



12 April 2018

**Memorandum Order**

No. 11  
Series of 2018

**Subject: Implementing Guidelines for the Farmers Production and Exchange of High Quality Inbred Rice Seeds**

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**I. PROJECT PURPOSE:**

The project aims to help raise small farmers' productivity and income. Specifically, palay farmers who continue to rely on any available poor quality seeds shall be empowered to shift to high quality seeds in an informal farmer production and exchange system. Access to appropriate inbred rice varieties shall also be enhanced and advantages of using high quality seeds shall be imparted.

**II. PROJECT SCOPE:**

A. Project Duration: The project shall start in the Wet Season of 2018 and shall continue up to the Dry Season 2022-23, thus encompassing rice plantings from March 16, 2018 to March 15, 2023,

B. Project Coverage:

1. Location: All 16 regions with rice producing provinces with lesser emphasis in provinces tagged as priority for hybridization,
2. Ecosystem: Irrigated lowland and Rainfed lowland
3. Project Zones: These are generally contiguous rice farms or close patches of rice farms in a municipality that are delineated and mapped by the Regional Field Office (RFO) with the provincial and municipal Local Government Unit (LGU) as dominantly planted to poor quality inbred seeds or mixtures of varieties especially during the Wet Season. These shall be disaggregated into sub-zones as follows for the recommendation of appropriate inbred rice varieties:
  - 3.1, Irrigated - Due to geographical isolation and/or limited resources, majority of farmers still utilize poor quality inbred seeds, at least two rice crops are harvested every year,
  - 3.2, Rainfed Favorable - Rainfed areas with reliable water source due to more or less even distribution of rainfall in the area and/or with available supplemental irrigation thus at least two rice cropping can be realized per year.
  - 3.3, Rainfed Drought-prone - These are areas with unpredictable sources of water wherein rainfall during the crop season is often erratic and no supplemental irrigation is available. Generally only one cropping of rice is raised per year,
  - 3.4, Problem Soil - These are either irrigated or rainfed areas identified as having soil related problems such as salinity or salt-water intrusion, water logged or poor drainage and/or nutrient deficiency or toxicity.

Yield of rice can be increased with planting of high quality seeds of appropriate inbred varieties that are more tolerant to the particular soil stress. Areas wherein deep water flooding regularly occur may also be considered as separate sub-zone.

4. **SEEDEX Clusters:** These are smaller units within the delineated project sub-zones consisting of adjacent farm lots wherein the farmer cultivators agree to participate in the project together.

C. This project has three (3) main components, namely:

1. **Formal Seed System Production and Procurement of Registered Seed (RS):** This component shall ensure adequate production and proper deployment of Registered Seeds required in the project. Production shall be undertaken under the formal seed system.
2. **Farmer Seed Multiplication:** This shall be the role of duly designated farmer seed producers under an informal community based seed system. The designated farmers are trained and assisted to multiply Registered Seeds to quantities of high quality seeds of appropriate inbred varieties for own use and more for exchange with commercial rice producers in the community.
3. **Seeds Exchange and Commercial Rice Production:** This is a system of barter with farmer rice growers exchanging their commercial quality palay (or through other modes ex. cash) with the high quality seed produce of the farmer seed producer. This component shall also provide the commercial rice growers using the high quality seeds adequate knowledge of the inbred rice PalayCheck system and other related production, harvest, post-harvest, storage and marketing technologies and techniques.

D. Project Targets

1. Targets setting starts with Component 3: Seed Exchange and Commercial Rice Production
  - a. By the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) planting season using exchanged seeds, average yield per hectare for a SEEDEX cluster shall be at least 50 percent higher than the baseline.
  - b. By the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) planting season using exchanged seeds, average cost of production per kilogram of dry palay in a SEEDEX cluster shall be at least 25 percent lower than the baseline.
  - c. Baseline data for average yield and product cost per kilogram will be determined at the start of the first (1<sup>st</sup>) commercial rice planting season using exchanged seeds. In case of two (2) plantings per crop year, the baseline yield and cost shall be determined for each planting. The resulting average yield and cost at the harvest of each planting season shall be monitored and recorded.
  - d. Commercial plantings thru SEEDEX using exchanged seeds shall cover at least 1.5 million hectares harvested area at the end of the project. The target area harvested by crop season per calendar and crop year aggregated at the national level will be finalized as soon as the FY 2019 National Expenditure Program (NEP) of the National Rice Program is released.

- e. Target for trainings and briefings on inbred rice Palay Check per season and per calendar and crop year will be scheduled by the respective implementers.

2. Targets for Component 2; Farmer Seed Multiplication:

- a. Production of clean and dry High Quality Seeds per hectare planted to Registered Seeds shall target more or less 3,000 kilograms.
- b. Quality wise, the target in High Quality Seed production shall be to attain standards approximating Certified Seeds (CS) as to varietal and physical purity, moisture content and germination percentage for at least 80 percent of the SEEDEX farmer seed producers output per season.
- c. The target quantity to be produced in a planting or crop season shall be at least 150 percent of the requirement for High Quality Seeds for commercial rice production in a cluster. The quantity of High Quality Seeds needed per hectare is assumed to be 80 kilograms.
- d. The national total of High Quality Seeds needed per planting or season and per crop year shall be finalized this year.
- e. Training or briefings on High Quality Seeds production, harvest, and post harvest and storage technologies, techniques and standards per year will be scheduled starting this wet season planting.

3. Targets for Component 1: Formal Seed System Production and Procurement of Registered Seeds:

- a. For the production of Registered Seeds, the target shall be more or less 3,000 kilograms per hectare.
- b. Target hectares to be planted to Foundation Seeds (FS) per current season shall be the total Registered Seeds requirement for the next season of the Farmer Seed Multiplication component with 20 percent allowance. Registered Seeds requirement is 40 kilograms per hectare.
- c. National aggregated target Registered Seeds requirement per planting or season and per crop year shall be finalized this year.
- d. Procurement and distribution targets of Registered Seeds by the DA-RFOs per season and crop year aggregated at national level will be scheduled up to the end of the project duration. DA RFOs may produce part or all of the needed Registered Seeds thus budget may have to be adjusted from procurement to production.

**III. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION:**

A. Prioritization of Areas,

- 1. The prioritization shall be done within 2018 and may be modified in 2019 and shall be the basis for annual phasing of the start in implementation among the provinces in a region. By 2020, implementation shall already be in all provinces identified as part of the project.
- 2. Rice producing provinces in a region shall be treated as equal priority or ranked in order of priority using DA- RFO set criteria. However, in case there are provinces in a region tagged in 2018 and 2019 as priority for hybridization, such provinces shall be ranked as lower priority.
- 3. The DA RFO shall also set the criteria and system for prioritizing municipalities and barangays. Again, the priority rankings shall be the basis

for phasing the start of implementation in a municipality and barangay among all the municipalities in a province and among all the barangays in a municipality. For barangays with large rice areas, prioritization may even be undertaken at *sitio* or *purok* level.

4. SEEDEX project zones consist of areas generally planted to inbred varieties. Purposively targeted as priority are the less accessible rice areas where yield levels are comparatively much lower and rice-farming families are generally poorer.

B. Organizing SEEDEX Task Forces.

1. The Director of Field Operations Service (FOS) shall head the SEEDEX National Task Force. Members shall be from Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI), PhilRice, Agricultural Training Institute (ATI), DA- Planning and Monitoring Service (PMS), DA-Financial and Management Service (FMS) and DA-Information and Communications Technology Service (ICTS). The FPOPD Chief shall head the secretariat of the National Task Force.
2. The Regional Technical Director (RTD) for Operations shall head the Regional Task Force together with the Regional Rice Focal Person and Regional Seed Coordinator with heads of concerned PhilRice Branch Stations, BPI- National Seed Quality Control Services (NSQCS) laboratory, ATI center and the Provincial Agriculturist of participating provinces as members. The Field Operations Division shall head the task force secretariat.
3. The Provincial Task Force shall be led by the Provincial Agriculturist and with representatives from the DA RFO Agricultural Program Coordinating Officer (APCO), BPI NSQCS, ATI and the Municipal Agriculturists of participating municipalities as members.
4. The Municipal Agriculturist shall lead the Municipal Task Force. The RFO, depending on the availability of human resources, may assign a technical staff per cluster of municipalities (district) to support the Agricultural Extension Workers (AEWs) and Local Farmer Technicians (LFTs) on the Municipal Task Forces.

C. Establishing and organizing the SEEDEX Clusters:

1. Establishing and organizing the SEEDEX clusters shall be the responsibility of the Municipal Task Force. The process shall be monitored and supported by the Regional and Provincial Task Forces.
2. Starting with the target coverage for the 2018 Wet Season, organizing of farm clusters shall be continuously undertaken until all project zones are fully covered by the end of 2020. Clustered SEEDEX farms should be geographically contiguous or proximate but confined within a specific municipality. Size shall be variable with the minimum and maximum to be agreed by the Regional Task Force members considering both aggregate hectares and number of farmer cultivators.
3. Organization of SEEDEX clusters shall include project briefing, master listing of cluster members and choosing the cluster head farmer. The seed exchange mechanisms, arrangements and processes should already be formulated and agreed at this early stage.

- D. Formal Seed System Production and Procurement for Registered Seed (RS):
1. This component shall be undertaken under the formal seed system with PhilRice, BPI, and DA-RFOs jointly responsible. BPI shall be the designated national coordinator for this component.
  2. The DA-RFO Regional Seed Coordinator (RSC) shall coordinate this component at the regional level. The LGU Provincial Seed Coordinator (PSC) shall work with the RSC in ensuring adequate Registered Seeds needs of the project in the province.
  3. Only NSIC-registered varieties shall be produced/procured and deployed under this project. Appropriate varieties for a particular season and location shall be recommended. Farmers' choice may be considered, taking in account the standard government procurement rules and regulations. For 2018, in view of the short lead-time to ensure availability of Registered Seeds of the preferred varieties, the project shall be more flexible as to varieties to be deployed. Starting in Wet Season of 2019, the project shall be more responsive to localized variety recommendations.
  4. Planting of Foundation Seeds:
    - a. Generally the Foundation Seed (FS) of varieties for procurement of Registered Seeds shall be planted one (1) crop season ahead of the targeted deployment and planting season of the SEEDEX Cluster.
    - b. In case the period between harvesting, processing and seed quality control cum certification as the Registered Seed is too tight for timely deployment, the Foundation Seeds shall be planted two (2) seasons ahead of the required season by the SEEDEX farmer seed producer.
    - c. In case the period between the harvest of High Quality Seeds by the farmer seed producer and the planting by the SEEDEX cluster commercial rice producers is very short, the Foundation Seeds of desired varieties may need to be planted three (3) seasons ahead of the season that the Registered Seeds is needed by the Farmer seed producer so that the High Quality Seeds shall be harvested two (2) seasons ahead on when this shall be planted by the commercial rice producer of the cluster.
  5. The DA RFO shall deploy these needed Registered Seeds to the SEEDEX clusters at least one (1) month before the target planting date by the farmer seed grower/s.
  6. Specially accredited rice seed growers including government agencies like DA RFOs, SUCs, LGUs and PhilRice shall be tapped as producers and suppliers of Registered Seeds. BPI shall issue the special accreditation upon recommendation of the DA Regional Executive Director.
- E. Farmer Seed Multiplication:
1. The BPI and PhilRice with the Regional Seed Coordinator and the Provincial Seed Coordinator shall coordinate seed production up to Registered Seed class to ensure availability of preferred varieties to clusters nationwide.
  2. The designated Municipal Seed Inspector shall coordinate this component at the Municipal and cluster level with coordination from the BPI NSQCS of the province/region.
  3. High Quality Seed production shall be undertaken by the duly designated SEEDEX farmer seed producers.

4. The SEEDEX Cluster head farmer, after consulting general membership, shall nominate one or several member/s to be farmer seed producer/s for the cluster to the Regional Task Force. Number of nominees shall depend on total area to be planted for the seed requirement of the cluster. The nominations shall be sequentially submitted thru the Municipal and Provincial Task Forces who are to validate that nominees meet agreed qualifications.
5. The Regional Task Force shall issue a temporary designation upon receipt of nomination of the said farmer seed producer. The official designation shall be issued only when nominees successfully completed the seed production briefing/ training. The designation of a farmer seed producer shall be valid for three years, subject to the evaluation of performance after every end of season.
6. A farmer seed producer may be replaced before the expiration of the designation depending on the criteria set by the Regional Task Force. Likewise, the Regional Task Force may renew the designation after three years, subject to conditions to be specified.
7. More members can be eventually designated depending on the seed requirement of the cluster.
8. A designated farmer seed producer may enroll all or just part of his rice growing area within the cluster coverage provided that minimum area shall be one fourth (1/4) of a hectare and maximum of three (3) hectares per individual producer. The enrolled area shall always be fully used for seed production every season.
9. Only duly designated farmer seed producer shall be provided with Registered Seeds as grant from DA.
10. Technical training/briefing of SEEDEX farmer seed producers shall be undertaken by tandem of trainers assigned by the RFO. PhilRice and BPI shall be responsible for the capability enhancement/training of selected trainers.
11. The RFO, thru the Municipal Task Force, shall require clusters to rank, in order of preference, the five (5) nationally recommended NSIC-inbred varieties. Other preferred NSIC-inbred varieties shall be determined for each cluster for a specific season.
12. RFO deployment of Registered Seeds to be planted by farmer seed producers shall be thru the Municipal Task Force at a rate of 40 kg per hectare. Deployment to SEEDEX clusters shall be jointly undertaken with the Provincial and Municipal Agriculture Offices.
13. As much as possible, only a single variety shall be produced for the whole cluster for a particular season. If two (2) or more varieties are planted for the High Quality Seed requirement of the cluster commercial rice producer in a season, as much as possible, the varieties should have very similar maturity date and grain physical characteristics.
14. For the seed requirement in the 2018 Wet Season, 2018-19 Dry Season and 2019 Wet Season, this shall be determined during the organizing of the clusters in the first semester of 2018.
15. Subsequently, determining the cluster preferred NSIC-registered inbred variety shall be done at least 2 seasons ahead of the planting season for the Registered Seeds to be made available to the farmer seed producer.

16. Technical guidance and monitoring of farmer seed producers from land preparation to post harvest processing and storage shall be provided by and thru the Municipal Task Force.
17. A Seed Quality Assurance Team shall be constituted from among the members of this task force plus two from among the SEEDEX cluster members. BPI-NSQCS shall brief the Seed Quality Assurance Team on high quality seeds standards and quality assurance test and inspection procedures. Quality assurance shall be done primarily for enhancing the capability of farmer seed producers rather than as a mechanism for regulation.

F. Cluster Seed Exchange and Commercial Rice Production:

1. The SEEDEX Task Forces, at various levels, shall be responsible for the facilitation and monitoring of the seeds-commercial palay exchange process with the Municipal Task Force overseeing the activities at individual cluster level.
2. The seed exchange mechanisms, arrangements and processes earlier agreed when the cluster was organized should be firmed up just before the first season harvest. The rate of exchange of commercial palay with seeds or cash should be agreed just before the farmer seed producer accepted the nomination.

In case the exchange will be in the form of cash, the amount to be exchanged should be equivalent to the buying price of the agreed volume of commercial palay at the time of harvest,

3. The seed exchange rate should effectively encourage the farmer seed producer to have high quality seeds available to members but at the same time this should be sufficiently enticing to commercial rice producers in the cluster. Equivalent cost of the seeds should at least approximate what the farmer member used to spend either in cash or in kind for his poor quality seeds previously being used. On the other hand, the cost equivalent should be less than the price of tagged Certified seeds that can be bought elsewhere in the area.
4. High Quality Seed produced by SEEDEX farmer seed producers may be exchange or sold outside the cluster only after fully satisfying the requirements of commercial rice producers in the cluster.
5. The SEEDEX Municipal Task Forces shall conduct briefing of cluster rice farmers on appropriate location specific rice production technologies.

G. Monitoring and Evaluation:

1. The National SEEDEX Task Force with DA ICTS shall establish an electronic information and reporting system possibly from the cluster to the national level. The impact pathway shall be established and intermediate and final target outcomes shall be agreed upon.

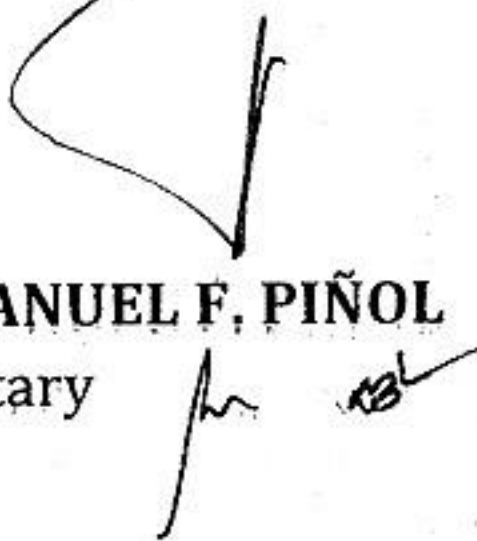
**IV. OTHER GUIDELINES:**

1. The HYTA-IBD maybe superimposed on organized clusters for the Wet Season of 2018 only. This can temporarily take the place of the Seed

Exchange and Commercial Rice Production component to have an earlier introduction to the use of High Quality Seeds to cluster members. The guidelines for High Yield Technology Adoption - Inbred Simple Seed Subsidy (HYTA-IBD SSS) shall be followed.

2. Modified Inbred Rice Model Farms (IBDMF) may be superimposed within large SEEDEX clusters. The seed requirement shall come from seed exchange but other inputs shall be provided as grant. Other guidelines for IBDMF shall be followed.
3. Establishment of Cluster seed storage as common facility may be looked into for short-term storage of "active" seeds and longer storage of cluster seed reserve.
4. Clusters may be provided other related assistance for the seed and commercial rice production. This may include facilitation of credit and crop insurance coverage even with the usage of untagged High Quality Seeds by the SEEDEX commercial rice growers.
5. Information campaign and advocacy shall be the responsibility of the task forces at national and regional levels with the assistance of the information units of the DA at those levels.
6. The DA-RFOs and DAF-ARMM can formulate supplemental guidelines to address peculiar needs and situations in their regions. Such supplemental guidelines shall require prior approval of the National Rice Program Coordinator.

This Memorandum Order shall take effect upon approval and shall remain valid until revoked in writing.

  
**EMMANUEL F. PIÑOL**  
Secretary

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
  
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