IRRIGATION MANAGEMENT TRANSFER IN THE PHILIPPINES

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FAO Investment Days
Rome, December 17, 2012

Background to the Sector

- Total developed irrigation service area about 1.4 million ha (potential irrigable area of 3.1 million ha).
- National Irrigation Administration (NIA) operates about 200 National Irrigation Systems (NIS) with a total service area of just over 700,000 ha, mostly devoted to rice farming, and with varying involvement of Irrigators' Associations (IA).
- Communal Irrigation Systems (CIS) are owned and operated by community-based IAs cover about 700,000 ha as well.
- Less than 70 percent of developed area irrigated, thus a large gap between potential created and actual area used.

Main Issues and Challenges for Sector

- Long history with Participatory Irrigation Management (PIM) and Irrigation Management Transfer (IMT). Mixed results.
- IAs established, few performing well.
- Deteriorating irrigation systems.
- Inadequate attention to O&M.
- Lack of routine repairs.
- Improper management of available irrigation water (inefficient use).
- Growing competing demands for domestic, industrial, and environmental water use. Climate change? Irrigation to give.
- NIA unable to provide sufficient technical and institutional support.
- Ageing of farm population, farm size declining, limited access to technologies.

Objective for Irrigation Sector Reform

- Break through the vicious cycle of poor system management, poor water service delivery, low cropping intensity, low ISF collection, and insufficient funds for O&M of irrigation facilities, and ensure that the Philippines irrigation sector is an efficient user of water that provides water to at least 90 percent of the potentially available irrigation area.

NIA Rationalization Plan (RP)

- April 2008 – approval of phased implementation of NIA's proposed RP.
- Reduction in staffing from about 6,000 to 3,400 by end of CY12.
- Central, Regional, and Irrigation Management Offices (IMO).
- Functions of staff still to fully align with new requirements. Will include the re-tooling and up-skilling of staff.
- Further development and empowerment of IAs in parallel with rehabilitation and modernization of infrastructure, leading to gradual turnover of responsibilities for O&M to IAs.
- Mismatch in these activities.

Irrigation Service Fee

- Irrigation service fee (ISF) per ha is set in kg of rice.
- Dry season: 150 kg of rice @Ps 15/kg is Ps 2,250/ha or US$55/ha
- Wet season: 100 kg of rice @Ps 15/kg is Ps 1,500/ha or US$36/ha
- Double cropping – ISF is 91/ha

PIM/IMT

- NIA started PIM in earnest in the early 1980s.
- There are some 2,400 registered IAs.
- Some 80 percent entered into contracts with NIA to take over some responsibilities in O&M.
- Contracts allow some negotiations for sharing of fees. Typically in the range 75 – 25%.
- Now move to IMT.

IMT Program

- Aims of IMT program:
- Establishment of duly organized and functional IAs.
- Improved performance of the NISs including equitable water distribution, timely and reliable water deliveries, higher irrigated cropping intensity, and higher collection efficiency of ISF.
- Creating opportunities to NIS farmers for better and more profitable agricultural production.
- Sustainability and financial viability of the IAs and the overall O&M of the NISs.
- Contribution to the sustainability and financial viability of NIA.

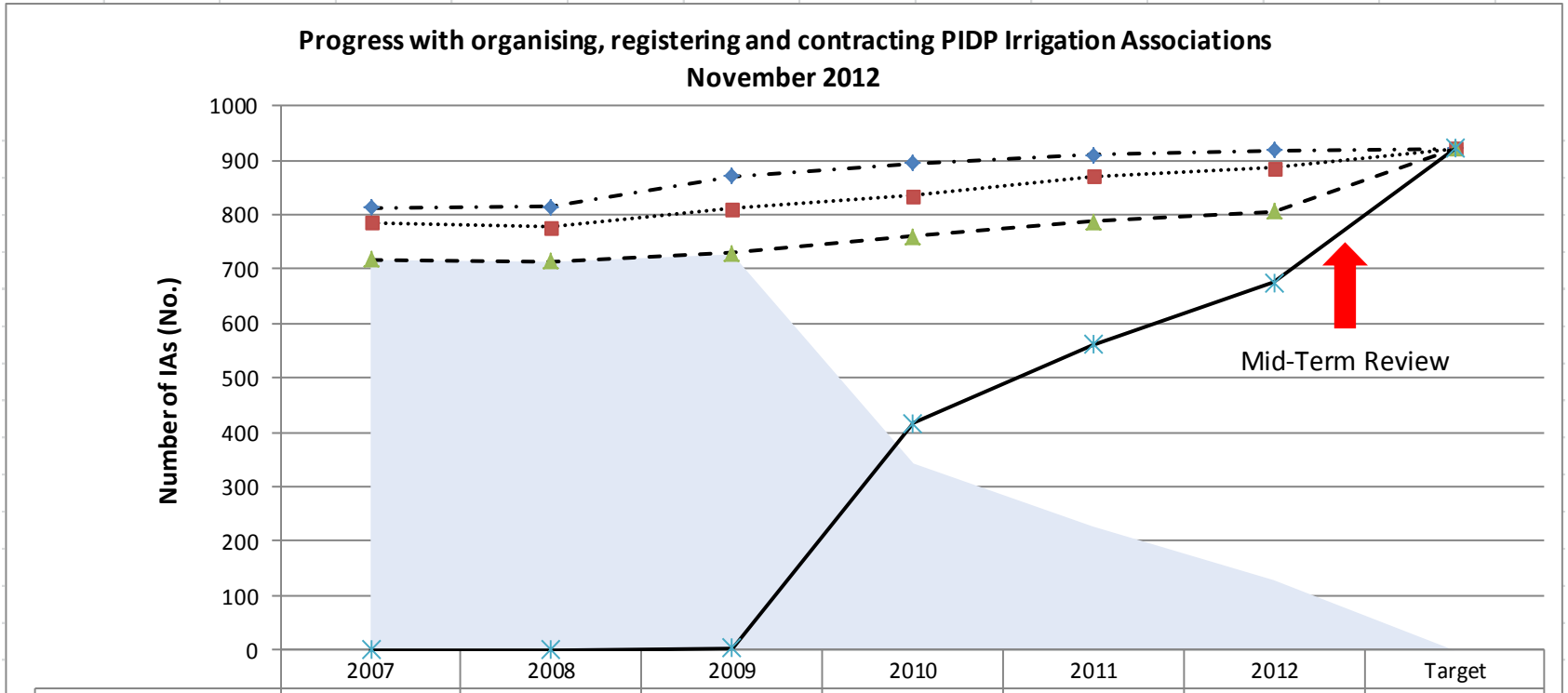
IMT Models

- **Model 1**—NIA manages the entire NISs but transfers specific operation and maintenance activities to the IA such as: (i) maintenance of some canals; (ii) operation activities such as discharge monitoring and distribution of water among turnouts; and (iii) distribution of ISF bills and campaign for payment.
- **Model 2—**NIA manages the main system, from the headworks to the main canal up to the head gates of lateral canals and transfers to the IA the management of the laterals, sub-laterals, and terminal facilities.

IMT Models

- **Model 3—**NIA manages the headworks and portion of the main canal up to the junction of the first lateral canal and transfers to the IA the management of the rest of the system downstream of the specified junction.
- **Model 4** – NIA completely transfers to the IA the management of the entire system including the headworks and stops all its activities on directly managing the system except on monitoring and evaluating the IA performance, collecting seasonal or annual payments from the IA, and periodic technical assistance to the IA by its Irrigation Management Office that has jurisdiction on the system.

IMT – Current Status



	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Target
Old Contracts	718	714	727	343	226	130	0
IA Organized	813	815	871	894	909	918	922
IA Registered	786	776	810	834	871	886	922
With Contracts	718	714	730	759	787	805	922
Model Contracts	0	0	3	416	561	675	922

IMT - Issues and Challenges

- IMT is relevant for the Philippines.
- Small, relatively easy to manage schemes.
- The RP and IMT are not in sync - staffing has been reduced just as significant IMT activities have started
- There is concern that the IMT Program has not yet created sufficient depth of understanding and knowledge about the process as well as the farmers' roles and responsibilities.
- There are difficulties in convincing IAs to convert from old to the new IMT model contracts due to less advantageous ISF sharing arrangements.
- There are insufficient staff at the field level to facilitate IMT.
- Sufficient funds are not available for repair or rehabilitation of systems prior to IMT. Prerequisite?
- Small IAs – are they technically and financially viable. Should farmers farm or be engaged in water management as well?