

## SUCCESS STORY: USAID-EXTENSION ACTIVITY SUPPORTS NICOCO AGRO SERVICES TO INCREASE ANNUAL REVENUE BY 114%

Nicoco Agro Services, a micro-enterprise that distributes certified improved rice seeds to smallholder farmers with extension and advisory services in the Ikwo farming communities of Ebonyi State, increased its annual revenue from N4,200,000 (USD4,200) to N9,000,000 (USD9,000), representing a 114% increase. The firm produced and supplied 12.5 tons of certified rice seeds to 200 smallholder rice farmers in their business network.

Before encountering the Feed the Future Nigeria Agricultural Extension & Services Activity (“Extension Activity”) in 2021, Nicoco Agro Services had provided farm input services to farmers, without extension messaging. Upon its contact with the Extension Activity, the firm received training in financial illiteracy, customer management/ retention, and record-keeping. Nicoco Agro Services also adopted various marketing strategies introduced by Extension Activity including demand stimulation, video

extension, and use of digital apps to reach more farmers efficiently. Consequently, through demand stimulation, the firm developed a wider customer base, increased its farmers from 45 farmers to 200 farmers. The farmers bought and received extension services from the firm to enhance their productivity.

Mr. David Oreke, the CEO of Nicoco Agro Services, is excited about their relationship with the Extension Activity and the training they received on financial literacy and business record keeping. He said, “The series of training I got from Extension Activity enabled me to effectively manage my finances and maintain accurate records of my sales. It also helped me to give more farmers good advice that helped them to increase their yield. Most of my rice farmers expanded their production because they have dependable source of improved seed from my company”.

Farmers attested to the superior quality of the seeds Nicoco Agro Services produces. Mr. Nwibo Simon, a farmer who benefited from the services of Nicoco Agro Services, was proud to identify himself as a loyal customer of Nicoco Agro Services. He said that since joining the farmers’ network of Nicoco Agro Services farmers network in 2022, he achieved yields of 3.6 tons per hectare against 2.3 tons before the union. He said, “I have expanded my rice farm from 1.5ha to 3ha because Nicoco Agro seeds germinate uniformly, tiller very well and assure high yield. I have experienced a good harvest beyond my expectations since 2022 when I started using improved rice seed from Nicoco Agro Services.”

Mr. Oreke appreciated the positive impact of the partnership with the Extension Activity. He said, “We provide farmers with the best quality to increase our customer base. This approach has fetched more money for my business. I will always be grateful with USAID for bringing Extension Activity to Ebonyi State.”

The Feed the Future Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services Activity supports MSMEs to commercialize the most impactful practices that enable smallholder farmers to increase their productivity and incomes. The Extension Activity works in seven states – Benue, Cross River, Delta, Ebonyi, Kaduna, Kebbi and Niger states.



Mr. David Oreke, CEO of Nicoco Agro Services showing off his 2ha certified rice seeds multiplication farm in the establishment stage. Photo Credit: Nigeria Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services Activity.