



Enhancing Agribusiness Rice Clusters and Market Linkages and Incomes in Northern Uganda (EARMINU)

Project coordinator
Gulu University, Uganda

Project ID RU/MCF/CARP+/2017/02

Partners
National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO)

Chain Uganda

International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR)

Associate Partners
Bobi TVET

Opit and sons rice millers Limited,
Gulu Uganda

Rice Producer Groups (Gulu, Amuru
and Nwoya districts)

Project Duration: 48 months

Start Date: 1st March 2018

Total budget: USD 200,000

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Summary

The Community Action Research Program Plus (CARP+), on agribusiness rice clusters and market linkages, aims to intervene in the rice value chain using a two-pronged approach. On the production and supply side, the project promotes Good Agronomic Practices (GAPs) and post-harvest handling technologies through on-farm demonstrations and learning plots to improve the production and productivity of rice in northern Uganda. The second approach seeks to create vibrant producer organizations and market linkages with various actors for enhanced access to rice output and input markets in the value chain. Therefore, a synergistic combination of the two approaches, is envisaged to result into: improvements in production, productivity and market access for smallholder rice farmers, agribusiness cluster formation to stimulate competitive rice value chain performance, and food security and incomes of actors in northern Uganda. This CARP+ further integrates TVETs and Gulu University in the higher education value chain through students' community outreaches, joint special projects, business plans and entrepreneurship deepening in theory and practice. It is further envisaged that this research will result into diversified product portfolios for human consumption, livestock feeds and energy briquettes. Graded, branded and packaged Rice and broken rice for rice flour and rice noodles will constitute the product portfolio for human consumption. While rice straw will be baled to make hay for animal feeds, and rice husks will be turned into charcoal briquettes to address the challenge of energy for cooking. Therefore, the proposed interventions are foreseen to spur the performance of the rice value chain in northern Uganda to enhance food security and incomes of the direct actors with spill overs and ripple effects to the wider community.

Objectives

The overall objective is to enhance market linkages and drivers of agribusiness rice cluster performance among rice actors for improved food security and incomes in northern Uganda. Specifically the research will be guided by the following objectives:

1. To determine the drivers of adoption of improved technologies (GAPs and PHH) in the rice value chain
2. To determine appropriate market linkages and contractual arrangements for smallholder farmers in the rice value chain
3. To determine the drivers of efficiency of farmer groups/cooperatives and rice millers in the rice value chain
4. To develop products from broken rice and determine their acceptability of among different market segments
5. To improve the nutrient content of rice straw as hay and ascertain its acceptance among zero grazing dairy farmers
6. To assess rice marketing arrangements and support systems (knowledge, markets, gender relations, contracts, etc.) required for innovating in and scaling up of agribusiness rice clusters for sustainable smallholder rice production systems

Target beneficiaries

This action oriented research in the rice value chain seeks to reach out directly and indirectly to 1500 smallholder farmers (SHFs), at least 20 rice millers and other actors in the value chain in Gulu, Amuru and Nwoya districts. In addition, students in Gulu University and Bobi TVET are envisaged to benefit from this action research and along with the youthful counterparts in the communities.

Result area

There are four result areas in this action:

Result Area 1: Functional Rice agribusiness cluster established to deepen and scale the networks and market linkages for the rice value chain actors.





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Result Area 2: Capacity enhancement of the various actors including farmers, traders and processors. Capacity of the students (Gulu University and Bobi TVET) and their youthful counterparts will be strengthened in entrepreneurship and business incubation.

Result Area 3: Adoption of appropriate technologies in production, post-harvest handling and processing of rice and other related products.

Result Area 4: New rice products for human consumption, animal feed and energy briquettes

General activities

- Demonstration on Good Agronomic Practices and Post-harvest handling of rice
- Training in group dynamics, social capital accumulation, social networking and market linkages
- Community Business incubation and coaching sessions
- Product development training targeting broken rice, briquette making, hay bailing and other animal feeds
- Product differentiation, grading and packaging

