

In order to advance and ensure food security amid a brewing food crisis, the agriculture and fisheries sector desperately needs due improvements in the form of policy and structural reforms.

With its collective approach to competitiveness, the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (AFMA) of 1997, or Republic Act 8435, is a landmark policy instrument seeking to improve the living conditions of farmers and fisherfolk, by increasing their productivity and enabling them to provide for the growing needs of both local and global markets.

AFMA's role in transforming the agriculture and fisheries sector is more relevant than ever, so the Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fisheries (PCAF) commissioned the Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP) to conduct a Full-Blown Impact Assessment (FBIA) of the AFMA.

Specifically, the Full-Blown Impact Assessment of the AFMA aims to:

a. Validate the findings and conclusions of the earlier AFMA rapid assessment study,

Continuing Collective Competitiveness: A Full-Blown Impact Analysis of AFMA



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b. Assess in greater detail the outcome and benefits and costs of the AFMA implementation,

c. Determine the current state of A&F sector components by updating earlier findings of studies made on AFMA,

d. Derive conclusions regarding the effectiveness of AFMA in achieving the avowed goals of sector modernization, and

e. Provide recommendations on policy reform for future directions or alternative programs for the further improvement of the A&F sector.

The FBIA will guide DA and PCAF, as we look forward to more agile, resilient, and future-ready programs and interventions to transform the agriculture and fisheries sector into a technology-based, advanced, and competitive industry.



Definition of terms

Future-Ready Programs: These are programs aimed to prepare the agri-fishery sector to surpass and surmount future challenges or competition.

AFMA Rapid Assessment Study: Conducted in 2015, this study was used as the baseline information in monitoring and evaluation programs related to AFMA implementation

Research for Development: These are research programs dedicated to strengthening research capabilities in underdeveloped regions and inventing technologies that would ultimately serve and benefit these areas.

Strategic Agriculture and Fisheries Development Zones (SAFDZ): Within the network of protected areas for agricultural and agro-industrial development, SAFDZs were determined to ensure efficient and sustainable utilization of lands.

AFMA: Decades of Modernizing Agriculture

The AFMA seeks to ensure that even the small farmers and fisherfolk have equal access to agricultural assets, resources, and services.

Valuing collective competitiveness, the AFMA encourages farmers and fisherfolk to bond together for more bargaining power and it continues to enhance people's participation in terms of decision-making. It also pursues a market-driven approach and promotes product processing to make our agricultural products more competitive.

In order to achieve these goals, the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Plan (AFMP) was developed to integrate a variety of activities, interventions, and support services that will make it easier for farmers and fisherfolk to access diverse elements of production.

The AFMA implementation included multi-agency partnerships, the development of Strategic Agriculture and Fisheries Development Zones (SAFDZ), improved credit and financing programs, improvements in irrigation, and various information services.

With its goal of agri-fishery modernization and global competitiveness, the AFMA also included human resource development, by improving trainings and encouraging the younger generation to study agriculture.

AFMA's science-based approach also focused on Research Development and Extension, and the creation of more infrastructures like fish ports, farm-to-market roads, water supply systems, public markets and abattoirs, and more access to rural energy and agricultural machinery.

Real Impact for Real People: Results of the Full-Blown Impact Analysis of AFMA



Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization

Despite challenges like climate change, many targets were met under the AFMP, as it sought to improve food security



Credit

Credit and financial reforms under the AFMA have encouraged the private sector to lend more, helping smallholder farmers



Irrigation

From 2014 to 2019, actual irrigated areas increased by 263,680 hectares



Information and Marketing Support

Several government agencies contributed to this component through projects like commodity industry roadmaps and techno guides



Human Resource Development

As the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education gains traction, enrollees and graduates of agri-fishery courses are expected to increase



Rural Non-Farm Employment Development

Success was observed in the provision of capacity-building trainings and livelihood and tourism projects, increasing rural non-farm employment



Strategic Agriculture and Fisheries Development Zones

Better zoning can increase production efficiency, so improvements on SAFDZs and projects to communicate the updates are needed



Budget and Finance

DA has reformed expenditure, procurement, and reporting to allow better planning and to fast-track programs



Other Infrastructure

DA has made gains in implementing this component and most of the AFMA's Implementing Rules and Regulations have been completed



Governance and Regulations

A commodity-based framework still defines the current approach, but there is a growing need to reorganize agriculture into a more integrated service



Trade and Fiscal Incentives

The importation and use of capital goods and consumables have all collaborated to advance the modernization of Philippine agriculture



Product Standardization and Food Safety

The study identified the need for more representation from the academe, research institutions, and the private sector in formulating research standards

In the assessment, farming and fishing families from barangays that adopted AFMA more intensely have also reported that their living conditions are substantially better now, with improvements in their regular income.

In various areas with higher AFMA adoption, there are also more jobs and training, more food for families, easier public transport, better access to schools, more reasonable electricity cost, and greater investment in livelihood programs.

Rural development, effective poverty-reduction and agricultural programs, better access to productive resources, and better implementation of agrarian reform were also reported by families in various barangays that adopted AMFA more intensely.

These families also agreed that agricultural authorities look after the common interests of farmers and fisherfolk and that current agricultural policies and regulations are consistent with the interests of future generations.

The Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Plan (AFMP), through the years, has also accomplished participatory planning and capability-building activities and has even mainstreamed climate change into DA programs and budgets.

Interventions also include projects dealing with improving irrigation, constructing post harvest facilities, and giving small and marginal farmers and fisherfolk more access to credit and financial support.

Towards Technology-Based Agriculture: Suggestions and Recommendations

The farmers and fisherfolk surveyed by the FBIA communicated their need for more farm production inputs. They stated the need for more hybrid seeds and planting materials, higher quality breeding stocks, improved irrigation, fertilizers, pesticides, and farm tools.

More post-harvest support could come in the form of dryers, millers, haulers, and bridges, and more marketing support could take place through product development.

Farmers and fisherfolk could also benefit from more training in farming technology, irrigation technologies, livelihood activities, micro-enterprise development and management, cooperative development and management, and microfinance.

Consolidating an agricultural research and development agenda, improving facilities and equipment of research laboratories, encouraging more experts and scientists to conduct more multidisciplinary research, and shifting towards research for development (R4D) could all help in the modernization of Philippine agriculture.

Fortunately, the current DA reform agenda deals with developing the Agriculture Career System, improving Agribusiness Management education and training, promoting youth engagement, and strengthening credit programs for agripreneurs.

The FBIA also recommended the combination of efforts for LGUs, DA, DAR, DENR, etc., to execute and monitor various zoning or land use plans and to intensify campaigning for a reformed Agri-fishery sector.

For further questions and for full copies of the FBIA, you can contact the Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fisheries at pcafofficial@pcaf.da.gov.ph