

Songco, Danilo A.

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How much has people empowerment progressed among small farmers and fisherfolk? State of people's organizations in the Philippines

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Danilo A. Songco



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CONTACT US:

RESEARCH INFORMATION DEPARTMENT
Philippine Institute for Development Studies

18th Floor, Three Cyberpod Centris - North Tower
EDSA corner Quezon Avenue, Quezon City, Philippines

publications@pids.gov.ph
(+632) 8877-4000

<https://www.pids.gov.ph>

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Small Farmers and Fisherfolk? State of People's Organizations
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Danilo A. Songco

PHILIPPINE INSTITUTE FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

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Abstract

This is an attempt to quantify government's performance in empowering small farmers and fishers following the provisions of AFMA. It establishes four dimensions of empowerment that may be used to measure empowerment and presents some evidence of how government has performed under each of these dimensions. It concludes that government has been on track in following AFMA's prescriptions for SFF empowerment but that its efforts are coming too little, too late although there are strong indications that such effort can be upscaled and can still achieve the empowerment objectives of AFMA if the government can undertake certain short-term and long-term policy measures.

Keywords: empowerment of small farmers and fishers, access to public resources, organizing capability, voice in policymaking, economic well-being, pursue F2C2 program, management capability of agricoops, inter-agency collaboration in empowering SFF, commercialization of small farms, agricultural cooperatives law, developing the youth in agriculture.

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Empowerment Chapter: How Much Has People Empowerment Progressed among Small Farmers and Fisherfolk? State of People's Organizations in the Philippines

Danilo A. Songco*

1. Introduction

Objective 5 of the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (AFMA) explicitly states that it aims to: *promote people empowerment by strengthening people's organizations, cooperatives and NGOs and by establishing and improving mechanisms and processes for their participation in government decision-making and implementation.* The law mentions or refers to small farmers and fisherfolks 28 times in its 120 sections.

This chapter of the Philippine Institute for Development Studies' (PIDS) book on AFMA aims to determine the extent to which this particular objective of AFMA has been achieved. In particular, the Empowerment Chapter has the following objectives:

1. To review available literature and data for assessing AFMA Objective 5: *To promote people empowerment by strengthening people's organizations, cooperatives and NGOs and by establishing and improving mechanisms and resources for their participation in government decision-making and implementation;*
2. To develop a Theory of Change (TOC) which will serve as a framework for evaluation of AFMA Objective 5, tracing linkages from AFMA interventions to outcomes and impacts;
3. To apply the TOC in evaluating the extent to which people empowerment has progressed among people's organizations, cooperatives, and NGOs, using evidence and indicators reviewed under Study Objective 1;
4. To provide plausible explanations for the pace and magnitude of improvement in people's organization, including the role of AFMA-mandated intervention\,s,
5. To identify a benchmark for determining attainment of people empowerment, and assess prospects for attainment of this benchmark;
6. To draw out policy implications for government and other key stakeholders of agriculture and fisheries modernization.

2. Conceptual Framework

The primary challenge for this chapter is establishing indicators for empowerment, a very abstract construct. The law itself provides for four ways in which empowerment of small farmers and fishers (SFF) can be achieved.

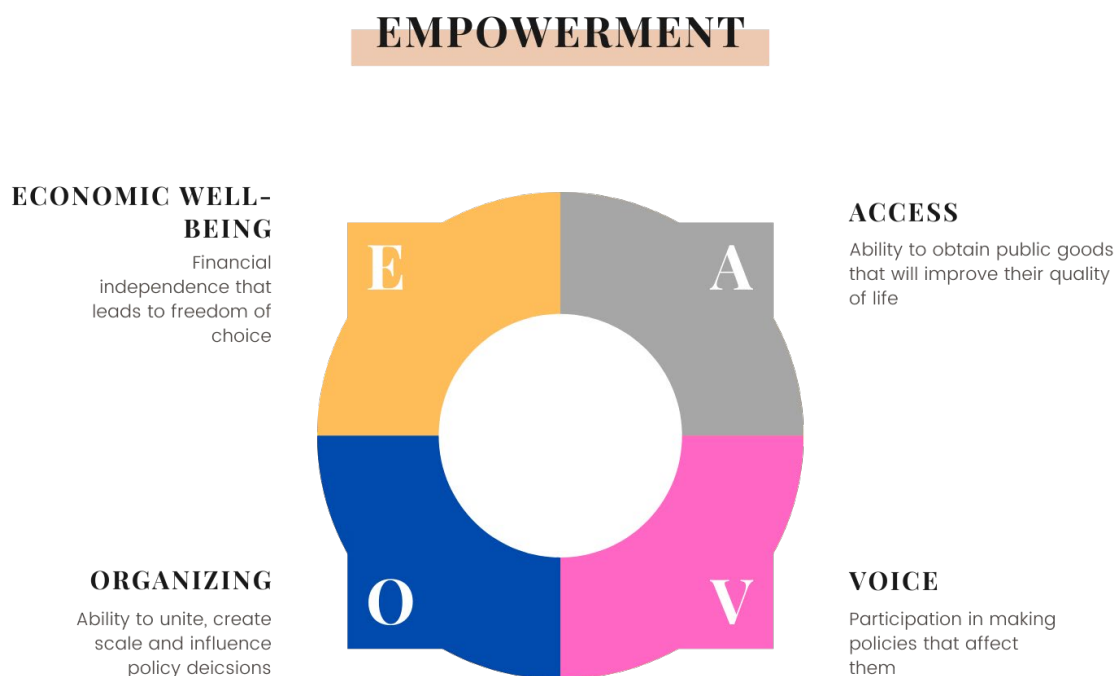
Fortunately, there is abundant literature that propose different methodologies in measuring empowerment.¹

¹ See for instance, Neerayan, D, 2002. "Empowerment and Poverty Reduction, A sourcebook. The World Bank Group; Ibrahin, S. and Alkire, S., 2007. "Agency and Empowerment, A proposal for internationally comparable indicators". Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative; among others.

Probably the most relevant to this study, is the Commonwealth of Learning’s (COL) Three-Dimensional Framework for Empowerment.² COL posits that the measurement of empowerment must align with one’s definition of it. COL believes that empowerment must be viewed from different dimensions from the macro to the micro perspective and that empowerment may take place in one but not the other dimensions.

With this in mind, it is suggested that four dimensions of empowerment as espoused by AFMA be considered in determining whether SFF have been empowered by the law. These are: **Economic well-being, Organizing, Access to Resources/Services, and Voice in policymaking.** Appendix 1 summarizes the specific provisions that are espoused by the law to achieve empowerment in these four dimensions.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework



Economic well-being. Poverty deprives people of many things, most fundamentally their freedom of choice. Their need to survive perpetrates their bondage to their source of livelihood. Thus, they need to become economically independent so that they can attend to other essential aspects of life. This is the micro and economic perspectives which look at the personal level of empowerment.

Economic well-being can be measured by determining the income of SFF before and after AFMA. The information for this dimension is based on Chapter 3 of the book: “How

² Carr, A, 2016. “Measuring Empowerment Toolkit: Using the Commonwealth of Learning’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework”. Commonwealth of Learning. British Columbia.

remunerative are agriculture and fisheries for small farmers and fisherfolk? Trends and policy options for boosting incomes and profitability”.

Organizing. The poor are easily exploited because they are largely unorganized and, as such, politically weak. Their ability to organize and muster political power will affect their ability to assert their rights and their influence on decision-makers. This is the view of empowerment from the political dimension and looks at the relationship of SFF to each other.

Organizing is measured through the increase in registration of SFF with government agencies. The ability of SFF to organize themselves could indicate their growing capability to harmonize their aspirations while also inserting themselves in the realm of social interaction. The registration of their organizations with government agencies indicates a desire for legitimacy. This legitimacy will enable them to access government services. The rate of registration with these government agencies will be determined before and after AFMA to establish the rate of organization of SFF during this period. This data will be compared to the estimated number of farmers and fishers during the period.

Access to services. Because of their meager resources, SFF are dependent on the support of government and the private sector (particularly non-government organizations) for the improvement of their agricultural enterprise. The extent to which public goods are reaching them will define their chances of improving their quality of life. This dimension looks at the responsiveness of government to their needs.

Access will be measured by determining the outreach of key government programs intended for SFF. Some of the biggest government programs will be chosen and their beneficiaries in selected provinces will be interviewed to determine their level of access to the programs and how these programs have impacted on their livelihood and well-being. This will be compared with the report of accomplishments of the chosen programs in these provinces.

Voice in Policymaking. The poor are further marginalized in the economic and political realms of society because their interest is subordinated to those of the more powerful and influential sectors. It is important for their voices to be heard in the course of determining the right policies that will emancipate them from their condition and make them key actors in policy decision-making. This is the macro perspective of empowerment which looks at the impact of SFF on major policy decisions that affect them.

Voice will be ascertained by determining the level of participation of SFF in venues that have been created for them by government. Among these venues are: agriculture and fisheries management councils, local development councils, agrarian reform councils, as well as the industry clusters created by DA and DTI to prepare the roadmaps for high value crops, among others. Since there is a large number of these venues, this study will purposively select certain areas of the country (i.e. one or two provinces in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao – depending on the ease of obtaining the required information) and use these as a representative sample. The methodology for obtaining this information is elaborated in the next section.

These four dimensions are discussed in detail in the section on Theory of Change (TOC). The interplay of these dimensions of empowerment of SFF can tell us if the objective of the law is being achieved.

3. Methodology

This study used a simple methodology of secondary data analysis and key informant interviews. Key to the study is developing the Theory of Change that would define the expected change that is expected to occur during the period of study. The TOC was developed through a review of available literature. The resulting TOC served as useful tool in going about the study. Breaking empowerment down into four dimensions facilitated the process of understanding how the government fared in relation to the empowerment provisions of AFMA.

Data to conduct the analysis for each dimension were obtained from these three sources:

1. *Available literature*, particularly those pertaining to frameworks and studies on measuring empowerment and experiences in empowering marginalized groups in the country as well as in other countries.
2. *Records of government agencies*, as listed in the matrix below.
3. *Key informant interviews* of leaders of civil society organizations assisting SFF, and leaders of farmers and fishers' organizations.

The KIIs were conducted to validate information that gave a macro perspective of the situation of SFF. These interviews served to verify if persons on the ground were actually affected and how they were affected by governments' actions or lack of them. The author and the team leader for this project agreed on the provinces of Camarines Sur, Negros Occidental, and Bukidnon as the geographical rooting of the study. The provinces represented the three major islands of the country. It is also believed that these provinces have significant SFF that are organized and can provide the information needed.

The matrix below summarizes how the information for this study were obtained.

Table 1. Sourcing of information for the study

Dimension	Information needed	Source of information	Means of obtaining data
Economic well-being	Increase in income of SFF	Chapter 3 of AFMA Book	Coordination with chapter author
Organizing	Registration of SFF with government agencies	- Cooperatives Development Authority - Bureau of Agricultural Statistics	Data from respective government agencies

Access to services	Report of accomplishment of selected government programs Level of access of SFF to selected programs	Reports on: Philippine Rural Development Program (DA), Project ConVERGE (DAR), RAPID Growth Project (DTI), among others major programs that have been implemented by DA, DAR, and DTI for SFF Key informant interviews	Data from records of selected programs/projects Key informant interviews of farmers and fishers' groups in selected provinces
Voice in decision-making	Participation of SFF' groups in government consultative bodies	- Two existing studies - Key information interviews	Existing studies Key informant interviews farmers and fishers' groups in selected provinces

Data from the four dimensions of empowerment were assembled to analyze whether and how the subjects of the study are advancing in each of the dimensions. A comparative analysis of how SFF fared in each of the dimension will tell us whether they have been empowered overall, and in what dimensions they have been more empowered. This information helped the consultant identify policy implications for government and other key stakeholders of agriculture and fisheries modernization.

Limitations

The information required to develop a sound analysis of how SFF were empowered in each of the four dimensions is large in relation to the magnitude of the study. In the area of access, for instance, there is a big volume of government programs and projects in the agriculture sector during the period under study. In the process, the author was confined to selected data that

would serve as a representation of government's performance. In this regard, the analysis may not be as comprehensive as if there were more complete information.

On the hand, there was limited government information on the extent of organizing of SFF. The author had to contend with limited information sources to draw conclusions on SFF's level of organization.

Only two key informants (KIs) were obtained for each of the selected provinces. Nevertheless, these KIs are leaders of either civil society organizations or people's organizations that have been operating in these provinces within and beyond the period under study.

4. Theory of Change

Kabeer (1999, p.437) defines *empowerment* as: "the expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them" This definition suggests that freedom of choice is central to empowerment.

AFMA starts out by saying in its Declaration of State Policy that: "... *the policy of the State [is] to enable those who belong to the agriculture and fisheries sectors to participate and share in the fruits of development and growth...*". This shall be done: "... *by establishing a more equitable access to assets, income, basic and support services infrastructure*". The law recognizes that **access** is key to enabling the poor farmers and fishers to share in the fruits of development and growth. It goes on by saying that among the objectives of the law are to: "*To enhance profits and incomes in the agriculture and fisheries sectors particularly the small farmers and fisherfolk*" (Sec. 3.b) and "*To improve the quality of life of all sectors*" (Sec. 3.j.). In short, **economic well-being**.

Poverty deprives people of many things, most fundamentally their freedom of choice. Their need to survive perpetrates their bondage to their source of livelihood. Thus, they need to become economically independent so that they can discover their choices in life. This is the micro and economic perspectives which look at the personal level of empowerment.

The law specifically defines the services that should be provided to SFF in order to elevate their status in life. Among these are: agriculture and fisheries production inputs, marketing assistance, information, technology, and credit (Section 17 of Chapter 1 - Strategic Agricultural and Fisheries Development Zones).

Because of their meager resources, SFF are dependent on the support of government and the private sector (particularly non-government organizations) for the improvement of their agricultural enterprise. The extent to which public goods are reaching them will define their chances of improving their quality of life.

In order for these prescribed services to be delivered efficiently, SFF need to be **organized**. In the Statement of Objectives, Sec. 3.d. states that among the objectives of the law is: "*To encourage horizontal and vertical integration, consolidation and expansion of agriculture and*

fisheries activities, groups, functions and other services through the organization of cooperatives, farmers and fisherfolk's associations, corporations, nucleus estates, and consolidated farms and to enable these entities to benefit from economies of scale, afford them a stronger negotiating position, pursue more focused, efficient and appropriate research and development efforts and enable them to hire professional managers". Further, Sec. 3.e. also says that the state aims: *"To promote people empowerment by strengthening people's organizations, cooperatives and NGOs and by establishing and improving mechanisms and processes for their participation in government decision-making and implementation"*.

The poor are easily exploited because they are largely unorganized and, as such, politically weak. Their ability to organize and muster political power will affect their ability to assert their rights and their influence on decision-makers. This is the view of empowerment from the political dimension and looks at the relationship of SFF to each other.

AFMA is also very explicit in its desire to give SFF a **voice** in decision-making. Sec. 2.f. People Empowerment, under the Declaration of Principles, states: *"The State shall promote people empowerment by enabling all citizens through direct participation or through their duly elected chosen or designated representatives the opportunity to participate in policy formulation and decision-making by establishing the appropriate mechanisms and by giving them access to information"*.

The poor are further marginalized in the economic and political realms of society because their interest is subordinated to more powerful and influential sectors. It is important for their voices to be heard in the course of determining the right policies that will emancipate them from their condition and for the state to produce policies that truly benefit them. This is the macro perspective of empowerment which looks at the impact of major policy decisions on SFF.

The **participation** of marginalized sectors is essential in policymaking because policymakers do not always empathize with their needs. Technocrats tend to promote technical solutions that do not always address the needs of the poor while politicians could favor certain interest groups as well as pander to popular albeit unsound demand. Apart from what is already in Sec. 2.f as previously cited, AFMA specifically provides that SFF shall be consulted, or their interest primarily considered in the formulation of policies and programs that it establishes (i.e. Strategic Agriculture and Fisheries Development Zones [SAFDZ] in Sec. 6; Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Plan in Sec. 13; Food Security, Poverty Alleviation, Social Equity and Income Enhancement in Sec. 16; and Farm-to-Market Roads in Sec. 52).

In the TOC illustrated in Figure 2, the four dimensions of *Economic independence*, *Access to Resources*, *Organizational Capability*, and *Voice in Policymaking* are the Outcomes that together lead to the desired Impact of Empowered Farmers and Fishers. The illustration also shows the inter-relationship of the four Outcomes. Access to Resources influences Economic Independence since the resources needed for SFF to flourish economically shall be provided by government. Organizational Capability, on the other hand, influences Access to resources because it is more efficient for government to deliver its assistance through organized groups.

Most government programs require beneficiaries to be registered with a government agency to establish their legitimacy. Organizational Capability also influences Voice in Policymaking since SFF can only participate in policymaking through organized groups.

These Outcomes are achieved through certain Outputs. The Increased Productivity of farmers and fishers is what will lead to Economic Independence because their current level of income is not sufficient for them to afford their basic necessities. This makes them vulnerable to exploitation. The Delivery of Government Services that will evolve from AFMA are the resources that need to be accessed by farmers and fishers. These services are what will contribute to increased productivity. Organized Cooperatives and Farmers/Fishers Associations are the vehicles needed for SFF to have the Organizational Capability as well as enable them to access Government Services and Participate in Government bodies so that they will have a Voice in Policymaking.

Figure 2. Theory of Change



At the bottom of the table are the Strategies promoted by AFMA that intend to achieve its goal. The Government Programs and Projects prescribed by the law will result into Services that are delivered by Government agencies and will also lead to Increased Productivity of farmers and fishers. Government Support for Organizing of Farmers and Fishers will help them form the vehicles to achieve Organizational Capability. The Creation of Government Bodies and Councils for SFF, both provided by AFMA as well as in other laws and policies that promote

their empowerment, is what will create the platforms for their Participation and give them a Voice in Policymaking.

A key pillar in this framework is the *organizing of farmers and fishers* because this connects to other elements in the TOC. The organization of farmers and fishers is the embodiment of their aspirations and the vehicle for them to attain their choices in life.

5. Profile of Small Farmers and Fishers

As of 2012, 43% or 8.6 million households in the Philippines were engaged in agriculture (PSA 2012).³ This went down to 7.6 million in 2018. The employment of the agriculture sector in the labor force in the country peaked at 33.8% in 2010. It went downward from there as the labor force migrated to the other sectors owing to the strengthening of the economy. It was down to 22.9% in 2019 and went up slightly to 24.5% in 2020 owing to the impact of covid-19 (Briones 2021).

While agriculture employs a quarter of our labor force, it is also home to the poorest segment of Philippine society. In 2015, small farmers made up 40.8% of the poor while small fishers accounted for 36.9%. These figures have improved significantly to 31.6% for small farmers and 26.3% for small fishers in 2018.

In 2013, the BAS reported that the average age of agricultural operators was 49 years old. However, Sec. Dar (quoting a UP Los Banos survey) declared that the average age of Filipino farmers is 53 years old.⁴ Considering the average lifespan of Filipinos, he said there would be a critical shortage of farmers in 12 years.

A major contributory factor to poverty among farmers is the dramatic reduction in average farm sizes. In 1960, there were 2 million farm holdings with an average size of 3.5 has. By 2012, this had shrunk to 1.3 has. partly because of population increase but also because of land distribution through the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) (Briones ibid).

This has severely affected the productivity of small farms. Dy (2018) points out that using comparative data of 10 major crops over 36 years, nearly all Philippine crops (except for pineapple and banana) pale in performance to the productivity of our ASEAN neighbors. This low productivity of agricultural products impacts the local agriculture manufacturing industry. Machineries are underutilized and result in low investments because of raw material constraints. This explains why there is rampant import of agricultural raw materials such as such as coffee, cocoa paste, cassava, palm oil, and rubber. The result of all these is the uncompetitiveness of Philippine agribusiness and the high incidence of poverty in rural areas which largely contributes to the national poverty incidence.⁵

³ Philippine Statistics Authority 2012. Census of Agriculture and Fisheries.

⁴ See <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2021/08/30/phl-faces-critical-lack-of-farmers-in-12-years/>

⁵ Dy, R. (2018, November 13). Long-Term Agri Productivity Gap: The Major Cause of Poverty. Management Association of the Philippines. <https://map.org.ph/index.php/2018/11/13/196/>. Accessed Nov. 15, 2021.

6. Best practice from N. Asia

Before we examine the condition of our SFF, let us look at benchmarks that will help us to locate their condition. The experience of three Northern Asian countries in how their respective farmers organizations were empowered can be quite instructive for this study. Japan, Korea, and Taiwan all grew their agriculture sector quite progressively in the 40s and the 60s which led them to achieve unprecedented economic growth fueled by agricultural development. These three countries exhibited parallelism in the way they empowered their small farmers that produced the same impact.

Government support for organizing. In Japan, the Industry Associations Act of 1900 led to the formation of 10,000 farmers' associations by 1910 and, by 1940, 90% of all farmers were members of these associations. In 1947, the farmers associations were formed into agricultural cooperatives and the Agricultural Cooperatives Act was passed allowing joint purchase of farm equipment and joint sale of agricultural products to 20,000 agricoops nationwide (Sager 2017). In Korea, the government sought to merge 16,000 village-level primary coops into larger cooperatives at the township level in the 70s. The 1,500 federated coops grew from an average of 139 members to an average of 1,400 farmers creating scale in operations and volume of products produced (Choi 2006).

Turn-over of public goods to coops. In the 60s, the Korean government relegated the sale of agricultural inputs exclusively to cooperatives through the National Agricultural Cooperatives Federation (NACF). This gave Korean cooperatives the responsibility of ensuring that their members receive the right quality and quantity of inputs at affordable prices. In addition, agricultural business such as supply of chemicals, machineries, and grains were also distributed by government through cooperatives. These became lucrative businesses for cooperatives which enabled them to use the profits towards the development of their members and the sector in general (Choi *ibid*).

Training of leaders and managers. To address the problem of lack of trained personnel in the mid-40s, the Taiwanese government, through the Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction (JCRR), trained directors, general managers, and staff members of farmers' association to improve their professional competence. Eventually, a permanent school of the Provincial Farmers' Association was put up for this purpose and has since trained hundreds of association officers and staff without government subsidy (Taiwan Review 1951). In modern day South Korea, the National Agricultural Cooperative Federation (NCAF) has 8 coop training centers in addition to an agricultural training institute established by the government. These training centers churn out thousands of graduates each year. They are self-sufficient so they can sustain the role of addressing the capability building needs of Korean agricoops (Choi *ibid*).

Government assisted financing. The Korean government established the NCAF in 1961 as a merger of the Agriculture Bank and the Agriculture Cooperative. The Agriculture Bank was a joint-stock company in charge of agricultural credit and banking while the Agricultural Cooperative engages in the supply and marketing business of farmers. NCAF is both the apex organization of 1,155 cooperatives representing 2.4 million farmer members (80% of Korean farmers) and the financing institution which is owned by its members who also borrow funds

from this institution. Over the past 5 decades, NCAF has grown to be the second biggest financial institution in South Korea.

Extension services. The Japanese government developed the management capability of small cooperatives by deploying extension officers and operations advisers to small farmers. Way back in the 1960s, they deployed 7,000 extension officers (with a ratio of 3-4 extension workers for every 1,000 farmers) nationwide. These extension officers worked with research institutions that conducted research and development of agricultural technologies which were propagated in small farms (JICA__).

Self-regulation. Since the 80s, the S. Korean government started to democratize the regulation of cooperatives. This came as a result of the pushback from cooperatives for government's increasing control over the sector. The government amended the old cooperatives act and abolished the requirement for government to approve their business plans, budgeting, and expenditure program.

7. Access to Public Services

Under the Declaration of the Policy of the State, Sec. 2a Poverty Alleviation and Social Equity of AFMA states: "The State shall ensure that the *poorer sectors of society* have equitable access to resources, income opportunities, basic and support services and infrastructure especially in areas where productivity is low as a means of improving their quality of life compared with other sectors of society." Aside from this, there are 13 other provisions (see Annex 1) that establish supporting principles, prescribe services/programs/ projects, and allocate resources specifically to SFF. AFMA recognizes that public goods need to be directed towards this sector to achieve its goal.

USAID (2006) reports that the poor rely a lot on natural endowments for survival. The study says between 15 – 70% of rural household cash incomes come from small-scale activities. Unlike the rich who have the wherewithal to access and cultivate natural resources, absent government support, the poor can only survive through "common pool resources".

Among the services that AFMA promotes for this sector are: infrastructure and technology development (Title 1, Chapter 1), credit (Chapter 3), information and marketing support (Chapter 5), and research development and extension (Title 3 Chapter 2). There is evidence that the expenditures of government in infrastructure services has been increasing.

Table 2. Budget appropriation of the Department of Agriculture for irrigation, in PHP millions (current prices)

	NIA	DA	Total Irrigation Allocation	Total DA System Budget	Share of irrigation in DA System Allocation (%)	Share of NIA in total Irrigation Allocation (%)
2011	12,791	510	13,301	34,758	38.3	96.2
2012	24,454	618	25,072	52,931	47.4	97.5
2013	27,156	1,282	28,438	64,504	44.1	95.5
2014	21,183	1,143	22,326	68,553	32.6	94.9
2015	28,750	1,338	30,088	67,807	44.4	95.6
2016	32,743	1,198	33,941	91,206	37.2	96.5
2017	38,376	3,292	41,668	95,014	43.9	92.1
2018	41,669	2,669	44,338	109,945	40.3	94.0

Notes: The direct appropriations for DA were through its regional field offices, Bureau of Soils and Water Management, and the Office of the Secretary. In 2015 and 2016, NIA was taken out of the DA system budget and moved to other executive offices. The ratios were computed as NIA budget divided by DA plus NIA budgets to be consistent with other years. The total DA budgets include those for all bureaus and attached corporations.

NIA = National Irrigation Administration; PHP = Philippine peso

Source: Department of Budget and Management (Various years)

Source: Briones (2021)

Table 2 shows the progressively increasing budget for irrigation from 2011 – 2018 where irrigation spending nearly quadrupled. As of 2020, government reports a total of 1.97 million ha. or 63% of estimated total irrigable land have been irrigated. This is a major accomplishment considering that lack of irrigation has been one of the causes of low productivity in the country.

Irrigation is an important infrastructure, particularly for rice farmers, who make up the majority of farmers in the country, because it increases their cropping intensity which leads to increased productivity and, eventually, higher incomes.

Expenditures in farm-to-market roads (FMR) totaled Php 46.196 billion from 2010 – 2016 (DPWH website). This accounts for 7,876 kms of FMRs that would benefit an estimated 1.4 millions farmers all over the country.

Farm mechanization is another area where there has been marked improvement in public spending. In 2013, PhilMech reported that the mechanization level of farms in the Philippines is 1.23 horsepower per hectare (hp/ha). This is a very significant improvement from the period when AFMA was enacted where our farm mechanization was at only 0.52 hp/ha. However, we are still quite far from the mechanization levels of our neighbors where Japan is at 7hp/ha, South Korea at 4.11 hp/ha, China at 4.10 hp/ha. Philippines was about the same level as Vietnam at 1.56 hp/ha. in 2013.

Access to credit is another area that has seen significant improvement in government support. Credit, particularly production loans, has been one of the biggest constraints to the development of small farms. Table 3 below shows the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) estimate of credit demand for SFF (in Php billion) based on initial estimates of the Agricultural Credit Policy Council (ACPC 2021).

**Table 3. Credit Demand for SFF
(Php Billion)**

Year	Low Estimate	High Estimate
2017	155.039	332.11
2018	164.404	352.18
2019	170.911	366.11
2020	180.312	386.245
2021	190.229	407.489
2022	200.692	429.901
2023	211.729	453.546
2024	223.375	478.491

Source: ACPC 2021

Based on these estimates, PIDS projects that the credit gap would be closed either in 2020 (using low estimates) or in 2024 (using the high estimates) (ACPC *ibid*). See Table 4 below. This is a major accomplishment given the importance of credit in rural enterprise development and the commercial viability of small farms and artisanal fisheries.

Table 4. Projected Credit Gap in Credit for Small Farmers and Fishers
(Php Billion)

Year	Low Estimate	High Estimate
2017	(31.417)	(146.513)
2018	(20.281)	(142.335)
2019	(3.009)	(129.888)
2020	17.721	(116.136)
2021	44.781	(96.438)
2022	79.807	(69.179)
2023	124.846	(32.335)
2024	182.457	16.631

Source: ACPC 2021

ACPC data also reveal that production loans funded by government has been progressively increasing between 2015 – 2019, in contrast to funding from private financing institutions. See Table 5 below. This is the reverse of government’s policy to crowd in private funding for small producers in agriculture but is nevertheless a welcome response to the biggest constraint to the development of small farms.

Table 5. Percentage Distribution of Agricultural Production Loans Granted by Type of Bank

YEAR	TOTAL	TOTAL GOVERNMENT BANKS	TOTAL PRIVATE BANKS	PRIVATE		
				PKBs	TBs	RBs
2015	100.0	12.1	87.9	70.3	8.3	9.2
2016	100.0	13.3	86.7	71.4	3.4	11.9
2017	100.0	12.3	87.7	75.8	2.6	9.3
2018	100.0	20.2	79.8	77.1	2.7	-
2019	100.0	21.0	79.0	76.7	2.3	-

Private Banks include:

PKBs - Private Commercial Banks

TBs- Thrift Banks

RBs - Rural Banks

Source: Agricultural Credit Policy Council (ACPC)

Government Banks include:

DBP - Development Bank of the Philippines

LBP - Land Bank of the Philippines

USAID (*ibid*) reminds of the importance of governance in the delivery of basic services, referring to institutions as integral to poverty reduction. Institutions influence the access of the

poor to household assets, benefits derived from their assets, and incentives in developing these assets. Thus, despite the positive development enumerated above, the feedback from the intended beneficiaries is not enthusiastic.

The key informants of this study are nearly unanimous in saying that there is arbitrariness and favoritism in the selection of beneficiaries of government programs for SFF in their respective provinces. They also claim that politics, particularly among local government officials, play a role in the selection of beneficiaries. One interviewee went as far as saying that some politicians have quotas from government agencies for their pet projects. He says heads of agencies have no choice but to cooperate because these politicians also work for their budget in Congress.

Two major scandals of recent memory highlight the magnitude of graft and corruption in government. One is the “fertilizer scam” where Php 728 million in fertilizer funds were diverted to the 2004 campaign of then President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. A Senate investigation concluded that the fund controversy was an Undersecretary of the Department of Agriculture in cahoots with some members of Congress.⁶ The other major controversy of note involved the kickbacks from Php 10 billion worth of Priority Development Assistance Fund (aka pork barrel) of members of Congress. The fund diversion scheme, headed by a private individual, involved using dummy non-government organizations as beneficiaries of pork barrel funds which found their way back to members of Congress who allocated these funds.⁷ These are two fully documented financial anomalies where funds allocated to small farmers and other poor beneficiaries were instead pocketed by unscrupulous government officials in cahoots with private individuals. Following this pattern, countless others could have gone undetected.

Apart from corruption, inefficiencies have also plagued implementation of government programs and projects. Farmers and fisherfolk groups in 20 municipalities in Masbate and Samar provinces who participated in a capacity building workshop in citizen monitoring of public programs identified the following gaps in government projects in their area: 1) mismatch between land size and the provision of seeds and fertilizers; 2) untimely delivery of farm input support during the planting season; 3) low quality of livestock given to farmers for dispersal purposes; and 4) ineffective information dissemination and targeting of beneficiaries (Philippine Consortium for Social Protection 2019).

In practice, the performance of government workers is often evaluated based on disbursement of funds or public goods. Thus, the emphasis is on disbursement rather than on efficacy of public goods and services. Disbursements would be made even if beneficiaries are not thoroughly prepared or capable to effectively utilize the grants. In one donor-funded government project that this author is working with, there is a very high disbursement rate

⁶ See <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/853086/what-went-before-fertilizer-fund-scam-2>

⁷ See <https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2021/2/14/PDAF-scam-what-you-need-to-know.html>

although the performance of the project in terms of the profitability of the enterprises that are being assisted is not very encouraging.

The biggest challenge in access to public resources is the availability of funds to address the massive need of SFF for assistance. Table 6 presents a sample of major government programs/projects for small farmers within the last decade. The total budget for these four programs is Php 11.55 billion and they are only reaching 979,000 farmers (excluding the beneficiaries of MRDP which includes all project beneficiaries). This outreach is only about 14% of the 7 million farmers in the country. There is a larger population of small farmers (and fishers) that is yet to be reached by government.

Table 6. Selected Programs/Projects for Small Farmers

Program/ Project	Period	Reach (# of SF/F)	Budget (Php)
Philippine Rural Development Program	2014 - 21	600,000	2.31 B (I-REAP)
Mindanao Rural Development Program II	2009 - 14	1,969,895 (all components)	1.5 B (Community sub- projects)
RAPID Growth	2019 - 25	79,000	4.755 B
Project ConVERGE	2015 - 21	300,000	2.6 B

Government is on track in providing access to public resources to empower SFF. The investment in key areas of empowerment have been established but need to progressively increase to attain a critical mass number of SFFs so that they can be effectively mainstreamed into the agricultural economy. Targeting needs to be improved and a more coherent and comprehensive investment approach to SFF empowerment needs to be established.

8. Organizing Capability

Organizing is the most critical among the four dimensions of empowerment. Organized farmers and fishers create scale in their production and enables them to sell their products directly to higher value markets which leads to higher income and a better position in the value chain. As demonstrated by the TOC, the organization of farmers and fishers are the ones that directly access government programs and projects. It is also these organizations that give SFF a voice in policymaking. Two AFMA provisions (Chapters 3.d and 3.e) recognize these as statements of objectives.

However, the state of organizing of SFF is not very encouraging. In 2013, only 17.6% of crop farm operators (SFFs) are members of crop-related organizations or organized groups (BAS

2013 ibid). Ilocos and Caraga regions have the highest proportion of organizationally affiliated SFF at 25% with Eastern Visayas and ARMM with the lowest at 1.68%.

According to the Cooperatives Development Authority (CDA), there are 5,758 operating cooperatives engaged in agriculture as of December 2020. Micro and small cooperatives make up 85.42% of these coops where 67.65% are micro and 17.77% are small. Medium-sized cooperatives constitute 9.9% while large coops are only 2.85%. See Table 7 below. CDA classifies the size of coops by asset size as follows:

- Micro (with Assets of P3,000,000 and below)
- Small (with Assets of P3,000,001 to P15 million)
- Medium (with Assets of P15,000,001 to P100 million)
- Large (with Assets over P100 million)

Table 7. Cooperatives By Membership and Asset Size

RECODE of members (Members)	Asset Size 2020					Total
	Large	Medium	Micro	Small	Unclassified	
0 to 50	5	39	963	157	0	1,164
51 to 100	6	47	567	205	0	825
101 to 150	2	41	249	143	0	435
151 to 200	3	40	109	95	0	247
201 and above	141	349	143	298	0	931
-	7	54	1,864	125	106	2,156
Total	164	570	3,895	1,023	106	5,758

Source: Briones 2021

If categorized according to their membership by asset size, the membership of micro and small agricoops are less than 200. Majority of their members are between less than 50 to 150. It is the medium size agricoops that have the biggest membership base. This means a big majority of agricoops are financially weak and have a small membership base. The medium and large agricoops that are financially stable and have the wherewithal to expand represent a small segment of the sector. If the number of coops according to size (rightmost Total column) is multiplied by the range of membership for each size (leftmost Recode of members column), even assuming that the average membership of the 2,156 unclassified coops is 200, the total membership of all operating cooperatives would most probably be around 1 million. That would be approximately 13% of the total number of farmers reported by PSA 2018.

The low level of organizing among Filipino farmers is a result of several factors. For one, organizing small farmers and fishers is costly. In our experience in PinoyME Foundation, organizing made up the biggest expense in our rural enterprise development program. Organizing expense normally include the salary of a full-time community organizer (CO) who would live in the area being organized. Add to that the board and lodging costs of the CO, transportation cost of the CO (to move around different barangays and farms), food and

materials for trainings, transportation subsidy for training participants who would come from distant barangays, among others. These costs would typically make up between 50 - 60% of total project cost. In a social enterprise setting, the revenues from the economic enterprise would normally not cover these costs in the early years. This subsidy would have to be borne by the entity that is organizing the farmers or fishers. It would typically take anywhere between 3 – 7 years before a stable organization can stand on its feet and such subsidy can be weaned. It is very rare that SFFs are able to self-organize without the intervention of an external entity.

The same is true with government projects. The cost of personnel and technical assistance constitute a major part of donor funded projects such as those listed in Table 6.

Organizing is equally costly on the part of SFFs. The organizing process is a long and tedious undertaking. It entails a lot of meetings which take time away from the farm or from fishing. In some cases, it involves transportation cost if the meeting is done outside of the community. It takes at least 6 months before a farmers' or fishers' organization can be established and registered with a government agency. The registration process itself is a disincentive because the organization applying for registration would need a barangay permit, a municipal permit, and the Tax Information Number (TIN) of the officers of the organization before they can be registered. Those registering as a cooperative would have to undergo an orientation seminar and come up with contributions to their share capital. Thus, for farmers and fishers in their 50s and 60s who have survived the challenges of farming and fishing and whose children have graduated from college and can fend for themselves, there is very little incentive for them to be part of an organization where there is no guarantee of progress.

A contributory factor is the lack of management skills among organized farmer groups. Majority of small farmers are full-time farmers who have inherited their farms from their parents and may not have benefitted from formal schooling. Only 8.39% of agricultural household members had college level education. About 18.84% reached high school while 13.33 are high school graduates. Majority, or 29.93% reached elementary with 11.44% are elementary graduates (BAS 2013). Their core competency is farming. Secondly, since agricultural trade in the rural areas is captured by traders, most smallholders merely serve as suppliers to these traders. While they are experts in the business of farming, their expertise is in small farm enterprise and are oblivious of the rest of the value chain, particularly in selling to institutional markets that are beyond their reach. Finally, as earlier mentioned, organizing a cooperative is costly. Even if they can fork out the required capital share (which in itself is a disincentive), attending to business activities of cooperatives requires dedication and some degree of decision-making which many small farmers are not comfortable with. The need to borrow working capital for consolidation of products, the logistics in transporting products to the market, and all the demands of agroentrepreneurship is beyond the competency of small farmers. It is no wonder that small cooperatives are perpetually stunted and those that manage to grow fail or are unable to scale up (Songco et al 2021). This failure rate among cooperatives and farmers organizations is another major disincentive for organizing.

The problem is complicated by decreasing farm sizes. Although PSA indicates that there has been a decrease in the number of farmers between 2012 to 2018, farm sizes are also down to 1.3 ha. Decreasing farm sizes means lower productivity and a greater need for consolidation among smallholders. This should be an impetus for organizing among farmers but a lot more intervention from government is needed in this regard. This highlights the importance of the Farm and Fisheries Clustering and Consolidation (F2C2) Program of the Department of Agriculture. The program promotes clustering and consolidation of the production, processing, and marketing activities of small farmers and fishers and encourages them to function as community business enterprises. The program shall provide a full range of assistance to these farm/production clusters including pre-production assistance (e.g. organizing, institutions building, marketing arrangements, etc.), production support (high quality seeds, equipment and machineries, and climate change adaptation), post-harvest/post-production processing, packaging and storage, transport and logistics, credit and project financing, marketing assistance, and infrastructure support.⁸

The Mindanao Rural Development Program (MRDP) is one of the first government projects, with assistance from the World Bank, that had increase in income of targeted agricultural and fishermen communities as its major objective. It started in 2000 and, after several phases, became a national project through the PRDP in 2015. The selection of projects in Table 6 accounts for the major investments of government in improving the condition of small farmers and enhancing their position in the value chain.

Sec. William Dar presents the most comprehensive and dedicated approach to empowering SFFs. Soon as he was appointed to head DA, Sec. Dar declared the goal of the department to ***double the income of small farmers and fishers in five years***. He established the “New Thinking in Agriculture” that is founded on 8 paradigms that would define his administration: *modernization of agriculture; industrialization of agriculture; promotion of exports; farm consolidation; roadmap development; infrastructure development; higher budget and investments for agriculture; and legislative support*.⁹ With this pronouncement, Sec. Dar established a purposeful and results-based trajectory for this administration in keeping with the desire of AFMA.

After more than two decades of lackluster performance of his department, Sec. Dar has set forth a coherent, highly progressive, and timely strategy to invigorate agriculture in the country while putting SFFs at the center of this strategy through his F2C2 program. His intention is to mainstream F2C2 within the DA such that clustering and consolidation of small farmers and fishers becomes the outcome of all DA programs. F2C2, also referred to as the Bayanihan Agri-Clusters (BAC), is a component of his One DA Agenda which defines the totality of this agricultural reform agenda in fulfillment of AFMA.¹⁰

⁸ See DA Administrative Order No. 27. https://www.da.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/ao27_s2020.pdf

⁹ See Dar, W. The New Thinking for Agriculture, p.3. <https://www.scribd.com/document/464443539/DA-Dar-NEW-THINKING>

¹⁰ See DA Administrative Order No. 25. https://www.da.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/ao25_s2021.pdf

In the modern agricultural economy that is envisioned by AFMA, inclusive value chain development (VCD) shall be the context of all interventions towards SFFs. UNIDO (2011, p.1) refers to inclusive VCD as “a positive or desirable change in a value chain to extend or improve productive operations and generate social benefits”. Indeed, this has become the perspective that many development agencies, donors, and governments have adopted as a key element of their rural poverty-reduction strategies (Humphrey and Navas-Alemán 2010 in Devaux et al 2016). This is strongly influenced by the globalization of agricultural value chains. However, while the opening of the agricultural market presents opportunities in increase in income and greater participation in high value markets for small producers, there is also a risk of further marginalization. The higher demand for quality and quantity of goods may be too much for small producers to meet and could lead to greater role for enterprising traders to take an intermediary role in consolidation and/or big investors investing in large farms that can produce the demands of a sophisticated market.

This highlights the importance of DA’s F2C2 program. Organizing of SFFs need to take the form of clustering and consolidation along value chains, very similar to how Japan promoted industry associations of farmers very early in their agriculture history. This was also the approach undertaken by the Korean government when it merged the tiny village-level primary cooperatives into bigger township cooperatives which then became the channels for other government interventions towards the sector. With his extensive experience in global agricultural research, Dar conceived the F2C2 as the ultimate solution to reducing poverty among SFFs while stimulating productivity at the beginning of the agricultural value chain. It will take an enormous amount of effort to redirect the agencies of DA to undertake this course correction and inevitably more time to implement this complex strategy. Definitely not enough time under the remaining term of Sec. Dar, unless he is reappointed by the next president. It would be wise for the next administration to pursue F2C2 both as an organizing and economic empowerment vehicle for SFF.

While there is an imperative for government to support the organizing of SFF, it would not be the best entity to take on this function. It is better off partnering with private groups that have the competency for this undertaking. Besides, Republic Act No. 9520, otherwise known as the Philippine Cooperative Code of 2008, explicitly states that the development of cooperatives is the primarily responsibility of the private sector and that there is no room for state-initiated cooperatives (Paez *ibid*).

Auspiciously, the agricultural cooperatives sector is formulating the Agricultural Cooperatives Development Agenda (ACDA). The leadership of the agricoops sector, with the support of USAID, is undertaking a major initiative to unite the sector towards a common agenda in making it “key players in the agricultural economy”.

The agricoops leadership plans to undertake a major drive in organizing the 5,758 registered agricultural cooperatives in the country towards building economies of scale, increasing management capability, working for financial reform, knowledge management and policy

research, striving for sustainability, and improving the values and governance of agricultural cooperatives. The agricoops leadership, currently convened through the Generating Rural Opportunities by Working with Cooperatives (GROW- Coop) project of USAID, plans to organize a structure that will facilitate strategic action, decision-making, coordination, and organizing of the broader sector. All of these will contribute to achieving the empowerment objectives of AFMA as well as in attaining its goals. Government should seriously consider partnering with this movement of agricoops.

9. Voice in Policymaking

The Philippines has one of the most, if not the most progressive enabling environment for people's participation in governance. Article XIII, Section 16 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution "guarantees the right of people and their organizations to effective and reasonable participation at all levels of social, political, and economic decision-making". It also "respect[s] the role of independent people's organizations to enable the people to pursue and protect, within the democratic framework, their legitimate and collective interests and aspirations through peaceful and lawful means" (Article XIII, Section 15).

The Local Government Code goes a step further. It establishes local development councils from the regional down to the barangay levels where 25% of the seats are reserved for accredited people's organizations and non-governmental organizations in those areas.

AFMA recognizes the importance of people's participation in its declaration of policy and prescribes consultations with SFFs in various matters that concern them.

The Cory Aquino administration established the National Agriculture and Fisheries Council (NAFC) through E.O. 116. NAFC had a long history of transformation from its origin in the Rice and Corn Coordinating Council by virtue of RA 2018 in 1958. NAFC also transformed into the Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fisheries (PCAF) when it merged with the Livestock Development Council in 2013 to pursue a functional and holistic rather than a sectoral approach in dealing with agricultural and fisheries issues and concerns.

The NAF Council is the apex structure for consultation and dialogue between and among government agencies, local government units (LGUs), private entities, including non-government organizations and people's organization engaged in agriculture and fisheries. It sets the goals and defines the scope of the country's agriculture and fisheries policies, plans, and programs. It serves as the integrative, consultative, and monitoring structure for the inter-agency and inter-sectoral collaboration in activities arising from AFMA. It is made up of 15 cabinet members, 8 chairpersons of the National Sectoral Committee (NSC), the heads of the leagues of LGUs, 5 regional agricultural fisheries council chairs, 12 CSO partners, and 2 guests from the Senate Committee on Agriculture and the Civil Service Commission.

The PCAF serves as the secretariat of the NAF Council.

The NSC is the venue for consultation between the DA and other agencies, representatives of national industry groups, civil society organizations on sectoral/industry-specific concerns. It is made up of 8 committees: Agricultural and Fishery Mechanization, Climate Change, Commercial Crops, fisheries and aquaculture, food staples, fruits and vegetables, international

trade, and poultry, livestock, and feed crops. seventy percent come from the private sector and only 30% come from government. The private sector representation shall be made up of 50% agribusiness sector and 50% civil society representatives. Each sectoral committee shall be made up of at least 20 member organizations.

The Agricultural and Fisheries Councils (AFCs), on the other hand, are the structures for private sector participation in agricultural development at the regional (RACF, provincial (PAFC), city/municipal (ICCAFC, CAFC, and MAFC), and barangay (BAFC) levels. The local structures are established to encourage people participation and empowerment in agricultural and fishery development. They are meant to be bottom-up, self-reliant farm systems approach that emphasizes social justice, equity, productivity, and sustainable use of agricultural and fishery resources.

The intention and structure of this whole infrastructure is very clear. It is intended to create a participatory system of governance of the agriculture and fisheries sector to empower SFFs as well as other private sector bodies in the course of agricultural modernization. It is in keeping with the intention of AFMA and the policies espoused by the 1987 Philippine constitution.

In 2016, PCAF commissioned the Development Academy of the Philippines to conduct a study to assess the *relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability* of PCAF consultative bodies in fulfilling their mandate.¹¹ The study was conducted using a review of secondary data, profiling of the AFCs, focus group discussions among all levels of the AFCs, and observations of the AFCs by the research team.

The study found that, in terms of *relevance* (the extent to which initiatives are responsive to the needs and priorities of target beneficiaries), the representation of AFCs was problematic. The unorganized farmers did not have an opportunity to participate in the councils because only organized national and local groups can be members of these councils. Representation was also skewed along nationally configured groupings following the sectoral committees which failed to accommodate local concerns that do not fall within these categories. Representation was also dominated by commodities producers and marginalized skilled agricultural workers who were more knowledgeable and familiar with local agriculture and fisheries issues. Representation among government agencies at the local level were unspecified such that government representatives changed frequently and often lacked the authority to commit their agency to council decisions.

As to *effectiveness* (the extent to which an initiative attains its objectives), AFCs were determined to be ineffective. Lack of staff work leads to resolutions being endorsed to other government agencies. There was limited engagement of AFCs in project life cycle such that they are unable to determine whether such projects conform to standards and whether they were effective in addressing the needs of intended beneficiaries. The AFCs were purely recommendatory bodies and did not have the authority to influence plans and projects of government agencies.

¹¹ See Development Academy of the Philippines 2016. Participatory Governance in Agriculture and Fisheries Development: An Evaluation Study on PCAF's Consultative Bodies.

Regarding *efficiency* or the measure of outputs in relation to inputs, the AFCs and SCs lacked the well-defined standard operating procedures to carry out their mandates, functions and activities. Agenda setting was arbitrary, inter-level coordination was faulty, and there were inadequate resources to conduct sectoral consultations.

Impact (changes produced by a development intervention) was also lacking. AFCs had marginal influence in policymaking and development planning owing to their purely recommendatory nature. Because of lack of technical staff work and non-representation in planning bodies, the AFCs are unable to get their initiatives through project planning, programming, and budgeting of government bureaucracies. AFCs are frequently surprised about sectoral projects being implemented in their communities without their prior knowledge. They are often bypassed in the selection of beneficiaries of national projects.

Sustainability (benefits of an initiative will continue beyond project funding) is also questionable. The lack of sectoral consultations and the need for representatives to spend their own funds to attend meetings effectively marginalizes struggling small farmers/fishers organizations and favors bigger groups and individuals who have resources to sustain their participation in AFCs. There is also a problem of succession since representatives are mostly seniors and there is lack of interest among the younger generation in the affairs of the AFCs.

This study is confirmed by a similar study that was conducted by Brain Trust, Inc. in 2018 on the Effectiveness of Private Sector Representation (PSR) in Regional Development Councils (RDC). The study was conducted in three regions using focus group discussions among RDC members and PSRs. This study concludes that PSRs are generally actively participating in RDC deliberations and activities. However, they are frequently lacking in Accuracy, Relevance & Timeliness. Their lack of accuracy could be due to their lack of capacity/resources for research. Many CSOs in particular are prone to giving opinions based on anecdotal information on their limited experience in dealing with poverty groups or sectoral issues in the course of their work. NEDA and the regional line agencies (RLAs) also opined that some PSRs were “parochial” in outlook, i.e. the latter’s perspectives were skewed towards personal or organizational interests only.

Despite this, the RDCs are mostly receptive to PSR inputs. RLA and LGU representatives expressed appreciation for the involvement of PSRs in RDCs because they provide an independent outsider’s perspective to the policies, plans, programs and projects being proposed or implemented by government. They find this a useful contribution to making government policies more relevant and responsive to the citizens. Thus, the key issue in the study regions is the quality of PSR inputs (Songco et al 2018).

The key informants for this study agree with the foregoing findings. In general, they feel that SFF have had a voice in policymaking through consultative bodies that were established by government. However, some also believe that while SFF are listened to in these bodies, they are not always heard. Government still reserves the decision on priorities and in project implementation. Some even go as far as to say that there is favoritism in who government listens to and that representation is not always democratic. There is also a feeling that the

effectiveness of participation depends a lot on the capability of the SFF representative to represent her/his sector.

As a matter of fact, one key informant says he had 4 projects approved with 3 of them implemented because he diligently followed up on these projects.

These studies are a tale of many government initiatives where good intentions are eclipsed by poor execution. Participatory governance is a complex process. For one, participatory governance is a case of representative democracy. The representatives in these government consultative bodies are expected to articulate the aspirations of her/his sector. Ideally, this means the representative must be able to consult the sector s/he represents and give feedback on discussions and decisions made in the government body that s/he sits in. This entails time and resources in convening the members of her/his sector, including providing for the transportation expenses of members who come from distant locations. This also entails an ability to build consensus of contentious issues and being able to reconcile these with conflicting interests of other sectors. Short of that, the result is representatives speaking only on their own behalf or mainly from the point of view of the organization that s/he represents. This makes participation a tokenism.

After more than three decades of giving voice to the poor and the marginalized in the way prescribed by the 1987 constitution, there remains a tremendous gap in attaining the AFMA objective, which cannot be overcome by simply repeating “business-as-usual”. Rather, government needs to take stock of its policy of participatory governance. At the macro, national level, the Philippines is one of the founders of the Open Governance Partnership (OGP)¹², an international initiative made up of government and private organizations where member national and sub-nation governments commit to promote transparent and accountable government, empower citizens, fight corruption, and utilize new technologies to strengthen governance. The country has been actively and consistently preparing National Action Plans since OGP was founded and is one of the leading lights in this initiative. However, the foregoing discussion indicates that there is much work to do in giving voice to the poor, particularly SFF, and most especially at the local government level. The practice of people’s participation in governance is a difficult and complex undertaking on both the part of the government and the poor sectors of society. National government agencies and local governments need to find more effective, efficient, and innovative ways of inclusive policymaking like using electronic information and communications technology to generate public participation. Civil society organization need to take greater effort in assisting marginalized groups, including SFF, to become more effectively involved and invested in policy making using free and widely available digital information and communications channels.

10. Conclusions and Recommendations

What does the foregoing discussion mean in terms of the empowerment of SFF in accordance with the intent of AFMA? In essence, there is evidence that government has tried to implement

¹² See <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/>.

the empowerment provisions of AFMA in all the dimensions outlined in the TOC for this chapter.

As far as *access to public resources* is concerned, there are marked increases in government spending in irrigation, FMRs, mechanization, donor-funded programs and projects for SFF in the last decade. The downside is these investments are only reaching a limited number of SFF. This could be a case of too little, too late. The government is enacting solutions at a time when the degree of the problem is already enormous. In the year AFMA was enacted, the poverty incidence in rural areas was already 44.4%. Eight years later in 2009, PIDS (2012) estimated that the poverty incidence among agriculture-related households slightly increased to 46.2%. Nearly half of the country's poor was already in this sector. By some indication, it was mainly in the second half of the implementation of AFMA that is covered by this book, that the government implemented programs and projects directly towards SFF. The major expenditures in infrastructure and other support systems did little to improve the lot of SFF because the primary problem is the lack of viability of small farms.

Given the importance of *organizing* as the critical factor in empowering SFFs, government needs to invest more in consolidating small farms and small fishers. The experience of Japan where 90% of farmers were members of farmers associations way back in the 40s and of Korea where this level of organizing was achieved in the 70s, became a major factor in the rapid growth of agriculture in these countries. It became more efficient for government to channel its resources to these highly organized groups which increased their productivity and eventually led to the competitiveness of their agricultural products.

The Philippines, on the other hand, despite a very robust Cooperative Code, has no budgetary allocation for cooperatives development. The absence of a unified financial and technical support from the government explains the very uneven growth of agricoops (Paez 2020).

The objective of organizing SFFs does not mean attempting to make all of them a member of a cooperative or a SFF organization. What is needed is to get a critical mass of SFFs organized into agricultural clusters that are actively engaged in value chains. In the long run, as those already involved in the system grow, they can take on more members to increase their supply. Alternatively, unorganized SFFs will be motivated to organize to capture the opportunities that they can clearly see in the value chains that they fall under. This way, organizing can be more efficient because it is market-driven and will lead to commercial relationships that can be sustainable after initial intervention. This process will also spread the cost of organizing. Commercial buyers will be interested to underwrite some of the costs of organizing if it will secure for them the supply that they need. SFFs will be more motivated to absorb some of the cost of organizing since they can expect financial returns on these investments. It is a win-win formula for all concerned but will entail some leadership to get it started and sustained. This is the role of government. It is what the F2C2 is all about.

The PCAF and the AFCs are key platforms in giving better quality of *voice* to SFFs. As government plays a more active role in brokering relationships among different actors in the

chain, the local councils can become critical platforms for distributing opportunities, creating higher scale and efficiencies, resolving competing interests, and advocating for policies to higher bodies. The local AFCs will become key sources of on-ground information about what's right and what's going wrong about agricultural modernization strategies and programs. As it stands, the increasing magnitude of investments in public goods for SFF has been a supply side initiative. This would be more meaningful if the design and execution of programs and projects for SFFs were a result of demand from the beneficiaries themselves as a result of their engagement in the PCAF and the AFCs. This is expressly provided in the declaration of principles and 4 other specific sections of AFMA.

On **economic well-being**, BAS (ibid p.8) reports that only 48.47% of total agricultural household income comes from farming. Off-farm income contributed 6.32% and non-farm income was a significant 30.18%. Another 15.02% of income comes from other sources which include remittances of family members working abroad, pension and retirement, interest on savings, income from rentals of real property, income from sale of vehicle, durable goods and jewelry, among others. This shows that agricultural families cannot survive on farming or fishing alone.

Feedback from the ground from KIs of this study indicate that there is still a large population of small farmers in their respective provinces that are not receiving any form of assistance from government although they are one in saying that the outreach of government programs has increased. The beneficiaries, as indicated by KIs, are all from organized groups. Given the low level of organizing among SFFs, a very large number of individual SFFs are left to fend for themselves. They are one in saying, however, that the lives of those who benefited from government programs have improved.

To this point, government should probably take credit for the reduction in poverty incidence among SFFs. The 9-percentage point reduction in poverty incidence among small farmers and the 10-percentage point among small fishers between 2015 – 2018 could be a result of government intervention. Productivity remained low and shrinking farmlands could only result to declining incomes. Logically, the public investments referred to earlier could be the main contributory factor to poverty reduction. Yet, a third of small farmers and a quarter of small fishers remained poor as of 2018.

In summary, government is behind in fully attaining AFMA's empowerment objectives. To achieve these objectives, it needs to invest more in getting SFFs more organized, multiply its investments in public goods and services towards SFFs that will increase their income and improve their standing in the value chain, and fine tuning the operations of consultative bodies so that they can become more effective avenues for SFF's participation in agricultural policymaking. The empowerment objectives of AFMA are not merely a social agenda. The experience of how the development of the agriculture sector of our North Asian neighbors catapulted them to growth, demonstrates what a well-organized, fully productive SFF sector can do in attaining a country's desire to modernize its agriculture and, in the process, achieve sustainable economic growth.

There are at least three important considerations for SFFs to become an integral part of the modern agricultural economy of the Philippines: SFFs need to get better organized to create economies of scale in agricultural production and consolidation, government spending in improving productivity needs to incrementally increase, and the entrepreneurial capability of SFFs must be boosted. The policy trajectory of government in this regard can be divided into short-term and long-term measures.

Short-term measures

1. ***Vigorously pursue F2C2 program.*** DA is in the process of preparing the guidelines for the implementation of F2C2. This is in preparation for the exit of the current administration and for leaving a legacy for the mainstreaming of the strategy. Banner programs have been instructed to provide available funding to jumpstart projects in certain priority areas. A series of workshops are programmed at the start of the year to consult stakeholders on the details of actual implementation on the ground. By all indications, F2C2 implementation is in full gear.¹³

Despite all the preparations being undertaken, there is no guarantee that the next administration will pursue F2C2. It is important for DA to establish a broad constituency of F2C2 outside of the department that can advocate for its implementation in the next administration. This should include, among others, the emerging agricoops movement and other private sector entities that have interest in the empowerment of SFF through value chain development.

2. ***Boost management capability of agricoops.*** The inherent weakness of SFFs earlier discussed need to be overcome. The solutions to this phenomenon need to go beyond the traditional management training for coop leaders. There need to be innovative, scalable solutions that can be implemented in the shortest possible time to capture available opportunities. Among these are:

Joint management. Big coops that will partner with small coops for supply of their products can offer to assign an experienced manager to help the small coop run the business side of their operations. The offer is to improve the management capability of the small coop by mentoring the existing manager while the mentor manager also shares decision-making. This gives the big coop partner greater confidence that the small coop will be able to deliver on its commitments while also increasing their management capability in the process.

Social franchising. This is primarily a franchising arrangement where the franchisee adopts a business operations system that will produce the desired quality and volume to produce. In the case of the Handholding for Viable Enterprises (HIVE) project of FPSDC, they provide a suite of services to the partner coop to achieve their partnership agreement.

¹³ FULL DISCLOSURE: This author is the lead consultant for the Technical Assistance being provided by IFAD to the F2C2 program.

These include: technology transfer, business development support, establishment of product standards, training/skills development, infrastructure support, enhanced access to marketing and distribution, and financing and insurance. FPSDC charges a one percent marketing fee and five percent royalty fee on gross sales for a 4-year term, renewable to another two terms. This and other similar arrangements can be explored.

Management services contracting. The big coop federations might want to establish a management service contracting firm that can deploy trained managers to weak coops that have potential to supply their products to institutional buyers. The small coop is charged a fee for the services of the professional manager plus a service fee for the firm but connected to the professional manager's deliverable to ensure additional business income of the coop that will offset her/his fees. This can become a social enterprise of the sector that will be revenue generating but at the same time can quickly increase management capability of small coops.

Entrepreneurship training in partnership with the academe. Local academic institutions may be tapped to provide entrepreneurship and management training to small coops with potential for supply and where the current manager is still trainable. TESDA has a Training Regulation (TR) for Agroenterprise Development (AED) National Certificate Level IV. This TR was prepared by DAR with the assistance of Catholic Relief Services (CRS). CRS provided Jollibee Group Foundation (JGF) with the AED technology that was used to organize the onion farmers in Nueva Ecija to deliver to Jollibee. This pilot project was expanded by JGF into its Farmer Entrepreneurship Program which has engaged 17 farmer groups that have delivered 7,000 metric tons of vegetables worth Php 300 million to the Jollibee group since 2009 (JGF, 2020).¹⁴

Agricoops can avail of TESDA scholarships to train the managers of small coops in AED.

Apart from AED, agricoops can partner with state universities and colleges (SUCs) that have agriculture extension services so that they can assist small cooperatives that will be ushered in value chain development projects. The Japanese government developed the management capability of small cooperatives by deploying extension officers and operations advisers to small farmers. Way back in the 1960s, they deployed 7,000 extension officers (with a ratio of 3-4 extension workers for every 1,000 farmers) nationwide. These extension officers worked with research institutions that conducted research and development of agricultural technologies which were propagated in small farms.

3. ***Closer collaboration among government agencies in empowering SFF.*** The three projects enumerated in Table 6 highlight the role of three government agencies in empowering SFF. These e projects have a lot of similarity in design as inclusive VCD projects (i.e. PRDP

¹⁴ https://www.jollibeefoundation.org/public/assets/pdf/annualpercent20reports/01_percent20-percent202020percent20JGF_percent20AR.pdf

of DA, ConVERGE of DAR, and RAPID of DTI). Each has its own focus and set of beneficiaries but their objectives and strategy have a lot in common. Unfortunately, while all 3 projects have a steering committee where all three departments are represented, the 3 projects do not fully benefit from the experience and competency of the other departments. The expertise of DA in agriculture technology is not fully maximized by ConVERGE and RAPID. DTI's access to massive information on markets is not fully tapped by ConVERGE and PRDP. This lack of collaboration is acknowledged by the officials of RAPID and ConVERGE.¹⁵

DA, DAR, and DTI have demonstrated a keen strategic interest in the development of SFF and have made the corresponding investment in that regard. It would be even more impactful for these agencies to undertake strategic planning and joint programming in increasing their role and investment in enhancing the position of SFF in agricultural development. The three projects cited here are all embodiments of the F2C2 approach. DA should form a strategic alliance with these two other agencies in mainstreaming F2C2 not just in DA but within the government. And then it should broaden this partnership to include other stakeholders in the local governments and the private sector, including civil society organizations.

Long-term measures

4. ***Develop market-based solutions to commercialization of small farms.*** The resources required of government to establish the ideal role of SFFs in agricultural modernization is enormous. Unfortunately, the sharp upward trend in agricultural and agrarian reform (AAR) spending of government that started in 2003, took a nose-dive in 2020. From a low of Php15 billion in 2003, the combined spending for AAR rose steadily to Php 134 billion in 2019 (Briones *ibid*). Unfortunately, the budget of DA was chopped to only Php 65 billion in 2020 and increased to only Php 67 billion in 2021 despite the department's request for Php 280 billion budget. Then Department of Budget and Management Secretary Benjamin Diokno pointed out that the spending of DA as a share of national budget has been constant in the last 3 decades but the sector's growth has been fluctuating during the period. He concluded that the performance of the sector is a function of policy and strategy rather than its budget.

Government needs to apply market-based solutions in order for financing the development of SFF to be sustainable. It must leverage its resources with private sector funds using a combination of incentives and public investments. The anchor firm approach of the RAPID project is one good example. The project invests in increasing productivity and product quality through replanting, provision of good quality inputs, and machinery and equipment to small farmers so that they can meet the supply requirement of large companies or anchor firms. Apart from assuring a market for the products of farmer beneficiaries, the anchor firms provide technical assistance to enable the suppliers to meet their standards. Both actors are encouraged to sign a commercial partnership agreement (CPA) that tie them into a strategic relationship that can endure beyond the project period. The CPA becomes some sort of guarantee for both public and financial institutions to supply other financing needs within the chain. This strategic

¹⁵ FULL DISCLOSURE: This author serves as an Agribusiness and Value Chain Development consultant of IFAD in Project ConVERGE and RAPID Growth.

relationship between organized small farmer groups and the anchor firm become the fulcrum of development in the value chains where they are and attracts participation of other stakeholders in the process. This model should be replicated all over the country as the catalyst of growth in other value chains.

Another financing modality that can be explored is how the Korean government sourced its supply of agricultural inputs and farm equipment through the NCAF. The government allowed NCAF to become the exclusive importer and distributor of these public goods to its members thereby creating a lucrative business, an efficient channel, and a responsive mechanism for the supply of these goods. This is one of the financial incentives that propelled the growth of NCAF. The Philippine government imported 2.3 million MT of fertilizers in 2018, 2.27 million MT in 2019, and 2.16 million MT in 2020.¹⁶ Allowing agricoops to procure and distribute fertilizers could achieve the same impact as the Korean experience. While there could be some leakage and regulatory issues in this approach, in the long run it would be a more efficient way and sustainable of providing subsidized fertilizers to poor farmers that would avoid the repeat of the fertilizer scam.

Public-private partnership (PPP) should also be applied in the agriculture sector. There is already a big number of companies that are engaged in agribusiness. Three examples of socially-oriented, large companies are Jollibee Foods Corp. (JFC), [Unifrutti](#) and the [Alcantara Group](#). These three companies have already well-developed programs that link their supply chains directly to small farms.

JFC piloted its Farmer Entrepreneurship Program by organizing the onion farmers in Nueva Ecija to deliver to its central commissary. This pilot project has since expanded to engaged 17 farmer groups that have delivered 7,000 metric tons of vegetables worth Php 300 million to the Jollibee group since 2009 (JGF, 2020).

Unifrutti has been one of the country's top exporter of bananas since the early 90s. The company has tied up with local indigenous communities for the supply of their products. Hinelaban Foundation, its social development affiliate, provides services to these communities by providing them with educational services, enterprise development training, and other community development services. The products produced by these indigenous communities are sold commercially through the [Hinelaban Store](#). Unifrutti and Hinelaban's program is deeply rooted in their respect of the rights and benefits of tribal communities and their desire to see these communities thrive.

The Alcantara group is piloting a new model in their aquatic resource business. Apart from maintaining their 50,000 cubic meters of sea cages and 350 hectares of brackish water ponds in Sarangani province, they outsource the growing of their seafood products to small producers each using 6,000 sq. m. of land that earn between Php 200,000 to Php 250,000 per

¹⁶ See <https://www.philstar.com/business/2021/11/21/2142718/philippines-see-government-government-talks-address-rising-fertilizer-costs>

season. They have been working with 100 of these are former banana workers for the part 5 – 6 years and one of them went from an annual sales of Php10 million to Php 150 million. They provide them with capital, inputs, and technology support and guarantee their buying price. Their biggest cost is in supervision of these partners to ensure quality of their product. They also provide them with social insurance in their time of need.

These are just some examples of private companies using inclusive business approaches as their core business strategy. There are other companies that could be interested to follow suit if provided the right incentives by government. In this regard, DA established a PPP unit under the Office of the Secretary to pursue this approach in financing big agriculture projects.

5. ***Pass an agricultural cooperatives law.*** Another salient feature of agricultural development for small farmers in Japan and in Korea was the passage of an agricultural cooperatives law. These landmark legislation in these countries served to consolidate agricultural cooperatives and turned them into highly empowered structures in the economy. In the Philippines, while the leadership of the cooperatives movement are generally appreciative of the enabling environment for cooperatives in general (Paez ibid, p.18), agricoops feel the need to enact specific legislation to clearly establish their identity and define government's assistance towards them. For one, agricultural cooperatives are not listed among the 20 categories of cooperatives in R.A. 6939, an Act creating the Cooperatives Development Authority (CDA). However, a CDA Memorandum Circular 2015-05, Section 5, identified agriculture cooperatives as those that “refer(s) to a primary cooperative which or whose members are involve/engage in raising/culture of plants, animals, fungi, and other living organisms for productive and economic purpose and in related activities that lead to the reduction of cost and/or value addition of outputs.” The leadership of the agricoops sector strongly feel that this identity crisis plus their notion that the Philippines' agricultural cooperative sector is the weakest subsector of the cooperative movement necessitates the passage of an agricultural cooperatives law in the hope of emulating the experience of Japan and Korea. This legislation will be an opportunity to fully establish the character of agricultural cooperatives not just in the larger cooperatives sector but as an acknowledged player in the modern agricultural economy. It will also be an opportunity for government to consolidate its assistance to this sector and to define its role in the modernization of Philippine agriculture.

6. ***Invest in developing the youth in agriculture.*** Small farms/fisheries must become commercially successful to make farming/fishing an attractive career option. This idea is not lost in the current administration of DA. The DA has a Youth Agripreneurship Program and Young Farmers Program which aim to create a culture of agribusiness among the youth. The Agriculture Training Institute is developing plans and program that will support the young farmers in doing business in agriculture, while promoting and strengthening youth participation in the sector. Invigorating interest in farming among the youth and transforming agribusiness courses into agroentrepreneurship of small farms will bring in a new wave of management capability and fresh ideas in agriculture in agricoops.

Local academic institutions may be tapped to provide entrepreneurship and management training to small coops with potential for supply and where the current manager is still trainable. TESDA has a Training Regulation (TR) for Agroenterprise Development (AED) National Certificate Level IV. This TR was prepared by DAR with the assistance of Catholic Relief Services (CRS). CRS provided Jollibee Group Foundation (JGF) with the AED technology that was used to organize the onion farmers in Nueva Ecija as cited in the foregoing section.

Agricoops can avail of TESDA scholarships to train the managers of small coops in AED. Furthermore, the children and relatives of current coop leaders who are beneficiaries of government programs and projects can also be trained in AED so that there can be continuity in sustaining these programs and projects.

Apart from AED, agricoops can partner with state universities and colleges (SUCs) that have agriculture extension services so that they can assist small cooperatives that will be ushered in value chain development projects. The Japanese government developed the management capability of small cooperatives by deploying extension officers and operations advisers to small farmers. Way back in the 1960s, they deployed 7,000 extension officers (with a ratio of 3-4 extension workers for every 1,000 farmers) nationwide. These extension officers worked with research institutions that conducted research and development of agricultural technologies which were propagated in small farms. If the government did a job creation program around agricultural extension and employed fresh agriculture graduates from SUCs, it could employ thousands of young people that have formal training who can be deployed to small farms and fisheries enterprises. This program could be done through the Provincial Agricultural and Fisheries Extension Service (PAFES) which is one of the flagship programs under the One DA agenda. These government extension workers could eventually become experts who can create a new wave of agricultural knowledge and competencies. In addition, it would create a market for agricultural extension service providers.

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Appendix A – Summary of AFMA Empowerment Provisions

Elements	Section	Specific Provision
Improved quality of life/ increase in income	Section 2 – Declaration of policy	2.a. Poverty Alleviation and Social Equity - The State shall ensure that the poorer sectors of society have equitable access to resources, income opportunities, basic and support services and infrastructure especially in areas where productivity is low as a means of improving their quality of life compared with other sectors of society
	Section 3 – Statement of Objectives	3.b. To enhance profits and incomes in the agriculture and fisheries sectors particularly the small farmers and fisherfolk , by ensuring equitable access to assets, resources and services, and promoting higher-value crops, value-added processing, agribusiness activities, and agro-industrialization
		3.j. To improve the quality of life of all sectors
Access to resources/ services	Section 2 – Declaration of policy	2.a. Poverty Alleviation and Social Equity ...
	Section 3 – Statement of Objectives	3.i. To provide social and economic adjustment measures that increase productivity and improve market efficiency while ensuring the protection and preservation of the environment and equity for small farmers and fisherfolk
	TITLE 1 PRODUCTION AND MARKETING	Section 17. <i>Special Concerns.</i> The Department shall consider the following areas of concerns, among others, in formulating the

	<p>SUPPORT SERVICES</p> <p>Chapter 1 Strategic Agricultural and Fisheries Development Zones</p>	<p>AFMP: a. Strategies and programs aimed to achieve growth and profitability targets in the context of the constraints and challenges of the World Trade Organization (WTO); b. Programs arising from the implementation of the Agrarian Reform Program; c. Identification of SAFDZ; d. Infrastructure and market support for the SAFDZ; e. Infrastructure support to make agriculture and fisheries production inputs, information and technology readily available to farmers, fisherfolk, cooperatives and entrepreneurs; f. Credit programs for small farmers and fisherfolk, and agricultural graduates;</p>
	<p>Chapter 3 <i>Credit</i></p>	<p>Section 20. Declaration of Policy It is hereby declared the policy of the State to alleviate poverty and promote vigorous growth in the countryside through access to credit by small farmers, fisherfolk, particularly the women involved in the production, processing and trading of agriculture and fisheries products and the small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) and industries engaged in agriculture and fisheries.</p>
		<p>Section 22. Coverage. An agriculture, fisheries and agrarian reform credit and financing system shall be designed for the use and benefit of farmers, fisherfolk, those engaged in food and non-food production, processing and trading, cooperatives, farmers/</p>

		fisherfolk's organization, and SMEs engaged in agriculture and fisheries, hereinafter referred to in this chapter as the "beneficiaries."
	Chapter 5 Information and Marketing Support Service	Section 38. Declaration of Policy. It is hereby declared the policy of the State to empower Filipino farmers and fisherfolk , particularly the women, involved in agriculture and fisheries through the provision of timely, accurate and responsive business information and efficient trading services which will link them to profitable markets for their products. They shall likewise be given innovative support toward the generation of maximum income through assistance in marketing.
		Section 39. Coverage. A market information system shall be installed for the use and benefit of, but not limited to, the farmers and fisherfolk, cooperatives , traders, processors, the LGUs and the Department.
		Section 40. The Marketing Assistance System. The Department shall establish a National Marketing Assistance Program that will immediately lead to the creation of a national marketing umbrella in order to ensure the generation of the highest possible income for the farmers and fisherfolk or groups of farmers and fisherfolk , matching supply and demand in both domestic and foreign markets.
	Chapter 6	Section 47. Criteria for Prioritization

	Other Infrastructure	<p>The prioritization of government resources for rural infrastructure shall be based on the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Agro-industrial potential of the area; b. Socio-economic contributions of the investments in the area; c. Absence of public investment in the area; and d. Presence of agrarian reform beneficiaries and other small farmers and fisherfolk in the area.
	TITLE 3 RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT AND EXTENSION Chapter 2 Extension Services	<p>Section 88. Special Concerns in the Delivery of Extension Services.</p> <p>The delivery of Agriculture and Fisheries Extension Services shall be multidisciplinary and shall involve the farmers, fisherfolk, and their organizations, and those engaged in food and non-food production and processing, including the private and public sectors.</p>
		<p>Section 91. Role of the Private Sector in Extension.</p> <p>The Department shall encourage the participation of farmers and fisherfolk cooperatives and associations and others in the private sector in training and other complementary extension services especially in community organizing, use of participatory approaches, popularization of training materials, regenerative agricultural technologies, agribusiness and management skills.</p>
	GENERAL PROVISIONS	For the first year of implementation of this Act, the

	Section 111. Initial Appropriation	<p>amount of Twenty billion pesos (P20,000,000,000.00) is hereby appropriated. The Department is hereby authorized to re-align its appropriations in the current year of the date of effectivity of this Act to conform with the requirements of this Act: Provided, That the amount shall be allocated and disbursed as follows:</p> <p>...</p> <p>2. Ten percent (10%) for post-harvest facilities: Provided, That the Secretary of Agriculture may invest up to fifty percent (50%) of the said amount to fund post-harvest facilities of cooperatives, especially market vendors' cooperatives, where said cooperatives exist and are operational: Provided, further; That if no cooperatives are operational, said amount shall fund the post-harvest facilities of the market-assistance system;</p> <p>5. Eight percent (8%) for the implementation of the Farmer-Fisherfolk Marketing Assistance System and support of market vendors' cooperatives</p> <p>7. Five percent (5%) for capability-building of farmers and fisherfolk organizations and LGUs for the effective implementation of the agriculture and fisheries programs at the local level;</p>
Organizing	Section 3 – Statement of Objectives	3.d. To encourage horizontal and vertical integration, consolidation and expansion of agriculture and fisheries activities, groups,

		functions and other services through the organization of cooperatives, farmers and fisherfolk's associations, corporations, nucleus estates, and consolidated farms and to enable these entities to benefit from economies of scale, afford them a stronger negotiating position, pursue more focused, efficient and appropriate research and development efforts and enable them to hire professional managers
		3.e. To promote people empowerment by strengthening people's organizations, cooperatives and NGOs and by establishing and improving mechanisms and processes for their participation in government decision-making and implementation
Participation in decision-making	Section 2 – Declaration of policy	2.f. People Empowerment - The State shall promote people empowerment by enabling all citizens through direct participation or through their duly elected chosen or designated representatives the opportunity to participate in policy formulation and decision-making by establishing the appropriate mechanisms and by giving them access to information;
	TITLE 1 PRODUCTION AND MARKETING SUPPORT SERVICES Chapter 1 Strategic	Section 6. Network of Areas for Agricultural and Agro-Industrial Development. The Department shall, within six (6) months after the approval of this Act, and in consultation with the local government units, appropriate government agencies,

	Agricultural and Fisheries Development Zones	<p>concerned non-government organizations (NGOs) and organized farmers and fisherfolk's groups, identify the Strategic Agriculture and Fisheries Development Zones (SAFDZ) within the network of protected areas for agricultural and agro-industrial development to ensure that lands are efficiently and sustainability utilized for food and non-food production and agroindustrialization.</p>
		<p>The SAFDZ, which shall serve as centers where development in the agriculture and fisheries sectors are catalyzed in an environmentally and socio-culturally sound manner, shall be identified on the basis of the following criteria:</p> <p>...</p> <p>6.4. Dominant presence of agrarian reform communities (ARCs) and/or small owner - cultivators and amortizing owners/agrarian reform beneficiaries and other small and fisherfolk in the area.</p>
		<p>Section 9. <i>Delineation of Strategic Agriculture and Fisheries Development Zones</i></p> <p>The Department, in consultation with the Department of Agrarian Reform, the Department of Trade and Industry the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Science and Technology, the concerned LGUs, the organized farmers and fisherfolk groups, the private sector and</p>

		<p>communities shall, without prejudice to the development of identified economic zones and free ports, establish and delineate, based on sound resource accounting, the SAFDZ within one (1) year from the effectivity of this Act.</p>
		<p>Section 13. <i>Agricultural and Fisheries Modernization Plan (AFMP)</i></p> <p>The Department, <i>in consultation with farmers and fisherfolk</i>, the private sector, NGOs, people’s organizations and the appropriate government agencies and offices shall formulate and implement a medium and long-term comprehensive Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Plan.</p>
		<p>Section 14. Food Security, Poverty Alleviation, Social Equity and Income Enhancement.</p> <p>The Department in coordination with other concerned departments or agencies shall formulate medium-and long-term plans addressing food security, poverty alleviation, social equity and income enhancement concerns based on, but not limited to, the following goals and indicators of development: a. <i>Increased income and profit of small farmers and fisherfolk</i>; b. Availability of rice and other staple foods at affordable prices; c. Reduction of rural poverty and income inequality; d. Reduction of the incidence of malnutrition; e. Reduction of rural unemployment</p>

		and underemployment; and f. <i>Improvement in land tenure of small farmers.</i>
	Chapter 6 Other Infrastructure	Section 52. Farm-to-Market Roads The Department shall coordinate with the LGUs and the <i>resident-farmers and fisherfolk</i> in order to identify priority locations of farm-to-market roads <i>that take into account the number of farmers and fisherfolk and their families who shall benefit therefrom</i> and the amount, kind and importance of agricultural and fisheries products produced in the area.

Source: Author's compilation

Appendix B – Questions for Key informants on Access to Services and Voice in Decision-making

FOR NGO KII

Access to Services

1. Are you aware of government programs (whether from DA or other agencies) that were delivered to small farmers in your province between the period 1997 to the present?
2. If so, can you enumerate these programs and provide certain details that you know about them?
3. Would you be personally aware of small farmers/fishers beneficiaries of these programs?
4. If so, would you know how the program/s have contributed to improving their well-being? Please provide details and anecdotes, if possible.
5. Would you have feedback from the beneficiaries of these programs regarding the benefits that they received from them and how these have improved their well-being? Would you have any adverse feedback from them regarding these programs?
6. If you compare these beneficiaries to other small farmers/fishers whom you know that did not benefit from any of these government programs, would you say they are better or worse off than these beneficiaries? Please elaborate.
7. Would you say that the programs of government for small farmers/fishers in your province have improved or remained the same before 1997 and in the last 20 years?

Voice in Decision-making

8. What are the functioning official government decision-making bodies in your province where POs are invited to become members before and after 1997? Which of these platforms are the most effective in promoting the active participation of POs?
9. Would you know if POs in your province are aware of these platforms? If so,
10. Are you aware who are the POs who are members of these platforms? Do you know of any POs that have been participating in these bodies?
11. Are you aware of how POs participate in these bodies? Would you have feedback from those that are participating in these bodies about their experience in those bodies?
12. If you have feedback, do they feel that their opinions and recommendations are being sufficiently recognized in these bodies? Would you know if there have been reforms that have been implemented in these bodies as a result of the intervention of member POs?

13. Would you know what are the strengths and weaknesses of POs in the course of their participation in these bodies?
14. In your opinion, have these bodies become more effective in promoting participation of POs in the past 25 years? Please explain.
15. Are you aware if POs are satisfied with their participation in these bodies?
16. Would you say that these bodies have improved, remained the same, deteriorated in promoting participation of POs in decision-making in your province?

FOR POs

Access to services

1. Are you aware of government programs (whether from DA or other agencies) that were delivered to small farmers in your province between the period 1997 to the present?
2. If so, can you enumerate these programs and provide certain details that you know about them?
3. Have you/your organization been a beneficiary of these programs? Which program? What were the benefits that you received from these program/s?
4. How did you become a beneficiary of this program/s?
5. Have these programs where you are beneficiaries contributed to improving your well-being? Please provide details and anecdotes, if possible.
6. If you compare yourself to other small farmers/fishers in your area who did not become beneficiaries of this program/s, would you say they are better or worse off than you are? In what way?
7. Would you say that the programs of government for small farmers/fishers in your province have improved or remained the same before 1997 and in the last 20 years?

Voice in Decision-making

8. Are you aware of functioning official government decision-making bodies in your province where POs are invited to become members before and after 1997? Which of these platforms are the most effective in promoting the active participation of POs?
9. Have you or know anyone been involved in any of these bodies? If so, which ones?
10. Describe how these bodies functioned in promoting your participation in decision-making? Are you or those you know satisfied about your participation in these bodies? Please elaborate.

11. Are you aware of any reforms that have been implemented in these bodies as a result of participation? Please elaborate.
12. Would you say are the strengths and weaknesses of POs in the course of their participation in these bodies?
13. In your opinion, have these bodies become more effective in promoting participation of POs in the past 25 years? Please explain.

Appendix C - Key Informant Interviews

Carlito Aquino
Chair, Provincial Agriculture and Fisheries Council
Provincial Agrarian Reform Council
Camarines Sur

FOR NGO KII

Access to Services

1. During those years, I am not aware of the government programs only until 2010 when I join the MAFC in our municipality. But until now 2021, still I only know programs may be 75 percent.
2. In so far as the programs is concerned, I know regarding the Mechanization program that started the implementation with Sec. Proceso Alcala that provides farm equipment to organized farmer association and cooperatives. Extended loans to farmer organizations and individual with the government own banks as implementers. Also, loans for farmers were extended to cooperative banks and rural banks as conduits.
3. Yes I am aware of the program because I am part of the program being one who signed the endorsement to the DA before the farmer organization be granted the requested machineries as the MAFC Chairman of that days.
4. Feedback from the beneficiaries is part of the MAFC's duties as member of the monitoring team and feedbacks are properly send to the PCAF and DA in the form of Monitoring reports. The reports are covered with the photos, status and programs regarding the benefits that they received from the effectiveness of the issued equipment and the assessment, comments and recommendations.
5. In many instances, there are machineries, equipment and livelihood programs granted to POs are not monitored by the MAFCs because it is directly released to their identified beneficiaries and as we know some of them are not fully organized or registered in any government registering agencies like SEC DOLE or CDA. We believe it has something between the coordinators of DA and the LGUs may be under political pressure. In that case, the required counterparts such as building or shed for the projects are not complied so much so that the machineries or livelihood assisted projects are not properly keeps that leads to damage and deteriorations. Another instances, projects are considered white elephants because equipment are being delivered without the capacity of the FOs to manage and some of said equipment are just being delivered even no request are being done the FOs. Another problem, equipment is not suitable to be use in the area considering the topographic differences an example of that is the designed Hand tractor designed in Central Luzon are not suited in the parts of Bicol region.
6. The government programs for small farmers/fishers felt only from year 2000 and the present. Why? Because before year 2000 only big agricultural companies and some selected among the few FOs are being benefited by the government programs.

Voice in Decision-making

7. It is a struggle of the PS (private sector) represented by MAFC to be parts of the MDC which is only in 2010 are recognized (only in some municipality but not all) the MAFC

membership in the MDC. Thank you to the joint memorandum circular number 100 of the DILG and DA.

8. May be today because of the active participation of the MAFCs and the DAs information programs, yes. About 80 percent are now knowledgeable of the DA programs.

9. The DA and the ATI are mandated to organized its farmers and fisheries group. To be fair, these activities became more effective. They organized the farmers according to their commodities. Example rice, corn, cacao, ruminant, livestock, inland fisheries, coconut and others. Another, they organize the IPs as sector, small farmer and fishers by categorizing them according to their strength. Its organization represented by their chairman or President comes the organization of the MAFC with the 60 percent representation from the private sector.

10. Yes, its organization represented by their chairman or President comes the organization of the MAFC with the 60 percent representation from the private sector. The elected MAFC Chairman will be automatically the representative to the Special bodies like MDC or Municipal Development Council representing the farmer sector.

11. The feedback is recognized through resolution form during the MAFC meetings. Issues and concerned are the agendas to be resolve during the meeting. The Resolutions developed are being send to proper agencies concern. It is also categorized either the issues and concern are local or national. It the issues is local it is sent to the LGUs and LGU will send feedback or kind of action they have perform to settle the issues. The MAFC through resolutions can propose local ordinance to be implemented in their municipality. It is in national in scope, the resolution is being send to the PAFC, to the RAFC and to the PCAF to avoid duplication. But sometimes, it is directly sent to PCAF.

12. Would you know what are the strengths and weaknesses of POs in the course of their participation in these bodies? Yes! It is the Political colors that exist in the council.

13. In your opinion, have these bodies become more effective in promoting participation of POs in the past 25 years? Yes! In some areas of the region and provinces like for example if the Governor down to the Mayor Agriculture has given priorities like Albay, Camarines Norte, Masbate but not Camarines Sur.

14. Are you aware if POs are satisfied with their participation in these bodies? Partly satisfied if the mayor is not against you.

15. Would you say that these bodies have improved, remained the same, deteriorated in promoting participation of POs in decision-making in your province? Generally, about 55% percent of the municipalities of the province of Camarines Sur are enjoying and improved, while the rest are remained and deteriorating. Because still many municipalities of the province are not active or has no MAFC.

FOR POs

Access to services

16. I am aware of the government programs (whether from DA or other agencies) when I organized our small farmer organization and register with SEC that became the start to be a member of MAFC and became MAFC Chairman in 2012 until awarded National Outstanding MAFC Chairman in 2016.

17. If so, can you enumerate these programs and provide certain details that you know about them?

18. Mechanization component – the coop, associations can avail as grant or loan. But individual can also avail through loan only payable for 5 years.
19. Capital component – can be avail for grant or loan depending on programs. Individual through loans.
20. Livelihood component – are grant to associations or coops.
21. Typhoon assistance – through loans
22. Crops Insurance - PCIC
23. Yes. Our organization been a beneficiary of these programs. All of the mentions program component.
24. Being a farmer and member of a farmer registered and accredited by LGU and DA organization.
25. Have these programs where you are beneficiaries contributed to improving your well-being? Yes. I personally avail of an individual mechanization component through loan with 2% interest and payable for 5 years that I am enjoying. In the next 2 years I personally own a 4WDT.
26. Yes, those small consolidators of produce or the komprador. They are having capitalist that directly buy the product from the consolidator adding amount. The capitalist also will supply the consolidators of farm inputs at a low price which the farmers will loan. The consolidator has a captured product and they command the price not the farmer who command the price. The consolidator has more than income than the farmer. I am different to them because I did not sell my products to any consolidator, instead I process it. Example rice; I sold milled rice not fresh rice.
27. Generally, the programs of government for small farmers/fishers in the province have improved their social and economic standard rather than before because of the farm mechanization granted to farmer organization and cooperative.

Voice in Decision-making

28. Yes, I am aware of functioning official government decision-making bodies, but not all are following such because they knows how to evade the implementation. Executives have their priorities. For example, in Camarines Sur.
29. Yes, the MAFC to be an automatic member of the MDC.
30. Being a member of the MDC, you have the chance to participation in decision-making and influence the outcome of the plans and programs and the approval since you can be a movant of a particular issues affecting the farmer sector you represent.
31. In our municipality yes, but not much in the other municipalities of the province.
32. The strengths and weaknesses of POs is depended on their representative. The ability of their representative to talk in the plenary. Not just a silent committee representative.
33. In our municipality I can say yes, because we have at present programs and projects jointly being implemented by the MAFC and the LGU. But, in general I think no. there are still municipalities who has no MAFC organization because the PCAF has no budget to expand more. I myself have organized one MAFC and now is very active.

Santiago Cervantes Kitaguchi
Carmel Agri-Learning Farm
Former member - RDC V, Provincial Agrarian Reform Council, Protected Area
Management Board
Regional representative - Foundation for the Philippine Environment

FOR NGO KII

Access to Services

1. Are you aware of government programs (whether from DA or other agencies) that were delivered to small farmers in your province between the period 1997 to the present?
2. If so, can you enumerate these programs and provide certain details that you know about them?
3. Would you be personally aware of small farmers/fishers beneficiaries of these programs?
4. If so, would you know how the program/s have contributed to improving their well-being? Please provide details and anecdotes, if possible.
 - Current programs are better, RD is more transparent
 - Govt services has improved in past 20 years, they are listening more now and more transparent
 - But coverage is still small, because farmers are not organized --- NEED TO IMPROVE TARGETING
 - Govt needs to pay more attention to processing and marketing, this is weakest service of govt; too much focus on production which ends up with traders
 - Need intermediaries to access govt services for individuals who have no access
 - LGU technicians are also not working so deserving benes are not reached (but incentives are also not sufficient to motivate them)
 - 2017: poverty incidence in Reg V = 31%, 2016: 27.5% (NEED TO CHECK THIS – for Iya, ref: Bicol Development Update, same for all regions)
5. Would you have feedback from the beneficiaries of these programs regarding the benefits that they received from them and how these have improved their well-being? Would you have any adverse feedback from them regarding these programs?
 - Politicians have quotas from govt agencies for their pet projects (they have allocation from govt agencies) – heads of agencies have no choice bec these politicians also work for their budget
6. If you compare these beneficiaries to other small farmers/fishers whom you know that did not benefit from any of these government programs, would you say they are better or worse off than these beneficiaries? Please elaborate.
 - 36 Rice Processing Centers in Bicol, not all are operational but according to DA all are operational

7. Would you say that the programs of government for small farmers/fishers in your province have improved or remained the same before 1997 and in the last 20 years?

- Yes, in the past 20 years
- Individual farmers cannot avail of govt programs, have to be groups, need to be accredited (individuals can only avail of seeds, fertilizers, animal dispersal) – for associations: members sometimes accuse chairman of monopolizing resources accessed from govt, chairman says he is the one who worked for it

FOR POs

Voice in Decision-making

14. Are you aware of functioning official government decision-making bodies in your province where POs are invited to become members before and after 1997? Which of these platforms are the most effective in promoting the active participation of POs?

15. Have you or know anyone been involved in any of these bodies? If so, which ones?

16. Describe how these bodies functioned in promoting your participation in decision-making? Are you or those you know satisfied about your participation in these bodies? Please elaborate.

- He was RDC rep 2016-19, but was replaced by candidate of RD who was not active, he was re-elected as rep of fisheries
- Araw of CODE-NGO is also active but more focused on DILG

17. Are you aware of any reforms that have been implemented in these bodies as a result of participation? Please elaborate.

- He has had 4 projects approved (BFDC infusion of dairy animals, Tabang Bicol – extraction of special oil, tourism road to Mt. Isarog, market consolidation of agri products but has problem with availability of land – DA wants donation but Pecuarria wants it paid)

18. Would you say are the strengths and weaknesses of POs in the course of their participation in these bodies?

19. In your opinion, have these bodies become more effective in promoting participation of POs in the past 25 years? Please explain.

- Special bodies: govt listens to the PO reps

**SIMAG Foundation Staff
Negros Occidental**

FOR NGO KII

Access to Services

1. Are you aware of government programs (whether from DA or other agencies) that were delivered to small farmers in your province between the period 1997 to the present? If so, can you enumerate these programs and provide certain details that you know about them?
 - a. *Creation of Agricultural and Fisheries Modernization Act of 1997. This was authored by Edgardo J. Angara during the Administration of Joseph Estrada.*
 - b. *Ginintuang Masaganang Ani Countrywide Assistance for Rural Employment and Services (GMA-CARES). It gives emphasis on social equity. This was implemented by Leonardo Q. Montemayor*
 - c. *Hybridization Programs. This was intensified and focused on Mindanao region.*
 - d. *Creation of Organic Agriculture Act of 2010 (RA 10068). This authored by Proceso J. Alcala.*
 - e. *Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Program (RCEP).*
 - f. *Creation of the Sugarcane Industry Development Act. Block Farming Program.*
 - g. *Creation of the Agricultural and Biosystem Engineering Law. This gives importance to agri- bio engineering as key engine in the modernization of the agriculture sector.*
2. Would you be personally aware of small farmers/fishers' beneficiaries of these programs? If so, would you know how the program/s have contributed to improving their well-being? Please provide details and anecdotes, if possible.

Yes. These programs have brought greater economic impact to the lives of the small and marginal farmers. See for example the Organic Agriculture program of the DA which paves the way to providing the communities not only with jobs but also with safer foods. Also, the block farming program under SIDA Law became an engine for growth especially in the sugarcane industry. Mostly, members of the ARB's communities have benefited a lot to the program. Take a case for the Candelaria Block farm, one of the assisted associations of the SRA Visayas, with this program the economic status of their members was improved. We have also RCEP which bring greater economic impact to the rice farmers. In short, all these government programs have really contributed a lot in uplifting the lives of the small and marginal farmers in the countryside.

3. Would you have feedback from the beneficiaries of these programs regarding the benefits that they received from them and how these have improved their well-being? Would you have any adverse feedback from them regarding these programs?

If I compare their lives before these programs arrived or implemented, it was indeed a disaster. See, when transporting their products, they found it very difficult, but with the farm

to market roads projects of the DA and implemented by the DPWH, it made them easier to transport their products from their farm to the market.

4. If you compare these beneficiaries to other small farmers/fishers whom you know that did not benefit from any of these government programs, would you say they are better or worse off than these beneficiaries? Please elaborate.

I knew a lot of individual farmers in the hinterlands who unluckily did not received any government support like in the DA's rice resiliency programs, and other supports programs like the block farming programs. What I always heard from them is their murmurs against the Government for not giving them supports. Actually, what they are trying to say is true, because they find it difficult to survive especially in marketing their produce. Also, they always complain for the very high cost of agricultural inputs like the fertilizers. As a result, they find it living depressed. On the other hand, those who benefited from the supports of the government like the free fertilizers' subsidy programs, the free inbred seeds and technical supports from the partner agencies like the philrice and the mechanization program of Philmech, their lives is improved as compared before.

5. Would you say that the programs of government for small farmers/fishers in your province have improved or remained the same before 1997 and in the last 20 years?

If I am going to rate from 1 – 10, (1 as the lowest and 10 the highest), its in a scale of 8. Let me say something like this; all these programs and projects of the national governments were in fact bring tremendous positive economic impact, however, when it reaches to some local implementing units like in the PLGU and LGUs, they mixed it with some political ambitions leaving some farmers remain untapped. These farmers are mere victims because they were not in the political allies.

Voice in Decision-making

1. What are the functioning official government decision-making bodies in your province where POs are invited to become members before and after 1997? Which of these platforms are the most effective in promoting the active participation of POs?

One of this functioning government decision making bodies are those in the office of the Agriculture and fishery council. This gives active participation of the PO's. the farmer field school program of the local government unit gives all willing PO to participate and share their knowledge and expertise in the technical and management side of farming.

2. Would you know if POs in your province are aware of these platforms? If so,

Unluckily, not all POs are aware of these platforms, maybe because it is not widely known since most of these programs were facilitated by agricultural technicians from the locals.

3. Are you aware who are the POs who are members of these platforms? Do you know of any POs that have been participating in these bodies?

Yes. Like the Eco-Agri Foundation Incorporated and RU Foundry Corporation have been actively engaged in these programs and projects. They have been advocating farming in a most sustainable and profitable way.

4. Are you aware of how POs participate in these bodies? Would you have feedback from those that are participating in these bodies about their experience in those bodies?

This private entity has been very vocal in advocating sustainable farming. In fact, they trainings and seminars regarding the organic agriculture program of the DA. Their technology was also adopted by farmers group in some locality.

5. If you have feedback, do they feel that their opinions and recommendations are being sufficiently recognized in these bodies? Would you know if there have been reforms that have been implemented in these bodies as a result of the intervention of member POs?

Yes. In fact, the technology they've been teaching is very doable and feasible that a small and ordinary farmer can easily apply.

6. Would you know what are the strengths and weaknesses of POs in the course of their participation in these bodies?

Maybe, sometime they became profit centered.

7. In your opinion, have these bodies become more effective in promoting participation of POs in the past 25 years? Please explain.

Absolutely Yes. For the past how many years, they are on the other side, one call away as afar as sustainable farming is concerned. Their community-based approach wherein community are part of every project and program implemented are one of their key strategies why they became super successful. They give importance as to how these programs/ projects would bring economic impact to the lives of the ordinary farmers.

8. Are you aware if POs are satisfied with their participation in these bodies?

Yes. They became what they are right now because of the positive impact of their participation in the community. It is because of the dynamic leadership of their leader wherein inclusive growth is the main reason for every programs/project.

9. Would you say that these bodies have improved, remained the same, deteriorated in promoting participation of POs in decision-making in your province?

For the past how many years, as compared before, they became now as one on top of the ladder that everyone could see their dominions in promoting sustainable economic programs.

FOR POs

Access to services

1. Are you aware of government programs (whether from DA or other agencies) that were delivered to small farmers in your province between the period 1997 to the present? If so, can you enumerate these programs and provide certain details that you know about them?

Yes. One is the organic agriculture programs of the DA. This paves the way to the organization step up to the highest pedestal. also, the RCEP programs of the DA which also made the organization recover from the ill effects of the pandemic.

2. Have you/your organization been a beneficiary of these programs? Which program? What were the benefits that you received from these program/s?

Organic Agriculture Program which made the organization became one of the farm school/training school accredited by ATI and TESDA to conduct Organic Agriculture Training.

3. How did you become a beneficiary of this program/s?

First and foremost, the organization was already well prepared and established and implementation ready. Also, Application to avail the program plus connections with some group in the higher office.

4. Have these programs where you are beneficiaries contributed to improving your well-being? Please provide details and anecdotes, if possible.

Yes. Not just it brought greater positive impacts to the organizations but also to the community as our beneficiaries. See, one of the graduates of the training is now a full-time organic farmer practitioner receiving multiple awards from other agencies.

5. If you compare yourself to other small farmers/fishers in your area who did not become beneficiaries of this program/s, would you say they are better or worse off than you are? In what way?

I am 10 kilometers away from them. Why? It is because these programs from the government is like a slice of cake, where I get the most shared. It is because I made it my decision to avail without hesitation or any negative second thoughts from the government. Also, political connections is very important TODAY otherwise you will die in the combat zone.

6. Would you say that the programs of government for small farmers/fishers in your province have improved or remained the same before 1997 and in the last 20 years?

It greatly improved now as compared may years ago. Today the governments offered a wide arrays of programs and projects which can be benefited by all small and marginal farmers.

Voice in Decision-making

1. Are you aware of functioning official government decision-making bodies in your province where POs are invited to become members before and after 1997? Which of these platforms are the most effective in promoting the active participation of POs?

Yes. The City Agricultural and Fishery Council of the City opened for opportunities for the participation of the PO.

2. Describe how these bodies functioned in promoting your participation in decision-making? Are you or those you know satisfied about your participation in these bodies? Please elaborate.

Inclusivity is one word that can best describe this local body. It gives opportunity to local farmers shared their best opinions to the councils, then the council will relay that to the higher authority in a form of a resolution.

3. Are you aware of any reforms that have been implemented in these bodies as a result of participation? Please elaborate.

Yes. It is because every resolution passed by the councils are heard by the group of political allies in the decision-making body. As I have said, political connections are very important in making your project became a reality.

4. Would you say are the strengths and weaknesses of POs in the course of their participation in these bodies?

Problem Identifications and Sustainable solutions where community is part is one of the key strengths. Social preparations before implementing every programs and projects is one to make the project became successful.

5. In your opinion, have these bodies become more effective in promoting participation of POs in the past 25 years? Please explain.

Yes. For the past how, many years these PO's have been actively promoting economic recovery programs wherein the focused is not only for the few but for the many esp., the small and marginal farmers in the countryside.

Gina Bautista-Martin
Former Administrator, Sugar Regulatory Administration
President, SIMAG Foundation

FOR NGO KII
Access to Services

1. Are you aware of government programs (whether from DA or other agencies) that were delivered to small farmers in your province between the period 1997 to the present? If so, can you enumerate these programs and provide certain details that you know about them?
 - a. *Creation of Agricultural and Fisheries Modernization Act of 1997. This was authored by Edgardo J. Angara during the Administration of Joseph Estrada.*
 - b. *Ginintuang Masaganang Ani Countrywide Assistance for Rural Employment and Services (GMA-CARES). It gives emphasis on social equity. This was implemented by Leonardo Q. Montemayor*
 - c. *Hybridization Programs. This was intensified and focused on Mindanao region.*
 - d. *Creation of Organic Agriculture Act of 2010 (RA 10068). This authored by Proceso J. Alcala.*
 - e. *Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Program (RCEP).*
 - f. *Creation of the Sugarcane Industry Development Act. Block Farming Program.*
 - g. *Creation of the Agricultural and Biosystem Engineering Law. This gives importance to agri- bio engineering as key engine in the modernization of the agriculture sector.*

2. Would you be personally aware of small farmers/fishers' beneficiaries of these programs?

If so, would you know how the program/s have contributed to improving their well-being? Please provide details and anecdotes, if possible.

Yes. These programs have brought greater economic impact to the lives of the small and marginal farmers. See for example the Organic Agriculture program of the DA which paves the way to providing the communities not only with jobs but also with safer foods. Also, the block farming program under SIDA Law became an engine for growth especially in the sugarcane industry. Mostly, members of the ARB's communities have benefited a lot to the program. Take a case for the Candelaria Block farm, one of the assisted associations of the SRA Visayas, with this program the economic status of their members was improved. We have also RCEP which bring greater economic impact to the rice farmers. In short, all these government programs have really contributed a lot in uplifting the lives of the small and marginal farmers in the countryside.

3. Would you have feedback from the beneficiaries of these programs regarding the benefits that they received from them and how these have improved their well-being? Would you have any adverse feedback from them regarding these programs?
If I compare their lives before these programs arrived or implemented, it was indeed a disaster. See, when transporting their products, they found it very difficult, but with the farm to market roads projects of the DA and implemented by the DPWH, it made them easier to transport their products from their farm to the market.
4. If you compare these beneficiaries to other small farmers/fishers whom you know that did not benefit from any of these government programs, would you say they are better or worse off than these beneficiaries? Please elaborate.
I knew a lot of individual farmers in the hinterlands who unluckily did not received any government support like in the DA's rice resiliency programs, and other supports programs like the block farming programs. What I always heard from them is their murmurs against the Government for not giving them supports. Actually, what they are trying to say is true, because they find it difficult to survive especially in marketing their produce. Also, they always complain for the very high cost of agricultural inputs like the fertilizers. As a result, they find it living depressed. On the other hand, those who benefited from the supports of the government like the free fertilizers' subsidy programs, the free inbred seeds and technical supports from the partner agencies like the philrice and the mechanization program of Philmech, their lives is improved as compared before.
- *Situation of farmers has not improved, more and more lands have been cut into small pieces --- By 2010, 90% of land have been cut up into 1 – 2 ha for ARBs, no improvement in their standard of living, benes are former sugar workers who do not have management experience in running their farm (nature of sugar – needs plantation approach)*
 - *There is fund in DOLE that should go to sugar farm workers*
 - *DA gave physical facilities and worked with banks to assist ARBs but did not change the situation of small farmers --- there is money but did not improve --- there is no professional management over small farms*
 - *There needs to be economies of scale*
 - *Model: service provider (foundation) to manage the business who is paid by ARB owners of the land (corporation)*
 - *Of 400,000 ha, almost 300,000 subdivided,*
 - *She is managing 30 ha (ideal size for block farm for 1 tractor) – 3rd year – she is leasing from them (that's their share) then they are employed (they have regular income plus de minimis) – she provides capital (the law provides that only former land owners can lease back the land) – they have a management contract – she deducts management fee, interest on loan (PEF funded, also from Dunganon)*
 - *As former land owner she leases back the farm from ARB, the ARBs organize themselves into a corp or coop and contracts out management (the block farm)*
5. Would you say that the programs of government for small farmers/fishers in your province have improved or remained the same before 1997 and in the last 20 years?
If I am going to rate from 1 – 10, (1 as the lowest and 10 the highest), its in a scale of 8. Let me say something like this; all these programs and projects of the national governments were in fact bring tremendous positive economic impact, however, when it reaches to some local implementing units like in the PLGU and LGUs, they mixed it with some political ambitions leaving some farmers remain untapped. These farmers are mere victims because they were not in the political allies.

Voice in Decision-making

10. What are the functioning official government decision-making bodies in your province where POs are invited to become members before and after 1997? Which of these platforms are the most effective in promoting the active participation of POs?
One of this functioning government decision making bodies are those in the office of the Agriculture and fishery council. This gives active participation of the PO's. the farmer field school program of the local government unit gives all willing PO to participate and share their knowledge and expertise in the technical and management side of farming.
11. Would you know if POs in your province are aware of these platforms? If so,
Unluckily, not all POs are aware of these platforms, maybe because it is not widely known since most of these programs were facilitated by agricultural technicians from the locals.
12. Are you aware who are the POs who are members of these platforms? Do you know of any POs that have been participating in these bodies?
Yes. Like the Eco-Agri Foundation Incorporated and RU Foundry Corporation have been actively engaged in these programs and projects. They have been advocating farming in a most sustainable and profitable way.
13. Are you aware of how POs participate in these bodies? Would you have feedback from those that are participating in these bodies about their experience in those bodies?
This private entity has been very vocal in advocating sustainable farming. In fact, they trainings and seminars regarding the organic agriculture program of the DA. Their technology was also adopted by farmers group in some locality.
14. If you have feedback, do they feel that their opinions and recommendations are being sufficiently recognized in these bodies? Would you know if there have been reforms that have been implemented in these bodies as a result of the intervention of member POs?
Yes. In fact, the technology they've been teaching is very doable and feasible that a small and ordinary farmer can easily apply.
15. Would you know what are the strengths and weaknesses of POs in the course of their participation in these bodies?
Maybe, sometime they became profit centered.
16. In your opinion, have these bodies become more effective in promoting participation of POs in the past 25 years? Please explain.
Absolutely Yes. For the past how many years, they are on the other side, one call away as afar as sustainable farming is concerned. Their community-based approach wherein community are part of every project and program implemented are one of their key strategies why they became super successful. They give importance as to how these programs/ projects would bring economic impact to the lives of the ordinary farmers.
17. Are you aware if POs are satisfied with their participation in these bodies?
Yes. They became what they are right now because of the positive impact of their participation in the community. It is because of the dynamic leadership of their leader wherein inclusive growth is the main reason for every programs/project.
18. Would you say that these bodies have improved, remained the same, deteriorated in promoting participation of POs in decision-making in your province?

For the past how many years, as compared before, they became now as one on top of the ladder that everyone could see their dominions in promoting sustainable economic programs.

FOR POs

Access to services

7. Are you aware of government programs (whether from DA or other agencies) that were delivered to small farmers in your province between the period 1997 to the present? If so, can you enumerate these programs and provide certain details that you know about them?

Yes. One is the organic agriculture programs of the DA. This paves the way to the organization step up to the highest pedestal. also, the RCEP programs of the DA which also made the organization recover from the ill effects of the pandemic.

8. Have you/your organization been a beneficiary of these programs? Which program? What were the benefits that you received from these program/s?

Organic Agriculture Program which made the organization became one of the farm school/ training school accredited by ATI and TESDA to conduct Organic Agriculture Training.

9. How did you become a beneficiary of this program/s?

First and foremost, the organization was already well prepared and established and implementation ready. Also, Application to avail the program plus connections with some group in the higher office.

10. Have these programs where you are beneficiaries contributed to improving your well-being? Please provide details and anecdotes, if possible.

Yes. Not just it brought greater positive impacts to the organizations but also to the community as our beneficiaries. See, one of the graduates of the training is now a full-time organic farmer practitioner receiving multiple awards from other agencies.

11. If you compare yourself to other small farmers/fishers in your area who did not become beneficiaries of this program/s, would you say they are better or worse off than you are? In what way?

I am 10 kilometers away from them. Why? It is because these programs from the government is like a slice of cake, where I get the most shared. It is because I made it my decision to avail without hesitation or any negative second thoughts from the government. Also, political connections is very important TODAY otherwise you will die in the combat zone.

12. Would you say that the programs of government for small farmers/fishers in your province have improved or remained the same before 1997 and in the last 20 years?

It greatly improved now as compared may years ago. Today the governments offered a wide arrays of programs and projects which can be benefited by all small and marginal farmers.

Voice in Decision-making

6. Are you aware of functioning official government decision-making bodies in your province where POs are invited to become members before and after 1997? Which of these platforms are the most effective in promoting the active participation of POs?

Yes. The City Agricultural and Fishery Council of the City opened for opportunities for the participation of the PO.

7. Describe how these bodies functioned in promoting your participation in decision-making? Are you or those you know satisfied about your participation in these bodies? Please elaborate.

Inclusivity is one word that can best describe this local body. It gives opportunity to local farmers shared their best opinions to the councils, then the council will relay that to the higher authority in a form of a resolution.

8. Are you aware of any reforms that have been implemented in these bodies as a result of participation? Please elaborate.

Yes. It is because every resolution passed by the councils are heard by the group of political allies in the decision-making body. As I have said, political connections are very important in making your project became a reality.

9. Would you say are the strengths and weaknesses of POs in the course of their participation in these bodies?

Problem Identifications and Sustainable solutions where community is part is one of the key strengths. Social preparations before implementing every programs and projects is one to make the project became successful.

10. In your opinion, have these bodies become more effective in promoting participation of POs in the past 25 years? Please explain.

Yes. For the past how, many years these PO's have been actively promoting economic recovery programs wherein the focused is not only for the few but for the many esp., the small and marginal farmers in the countryside.

Corazon Laudere

Chair and former General Manager (5 years)

INDAWSA Agrarian Reform Cooperative, registered May 15, 2012

Also worked as Finance Officer in Pagkalambuway (partner of DOLE in their livelihood)

Worked with farmers since 2007 in Bukidnon

FOR NGO KII

Access to Services

1. Are you aware of government programs (whether from DA or other agencies) that were delivered to small farmers in your province between the period 1997 to the present?
 - Yes
2. If so, can you enumerate these programs and provide certain details that you know about them?
 - Programs are ok but in Malaybalay, only big groups can access, individuals cannot access
 - BUB project was ok but after 4 years project discontinued, projects were identified by sector

- Rice program: provision of equipment (not aware of source)
 - Local government weak support for agriculture because of small budget (provision of seeds, fertilizer) --- there is favoritism, political favors especially for bigger groups
3. Would you be personally aware of small farmers/fishers beneficiaries of these programs?
 - Yes
 4. If so, would you know how the program/s have contributed to improving their well-being? Please provide details and anecdotes, if possible.
 - Need for POs leaders to be assisted (trainings – where to access services, not all can access these services)
 5. Would you have feedback from the beneficiaries of these programs regarding the benefits that they received from them and how these have improved their well-being? Would you have any adverse feedback from them regarding these programs?
 - Some improved but others just wasted their assistance (e.g. did not plant cacao seedlings)
 - Those in big coops are improving because of a lot of support from government, more support is given to those whose lives already improving
 6. If you compare these beneficiaries to other small farmers/fishers whom you know that did not benefit from any of these government programs, would you say they are better or worse off than these beneficiaries? Please elaborate.
 - Yes, situation improved but small groups still need help to access govt assistance
 - The Farmers who were able to access are doing well
 7. Would you say that the programs of government for small farmers/fishers in your province have improved or remained the same before 1997 and in the last 20 years?
 - Konti pa lang ang natutulungan, only 40% reached

Voice in Decision-making

8. What are the functioning official government decision-making bodies in your province where POs are invited to become members before and after 1997? Which of these platforms are the most effective in promoting the active participation of POs?
 - Formerly observer of BAC, regional council of coffee industry, Malaybalay organic farmers group, DTI: active KMME
 - If able to attend meetings, she feels she is heard in meetings
9. Would you know if POs in your province are aware of these platforms? If so,
10. Are you aware who are the POs who are members of these platforms? Do you know of any POs that have been participating in these bodies?

11. Are you aware of how POs participate in these bodies? Would you have feedback from those that are participating in these bodies about their experience in those bodies?
- There are 10 other organizations involved in decision-making
 - Suggestions are heard but priorities are determined by govt agencies, POs only suggest or argue
 - Most favored program is BUB because sector are heard in prioritizing their needs
 - Responsiveness of govt programs is not very high, prioritization favors certain groups (they worked for Coffee center but when project was approved, it was granted to favored groups)
 - Situation of voice in decision-making improved since before (those who are not able to voice out their needs, their lives did not improve only those participating in decision-making are benefiting from govt programs)
 - Not very keen about corruption in govt programs but hears about govt officials create council (in HVC) but it seems only city agriculture are the ones involved in this council – why need to create new groups when there are already existing groups (some beneficiaries are retirees of govt agencies)
12. If you have feedback, do they feel that their opinions and recommendations are being sufficiently recognized in these bodies? Would you know if there have been reforms that have been implemented in these bodies as a result of the intervention of member POs?
13. Would you know what are the strengths and weaknesses of POs in the course of their participation in these bodies?
- Need for sectoral organizing --- organizing is essential because unorganized groups/individuals are not able to access services
 - Impression: about 80% of farmers are organized
 - What govt needs to do to assist in organizing: need to validate information of situation of farmer (how many hills are farmed) --- need to determine who are really genuine farmers so that govt resources are not wasted
 - She feels priorities of small farmers are not heard
14. In your opinion, have these bodies become more effective in promoting participation of POs in the past 25 years? Please explain.
- Need for a dedicated person to attend to sectors' needs --- go direct to farmers
 - Presentations of govt agencies but PSR are not fully aware of result of decisions
15. Are you aware if POs are satisfied with their participation in these bodies?
16. Would you say that these bodies have improved, remained the same, deteriorated in promoting participation of POs in decision-making in your province?

Imelda Esteban
Chair, Former Executive Director – Kaanib Foundation
Former member – RDC X

FOR NGO KII

Access to Services

1. Are you aware of government programs (whether from DA or other agencies) that were delivered to small farmers in your province between the period 1997 to the present?
 - I am not knowledgeable of the programs before, but already have some knowledge of the current programs of DA now.

2. If so, can you enumerate these programs and provide certain details that you know about them?
 - SURE AID - zero interest both for rice and corn farmers
 - Corn farmers - 25K ; 10 yrs term
 - Rice farmers – 15K ; 8 yrs term
 - Food and cash subsidy for marginal corn farmers
 - 5K per farmer for land holding of 1.0 ha. and below only
 - Rice Farmers Financial Assistance
 - 5K per farmer for land holding of 1.0 ha. and below only
 - Rice Resiliency Program
 - Distribution of Fertilizer & seeds for all rice farmers
 - Fertilizer & corn seeds project under the Corn Program of the agency
 - Recipient are selected POs
 - Special Area for Agr'l Dev't. Project (SAAD)
 - Beneficiaries = 50 farmers only
 - Farm inputs & corn seeds
 - 18 ducks for egg laying
 - Provincial Livelihood Program – Fertilizer & corn seeds assistance to corn farmers
 - Farmers with 1 ha. and below
 - 3,774 recipients only
 - Agricultural Credit Policy Council (ACPC)
 - Coops can be a lending conduit – 0 %
 - Coops can be borrower from lending conduit if it does not qualify as lending conduit.
 - Farm & fisheries Clustering & Consolidation (F2C2)
 - DA's provision of farm machineries & post harvest & processing facilities, including transport & logistics. Other technologies will also be provided. This program is to alleviate income of the farmers, but all those mentioned facilities will be channeled to qualified recipients like coops.

 - ACEF -loan for production, low interest (1%), need to fully pay at harvest (can be accessed by indiv)

 - PRDP – transport, trucking, dryer, marketing capital (for organizations), grant but counterpart of 25%, Kape Maramag received 10M, MAPU MPC received 15M (multiple facilities) – but takes long to access, around 2-3 years to release

These are all on-going. But some go through Landbank, some vegetable farmers were able to access but coffee farmers were not successful bec funds have run out (ACEF) --
- benes are selected according to criteria. It is a mix of DA identifying farmers and

farmers applying for funding (but farmers need help bec lots of documentary requirements).

Outreach of programs (Impasug-ong) 80% ---

Basis of grant is based on old list so sometimes benes are already gone

Programs are increasing and benes are increasing but need to improve the system

RSBSA listing is easy enough – listing is efficient naman ---- only during time of Sec Dar but was not being implemented before

3. Would you be personally aware of small farmers/fishers beneficiaries of these programs?
 - Yes, some of them.
4. If so, would you know how the program/s have contributed to improving their well-being? Please provide details and anecdotes, if possible.
 - Some recipients were able to use the proceeds of the program in augmenting their capital, and some were liberated from debt to the traders. However, there are also some farmers who sold the fertilizers & the seeds they got. Some reasons for selling was the untimely distribution, inputs & seeds were distributed when the farmers were already done planting.

ACEF is high impact bec relief from trader --- but depends on farmer (how they will use their borrowed funds)

Traders did not decrease but probably their business declined bec of consolidation of farmers

5. Would you have feedback from the beneficiaries of these programs regarding the benefits that they received from them and how these have improved their well-being? Would you have any adverse feedback from them regarding these programs?
 - Some of the beneficiaries were so appreciative of the program, but some were not lucky enough to be a recipient.
6. If you compare these beneficiaries to other small farmers/fishers whom you know that did not benefit from any of these government programs, would you say they are better or worse off than these beneficiaries? Please elaborate.
 - The programs are not really that promising that we can say those recipient are better off than those who did not become a recipient. The program are not sustainable. Like for the SURE AID, we cannot expect repayment from the farmers anymore since the term were so long. The farmers might forget already they have obligation to repay the Gov't. especially now that we are suffering this pandemic.
7. Would you say that the programs of government for small farmers/fishers in your province have improved or remained the same before 1997 and in the last 20 years?
 - I think it is still the same, just like the masagana 99 program, nothing happened farmers still become indebted. The Samahang Nayons who turned to be Multi-Purpose Cooperative has the thinking that being officers are perpetual. Usually, Samahang Nayons equals the family names of the Chairman or the Managers.

RCEF is not yet being felt by farmers up to now

Voice in Decision-making

8. What are the functioning official government decision-making bodies in your province where POs are invited to become members before and after 1997? Which of these platforms are the most effective in promoting the active participation of POs?

- I think the Local Development Council and the Special bodies.
9. Would you know if POs in your province are aware of these platforms?
 - Yes
 10. Are you aware who are the POs who are members of these platforms? Do you know of any POs that have been participating in these bodies?
 - Yes, different private sectors are members of the LDC
 11. Are you aware of how POs participate in these bodies? Would you have feedback from those that are participating in these bodies about their experience in those bodies?
 - The POs usually are being heard during LDC meetings
 12. If you have feedback, do they feel that their opinions and recommendations are being sufficiently recognized in these bodies? Would you know if there have been reforms that have been implemented in these bodies as a result of the intervention of member POs?
 - In our municipality, the suggestion of the POs are being considered. Selected POs are also members of the economic and environment council.
 13. Would you know what are the strengths and weaknesses of POs in the course of their participation in these bodies?
 - Some POs are not participative in the discussions, maybe because some have lack of knowledge on the topics. Especially for those POs who were hand picked by the local government, those who were just organized for a purpose of getting projects or aid from the local government. But there are POs, those who were already in the development work for sometime that those to participate in the development agenda of the local government. Some POs were already influential, esp those who do not depend on the assistance of the local government.
 14. In your opinion, have these bodies become more effective in promoting participation of POs in the past 25 years? Please explain.
 - For now, I think it is still the best platforms that the POs participation is well recognized. This is the most effective one for now.
 15. Are you aware if POs are satisfied with their participation in these bodies?
 - I think so, for those POs whose participation are true and genuine.
 16. Would you say that these bodies have improved, remained the same, deteriorated in promoting participation of POs in decision-making in your province?
 - POs participation in the municipal level is more enhanced now. But at the provincial level, I think participation of POs depends at the pleasure of the Governor.

Impact of participation – decision-makers preference prevails
 Farmers cannot cope with high level/technical discussions

FOR POs

Access to services

20. Are you aware of government programs (whether from DA or other agencies) that were delivered to small farmers in your province between the period 1997 to the present?
 - Yes, some of the current programs, but I'm not so aware of the programs in 1997.
21. If so, can you enumerate these programs and provide certain details that you know about them?
 - Please refer to No. 2 – access to services
22. Have you/your organization been a beneficiary of these programs? Which program? What were the benefits that you received from these program/s?
 - Not yet, but already have some initial discussions with the agency (DA), its still a work in progress.
23. How did you become a beneficiary of this program/s?
 - Even if we are not yet program beneficiary, but I think the endorsement of the local government will help us to become one. Our relationship with the local government is critical, it will be a make or break. Good relationship with the local government will mean more access and participation to government programs since almost all DA programs need LCE & MAO endorsements.
24. Have these programs where you are beneficiaries contributed to improving your well-being? Please provide details and anecdotes, if possible.
 - Let us see how the program will affect the lives of our beneficiaries when we already get the chance of implementing some.
25. If you compare yourself to other small farmers/fishers in your area who did not become beneficiaries of this program/s, would you say they are better or worse off than you are? In what way?
26. Would you say that the programs of government for small farmers/fishers in your province have improved or remained the same before 1997 and in the last 20 years?

Voice in Decision-making

27. Are you aware of functioning official government decision-making bodies in your province where POs are invited to become members before and after 1997? Which of these platforms are the most effective in promoting the active participation of POs?
28. Have you or know anyone been involved in any of these bodies? If so, which ones?
 - Yes, we are a member of the Local Development Council of Impasugong.
29. Describe how these bodies functioned in promoting your participation in decision-making? Are you or those you know satisfied about your participation in these bodies? Please elaborate.
 - Yes, because when we have suggestions, it is being well taken. Some were implemented.
30. Are you aware of any reforms that have been implemented in these bodies as a result of participation? Please elaborate.
 - In the previous years, selection of representatives to the LDC and local special bodies were a collective decision of the CSO's, each sector has its representative.

31. Would you say are the strengths and weaknesses of POs in the course of their participation in these bodies?
- I think, participation of the POs in the special bodies is very relevant but the selected POs should ensure that they will not be influenced by the Local government. The weakness is if the PO is being influenced by the local government (usually those that has been organized just for the purpose of being a government project recipient).
32. In your opinion, have these bodies become more effective in promoting participation of POs in the past 25 years? Please explain.