



Bayelsa Creek Rice

Proposal for capacity building in the rice industry

This project will build the capacity of ex-bunkerers to pursue alternative livelihoods, and simultaneously develop the rice industry in Bayelsa State.

ASCOTID is seeking funding to further develop the rice industry in Bayelsa state by training 50 individuals across Bayelsa State, investing into the emerging industry in Southern Ijaw LGA, and researching the potential to industrialise processing to produce a range of value-added products.

This will boost the collective strength of the rice industry in Bayelsa State and create hundreds of alternative livelihoods, primarily targeted at individuals who have left the artisanal oil industry, but also for members of target communities who are at risk of entering the illicit trade (artisanal oil refining) or other prevalent vices.

Individuals that leave the artisanal oil industry (or *bunkering*), whether by force or voluntarily, rarely have support to establish an alternative livelihood. Experience in Bayelsa shows that without an income, it does not take long for an ex-bunkerer to return, or worse, enter more deadly trades, including sea piracy and kidnapping. ASCOTID aims to break this cycle and promotes alternative livelihoods for ex-bunkerers.

Training budget: ₦7,000,000 (seven million Naira)

Project budget: ₦15,000,000 (fifteen million Naira)

Time frame: 20 Weeks / Eight months

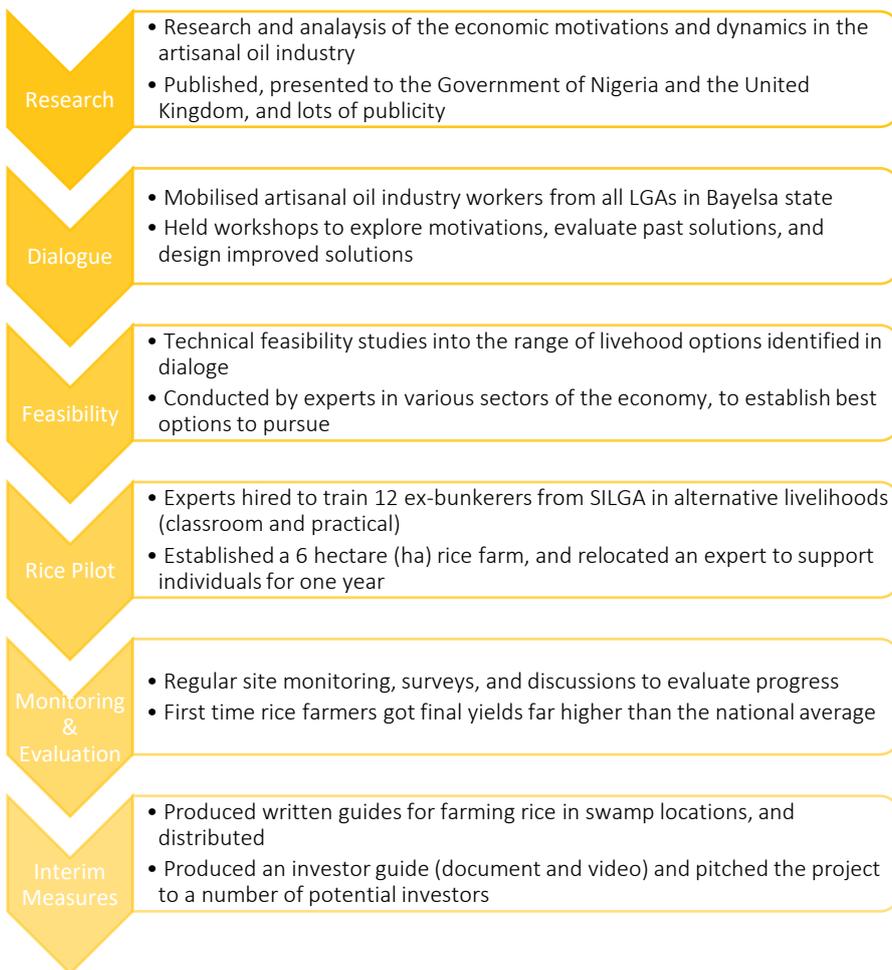


Above: One of the rice farms supported under the past project in Southern Ijaw LGA, Bayelsa State.



The journey so far

This project will pick up where a recent project ended, and share the knowledge and skills with a wider group of beneficiaries. Between 2016 and 2020, ASCOTID facilitated a project with rice industry experts, and Stakeholder Democracy Network (SDN), in a project funded by the UK Government. The team achieved a number of notable milestones, including:



The environment in Southern Ijaw, Nembe and Brass are ideal for rice production. In a pilot project in SILGA between 2017-2020, ex-bunkerers new to growing rice had huge yields. Averages of 5 metric tons (MT) per hectare (ha) were sustained over three cycles. This is well above the national average of 1.8 MT (for non-irrigated cultivation), and one plot yielded 5.8MT, nearly triple that of other Nigerian farms. The environment is exactly the same along the coastal regions of Bayelsa, especially Nembe and Brass, where we aim to eventually expand to at some point. Results from the pilot validate projections that up to 10 MT per ha is possible, and business model projections confirm that commercial scale rice farming would be highly profitable in Bayelsa state.

The proposal

This project will support the development of 50 budding rice industry entrepreneurs in Bayelsa State (five people from each of the eight local government areas (LGA), plus ten additional selections). This includes training, post-training / start-up support, as outlined below.

Training

Rice industry training will be conducted by a team of rice industry experts for 50 beneficiaries, involving one week of classroom-based modules, and two weeks of practical modules. The beneficiaries will travel from their LGA and stay on site for three weeks to complete the training. A location will be selected with classroom and accommodation facilities, as well a suitable plot of land that can be converted into a teaching and demonstration area for the period of the training. Trainees will learn everything they need to start farming rice – including the inputs, processes, processing, and markets. Theoretical knowledge is put into action, as the trainees will get hands-on experience with rice, from seeds, to nursery, planting, cultivating, maintenance, harvesting, and even processing the grains. Three demonstration plots with rice plants at different stages of their growth will be prepared (hence the six-week lead time to establish the training site). Machines will be procured early so they can be used during training (hence the importance of releasing funds simultaneously).

Post-Training / Start-Up

Strategic investments into the value chain will support the farmers to continue producing and selling rice. This will include a nucleus farm in Southern Ijaw LGA (SILGA), where farmers will have access to rice industry experts, who will help them to source inputs, select and prepare land, plant, maintain and harvest rice. Modern machinery will be kept here, that can speed up transplanting, weeding, and harvesting. This will increase the existing capacity on ground – which includes a fully functioning rice processing facility (parboiling, milling, de-stoning, polishing, bagging), set-up under the SDN/UK project.



Transplanter machine at a show room in Nigeria, and threshing machine in action

Research / Value-addition processing industry

ASCOTID will explore rice-based products and business models that are feasible and appropriate to Bayelsa State, to increase the demand and value of rice. Desk-based research and site visits to processing factories in the UK will explore promising products and machinery. Market surveys in Bayelsa will assess the demand for these products (e.g. sampling feedback). A business plan will be developed for the most promising product, for investor(s) engagement.



Rice milk, noodles, and Chilli rice crackers (possible products)

Sustainability

- The project is designed to boost an existing rice farming initiative to a level where it will attract subsequent investors. In the process, it will strengthen an emerging rice industry value chain, and thus support a growing number of Bayelsan rice farmers.
- After one season of growing with our support, the beneficiaries will make a profit and can choose to reinvest into a subsequent season beyond the project, and even expand.
- Beyond the project, the machinery will remain at the nucleus site, which farmers can rent out to use on their farms. Experts will be available for support and advise for a small fee.
- The farming model is modular, and the donor may wish to invest in a 2nd season (for a lower price since land is prepared). This could also be attractive to other donors or CSR projects.
- Private investors have shown interest in a larger farm at the nucleus site – this would start at 50 ha, producing at least 1,000,000 KG of rice in year one. This would generate enough profit to expand to 100 ha in the second year, if the investor follows an expansion strategy.
- Additional private investors will be readily attracted by the processing industry opportunities, that will be raised in the research into value-added products.



Outputs/Deliverables

- Report of results of training programme with NCDMB
- Study of existing rice economy in Igbomotoru and areas to invest
- Report and business models for rice-based products
- Bi-monthly project progress report
- Final project evaluation report

Budget and Timeframe

Funding is expected in March 2021 to enable us enough time to prepare the land to meet up with the farming season commencing in April. The budget for the start-up will be needed at the same time as the training, so that at least one of each machine can be purchased and used for training participants. The following table shows a breakdown of activities, budget, and duration

Activity	Budget (NGN)	Duration (weeks)	Project month					
			1	2	3	4	5	
1. Receipt of funds from donor	--	March-April						
2. Mobilisation of team	--	1 week	█					
3. Establish training site	7,000,000	6 weeks	█	█	█			
4. Classroom training		1 week		█				
5. Practical training		3 weeks		█	█	█		
6. Procure machinery*	10,000,000	4 weeks		█	█	█		
7. Start-up investment (SILGA rice farm)		15 weeks		█	█	█	█	█
8. Research into processing	4,000,000	8 weeks			█	█	█	█
9. Monitoring and evaluation	1,000,000	16 weeks			█	█	█	█
Total	22,000,000	20 weeks						

Contact

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