



BRIA has endeavoured to contribute to the Philippines' long term goal of achieving rice self-sufficiency. The project has been implemented with the goal of strengthening the local government units (LGUs) in their delivery of extension services to farmers and to help farmers in the selected LGUs to improve their market position and income, contributing to an enhanced food security. The project activities have been designed to respond to the set indicators:

- 70% of 200 trained municipal agricultural officers, lead farmers and private service providers are able to apply their knowledge on value chains, basic agriculture, rice-specific farming techniques and enhanced methods following training delivery.

Strengthening the local extension system is one of the project's components. Of the target 200 extension intermediaries, a total of 244 had been trained to train and provide extension advisory to farmers. These included agricultural extension workers (AEWs), municipal agricultural officers (MAOs), lead farmer technicians (LFTs), agricultural staff of partner agencies, and farmers. A series of training sessions on the BRIA modules were rolled out to develop those trained into better service providers to farmers and other rice farming stakeholders in the LGUs.

Through the local subsidy support, more trainings for and with farmers had been carried out and the visibility of extension workers in their assigned communities has increased. Because of this, there has been increased recognition of AEWs as source of information on farming methods.

Aside from trainings, demonstration plots (demo plots) were established across three regional sites in Iloilo, Aurora and Southern Leyte provinces. It is the third cropping season that the demo plots have been set up as a core component of BRIA's training curriculum for extension intermediaries and smallholder farmers. The demo plots served as learning sites to contextualise lessons in the ToT and farmer field schools (FFS) with field-based examples. This allowed farmers to test and validate what they have learned from the training in real field conditions. With this experience, it is easier to convince farmers to test rice-based technologies on their own farms. The BRIA demo plots applied cost-efficient technologies, hybrid rice, and best practices in rice cultivation. Promoting cost-efficient technologies and sustainable practices aligns with the government's effort to help farmers boost farm yield and income. The government has spearheaded a campaign encouraging farmers to plant hybrid rice, which is part of a national goal to achieve food sufficiency by 2020. Farmers generally witnessed higher yield by using high quality seeds; a science-based, holistic and integrated pest management approach; better crop nutrition; and the PalayCheck System. Cost-efficient technologies and sustainable crop management practices helped farmers to achieve higher incomes. The demo plot farmer-cooperators have been taught 'farming as a business' to make sound business decisions, increase profits, keep records, budget and conserve money.



The number of demo plots set up from 2016-2017

Region	2016		2017	Grand Total
	Dry Season	Wet Season	Dry Season	
Region 3	9	17	16	
Region 6	15	22	3	
Region 8	12	18	30	
Total	36	57	39	132



About 66% or 131 AEWs and LFTs provided trainings to 7,527 farmers out of 8,000 via the local extension programme supported by BRIA's local subsidy. Local extension modalities consisted of meetings with farmers, farmer field schools (FFS), techno briefings, harvest festival, field visits, and BRIA School Days (BSD). However, the other extension intermediaries were not able to train farmers because their focus commodity is not rice but high valued crops (i.e., corn, vegetables), livestock, and fisheries. To reach the target, the remaining 473 farmers will receive training by November 2017.

- 80% of 8,000 farmers who received advice from the project achieved 20% yield and 15% income increase in rice production compared to the provincial agricultural average.

This indicator is linked with component 1 on providing training to farmers on value chain knowledge, farming as a business, basic agriculture, rice-specific farming techniques such as use of high quality seeds, crop nutrition, product stewardship, and Integrated Pest Management (IPM), amongst others. The overall goal is to increase farm yield and income as well as enhance the market position of farmers in the rice value chains.

Based on the post-baseline survey, about 34% and 30% of advised farmers achieved 20% yield in both dry and wet seasons, respectively. In terms of income, farmers in Aurora and Iloilo increased their income between 10% and 34% in dry season. In Southern Leyte, though yield increased by 7%, the price of paddy rice significantly decreased (baseline: P20/kg; post-baseline: P16/kg). In wet season, farmers in Iloilo

achieved more than 20% yield increase while farmers in Southern Leyte had low yield performance due to bad weather and pest infestation. On the other hand, there has been an increase in farm investment due to the use of high quality seeds and fertilisers.

- 40% of 8,000 advised farmers have enhanced knowledge of the local rice market and its marketing channels and formal long-term agreements between these farmers and retailers have increased by 20%, taking account of risk management options and microinsurance.

BRIA-FARMERS established two market linkage models in the municipalities of Leganes and Pototan, Iloilo, involving a number of actors and value chain stakeholders. During the first two cropping seasons, the parties involved were two farmer associations, a private trader, and a government-supervised rice processing complex. In these models, farmer associations sold 100 tons of paddy rice to buyers with additional Ph0.50 as top up to the prevailing market price. This also included free hauling or transport within 10 kilometres from the farm to markets. The lessons learnt from these previous cropping seasons would be replicated and improved on, whenever applicable. This replication and enhancement activity was undertaken through a collaborative partnership with the Iloilo-based Central Philippine University (CPU). This was initiated by the project and it targeted five more market linkage agreements in another BRIALGU. The agreements would link farmer groups to rice traders and even, ultimately, consumers. This activity involved 2,107 farmers from 50 farmer associations.



The CPU-led activities started in July 2017 and was rigorously pursued in close collaboration with the Department of Agriculture and PhilRice. As the first step, CPU carried out market needs assessments among the target municipalities and the stakeholders.

In total, 11 marketing contracts were signed among farmer associations and millers, traders, and institutional buyers with 14 contracts under negotiations in Region 6. In terms of volume, 419.3 tons were traded in 2016 while in 2017 the committed volume of paddy rice to be traded until December is 3,550 cavans or 177.5 tons. However, the volume could further rise as the contract negotiations are still ongoing.

In the post-assessment survey, 51% of farmers have demonstrated increased knowledge and access to local rice market. Despite no improvement in crop insurance availment, farmers have considered microinsurance more important in view of the changing climate condition.

As part of the sustainability of this market linkage activity, the Department of Agriculture-Regional Field Office 6 (DA-RFO 6) will extend its technical and logistical support to the involved farmer associations even beyond the project.

- **Development of training modules and good practices in production techniques, marketing and stakeholder cooperation documented, disseminated, and accessible to all, submitted to the Department of Agriculture.**

The BRIA-FARMERS training compendium can be considered the centerpiece knowledge product of the project. It has 17 training modules worked on by technical experts from PhilRice, ATI, IRRI, University

of the Philippines-Los Baños, Bayer and Yara. The compendium contains all the modules which are considered the most important topics in rice farming. Aside from the rice-based technologies, two new modules used during the ToTs and considered the major contribution of the project to the training curriculum of the public partners, are 'Farming as a Business' and 'Farmers' Engagement Training: The Basic of Training Adults.' These modules have been the main content of the ToTs conducted across the regions. The training compendium was turned over to the Department of Agriculture during the National Learning Event on 26 October. Aside from the training modules, other knowledge products turned over included printed materials to be used as visual aids for training. They serve as supplementary materials to the training modules.

Aside from the training compendium, the BRIA Learning Videos produced by the project, formed part of the training package handed over to the Department of Agriculture. As in the case of the training compendium, the videos were a product of the technical inputs from the experts from all the partner organisations. The topics for the learning videos include: proper land preparation, the use of high quality and recommended seeds, crop establishment focusing on direct seeding, farming as a business, integrated pest management, 4 Rs in crop nutrition, climate-smart rice production technologies, and harvest and postharvest technologies. The videos will be uploaded and made available through social media sites such as YouTube and Facebook. The partners, moreover, financed the production of some of the videos.

