

Jollibee Foods Corporation:

A Case Study on Responsible Investment into Farmer Entrepreneurship in the Philippines

ASEAN Guidelines on Promoting Responsible Investment in Food, Agriculture, and Forestry

With the technical support of:



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



IISD
International Institute for
Sustainable Development



Image courtesy of Jollibee Group Foundation

Copyright

Copyright © 2022 by Grow Asia Partnership Ltd.

Authors

Cherry Tadeo-Cunanan and Amy Melissa Chua, Philippines Partnership for Sustainable Agriculture; Erin Sweeney and Chrissa Borja, Grow Asia

Editor

Grow Asia

Acknowledgements

Grow Asia would like to thank the Jollibee Group and the Jollibee Group Foundation for their participation in the ASEAN Guidelines on Promoting Responsible Investment in Food, Agriculture, and Forestry (ASEAN RAI) case study series. Special thanks to Jollibee Group and the Jollibee Group Foundation senior leaders, managers, and staff who participated in the interview and supported the review and editing process. Finally, we would like to thank our partners Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) for their inputs, insights, and review of this case study. Grow Asia is grateful for the ongoing collaboration with the ASEAN Secretariat, IISD, and FAO in developing and implementing the ASEAN RAI.

Funding

This publication has been produced with generous support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Executive Summary

This case study outlines the journey of Jollibee Foods Corporation, hereinafter referred to as 'Jollibee Group', in their investment in Jollibee Group Foundation's Farmer Entrepreneurship Program (FEP) that supports multiple groups of smallholder farmers who are producing high-value crops including white onions, salad tomatoes, bell peppers, Philippine lemon, and hot pepper.

Smallholder farmers dominate agricultural production in the Philippines: according to the Agriculture Census of 2012, 90% of agricultural landholdings are less than three hectares. The agriculture sector relies on the productivity of smallholder farmers, making them a significant part of any value chain in the country.

Smallholder farmers in the Philippines rely on multiple layers of intermediaries to consolidate and transport their products to market. Many farmers lack the knowledge and capacity to make their products market-ready to reach end consumers. Farmers relying on intermediaries earn less for the price of their products compared to those that are able to supply and sell directly to the end market.

With the goal to create social and economic impact on the Philippines' agricultural sector, the Jollibee Group Foundation, with support from an annual investment by the Jollibee Group, initiated the Farmer Entrepreneurship Program (FEP) which has proven to address economic challenges by empowering smallholder farmers and transforming them to become entrepreneurs more than being producers.

The key learnings emerging from the investment include:

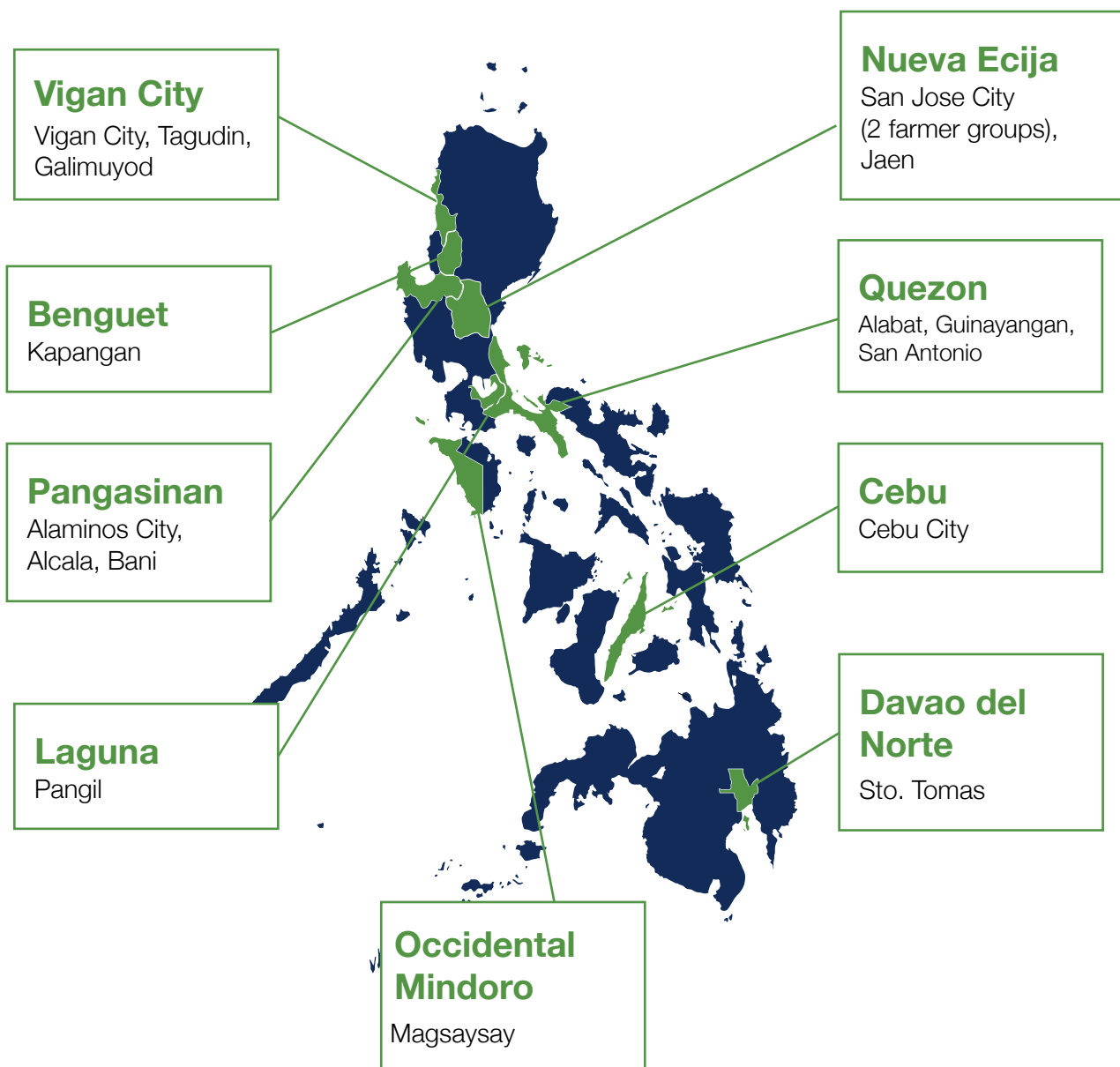
- Supporting farmers with the right access to training, capacity development, and linkage to institutional markets can help them become entrepreneurs;
- Collaborating and partnering with the national and local government as well as civil society organizations are important in making business interventions effective and sustainable;
- Directly sourcing products from smallholder farmers makes a strong business case for food companies.

Read the full case study to learn more about how Jollibee Foods Corporation impacts the lives of smallholder farmers through their investment, following principles of the [ASEAN Guidelines on Promoting Responsible Investment in Food, Agriculture and Forestry](#).



Location

As of June 2022, the Farmer Entrepreneurship Program (FEP) includes 17 groups¹ of farmers and agri cooperatives located in 16 cities and towns in nine provinces across the Philippines.



¹To date, four additional groups are preparing to regularly supply Jollibee Group.

Timeline

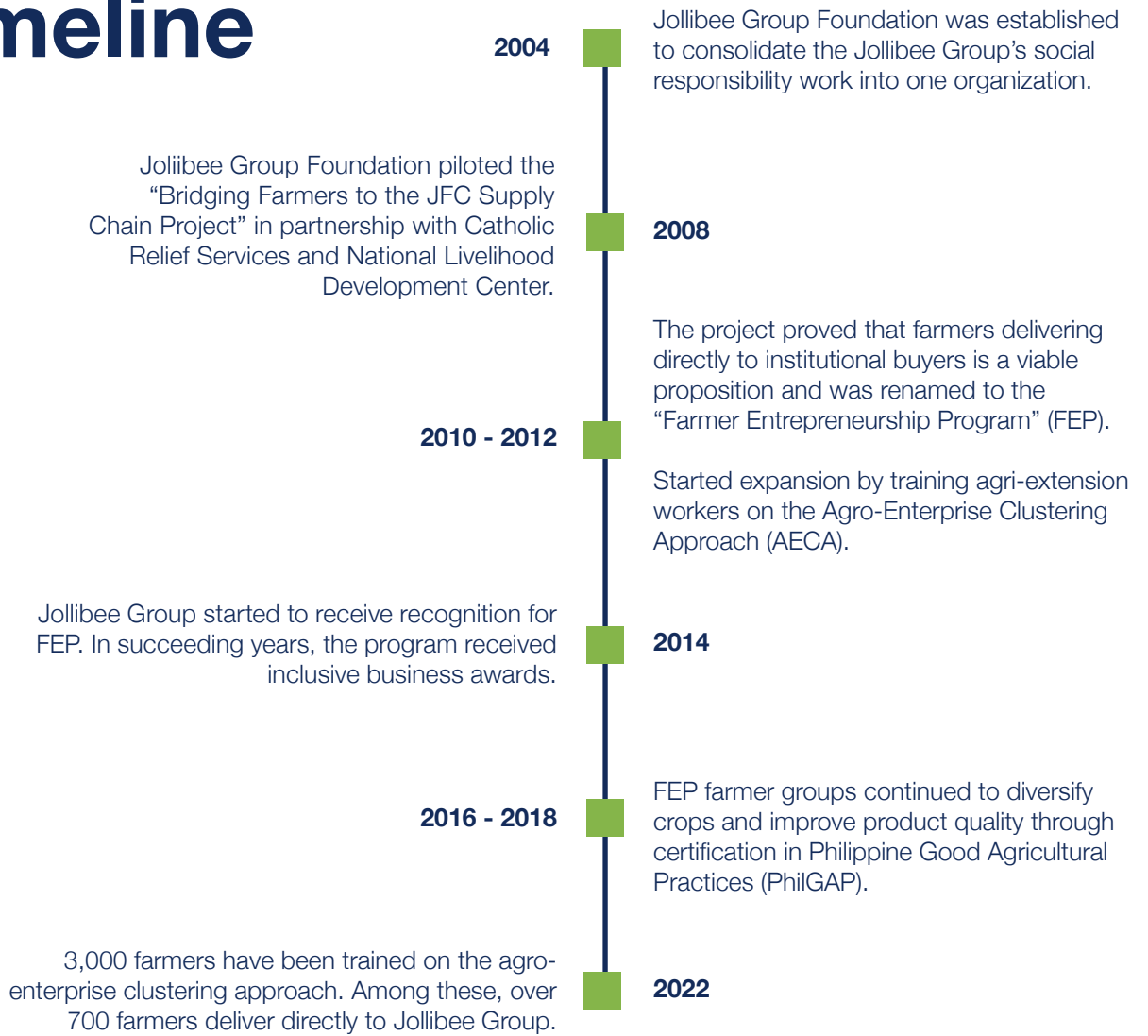


Image courtesy of Jollibee Group Foundation

Investor Profile

Jollibee Foods Corporation (Jollibee Group) is one of the fastest-growing restaurant companies in the world. Its vision is to be one of the top five restaurant companies in the world with a mission to serve great-tasting food, bringing the joy of eating to everyone. The company received multiple awards over the years including “Most Admired Company in the Philippines” by the Wall Street Journal Asia.

Established in 1978, the company is now present across 34² countries, operating over 6,200 stores across 18 brands. As part of its global operations, the company also operates food commissaries³ in the Philippines, China, United States, and Vietnam to directly supply products to their restaurants. This is a strategy that the company set up to ensure that product quality and safety are upheld to the highest standard.

In its pursuit to create impact in the country, Jollibee Group saw the opportunity to contribute in the development of the agriculture sector in the Philippines, especially in rural areas where agricultural productivity rates and contribution to GDP are low, and poverty rates are higher than in urban areas. Looking at the farmer and farming communities in the country, the company recognized the challenge, and opportunity, of the gap between farmers and buyers and the impact that bridging that gap would create. Rooted in its expertise, Jollibee Group aimed to bridge this gap by empowering farmers to become entrepreneurs of better [agri] business, which would boost confidence in their farms for larger buyers. With this outcome envisaged, Jollibee Group set its vision to bring a positive impact to the country's agriculture industry.

Jollibee Group shares its expertise as a food company to equip farmers with critical market knowledge and insight. This includes product quality, quantity, specifications, and other variables needed by the Jollibee Group and other corporate buyers such as CDO Foodsphere and Splash Foods Corporation⁴, and others who also bought product from farmers trained under the FEP. By bringing its expertise to the farmers, Jollibee Group fulfills its investment goals of a stable supply chain while pursuing food security as evidenced by stories of positive change at scale.

As a publicly listed company in the Philippines, Jollibee Group has been working constantly and actively to become more sustainable as a company. Jollibee Group's Sustainability Report allows the company to demonstrate their impact through formal and recognized channels.

² As of June 2022, this includes The Philippines, United States, Canada, the People's Republic of China, United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, Vietnam, Brunei, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, Indonesia, Costa Rica, Egypt, Panama, Malaysia, South Korea, Australia, and India.

³ Commissaries consolidate different commodities for distribution to restaurants and other retail distributors. These commissaries also produce and manufacture some products.

⁴ CDO Foodsphere and Splash Foods Corporation were among the companies who joined the program that has bought directly from the farmers trained under the FEP.

Investment Profile

The Jollibee Group Foundation was created to harmonize the social responsibility efforts of the Jollibee Group and support socio-economic development in the Philippines. The Foundation envisions every Filipino family to have food on the table and its mission is to build partnerships and capacity for community resilience and self-reliance. The Foundation focuses on access to food for the community, especially programs on feeding undernourished children, providing underprivileged youth with access to education, developing farmers to become better entrepreneurs and suppliers of agricultural products, and providing relief assistance during disasters.

Jollibee Group contributes 90% of the annual operating funds for Jollibee Group Foundation and the remaining 10% comes from external sources, including development finance institutions (DFI) and donations from customers via coin banks, where the latter is mainly used for JGF's other programs on education and disaster response.



Investor

Jollibee Foods Corporation (Jollibee Group)



Commodity / crop

High-value crops including white onions, salad tomatoes, bell peppers, Philippine lemon, and hot peppers



Any other financiers involved

Implementation costs are shared/matched by other collaborators or implementing partners, such as local governments and civil society organizations



Total amount of the investment

1.5% of Jollibee Group annual profit invested to Jollibee Group Foundation, portion of which is used for the FEP



Percentage invested by each investor type

90% from Jollibee Group
10% from other sources

Investment Profile

There is an inherent business case for the investment into Jollibee Group Foundation to establish programs that can achieve corporate social commitments. Given the stability of its annual investment from Jollibee Group, the Jollibee Group Foundation can concentrate its efforts in supporting communities through various programs.

One of these programs is called the Farmer Entrepreneurship Program (FEP). The FEP focuses on improving the socio-economic situation of Filipino farmers, thereby further supporting the Philippines' agricultural development and food security.

The FEP is a complete set of interventions that directly responds to the immediate and long-term needs of smallholder farmers, such as 1) capacity building and development; 2) production financing; 3) market linkage (institutional buyers); 4) technology inputs; 5) logistics support; and 6) access to post-harvest facilities. These program interventions provide smallholder farmers with important financial benefits including a reduction in transaction costs that they would traditionally incur when selling products through intermediaries, and interest payments for loans.

Jollibee Group's investment goal for the FEP goes beyond a traditional seller-buyer relationship by transforming it into a partnership model. The approach of the FEP is rooted in collaboration not only with implementing actors (government and civil society organizations) but more importantly with farmers as business partners.



Investment Objectives

This case study focuses on the Farmer Entrepreneurship Program (FEP), as one of the various programs being supported by Jollibee Group through the Jollibee Group Foundation.

When Jollibee Group began to source directly from farmers in 2008, through the FEP, they simultaneously worked to address the challenges from previous attempts to source directly from farmers. Among the key challenges were the farmers' inability to meet the requirements set by the company in terms of the quality, quantity, and timing of deliveries. There were also instances of pole-vaulting, or small producers defaulting on existing contracts by selling to spot buyers, which caused breakdown in trust with other value chain partners.

With these challenges in mind, the objectives of the FEP include:

- Farmer groups practice agro-entrepreneurship, contributing to increased income and improved quality of life
- Local institutions help more farmer groups develop agro-enterprises
- FEP groups regularly meet Jollibee Group standards, increase their volume, and diversify products

“

We want the farmers to become very good entrepreneurs or businessmen. We do not look at them as just beneficiaries of the Foundation, but we wanted to enable them to build sustainable businesses with the partnership of institutions who can support them.

”

**– Mr. Ysmael Baysa, former Chief Financial Officer (CFO),
Jollibee Foods Corporation**

This quote was taken from the interview conducted in August 2021.

Investment Process

Assessment and Planning. Consolidating its social responsibility efforts while continuing to link its business endeavors to social impact programs drove the creation of the Jollibee Group Foundation. An [internal task force](#) was created to systematically design programs built on previous experiences for risk mitigation, making it economically balanced and sustainable. Several strategy sessions were conducted, focusing on food security, improvement of livelihood, and strengthened supply chain through direct sourcing. These themes became the primary areas of work for the Foundation.

Consultations and Partnership-Building.

Leveraging on its network of different stakeholders, the Jollibee Group, through the Jollibee Group Foundation, went through multiple layers of [external consultations](#) with various stakeholders to design the Farmer Entrepreneurship Program (FEP). Those stakeholders included: the [Department of Agriculture \(DA\)](#); public financial institutions such as [Land Bank of the Philippines \(LBP\)](#); [Small Business Corporation](#) (then National Livelihood Development Corporation); the [Catholic Relief Services \(CRS\)](#); local governments; farmer cooperatives; non-profit organizations; and other associations in the agriculture sector.

Through these consultations, the Jollibee Group Foundation identified and entered into a program partnership with NGOs, local government units, and national financing institution that were critical actors in starting the FEP.

Implementation. The FEP implementation went through a [pilot phase in 2008-2010, expansion in 2011-2014; and refocusing in 2014-2021](#).

Throughout the implementation, Jollibee Group Foundation and its partners engage different actors including the Department of Agriculture (DA) at the national and regional levels; local government units in various provinces; NGOs; microfinance institutions; and other stakeholders. To further identify the farmer groups and crops, existing production was assessed in terms of volume, suitability, sustainability, and farmer investment requirement.

Training and Capacity Building/Development.

The FEP follows an [Agro-enterprise Clustering Approach \(AECA\)](#), which is a step-by-step process to help farmers develop their skills in clustering, cost computation, and collective marketing. This cluster approach also provides experiential learning to smallholder farmers by allowing them to learn from fellow farmers. As the program progressed, the clustering strategy also transitioned to tapping local expertise to mobilize and select new clusters or cluster members. This strategy resulted in more stable supply management as well as enhanced farmers' agency and leadership.

The FEP also includes a Training of Trainers (ToT) approach, with both classroom and virtual orientation modules. Farmers are supported with continuous coaching through the clusters and local development partners indigenous to their respective context so that it fosters a community-based understanding of problems and corresponding solutions, co-ownership of goals, generation of resources, and the transition to become formal market players guided by contracts and agreements.

“

We initiated the consultation. Through a network of interconnections, we introduced ourselves to these cooperatives. We were able to have recommendations with different cooperatives in different parts of the country. ”

– Mr. Ysmael Baysa, former Chief Financial Officer (CFO),
Jollibee Foods Corporation

This quote was taken from the interview conducted in August 2021.

Investment Process

Market Linkage. Included in the AECA Approach is the market linkage facilitated initially by the Jollibee Group Foundation. When farmers are referred to the Jollibee Group⁵ they undergo market testing activities including test deliveries, accreditation process, and quality orientations.

Once farmers are accredited, the Jollibee Group then deals with the farmers as ‘entrepreneurs’ themselves. There is no requirement for the farmers to sell 100% of their harvest to Jollibee Group; what is important is for the farmers to determine the supply volume that they can commit to and which will be economically viable for them considering logistics and other marketing costs.

This also allows farmers the option of tapping other buyers, ensuring sustainability of their business.

Financing. With the support of project implementing partners, the FEP also facilitates access to finance for farmers either through production inputs, cash, or direct access to microfinance institutions. Some microfinance institutions also designed [farmer-centric technical assistance and loan products](#) that are responsive to the needs and cash flows of farmer and agribusinesses⁶.

Technological Inputs, Logistics, and Facilities. Technological inputs were provided through a combination of donations or grants from the various project partners of the program, local government, and the farmer cooperatives/clusters themselves.

FEP has entered the ‘Inclusive Business⁷ Institutionalization’ or ‘Transformational and Innovation’ phase with more engagements from different sectors including the national [government](#), local government units, academe⁸, multi-stakeholder partnerships⁹, international organizations¹⁰, and investors.

Monitoring and Evaluation. To evaluate the business success of the program, Jollibee Group measures the total tonnage and value of produce from farmers with direct supply contracts. Depending on the quality and quantity produced by the farmers, there are instances when the farmers’ produce does not meet the required quality conditions, thus, some products may not be bought by the company.

“

We taught the farmers how to borrow money. We do not look at them as just beneficiaries but we wanted to enable them to build a sustainable business.”

– Mr. Ysmael Baysa, former Chief Financial Officer (CFO),
Jollibee Foods Corporation

This quote was taken from the interview conducted in August 2021.

⁵ Jollibee Food Corporation’s Purchasing Group carries out the accreditation process undergone by the farmers.

⁶ As shared by Tulay sa Pag-unlad, Inc. during AECA Session organized by the Philippines Partnership for Sustainable Agriculture (PPSA) and Jollibee Group Foundation in March 2022.

⁷ Inclusive Businesses provide goods, services, and livelihoods on a commercially viable basis, either at scale or scalable, to people at the Base of the economic Pyramid (BoP), making them part of the value chain of companies’ core business as suppliers, distributors, retailers, or customers.

⁸ Agro-Entrepreneurship Facilitators Training Program in collaboration with Xavier University Ateneo de Cagayan with the course program Agro-Entrepreneurship for Inclusive Value Chains Online Course

⁹ Grow Asia and its Country Partnership Network of 580+ organizations.

¹⁰ Seed varietal trials with experts from the Netherlands.

Investment Results

Objectives	Results to date
<p>Farmer groups practice Agro-entrepreneurship, contributing to increased income and improved quality of life</p>	<p>17 farmer cooperatives accredited as suppliers to Jollibee Group; 3,000 farmers trained in directly engaging with agriculture value chains</p>
<p>Local institutions help more farmer groups develop agro-enterprises</p>	<p>54 partners from different sectors, 21 of which are local implementing partners</p>
<p>FEP groups regularly meet Jollibee Group standards, increase their volume, and diversify products</p>	<p>Since 2009, FEP farmers have delivered nearly 9 million kilos of vegetables to Jollibee Group worth more than USD 7 million</p> <p>Jollibee Group currently sources about 15% of its vegetable requirements—white onions, tomatoes, bell peppers, hot peppers, calamansi, spring onions, kangkong, etc — directly from farmers</p>

These results are made possible through the effective multistakeholder partnership approach employed by the Jollibee Group Foundation.

Alignment to ASEAN RAI

The ASEAN Guidelines on Promoting Responsible Investment in Food, Agriculture, and Forestry (ASEAN RAI) is a regionally-adopted, voluntary framework to guide investment decision-making for both private and public sector actors.

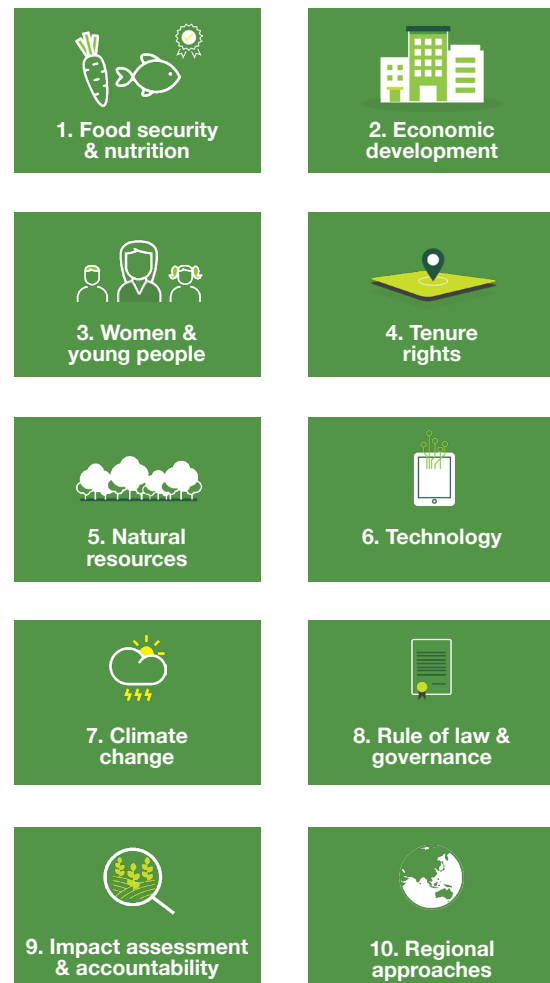
ASEAN Member States have agreed to use these Guidelines to create or update legally-binding policies – which means agribusinesses and investors who demonstrate alignment to the ASEAN RAI are better prepared for these future policy changes.

The next three pages outline the alignment between the company's practices and the ASEAN RAI principles (Figure 1). When a company like Jollibee Group makes a pre-investment commitment to follow responsible environmental, social, and governance practices, they are more likely to be aligned with the ASEAN RAI.

This investment retroactively applies the ASEAN RAI to Jollibee Group's investment into Jollibee Group Foundation, practices and outcomes which are aligned to (some aspects of) 9 out of 10 Guidelines.

If ASEAN RAI had existed before Jollibee Group's investment, it would have helped them to: improve its efforts in identifying the food security and nutrition impact of the FEP on the communities with partner farmer cooperatives and the national targets (Guideline 1); establish a baseline assessment of the socio-economic of target areas (Guideline 9), and evaluate the program's impact over the years (Guideline 9).

Figure 1. 10 Principles of the ASEAN RAI





Guideline 1

Food security and nutrition (local and national)

Access to food has been a focus area for Jollibee Group and the Jollibee Group Foundation. Part of the motivation is ensuring that farmers are able to provide a stable supply of products to the company.

Through the economic impact of FEP to farmers, they are able to provide food, not only for trading but also for their own consumption; and to wider communities.

FEP and other programs of the Jollibee Group Foundation address structural barriers to nutrition goals, e.g., children are not able to go to school or complete the school year because of lack of access to nutritious food, or mothers do not have enough finances to fulfill this need.



Guideline 2

Sustainable, inclusive economic development and poverty eradication, including: improved producer livelihoods, fair contracts, employment and wages, worker health and safety

The FEP is clear in addressing the economic development of farmers by providing training and business and leadership skills development.

Farmers report a significant increase in their income and yield after receiving support from FEP, which also generated multilateral support from various organizations including banks providing access to loans, local government authorities providing access to post-harvest facilities as well as civil society organizations providing technical support.



Guideline 3

Equality, engagement and empowerment of women, indigenous communities, youth, marginalized communities

Gender-sensitive asset ownership, benefit-sharing, and participation in governance are embedded in the FEP. The leadership training package equips women with skills to support their families.

This is evidenced by the program's clustering and quality requirement, e.g., onion peeling which became a source of additional income for one farmer group's women committee.

According to testimonies from one of the women farmers, Jollibee Group Foundation's support enabled her to have a more productive revenue stream and negotiate for herself, reflecting an increase in her agency and economic empowerment.

The FEP also provides scholarships for technical-vocational skills training and has reached 430 underprivileged youth (to date) to engage them in agriculture.

“

Our eventual decision to latch everything on food security or access to food came around 2013. The leadership of Jollibee Group has always been very explicit that what we need to make sure that we make a difference in the community. ”

– Mr. Ysmael Baysa, former Chief Financial Officer (CFO),
Jollibee Foods Corporation

This quote was taken from the interview conducted in August 2021.



Guideline 5

Conservation of natural resources, especially forests

Farmers are supported with the provision of Philippine Good Agricultural Practices (PhilGAP) Certification that comes with training and compliance requirements. PhilGAP Certification is a requirement of Jollibee Group. This certification guides farmers to comply not only with food safety standards but also with sustainable environmental management standards embedded in the certification measures such as the use of planting materials and inputs (fertilizers and agrochemicals), water use, soil management, waste management, and protection of biodiversity, among others.

The certification itself is provided by the DA-Bureau of Plant Industry. The Foundation also worked with DA to come up with a [PhilGAP manual](#) to help farmers more easily understand the requirements.



Guideline 6

Sustainable and appropriate use of technologies

FEP also supports farmers with varietal trials on seeds to be used that aid them to realize better yields and varieties that are easier to manage.

Jollibee Group Foundation has worked with PUM Netherlands senior experts (a consulting firm) since 2019, to upgrade agri-technology knowledge of FEP farmers and technicians. This partnership aims to improve the quality and quantity of farmers' crops by studying soil, fertilizer use, crop varieties, and farm machineries. Over 500 smallholder farmers who supply onions, bell peppers, and other vegetables to Jollibee Group have benefited from this project.



Guideline 7

Resilience to climate change, natural disasters and other shocks

Jollibee Group Foundation partnered with IBM to provide weather sensing technology to help farmers adapt to the challenges of climate change, threatening stability in yields. They have provided data technology that gives advanced information, 15-day weather and rainfall forecast so that farmers can effectively plan their planting schedules to mitigate costs and disruptions on yields.





Guideline 8

Respect for the rule of law and incorporation of inclusive and transparent governance structures, processes and grievance mechanisms

Jollibee Group has governance, grievance structures, and mechanisms in place applicable to Jollibee Group Foundation and programs such as the FEP.



Guideline 9

Assess and address environmental and social impacts and monitor performance

Jollibee Group, as a publicly listed company, annually submits a sustainability report and addresses environmental, economic, and governance impact through materiality, as well as the performance of the FEP. Some of the actions identified include amendments or improvements in water use management and food wastage.



Guideline 10

Strengthened regional approaches to responsible investments

The Jollibee Group Foundation has been active in supporting regional and national initiatives to strengthen its programs. They have been actively supporting regional innovation programs of [Grow Asia](#) and programs in the Philippines under the [Philippines Partnership for Sustainable Agriculture](#).

Jollibee demonstrates its continued efforts towards collaboration with other industry players by joining these communities.



Image courtesy of Jollibee Group Foundation

Ensuring long-term sustainability

Jollibee Group continues to fund the Jollibee Group Foundation to create a bridge between the company to partner farmers. Jollibee Group Foundation actualizes the company's commitment to helping communities develop. By removing intermediaries and providing training (e.g. Philippine Good Agriculture Practices), the FEP offers partner farmers access to income growth and economic gains. The FEP, Jollibee Group, and the Jollibee Group Foundation demonstrate how a private sector model can be a strong enabler to propel economic development in the country, while building an even stronger business, within and beyond borders.

As for the Jollibee Group Foundation, building strong connections and multistakeholder partnerships have helped support the FEP. By partnering with universities, the Foundation can offer production management and capacity development to farmers. Having an established relationship with the national and local governments through involvement in working groups and in commodity roadmap development, the Foundation can advance the importance of a strong business case for the Jollibee Group and for farmers.

To ensure long-term success and sustainability for the FEP and farmers:

- Government agencies can partner with companies, NGOs, and LGUs to institutionalize training for agriculture extension workers and for farmers
- Companies can recognize the business case for directly sourcing products from farmer entrepreneurs, and support increased market linkages to leverage this opportunity

“

In general, because agriculture is such a complex industry, the company or the business should really look at all the different possible strategies to get things done, if they are really pursuing an inclusive value chain.

”

– **Gisela Tiongson, Executive Director,
Jollibee Group Foundation**

Learnings for the future

Jollibee Group believes that it could do more with the structure of the Jollibee Group Foundation and its programs, especially by creating formal joint ventures with companies locally and in the region. This will help build stronger value chains with other companies, so that farmers have multiple markets to sell their produce, without needing to rely on intermediaries. This benefits the farmers (increased profit) and companies (having access to a diverse set of suppliers and being able to trace their products to farms).

Collaboration and expertise are key to achieving this purpose. The Jollibee Group believes that it should use its unique position to influence duty bearers, both government and other private sector players, to embed fair trade approaches by providing farmers opportunity to sell directly to end markets. This will deliver win-win benefits for farmers, companies, and the government to create a more food-secure and sustainable future.

“

With the complexity of the problems in agriculture, especially improving the plight of smallholder farmers, we need many actors and partners. In the case of the company, the supply chain people do not have the time to deal with individual farmers, training and nurturing them; that is why it was important for us to first make sure that we bring others with us, collaboration is key to achieve the purpose. ”

– **Gisela Tiongson, Executive Director,**
Jollibee Group Foundation

References

[2020 Annual Preliminary Estimates of Labor Force Survey \(LFS\)](#)

[AECA Learning Session Synthesis Report](#)

[Farmers are Rolling On and Rolling Off to Increased Revenue in the Philippines](#)

[FEP Learning Video: The 8 Steps of Agro-enterprise Clustering Approach](#)

[Going Against the Grain: A Case Study of Jollibee Group Foundation's Farmer Entrepreneurship Program](#)

[IBM, Jollibee Group Foundation partner to empower farmers with weather insights](#)

[JFC Sustainability Report 2019](#)

[JFC Sustainability Report 2020](#)

[The Farmer Entrepreneurship Program \(FEP\) Project Case Study](#)



Image courtesy of Jollibee Group Foundation

Grow Asia

www.growasia.org

info@growasia.org



ASEAN RAI Guidelines

www.aseanraiguidelines.org