

Vietnam collaborates with IRRI and GIC to implement technological strategies boosting rice value chain

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The "Green Innovation Centers" (GIC) project was officially concluded at a conference held in Can Tho City to celebrate the success of the collaboration between the Vietnam Ministry of Agriculture and Environment (MAE) and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ).

The GIC project, part of the broader "Green Innovation Centers for the Agriculture and Food Sector" program under the global initiative "One World, No Hunger," is funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by GIZ in 15 African and Asian countries.

In Vietnam, the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), in close partnership with GIC and provincial Departments of Agriculture and Environment, has been implementing innovative techniques to enhance the rice value chain. This includes promoting sustainable rice straw management and adhering to Sustainable Rice Platform standards.

By December 2024, the project had effectively engaged 24,062 farmers along with 294 cooperatives and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) across the rice and mango value chains in six Mekong Delta provinces. A noteworthy aspect of the initiative was the targeted support provided to 91 rice cooperatives and the piloting of 43 innovative farming models, which have demonstrated enhanced economic efficiency and a reduction in emissions when compared to traditional methods.

Dr. Nguyen Van Hung, a scientist at IRRI, shared insights on the project's impacts, stating, "Over the past four years, we have trained many cooperatives and officers in mechanized rice straw-based composting. This effort has fostered environmental responsibility and economic growth among Vietnamese rice farmers." He emphasized that this initiative empowers cooperatives to become key producers of compost, diversifying their income streams and enriching soil fertility, showcasing the positive impact of cooperative-led sustainable agricultural practices in Vietnam.

The innovations surrounding rice straw developed and advocated by IRRI have received widespread adoption and commendation from stakeholders. Mr. Dong Van Canh, Director of New Green Farm Cooperative in Thot Not district, Can Tho city, noted that cooperative farmers are now utilizing rice straw for cultivating straw mushrooms, thereby enhancing their income through both outdoor and indoor models. Additionally, the residual straw from mushroom production is repurposed as organic fertilizer, contributing to sustainability.

Mr. Ta Van Bong, Director of Tan Binh Cooperative in Thanh Binh district, Dong Thap province, highlighted the importance of rice straw composting, stating, "The implementation of rice straw composting is a valuable innovation for Tan Binh Cooperative. Our farmers are actively reducing post-harvest rice straw burning, and transforming rice straw into fertilizer is crucial for improving soil fertility in both intensive rice cultivation areas and those focused on industrial crops and fruit orchards."

Looking ahead, Mr. Nguyen Tan Nhon, Director of the Provincial Programme Management Unit (PPMU) in Can Tho City, outlined future plans with optimism, stating, "We will focus on promoting on-farm rice straw processing into organic fertilizers for reapplication to fields and other crops. This initiative will help farmers reduce production costs and lessen their dependence on chemical fertilizers, especially given the current market conditions."