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CHARMP 2 approves P.5M for heirloom rice business project

February 15, 2016 Dan B. Codamon

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BANAUE, Ifugao, Feb. 15 (PIA) - - The Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resource Management Program 2 (CHARMP) approved the P.5 million heirloom rice business project proposed by the Rice Terraces Farmers Cooperative (RTFCI) based at barangay Poblacion here.

The proposal was approved during the assessment meeting of the CHARMP 2 personnel at the Bahawit Nursery Office in Lagawe last February 4.

The RTFCI is a duly registered cooperative with the Cooperative Development Authority with 303 members. It was established to oversee the production, consolidation and processing of the native rice of Ifugao called "Tinawon" to supply local and foreign markets with the support of government and the non-government organizations.

The Tinawon rice has four fancy varieties and produced in eight municipalities of Ifugao. These varieties have big aromatic grains, great nutritional values, unique attractive appearance but can only be produced once a year because of its long maturing properties.

Seven years ago, coop members have participated in selling the native rice with premium price to export market particularly in the United States of America. Three years ago, they promoted and sold it in the local market by participating in exhibits and trade fairs.

Since its promotion and earning premium price in the market, the farmers managed their rice fields more properly, effectively and efficiently improving their harvest and increasing the family income by 50% with the sale of their native rice.

Now the demand for the native rice here and abroad is increasing so that there is a need to satisfy the demand with ample supply of the Tinawon rice.

To sustain the farmers' activities, the coop is requesting for financial assistance through the loan from CHARMP 2 as revolving fund for the members' entrepreneurial activities for the whole province, explained RTFCI Manager Jimmy Lingayo.

Aside from the entrepreneurial activities, the money will also be used to buy rice from the different municipalities and nearby provinces that are producing the traditional rice.

Buying of the native rice starts after harvest on a cash basis to the members to acquire capital for maintenance and providing their basic need while the processing and packaging will be done by the cooperative following strict quality control. (JDP/DBC- PIA CAR, Ifugao)