Meeting the Challenge, Head-on

Just recently, the first of its kind project of NIA-Caraga, Kitcharao Small Reservoir Irrigation Project was inaugurated by no less than the then OPAFSAM Secretary Francis Pangilinan, the newly installed OPAFSAM Secretary Fredelita Guiza, and NIA Administrator Florencio F. Padernal.

With the mentioned management strategies, employees' positive feedbacks can attest to the changes in the region. Central Office acknowledges a renewed region, true to its commitments and recognizes the fruits of the effort the new management is doing. On September 7, 2015, Engr. C'zar M. Sulaik was ap-

pointed as the new Regional Manager.

The new Regional Manager rose from the ranks. A consistent performer, his latest award was one of the Most Outstanding IMO Manager for CY 2014. With great hope coupled with positive attitude of the middle management and employees, Manager Sulaik believes NIA-Caraga will continue to serve and grow as what the agency envisions for both the employees and the stakeholders. He hopes for the same support to whoever holds the reign in the coming years.



Inauguration of Tangub SRIP

Ribbon cutting led by Former Secretary of OPAFSAM Francis "Kiko" N. Pangilinan, (centermost) assisted by recently appointed OPAFSAM Secretary Fredelita Guiza (4th fr. left) together with NIA Administrator Florencio F. Padernal (leftmost) NIA-X Acting Regional Manager Ramon A. Bugacia (3rd fr. right). LAMISCA IMO Manager Joecarnine L. Gubat (rightmost), Tangub City Mayor Philip T. Tan and wife Jenifer (all in white outfit) and Ozamis City Mayor Reynaldo Parujinog (2nd from right) in the inauguration of Tangub SRIP at the Brgy. Manga Tangub City on October 7, 2015



Unveiling of marker in Tangub SRIP

Mass Turnover of Completed Irrigation Projects to Irrigators Associations



Hon. Secretary Francis N. Pangilinan with Administrator Florencio F. Padernal lead the turnover of completed projects to the officers of Irrigators Association nationwide. Witnessing the event are NIA Board Member Silvestre Bonto and Tarlac Governor Victor A. Yap





Inauguration of Kitcharao SRIP in CARAGA Region



From L-R. Hon. Randy V. Salvajan-Brgy. Captain, Hon. Jenry E. Montante-Kitcharao Vice Mayor, Hon. Francis N. Pangilinan, Sec. Fredelita C. Guiza, Administrator Florencio F. Padernal, Engr. Luisito L. Cadelina, KSRIIP Resident Engineer, and Engr. C'zar M. Sulaik, Regional Manager-NIA CARAGA

Blessing of Dam



Releasing of fingerlings

BBMP site visit of Sec. Kiko Pangilinan and Administrator Florencio F. Padernal



Sec. Pangilinan with Mayor Jose Areno Yap, Jr., Administrator Florencio F. Padernal and Regional Manager Josephine B. Salazar.

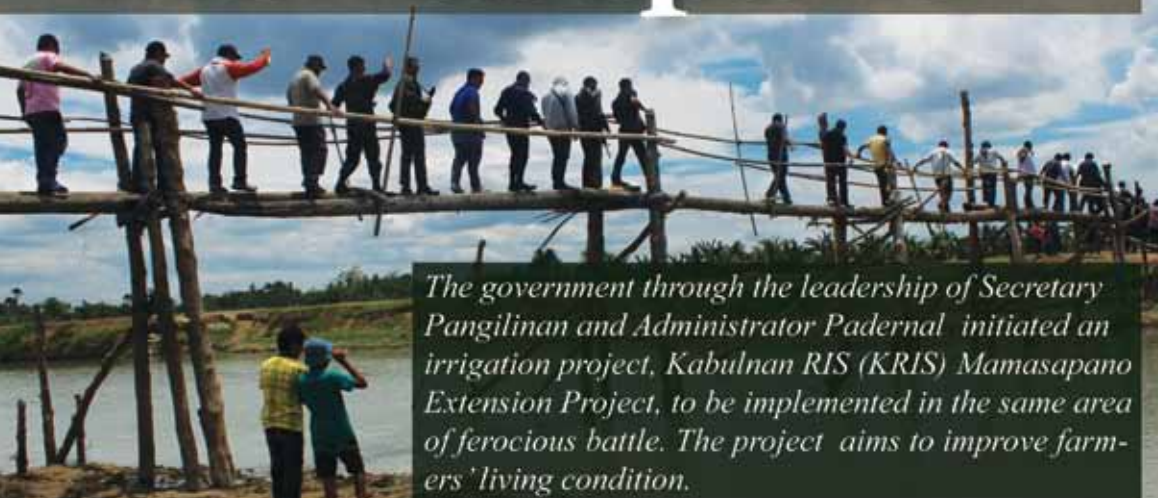


Site of the proposed Balog-Balog Dam and Reservoir in Brgy. Maamot, San Jose, Tarlac.



Site Inspection of Bulsa River where the proposed Balog-Balog Dam will be constructed in Brgy. Maamot, San Jose, Tarlac.

Mamasapano



The government through the leadership of Secretary Pangilinan and Administrator Padernal initiated an irrigation project, Kabulnan RIS (KRIS) Mamasapano Extension Project, to be implemented in the same area of ferocious battle. The project aims to improve farmers' living condition.



Site Photos





PAFSAM Secretary Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan and Administrator Florencio F. Padernal and the rest of the group crossed the remarkable bridge at Tukanalipao, Mamasapano, Maguindanao.



The Irrigators Association



Region 1

ASENSO BAILE: IA to Watch in Pangasinan

by: Oscar Navata, PRO

Registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) on August 12, 2008, Asenso Baile Irrigators Association (IA), Inc. covers three Barangays, namely Baguinay, Inamotan and Lelemaan in a small bucolic town and the home of the Minor Basilica of Our Lady of Manaog.

A service area of 205 hectares with 297 farmer beneficiaries representing eleven Turnout Service Area Groups (TSAGs), Asenso Baile started as an ordinary IA beset with administrative woes, organizational constrictions and in financial disarray during its maiden years. In a catchphrase, NISRI Institutional Development Officer (IDO) Harry Villanueva describe the ordeal during the developmental phase of the IA: "Grabe ang pinagdaanan naming hirap sa pag-organize sa IA na ito!"

This year's dry season, however, the Agno-Sinocalan group which supervises the association under the stewardship of PIMO Teodoro Paragas suddenly awoken in upbeat mood. In a relatively short period, their sacrifices yielded an affirmative result. During the second quarter of 2015, Asenso Baile had a breakthrough - delivering 100% Irrigation Service Fee (ISF) collection! The mystery is what this IA success story is all about.

Hitches of Type 1 - Type 2 Model Contracts

On January 3, 2011, Baile Irrigators Association, Inc. forged a partnership with NIA ROI through the traditional Type 1 contract wherein the IA is primarily given the task to undertake clearing and maintaining a specific



Lean and Mean. A highly cohesive Board of Trustees (BOT) headed by Chairman Magdaleno Andres during special meeting held at the Asenso Baile headquarters in Baranggay Lelemaan, Manaog, Pangasinan

length of canal within its service area. The deal includes sustained greasing of steel gates plus the responsibility of assuming minor repairs of irrigation facilities.

In return, the NIA is duty-bound to remunerate the association with the latter's canal clearing services, implement organizational development programs and assist the IA officers in the preparation of policies and procedures to carry out "maintenance responsibilities." Three months later, the parties agreed to elevate the partnership to a higher ground. Under the Type 2 model scheme, the IA was given a chance to prove itself to perform in the areas of operation and ISF collection. It was during this difficult phase when the association manifested birth pains particularly

in complying with performance standards set forth in the agreement. In the area of operation alone, Asenso Baile has to abide and co-operate with NIA before the start of each cropping season.

This requires their active participation in the formulation of cropping calendar and pattern of planting (CCPP) for dissemination to their farmer-beneficiaries. Under the new agreement, the IA has to monitor and submit List of Irrigated and Planted Area (LIPA) to NIA on a weekly basis, resolve conflicts arising from water distribution and its delivery to every TSAG, conduct planning, review and workshop in collaboration with NIA within a month after the end of cropping season and for IA officers to attend regular meetings and conferences organized by NIA field personnel to discuss various issues and concerns.

As if the burden was not enough, Asenso Baile has to contend with onerous ISF collection incentive scheme. For a collection efficiency of 91% up to 100% (highest category) the IA only gets a maximum of 15% share. Since the IA could hardly attain its desired income because of unsatisfactory ISF collection performance, demoralization obviously began to set in. As a result, the growth of association in general was stunted for a while.



Prize Catch. Officials of Asenso Baile Irrigators Association, Inc. show off the combine harvester, one of the most important labor-saving machine the IA acquired through the Department of Agriculture.

Dynamic leadership

Upon his retirement from Philippine Navy Marine, Magdaleno “Mandy” Andres became a full time farmer and was elected President of Asenso Baile since its inception in 2008. Asked about his success formula for the association’s transformation from obscurity to an excellent farmers’ organization, Andres briefly explained the importance of having competent leaders within the organization. *“Kailangan ipaliwanag na mabuti sa mga farmer-members na ang mga karapat-dapat lang ang mahahalal sa BOT, dahil sila din ang kawawa sa bandang huli kapag nagkamali sila ng mga pinili”.*

His first major contribution which inspired his Board of Trustees (BOT) was his persistency to apply for a flat-bed dryer with the Department of Agriculture (DA) which was eventually awarded to them in September 2008. The facility which benefits the farmer-beneficiaries particularly during wet season was constructed in a 460 square meters lot in Barangay Lelemaan which is owned by Andres. The property serves as permanent venue for Asenso Baile to hold BOT meetings regularly. IA Treasurer Lilita Pascua averred that the use of flat-bed dryer is cost-free to all their members.

Cooperation, cohesion, and active participation are other important factors which fuel their IA to greater heights. Since their officers are very visible even in the LGUs to apply for agricultural farm machineries, Andres claims that he finds it easy to secure favorable endorsements from NIA and politicians as regard their application for machineries. At present, Asenso Baile IA has acquired the following assets:

Item/Facility	Year Awarded	Donor	Benefit to Member
Grass cutter (10 units)	2015	IA	Free
Mech. Chainsaw (2 pcs)	2015	IA	Free
Warehouse	2015	DA	Free
Kuliglig	2014	DA	30% discount
Harvester	2013	DA	30% discount
Hand tractor	2013	DA	30% discount
Water pump (2 units)	2013	IA	Free
Reaper	2012	DA	30% discount
Flatbed dryer	2008	DA	Free

Light at the End of the Tunnel

On December 6, 2011, the Type 2 Model Contract was finally rescinded in lieu of an by effervescent partnership through Irrigation Management Transfer (IMT) Model 2 Contract. In a nutshell, a 60-40 sharing scheme was offered to the association. Details of this arrangement provides that if IA collection efficiency is below 100%, the first 60% shall be automatically deducted as NIA’s share while the remaining 40% goes to the IA. The first three years proved to be helter-skelter in so far as collection is concerned. Asenso Baile came up with this history of ISF collection performance:

Year	Dry	Wet
2012	75.04 %	52.20%
2013	86.56 %	76.97%
2014	85.52%	82.95%
2015	100.19%	-

Sound Financial Policy

In addition to the association’s seed money which was derived from accumulated ISF incentives through the years, the amount of 250,000.00 Php was recently infused to their fund courtesy of their 40% incentives during this year’s dry season excluding their earnings from old back accounts. Chairman Andres revealed that the IA fund is properly managed and is utilized to cover members’ honoraria for canal clearing and cost for maintenance of basic irrigation facilities in their area. He also explained that 10% of the IA fund is allotted to their designated collectors as incentive to ensure that they are properly compensated and motivated to focus in attaining 100% collection efficiency in their respective TSAG.

It was also revealed during their special meeting that Asenso Baile has allotted a fix amount of honorarium for BOT members for every meeting attended. Marietta



Flat-bed Dryer



Assets of the Asenso Baile IA.

Flores, IA Bookkeeper quipped that this is one reason why they always have perfect attendance. during BOT meetings. When asked about their future plans, Andres proudly discussed about the impending construction of their IA office which will be erected within the area of the warehouse (currently being used as palay shed). He said that construction materials have been purchased and the IA-funded office will be inaugurated before the year ends. It was emphasized that the office will serve as learning, ISF collection and business center. Briefly, Andres also discussed the BOT plan to attain “Zero Back Account” while sustaining its 100% ISF current account collection efficiency.

This is attainable because the IA has sufficient fund to pay for outstanding and overdue collectibles in cases wherein farmer-members are unable to settle their ISF obligations on time due to emergencies. To this effect, the IA came up with a “loan policy” to ensure 100% ISF collection. When asked what happens if farmers refuse to pay their loan, Andres replied that the BOT will till the land of the erring farmers using the IA farm machineries. “Of course we will take care of the crop yields come harvest time”, Andres added and emphasized that stringent policies on ISF collection is essential in order to actualize the Asenso Baile Multi-Purpose Cooperative within the next couple of years. Indeed, this group is truly in a hurry to enter the next level of Irrigation Management Transfer partnership with NIA.

CUMABAO IA STRIDES AHEAD

By: Macario Toribio, PRO-B

"Start it small and nurture it to greatness."

The above slogan may simply apply to the Cumabao Communal Irrigation System (CCIS) which started almost four decades ago as just a dole-out project of the government purposely to irrigate an initial area of around 70 hectares of formerly rainfed riceland.

Cumabao CIS is located in Cumabao, one of the remote barangays on the northwestern part of the town of Tumauni, about 25 minutes ride from the Isabela Clustered NIS Office in Lingaling, also in the town of Tumauni, Isabela. Although a longer portion of the road is already concreted, about 20% is still an all-weather road currently under construction.

"Our system started as dole-out project of the government with just a brash dam across the Balasig River to divert water for irrigation," recalled Cumabao IA President Efren Madriaga. He recounted how the farmers used to repair the brash dam every time rampaging floodwaters wash it out after heavy downpours.

Cumabao Irrigators Association was organized in 1976 and registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission on May 8, 1980. It has a total membership of 116 farmers with a service area of 160 hectares covering barangay Cumabao and Sitio Bayabo of barangay Camasi, also of the town of Tumauni.

Today, Cumabao IA has grown stronger. Tempered with vast experiences as a group of farmers with full determination and perseverance, it now became one of the top farmers' association under the Isabela Irrigation Management Office (IIMO) as evinced by the

The Ogee-Type Diversion Dam of CCIS across Balasig river



latest IA evaluation conducted by the team of Engr. Juliet Laxamana of the Institutional Development Section of NIA Region 2.

Out of their savings from the member's amortization fee, the Board of Trustees allocated some amounts for the construction of facilities needed by the members such as their office cum storehouse where they usually hold their regular meetings and, a Multipurpose Drying Pavement, where members could dry their produce in order to command a better price in the market.

"Except the Flatbed Dryer which was given on a grant basis by the Department of Agriculture, these are all self help projects of our association," says Mang Efren as he pointed to the Multipurpose Drying Pavement in front of their office.

"We are very thankful to the DA for giving us this Flatbed Dryer which is of great help to us specially during rainy seasons when they could hardly dry their harvest," Mang Efren said. The Flatbed Dryer has a drying capacity of 200 cavans in every 24 hours.

The members are good payers too. Today, with a total of 200 active members, CBIA has a collection efficiency of 85 to 90% from which, out of the 150 kilograms irrigation charge per hectare, 125 kilos is allotted for their annual amortization and 25 kilograms for their IA Fund.



Board of Trustees

Cumabao IA is paying an annual amortization in the amount of P65,000.00 for the period of 25 years. Quite big enough for a struggling association like CIA. But while other IAs could hardly pay or lag far behind in the payment of their amortization fee, Cumabao IA already have a 4-year advance payment as of this cropping.

"Ammomi ngamin a no saan kami nga agbayad iti padanummi, dakami met laeng ti kangrunaan a marigatan (We know that if we will not pay our water obligations, it is us who will suffer most)," Mang Efren said in closing.

With the right leadership and the unity and cooperation of its members, Cumabao IA will slowly but surely stride ahead towards the realization of its goal.



The IA office with storehouse and multipurpose drying pavement

Region 3

BAGBAGUIN MANATAL IA MADE IT BEST

By: Eliseo V. Bitangcol, PRO



(From Left to Right) Rochelle R. Cervantes, Mgr., AFD, Josephine B. Salazar, Regional Manager, Noel Miranda, IA President Bagbaguin Manatal, Loreto C. Jacinto, Vice-President, Benedict Sta. Ana, Secretary, Cresencio Hilario, Treasurer, Robert Cleofas, PRO, Angelito S. Miguel, Mgr. NIA BANE IMO and Virgilio J. Ilao, Mgr. Engineering and Operations Division. Photo taken during NIA 52nd Anniversary at NIA Region 3 Covered Court, Tambubong, San Rafael Bulacan, on June 29, 2015

Approximately 40 km. North of Manila, the Bagbaguin-Manatal IA was organized in Barangay Bagbaguin, Municipality of Pandi in the Province of Bulacan on June 27, 1990 under the NIA's Farmer Irrigators Organizing Program (FIOP). The association was legalized by its registration with the Securities and Exchange Commission on April 11, 1991.

The Bagbaguin-Manatal IA is a National Irrigation System (NIS) covered by the Bulacan-Aurora-Nueva Ecija Irrigation Management Office (previously Angat-Maasim River Irrigation System). It has a total service area of 270 hectares and 192 farmer beneficiaries. The system has a 4.10 kilometer length of the canal being maintained by the IA itself. The Association initially entered the Type I and II contract with the National Irrigation System under the Irrigation Management Transfer (IMT) Program and finally the IMT Model 2 which was its 3rd contract executed on July 1, 2010.

In the year 2014 its updated service area turned to 559 hectares covering the Barangays of Camatchilihan, Bagbaguin, Manatal, Masagana, and

Bunsuran with 448 farmer beneficiaries. Its prolonged canal measured at 26.30 km. The remarkable increase was due to the knowledge imparted as well as technical assistance brought by the NIA to the association.

Managing themselves with the capacity gained, its functionality improved through the year, that lead them to acquire a very impressive performance rating of 103.80%. Its Operation and Maintenance collection performance for the CY 2014 has a 118.98% rating during dry and 97.07% during wet marking a Cropping Intensity of 98.24 in dry season and 185.46 on wet season. Out of the total collection of 851,275.00 for CY 2014, the Bagbaguin-Manatal IA hit a shocking 826,370.77 wet & dry collection.

A new record which puts the IA into nominations for Most Outstanding IA for National System, an exceptional achievement ever received by an Irrigators Association.



(From Left to Right) Almario Cajucom - Sr. IDO, BANE IMO, Marianito Bullozo-SWFT, Loreto C. Jacinto - IA Vice President BAGBAGUIN Manatal, Noel Miranda-IA President BAGBAGUIN Manatal, Ma. Joselyn Garcia - SWFT, BANE IMO, Norman Castro, BOD BAGBAGUIN Manatal, Benedict Sta. Ana - Secretary BAGBAGUIN, Francisco Lara - SWFT TARZAM IMO and Danilo De Guzman - SWFT, BANE IMO.



PEÑARANDA IA : HOW ITS FAILURE BREEDS SUCCESS

By: Maria Isobel F. Padolina, PRO-UPRIIS



Members of Peñaranda IA, Inc.

Scarce water supply, disorganized water system, uncooperative members to failure of management- these kind of scenario picture how the Peñaranda Irrigators Association, Inc. (PIA) of UPRIIS struggled to survive.

With its Pump Irrigation System, learning from mistakes transformed them to be a model irrigators association today. It gave them the opportunity to build their resiliency to bounce back and find new ways and means to recover from their losses.

A Not So Good Start

Under the supervision and guidance of UPRIIS Division IV and with the able management of Engr. Eugenio O. Conde Jr., PIA operates the Peñaranda Pump Irrigation System located in Peñaranda, Nueva Ecija where they also derived the name of their association. It was founded on October 10, 1982 with 244 members irrigating a total of 400 hectares of farmland along three barangays on Peñaranda namely Sto. Tomas, Poblacion and San Josep.

Located in an upland and tail-end area, the outflow of water from the Peñaranda Dam hardly reaches the irrigation canals along the area. This condition led NIA to construct a pumping system in 1986 that would help pull the water to irrigate the crops. The pumps were initially powered by electricity. Its operation cost is being shouldered by NIA while the association collects irrigation fees from the farmers in the form of palay and remit a portion to the agency. Nevertheless, this kind of system did not do well resulting to bloated electric bills and unpaid obligations to NIA. This stemmed to the conversion of electric motor pumps to diesel engine pumps in 1992. Eventually, the association could not sustain its operation because of lack of clear-cut policies and control especially with regards to handling disbursements

and finances of the association. Apparently, its officers borrowed money from private entities and persons causing them huge debts which accumulated up to almost P500,000. As a result, the area covered by the pump irrigation system was reduced to 100 hectares.

New Management, New Beginning

Series of failures, however, did not impel the members to quit. After all, farming is their source of living. Something should be done. And so, in 2007, a new set of officers headed by Engr. Bert Aberin took over and introduced a new system of management. Members were asked to pay a membership fee. The diesel fuel would be assumed by farmers who requested for water following the rule "No Diesel, No Water policy" while a token fee would be paid to NIA as payment for the use of facilities provided to them. Any delinquent farmer would no longer be allowed to use the pump system. As irrigation service



During IA meeting

fee, farmers would pay fixed fees during dry and wet season in the form of cash. A new set of pump equipment granted in 2008 by then DA Secretary Arthur Yap contributed more to the improvement of the system. Unfortunately, Engr. Aberin died in December, 2007 and was then replaced by Mr. Francisco Padilla.

With these changes, PIA started to grow. Farmers were given the opportunity to take part in decision making. The funds of the association was deposited in the bank and its financial books were regularly reported to the members. Delinquent farmers were minimized because they could not get water without any payment although there is no discount or penalty being imposed. From this development, they were able to settle their obligations and regained the losses incurred in the past. As a fresh start though, the association urged the renaming of PIA from Peñaranda IA Inc. to Penaranda IA, Inc. in 2012 under the leadership of Mr. Jaime Reyes.

It's all about Trust, Honesty and Transparency



Mr. Jaime Reyes who is still the current president uplifted the morale of its members and his efforts boosted the income of the association. He was able to build trust among his members by being true and honest to his words. He made sure that the dealings and transactions of the organization are clear to their members. By creating a transparent management, members were able to understand well the purpose of their

association. Through open communication, members were convinced that the association is in good hands. Subsequently, teamwork and cooperation followed.

Fruits of Labor

Patience and willingness to adopt new ideas reformed the association into a useful and viable organization. Added to this were the numerous trainings and seminars provided by UPRIIS with the assistance of Department Manager Reynaldo D. Puno who value the farmers as

great partners in irrigation development. Shaping the members to be equipped with the right knowledge in supervising their operations such as Leadership and Capability Trainings, Records and Financial Management among others is one of the agency's priorities.

Indeed, hard work produces good fruits. Today, PIA has an astounding net worth of more than 2.3 Million Pesos. Due to their remarkable performance, DA granted them several machineries and equipment like flat bed dryer, drum seeder, combine harvester, hand tractors and many others. Out of these farm tools, they get additional income from seed drying and harvesting services. They even engaged on selling diesel fuel for use in pump irrigation.

Transformation into a Model IV Irrigators' Association

This year, because of PIA's outstanding achievements, the management of Division IV realized their potential and converted the association into a Model IV IA under the Irrigation Management Transfer Program of NIA. With this transformation, the association finally has its own legitimate identity. By having well-defined power and functions as an irrigator association, more opportunities await them. Guided by a contract closely monitored by UPRIIS, the system of payment is clearer and more identified including their benefits and limitations as a farmer organization.

With its own earnings, PIA was able to purchase more than 2,000 square meters lot. In this lot, one can find the newly constructed IA office, a warehouse and a multi-purpose pavement. They have also concreted about 60 meters of farm ditches (aripit) within their area in which they intend to replicate to more areas in the future. This maintenance activity is just a parcel of their bigger plans for the association. President Reyes envisioned PIA to be a model DA service provider and a seed grower. He also proposed to venture on selling organic and commercial fertilizers, or perhaps building a mini gas station to increase their income for the welfare and benefit of its farmer members.



Lining of farm ditches / canal is one of the main projects of PIA as model IV IA

Providing Service Above All

What better way to make the farmers happy is to provide them the service that they need. By providing consistent and efficient service, farmers would develop among themselves a sense of dependence to the association. They now care for the organization like their own family. PIA revolves around this core principle which has made them successful. In spite of all of these, farmers could see that they still have a long way to go. But the simple truth is, no great success could ever be achieved without failure. Certainly, the association learned from their mistakes. And finally, those failures have become their stepping stone in achieving their dreams.



Region 4-A

Culong-Culong RFIA: MAKING A DIFFERENCE

By: Marietta M. Dela Cruz, PRO



Culong-culong IA together with Mr. Angeles Pegollo, President and the officers Mario Saliba, Rufo Pasion, Gregorio Manalang, Norlito Villanueva, Rany Aquino, Benny Feleo, Francisco Gaspar, Nestor Hinalog, Carlito Cruz, Pedro Encapas and Enrique Guevarra. Joined by NIA personnel Marietta Dela Cruz - PRO, Cresencio Alcazar - IDO and Sherwin Guevarra - Enumerator.

Amidst the green riceland and the sun shining brightly while the fresh air mildly touching the skin, it was a beautiful day indeed at Barangay Palangue, Naic, Cavite when we met the officers of Culong-culong Rice Farmers Irrigators' Association. One can feel that they are pleased with the visit and their willingness to share what they have.

Culong-culong IA is a typical national irrigation system (NIS) IA organized by NIA in June 1990 as partner in its operation and maintenance. Along the way, however, the IA fallen into neglect with non-functional officers who did not have enough dedication to pursue the purpose of the association.

Reorganization works were conducted by NIA in 2009 and a new set of officers emerged and have undergone with the usual trainings and seminars on Basic Leadership Course, Financial Management and System Management. This time, the IA was determined to start anew and focused on the renewal of their SEC registration which have been revoked. They have incurred penalties due to the non-compliance of previous officers to SEC reportorial requirements and were forced to shell out around P40,000.00 to pay the penalties

as well as for the requirements for their BIR registration.

On July 1, 2009, Culong-culong IA entered into Model 1 contract with NIA (maintenance of irrigation canal - that for their 10.50 km canal they are being compensated P5,400.00 every 45 days). In addition, they receive an ISF share for the campaign they do during collection period using the standard NIA scheme: No share for Base Collection Efficiency (CE) below 60%; at 60% - they have a 5% share; 61-90% is 15% share and 91% and above is 25% share. This Dry Season 2015, they were able to attain 91% collection efficiency and received P121,532.70 IA ISF share.

To show that they are determined to make a difference, the present Culong-culong IA officers ably led by their President, Mr. Angeles Pegollo serve and work for their members for free without any allowance nor honorarium or any transportation allowance. They decided to use their funds to procure four (4) hand tractors which they lend to their members for free (with agreement that labor and fuel are their obligation). Also, out of this fund they were able to pay the aforementioned SEC

penalties and the BIR requirements topping off with their civic project through donation of school supplies for deserving students. With enough fund, they are planning to repair their office which have been destroyed by typhoons and start managing their IA affairs for their plan to enter into Model 3 contract

The system is catering to 316 farmer-beneficiaries and has firmed-up service area of 475 hectares. They have 19 Turn-out service area groups but have been divided into 11 sectors all of which have active officers. One of their main objective is to equitably supply irrigation water for each of their members - so that each one of them will have good harvest. However, their average palay yield per hectare is only 93 cavans which they attribute to the soil degradation in their field because of its too much acidity coupled with still traditional way of farming. They hope to remedy this through closer coordination with their municipal agriculture's office and other government agencies that can help in raising their awareness to better farming and obtain the necessary support for their association.

Awarded Best in Organizational Practices by the region, the Culong-culong Rice Farmers

Irrigators' Association know that they still have a long way to go to attain the level they want. They are actually not after the awards, but to be considered as one of the best is reward enough for them. They are happy that their efforts have been noticed not only by their members but by others as well. They hope to carry on with their plans and are praying that needed support will come on time.

No doubt, Culong-culong IA have already made an impression that will pave the way, the opening of doors toward the success of their association, towards abundant harvest and happy, prosperous farmers.

With distinctive pinoy hospitality, we are given a huge plastic bag of freshly picked cucumbers and with their waving arms, we left the IA officers with an assured feeling that indeed Culong-culong Rice Farmers Irrigators' Association has already made a difference, a great change for the better.



MEETING THE OFFICERS OF CULONG-CULONG IA

Region 4-B

SUMULONG NA MAGSASAKA NG BAGONG SIKAT IA: Palawan's Pride

By: Aileen Vernice G. Bahia, PRO

Looking at the list of awardees for the regional NIA IA Day, I couldn't hide my smile as I see that an Irrigators Association (IA) from Palawan Irrigation Management Office (IMO) has finally made it to the outstanding category. It's been a while, I said to myself.

Sumulong na Magsasaka ng Bagong Sikat IA! Its story must be shared so that more and more IAs can adopt their strategies and policies for future improvement.

Background

Included under the Malatgao River Irrigation System (RIS), the Sumulong na Magsasaka ng Bagong Sikat IA was organized on February 16, 2010 which covers 137 hectares of Brgy. Bagong Sikat, Narra, Palawan. The IA has 58 homegrown farmer members. To legalize its existence, it was reg-

istered to the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) with number CN201007365 on May 8, 2010

The IA is currently under the Irrigation Management Transfer (IMT) Model 2 Contract and has five (5) Turnout Service Area Groups (TSAGs). Headed by President Mr. Levi Pasudag, the IA is guided by Sr. Water Resource Facilities Technician (SWRFT) Mr. Bernardo Balocas and Irrigators Development Officer (IDO) Ms. Annie Jake de Jesus.

Effective Scheme

With the IA's impressive and effective management scheme, they were able to discipline their members in implementing the association's by-laws and policies. They held their annual general assembly every 25th day of March together with Barangay officials of Bagong Sikat to coordinate with the members and address different concerns of the association. Regular conduct of Board of Trustees (BOT) and TSAG meetings are also the secret in improving and providing directions for the IA.

Moreover, the IA continues to develop their inter-agency linkages through participation to different activities and programs like Farmers Field School Program of PhilRice.



Sumulong na Magsasaka IA conducts their annual General Assembly every 25th day of March

IA SUCCESS STORIES

Sumulong na magsasaka ng bagong Sikat IA: Palawans Pride, from Page 30

Sustaining the IA's viability is never a problem for the Sumulong na Magsasaka ng Bagong Sikat IA for they thought of a strategy to increase their income: lending the revolving fund to IA members. This strategy helps to support the additional expenses of the association and will soon be used for the equity of farm machineries and equipment.

Excellent Feat

Equally active and dynamic IA officials and members who work together drives the Sumulong na Magsasaka ng Bagong Sikat IA to achieve remarkable performance in all aspects of the functionality survey resulting to its nomination as Outstanding IA in the IMO and Regional Level. It got the awards for both levels.

Records show that in terms of Collection Efficiency (CE), the IA held high percentage for the past years. It recently got 98.15% CE for this season's collection (Dry Season 2015).



Sumulong na Magsasaka IA undergoes the Basic Leadership and Development Course (BLDC)

"Sa pamamagitan ng pagtutulongan naming mga opisyal ng IA na maningil, kinakausap namin ang mga individual farmers at sa tulong na rin ni Sir Baloc (SWRFT)," stated President Levi Pasudag when asked how they maintain the high percentage of collection.

Sumulong na Magsasaka ng Bagong Sikat IA believes that this is just the start of its fruitful journey as Palawan's Pride.

Region 5

Coop learns success on its own

By: Jagel Mae S. Escandor, Research Assistant B



BULA, Camarines Sur - San Agustin San Ramon Farmers Cooperative or SARFC learned that they can do more on their own as independent, juridical entity.

Capitalizing on two units of electric pumps that draw water from the Bicol River to irrigate rice lands in villages of San Ramon and San Agustin, SARFC operates San Ramon Pump Irrigation System in Bula town, southwest of Naga City.

Providing irrigation water all year-round to 419 hectares of rice lands, SARFC's irrigation system has sufficient water supply to even extend its services to 200 hectares more and allow third cropping in the rice lands. Within its irrigation service area, the average yield per hectare reaches 138 cavans.

Run by 21 regular staff, SARFC has diversified its operation that include the service operation of a flatbed dryer, a mechanical dryer, hand tractors, solar dryer, seed bank hall, rice storage hall and a service van.

Through the years, SARFC acquired their assets from government agencies that include Department of Agriculture, Department of Agrarian Reform, National Irrigation Administration and also from non-government organizations.

SARFC's success was not a walk in the park as they had to go through difficulties that shaped them well into becoming one of the national finalists to the 2014 Most Outstanding Irrigators Association under CARP category. It was awarded the recognition by the NIA on June 2015 at NIA-Central Office.

In return to the irrigation service, SARFC collects 12 cavans of palay for dry cropping season and another 10 cavans for wet season called Irrigation Service Fee (ISF) for seven years now without complain from its members.

Edgar Razado, SARFC Chairman, said that the members had to abide by the payment scheme to sustain its service operation. "Without the farmers paying the irrigation fee results to the stoppage of operation like one incident in the past," shared Razado

Abject condition

Arthur S. Rabeje, General Manager and former SARFC Chairman said when irrigation pumps break down or the coop fails to pay the power bills, the poor rice-farming families in San Agustin and San Ramon suffer

more amidst their already abject condition.

As village chief of San Ramon up to 2007, he recalled that many times his constituents had to beg from local politicians every time the electric pumps were disconnected for failure to pay the power bills. "Because of great sufferings around the community whenever the power was cut-off from the electric pumps and the rice farmers fail to plant, looting became a frequent occurrence," Rabeje narrated.

"It's the time when even cooked rice in the pot left in the kitchen can be stolen," Rabeje recalled.

Delays in power payment

The former village chief said SARFC continued to experience delays in paying for its power bills to Camarines Sur III Electric Cooperative (Casureco III) until one time the arrears reached P3.5 million. By that time, he said, the members and officers of SARFC had no choice but to ask any local politician to help the irrigation system be reconnected to power if only to enable the rice farmers to plant.

Rabeje said it took almost ten years for the SARFC to overcome its weaknesses in terms of promptly paying power bills which forced them at the mercy of local politicians' influence to allow the electric pumps reconnect to Casureco III's power lines even with arrears.

But SARFC's dependence to local politicians made the members and officials indebted to them which inevitably allowed people helping them throw their weight on the management and operation of the cooperative.

Reorganization

When Rabeje's term as village chief ended in 2007, he was elected to the Board of Trustees (BOT), and consequently, as the chairman of SARFC.

In his first term as chairman of SARFC, he decided to seek meeting with the officials of the Casureco III regarding the payment of its arrears. He agreed to pay the initial payment of 2,000,000.00 for the reconnection of power to their electric pumps.

With the approval of the general assembly of the SARFC, for the first time they decided to ask help from private individuals rather than local politicians. They were able to pay for the initial payment and the electric pumps were reconnected to power and the irrigation system again operated for the benefit of the rice farmers in the area.

After the irrigation service of SARFC was revived, the general assembly approved to set the irrigation fee which until now is still enforced with nobody complaining. Obviously, the members of the farmers' coop realized that paying religiously the irrigation fee is the only way to sustain the irrigation service and livelihood in the villages of San Agustin and San Ramon.

Learning from the past

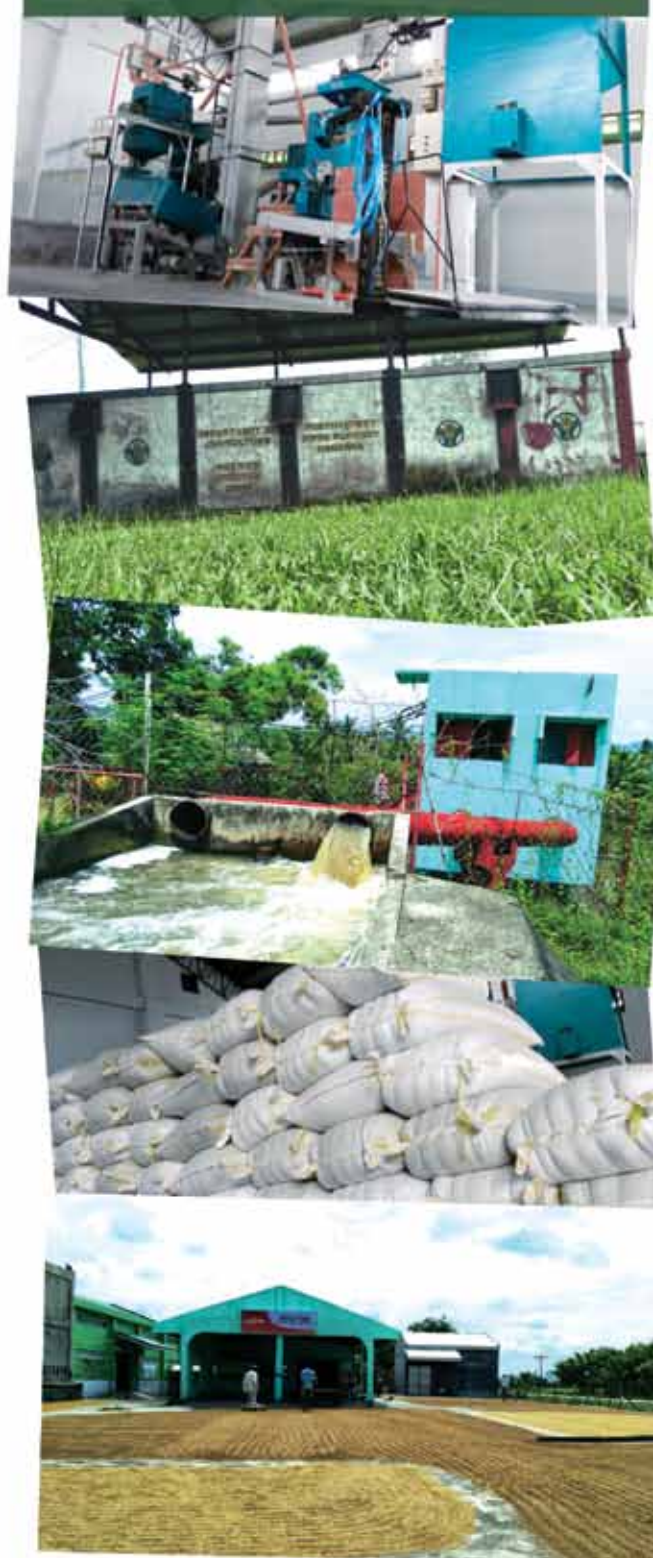
Learning from the pitfalls the coop experienced in the past years, the members and officers of SARFC improved cooperation through *rabus* (collective work) in the maintenance of the irrigation ditches.

Furthermore, more administrative and operational policies were instituted into the cooperative while financial transactions were made transparent and reported every regular meeting.

With improved systems and procedures, SARFC learned how to relate with agri-related agencies instrumental in the acquisition of more capital. These agencies also work for the development of staff, members and officials of the coop through the conduct of appropriate trainings and seminars.

Maturing as service organization, SARFC has gone a long way from a struggling cooperative burdened with indebtedness to being one of the thriving community-based people's organization providing services to its members in this town.

SARFC Asstels



Region 6

Paving Way for Freedom to Choose

By: Florentina L. Magbanua, Senior IDO and Jimena L. Dignadice, IDO, NOIMO



Malaysian mums ready for harvest

Sugarcane farm, flower farm, paddy rice farm and corn farm in close proximity are the unique features of the service area of Buenavista Communal Irrigation System (CIS) in Bago City, Negros Occidental. These farms are sharing the same irrigation canal and turnout making it easier for the farmers to share technologies and experiences. For the visitors, it's a breathtaking panorama of a variety of crops vigorously growing even at the height of summer season.

Buenavista CIS was constructed in year 2000. The irrigation community at that time was a mono crop of sugarcane. For CARP beneficiaries who were only starting to farm, out of their own resources find it extremely difficult to sustain production. "We were already contemplating to lease our farms when NIA started to facilitate organizing the farmers into Irrigators Association", said Leopoldo Doronila, IA President. "The project gave us new hope and better outlook in life," he added. Almost all IA members alternately worked during project construction as labor force with minimal take home pay as most part of their daily wage were contributed to equity. With some assistance from the City Government, the IA was able to raise 30 percent equity upon project completion exempting the farmers from amortizing the project cost to NIA.

After project turn over, the farmers were faced with greater challenge of converting their sugarcane farms into rice paddies. "We commissioned every member of our family to do the hard work of land use conversion." Said Merlinda Norbe, IA treasurer. "It took us months to complete the conversion process of the first half hectare of our land but every paddy we built was a big leap towards a better tomorrow"

Cost of land conversion varied, depending on topography and the kind of crop that will be raised. According to Edgar Namang, a flower farmer, it cost him about P160,000.00 per hectare to convert a sugarcane farm to flower farm intended for roses and about P80,000.00 per hectare if its intended for chrysanthemum and other short duration varieties. In rolling areas, conversion cost for rice paddies is about P70,000.00 per hectare while for flat terrain is about P 40,000.00 per hectare according to Aniolino Pedoy and Roberto Jamias, Board of Directors. To

date, the farmers were able to convert almost half of the 120 hectares sugarcane farms.

Flower farming is the most profitable farming practice followed by rice, sugarcane then corn according to the IA Officers. The IA members are given freedom to decide on what crop to raise in a particular season which provided the timing of planting, and crop maintenance does not disrupt the water delivery and distribution schedule. "The Department of Agrarian Reform facilitated our emancipation from the bondage of big landowners and NIA paved way for a greater freedom to choose on what crops to raise suited to our skills and expertise" said Samuel Tapio, Board of Director. "We were also able to apply the technology of multicropping and intercropping without fear of water shortage or drought" added Leorina Doronila.

Today, the IA serves us the unifying force of CARP beneficiaries in the area. The IA Office is the most common venue for farmers' meeting and training facilitated by both government and non government sectors. It is also the channel of various assistance to farmers being catered by other agencies. The IA has gradually raised its assets and cash through internally generated funds. It has been awarded as the most outstanding CARP assisted IA in Region 6 for two consecutive years now. It vows to maintain its outstanding performance. More than the awards and recognition, the IA takes pride for being an instrument in empowering the individual farmers to choose and explore possibilities. "We are not rich in material things yet, but we abound with hope and opportunities" concluded Rosemarie Doronila, the youngest member of the IA.



Flower farm, sugarcane farm and rice paddies in close proximity



IA Office

Region 8

Hingatungan IA, Inc.: Garners Top IA Award

By Edita V. Enderez, OIC, IDS



Virgelio T. Tosloc & Rodel T. Fortaleza, President and Treasurer respectively of Hingatungan IA hold the ceremonial check as 2nd runner-up of Most Outstanding IA given by CARP – IC with OPAFSAM Secretary Pangilinan and NIA Administrator Padernal together with other NIA top brass.

Virgelio T. Tosloc, and Rodel T. Fortaleza, President and Treasurer respectively of Hingatungan IA Inc. of Brgy. Hingatungan, Silago, Southern Leyte, smile and could not believe that their dream of receiving the prestigious National Award as 2nd Runner-up Most Outstanding IA given by CARP-IC is happening. They received the trophy and cash award of P25,000.00 from Sec. Francis N. Pangilinan, Presidential Assistant for Food Security and Agricultural Modernization (PAFSAM) on June 24, 2015 during the 52nd NIA Anniversary celebration at Central Office, Quezon City. He was assisted by NIA Administrator, Engr. Florencio F. Padernal and Engr. Delsy J. Revellame, CARP-IC Project Manager. A week earlier at NIA Regional Office, Tacloban City which celebrated the same occasion, Virgelio T. Tosloc was also awarded a certificate of appreciation and cash in the amount of thirty thousand pesos (P30,000.00) from the Regional Manager Romeo G. Quiza. Hingatungan IA was one out of three IAs honored for outstanding performance in managing the system for CY 2014. After being only a nominee for the top award for the past five years, it won its first major award. The Search for National Outstanding IA is an annual event organized by NIA Central IDD to inspire IAs to improve and surpass their previous years' performance.

Indeed, the IA president was not only successful in bringing his IA to greater heights but also in overcoming his intense fear of being a star in a video documentary. The reason he couldn't sleep a day before its conduct. But unexpectedly, he did it with flying colors as he was able to narrate the IA's history, his management skills and techniques; how he instilled discipline to his officers and members; how he resolved problems encountered; and, how he steadily climbed up the ladder of success in managing the operation and maintenance of the IA. Mr. Tosloc is equally active in his social responsibilities to the community.

Hingatungan IA Incorporated is a coastal barangay of Silago, Southern Leyte, about 108 km away from Tacloban City. It is surrounded

by green mountains, scenic waterfalls and pristine beaches against a backdrop of the deep blue Leyte Gulf. Biodiversity teems with the abundance of fish, corals, marine life, birds and snakes. Farming and fishing are the farmer's means of livelihood.

Irrigation Development of Hingatungan CIS was slow but steady. It started in 1979 with only six (6) hardworking and aggressive farmers eager to cultivate their rainfed rice of about three (3) hectares. With just bare hands, they built a brush dam along Bagakay River by piling stones, rocks and boulders. Through bayanihan or "Tagbo", they manually dug an earth canal connecting to their brush dam going to their rice fields. Ten years thereafter, NIA constructed their communal irrigation system expanding their irrigated area to 40 hectares funded by CARP. The farmer-beneficiaries continually and sustainably built and developed contours/terraces and paddies thereby attaining 100% paddy development in 2013. Operation and maintenance performance was at its peak with a 200% cropping intensity and production was high at 6 metric tons per hectare. Capacity building activities conducted to IA members specifically the Rice Production Technology, System Management Trainings, and Gender Sensitivity Training. The outcomes of all these trainings have resulted to increased paddy yields and rice production which ultimately increased their farm income. The impact of the CARP Project is basically evident in the improvement of their quality of life as they enumerated how the project has transformed their lives: being able to send their children to school; build better homes; acquire furnitures, motorcycles and most of all, being able to eat variety of foods at three square meals a day.

Women IA members were also supported by the IA which resulted to their innovative transformation. Women played a vital role in the success of the IA. They were provided pigs to start with the swine dispersal program. With this income generating project, they

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IA SUCCESS STORIES

Hingatungan IA, Inc.: Garners Top IA Award, from page 34

were able to raise funds of about P8,160.00 from a monthly contribution of P5.00 per member.

What is commendable for the Hingatungan IA is its unified support to the care of the environment. Fully aware that barangay Hingatungan is a Tsunami prone area, the Board of Trustees (BOTs) actively participated in planting mangroves along the coast. This will serve as protection from soil erosion, salt intrusion as well as fish sanctuary in the barangay. The IA members also plant trees in their watershed area to have a continued source of irrigation water as well as prevent landslides. They are also active as volunteers in the yearly Brigada Eskwela of Hingatungan National High School. Recently, they received an award for their active participation from the said school. They have also that innate concern to extend a helping hand to those in need. During the wrath of Supertyphoon Yolanda on November 8, 2013, their IA office served as an evacuation center and home to 53 evacuees covering 12 households.

Hingatungan IA is a recipient of numerous awards as Most Outstanding IA for National, Regional and Provincial levels, but this is the first time they received a Top National Award thus, bringing honor to Region 8. Regional Manager Romeo G. Quiza and IMO Manager Pedro C. Rubio, Jr., both awardees on the same occasion were very proud of its achievement. They vowed to continue their support to the IA.

For CY 2015, they have lined up several programs and projects for implementation using the cash award as start-up capital. They plan to engage in micro-enterprises such as: sale of farm inputs, palay trading, and rice milling. Income derived will be used in the provision of additional benefits to members as well as the continued operation and maintenance of the system. Virgelio T. Tosloc is requesting for the continued support from CARP-IC and staff, NIA RO and IMO staff since he believes that without their support they could not be where they are now.



President Virgelio Tosloc with the women IA members of Hingatungan IA who played a vital role in the success of the IA.



a preview of the management skill of virgelio Tosloc.



Virgelio Tosloc giving instruction to an IA member.

Region 11

THE POWER OF IA:

San Agustin Ruparan Barangay Irrigation Development Association, (SARBIDA) Inc.

By: Bernadette G. Robin, Acting PRO



Hon. Secretary Pangilinan leads recognizing SARBIDA IA as the Most Outstanding IA in Communal Irrigation Systems (CIS) category.

At a glance, SARBIDA may not be that famous nor popular. It seems to be just an ordinary IA, modest and even self-effacing. However, this IA has the innate power, the energy to hit their targets. Among the many accolades bestowed upon them in recognition of their achievement, SARBIDA is recently awarded as the national Most Outstanding IA, CIS category during the 52nd NIA Anniversary in June 2015.

The IA got strength, the power to manage the IA membership effectively towards improving the association.

Tougher than the IA looks, SARBIDA has the influence to motivate its 390 member – beneficiaries. Considered as the core, the members are the most important resources of IA. Fortifying the capability of every member whose skills in farming they inherit from their roots and ancestries, and strengthening their ability to manage the irrigation system. Members have been nurtured congruent to the viability of the IA. From here, the IA basically put discipline among members to accomplish goals, one direction for all.


SARBIDA HARVESTER

The best use of commodities - the water supply and the irrigable area within the reach. Nearby the City of Digos is SARBIDA's 478.24 hectares actual irrigated rice fields skirting alongside the highway that shimmers green and gold at harvest and turns the environment refreshingly invigorating. Some parcels of its farmlands covering the service area of San Agustin Communal Irrigation System (San Agustin CIS), Digos, Davao del Sur have been taken for home lots, access roads and waterways. SARBIDA manages the irrigation system effectively and the members religiously abide with policies and implementation of O&M plans. The member-users' yield average 145 cavans per hectare which highly contributes to rice requirement of the populace.

Trending technology, SARBIDA has effected innovations advancing technology for the IA such as computers and other gadgets to facilitate data processing and communications.

The association decides to own the irrigation system. For the improvement and lasting functionality of San Agustin CIS, SARBIDA sought for the rehabilitation of the CIS which structures were constructed and repaired by the National Irrigation Administration (NIA), then turned over to SARBIDA for the management of the system. A Certificate of System Ownership was issued by former NIA Administrator Antonio S. Nangel on November 5, 2012 after paying their amortization in full after availing the Scheme II of the MC #27, s. 1991 in which, SARBIDA settled 30% of the remaining loan balance and 30% equity scheme of their completed project under the Restoration and Rehabilitation Fund.

Collection efficiency of SARBIDA is 100% and more. Along with other income, the association earns millions which proceeds are properly subjected in their IA financial procedures

and auditing system open and transparent to the general assembly making the IA more viable.

IA's mind works wonders. The rewards and prize SARBIDA reaped from the Agri Pinoy and outstanding awards are invested in profitable projects. The cash award they received from Agri Pinoy has been in production loan program assisting the individual members in their farming activities. Resolved in sustaining the improved quality of life of its member, SARBIDA keeps soaring and unceasingly improving.

This is indeed a fulfilling mission for SARBIDA. After all, IA is what they make it with their POWER.


SARBIDA WAREHOUSE

Region 12

Bulacanon IA, Inc.: Patience Begets Success

By: Dr. Antonio C. Hilario, Supervising IDO (IDS Chief), Cotabato IMO



Mr. Joel Abinsay representing Bulacanon IA receives plaque and cash incentive as the 1st Runner-Up in the Search for the Outstanding IA in Communal Irrigation System (CIS) Category. Present to grace the event are Secretary Francis N. Pangilinan, Board member Silvestre Bonto and top management officials led by Administrator Florencio F. Padernal

One of the ingredients of success is patience and better still it should be coupled with hard work and teamwork. These are the values and attitudes that run through the veins of the officers and members of Bulacanon Irrigators Association, Inc. of Bulakanon, Makilala, Cotabato.

The IA started its indigenous irrigation system sometime in the 1940's and forty-three (43) years after, then NIA Cotabato Provincial Irrigation

Office, now Cotabato Irrigation Management Office formally organized the association in 1983 under the Participatory Approach Program. Under this program, the office constructed a well-planned and better engineered irrigation facilities. With the involvement of the farmers in planning and construction, the project was completed and turned over to and accepted by the association without resistance for the primary aim of sustaining the operation and maintenance of the system.

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Through all the years, the IA stood firm in its vision to provide services to both farmer-members and non-members for a sustainable development through the implementation of community-

based programs and projects for the

farmers. Henceforth, the IA became an instrument in gaining support from various government agencies and non-government organizations as well as from Barangay and municipal government units of Makilala. In so doing, the IA received financial assistance and farm machineries including a warehouse and multipurpose solar drier.

The IA under the present leadership of its president, Mr. Rufino C. Floresca, Sr. has been performing well in its financial and operational management and as such became a multi-awarded farmers' organization not only in the municipal, NIA Provincial and Regional levels but also in the national level being bestowed by the NIA Central Office and CARP Project Management Office.

When the Agri-Pinoy Rice Achievers Award (APRAA) organized by the National Rice Program of the Department of Agriculture started its annual search in 2012 for Outstanding Irrigators Associations which have contributed a significant increase in the national rice production and in the attainment of rice self-sufficiency, Bulacanon IA was one of the nominees. An astounding one million peso cash prize was at stake for the lucky IA. However, during the first year of the search, the IA only received a consolation prize of P200,000.00. In the succeeding year, 2013, the IA joined again in the quest but was dislodged by more competent associations.

Nevertheless, losing in that prestigious search did not deter the IA from striving even more in its various endeavors and ventures. The IA never failed to look for better strategies to increase its production and productivity. The members planted registered and certified seeds and were granted agricultural inputs through soft loans while practising modern farming technologies. On the other hand, the IA leaders religiously implement their policies with the support of local government ordinances.

When the next round of APRAA search for 2014 was announced, the officers seemed reluctant to join again due to fear of losing. Some declared not to join anymore while others said maybe next time. However, with the prodding of Cotabato IMO Institutional Development Section, the Officers and Board of Directors patiently prepared their book-bound documents which they submitted on time to the Screening Committee. Unexpectedly and for the third time, the NIA Central Office Evaluation Committee went to Bulacanon and found the IA to have improved tremendously in its agriculture-related activities and got their nod to win as one of the five Outstanding Irrigators Associations under the communal irrigation systems category.

Once again, Bulacanon IA, Inc. added another achievement in its ever-growing roster of awards. Last June 24, 2015 during the 52nd Anniversary celebration of NIA, Bulacanon IA, Inc. was awarded First Runner-up in the National Search for CY 2014 Outstanding Irrigators Association under the communal irrigation system category. In addition to this, Bulacanon IA, Inc. was awarded as CY 2014 Most Outstanding CARP-assisted Irrigators Association by CARP-IC Project Management Office.

Truly, a quitter never wins and a winner never quits. However, if one aims to win, he must always exercise persistence and above all patience to gain success.

CARAGA

BEHIND THOSE DREAMS: THE WEBAMSI STORY

By: Jane B. Huqueriza, PRO



It is an inspiration to see an organization withstand, despite of a series of calamities and challenges they go on to pursue their vision. One organization that stands among the rest is West Bayugan Maygatasan Sta. Irene Irrigators Association, Incorporated (WEBAMSI). It is one of the 22 IAs of Andanan-Wawa River Irrigation System of (AWRIS) under Agusan del Sur Irrigation Management Office.



IA Regular BOT Meeting

The association's office is located at Purok 6, Maygatasan, Bayugan City. It serves 265.52 hectares with a total of 202 farmer beneficiaries. The IA entered into Model 2 IMT contract on January 26, 2010. Under Model 2, canal clearing, billing and collection are being undertaken by the IAs. So far, regardless of these responsibilities, they have not encountered problems that were not resolved right away, as the members were adept to "bayanihan." They have one employee to do the billing and recording to IFRs and one encoder to prepare documents and reports. Their high collection efficiency at 100% is maintained every cropping season since CY 2010 as the leaders are the collectors themselves. This year's wet cropping season, despite of the irrigation facilities of Andanan RIS was damaged by Typhoon Seniang, the farmers planted rainfed rice and mostly planted corn. They are positive the higher management heed their clamor for a fund to repair the damaged portion of the system. Under the leadership of Engr. Akas Basilan of the Agusan del Sur IMO and Engr. C'zar M. Sulaik, the acting Regional Manager of NIA-Caraga, and with the support of the Provincial and Local Government, their irrigation will be restored in due time.

Behind the IA's resilience is a strong leadership of its President, Mr. Nemesio B. Niog, Jr. supported by 13 Board of Trustees who are also acting as the TSAG leaders, who implemented their policies down to its 22 turn-out service areas. The strong implementation and linkages developed with other agencies and local government units helped them achieve everything they have now and earned several awards from the local, regional, and national levels as they were annually chosen as one of the Outstanding Irrigators Associations.

In 2012, the IA was awarded P'200,000.00 from the Department of Agriculture's (DA) Agri-Pinoy Search for Outstanding Irrigators Association. They put up a Farm Inputs Financing for selected members out of the amount, and they joined the Community Seed Banking Program of the Philrice. The seed banking program assured the farmers of certified seeds for their farms.



In 2013, they again received a one million peso award for winning as one of the Outstanding Irrigators Association from the same search of the DA. Out of this award, they have put up an equity for a Mechanical Drier, 2 Solar Driers, 2 units turtle hand tractors, 1 unit Kuliglig, 2 units drum seeders, and a thresher.

This time they are processing for the release of their combined harvester/thresher. Their Rice Production program now is worth P300 thousand, and they have a livelihood program for women worth P'255,000. This livelihood program is for piggery, sari-sari store, and buy and sell of pigs.

As of present, the IAs assests totaled P'2.2 million and is continuing to grow with the cooperation of the members. The strategies and new farm techniques practiced by the members assures high production. From using cellphones to communicate with all the members, they are now in the stage of planning to establish a radio station to cater to the information, education, and campaign of the association. This initiative can add more earnings and can serve not only their community but also the whole region.

They've always emphasized that without the help of the Almighty they cannot achieve all that they have today. With God, their dreams become a reality.

The Captivating Hinterlands of Tapaz (Memoirs of an FPIC Team member)

By: Ramon C. Salvilla, JRMP II – IEC

Western Visayas is brewing again another milestone in irrigation development. Alongside with the preparations for the implementation of the Jalaur River Multi-Purpose Project Stage II (JRMP II) in Calinog Town, Province of Iloilo, is the feasibility study that will be undertaken for the Panay River Basin Integrated Development Project (PRBIDP) in Tapaz town, Province of Capiz.

A major water resource for agriculture, domestic and industrial use, the Panay River Basin once developed is seen to boost agriculture production, mitigate perennial flooding, and provide source for potable water and renewable energy for the province. Important too is the development of sustainable measures in the management of the Panay River Basin Watershed.

The feasibility study for PRBIDP covers 27 barangays, 20 of which are communities of the Panay-Bukidnon Indigenous Peoples of Tapaz. As such, mandatory consultations through the Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) Process were undertaken by the National Irrigation Administration Regional Office 6 (NIA-RO6) to secure IP consent for the FS. The FPIC is provided under Republic Act 8371 or the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA), a guiding principle of the PRBIDP.

I am one of the lucky few who were chosen to comprise the FPIC Team for the project. Being in NIA for less than a year, I was privileged to document the process and discover the wonders of Tapaz that remains unknown to many.



The Extra Mile

Conducting the community assemblies for PRBIDP meant going the extra mile for most of the FPIC Team Members. We were literally miles above sea level, far from our homes and the comforts of life in the city. We spent 20 days or more in the hinterlands of Tapaz, visiting one community after the other. But in all these, it was an extra mile spent well for it was made for the good of many.

January 23, 2015 was when I first set foot on the hinterland barangays of Tapaz. It was the second stretch of the Consultative Community Assemblies for the FPIC Process. The first set of community assemblies were conducted in December 2014 and focused on the low-land areas of the town. Our journey started

with a long winding trip from Iloilo to Tapaz aboard a four-wheel vehicle, until the most remote area that it can reach. Then with our bags and packed supplies, we started to walk to reach our destination.

One unforgettable experience we had was our travel from Barangay Buri to Nayawan. “Nayawan” is a local term for getting fed up or having more than enough. And we seriously did have more than what we expected. We trekked the steep rolling terrains of Tapaz for hours. Everytime we ask our guides if we are near the location they would just answer “lapit na lang” (we are near) but truth is we were miles away from the actual location. After the long trek, we reached the bank of Panay River. Because of the deep and strongly flowing river, we need to ride on bamboo raft.

After learning that we need to cross the river, the first thing that popped into my mind is “how are we supposed to do that? I ain’t a swimmer. We don’t have life-jackets.” I wasn’t actually the only person who thought of it, all of us in the team are no swimmers. To take worries away, our guides improvised a raft which would carry us to the other side. A rope was stretched from one side of the river to the other so we can hold on to it while crossing.

The improvised raft could only accommodate two FPIC team members per ride. So, patiently I waited for my turn while nervously watching my other co-members cross the river. When it was my turn, I felt like my nervousness swallowed me whole. I’ve never been that afraid in my whole life. God forbids the raft or the rope to snap while we cross. My hands were ice-cold and I could feel my sweat running through my bald head. It was the longest raft ride I ever had. All the fear and the sweat were paid off when we reached Nayawan safe and sound. After setting foot on the barangay proper, we confessed to the residents we surely had enough just to get to their place and that is how much love we have for our work and for them who will benefit the project if ever it is feasible.



Tapaz in a plate

I'm sure the rest of our team would agree that aside from mountain climbing and trekking, river swimming and many other experiences we had throughout the FPIC process, native cuisine has made our journey gastronomically unforgettable.

Staying there for weeks, I had this chance to taste the indigenous foods of the Tapaz hinterlands. Made with local ingredients and prepared the traditional way, their food was a unique experience for my discriminating taste.

Pako, an edible fern, is one of the foods I could never forget. It is almost an ubiquitous plant that grows in the river or creek and tastes far better than any other vegetable I had tasted my whole life. Like any other green leafy vegetables, it could be served blanched and added with a bit of soy sauce, sliced tomatoes and onions. It could also be cooked in coconut milk with mixed ginger and tomatoes. Natives call the delicacy as "Ensalandang Pako". Another traditional way of cooking it is "tinuom" which means "wrapped". Locals wrap the fern, tomatoes and other spices with banana leaf and cook it in pot for few minutes.

Another prized food of the IPs in Tapaz is their "unog" which is a small fish that can be abundantly found in rivers or creeks. There are actually different ways of preparing it but my favourite is "Tinuom nga Unog". Nobody would ever think that small river fishes could be gigantic in taste once cooked well.

With these food served on the table, who would still complain of the long hours of trekking and river crossing? Definitely not me.

Binanog Dance

The FPIC experience has opened my heart and mind to the culture and traditions of the Panay Bukidnons of Tapaz. Though I have seen various Binanog dances before, still I was fascinated by it. Binanog is traditional dance of the Panay Bukidnons imitating the hawk locally called as "banog". Binanog dance is usually performed during courtship however in most of the barangays we have visited we were welcomed by the locals through this dance. IPs gracefully danced through the beat of drums and improvised bamboo instruments. It was an amazing experience for me and definitely no welcome can ever be warm than through Binanog dance.



The People

Above all breath-taking sceneries we saw, the palatable food we tasted and the wonderful dance we were welcomed with, the top reason why I enjoyed my FPIC experience the most is the people we have met. Panay-Bukidnons in Tapaz were very hospitable. They have even offered their own houses as our shelters during our stay in their community. Many of them left their jobs in the farm to attend our assembly. Everybody attentively listened to the discussion and participated during the open forum.

Many of the IPs in Tapaz rarely go down the town proper so they are used to see the same faces all the time. As such, we expected that most of them would be very aggressive and reluctant to communicate with us but to our surprise they were actually friendly and very caring. Everybody smiles all the time. They seem to be contented of the simple lives they have in the hinterlands.

In all these, the FPIC Process for the FS of the PRBIDP was a treasured experience for me. More than being trusted to perform a duty others may have turned down, I feel totally happy that I am involved and that I have done something for the agency I work for and the people of the Tapaz.

As of writing, NIA has finally secured the Conditional Consent of the IPs for the conduct of the study. With this, the FPIC Team is now preparing the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to formalize and finally secure their full consent for the FS of PRBIDP.

On-going activities in KRIS - Mamasapano Extension Project

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