

**THE TECHNO GABAY PROGRAM EXTENSION MODALITY: STRENGTHENING
LGU-ACADEME PARTNERSHIP TOWARDS PROVIDING TECHNOLOGY
TRANSFER SERVICES IN THE GRASSROOTS LEVEL**

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ABSTRACT

Carving a niche in the arena of information and technology transfer, the Techno Gabay Program of Region 02 spearheaded by the Isabela State University and institutionalized under the Extension Program showed its prowess as one of the country's effective extension modalities.

With strong collaboration of CVARRD, its member agencies and host LGUs, the past 3 years proved to be a worthy years to reckon with in its TGP implementation. As TGP continues to attract attention from the local scene, support from the national government turns its tide this year with the implementation of the EO 801 entitled "Encouraging Local Government Units (LGUs) to adopt the Techno Gabay in their agricultural extension programs and the concerned government agencies to provide the required assistance for the purpose" which provided the needed legal backbone for the program.

With this, FITS Centers established totaled to 73. This also corresponds to 88 Magsasaka Siyentista appointed. In terms of client served, a total of 546, 023 were listed as of December 2012. These clients were either served through trainings, fora, clinics or walked in clients served with IEC materials on various commodities. There are 43 MS Best Practices Documented and 3,018 IEC materials disseminated to various clients. Also, 31 STBF projects established with 43 field days conducted for the past years. TGP had conducted 5 MS Lakbay Aral in HARRDEC, SMARRDEC, VICARP, CLARRDEC, STARRDEC consortia.

On RACO support to TGP in prototyping information and technology packages, a total of 56 POTs were developed with 403 Titles of IEC Materials Provided/ disseminated to FITS Centers/PMAs from the pool of IECs gathered from the member-agencies. In line with this, a total of 42 MS were grounded for MS documentations.

On RMIS support to TGP, the group was able to deliver efficient ICT support to the program through conduct of trainings, and shepherding of FITS staff with the use of the ICT hardware provided at the centers. A total of 59 FITS centers were successfully connected to the web. These made the centers linked and gained access to the vast information and technologies hosted through the web. Also, a total of 65 digital cameras, 130 cell phones, 65 printers, and desktop computers were provided to 73 FITS centers.

These accomplishments of Region 02's TGP in providing information, technologies and strengthening the capacities of LGUs is a monumental efforts for the consortium in making technologies work for people through bridging the knowledge generation aspects of R&D and knowledge utilization of extension services.

Keyword: FITS; LGU; Academe; Partnership; Technology Transfer

Introduction

The *Techno Gabay Program* is a banner program on technology transfer initiated by PCARRD-DOST and implemented nationwide through the regional consortia being coordinated and monitored by the Isabela State University as the base and lead agency of the CVARRD Consortium. This program was conceived to provide information and technology services in agriculture, forestry and natural resources via an effective mechanism. It provides a framework for a more effective and sustainable strategy for bringing the much needed information and technologies to the countryside. The CHED Memorandum Order in 2007 mandates all SUCs to have the Techno Gabay Modality to be integrated in the extension program of SUCs. For ISU, it is one of the extension banner programs under the LGU Strengthening and Capability Building Program.

ISU as the lead agency of the Cagayan Valley Agricultural Research Resource and Development Consortium (CVARRD) under the National Agricultural Research Resources and Development Network (NARRDN) of PCARRD forged a strong partnership with LGUs who provide facilities and other logistics in the implementation of the program.

The program is implemented with the following components: a) Farmers Information and Technology Services (FITS); b) Magsasaka Siyentista (MS); c) Information, Education and

Communication (IEC); and d) Information Communication Technology (ICT). This is one of the extension modalities adopted by the Isabela State University under the LGU Capability and Strengthening Program. Through the years, ISU-CVARRD has evolved this strategy/modality in partnership with the farmers themselves and the LGUs in the region in the technology delivery process. Emerging impacts include the improvement, self reliance and participatory agricultural development.

THE BEST PRACTICE

The program has four major components, namely;

1. Farmer Information and Technology Services (FITS)

More popularly known as Techno Pinoy, the FITS is an information and technology delivery service facility which is aimed at improving access of farmers, traders, processors, entrepreneurs and other stakeholders to information and technologies in agriculture forestry and natural resources. As a provider of information service, FITS provides IEC materials in different formats such as print (primer, comics, leaflets and bulletins), audio-visual, broadcast, and e-based media. These centers could also be a good back-up facility for on-farm research. As of December 2012, there are 73 FITS centers in Region 02. There are 62 FITS centers based at the municipalities, 5 at Department of Agriculture-Regional Research Stations, 5 Provincial Capitols and 1 at Agricultural Training Institute.

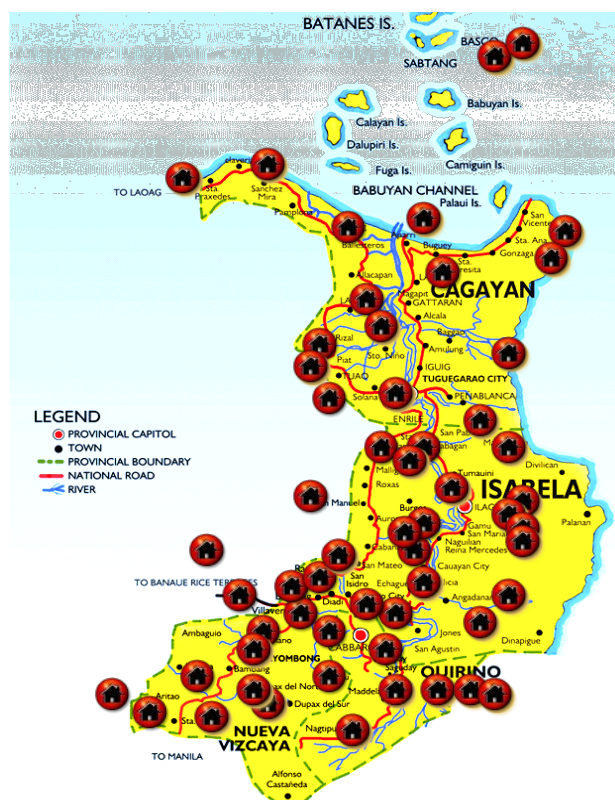


Figure 1. FITS Centers established/launched in Region 02.

2. Magsasaka Siyentista(MS)

Magsasaka Siyentista are progressive farmers who are effective change agents in technology transfer. They are composed of outstanding farmers who demonstrated successful application of science & technology-based and indigenous technologies in their farms. These farmers are active participants, enablers, facilitators or initiators of technology development and transfer processes.

From the Magsasaka Siyentista component of the program emanates the Science and Technology-Based Farm (STBF) Projects as the prime activity of the MS. In their Science and Technology Based Farms (STBF), they showcase the application and use of science and technology interventions versus their traditional practices in farming. They have at least 30 farmer adoptors in the STBF. They also act as resource persons during technology fora, seminars and trainings. To date, there are already about 88 model farmer scientists who have been recognized and had given appointments in region 02.

3. Information, Education and Communication (IEC)

Information, Education and Communication (IEC) strategies is a need-based communication process aimed to hasten adoption of technologies by FITS and MS clientele. Among others, IEC activities involve information needs assessment, objective setting and communication planning, design and production of prototype testing and dissemination of IEC materials in print, audio-visual, broadcast and other

electronic formats, impact evaluation, and interpersonal approaches such as information caravan and technology exhibits.



4. Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

The ICT activities under the Techno Gabay Program are basically aimed at strengthening information services. These include the establishment of user-friendly databases for the FITS centers, development of web pages, and production of CD-based multimedia featuring IEC materials as well as the technologies being adopted by the *Magsasaka Siyentista*.

The FITS database contains seven component databases, namely, farmers' profile, experts profile, contact firms, technology, publications, video materials and trade/production statistics.



Techno Gabay Framework

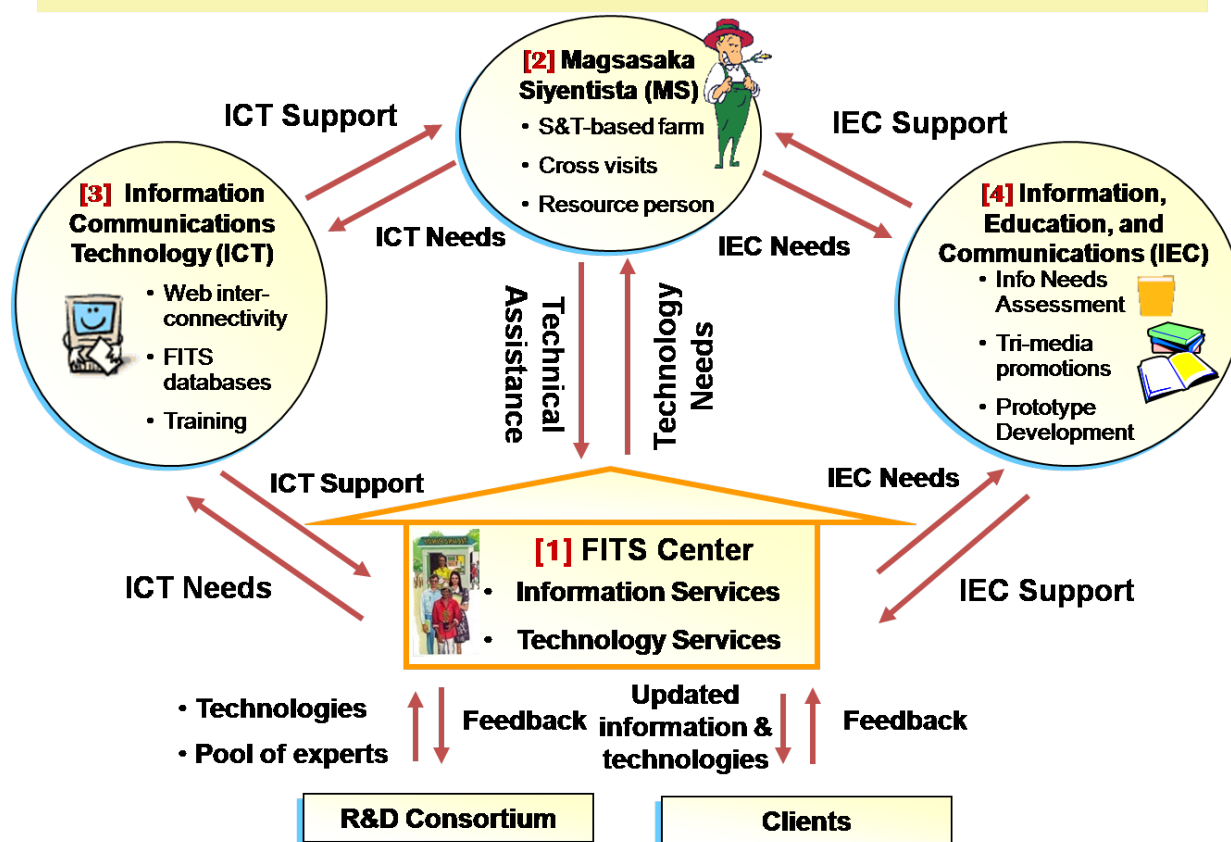


Figure 2. Framework of the Techno Gabay Program depicting the interplay of its various components

HIGHLIGHTS OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

Lessons Learned

1. ISU-LGU Partnership Approach/Strategy

The successful implementation of the Techno Gabay Modality in Region 02 is due to the dedication, commitment, competence and heart of the ISU personnel who served as the Secretariat and Coordinators of the CVARRD Consortium plus the support and commitment of the ISU President as the RRDCC Chair of the Consortium as well as heads of CVARRD

member agencies. There is the strong “Ugnayan Spirit” of the member agencies of CVARRD resource sharing and complementation as well as shared responsibility between and among member agencies

On the part of ISU as base agency of the CVARRD Consortium, through this program and its component modalities, it contributed significantly to the winning of four times successive Ugnay Award in 1998, 2000, 2001 and 2002 and finally to Hall of Famer Award in 2010, the first Hall of Famer Consortium Award in the Philippines. CVARRD Region 02 is looked upon as model consortia in the whole country.

This strategy results in establishing good working relationship with LGUs at the provincial, municipal and barangay levels. In technology promotion there must be resource sharing and there is shared responsibility between and among stakeholders.

This was evolved and implemented by the university pursuant to the provision of R.A. 8435 otherwise known as the Agriculture Fisheries and Modernization Act (AFMA). As provided under Section 90, the university is mandated to focus its extension services on the improvement of the capability of the LGUs in the delivery of extension services. These services are in the forms of degree and non-degree trainings, technical assistance, establishment of demonstration projects cum research activities, monitoring and evaluation of LGU extension projects and information support services. These are being made more effective through the use of tri-media. This umbrella extension program known as LGU Extension Capability Strengthening Program had been implemented through various modalities and special programs such as the Techno Gabay Program.

2. Interfaced generation and utilization activities: addressed gaps in the knowledge management continuum

The Techno Gabay Program also addressed the need to create a strong link between the technology generation and utilization in the knowledge management continuum. The results of research and development projects are piloted and utilized directly at the grassroots level channeled thru the TGP in complementation with other extension programs. For example, peanut technologies generated at the DA-laboratory stations and SUCs pilot sites were directly received and adopted by farmers thru the Science and Technology-Based Farm

Projects emanated from the Techno Gabay Program.

This implies that the intended users of technologies out of the various RDE activities could readily access the result of such, creating a more dynamic testing and calibration of generated information and technologies.

3. MS capacity development, empowerment and utilization of the MS farm as show window of technologies

As one of the major components of the Techno Gabay Program, one of the most significant sources of innovations rest on how the program utilized and in the process enhanced the capabilities of Magsasaka Siyentista.

The Science and Technology Based farms are MS farms or enterprises that showcase effectiveness of S&T interventions in improving productivity and income of farmers.

The STBF Projects provided a strong link among researchers, extension workers, farmer leaders and farmers themselves in a culminating activity of information and technology showcasing and exchange. Based from evaluation, it is an enriching experience for all key players, as the interaction serves as an opportunity to learn new things from various levels in the development process.

On capacitating MS, the program is successful in involving the MS in technology transfer programming with the creation of a definite identity group for MS thru the MS organization. Lakbay Aral, participation in technology fora and tapping them as resource persons enhanced their leadership and stature as farmer-leaders in their communities. With this, the MS figures as an ambassador or ambassadress of agricultural development reflected from his or her progressive farming systems, technology utilization and high farm efficiencies.

Thus, the program tapped the innate characteristic of the MS as a concrete link and a platform in the program's effort to become touch base in the various agricultural communities it serves.

4. Refurbished infrastructures, equipment and facilities in extension delivery

Aside from the capacities attained by extension workers, facilities, equipment and infrastructures were set to support the strengthening of MOAs' offices functions. The Techno Gabay Program thru the two projects under it; K-Agrinet and the Enhancing FITS for Rural Development Program are the government's ICT revolution mainstreams. Under TGP, all FITS Centers received both hardware and software funding support to facilitate the interconnectivity of each FITS Center – attaining the goal of making the FITS Centers the last mile connection of agricultural information and technologies ready for users' access. The program enhanced the LGUs capacity to deliver extension services. In addition, through this modality, the LGUs particularly the MAOs Office was able to refurbish the infrastructures, equipment and facilities.

5. Enhanced LGUs capacity to deliver extension services

With program components focused on enhancing the capacity of LGU extension workers towards effective provision of services, TGP is successful in developing these capacities thru trainings, mentoring, coaching and lakbay aral activities.

The conducted FITS Basic ICT, FITS IS, and IEC trainings opened avenues for extension workers to explore the option of managing and implementing extension programs. Thus, they are more empowered to create materials, do activities which could contribute further to their efficiency and effectiveness as development workers.

SUSTAINABILITY

Along sustainability, the TGP modality is institutionalized in the extension program of the university under the LGU Strengthening and Capability Building Program. The CHED Memorandum Circular in 2007 served as the legal bases in integrating the Techno Gabay modalities in the extension program of SUCs. At the LGU level, the Techno Gabay Program is institutionalized even before program implementation as reflected in the resolution from the Sangguniang Bayan (SB) which spells the perceived importance, commitment and resources provided by the Local Government Unit for the program. With this, the TGP is considered as an organic program of the LGUs in providing extension delivery services in

their respective communities. Notably is the provision of dedicated funds for the program implementation with varying amounts from Ph100,000 to Ph500,000. LGU-DA technicians were capacitated and improved in delivering its extension services.

Also, Executive Order 801, which encourages LGUs to adopt the Techno Gabay Modality as their extension delivery program served as the legal backbone in the existence of TGP in every municipality in the country.

One of the bold moves served to TGP as to its sustainability is its transfer to the Department of Agriculture – Agricultural Training Institute (DA-ATI). This follows the fact that DA-ATI is the national extension arm of the country which has the mandate to usher, initiate and implement technology transfer programs in the country. With this, TGP will become a regular extension program of the national technology transfer program from DA-ATI with technical support from the State Colleges and Universities.