

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MEETING
Consultation Meeting on SARAI Centralized National Hub for Regional Operations
(SARAI CeNTRO)

9:00 – 10:30 AM | 16 October 2024 | via Zoom

I. Attendees:

1. Mr. Eduardo Fugoso – DOST-OUSECRO
2. Ms. Raquel Santos – DOST Region II
3. Mr. Bryan Baltazar – DOST Region III
4. Mr. Doms A. Pena – DOST V
5. Ms. Hazel Maganto – DOST Region VI
6. Ms. Ana Mae Roberto – DOST Region VI
7. Ms. Mary Grace Tariao – DOST Region VIII
8. Mr. Mhardy Montejo – DOST Region VIII
9. Ms. Jean Ragub – DOST Region VIII
10. Ms. Nicka Salentes – DOST Region VIII
11. Ms. Dores Gabo – DOST Region IX
12. Ms. Alma Fe Albrarico – DOST Region IX
13. Mr. Nori Vincent Aposaga – DOST Region IX
14. Ms. Coreen Joy Revamonte – DOST IX
15. Mr. Benzar Kasan – DOST Region IX
16. Ms. Sheryl Jovenal – DOST Region X
17. Ms. Grazelle Dela Cruz – DOST Region X
18. Mr. Jowin Jeoh Coscos – DOST Region XI
19. Ms. Just Magallanes – DOST XI
20. Ms. Giselle Eve Siladan – DOST Region XI
21. Ms. Rizza Mae Bluza – DOST Region XII
22. Ms. Hizam Panggaga – DOST Region XII
23. Ms. Beatriz Bongcawel – DOST Region XII
24. Mr. Karl Franial – DOST Region XII
25. Ms. Oonah Abing – DOST Region XII
26. Ms. Sheryl Demillo – DOST Region XII
27. Ms. Noneth Labastilla – DOST-CARAGA
28. Mr. Rik Varela – DOST-CARAGA
29. Ms. Rachel Montero – DOST-MIMAROPA
30. Ms. Abegail Baoy – DOST-MIMAROPA
31. Mr. Allan Acosta – DOST-MIMAROPA
32. Mr. Santy Anthony Jalla – DOST-MIMAROPA
33. Ms. Ameca Fe Jinang – DOST-MIMAROPA
34. Mr. Bernardo Caringal – DOST-MIMAROPA
35. Ms. Maria Ethelwilda Coronacion – DOST-MIMAROPA
36. Mr. Vincent Labindao – DOST-MIMAROPA
37. Ms. Elvin Almazar – DOST-NCR
38. Mr. Joseph Louis Cabalza – DOST-NCR
39. Mr. Jayson Umali – DOST-NCR
40. Ms. Alice Balacua – DOST-CAR
41. Dr. Decibel Faustino-Eslava – UPLB SARAI
42. Dr. Maria Victoria Espaldon – UPLB SARAI
43. Prof. Moises Dorado – UPLB SARAI
44. Prof. Concepcion Khan – UPLB SARAI
45. Ms. Maria Regina Regalado – UPLB SARAI

46. Mr. Leo Neil Viado – UPLB SARAI
47. Ms. Rosemari Areglado – UPLB SARAI
48. Ms. Ericha Amante – UPLB SARAI
49. Ms. Dara Montalbo – UPLB SARAI
50. Dr. Reynaldo Eborá – DOST-PCAARRD
51. Ms. Maria Teresa de Guzman – DOST-PCAARRD
52. Engr. Kathleen Faith Jay Villarma – DOST-PCAARRD
53. Ms. Misty Mae Evangelista – DOST-PCAARRD

II. Objectives of the meeting:

- The meeting was called to discuss the comments and recommendations of the DOST-EXECOM during the program's presentation on August 1, 2024 and gather inputs from respective DOST Regional Offices (DOST-ROs), to further improve SARAI CeNTRO program. These recommendations are as follows:
 - Identify the expected outputs from each regional hub for confirmation of the regions;
 - Clarify the roles of various agencies involved; and
 - Review the budget summary.

III. Highlights of the meeting:

- Dr. Reynaldo V. Eborá of DOST-PCAARRD started the meeting by emphasizing the importance of completing the critical needs for the establishment of regional hubs, defining their expected outputs and finalizing administrative documents. He highlighted the need to assess the financial requirements for each region, considering that some regions may already have the necessary equipment and infrastructure. Dr. Eborá also informed everyone that based on a recent meeting, PhilRice along with other agencies in the Department of Agriculture (DA) is willing to collaborate with SARAI. The next step will be to have a discussion with them regarding digital agriculture.
- Dr. Decibel V. Faustino-Eslava of UPLB presented the SARAI CeNTRO framework and its role as a centralized hub responsible for the overall program management and coordination with the National Advisory Committee and Regional Technical Advisory Committee. The National Advisory Committee will include representatives from national government agencies and relevant line agencies, co-led by the DOST and DA. The Regional Technical Advisory committee will be co-led by the Regional Research, Development and Innovation Committee and DOST. They will be supported by the corresponding regional offices of the NGAs, PLGUs, LGUs, relevant commodity agencies/institutions in the region, regional academic/development/economic consortia, and other relevant collegial bodies.
- Dr. Eslava also discussed the staff requirements for the operationalization of SARAI CeNTRO.
- Dr. Eborá advised to clarify the number of staff (4 technical staff and 1 admin staff) per region in relation to the space required for each hub. Dr. Eslava mentioned that the UPLB Team is preparing the terms of reference (TOR) to guide the regions on the necessary skill sets for hiring staff.

- Dr. Eborá also suggested to hold the discussion with BARMM until there's clarity on how to proceed, given its separate entity and autonomous status, its scope is still equivalent to DOST regional offices. He recommended that communication with BARMM should be channeled through the DOST – Office of the UnderSecretary for Regional Operations (DOST-OUSECRO). UPLB will prepare a memo letter concerning this matter so that initiatives with BARMM will complement with the objectives of the program.
- Mr. Eduardo C. Fugoso of DOST-OUSECRO also inquired if Negros was included among the 16 regions. It was mentioned that Negros is not yet part of the 16 regions, and the available office and space for the hub is still under review.
- Prof. Moises A. Dorado of UPLB discussed the objectives of Project 2 -SARAI Regional Hubs, which will focus on establishing SARAI Regional Hubs that will adopt the functions of the SARAI ICMF. These hubs will manage SARAI systems and technologies in their respective regions while coordinating closely with the SARAI Central Hub. Staff responsible for running these regional hubs will undergo an intensive 2-3-month training on different SARAI technologies/systems to ensure that they are equipped to introduce the systems and technologies to LGUs and other partners. Each region will select LGUs that can produce potential yield based on NDVI, crop phenology, cropping areas, and estimated yield. During the first year, the Central Hub will train the Regional Hubs in operating CL-SEAMS. Additionally, the project will include the installation and maintenance of automatic weather stations.
- The DOST ROs will identify and provide the space for their respective hubs. They will also identify the LGUs and priority crops where SARAI systems and technologies will be applied. In the first year, one LGU and at least two crops will be chosen, with the goal of expanding to three LGUs for each succeeding year, for a total of 10 LGUs over the four-year project period.
- Prof. Dorado also explained that the criteria for selecting the LGUs would depend on the regional offices, as long as the LGUs could generate outputs and commit to participating in the project's activities.
- Mr. Rik Varela of DOST-CARAGA asked if SUCs could be included, given that the project targets 10 participating LGUs. This was not included in the initial proposal but will be looked into it.
- A three-month training will be conducted in Year 1, either through clusters or a single group training at UPLB for regional offices. There will be three training modules, and the project team will bring in an additional 6-8 staff members to help conduct the training.
- There was also a question about how the AWS (Automatic Weather Stations) differs from PAGASA weather reports. Prof. Dorado explained that the AWS would provide micro-climate data specific to agricultural areas, while PAGASA focuses more on urban areas. However, coordination with PAGASA on climate information will still be maintained.
- It was also noted that farmers will be able to access advisories and information from SARAI systems and technologies through free mobile applications.

- Ms. Maria Teresa L. De Guzman emphasized the importance of strong coordination between DOST ROs and LGUs for the regional hubs' implementation. While SARAI systems provide the tools for generating advisories, the necessary inputs for delivering the actions on advisories will come from the LGUs, benefiting the farmers.

IV. Agreements:

- UPLB will facilitate and prepare the matrix while DOST Regional Offices are expected to submit their inputs on available space, LGUs, priority crops and line-item budget (LIB). The deadline for their inputs is on October 23, 2024 (Wednesday).
- Regional Offices will determine the permanent staff (lead and alternate) that will serve as the project staff and focal person for the project.
- UPLB will provide updates to DOST-OUSECRO regarding the discussions with BARMM on October 17, 2024 (Thursday).