



Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Regional Field Office No. 02
Diversión Road, San Gabriel
Tuguegarao City, Cagayan 3500

DARFO2.ORED.73-2

July 1, 2026

DR. BENJAMIN D. PARAGAS, CESO V
Regional Director
Department of Education Regional Office No. 02
Regional Government Center, Carig Sur, Tuguegarao City, Cagayan
Attention: All Schools Division Superintendents, DepEd Region 02



Dear Director Paragas:

In celebration of the **National Rice Awareness Month 2026**, the Department of Agriculture - Regional Field Office No. 02 (DA RFO 02), through the National Rice Program, respectfully seeks the support of the Department of Education Regional Office 02 in encouraging the participation of eligible learners, teaching and non-teaching personnel, and other qualified individuals to participate in the **Rice Heroes: Young RICEponsible Mascot Design Challenge**.

The competition aims to harness the creativity and artistic talents of Filipino youth in designing an original campaign mascot that embodies the core messages of the "Be Riceponsible Everyday" campaign, promoting responsible rice consumption, preventing rice wastage, and fostering greater appreciation for the invaluable contributions of Filipino rice farmers to the nation's food security.

The contest is open to **Filipino youth aged 15 to 30 years old**. All entries from Region 02 shall undergo regional screening prior to endorsement to the national level. The attached contest guidelines contain the complete mechanics, eligibility requirements, submission procedures, and other pertinent information.

In this regard, may we respectfully request your good office, through the Schools Division Offices, to disseminate this invitation and the attached contest guidelines to all public and private secondary schools throughout Region 02 and encourage qualified individuals to participate. To provide sufficient time for the Regional Field Office to conduct the screening, evaluation, and endorsement of entries, interested participants are requested to submit their complete entries to DA RFO 02 on or before **July 28, 2026**. This will facilitate the timely processing and consolidation of entries and ensure their endorsement to the National Rice Program ahead of the national submission deadline of **July 30, 2026**.

For inquiries and submission of entries, participants may coordinate with Ms. Jhoana Bassig, RAFIS Chief through email at darfo2uram2026@gmail.com or mobile no. 0917-157-0598.

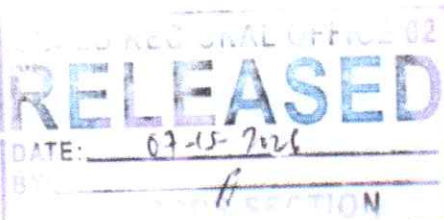
We look forward to your continued partnership in inspiring the youth to become advocates of responsible rice consumption while recognizing the vital role of our rice farmers in achieving a food-secure and resilient Philippines.

Thank you for your continued support and cooperation.

Very truly yours,

ROSE MARY G. AQUINO, Ph.D.
Regional Executive Director

//RAFIS



MEMORANDUM		Date: 7/20/24	Released (Words): 400
To: () PSDS/DICS	() Elem/Sec School Heads		
() Private Schools	() Others:		
For: () Information	() Dissemination		
() Guidance	() Strict Compliance		
ORLANDO E. MANUEL PhD., CESO V Schools Division Superintendent			
By: [] ASDS	[] CID Chief	[] SGOD Chief	[] AO [] Ally

July 7, 2026

To: **ALL SCHOOLS DIVISION SUPERINTENDENTS**
Attn.: Division Partnership Focal Person

Greetings!

For your information and appropriate action.

BENJAMIN D. PARAGAS PhD, CESO III
Director IV/Regional Director



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July 1, 2026

DR. BENJAMIN D. PARAGAS, CESO V
Regional Director
Department of Education Regional Office No. 02
Regional Government Center, Carig Sur, Tuguegarao City, Cagayan

Attention: **All Schools Division Superintendents, DepEd Region 02**

Dear **Director Paragas**:

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Very truly yours,

ROSE MARY G. AQUINO, Ph.D.
Regional Executive Director

//RAFIS



For and by Authority of the Regional Executive Director:

ROSEMARY G. AQUINO, Ph.D.
Regional Executive Director
For Operations and Extension

Kindly submit your entries to the assigned regional focal person using the email address corresponding to your region. Please double-check your region before submitting your entry.

Region	Contact Person/s	Email Address
CARFO	Janice Agrifino/Jasmine Agbuya	rafis@car.da.gov.ph rice@car.da.gov.ph
RFO I	Vida Cacal/ Leah P. Coloma	rafis@ilocos.da.gov.ph/rice@ilocos.da.gov.ph
RFO II	Marvin B. Luis, DPA (Chief, FOD/ Rice Program Focal) Jhoana M. Bassig (Chief, RAFIS)	darfo2nram2026@gmail.com
RFO III	Lowell D. Rebillaco (Acting Chief, FOD) Ozanne Ono D. Ocampo (RAFIS Chief)	fod.rice@rfo3.da.gov.ph/ ozanneono.ocampo@rfo3.da.gov.ph
RFO IV-A	Jayvee Ergino/ Chieveryly M. Caguitla - RAFIS Maricris O. Ite/ Christie S. Gonzales - Rice Program	rafis@calabarzon.da.gov.ph calabarzon.riceprogram@mail.da.gov.ph
RFO IV-B	Ronald A. Degala/Leofred N. Ganibo Baby Clariza San Felipe	mimaroparice@gmail.com rafis@mimaropa.da.gov.ph
NCR	Simon Ishigaki L. Abitan, RAgr.	ishigaki.abitan@mail.da.gov.ph
RFO V	Lovella P. Guarin	rfo5.rafis@mail.da.gov.ph
RFO VI	James Earl Ogatis (Regional Information Officer) Sheila Mae Cocjin (Information Officer II)	info@wv.da.gov.ph
RFO VII	Engr. Epifanio P. Gaudicos Jr. (RICE) / Florelin R. Orozco (RAFIS)	riceprog07@gmail.com / rafisvii2014@gmail.com / da7documentation@gmail.com / da7.ored@da.gov.ph
NIR	Jan Nephi S. Treyes/Maria Ritchel Bergantin (RAFIS) Rammy Baylosis/ Dana Mae B. Sampilo (Rice)	rafiz.danir@gmail.com rice.danir@gmail.com
RFO VIII	Jennina June Leira Brosas/Elizabeth Hugo	da8.rafis@gmail.com/ da8rpmu@gmail.com/ rafis@rfo8.da.gov.ph
RFO IX	Ray Anthony M. Credo	riceprogram.rfo9@gmail.com
RFO X	Jurrybe Lachica Mary Grace Sta. Elena	rice@region10.da.gov.ph dioriveehardin1989@gmail.com rafisnorthmin@gmail.com

		gracestaelena579@gmail.com
RFO XI		rafis@rfo11.da.gov.ph ricedavao@gmail.com
RFO XII	Emma A. Narca Edgar Allan Pasaol	rice@rfo12.da.gov.ph rafis@rfo12.da.gov.ph
RFO XIII	Noli G. Orog Francis Irene C. Limbaga Rhea C. Abao	rice@caraga.da.gov.ph francisirene0118@gmail.com rafis@caraga.da.gov.ph

ANNEX A: GENERAL CONTEST GUIDELINES

A.1 General Mechanics

All Public and Youth Engagement Activities shall follow a standardized two-tiered evaluation process (Regional Level → National Level) to ensure inclusive participation, consistency in screening, and equitable representation across all regions.

1. Submission of Entries

All participants shall submit their entries to the appropriate RFO based on their residence, school, or organizational affiliation. Submissions must strictly comply with the prescribed formats, technical specifications, documentation requirements, and deadlines indicated in the official contest guidelines. Entries submitted directly to the national level shall not be accepted.

2. Regional-Level Screening

Each RFO shall conduct an initial screening and evaluation of all submitted entries within its jurisdiction. The RFO shall select and endorse one (1) official regional representative per category, unless otherwise specified in the activity guidelines. The regional level shall serve strictly as a screening stage; no cash prizes shall be awarded at this level. Selected participants shall receive a Certificate of Recognition, and RFOs may provide non-cash or in-kind tokens, subject to availability of resources.

3. National-Level Evaluation

All officially endorsed entries shall undergo final evaluation at the national level by an authorized Board of Judges designated by the organizing body. Winners shall be determined based on the approved criteria and scoring system for each contest.

4. National Awards Structure

Unless otherwise specified per activity, the following awards shall be granted at the national level:

- Grand Winner
- First Place
- Second Place
- Five (5) Consolation Winners
- One (1) RICEponsible Choice Award

5. RICEponsible Choice Award (Online Engagement)

A separate RICEponsible Choice Award shall be determined based on validated online engagement of officially endorsed entries. Reactions shall be equivalent to one (1) point, while shares shall be equivalent to three (3) points. The official voting period shall be five (5) to seven (7) days, as announced by the organizing body. Any form of fraudulent, automated, or manipulated engagement shall result in disqualification from this award category. The RICEponsible Choice Award shall not influence the results of the official judging.

A.2 Grounds for Disqualification

Entries may be disqualified under any of the following conditions:

1. Submission not made through the appropriate RFO
2. Plagiarized, copied, or previously published content
3. Non-compliance with prescribed technical, documentation, or content requirements
4. Submission beyond the official deadline

5. Use of inappropriate, offensive, or misleading content
6. Violation of intellectual property rights or use of unauthorized materials
7. Engagement in fraudulent activities, including manipulation of online votes or submissions

A.3 General Eligibility

1. **Participant Eligibility**

The contests are open to all Filipino citizens residing in the Philippines, subject to category-specific requirements indicated in each activity. Participants must also be a follower of the Be Riceponsible Facebook page and the Department of Agriculture National Rice Program.

2. **Participation Format**

Participants may join as individuals or groups, depending on the specifications of each contest. Each participant or group may submit only one (1) entry per category.

3. **Participation of Organizing Body and Affiliates**

Employees of the Department of Agriculture, their relatives, and individuals from partner agencies may participate, provided that they comply with all eligibility requirements and are not directly involved in the screening, evaluation, or judging process.

4. **Compliance with Contest Guidelines**

All participants must fully comply with the general and activity-specific guidelines. AI may be used as a support tool, but submissions should primarily reflect the participant's own creativity and work. Failure to adhere to any requirement may result in disqualification or invalidation of the entry.

ANNEX B: ACTIVITY-SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

B.1 Rice Heroes: Mascot Design Challenge

Mechanics

The Rice Heroes: Young RICEponsible Mascot Design Challenge is a nationwide art competition designed to promote creativity while reinforcing the values of responsible rice consumption and appreciation for Filipino rice farmers.

1. Concept Development

Participants shall create an original mascot design that embodies the core campaign messages of Be Riceponsible Everyday, including: Avoid Rice Wastage; Buy Our Farmers' Rice and Choose Healthier Rice

The mascot may take the form of a human, animal, plant, rice grain, or other symbolic character, provided that it clearly reflects the campaign theme and effectively communicates the values of responsible rice consumption and appreciation of Filipino rice farmers. The design should be visually engaging, memorable, and suitable for use in educational, advocacy, and promotional materials targeting various audiences.

2. Design Requirements

The mascot design must be original and may be created through hand-drawn or digital illustration. All entries must be presented in full color and accompanied by a short written description consisting of three to five (3-5) sentences explaining the concept, symbolism, character traits, and relevance of the design to the campaign.

The mascot should demonstrate creativity, originality, and strong visual representation of the campaign messages. Designs must not contain copyrighted elements, trademarks, logos, or materials owned by third parties without proper authorization.

3. Technical Specifications

Entries shall be submitted in PDF, PNG, or JPEG format. Digital files must be of high quality and suitable for reproduction in print and digital platforms. Scanned artworks must be clear, properly cropped, and submitted at a minimum resolution of 300 dpi.

Participants must ensure that submitted files are complete, legible, and production-ready. Editable source files may be requested from selected winners for campaign production and distribution purposes.

4. Submission Limitation and Originality

Each participant is allowed to submit only one (1) entry. All submissions must be

original, unpublished, and must not have been previously submitted to other competitions. Any form of plagiarism or duplication shall be grounds for disqualification.

5. Submission Requirements

Participants shall submit a complete entry package, which includes: Final mascot artwork in PDF, PNG, or JPEG format, A short concept description consisting of three to five (3-5) sentences explaining the design concept and its relevance to the campaign, A duly accomplished Application Form, A duly signed Declaration of Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), whether AI tools were used or not used in the creation of the entry, Proof of following the Be Riceponsible Facebook Page and the Department of Agriculture National Rice Program official page (screenshot), A valid government-issued ID, school ID, or any official document indicating the participant's current region of residence, A signed consent form from a parent or legal guardian for participants below eighteen (18) years old.

Incomplete submissions or failure to submit the required forms and declarations shall be grounds for disqualification.

6. Ownership and Use of Entries

Winning entries may be adopted by the organizing body, specifically the Department of Agriculture or its designated implementing unit, for official campaign use, subject to an intellectual property agreement with the creator.

The organizer reserves the right to reproduce, publish, display, adapt, and utilize submitted entries for advocacy, educational, promotional, and campaign-related purposes, with proper acknowledgment of the creator.

7. Selection and Announcement of Winners

Entries shall undergo a two-tiered evaluation process. All entries shall first be submitted to and screened by the Regional Field Office (RFO) corresponding to the participant's region of residence. Each RFO shall select and endorse the top entries to the national level for final evaluation by an authorized panel of judges.

Winners shall be announced through official campaign platforms.

Eligibility and Requirements

1. Participant Eligibility

The competition is open to all Filipino citizens nationwide who fall within the youth age bracket of 15 to 30 years old, as defined by Republic Act No. 8044, also known as the Youth in Nation-Building Act. Participants may include students, individuals, and representatives from various sectors. Additionally, participants must be followers of the Be Riceponsible Facebook page and the Department of Agriculture National Rice Program.

2. Participation of Government and Partner Personnel

Employees of the Department of Agriculture, as well as personnel from partner agencies and organizations, are allowed to participate, provided that they comply with all

eligibility requirements and do not have direct involvement in the judging or evaluation process.

3. Required Documents

Participants must submit the following documents: Duly accomplished Application Form, Final mascot design entry, Short concept description, Signed Declaration of Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Proof of following the required social media pages (screenshot), Valid government-issued ID, school ID, or any official document indicating current region of residence, Parent or guardian consent form for participants below eighteen (18) years old

Entries must be submitted through the Regional Field Office (RFO) corresponding to the participant's region of residence. The submitted proof of identity and residency shall be used to verify eligibility and determine the appropriate region for screening and endorsement to the national level.

Failure to provide valid proof of identity and residency may result in disqualification or non-acceptance of the entry for regional screening.

4. Compliance with Legal and Ethical Standards

All entries must comply with applicable intellectual property laws and ethical standards. Designs must be respectful, appropriate for public use, and aligned with the values promoted by the campaign.

AI may be used as a support tool; however, submissions should primarily reflect the participant's own creativity and work. Any use of AI tools, whether for concept development, illustration, design enhancement, editing, or other production-related purposes, must be fully disclosed through the Declaration of Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Failure to disclose AI usage may result in disqualification upon verification by the organizers.

Criteria for Judging

Criteria	Description	Weight
Creativity & Originality	Uniqueness of concept and innovation in design	30%
Relevance to Theme	Clear representation of responsible rice consumption and farmer support	25%
Visual Impact	Color harmony, composition, and overall appeal	20%

Symbolism & Message	Strength and clarity of advocacy message	15%
Technical Execution	Neatness, effort, and skill appropriate to age	10%

Prize Structure

- Grand Prize - ₱10,000
- 1st Prize - ₱7,000
- 2nd Prize - ₱5,000
- Consolation (5) - ₱2,000 each
- RICEponsible Choice - ₱1,000

APPLICATION FORM

I, _____, residing at _____, hereby voluntarily agree to participate in the _____ under the National Rice Awareness Month 2026 celebration of the Department of Agriculture (DA), to promote responsible rice consumption and strengthen public support for Filipino rice farmers.

By signing this document, I hereby certify that I have read, understand, and voluntarily agree to the following terms and conditions:

1. **Originality of Entry:** I certify that the submitted entry is my original work and does not infringe upon any copyright, trademark, or intellectual property rights of any individual, organization, or entity.
2. **Ownership and Use of Entries:** I understand and agree that winning entries may be adopted by the DA and/or its designated implementing unit for official printing, publication, reproduction, dissemination, and distribution, subject to applicable intellectual property laws and agreements.
3. **Grant of Permission:** I hereby grant the DA a non-exclusive, royalty-free right to reproduce, publish, display, distribute, and utilize my submitted entry in whole or in part for advocacy, educational, promotional, and other official government purposes, with proper acknowledgment of authorship.
4. **Acknowledgment of Authorship:** I understand that proper recognition shall be given to me whenever my work is used, reproduced, published, or disseminated by the organizing body.
5. **No Additional Compensation:** Except for prizes, awards, certificates, or incentives officially indicated in the contest guidelines, I understand that no further monetary compensation, royalty fee, or remuneration shall be claimed for the authorized use of my submitted entry by the DA.
6. **Compliance with Contest Rules:** I agree to abide by all contest mechanics, guidelines, requirements, and decisions of the organizers and board of judges, which shall be deemed final and irrevocable.
7. **Release and Hold Harmless:** I hereby release and hold free and harmless the DA, its officials, employees, and organizers from any claim, demand, or liability arising from my participation in the contest, except in cases of willful misconduct or gross negligence.
8. **Data Privacy Consent:** I authorize the DA to collect, store, and use my personal information solely for the administration, evaluation, documentation, and promotion of the contest, in accordance with the provisions of the Data Privacy Act of 2012 and other applicable laws.

Signed this ____ day of _____ 2026.

Signature over Printed Name of Participant

If minor, please confirm parental consent by signing below:

Signature over Printed Name of Parent/Guardian

DECLARATION OF USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

I, _____, hereby declare that the entry I submitted for the _____ contest is my original creative work.

I further certify that:

1. The submitted entry was personally conceptualized, developed, and completed by me.
2. Any use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, applications, software, or platforms in the creation, enhancement or refinement of the submitted entry has been fully disclosed in this declaration and complies with the contest guidelines.
3. The submitted entry does not infringe upon any intellectual property rights, including copyright, trademark, or related rights of any person, organization, or entity.
4. I understand that failure to disclose the use of AI tools, submission of AI-generated content beyond what is permitted under the contest guidelines, plagiarism, misrepresentation of authorship, or any false declaration may result in automatic disqualification and possible forfeiture of awards or recognition.

Please indicate whether AI tools were used in the creation of the submitted entry:

- ☐ No, I did not use any AI tools in any stage of the creation process.
- ☐ Yes, I used AI tools during the creation process. Details are provided below:

Name of AI tool/site/app	Purpose	How the tool/site/app was used

I affirm that the information provided above is true, accurate, and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the contest organizers may review, verify, and assess the disclosed use of AI to determine compliance with the contest rules and eligibility requirements.

I am executing this declaration voluntarily and with full understanding of its contents for the purposes of participating in the National Rice Awareness Month 2026 Celebration contest organized by the Department of Agriculture.

Signed this ____ day of _____ 2026.

Signature over Printed Name of Contestant