**PROJECT PROFILE AND BRIEF**

Organization Name: Zarraga Integrated Diversified Organic Farmers Association (ZIDOFA)

Number of Farmer-Members: 37

Products: organic pigmented rice, organic herbs and vegetables, livestock

Location: Zarraga, Iloilo 5004

As part of LGU Zarraga’s vision of attaining sustainable economic development, the promotion of climate-friendly agricultural practices which would help mitigate climate change and allow farmers and their crops to adapt to changes in weather patterns, droughts, floods and other climate-change events has been an integral part of a program focused on providing sustainability and productivity impacts on the environment, economic viability and social well-being of Zarraganhons.

This blueprint for sustainability has made initial successes in our municipality through the multi-agency convergence of resources and technical assistance. One such project which has gained much momentum in this arena is the Regenerative Organic Agriculture Initiative using the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) spearheaded by the Zarraga Integrated Diversified Organic Farmers Association (ZIDOFA), a small-farmer initiated project, which has successfully converted 23 hectares of previously conventional/chemical-based rice paddies into organic SRI rice fields in a span of just over two years. ZIDOFA Projects to increase the number of participating farmers to 45 and the total land area converted to organic SRI to 30 hectares come first cropping cycle of 2017.

In just over two (2) years of operation, the project has already gained the following milestones and support in collaboration with several government and private entities:

* In May of 2016, ZIDOFA and its organic SRI rice farms were the first chosen by DA-RFO6 to be the first ever sites for the implementation of Laser-Guided Levelling Equipment to farming organizations.
* In September 2016, ZIDOFA was chosen as the lone organic agriculture organization to be included in a Rice Marketing and Value Chain Research conducted by German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) through its Better Rice In Asia (BRIA) project;
* In June 2016, ZIDOFA farmers were chosen as project cooperators by the Department of Agriculture for research on organic SRI at its WESVIARC facility;
* ZIDOFA was also chosen in September 2016 as one of only twenty MSME’s in the Region by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) for its first ever national pilot of its Mentor Me Program;
* the ZIDOFA Organic SRI Project was also chosen on December of 2016 as one of only six ( 6 ) sites nationwide for trial testing of a compact village type rice huller by the Philippine Center for Post Harvest Development and Mechanization (PhilMech);
* ZIDOFA was awarded by the DA RFO 6 with a Greenhouse with Drip Irrigation in consonance with ZIDOFA’s goal to promote farm diversification not only to its members but also to neighboring farm communities.|
* In recognition of ZIDOFA’s efforts to restore biodiversity in the farm ecosystem including the restoration of fertility of our soils through the promotion of Organic SRI, ZIDOFA has received grants from Oxfam Germany (June 2015), Nutiva (July 2015), Nutiva (October 2015), Rapunzel & Deutsche (May 2016) and Dr. Bronner’s (December of 2016) and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) (January 2017).
* It was also chosen in February 2017 as one of the four sites in the nation to participate in the first ever testing of the Sustainable Rice Platform (SRP) with the DA, International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) and the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) through its Better Rice In Asia (BRIA) project;
* In October 2017, it commenced collaboration with the DA and PhilRice Upland Rice Development Programs (URDP) for ZIDOFA’s seed banking of heirloom and native rice varieties sub-component;
* ZIDOFA was site visited by a team of officials from the Office of the Regional Executive Director (RED) Engr. Remelyn Recoter and DA Information Systems Staff headed by Jovy Gaton to assess ZIDOFA organic SRI Project November 2016
* In March 2017, ZIDOFA partnered with Convergence for Organizational Resilience and Empowerment (CORE), Philippines, Inc. for a first-ever Strategic Visioning and Action Planning Workshop for an Organic SRI Initiative
* ZIDOFA, in December of 2016, was awarded a grant by the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) through its Grant-In-Aid (GIA) Program for the establishment of a Pinawa Rice mull which will increase the milling quality organic pigmented (red, black, brown, etc) SRI rices produced by ZIDOFA farmers. Installation of the rice mill was completed 15 September 2017 and milling operations for organic SRI rice will commence First week of October 2017.
* In February 2017, the Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization (PhilMech) delivered for field trial by ZIDOFA, an impeller-driven, village-type compact rice huller for milling of ZIDOFA farmers’ organic SRI pigmented Rices.
* ZIDOFA is currently the only organic agriculture organization participating in the nation’s first ever field trials of the first ever global sustainable standards for rice cultivation, the Sustainable Rice Platform, in collaboration with IRRI, DA RFO 6 and GIZ/BRIA. ZIDOFA’s participation also earmarks a first ever SRP implementation on organic-based SRI implementations.

Additionally, ZIDOFA SRI rice farms have been host to several lakbay-aral, site visitations and SRI hands-on demonstration trainings to fellow farmers and interested individuals, organizations and government agencies such as:

* Hands-on Demonstration of Organic SRI to 30 farmers from the Municipality of Panit-an Capiz under the IRelief Foundation July 2015
* Organic SRI Training conducted by ZIDOFA to 30 farmers in the Municipality of Panit-an Capiz, August 2015
* Organic SRI Training conducted by ZIDOFA to 40 farmers from LGU Zarraga and the Municipalities of Dingle, Pototan, Mina and Dumangas
* Organic SRI presentation in the Department of Agriculture Regional Capability Building Seminar for Local Technical Committees hosted by DA RFO 6, October 2015
* Harvest Festival and Lakbay Aral on Organic SRI to 30 farmers from Municipality of Panit-an, Capiz under the IRelief Foundation November 2015
* Presentation on Organic SRI and Climate Change to University of the Philippines students and Alumna, Pavillon Hotel, Bacolod City, November 2015
* Presentation on Organic SRI and Climate Change to University of the Philippines students and Alumna, Breakthrough Restaurant, Iloilo City, December 2015
* Hands-on Demonstration of Organic SRI to 60 farmers afrom the Municipality of Panit-an Capiz under the IRelief Foundation August 2015
* Hands-on Demonstration of Organic SRI to 30 farmers and high school students from the Municipality of Dao, Capiz under the IRelief Foundation August 2016
* Harvest Festival and Lakbay Aral on Organic SRI to 40 farmers from Municipality of Dao, Capiz under the IRelief Foundation November 2016
* Organic SRI training for 30 farmers belonging to three barangays from the Municipality of Santa Barbara, Iloilo June, 2016
* ZIDOFA was site visited by a team of officials from the Provincial and Regional Offices of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST VI) to assess ZIDOFA organic SRI Project, October 2016
* ZIDOFA monitored, mentored and evaluated 28 organic SRI rice fields in 12 Barangays in the Municipality of Dao, Capiz
* Hosted Lakbay-Aral and Knowledge tour of 30 farmer from three barangays from the Municipality of Santa Barbara, Iloilo, October, 2016
* ZIDOFA was site visited by a team of officials from the Office of the Regional Executive Director (RED) Engr. Remelyn Recoter and DA Information Systems Staff headed by Jovy Gaton to assess ZIDOFA organic SRI Project November 2016
* Training on Seed Production and Multiplication for Organic Heirloom seeds conducted by ZIDOFA with PhilRice and DA RFO 6 Upland Rice Development Program (URDP) to farmers of various organizations in Zarraga.
* Seed Saving School conducted by Friends of ENCA Farms and Rocky Mountain Seed Alliance in Baguio City attended by select ZIDOFA farmers
* ZIDOFA was site-visited by the team of Assistant Secretary to the Visayas/Operations Atty. Hanzel Didulo and his team of agricultural experts to assess the ZIDOFA Organic SRI Project December of 2016
* Site visit by Philippine Center for Post Harvest Development and Mechanization (PhilMech) Engineers to ZIDOFA organic SRI Farms, February, 2017
* 1st batch of International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) sponsored Roving Workshop on Climate Smart Agriculture Technologies as part of the Adaptation and Mitigation Initiatives in Agriculture (AMIA) Program of the DA where
ZIDOFA hosted 60 rice farmers from Ivisan Capiz to demonstrate how Organic SRI Method of Rice cultivation uses less water and reduces emissions of Green House Gas Methane – March 17, 2017
* 2nd batch of International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) sponsored Roving Workshop on Climate Smart Agriculture Technologies as part of the Adaptation and Mitigation Initiatives in Agriculture (AMIA) Program of the DA where ZIDOFA hosted 500 rice farmers from Ivisan Capiz to demonstrate how Organic SRI Method of Rice cultivation uses less water and reduces emissions of Green House Gas Methane – March 24, 2017
* ZIDOFA was site-visited by a Research Team from the UP Los Banos(UPLB)/PCAARRD to assess the field testing of ultra-compact rice mill given by PhilMech/PCAARRD to ZIDOFA for their Organic SRI Project, March 2017
* On September 16, 2017, 30 farmer representatives from the federation of farmers organizations from the Municipality of Pavia went on a knowledge tour of Zarraga organic SRI sites where ZIDOFA farmers conducted organic SRI orientation and briefings prior to actual field observations of standing organic SRI rice plants.

As part of ZIDOFA’s advocacy to promote Organic SRI to other farmers in the region as well as government agencies and to increase consumer awareness on the health, socio-economic and environmental benefits of Organic SRI method of rice cultivation and organic pigmented heirloom rice varieties it has aggressively participated in exhibits, forums and conferences such as:

* 12th National Organic Agriculture Organic Congress in Bacolod City, November 2015 – Exhibitor
* Regional Agri-Aqua Fair in San Jose Antique, December 2015 – Exhibitor
* Central Philippine University Agri-Research Fair December 2015 – Exhibitor
* National Agri-Machineries Expo, December 2015 – Attendee
* National Rice Technology Forum, Pototan Iloilo, Exhibit participant March 2016
* Regional Agri-Aqua Fair, Kalibo Aklan, Exhibit participant, April 2016
* Department of Agriculture Program Implementation for 2016 Planning Workshop, January 2016, Punta Villa, Iloilo
* Focus Group Discussion on Rice Value Chain October 2016 WESVIARC sponsored by BRIA/GIZ
* Regional Organic Agriculture Congress Exhibit and Trade Fair, October 2016 Tigbauan, Iloilo
* Packaging and Labeling (3rd Batch) Program of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Department of Science And Technology (DOST) October 2016
* Dinagyang Trade Fair and Exhibit by Iloilo Chapter of Philippine Chamber of Commerce, January 2017
* Produkto Lokal Trade Fair and Exhibit, Megaworld Festive Walk Parade, February 2017
* ZIDOFA was an official exhibitor of DA RFO 6 during the Makina Expo Agri-Machinery exhibits held at the Iloilo Convention Center September 2017.
* ZIDOFA is currently an exhibitor at the 5th Regional Organic Agriculture Congress in Kalibo Aklan, Sept 27-29, 2017.
* Tinukib Trade Fair at SM City Iloilo, March 2017
* Department of Agriculture, OBM, NEDA 2017 Budget Program Planning Review
* Department of Science and Technology Grant-In-Aid Program awarded to ZIDOFA for a rice mill and two (2) motorized weeders (Total GIA Cost of Php 1million)
* Department of Science And Technology, NEDA 2017 Budget Program Planning Review.
* In August of 2016, ZIDOFA was chosen by DTI VI to be one of 20 MSME’s to participate in the nation’s first launching of DTI’s Mentor Me Program.
* In August of 2017, ZIDOFA was among the top 36 Social Entrepreneurs in the BPI-Sinag Accelerate Program.
* official exhibitor for the region 6 at the National Organic Agriculture Congress in Cagayan de Oro, October 23-27

The overriding objective of ZIDOFA’s SRI Project is to create a closed-loop non-chemical organic SRI Rice value chain devoid of unscrupulous traders and middlemen. This closed-loop value chain will then produce safe, healthy and nutrient-rich brown (red, black, brown, pink, etc.) rice for the Filipino consumer. This will give the farmers the ability to lower production costs, increase yields and receive all the credit and the benefits for the all the hard work they put into rice cultivation. This will also give them a level playing field if not an edge, when cheap rice imports from the ASEAN economic integration and the upcoming lifting of Rice Quantitative Restrictions come in and make the Filipino rice farmer competitive in the global rice market

It is the aim of the project to uplift the socio-economic status of farming communities, restore soil biodiversity and fertility, conserve and protect farm and marine ecosystem resources and reduce production costs in rice cultivation.

Prepared By:



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Chairman

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(ZIDOFA)

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