



Title of activity	Consultation Meeting on SARAI CeNTRO
Venue	via Zoom Conferencing
Date conducted	October 16, 2024 at 9:00 am
Implementing agency	UPLB
Person/s who attended	Allan G. Acosta, <i>Senior Science Research Specialist</i> Abegail I. Baoy, <i>Project Technical Assistant I</i> Maria Ethelwilda G. Coronacion – PSTO Occidental Mindoro Rachel B. Montero – PSTO Oriental Mindoro Santy Anthony J. Jalla and Ameca Fe L. Jinang – PSTO Marinduque Juls Anton Clark V. Mana – PSTO Romblon Others: Representatives/Focal Persons per Regional and Provincial Offices DOST PCAARRD Representatives UPLB Project SARAI Team

Highlights of the Activity

"SARAI Centralized National Hub for Regional Operations (SARAI CeNTRO)" aims to implement Project SARAI throughout the Philippines by creating a Central Hub in UPLB that is networked with and mirrored at all DOST Regional Offices for the deployment of its systems and technologies and to serve as a continuum that links producers, monitors, implementors, and decision-makers for the transformation of agriculture as an industry in the country. The program is headed by Dr. Decibel V. Faustino-Eslava of the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB).

- The meeting agenda includes the following recommendations which was made during the EXECOM.
 - 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
- The meeting commenced with opening message delivered by Dir. Reynaldo Ebor, presenting the outline/agenda of the meeting.
- **SARAI CeNTRO Implementation Strategy** presented by Ms. Regina Regalado, UPLB SARAI Team:

The presentation outlined SARAI CeNTRO's implementation strategy. The project leader for the SARAI Regional Hub is Prof. Moises A. Dorado, and the 16 SARAI Regional Hubs will coordinate closely with him. Within the regional office, we will identify a team that will work with the coordination and monitoring team, including one organic senior-level staff member to lead the project in the office and one project colleague to assist. For this project, the regional offices will hire one senior technical specialist (**Project Technical Specialist III – SG 18**), three junior staff (**Project Technical Assistant III – SG 12**), and one administrative staff member (**Project Administrative Aide V – SG 8**). The SARAI CeNTRO's Regional Hubs will be physically established within the Regional DOST Offices. These hubs will handle the local administrative requirements for implementing the project

in the region, procure and maintain equipment, operate the SARAI systems for their respective regions, and coordinate closely with the SARAI Central Hub.

Aside from the SARAI Regional Hubs, the Main Coordination and Monitoring component will be established at UPLB. This team will focus on guiding the SARAI Regional Hubs in their activities and operations. Through the Main Coordination and Monitoring component, the SARAI Regional Hubs will coordinate with the Central Hub for their training and capacity-building requirements and will be subject to monitoring.

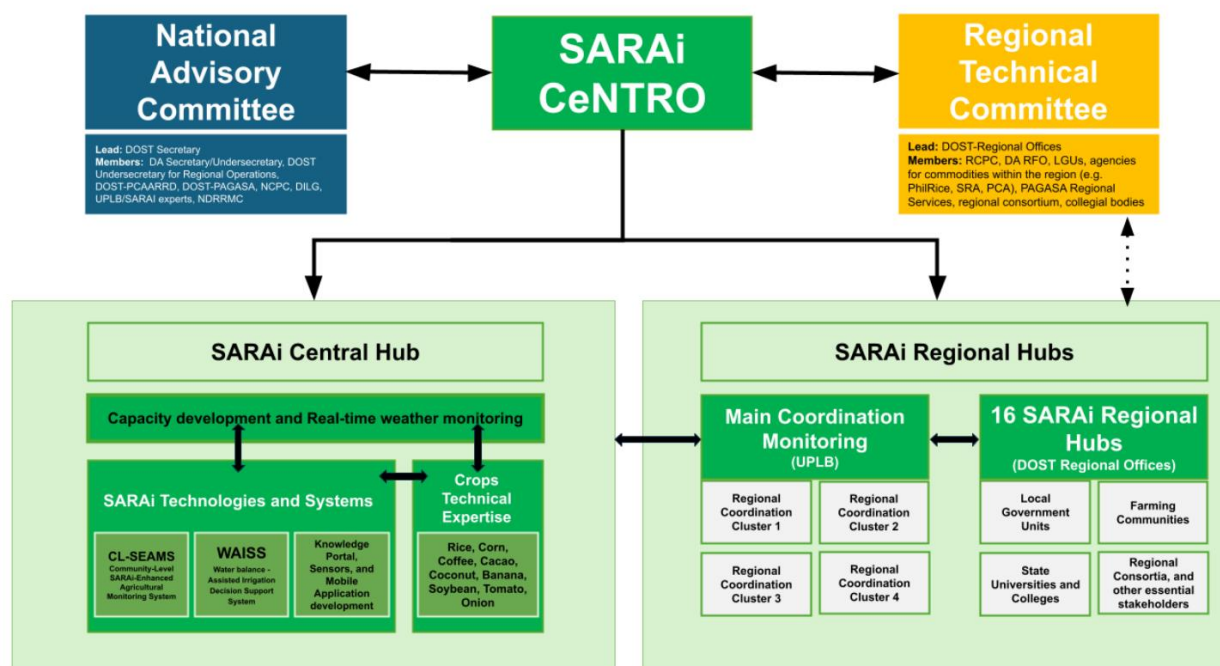


Figure 1. SARAI CeNTRO implementation strategy

- It was also discussed that there is currently a separate proposal for BARMM. Dr. Ma. Victoria Espaldon explained the details, stating that the SARAI Team has an ongoing negotiation with BARMM. It was mentioned that BARMM wants to adopt SARAI Technologies, which will be centered in Cotabato City, and they plan to select six (6) LGUs for the project's implementation. Dir. Reynaldo Eborra suggested that the SARAI Team should first coordinate with the Office of the Undersecretary for Regional Operations regarding the details to avoid confusion. He emphasized the importance of having a unified approach, rather than holding independent discussions with BARMM, as any administrative issues could be difficult to manage.
- Questions/Clarifications:**
 - Ms. Just Magallanes from DOST XI inquired about the computer units and other workstations needed for the newly hired personnel. It was discussed that these were included in the LIB, and the specifications for the required equipment were also outlined in the provided proposal.

- Mr. Allan G. Acosta from the DOST MIMAROPA Regional Office inquired about the budget release and how it will be transferred to the regional offices. Ms. Tess De Guzman from DOST-PCAARRD responded, stating that PCAARRD is currently coordinating with UPLB for the preparation of the necessary documents (rejoinder and final LIB) for DOST to release the funds. There is a separate LIB for each region, and the funds will be released directly to the regional offices, with UPLB as the lead implementing agency and PCAARRD as the monitoring agency.
- Overview of the **SARAI CeNTRO Region Hubs specific objectives** presented by Prof. Moises A. Dorado, SARAI Regional Hub project leader:

SARAI CeNTRO

SARAI Regional Hubs | Specific objectives:

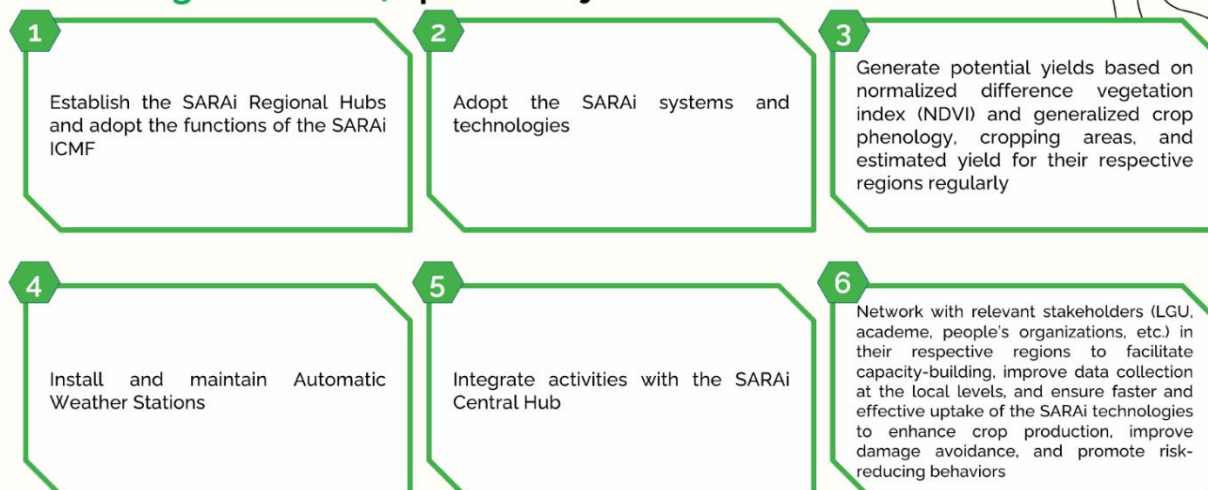


Figure 2. SARAI Region Hubs specific objectives

The following are the specific objectives of the SARAI Regional Hubs:

1. Establish the SARAI Regional Hubs and adopt the functions of the SARAI ICMF.
2. Adopt the SARAI systems and technologies including: CL-SEAMS, WAISS, SPIDTECH, AWS (Real-time weather monitoring), Bantay SARAI, and BANATECH, and disseminate the ICMF bulletins to its target regional constituents.
3. Generate potential yields based on normalized difference vegetation index (NDVI) and generalized crop phenology, cropping areas, and estimated yield for their respective regions regularly. The regional offices will not directly produce these results, but rather the LGUs engaged in each region will be responsible. There will be two to three months of intensive training for the project staff to learn how to operate the SARAI technologies. After the training, the regional staff will introduce the technologies to the selected LGUs, and the data will be generated by the LGUs. In the first year, the target is to coordinate with at least one LGU, focusing on at least two crops. After the first year of project implementation, the target




"Hatid ay makabagong solusyon!"

will increase to three additional LGUs each year, until the fourth year, resulting in a total of ten LGUs, each focusing on two crops.

4. Install and maintain Automatic Weather Stations.
 5. Integrate activities with the SARAI Central Hub.
 6. Network with relevant stakeholders (LGU, academe, people's organizations, etc.) in their respective regions to facilitate capacity-building, improve data collection at the local levels, and ensure faster and effective uptake of the SARAI technologies to enhance crop production, improve damage avoidance, and promote risk-reducing behaviors.
- After the presentation by Prof. Moises, questions were raised.
 - Ms. Just D. Magallanes inquired about the criteria for selecting LGUs. It was discussed that the Regional Offices are responsible for choosing the LGUs and determining the crop priorities. Mr. Ed Fugoso of the Office of the Undersecretary for Regional Operations, suggested sending a spreadsheet to each region for timely project updates, which should include the criteria for selecting the LGUs and the crops to be considered.
 - Mr. Rik Varela from DOST CARAGA inquired about the number of LGUs to be selected, stating that the target is to have ten LGUs. He asked if it would be possible to include at least one SUC in the project implementation, as they are considering a partnership with CARAGA State University. However, he expressed concern about budgeting, suggesting the possibility of having nine LGUs and one SUC. Dr. Decibel Eslava acknowledged this suggestion, noting that it should be considered since SUCs are now capable of joining such projects. Additionally, Dr. Ma. Victoria Espaldon mentioned that while it is feasible, the focus should remain on LGUs since that was the approved plan. Therefore, the budget must accommodate this, and if SUCs are included, the LGUs will need to find additional resources to complement the regional budget.
 - Mr. Fugoso inquired about the training sessions. Prof. Moises discussed the training plan, stating that the training will last three months. Also, they will hire trainers to assist with the sessions. Another question from Mr. Fugoso was about the difference between SARAI's AWS and the PAGASA report. Prof. Moises explained that the AWS collects information from the immediate surroundings and uses weather satellites to complement the data gathered. It focuses more on the microclimate of the community. Additionally, one of the features of the AWS includes measurements of solar radiation and soil moisture. The third question from Mr. Fugoso concerned the training budget and whether ordinary farmers would receive cellphones. Prof. Moises explained that the farmers would not receive cellphones; instead, they would be provided with the application to use.
 - Mr. Doms A. Pena from DOST Albay inquired whether there would be a need for clearance or approval from PAGASA regarding the location for the installation of the AWS. Prof. Moises responded that any matters related to weather and climate will be discussed with PAGASA.
 - Ms. Jessa from DOST-CAR inquired whether there would be a financial counterpart required from the LGUs. Prof. Moises explained that the immediate contribution from the LGUs for the training sessions would be the venue and food, even though these expenses are covered in the budget. Aside from that, we only provide the tools necessary for project implementation.



- Mr. Rik Valera inquired about how coordination at the provincial level would be handled. Prof. Moises explained that the regional offices will be trained first, and then, in the second year, if the regional offices are capable of managing provincial-level coordination, it will be feasible.
- Mr. Jowin Jeoh Coscos from DOST XI raised a question regarding the space for the establishment of the SARAI Region Hubs. Dr. Decibel Eslava from the Project SARAI Team answered that the spaces will depend on the available resources per region. Partnerships with SUCs can also be considered for the lodging of the equipment.
- The meeting concluded after no further questions were raised.

Concerns the RD should know	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The mode of fund transfer will be directly to the regional offices, and the transfer will be done in tranches, depending on the availability of funds.• For the LIB realignment, we are allowed to realign three times per year, but this must be done two months before the active period to give the team ample time to prepare the necessary requirements. Additionally, an inspection meeting will be held to discuss these requirements.
Action request/s coming from the activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The next step is to identify which LGUs and crops will be considered for the implementation of the project.• Designate and confirm regional focal person and alternate to handle communication with PCAARRD and UPLB.
Deadline for action request/s	October 23, 2024
Action Taken	N/A
Remarks	N/A
Date submitted	October 16, 2024
Signature/s of staff	<div>Prepared by:  ENGR. ABEGAIL I. BAOY Project Technical Assistant I</div> <div>Reviewed by:  ALLAN G. ACOSTA Senior Science Research Specialist</div> <div>Noted by:  ENGR. JERRY B. MERCADO Chief, Technical Services Division</div>