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Philippines: Agrarian Reform
Infrastructure Support Project—Making Agrarian Reform Work

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Executive Summary

The majority of the Filipinos who live in the countryside are poor. Poverty and oppression brought about by inequality in land tenure relationships and lack of state support for agriculture has led to rural unrest and mass migration to urban centers. Agrarian reform has been seen as a key state intervention that would reduce poverty by redistributing wealth and transform rural areas into centers of equity-led economic growth by ensuring investments in agriculture. This became the goal of the Agrarian Reform Infrastructure Support Project (ARISP); the impact it has created in creating a better life for thousands of Filipino farmers has made it one of the most effective poverty reduction programs in the Philippines today.

Agrarian reform and implementation

ARISP was the first Japanese official development assistance (ODA) loan assistance that supported the implementation of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP). Agrarian reform—as a national policy instrument used to bring about social justice, poverty reduction, and rural development—has been on the government agenda for many years. Despite the difficulties and obstacles the program encountered in previous years, it gained ground during the Ramos administration (1992–98). During this period, the distribution of private and public agricultural lands to farmer beneficiaries accelerated and the Agrarian Reform Communities (ARC) strategy was launched. The ARC strategy focused limited
resources for agricultural production support to clusters of villages that had already undergone the land reform process, thus maximizing impact and serving as models for agrarian reform.

ARISP provided infrastructure support such as irrigation, farm-to-market roads, and post-harvest facilities to farmer beneficiaries in 76 ARCs nationwide. Institutional development support was given to the farmers’ associations, irrigators’ associations, and cooperatives by tapping the expertise that development nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) had in community organizing. By the end of the project in 2002, 78 communal irrigation projects and systems in more than 14,000 hectares of land, 45 post-harvest facilities, and more than 400 kilometers of farm-to-market roads had been constructed; 76 farmers’ associations had also been strengthened. These inputs have resulted in a 125-percent increase in the size of irrigated areas, a 113-percent improvement in cropping intensity, a 10-percent decrease in post-harvest losses, and a 97-percent increase in average production yields. In terms of the farmers’ institutions, membership increased by 19 percent, capital build-up increased by 36 percent, and savings increased by 21 percent.

**Project impact and political will**

Translated to project impact among farmer beneficiaries, ARISP has caused productivity to increase between 35 percent and 64 percent; more importantly, incomes of farmer beneficiaries have increased from a low of 60 percent to a high of 227 percent. The message these results send cannot be overemphasized. The impact of agrarian reform in improving the plight of poor farmers has always been in doubt and under fire, especially from opponents of the program. ARISP showed that by providing land and agricultural support services, farmers can pull themselves out of the quagmire of poverty.

The political will of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), its efforts at energizing the organization, and its strategy of winning back the public constituents of agrarian reform provided the favorable environment that boosted the implementation of ARISP. Institutionalizing community and civil society participation and re-educating the bureaucracy for community-based development work were institutional innovations that became driving forces of the project. The extensive use of government inter-agency collaborative mechanisms helped solve problems encountered and allowed the tapping of other government resources and technical expertise. But what really differentiated ARISP from any other
ordinary infrastructure project was the heavy involvement in the project of beneficiaries and civil society groups. They were seen not as mere project implementers but as major stakeholders of the project. That has made the difference.

**Scaling up**

The success of ARISP has led to the scaling up of the program through the launching of complementary and similar programs within DAR and the implementation of a second phase. To complement the production credit requirements of ARISP ARCs, DAR and the Land Bank of the Philippines—with the support of JBIC—launched the Rural Farmers and Agrarian Reform Support Credit Program with more than 2 billion pesos of credit extended to farmer beneficiaries nationwide. Following this was the Mindanao Sustainable Settlements Development Program, another program launched by DAR and JBIC using ARISP’s salient features. Currently DAR is undertaking an ARISP Phase 2 program, amounting to 6.7 billion pesos in 150 ARCs covering about 43,000 hectares of land and benefiting an additional 99,000 farmer beneficiaries.

**Features, strategies, and lessons learned**

ARISP’s salient features and successful strategies have been adopted and replicated in the other ODA programs and projects of DAR. This has now amounted to more than 40 billion pesos providing support to thousands of agrarian reform beneficiaries nationwide. More importantly, ARISP has shown that production yields and incomes of farmers will increase if they are given the essential ingredients for development: land to till, agricultural support to make their lands productive and crops marketable, and community institutions that are strong and sustainable. In the case of the Philippines, ARISP has shown that agrarian reform works.
Implementation Process

Historical and Social Context

The importance of the impact of the Agrarian Reform Infrastructure Support Project (ARISP) must be understood within the context of the Philippine agrarian reform program. To assess and view it as an ordinary stand-alone project would be inadequate. ARISP was implemented amidst a social reform process that had been an arena of struggle for farmers and peasants for a number of decades. ARISP was a program that provided an answer to the emotionally charged question that the opponents and proponents of agrarian reform have continued to ask: Does agrarian reform work?

The opponents of agrarian reform, in particular the landed class, have often argued that cutting-up land into small pieces is not economically viable because the farmers are not prepared to make such lands productive. They view the agrarian reform program as a waste of the resources of the state. The proponents of agrarian reform on the other hand, in particular the farmers and NGO activists, argue that agrarian reform has been a long delayed social justice measure that when implemented will not only restore the dignity of the farmer but also unleash his/her productive resources and skills. Proponents of agrarian reform maintain that the state plays a major role in the implementation of agrarian reform and must therefore allocate substantial resources for it.

The meaning of agrarian reform has gone beyond mere distribution of land to landless farmers. In the Philippine context it has included the provision of support services such as credit, infrastructure, agriculture extension and marketing and the strengthening of the farmers associations and institutions. The assumption is that given these full ranges of interventions the farmers and their families have better chances of improving the quality of their lives. Farmers who are prosperous spur rural development thus making an excellent case for agrarian reform. It is within this milieu therefore that ARISP can claim to have contributed to the advancement of agrarian reform in the Philippines.
To better understand the social and political context in which ARISP was undertaken it is perhaps important to know the history of agrarian reform in the Philippines and how it has reached its current state.

Attempts to implement agrarian reform in the past have been weak and inadequate. Policies and programmes were implemented by various administrations to quell peasant unrest. More significantly, there was no attempt to encourage peasant participation in the implementation of agrarian reform. A 1985 Ministry of Agrarian Reform report showed that in a 42-year period only 99,000 hectares of land were covered and given to some 52,000 beneficiaries. Olano (2002), in the article entitled “The Role of Peasants’ Organizations in Managing Agrarian Conflict” cites factors that led to the failure of previous programs.

A major factor is the lack of political will on the part of the government to implement a genuine and comprehensive agrarian reform. The land reform programmes were not meant to radically alter the prevailing oppressive and unjust agricultural structure. Rather, they were used as quick-fix solutions to political problems, such as neutralizing agrarian unrest sporadically occurring in Luzon, or as means to rob political rivals of their economic base, as in the case of President Marcos.

Past programmes have also been limited in terms of coverage of agricultural land types, in particular to tenanted rice and corn lands. The programmes focused on tenancy regulation and resettlement. Some owners of vast rice and corn lands changed the crops planted in their farms in order to evade the programme. The limitation has also excluded the large tracts of coconut lands and sugar haciendas where most of the poorest farm workers can be found.

The agencies created to carry out the programmes were generally inefficient and lacked adequate funding. Magsaysay’s Land Tenure Administration was able to expropriate only less than 20,000 ha after six years, and the National Land Settlement Administrations accomplished only 6,000 ha during the Commonwealth period.

On 10 June 1988, President Corazon Aquino signed into law Republic Act (RA) 6657, otherwise known as the CARP. There were diverse reactions to Republic Act 6657. Positions among peasants’
groups ranged from outright and total rejection to uncompromising acceptance of the law. It is clear, however, that CARP was an improvement over previous laws for the following reasons:

- **Coverage and schedule of implementation** – CARP covers all public and private agricultural lands, regardless of tenurial arrangement and commodity produced. The distribution of these lands shall be implemented and completed within 10 years from effectivity of the law;

- **Retention and distribution limits** – retention by the landowners shall not exceed 5 ha and 3 ha to each qualified child of the landowner. Qualified farmer beneficiaries, on the other hand, may own not more than 3 ha of land;

- **Qualified beneficiaries** – lands shall be distributed to landless residents of the same village or municipality subject to the following priority: (a) agricultural lessees and share tenants; (b) regular farm workers; (c) seasonal farm workers; (d) other farm workers; (e) actual tillers or occupants of public lands; (f) collective and cooperatives of beneficiaries; (g) others directly working on the land;

- **Determination of just compensation to the landowner** – factors considered are: the cost of acquisition of the land, current value of like properties, its nature, actual use and income, the sworn valuation by the owner, the tax declarations, and the assessment made by government assessors. The Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) shall compensate the landowner in cash and in bonds;

- **Payment by beneficiaries** – lands awarded shall be paid for by the beneficiaries to the LBP in 30 annual amortizations at 6 per cent interest per annum. Payments for the first three to five years may be reduced and should not exceed 5 per cent of the value of the annual gross production;

- **Support services to the beneficiaries** – farmer beneficiaries shall be provided with the following support services: (a) land surveys and titling; (b) liberalized terms on credit facilities and production loans; (c) extension services by way of planting, cropping, production and post-harvest technology transfer, as well as marketing and management assistance and support to cooperatives and farmers’ organizations; (d) infrastructure, such as access trails, mini-dams, public utilities, marketing and storage facilities; and (e) research, production and use of organic fertilizers and other local substances necessary in farming and cultivation.
By December 2002, DAR had already distributed 3.2 million hectares of agricultural land to 1.8 million agrarian reform beneficiaries. This represents 75 percent of the total coverage of CARP. Through CARP, thousands of farmers were transformed from tenants or agricultural workers to actual landholders.

CARP is a program intended to support agriculture, an important sector in the Philippine economy. Majority of Filipinos still depend on agriculture and related activities for their income and livelihood. The sector, however, is beset with problems of low productivity due to inefficient and inadequate production facilities, lack of capital, poor technology, and undeveloped market infrastructure. Added to this are problems related to the growing international trade liberalization, global competition, and advancements in information technology. Thus as a concrete strategy to boost agricultural production DAR embarked on the Agrarian Reform Communities (ARC) strategy.

In 1993, DAR launched the Agrarian Reform Community approach to the development of farmer beneficiaries. The approach aims to concentrate the efforts of the Department in support services delivery in selected areas rather than dispersing the delivery of services. The ARC was a way of fast-tracking the improvement of farm productivity.

As defined, an ARC is, at the minimum, a barangay (village) or a cluster of contiguous barangays wherein a critical mass of farmers and farm workers are awaiting the full implementation of agrarian reform. To attain this, DAR develops the capabilities of farmers in the ARCs to become efficient agricultural producers and entrepreneurs. The aim is to make them self-sufficient, able to compete effectively in local markets, and ultimately, capable of competing in the world market. This is done by introducing training programs and providing basic support services such as credit assistance and infrastructure facilities, among others.

ARCs were selected among the targets for agrarian reform with the following standards: 1) land distribution process is on-going successfully; 2) there exist many beneficiaries; 3) these are poverty areas; and 4) there exist basic farmers’ organizations that would be recipients of assistance.
Overview of the Agrarian Reform Infrastructure Support Project (ARISP)

ARISP is an integrated package of support services designed to provide basic infrastructure, institutional development and agricultural support to agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) nationwide. The project is the first loan assistance for the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) under the Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA). It has a total investment cost of 2.5 billion pesos and 75 percent of the cost was financed through a loan from the Government of Japan, through the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), with counterpart funds provided by the Government of the Philippines (25 percent of the cost). The project covers 23,393 Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries located in 76 Agrarian Reform Communities (ARCs) in 33 provinces nationwide. The project started in June 1996 and was implemented for a period of six years.

The general objective of the project is to alleviate poverty, institute agrarian change and spur economic growth in ARCs nationwide, which can be a good example for scaling-up of poverty reduction. This is to be manifested by income increases and improvement in the living standards of the farmers. In specific terms, the member-families in the ARCs are expected to attain an average annual income of 60,000 pesos at 1996 prices, effectively raising them above the poverty threshold. To pursue this, basic infrastructure support that an ARC would need were provided to enable it to take-off from its present state of underdevelopment. Hence, irrigation facilities is the core component with complementary warehouse and solar drier for post harvest activities, farm-to-market roads for mobility and institutional development for sustainability of operations of the facilities.

Specifically, the following are the objectives of the project:

- Farm productivity per hectare is increased from 2.7 to 4.3 tons/hectare with the provision of steady irrigation water;
- Total paddy production per year is increased more than 2 times than of the present volume by expanding the irrigated area and improving unit yield;
- Mobility of rural people and their farm produce within and outside the project area is improved by the construction and rehabilitation of farm-to-market roads; and
Farmers’ organizations are established/strengthened to ensure viability of the project.

Project preparation phase started in 1994 and was completed by early 1995. The National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) Investment Coordinating Council (ICC) Technical Board and Cabinet committee approved the project in September 18, 1995 and December 15, 1995, respectively for financing under the 20th Yen Loan Package of the Government of Japan. The Loan Agreement was signed by and between the Governments of Japan and the Philippines on August 30, 1995. However, implementation commenced only on June 28, 1996 when the loan became effective just after the government had cleared the issues regarding the limited headroom in the government’s foreign borrowing ceiling. The project was implemented in six years and was officially closed on June 28, 2002.

The project is implemented by the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), as lead agency, in cooperation with the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) for the irrigation and post-harvest components and the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) for the farm-to-market road. Institutional development was implemented in collaboration with the Philippine Development Assistance Program (PDAP), Bureau of Post- Harvest for Research and Extension (BPRE), local-based NGOs and University of the Philippines (UP)/Ugnayan ng Pahinungod Oblation Corps Los Banos (UP/OC). (See Annex 1 for Program Implementing Structure)

The concept of the project is to address the need for basic infrastructure facilities that are essential in increasing productivity and income. Hence, irrigation is the core component with complimentary warehouse and solar drier for post harvest activities, farm-to-market roads and bridges for mobility and institutional development for sustainability of operations. (See Annex 2 for Description of Components)

The project area covers the entire Philippines. Preliminary selection of subprojects was made based on the list of sites included in “The Master Plan Study on the Small-Scale Irrigation Project (SSIDP)” of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the National Irrigation Administration (NIA). From the list of 459 qualified subproject sites under the SSIDP, 96 irrigation projects located in ARCs were selected by DAR based on the following criteria: a large CARP scope whether under land transfer or leasehold program; the area had high density of potential and actual farmer
beneficiaries; the area is economically depressed; and non-government and people’s organizations (NGOs/POs) are present. Further validation by DAR brought down the number of sites to 79 ARCs.

To complement the production credit requirements of ARISP ARCs, DAR and the Land Bank of the Philippines with the support of JBIC launched the Rural Farmers and Agrarian Reform Support Credit Program (RASCP) which extended credit to farmer beneficiaries nationwide.

What distinct features and development innovations distinguish ARISP from other poverty programs? The following are some of them, which can serve as references for scaling-up for poverty reduction:

• ARISP is primarily a “Rights-based” program. The basic right to ownership of land and other resources is first assured before any other intervention is made; otherwise such interventions would only have residual and marginal effects on the lives of the farmers.

• ARISP reinforces the strategy of focusing scarce resources in specific communities to maximize impact. The program complements DAR’s efforts to anchor efforts in Agrarian Reform Communities (ARCs) that would later on become launching pads for replication and radiation in other communities.

• ARISP’s interventions are comprehensive and integrated. Small-scale infrastructure, credit, agricultural technology support, and institutional development are organically linked to help farmers become self-reliant, productive, and prosperous.

• ARISP puts a premium on people’s participation. The farmer beneficiaries are involved in various stages and aspects of the program, including planning, implementation, construction work, management, monitoring, and evaluation.

• ARISP is inclusive rather than exclusive. It attempts to involve as many stakeholders as possible both from within and outside government. Line agencies, the consultancy firm Nippon Koei, and civil society organizations work hand-in-hand in the various activities of the program.
• ARISP is both process and results oriented. The program respects the processes for community organizing and institutional development that farmers’ organizations have to go through but at the same time the program is zealous about achieving concrete outputs and tangible results.

**Impact Analysis**

**Results of the monitoring of DAR**

Preliminary results of the project on the farmer beneficiaries and their organizations in 50 ARCs based on the monitoring reports of DAR show marked increase in the productivity and income of the ARBs. (See also Annex 3 for Physical Accomplishment)

Under the Infrastructure Development Component the following results were recorded:

• 125 percent increase in the size of irrigated area, from 6,418 to 14,441 has (including 8,033 has. of rain-fed areas);

• 113 percent improvement in cropping intensity where an increase from 80 percent to 170 percent was posted, and;

• 97 percent increase in average yield during wet season, from 47 cavans per hectare to 84 cavans per hectare (1 cavan=50kg);

• For post-harvest facilities, an estimated 5-10 percent decrease in post-harvest losses and improvement in the quality of rice was observed;

• For the farm-to-market road, 48 percent or a 14-minute decrease in average travel time from the ARC to the market center and a 50 percent decrease in average transport cost, from 11.50 pesos to 5.75 pesos per person were noted;

• On a per cavan basis, there was a 38 percent decrease in transport cost where transport charges went down from an average of 7.25 pesos to 4.5 pesos per cavan;

• Likewise, there was a 71 percent increase in the average number of vehicles plying the ARCs;
• A total of 406.82 kilometers of farm-to-market roads and access roads were constructed out of the original target of 544 kilometers.

    For the Institutional Development Component, the following results were recorded:

    • 19 percent increase in membership, from 7,662 to 9,151 members was registered;
    • 36 percent increase in capital build-up generation, from 13.04 million pesos to 17.79 million pesos, and;
    • 21 percent increase in savings mobilization, from 4.04 million pesos to 4.88 million pesos was posted.

    In terms of increase in income, results show:

    • In the Luzon island-region, the average annual real income increased by 28.61 percent in 17 ARCs specifically from 60,878.00 pesos to 78,293.00 pesos;
    • In the Visayas island-region ARCs, average real income improved from 26,769.00 pesos to 45,535.00 pesos or a 77.58 percent increase for 5 ARCs;
    • For the Mindanao island-region 9 ARCs, posted a 38.26 percent increase from 27,687.00 pesos to 38,279.00 pesos;
    • Overall, using the 1996 prices, 31 ARCs enjoyed a 34.92 percent increase in real income, from 45,741.00 pesos to 61,715.00 pesos thereby exceeding the targets set by the project.

**Results of the Evaluation Report**

In 2002 the project commissioned Mr. Katsumi Nozawa, Ms. Blanquita Pantoja, and a research team to conduct a Social Survey on the Comparative Evaluation of three selected ARISP ARCs with three Non-ARISP ARCs (with-without cases comparison in terms of relationship between productivity and irrigation, forms of tenure, etc.). The study aimed to assess the overall effects and impacts of ARISP 1 on the agricultural productivity and farm income, and the change in sociology-economic status of the beneficiaries by comparing the ARISP ARCs with the non-ARISP ones. In summary the Nozawa/Pantoja report shows the ARISP increased agricultural productivity in the target agrarian reform communities
resulted from improvement of irrigation systems, introduction of high-yield crops and modern agricultural technology. For effects on productivity, the yield increased by 55-64 percent in successful and intermediate sites and 35 percent in an unsuccessful site. For effects on income of farmers, net on-farm income increased by 227 percent in a successful site and 60-80 percent in intermediate and unsuccessful sites. The following are the highlights of the evaluation:

- **Rice Productivity**: In all three cases, the ARISP ARCs had higher average yield per hectare than the non-ARISP ARCs. The three ARISP ARCs (successful case, medium case, and unsuccessful case) recorded yields of 4.66 mt/ha, 4.29 mt/ha, and 2.82 mt/ha respectively, while the three non-ARISP ARCs recorded yields of 2.85 mt/ha, 2.76 mt/ha, and 2.09 mt/ha respectively.

  Irrigation, the anchor intervention of ARISP, is essentially intended to increase farm output. In two ARISP sites under the study, the command area for irrigation covers much of the ARC production area. In contrast, parcels cultivated by the respondents in the non-ARISP sites are largely rainfed. A comparison of the irrigated parcels in the ARISP and non-ARISP sites was also undertaken. Results showed that irrigated parcel in the ARISP areas obtained better yields than the non-ARISP sites. This could be attributed to the quality of irrigation facilities. While irrigation systems in the ARISP ARCs have been rehabilitated and concreted, those in the non-ARISP remain earth-lined canals or drawn by irrigation pumps from surface or ground water.

- **Marketable Surplus**: The ARISP ARCs have higher mean marketable surplus for rice compared to the non-ARISP sites. The issue to be tackled will be the marketing, for the marketable surplus of the ARISP ARCs is still less than half of the average yield per hectare of a typical farmer.

- **Household Income**: In all three cases, average household incomes of the three ARISP ARCs were higher than their non-ARISP counterparts. The table below shows the results:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARISP ARC</th>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Non-ARISP ARC</th>
<th>Income</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pusunangtatay</td>
<td>Php 157,083.11</td>
<td>Inabaan Norte</td>
<td>Php 98,714.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nabunturan</td>
<td>Php 102,988.73</td>
<td>Awo</td>
<td>Php 64,246.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dela Paz</td>
<td>Php 108,001.96</td>
<td>AGCA</td>
<td>Php 70,631.06</td>
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</table>
However, the evaluation reveals that non-farm income such as income of family members employed in urban centers or as oversea contracted workers constitutes a relatively high proportion of average annual farm income. In addition, the beneficiaries get income, although limited in its volume, by opening small-scale general stores or leasing agricultural machines. They exceed half of average farm income in all with cases and even in without cases.

- **Membership in organizations**: Membership of respondents from the ARISP ARCs was confined mostly to cooperatives and irrigators’ associations. Meanwhile, less respondents from the non-ARISP ARCs joined more varied types of organizations. Findings further showed that more respondents from the non-ARISP complained that their organizations do not provide them any benefits. This absence of benefit has deterred many respondents from the non-ARISP from joining organizations. This also reflects the fact that organizations in the ARISP ARCs are more active since they are able to provide certain services needed in the community.

- **Perceptions on current sociology-economic conditions, productivity levels and present income**: Majority of respondents from the ARISP ARCs claimed that their sociology-economic status, productivity levels and current incomes have improved since 1996, attributing it mainly to increased production brought about by sufficient water supply. Meanwhile, only a minority of those from the non-ARISP ARCs had the same perception.

Mr. Nozawa and Ms. Pantoja concluded that main reasons for the increase of productivity are improvement of irrigation system, introduction of high yield crops and modern agricultural technology.

**Driving Factors**

**Commitment and Political Economy for Change**

After conducting a series of consultations at the local level as well as at the national level, the Ramos Administration adopted the Social Reform Agenda in 1994 to address the long-standing problem of poverty. It focused on the nine flagship programs; namely the improvement of (1) agricultural development, (2) fisheries and aquatic resources conservation, management and development, (3)
protection of ancestral domains, (4) workers’ welfare and protection, (5) socialized housing, (6) comprehensive integrated delivery of social services, (7) institution-building and effective participation in governance, (8) credit and (9) livelihood programs.

In the Social Reform Agenda, the administration targeted such groups as small scale farmers and landless farmers, small scale fisheries and minorities, urban poor and disadvantaged groups. President Ramos’ political commitment to the agrarian reform issues was established in line with this Social Reform Agenda.

President showed his political commitment to the agrarian reform by appointing several NGO staff members who had been committed themselves to rural development to key persons in DAR. First of all, President Ramos appointed Secretary Ernesto D. Garilao to head DAR. Secretary Garilao had spent many years working in one of the major NGO institutions in the country, the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP). His entry into the department signaled the transformation of DAR into a development-oriented bureaucracy. In addition he brought with him several young development managers from respectable NGOs and NGO networks who occupied Undersecretary, Assistant Secretary and other key positions in the department, providing further proof that the Ramos government was serious in implementing agrarian reform. This situation encouraged what Borras (1998) called the “bibingka” (a native Filipino rice cake baked in a homemade oven of two layers, with charcoal smolders in each layer, on top of and underneath the cake) strategy in land reform implementation, where there is a “positive interaction” between pro-reform peasant mobilizations “from below” and pro-reform initiatives “from above”, i.e. from state reformists inside government.


“In July 1992, the backlog in land distribution was placed at 6.1 million hectares. Among the highest priorities of the Ramos administration, therefore, was increasing the pace of land acquisition and distribution. The largest backlogs were in the privately owned agricultural lands, where only 474,918 hectares (equivalent to 16 percent) were acquired and distributed from 1972 to June 1992 out of a total
program scope of 2,996,105 hectares. This is the most contentious point of the criticisms against the program by the organized peasantry.”

In addition to the major issue cited above, the other problems and challenges confronting the Ramos administration included the following:

- Lack of reliable data for rationale and effective program planning
- Low valuation of properties and slow processing of landowner compensation
- Limited participation of farmers’ organizations in the program
- Weak inter-agency coordination dispersed support service delivery
- Dwindling financial resources

Perhaps one of the biggest problems of DAR in 1992 was the low level of credibility it enjoyed especially among the various stakeholders of agrarian reform in the Philippines. The spate of anomalies and scandals that rocked the department in previous administrations and the weak performance in distributing lands contributed to the perception that CARP was a failure and that DAR was an inept agency. There was also little support coming from donor agencies. DAR practically had no Official Development Aid (ODA) portfolio to speak of. Thus the new administration in 1992 initiated strategies and programs to revitalize the bureaucracy, accelerate the implementation of CARP, win back the support of the agrarian reform constituents, and bring back the credibility of the program and DAR.

As a result of the positive developments in DAR, ODA started pouring in. The European Union was among the first with a 632.4 million-peso grant to assist agrarian reform work in five provinces. Then in 1994 negotiations began for the first Japanese ODA to assist CARP and in 1996 ARISP officially started.

**Institutional Innovation**

**Institutionalizing Community and Civil Society Participation – as a social inclusion process**

The participation of farmers’ and irrigators’ associations, cooperatives, and NGOs in the institutional development component of ARISP is a significant and critical institutional innovation that greatly
contributed to ARISP’s performance and sustainability. This situation, however, is the result of a historical growth and evolution of the peasant movement as it tried to relate to the state. It is fortunate that at the time ARISP was implemented most peasant groups and NGOs had already matured in their critical and principled engagement with government. It was not like this before, especially during the period of Martial Law (1972-1984) under President Marcos where POs/NGOs and government were antagonists.

At present the peasant movement continues to be diverse and fragmented. It was only in 1986 to 1992 when all the farmers’ federations were united under the Congress for a People’s Agrarian Reform (CPAR) that later disbanded in 1993 due to organizational differences. There are various peasant blocks allied with different political forces and persuasions. There are many more independent farmers groups in the barangay and municipal levels in the provinces. Yet while such is the situation majority of these groups including the many rural development NGOs have learned to engage government and have participated in various programs and projects of government. They have not abandoned their role to be watchdogs, policy advocates, and critics of government. In addition they have also contributed to the institutionalization of participatory processes and mechanisms in government bodies and programs.

In 1992 “tripartism” became a byword in DAR. It meant promoting partnerships among the three major stakeholders of agrarian reform: the Farmers’ Organizations, the NGOs, and DAR. At the beginning of the Ramos administration, the new DAR leadership, bolstered by years of NGO development experience, created an environment in DAR that was friendly to civil society groups. Thus all the programs and projects launched by DAR during this period, including projects supported by ODA, required the involvement and participation of farmers’ organizations and NGOs.

Community and NGO participation was enshrined explicitly in the Institutional Development Component and in the Infrastructure Development Component. The program tapped the community organizing and community development expertise of NGOs to strengthen the subject institutions in the ARISP ARCs. These community-based institutions participated in the planning and construction of the various infrastructure facilities that they eventually owned and managed.

The goal of the Institutional Development Component (IDC) was to organize and/or strengthen ARC-wide cooperatives and Irrigators’ Associations (IAs) for them to eventually become the viable
economic arm of the farmer beneficiaries that will undertake the sustainable operation and efficient management of the post-harvest facilities and the communal irrigation systems.

Three strategies, that will serve as reference for other trials for scaling-up poverty reduction, were employed in implementing this component namely:

- **Targeting**

  Recognizing the time and budget limitations of the project, the scope of institutional development had to be focused on improving the maturities level of a particular subject cooperative or irrigators’ association for which intervention were based on clear and doable targets.

- **Integration** - in principle, institutional development was designed to:
  
  o develop the capability of local organizations to plan, operate and maintain the infrastructure facilities on a sustainable basis; and,

  o to increase the capacity of the implementing agencies/organizations to deliver support service more effectively and efficiently.

  Operationally, this meant that action plans for institutional development were tailored to provide the skills and competencies that the subject cooperatives need in order to effectively operate and manage the irrigation and post-harvest facilities.

- **Tripartism** - This meant harnessing the specialization of the government agencies, POs and NGOs and mobilizing them to work synergistically based on a common action plan. Three key players complement one another in implementing frontline activities:

  o The Development Facilitator (DF) of DAR

  o The Institutional Development Officer (IDO) of NIA

  o The Development Worker (DW) of partner-institutions or locally-based NGOs.
The scope of assistance was classified into these major types:

- **Cooperative Development**
  
  The assistance to farmers’ cooperatives was to build/strengthen their capability to become self-reliant and viable organizations. These cooperatives were assisted by local-based NGOs in terms of organizational-building and management, resource mobilization/management and social enterprise operations.

- **Irrigator’s Association Development**
  
  This involved the provision of assistance to IAs by NIA to enhance the capability of the associations to operate and manage the irrigation facilities.

- **Agricultural Development Support**
  
  In the course of implementation of the infrastructure development component, agricultural development support was perceived as a critical subproject component to address the need for technology enhancement of the farmer beneficiaries in utilizing the different infrastructure provided under the project. Although the LGUs were mandated to provide agricultural development support to the farmers, GOP funds were mobilized under the project to support agricultural development in the ARCs that would augment LGUs’ resources. Hence, partnership with technology providers was pursued.

- **Productivity-Based Volunteer Services for ARCs**
  
  The Los Banos Ugnayan ng Pahinungod/Oblation Corps, a volunteer service arm of the University of the Philippines Los Banos (UPLB) was tapped for the implementation of the agricultural extension support to the ARCs under the project.

DAR established a procedure to contract the services of NGOs and POs. In accordance with existing laws, invitations were published in widely circulated newspapers calling for technical proposals in the implementation of IDC as a requirement in the pre-qualification and bidding. After the evaluation done by the Project and Awards Committee and the Project Management Office among 5 bidders, the implementation of IDC was awarded to the Philippine Development Assistance Program (PDAP), a
consortium of five major NGO networks in the country. PDAP was tasked to oversee the IDC in 79 ARCs by recruiting, selecting, supervising, and monitoring local-based NGOs that were tasked to assess the organizational status of the target organizations and cooperatives in the ARCs. They were also responsible for preparing concrete organizational action plans and assisting the POs in carrying these out. In total 39 NGOs were contracted for project implementation at the local level and covered 56 ARCs. These NGOs acted as facilitators between the beneficiaries and officials.

Re-educating the Bureaucracy

Secretary Garilao, in his transition report, termed it “energizing” the bureaucracy (as an organization). According to him the Ramos administration identified three key tasks. First was to upgrade the program’s human resources through training and education. Values and attitudes had to be reoriented within the bureaucracy to heighten commitment to the social justice and empowerment goals of agrarian reform and to working with peoples’ organizations and NGOs. Thus in 1993 DAR, with the support of the Ford Foundation and in partnership with the Asian Institute of Management (AIM), conducted a series of one-month courses called Program for Development Managers (PDM) especially designed for DAR’s Provincial Agrarian Reform Officers (PAROs) and their counterpart NGO Executive Directors or Program Managers. At the end of the course the participants were not only oriented on key development principles, approaches, and strategies, they were required to come-up with their provincial agrarian reform development plans using the tripartite (DAR-PO-NGO) approach.

The second task was to introduce into the DAR a system of performance contracts to establish clear accountabilities. The Key Result Areas (KRAs) of the performance contract included performance indicators under 1) Land Tenure Improvement; 2) Agrarian Justice Delivery; 3) Program for Beneficiaries Development; 4) Constituency Relations Strengthening; and 5) Bureaucracy Energizing and Management. The third task was to introduce systems that would assist management in making decisions and encouraging transparency.

Perhaps it is appropriate to conclude that the institutional innovations that included participatory processes and development of human resources made it possible for civil society members and farmer
beneficiaries who used to be tenants or landless hacienda workers to become socially, politically, and economically “included” in the project implementation process.

**Private Sector Participation**

The Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law stipulates that a landowner who invests in rural-based industries shall be entitled to the incentives granted to a registered enterprise engaged in a pioneer or preferred area of investment. This was designed to foster the development of domestic investment by landowners with the compensation they were scheduled to receive. This may be thought as one type of private sector participation. Unfortunately it did not bear fruit.

**Learning and Experimentation**

ARISP was one of the first forays of DAR in implementing large-scale projects involving several government agencies and multiple stakeholders such as, the farmers’ and irrigators’ associations, cooperatives and NGOs. Thus there was a dearth in previous experiences or learning from past projects that could be considered in the design stage. This was a pioneering and trail blazing effort especially among all the other agencies of government at that time.

The process of re-education of the bureaucracy initiated at the beginning of the Ramos administration enabled ARISP to become a concrete manifestation of all the re-learning that DAR had done. It's policies, systems and procedures, modus operandi, components, coordinating structures, and goals and objectives all reflect what DAR had tried to experiment on and learn over the years.

The experimentation, especially in relating with civil society in project implementation, was difficult at the beginning. The NGOs were adjusting to their role as project “contractors” for institutional development, something to which they were not used to doing before. In some way they were feeling the seeming loss of being an independent policy advocate by entering into contractual obligations with government. In addition, the complicated processes and procedures of the bureaucracy in contrast to the simple and flexible methods of operations that NGOs were familiar with overwhelmed them. But after a time the NGOs realized that the partnerships developed at the community level with government agencies did not prevent them from pursuing their advocacy work. It in fact became another arena for doing
effective development work because issues addressed to government were immediately surfaced and
resolved.

DAR and the other government agencies also initially experienced difficulty in dealing with
NGOs. There were times when conflicts in the field arose because of differences in policy interpretation
and community organizing strategies. NGO workers, coming from a tradition of conflict confrontation in
community organizing, sometimes tended to be aggressive and militant in pursuing issues. But as the
project proceeded the initiatives for dialogue and the coordinating mechanisms provided an environment
for cross-cultural learning between government and NGOs. The partnership that evolved provided the
synergy needed to collectively act and resolve problems and issues that arose during the course of project
implementation.

It should be admitted that the social inclusion process of the ARISP experienced much trial and
error and needed improvement. The experience at the time of the 1st phase of ARISP was reflected in the
2nd phase in a more effective manner. For example, in the 2nd phase, most of the activities required for the
formulation of ARC development plan were decentralized at the field level. Those reflections show that
the development experience was scaled-up.

**External Catalysts**

The Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), the donor of ARISP, was a major catalyst of the
project. The loan assistance provided made it possible for the ARCIs to achieve a higher level of
development. Government funds for agrarian reform and rural development are very limited and every
year government experiences budget deficits.

At the project formation stage, the ARISP was a mere infrastructure project composed of mainly
small-scale irrigation sub-projects created by NIA. However with the suggestions of Japanese side, the
Philippine government transformed its contents so that the project was geared toward one of the hottest
issues in the Philippines at that period “agrarian reform,” by including such infrastructure components as
post-harvest facilities or farm to market roads and institutional development components.
The Japanese side also considered that for self-sustenance of the ARISP model it would not be desirable that a donor cover everything. That is why it left part of component uncovered so that the Philippine government would keep allocating necessary budget for agrarian reform.

Even before negotiations for ARISP began in 1994, a Japanese High-Level Mission that came during the previous year set the tone by making a policy statement that the Japanese government places top priority in supporting the agrarian reform program in the Philippines. The Japanese government acknowledged that its own agrarian reform program, implemented after the Second World War, paved the way for Japan’s industrialization and economic prosperity. This policy pronouncement uplifted and led support to the Ramos’ government’s political decision to advance and complete the implementation of CARP in the Philippines.

The ARC concept and concepts of ARISP were acknowledged by other bilateral and multilateral funding agencies. By March 2003, in total 837 ARCs were assisted with foreign funds. The accumulated amount of assistance amounted for 40 billion Philippine Pesos (US$810 million). Being ARCs means that there are high chances for beneficiaries to get assistance, which was a good impetus and catalyst.

**Lessons Learned**

ARISP provided an opportunity for DAR to demonstrate the viability and efficacy of the integrated approach to small area development as espoused by the ARC development program of DAR. The project has indicated that the integrated approach to rural development is possible and manageable in small-scale geographic areas like ARCs. In addition, the project showed that the inter-agency and multi-sectoral approach to project implementation is workable if the terms of cooperation are clear and understood by the stakeholders.

The ARISP experience highlighted the importance of a common development plan that is understood, accepted, and shared by implementers and beneficiaries. The presence of ARC project plans somehow facilitated the understanding of the roles and contribution of implementing agencies that in turn helped enhance cooperation and teamwork.
In relation to project design, the post harvest facility should be treated as a component separate and distinct from the irrigation component. Under the original design, the post harvest facilities such as warehouses and solar dryers were considered part of the irrigation component. The idea was to minimize cost and maximize the use of structures by converting the construction bunkhouses of the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) into a warehouse and the working area into a solar dryer. However, in most cases, the concept was not feasible because of difference in location requirements. For example, a bunkhouse needs to be located near the dam site that is not necessarily the most strategic and feasible location of a warehouse. The warehouse, in return, has to be turned over to the farmers for utilization and management. The farmers, have in these instances, found it difficult to accept much less manage the facilities.

While the concept of ARISP is integrated, it only provides the basic infrastructure facilities in support of production. There is a need to incorporate other elements such as agricultural technology and extension services, accessible and affordable capital, and market and marketing support to optimize benefits derived from the project.

In terms of institutional development, the project has rekindled and strengthened the spirit of cooperativism in the ARCs through the participatory approach to community organizing. By the end of the project, most of the subject cooperatives showed signs of improved organizational maturity compared to their status at the start of the project. Some of the cooperatives that had hibernated due to organizational problems, mismanagement, individualism, and lack of opportunities were revitalized. The project has served as a vehicle to make people aware of their capacities as a group, appreciate their responsibilities to cooperate to solve problems and undertake communal projects.

The project tapped existing government and inter-government structures. The ARISP experience has shown that inter-agency collaboration is effective if the proper mechanisms are in place. The appreciation of a common framework, joint planning and assessments, and regular inter-agency meetings are necessary to ensure coordinated action.
Conclusion

Does agrarian reform work? The ARISP experience has tested and proven the formula for agrarian reform to work: distribute land to the farmers, provide support services to increase their production and income, and strengthen their institutions.

Who can make agrarian reform work? The farmers and their communities have to be the main actors and the major stakeholders of the program. But working with them to provide support must be a responsive and effective partnership among government agencies, NGOs, and donors. This is the essence of ARISP.

The success of ARISP has led to the scaling-up of the program through the launching of similar programs within DAR and the implementation of a second phase. The program launched by DAR and JBIC that used ARISP’s salient features was the Mindanao Sustainable Settlements Development Program (MINSSAD). And currently DAR is undertaking an ARISP Phase 2 program amounting to 6.7 billion pesos in 150 ARCs covering about 43,000 hectares of land and benefiting an additional 99,000 farmer beneficiaries. As a proto type project, the ARISP I gradually fit itself to the stream of social inclusion. Lessons learnt in the 1st phase are used to advantage to improve component of the project in the 2nd phase. Several ideas were added to make the ARISP model applicable in other occasions. For example, local governments are expected to involve themselves more directly so that local governments are able to strengthen their capability as arms of agrarian reform. In addition, water facility component was put in the infrastructure component.

ARISP’s salient features and successful strategies have been adopted and replicated in the other ODA programs and projects of DAR that have now amounted to more than 40 billion pesos providing support to thousands of agrarian reform beneficiaries nationwide. More importantly ARISP has shown that production yields and incomes of farmers will increase if they are given the essential ingredients for development, i.e., land to till, agricultural support to make their lands productive and crops marketable, and community institutions that are strong and sustainable. Indeed, in the case of the Philippines, ARISP has shown that agrarian reform works.
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Olano, Jose Noel (2001), The Role of Peasants’ Organizations in Managing Agrarian Conflict, Land Reform and Peasant Livelihoods, UNRISD, Geneva

Pantoja, Blanquita (2002), Evaluation of Three Selected Agrarian Reform Infrastructure Support Project (ARISP) Agrarian Reform Communities (ARCs).
Annex I – Program Implementing Structure
Annex 2 – Program Components

A. Infrastructure Development Component

The infrastructure development component under the project is composed of communal irrigation and drainage facilities, farm-to-market roads, and post harvest facilities.

- **Irrigation and Drainage Facilities**
  
  To support agricultural productivity, irrigation and drainage facilities were either constructed or rehabilitated under the Project. This component focused on small-scale irrigation projects which are gravity communal irrigation facilities and provision of pump irrigation or pump communal facilities, with service area ranging from 50 to 500 hectares. A typical facility consists of diversion dam with intake structure, irrigation and drainage canals, access/service roads and flood protection dike. The construction of the facilities was implemented by the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) as cooperating agency. This was undertaken mainly through force-account work where the FBs provided labor as equity for the subprojects.

- **Farm-to-Market Road and Bridges**
  
  To improve accessibility to and from the ARCs, the project covered the construction and/or rehabilitation of farm-to-market roads. The specific objective of this subcomponent is to improve the mobility of rural people and their farm produce within and outward the ARC. This improvement decreases transportation costs for both agricultural inputs and outputs.

  Implementation of this subcomponent was undertaken by DPWH as cooperating agency. DPWH implemented the construction/rehabilitation of farm to market roads, which are mostly gravel type. Concreting of critical/sloping sections and the construction of slope protection, drainage structure and some bridges were also provided. The Project also covered road improvement from gravel pavement to Portland Cement Concrete Pavement (PCCP).

  In addition, irrigation service roads were constructed by NIA to promote access to the irrigated areas to facilitate the transportation of produce from the rice fields to the post-harvest facilities or to the nearest market.

- **Post-Harvest Facilities**
  
  Post-harvest facilities were provided to reduce post-harvest losses, improve the quality of grains and provide opportunities for small-scale businesses enterprise in the ARCs. This is in response to the expressed need of the communities that the insufficiency of post-harvest facilities has been causing farmers to dispose their produce immediately after harvest even at very cheap prices.

  Under the Project, the PHFs provided consist of warehouse and solar dryer to provide storage and drying facilities, especially for palay and other crops harvested in the ARC. The warehouse is given as a loan either to an Irrigators’ Association (IA) or cooperative to provide space for storage of produce either for amortization in kind or for palay trading.
purposes. The PHFs were constructed by NIA in cooperation with the FBs based in an equity
generation scheme where the farmers’ association or cooperative contributed an equity of
either 10 percent to 30 percent of the chargeable cost of the Project, in the form of labor,
materials, equipment, and/or cash.

B. Institutional Development Component

The goal of Institutional Development Component (IDC) is to organize and/or strengthen ARC-
wide cooperatives and Irrigators’ Associations (IAs) for them to eventually become the viable
economic arm of the farmer beneficiaries that will undertake the sustainable operation and
efficient management of the post-harvest facilities and the communal irrigation systems.

In addition, the IDC objectives include: (a) to organize and develop an inter-
agency/multisectoral development team to improve delivery of services; (b) to develop an
effective mechanism that will ensure coordination among organizations in the ARC in the use of
provision of basic support services to the whole community; and (c) to strengthen the technical
capabilities of the local government units (LGUs).
**Annex 3 – Major Physical Accomplishments, Results and Impacts of ARISP**

Overall, by the end of the project in June 2002, ARISP achieved 102.09 percent of its overall physical target, utilized 96.51 percent of the total loan commitment, and obligated 100 percent of the peso appropriations cover over a period of 72 months.

### 1. Physical Accomplishment (by the end of the project in June 2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output</th>
<th>Project Components</th>
<th>Overall Revised Targets</th>
<th>Actual # of subprojects Covered</th>
<th>Percent Accom.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>Construction &amp; Rehabilitation of irrigation facilities</td>
<td>(2) Communal Irrigation Projects</td>
<td>(3) 87 CIPs/CISs</td>
<td>(4) 78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Areas covered with irrigation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14,000ha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Construction and rehabilitation of farm-to-market roads</td>
<td>Farm-to-market Roads</td>
<td>354.75 km</td>
<td>406.8kms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Construction of post-harvest facilities (warehouse and solar dryer)</td>
<td>Post-Harvest Facilities</td>
<td>45 PHFs</td>
<td>63 PHFs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Institutional Development (Development of farmer-organizations )</td>
<td>Institutional Development</td>
<td>79 ARCs</td>
<td>76 ARCs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Results (by the end of the project in June 2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coverage of irrigation</td>
<td>Increased by 125 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cropping intensity</td>
<td>Improved by 113 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post harvest loss</td>
<td>Decreased by 10 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average production yields</td>
<td>Increased by 97 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership of beneficiaries’ cooperatives</td>
<td>Increased by 19 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital build-up of beneficiaries’ cooperatives</td>
<td>Increased by 36 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saving of beneficiaries’ cooperatives</td>
<td>Increased by 21 percent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Impact on beneficiary farmers (based on the evaluation by Mr. Nozawa & Ms. Pantoja, 2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Productivity</td>
<td>Increased by 35 percent - 64 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>Increased by 60 percent - 227 percent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex 4 - ARISP Project Map
## Annex 5 - ARISP Target ARCs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Province</th>
<th>No.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Taal Norte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Iligan</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lagawe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Iligan</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Malayano</td>
</tr>
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<td>Kalinga</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pinokpok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mt. Province</td>
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<td>Parmeñas</td>
</tr>
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<td>I</td>
<td>Bicol Norte</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Bicol Sur</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Calayat</td>
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<td>Misamice</td>
</tr>
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<td>South Cagayan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Tarlac</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Bis. Rosario</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Marinduque</td>
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<td>Humaorita</td>
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### List of ARISP Covered ARCs

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<tbody>
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<td>VIII</td>
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<td>Cagayan Valley</td>
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<td>La Union</td>
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<td>Cusuin</td>
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<td>Lupaym Baja</td>
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