



Republic of the Philippines
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Elliptical Road, Diliman
1100 Quezon City

MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR

No. 42

Series of 2020

SUBJECT: IMPLEMENTING GUIDELINES FOR THE URBAN AGRICULTURE PROGRAM UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11494 OR THE "BAYANIHAN TO RECOVER AS ONE ACT"

Republic Act No. 11494 or the "Bayanihan to Recover as One Act" (Bayanihan II) was enacted to promote a just and dynamic social order that will ensure the prosperity and independence of the nation and free the people from poverty particularly in the aftermath of natural and man-made disasters. The established mechanisms under the said Act likewise aim to accelerate the recovery and bolster the resilience of the Philippine economy through measures grounded on economic inclusivity and collective growth through fiscal sustainability.

Under the Bayanihan II, the Department of Agriculture's (DA) Agriculture Stimulus Package includes productivity enhancement projects. One of the said projects is the Urban Agriculture (UA) Program. To implement the UA Program under the Bayanihan II, this Memorandum Circular is hereby issued.

Section 1. OBJECTIVES

With the implementation of the UA Program in urban areas, the issue on mismatch of where the crops are produced and where huge demand for consumption is concentrated, shall be resolved. The program further aims to establish a resilient food system, specifically during the COVID-19 crisis, through Urban Farming that would ensure the following:

- a. Food accessibility and availability by growing food in areas close to urban area dwellers;
- b. Promotion of urban farming and innovative agricultural practices;
- c. Collaboration among Local Government Units (LGUs), National Government Agencies (NGAs), and other interested stakeholders;
- d. Promotion of healthy consumption of vegetables; and
- e. Provision of alternative source of income for urban farmers.

Section 2. DEFINITION OF TERMS. As used herein,

- a. *Beneficiary* refers to the selected individuals or group of individuals living in an urban area to include, but not limited to, members of households, students, out-of-school youth, and senior citizens.

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- b. *Community garden* refers to the land cultivated by a group of individuals and planted with various high value crops as defined under Republic Act No. 7900 or the "High Value Crops Development Act of 1995", and with crops declared as such by the DA Secretary.
- c. *Mushroom Production* involves the process of producing food and other products by the cultivation of mushrooms in some type of organic substance such as ground wood chips, hay and compost or leaves.
- d. *Urban Agriculture* refers to food production that occurs in urban areas. Such production takes place in backyards, on rooftops, in community vegetable and fruit gardens or on unused or public spaces. It includes commercial operations that produce food in greenhouses and on open spaces.
- e. *Urban areas* refer to areas in the National Capital Region (NCR) and all other areas falling under any of the following categories pursuant to Philippine Statistics Authority Board Resolution No. 1, series of 2017:

Category 1 - Barangays with a population size of 5,000 or more, or

Category 2 - Barangays with at least one establishment with a minimum of 100 employees, or

Category 3 - Barangays with five or more establishments with 10 to 99 employees, and five or more facilities within the two-kilometer radius from the barangay hall. These facilities are as follows: municipal/city hall or provincial capitol; church, chapel or mosque where religious services are held at least once a month; public/town plaza or park for recreation; cemetery; market place or building where trading activities are carried out at least once a week; public school buildings (elementary, high school, and college/university); hospital, puericulture center, barangay health center/station or clinic; fire station or public fire protection services; seaport in operation; community waterworks system; post office or postal service; landline telephone system or calling station; cellular phone signal; and public street sweeper.

Section 3. PROGRAM COMPONENTS

a. Urban Mushroom Production

Mushroom culture has been gaining popularity in the Philippines and the demand continuously increases locally and abroad. It is suitable for growing in limited spaces, can be grown whole year round, and is also effective in utilizing wastes abundant in urban areas such as coffee grinds, sawdust, woodchip and compost.

Under this component, it is aimed that a facility be established as a reliable source of food in identified areas. The following will be provided under this component:

1. Distribution of mushroom bags;
2. Provision of sterilizing drums and other production equipment;

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3. Establishment of mushroom house (see attached sample design), if necessary;
4. Provision of processing and packaging equipment (fryers, vacuum sealer); and
5. Other relevant and necessary inputs and support services.

b. Establishment of Community Gardens

Under this component, community gardens shall be established, preferably in poverty-stricken communities or barangays to be identified by the LGU.

The project will focus on producing lowland vegetables such as, but not limited to, eggplant, tomato, okra, stringbeans and legumes such as mungbean, moringa, rootcrops and fruit trees like calamansi and guava, or highland vegetables, if suitable. The project shall contribute in addressing malnutrition and promoting a healthy lifestyle in the community.

The following shall be provided under this program component:

1. Distribution of seeds, seedlings and farm inputs;
2. Provision of garden tools;
3. Farm machineries (multi-cultivator, irrigation system etc.);
4. Establishment of crop museums for seed conservation; and/or
5. Other relevant and necessary inputs and support services.

c. Modernization of UA

UA has been considered as a relevant component of food production systems in urban areas, and adoption of modern technologies had been established to highly contribute to increased, efficient, and sustainable food production.

Accordingly, establishment of facilities adopting modern technologies such as, but not limited to, the following are hereby authorized:

1. Greenhouses

Greenhouse farming is the use of technology for crops in framed or inflated structures covered with translucent or transparent materials that are large enough to grow crops under partial or fully controlled environmental conditions to get optimum growth and productivity.

2. Vertical Farming

Vertical farming is a means of urban food production that grows crops vertically, either stacked in layers, shelves, or modified pallets against walls. It is usually combined with techniques like hydroponics in a climate-controlled environment. The major benefit is the ability to produce more food in a tighter/limited space, especially in urban areas like the NCR where space cost is high. It aims to produce high quality, locally grown and safe food with lowest possible footprint.

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3. Hydroponics

Hydroponics is any system for growing plants without the use of soil. Instead, nutrients are added to water that plants are immersed in, or that regularly washes over the roots of the plants. This technology can be used in growing tomatoes, herbs and leafy vegetables. Gravel, perlite, or other materials can be used to provide more physical support for the plants. Since water in hydroponics systems is recycled and reused, it can save on water usage for growing crops. It can also be coupled/combined with fish farming which is called as Aquaponics system.

In addition to the facilities, the following inputs and support services shall likewise be provided:

1. Provision of seeds, seedlings and farm inputs;
2. Technical assistance in the operation and maintenance;
3. Capacity building and livelihood training;
4. Marketing assistance, if needed; and
5. Other related and necessary support.

Section 4. RESPONSIBILITIES

In the implementation of UA Program, the following DA offices shall have the following responsibilities:

- a. The DA-High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP) shall serve as the oversight office.
- b. The DA-Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) shall:
 1. serve as the lead coordinating and implementing unit in the NCR, except Caloocan and Quezon City;
 2. assist the LGU in site identification;
 3. ensure that the beneficiary has the legal right in the urban area where the facilities as provided herein shall be established;
 4. in coordination and collaboration with the DA-Agricultural Training Institute (ATI), it shall provide technical assistance for the UA implementation; and
 5. ensure the availability of good quality seeds and seedlings.
- c. The ATI shall likewise provide training support and establish technology demonstration for extension support services. It shall also serve as the implementing agency of UA in Caloocan and Quezon City.
- d. The DA-Regional Field Offices (RFOs) - High Value Crops Development Program shall serve as the lead implementing office in their respective regions, prepare and implement regional plans and conduct regular monitoring and evaluation of UA projects.

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- e. The DA-Bureau of Agricultural and Fisheries Engineering (BAFE), subject to its existing guidelines, shall provide technical assistance in site evaluation, project design and feasibility, and in the operation and maintenance of the facility.

They shall likewise perform such other functions as may be assigned by the Secretary.

Section 5. MONITORING

A Program Monitoring Committee in the Central Office is hereby created. It shall be chaired by the Undersecretary in charge of high value crops, with the BPI Director as Vice Chair. It shall have such membership composed of representatives from each responsible agency or office as members, who shall be appointed by the Secretary. Its function is to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the UA Program as provided herein.

A similar Committee may be created by the Regional Executive Directors (RED) in their respective region to be chaired by the RED or his alternate with a rank of Assistant Director.

A UA Program Implementation Quarterly Report shall be prepared by the Committee which shall be submitted to the Secretary.

Section 6. PROGRAM PARTNERS AND BENEFICIARIES

The BPI, ATI and DA-RFOs being the coordinator and implementor of the UA Program, shall prepare the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Agreement (MOA) to be entered into by and between the implementing office and the identified beneficiaries. Copies of the said Memorandum of Understanding or Agreement as certified by the head of the implementing agency or office, shall be sent to the Office of the Secretary and the Undersecretary for High Value Crops within ten (10) days from the signing thereof. The MOA shall necessarily include the rights of the DA to terminate the MOU or the MOA and repossess any agricultural machinery, equipment, facilities or any other property delivered to the beneficiary, transfer the management or operations of such intervention, or demand the refund of any fund transferred, as the case may be.

In case of establishment of facilities or permanent structure, the DA should secure documents establishing the legal right of the beneficiaries to use the property where the facility or structure shall be built.

The beneficiaries are those in urban areas that are willing to collaborate as a partner and beneficiary of the UA Program, such as:

1. Barangays and their cities or municipalities;
2. Basic Education Schools;
3. Private and State Universities and Colleges;
4. Non-Government Organizations; or
5. Government Institutions.

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Program partners shall provide counterpart in the form of technical and financial assistance for the operation, repair and maintenance of the facility to ensure continuity and sustainability of the UA Program sites for the succeeding years. They shall also establish a scheme to ensure that the produce will be utilized for community feeding programs (community kitchen), and that the facility is accessible to the community and/or is income generating.

Each partner municipality or city where the urban areas are located, with UA Projects under Bayanihan II shall submit to the Program Monitoring Committee reports of sales and harvest every quarter, or earlier as may be required. A project status report template shall be provided for uniformity.

Section 7. IMPLEMENTATION SCHEME

- a. Site identification, validation and evaluation;
- b. Forging of partnership thru Memorandum of Understanding or Agreement;
- c. Conduct of training and capability building;
- d. Establishment of production facilities and provision of farm inputs and machineries;
- e. Management and operation; and
- f. Monitoring, assessment, and submission of quarterly report.

Section 8. OVERSIGHT

The Office of the Secretary through the Office of the Undersecretary in charge of high value crops shall have oversight functions in the implementation of the UA Program.

Section 9. BUDGET

The UA Program funding shall be sourced from the Bayanihan II allotment for the HVCDP.

To sustain this UA Program, the UA implementing offices may allocate supplementary funds for its various activities. This will cover the conduct of trainings and meetings, provision of agricultural inputs, field monitoring, incentives and performance awards.

Section 10. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

The implementation of this Program may be subject to the relevant and applicable existing guidelines, rules or regulations of the implementing offices stated herein. It shall likewise be subject to the accounting and auditing rules and regulations of the Commission on Audit and to such other applicable laws and issuances.

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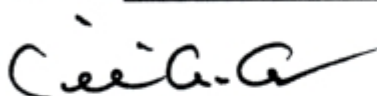
The RFOs, whenever necessary, may likewise issue supplementary guidelines for the local or regional implementation of the UA Program, provided that they are not inconsistent with this Memorandum Circular. The Office of the Secretary and the Undersecretary for High Value Crops and Rural Credit shall be furnished a copy of the said supplementary guidelines within ten (10) days from the issuance thereof.

All other agencies of the DA are enjoined to provide their full cooperation and support to the UA Program in ensuring its success.

Section 11. EFFECTIVITY

This Memorandum Circular shall take effect immediately upon its approval and following its publication as provided under existing laws. Any other issuances or parts thereof inconsistent herewith are deemed superseded, revoked, or modified accordingly.

Done this 11th of December, 2020.



WILLIAM D. DAR, Ph.D
Secretary

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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