

Part 3

Institutional Strengthening (Component 2)



**Value Chain
Governance**

**Commercial
Partnership**

This component is organized into two mutually reinforcing sub-components—Value Chain Governance and Commercial Partnership. These areas outline the mechanisms and partnerships essential for effective value chain upgrading.

A. Overview



1. General Approach

Component 2 supports activities that foster progressive and sustainable commercial business partnerships between MSMEs and farmers, ancillary actors, and industry enablers in the target value chains. It aims to ensure that producers and value chain actors execute collaborative action plans and build commercial partnerships in selected commodity value chains. It has two sub-components, namely: 1) Value Chain Governance and 2) Commercial Partnership.

The RAPID Growth Project uses the value chain approach and industry clustering strategies in the development of the four (4) priority sectors, namely cacao, coffee, coconut, and processed fruits and nuts, such that it covers the processes and tasks along the entire value chains under the aforementioned sectors. The project's value chain approach and industry clustering strategies foster inclusion, convergence, and collaboration by involving all relevant industry stakeholders and business enablers.

The value chain approach is synonymous with a market-driven initiative with the private sector taking the lead role and the concerned national agencies such as DTI, DA, DOST, DAR, PCA, DENR, etc., and the LGUs taking the support roles as enablers. Industry associations will also play a critical role in the implementation of the various development interventions that will be undertaken by the project.



With the market-driven value chain approach of the project, it is imperative to strengthen the commercial partnership between the farmer/producers and the processors/traders/exporters, which makes commercial partnerships a vital component of the RAPID Growth Project. Through the execution and strengthening of the commercial partnership, the farmers will benefit from the gains of the markets while MSMEs are assured of the strong backward linkages with farmers to ensure a sustainable supply of quality raw materials.

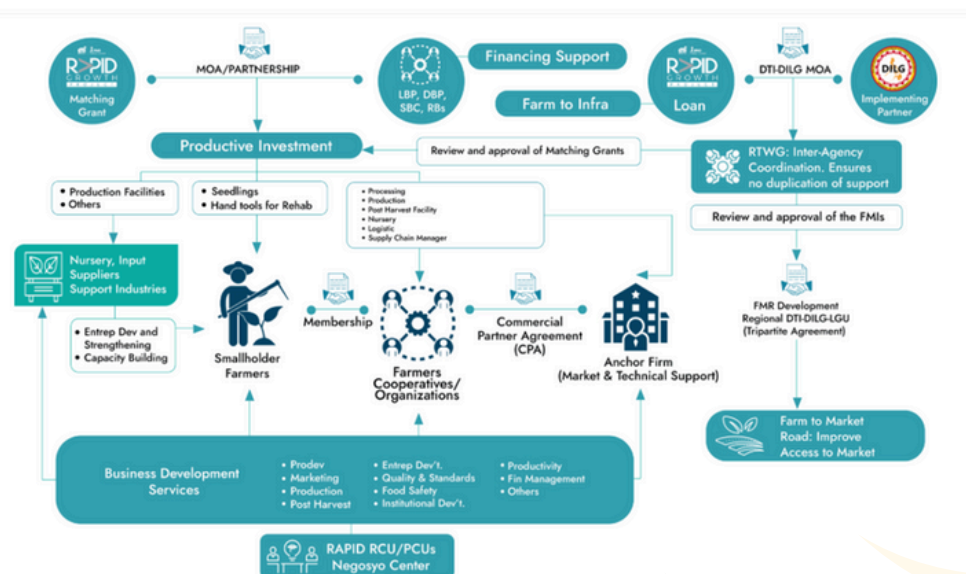
Ultimately, this approach is envisioned to achieve a sustainable and inclusive development of value chains and their stakeholders. To achieve this objective, there is the need to implement strategic interventions to strengthen stakeholder collaboration and enhance the capabilities of all relevant project partners.

This component is organized into two main sub-components:

1. Value Chain Governance
2. Commercial Partnership

This manual serves as a foundational reference for all stakeholders involved in the design, management, and implementation of this Component.

RAPID Business Model





2. Goals and Objectives

The Institutional Strengthening Component of the RAPID Growth Project plays a pivotal role in advancing the project’s goal of sustainable and inclusive agricultural business development. By promoting commercial partnerships between and among MSMEs, farmer organizations, and smallholder farmers in the target value chains—cacao, coffee, coconut, and fruits and nuts—the component ensures that agricultural production is aligned with market demand. Through its two sub-components, Value Chain Governance and Commercial Partnership, the project fosters collaboration among value chain actors and strengthens coordination with government agencies, industry associations, and other relevant industry enablers.

This component enables smallholder farmers to access stable markets, while MSMEs benefit from a reliable, quality supply. It supports the implementation of joint action plans, enhances stakeholder capabilities, and reinforces value chain linkages. Ultimately, Component 2 facilitates a market-driven, inclusive, and resilient value chain ecosystem, where producers and enterprises grow together in a sustainable and mutually beneficial manner.

The table below shows the specific logical framework indicators of the RAPID Growth Project to which the component directly contributes:

Key Success/ Outcome Indicators	Alignment to RAPID’s Logical Framework	
	Results Statement	Indicator
Spokes are delivering its committed produce to their respective Hubs, and Hubs are delivering its committed supply (agreed quality and volume) to their respective Anchor Firm(s).	<p><i>Outcome 1: Producers and value chain actors execute collaborative action plans and build commercial partnerships in selected commodity chains</i></p> <p><i>Output 1.4 DIPs connecting farmers to SMEs and facilitating access to markets and services</i></p> <p><i>Outcome 2: MSMEs secure the necessary access to producers, markets and suitable investment finance</i></p>	<p><i>1.a Percentage increase in value of sales of participating MSMEs, Farmers Associations and Cooperatives</i></p> <p><i>1.b: No. of commercial partnerships developed between farmers cooperatives and SMEs/large corporations</i></p> <p><i>1.4.b Number of partnership agreements entered into by FAs/ Coops, MSMEs or large enterprises</i></p> <p><i>2.c % increase in productivity of participating SMEs and Cooperatives</i></p> <p><i>2.d % increase in volume and value of sales at farm/coop level and SME level</i></p>



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Farmer Organizations whether Hubs or Spokes are expanding membership and inactive members re-engaged.	<i>Output 1.4 DIPs connecting farmers to SMEs and facilitating access to markets and services</i>	<i>1.4.b Number of farming households participate in Detailed Investment Plans (DIPs)</i>
Anchor Firms, Hubs, and Spokes have established an efficient and cost-effective logistics system, decreasing transport costs in all levels of the supply chain.	<i>Outcome 2: MSMEs secure the necessary access to producers, markets and suitable investment finance</i>	<i>2.c % increase in productivity of participating SMEs and Cooperatives</i> <i>2.d % increase in volume and value of sales at farm/coop level and SME level</i>
Hubs and Spokes have established its extension services system and network. (Clustering method and installation of Agri Extension Workers).	<i>Output 1.2 Qualified business providers able to provide business services to MSEs</i>	<i>1.2.a Number of pools of qualified service providers set up per province</i>
Hubs have accessed financial services from FSPs including partner Anchor Firms to increase the latter's working capital for consolidating commodity products from the Spokes.	<i>Outcome 2:MSMEs secure the necessary access to producers, markets and suitable investment finance</i> <i>Output 2.3 Financial Institutions (FIs) with improved capacities to serve target value chains players</i>	<i>2.b Number of MSMEs established linkage with producers/farmers, markets, and availed financial services for productive investments</i> <i>2.3.a Number of FSPs extend innovative and other value-chain financial services</i> <i>2.3.c. Number of linkages to financial services established</i>
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FOs/MSMEs consciously putting effort in targeting/including women, youth, and IPs in the upgrading of their agri-enterprise activities and implementation of the RAPID Growth Project.	<i>GESI Mainstreaming mandate of the Project</i>	<i>Project's overall outreach targets:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 40% women ▪ 20% youth ▪ 10% IP





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3. Strategic Framework

The Institutional Strengthening Component of the RAPID Growth Project focuses on creating a supportive environment for inclusive value chain development by enhancing the capacity and collaboration of relevant stakeholders involved in the covered value chains of the Project. It aims to build strong sustainable commercial and enabling linkages between smallholder farmers, farmer cooperatives and associations, MSMEs, government, financial institutions, and other relevant industry enablers ensuring access to markets, services, and finance. The component has two key strategies, namely:



a) Value Chain Governance

This strategy pursues a sustainable and progressive ecosystem for the growth of the value chain actors covered by the project. Specifically, this strategy will cover the following:

- *Structure supply chain actors according to functions and maturity;*
- *Strengthen commercial partnerships between the smallholder farmers, farmer cooperatives and associations, and anchor firms; and*
- *Foster collaboration with government and financial service providers, and promote financial inclusion through access to credit, insurance, and other financial services tailored to agricultural actors.*

b) Commercial Partnerships

This strategy promotes structured business relationships between MSMEs and farmers within key commodity value chains. Using an “anchor firm” approach, it facilitates market-driven production through partnership agreements that provide farmers with technical, logistical, and market support. These partnerships aim to boost farmer income by 60% and MSME sales by 100% through improved product quality, productivity, and access to markets and investment finance.



B. Value Chain Governance

For the RAPID Growth Project, Value Chain Governance is a critical mechanism for enabling inclusive, coordinated, and sustainable development of the target value chains. It strengthens institutional frameworks that promote collaboration, strategic dialogue, and evidence-based decision-making among key public and private stakeholders at national, regional, and provincial levels.

The project will support the establishment of producer Hub and Spokes, creation, capacity building, and institutional strengthening of National, Regional, and Provincial Industry Councils. These councils will serve as multi-stakeholder platforms for value chain-wide coordination and public-private dialogue on key issues such as investment planning, policy development, and program alignment.

Building on the Regional Strategic Investment Plans (RSIPs) of the project and existing industry roadmaps, the project will assist these councils and industry-enabling cohorts in formulating responsive, data-driven policies that address the needs of the relevant value chain actors covered by the project through public and private investments and interventions.

1. Scope of Project Support

Project support under this sub-component will be demand-driven and programmed annually and will cover:

- *Setting-up of the commodity Hubs and Spokes and all of the necessary operations and governance systems;*
- *Establishment and institutional strengthening of National, Regional, and Provincial Industry Councils;*
- *Strategic planning and capacity building, through workshops, training, and facilitated sessions;*
- *Organization of industry conferences at provincial, regional, and national levels;*
- *Policy research and formulation to guide sectoral and value chain development;*
- *Research and Development (R&D) aligned with priority commodity needs;*
- *Joint initiatives and special projects co-organized with Industry Councils that have strategic sectoral impact;*
- *Support to industry associations, identified through Regional Strategic Investment Plans (RSIPs), Industry Roadmaps, or Annual Sectoral Strategic Planning Workshops.*



2. Alignment with the Industry Clusters Enhancement (ICE) Program

All interventions under the RAPID Growth Project—focusing on cacao, coffee, coconut, and processed fruits and nuts—will be fully aligned with the Department of Trade and Industry’s (DTI) Industry Clusters Enhancement (ICE) Program. ICE provides the strategic framework for harmonizing government and private sector efforts in industry cluster development.

To operationalize this alignment, the project will:

- *Integrate planning, monitoring, and reporting systems with ICE to ensure synchronized implementation and shared accountability;*
- *Develop and utilize shared databases to consolidate key value chain data across implementing partners, improving investment decisions and policy planning;*
- *Institutionalize joint planning and review sessions with DTI’s National and Regional Industry Cluster Coordinators;*
- *Co-organize council meetings, strategic planning workshops, and sectoral assessments that directly support ICE implementation.*

DTI, as the Chair or Secretariat of most Industry Councils and the lead implementing agency for RAPID, plays a central coordinating role. However, past implementation experience noted challenges such as insufficient data, particularly for commodities not prioritized in provincial plans. To address this, the project will invest in data generation, analysis, and sharing, ensuring timely access to market studies, value chain analyses, and sector investment profiles.

Furthermore, RAPID will advocate for the inclusion of its supported commodities in local development plans and industry roadmaps, even in areas where they are not currently considered priority.





3. Inclusive and Participatory Value Chain Governance

To promote inclusive growth, the RAPID Growth Project will ensure the active and equitable participation of a broad range of stakeholders in all value chain governance structures and activities. This includes special target sectors such as:

- Women-led enterprises and women's cooperatives;
- Youth and Indigenous Peoples;
- Other marginalized or underrepresented groups involved in value chain activities.

This inclusive approach will be reflected in council representation, strategic planning, training programs, consultations, and the design of interventions. Special focus will be given to identifying and addressing the unique barriers faced by these groups, enabling them to fully participate in and benefit from value chain development.

4. Knowledge Sharing and Policy Learning

To support institutional learning and enable replication of successful models, the RAPID Growth Project will establish a centralized repository of:

- Effective policies, strategies, and regulations developed by the Project or through Industry Councils;
- Best practices and case studies demonstrating successful value chain coordination and inclusive governance;
- Collaborative models of public-private partnerships that resulted in measurable improvements in sector performance.

This knowledge base will serve as a reference for other sectors, regions, and future programs—facilitating continuous learning, innovation, and scalability of value chain governance interventions.



5. Inter-agency Coordination and Engagement Mechanisms

The NPCO’s Value Chain Management Unit (VCMU), Regional Coordinating Units (RCUs), and Provincial Coordinating Units (PCUs) will actively support the planning and implementation of Industry Council activities. In collaboration with DTI’s Industry Cluster Point Persons, they will facilitate coordination meetings, joint planning sessions, and other multi-stakeholder engagements to strengthen council participation and align with national and regional priorities.

Given DTI’s dual role as Council Secretariat/Chair and lead RAPID implementing agency, strong inter-agency collaboration is essential to maximize project impact and ensure policy coherence. At the national level, the Project Steering Committee (PSC) and, regionally, the Regional Technical Working Groups (RTWGs) provide core mechanisms for alignment, guidance, and operational support.

To enhance their effectiveness, the project will implement targeted coordination support measures to foster a more accountable, responsive, and results-oriented inter-agency system that advances the goals of the RAPID Growth Project.

Key Mechanisms	Description
Project Steering Committee (PSC) Meetings	PSC meetings will be held at least semi-annually guided by a standardized agenda and reporting format to ensure consistency and allow for structured discussions on project budgetary requirements (AWPBs), progress, issues, resolutions, and next steps. A special meeting may also be called as the need arises.
Regional Technical Working Group (RTWG) Meetings	RTWG meetings shall be convened for the technical review and endorsement of Detailed Investments Plans (DIPs) of Regional and/or Provincial Coordinating Units including Farm-to-Market Road proposals. An annual RTWG meeting organized by the RCUs is also encouraged to discuss progress, issues, and ways forward. A special meeting may also be called as the need arises specially on matters on DIP and FMR Implementation.
DIP Implementation Planning Sessions	Right after the approval of the R/PCU’s DIPs, the R/PCUs are mandated to plan the implementation of the DIPs with various relevant industry stakeholders and enablers. In this way, the R/PCUs would get the crucial implementation support to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of DIPs and maximize impact through concerted efforts from the project and other industry enablers.
DIP Implementation Review Sessions at the Regional and/or Provincial level	At least 6 months after the approved DIPs were implemented, the R/PCUs are mandated to conduct the DIP Implementation Review Sessions together with the relevant stakeholders and enablers to check the progress of implementation, harvest emerging gains and constraints, and plan mitigating and corrective actions to ensure that the Project’s objectives will be realized as envisioned in the approved DIPs.



These measures aim to foster a more accountable, responsive, and results-oriented inter-agency coordination system—ensuring that national and regional mechanisms remain proactive in supporting the goals of the RAPID Growth Project.

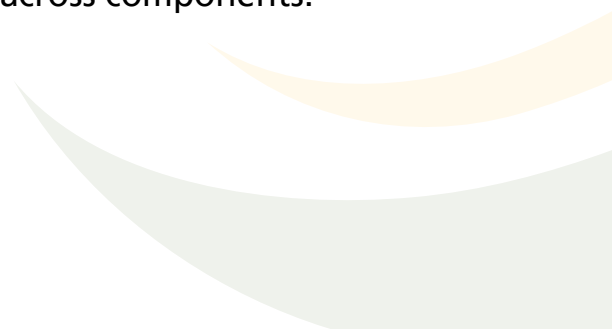
6. Roles and Functions

The table below outlines the key roles and functions of each component of the organizational structure, which are further elaborated in the subsequent sections.

Structure	Primary Role	Key Activities
NPCO	National coordination & strategic oversight	Project-wide implementation planning, coordination support, and technical assistance to implementing units, including the establishment of governance bodies, technical guidance, and ongoing monitoring.
RGMS	PSC secretariat	Organizes PSC meetings, documentation, stakeholder coordination, and oversight support
PSC	Policy and oversight body	Approves AWPB, procurement and progress reports, meets at least semi-annually
RTWG	Regional governance & investment approval	Reviews and endorses RSIPs, DIPs, and FMRs; fosters agency coordination; and facilitates implementation collaboration, including the endorsement of DIPs.
RCU and PCU	Regional coordination & operations	Serves as the Secretariat for the RTWG and organizes regional-wide activities, including the implementation of regional-wide initiatives, monitoring and evaluation, and the provision of technical and administrative support to PCUs.

a) National Project Coordinating Office (NCPO)

The National Project Coordinating Office (NPCO) serves as the central hub for project management and inter-agency coordination at the national level. Once the key NPCO staff positions are filled, the Project Director will convene a project-wide implementation meeting with all Regional Directors and Provincial Directors in the RAPID target sites. This meeting aims to align all levels of project implementers on the project's objectives, design, strategies, and implementation guidelines across components.





The activity, led by the project director and supported by the project manager, will ensure a shared understanding among the national, regional, and provincial stakeholders. Participants will include all RAPID NPCO staff, 6 regional directors, the MTIT-BARMM minister, and 20 provincial directors.

As part of its inter-agency coordination mandate, the NPCO and RCUs will facilitate the establishment of key governance structures, which are the Project Steering Committee (PSC) at the national level and the Regional Technical Working Groups (RTWGs) at the regional level. These bodies serve as formal platforms for active participation of partner agencies, financial service providers, and private sector representatives, enabling a whole-of-government and whole-of-industry approach to project implementation.

To further strengthen coordination and ensure effective stakeholder engagement, the NPCO will implement the following support mechanisms:

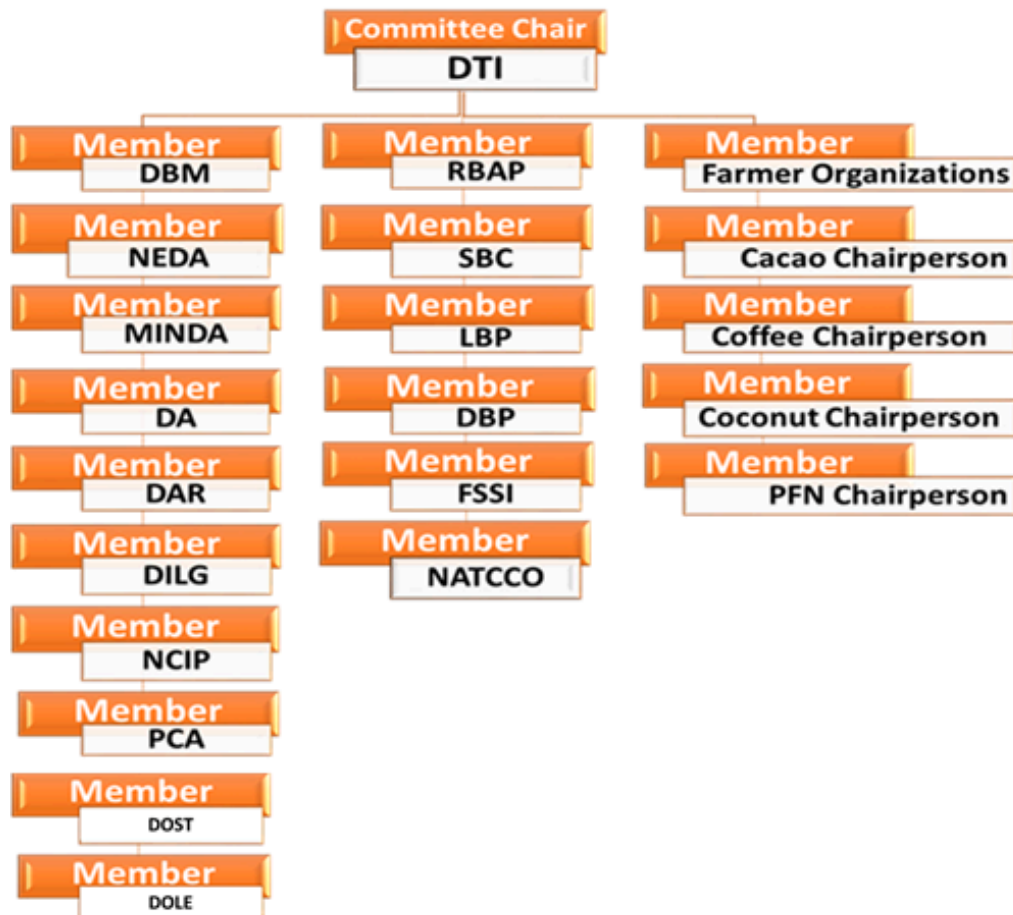
- *Coordination meetings with standardized agendas and reporting formats to ensure consistent communication across all levels.*
- *Coordination reviews to gather insights, document best practices, and continuously improve inter-agency collaboration mechanisms.*

Through these mechanisms, the NPCO plays a strategic role in harmonizing actions and decisions across institutions, ensuring the RAPID Growth Project is implemented in a coherent, inclusive, and well-integrated manner.

b) Project Steering Committee

The Project Steering Committee (PSC) will be established to provide strategic direction, policy guidance, and high-level oversight to the RAPID Growth Project. It will be chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and will bring together three key stakeholder groups: (1) Government Institutions; (2) Financial Service Providers; and (3) Industry Representatives.





The PSC serves as a critical inter-agency coordination platform, ensuring that decisions and policies are harmonized across relevant sectors and stakeholders. It will review and approve key project documents, including:

- Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWPB)
- Annual Procurement Plans (APP)
- Annual Progress and Financial Reports

The PSC will convene at least on a semi-annual basis, or as needed, to:

- Monitor overall project performance
- Address pressing implementation issues
- Ensure alignment with national priorities and sectoral policies
- Promote collaborative decision-making among its diverse members

Through its multi-sectoral composition and decision-making authority, the PSC plays a central role in strengthening institutional coordination and stakeholder accountability for effective project implementation.



c) Resource Generation and Management Services (RGMS)

The Resource Generation and Management Services (RGMS) will serve as the official secretariat to the Project Steering Committee (PSC). In this role, the RGMS will be responsible for organizing and facilitating all PSC-related activities, including:

- Sending out invitations to committee members and stakeholders
- Arranging meeting logistics (venue, materials, equipment)
- Preparing programs and agenda
- Managing the actual conduct of meetings
- Documenting proceedings and preparing official minutes

The NPCO will provide technical and logistical support to RGMS as needed, particularly in coordinating the participation of stakeholders from Mindanao, including industry council representatives and local committee members. All expenses incurred in the conduct of PSC meetings and related activities will be charged to the project.

PSC meetings will be organized in close coordination between RGMS and NPCO to ensure broad and meaningful stakeholder participation. This includes inviting:

- Representatives from IFAD, who must be present in all PSC meetings
- DTI Regional Directors
- Government agency representatives and private sector partners, especially those with relevant issues, proposals, or updates to present

To formally introduce the governance structure, PSC members will be presented during the National Project Launch and must be invited to all major national-level events organized or supported by the RAPID Growth Project. This ensures visibility, engagement, and alignment across all participating institutions.





d) Regional Technical Working Group

The Regional Technical Working Group (RTWG) serves as a key inter-agency coordination and decision-making body at the regional level. Its primary role is to review, approve, and endorse critical regional project documents and ensure alignment and synergy with ongoing government initiatives. The following are the RTWG Core Functions:

— Review and Approve:

- Regional Strategic Investment Plans (RSIP)
- Detailed Investment Plans (DIPs)
- Farm-to-Market Road (FMR) Subprojects

— Advisory Role:

- Provide guidance to Regional and Provincial Coordinating Units in coordinating with other line agencies to complement and build synergies with existing programs, projects, and investments in the region.

The RTWG is organized into two sub-committees, each chaired by a key regional government agency:

Sub-Committee	Chairperson	Key Members
1. Value Chain Development & Productive Investments	DTI Regional Director	DA, DAR, DENR, DOST, NCIP, NEDA, MinDA, MSMED Council, LBP, DBP, SBC, Provincial & LGU Officers
2. Access Infrastructure Sub-Committee	DILG Regional Director	DILG, DTI, and DPWH

Additional members or resource persons may be invited as needed to provide expert inputs or represent relevant institutions during the review and approval processes. This multi-agency composition ensures that the RTWG serves as a platform for coordinated planning, technical validation, and alignment with regional priorities, fostering a collaborative approach to project implementation across components.



e) Regional Coordination Units



Regional Coordination Units. The Regional Coordination Unit (RCU) serves as the secretariat and operational backbone of the RAPID Growth Project at the regional level.

It plays a pivotal role in facilitating inter-agency collaboration, organizing technical reviews, and ensuring the effective implementation of project activities in close coordination with regional stakeholders. The following are its key functions:

Key Roles	Details
Formation and Orientation of the RTWG.	<p>Once the RCU staff are on boarded, they will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize and convene the first RTWG meeting Introduce the RAPID Growth Project to all relevant agencies and organizations identified as RTWG members Lead program preparations, with the Regional Project Head presenting the project's goals, structure, and implementation strategies Invite NPCO Officers to conduct orientations or technical briefings, as needed
Secretariat to the RTWG.	<p>The RCU is responsible for all coordination, logistical, and administrative arrangements related to the creation and activities of the RTWG. These tasks include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sending invitations Organizing meeting logistics and venue Preparing the program and materials Documenting proceedings and preparing minutes <p>All costs related to RTWG meetings and associated activities are chargeable to the project.</p>
Regional Project Launch:	<p>The RCU will also organize a Regional Project Launch, where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members of the RTWG are formally introduced The project is officially presented to a wider regional audience Cross-sectoral cooperation is highlighted and encouraged
Stakeholder Engagement and Expansion	<p>To enhance regional collaboration and alignment, the RCU will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure RTWG members are invited to all key regional project activities Recommend the inclusion of additional members or resource persons in the RTWG when relevant to ongoing discussions or planning needs Facilitate linkages with existing government programs, sectoral or industry councils, and other initiatives to strengthen complementation and convergence at the regional level
Project Management	<p>This positioning of the RCU ensures that the planning, coordination, and decision-making processes of the RAPID Growth Project are deeply rooted in the local context, while being aligned with national priorities and frameworks.</p>





f) Negosyo Centers as Focal Points for RAPID Beneficiary Support

Negosyo Centers (NCs) are established as one-stop shops to improve the ease of doing business and facilitate MSMEs' access to various services offered by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). These centers are located in all cities and municipalities across the country, created in partnership with Local Government Units (LGUs), local business chambers, and other support organizations.

All 21 RAPID Growth target provinces currently have operational Negosyo Centers. These are classified into three categories based on the level and scope of services they provide. Each NC is managed by trained Business Counsellors who offer business consultancy and client servicing. The number of personnel assigned varies by category, with Category A NCs offering full services, including:


- Business Registration and Licensing
- Market Linkage and Referral
- Enterprise Development Trainings
- Financing Facilitation
- Conduct of Trainings and Seminars

In cases where NCs are co-managed with LGUs, additional support staff may be provided by the local government.

Role of NCs in RAPID Growth Implementation. As part of the RAPID Growth Project, a provincial network of Negosyo Centers will be established in each target province. These networks will serve as platforms for:

- Information exchange and business referrals
- Efficient coordination of project activities
- Improved access of farmers, cooperatives, and MSMEs to business development and financial services





NCs will act as focal points for service delivery, aligned with the project's implementation framework. To enhance their capacity, selected NCs will be equipped with additional facilities and tools necessary for effective service provision. Furthermore, NC Business Counsellors will undergo training through RAPID's capacity-building initiatives.

Negosyo Center's Deliverables. Negosyo Centers will serve as local business advisory hubs for RAPID-supported enterprises, with key functions including:


- Delivering or facilitating basic business development services in coordination with BDSPs and PCUs
- Assisting MSMEs and FOs in preparing business improvement plans and accessing financing or technology services
- Supporting market linkage initiatives, including participation in business matching events and trade fairs
- Participating in monitoring of enterprise growth milestones and referring cases to PCUs for further intervention

Specific deliverables and performance expectations will be included in an updated Negosyo Center-RAPID Function Matrix, to be developed in consultation with DTI regional offices.

Capacity Building and Staff Integration. Business Counsellors and selected RAPID staff will be trained to develop core competencies in the following areas:

- Conducting value chain mapping and analysis, and preparing Regional/Provincial Strategic Investment Plans (SIPs)
- Facilitating business partnerships between farmers' micro-enterprises (cooperatives, associations, farmer-owned businesses) and agribusiness SMEs, including the development of Business Improvement Plans (BIPs)
- Supporting women and special groups in accessing project services
- Understanding and facilitating value chain financing
- Collecting data for the MIS, VC-ICT systems, and RAPID M&E/Knowledge Management system

All costs associated with the strengthening of NCs and the upskilling of Business Counsellors are chargeable to the project.





Client Engagement and Service Coordination. The Negosyo Center (NC) will serve as the primary entry point for farmers and MSMEs interested in participating in the RAPID Growth Project. Clients may visit NCs to inquire about the program, register their interest, and receive initial guidance. All client interactions—including inquiries and expressions of interest—will be formally documented by the NC Business Counsellors and submitted to the Provincial Coordination Unit (PCU) for appropriate follow-up and action.

Value Chain Facilitators (VCFs) will be assigned to each province (one VCF per two value chains) and located within the covered DTI Provincial Offices. The VCFs will work closely with Business Counsellors to ensure coordinated service delivery and consistent implementation of value chain activities. During field activities, NC staff are encouraged to accompany the VCF or PCU teams, contributing their local knowledge, community connections, and stakeholder networks to improve outreach, engagement, and follow-through.

In addition, the NC will serve as a convenient venue for RAPID-related activities, such as stakeholder consultations, meetings, training sessions, and business matching events. These engagements may be recorded as part of the NC's accomplishments, and related operational costs may be charged to the project.

Coordination Mechanisms. To ensure effective collaboration and prevent duplication of efforts, the project will establish a coordination protocol between Negosyo Centers and PCUs to support joint planning, beneficiary validation, activity tracking, and information sharing.

This coordination mechanism will be formalized and institutionalized through regional and provincial planning sessions, and will be supported by regular coordination meetings, shared reporting tools, and agreed workflows to promote accountability, clarity, and responsiveness in service delivery.





Strategic Role in Coordination and Reporting. To support monitoring and coordination, Business Counsellors shall regularly submit reports to the PCU containing:

- Inquiries and expressions of interest from clients
- Updates on field visits and engagements
- Other project-relevant information gathered through the NC

The active role of NCs in field coordination, data gathering, and service delivery positions them as critical partners in achieving the goals of the RAPID Growth Project. Their strategic location, established relationships with local stakeholders, and embedded presence in the communities make them ideal focal points for integrating government support and private sector participation.

Incentive and Resource Support. Recognizing the expanded responsibilities of Negosyo Centers under RAPID, the project will explore options for incentives and resource support, which may include:

- Access to capacity building specific to value chain development and enterprise upgrading
- Provision of promotional and knowledge materials to support service delivery
- Inclusion in recognition programs or co-branding of successful interventions

These provisions aim to ensure sustained engagement, improved service delivery, and accountability, while promoting closer integration of national and local enterprise development initiatives.





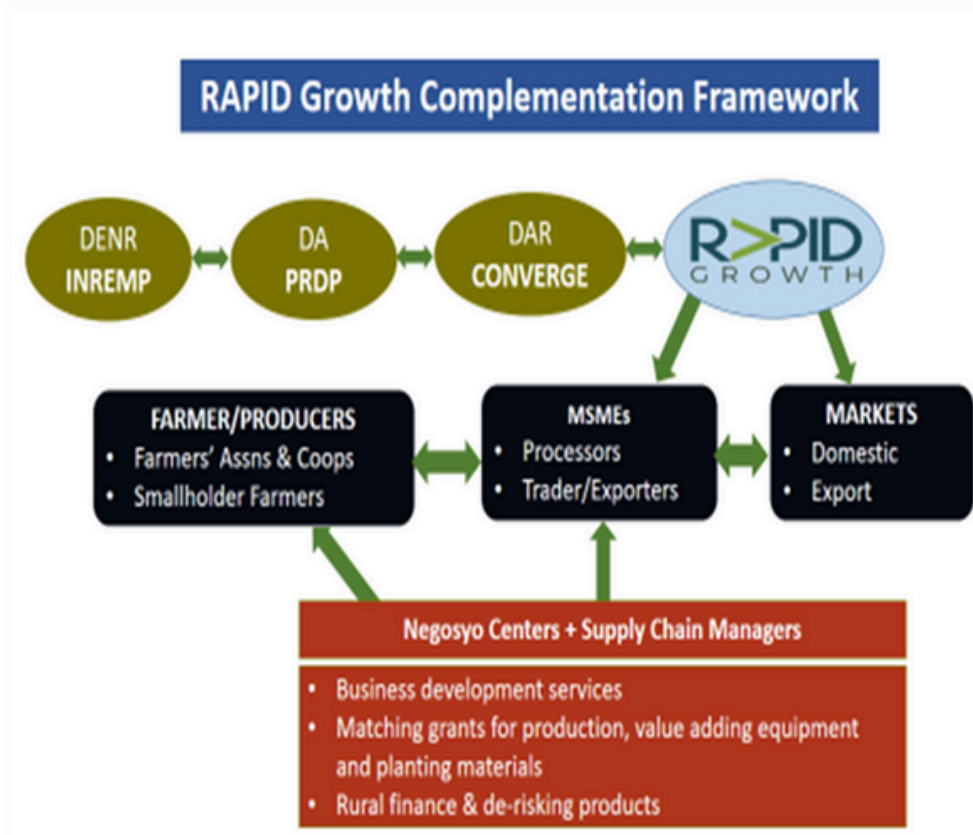
7. Strengthening the Capacities of Public and Private Sector Partners.

A key strategy of the RAPID Growth Project is to build the capacities of both public and private stakeholders to ensure the effective adoption, implementation, and sustainability of project interventions.

The approach is two-fold:

- **Institutional Development** – strengthening of farmer groups, cooperatives, MSMEs, and local organizations involved in the value chain; and,
- **Capability Building for Value Chain (VC) Partners** – enhancing the technical and coordination skills of government agencies, financial institutions, and private sector actors to support value chain implementation.

Figure 1: RAPID Growth Complementation Framework





a) Institutional Development of Value Chain Organizations

The project will support the growth and formalization of value chain actors—such as farmers’ groups, cooperatives, and MSMEs—identified through value chain mapping. Participation is open to both formally registered and informal groups. Support for informal organizations includes assistance with legal registration and basic organizational development. Core interventions include:

- Organizational development and legal registration;
- Capacity building in governance, technical operations, and management;
- Financial literacy and resource management training;
- Strategic planning and implementation support.

Strengthened organizations will serve as implementing partners in delivering project services, accessing finance, and facilitating member support. The project will only engage individual farmers through these organizations.

RCUs and PCUs will ensure active involvement of these groups in planning processes, such as the Regional Strategic Investment Plan (RSIP) and Detailed Investment Plan (DIP) workshops. RAPID R/PCUs and NC staff will maintain updated organizational profiles, which will be consolidated by R/PCUs and uploaded to the MIS.

b) Hub and Spoke Model

A key strategy in this approach is the adoption of the Hub and Spoke Model, wherein more mature, capable FOs or MSMEs serve as “hubs” that anchor value chain coordination, while smaller or less mature FOs operate as “spokes.” The Hub and Spoke Model Framework will support both hubs and spokes by:





- Strengthening the capacity of hubs to coordinate supply, ensure quality, and engage with anchor firms
- Supporting spokes in improving production practices, organizing members, and building linkages with hubs and support services
- Improve the commercial partnerships between and among the Hubs, Spokes, and Anchor Firms to ensure economic gains are shared at all levels.

This differentiated and inclusive value chain upgrading and upscaling approach ensures that all FOs—regardless of maturity—can play meaningful roles within the value chain and benefit from increased market access, collective action, and improved services.

8. Capability Building of Value Chain Partners

RAPID's value chain approach relies on collaboration across sectors and stakeholders. As this extends beyond DTI's traditional mandate, capacity building is essential to align efforts and ensure coordinated, market-driven development.

Capacity-building activities will be based on assessed needs and monitored for its effectiveness focusing on the results of:

- Strengthening farmer organizations (Hubs and Spokes) to deliver services to their smallholder farmer-members;
- Tailored training for financial institutions and Hubs to improve outreach and sustainability;
- Building LGU capacity in value chain planning and implementation;
- Developing DTI's internal capabilities to lead project implementation;
- Identifying and integrating the capacity needs of MSMEs and farmers;
- Documenting best practices and scalable models for post-project use.





The following are key initiatives of the capacity building component:

- **Formal VC Training** – NPCO or accredited [DV1] providers (e.g., PTTC) will train DTI and RAPID staff in value chain development.
- **Localized VC Training** – RCUs/PCUs will organize province-level training sessions with LGUs, government agencies, industry groups, MSMEs, and farmers' organizations. PPCs or VCFs will lead design and facilitation.
- **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)** – PCUs will conduct FGDs to deepen local understanding of VC principles, define roles, and identify interventions. These discussions will also serve as platforms for anchor firms and MSMEs to explore market linkages and product development.

By investing in both institutional and technical capacities, RAPID Growth aims to establish a strong ecosystem of empowered organizations, capable institutions, and engaged private sector actors. This will ensure that value chain development continues and scales beyond the project lifecycle, fostering inclusive and sustainable rural economic growth.

9. Collaborative Approach to Capacity Development

Given the multi-stakeholder nature of value chains, the RAPID Growth Project places strong emphasis on convergence and collaboration in the design and delivery of capacity building initiatives. Capability development efforts will target not only individual MSMEs and farmer organizations but also support actors such as LGUs and industry associations—ensuring inclusive and system-wide value chain strengthening.





10. Training Tools and Knowledge Resources

To enhance relevance, standardization, and replication of capacity building activities, the Project will develop and provide a set of training tools and reference materials. These knowledge materials include but not limited to:

- Sample training modules tailored to specific functions of value chains
- Templates for profiling MSMEs and farmer cooperatives and associations
- Diagnostic tool to assess the capacity, gaps, and interventions for the upgrading and upscaling of RAPID-assisted MSMEs and FCAs
- A Value Chain Training Curriculum Outline adaptable for regional and national use

These resources will support partners in delivering consistent, high-quality training interventions across project sites.

11. Integration of GESI Principles

Capacity building activities will fully integrate Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) principles. Special focus will be given to:

- Empowering women, indigenous people, and youth-led MSMEs and Farmer Organizations
- Designing training modules that are accessible, inclusive, and gender-responsive
- Providing targeted mentoring and support services that address the specific needs of marginalized groups

This ensures that value chain development efforts promote equitable participation and benefit-sharing among all stakeholders.





12. Sustainability and Exit Strategy

To maintain the momentum of capability building beyond the project's lifespan, a clear sustainability and exit strategy will be implemented. This includes:

- Institutionalizing training programs through partnerships with LGUs, academic institutions, and industry bodies
- Encouraging local ownership and continuous learning through peer-to-peer mentoring networks
- Embedding business advisory services within local structures for continued support
- Partnership with Coop Federations for the sustainability of support to RAPID-assisted farmer cooperatives
- Partnership with Chambers of Commerce to facilitate sustainability of strategic linkages with the private sector

Through these measures, the project ensures that the benefits of capacity building are sustained and scaled beyond project funding.

C. Commercial Partnership

The Commercial Partnership component of the RAPID Growth Project fosters inclusive, market-driven linkages between farmers, cooperatives, and MSMEs within the project's priority value chains. Centered on an anchor firm-led model, it enables smallholders to access technologies, financing, and stable markets. This section outlines the key features of the approach, including its strategies, implementation mechanisms, and shared benefits for farmers and enterprises.





1. Contribution to RAPID Growth Project

The Commercial Partnership approach directly contributes to the overarching development targets of the RAPID Growth Project:

- 60% increase in smallholder farmer income
- 100% increase in MSME sales

By fostering inclusive and strategic business relationships, the component ensures that farmers and MSMEs are not only linked—but also empowered to grow and sustain their enterprises together.

a) Development Outcomes

The Commercial Partnership approach of the RAPID Growth Project supports all activities necessary to foster and formalize business linkages between MSMEs and farmers within the project's target value chains. Its primary aim is to deliver two key development outcomes:

- Producers and value chain actors collaborating through joint action plans and formal business partnerships
- Farmers' associations, cooperatives, and MSMEs gaining improved access to markets, appropriate technologies, and investment financing

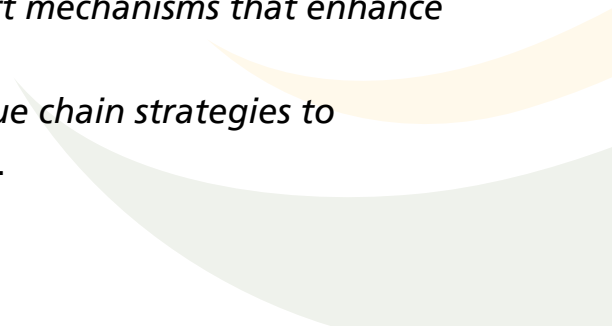
b) Key Approaches

To achieve these outcomes, the component operates through three interrelated approach:

Strengthening Governance and Institutional Frameworks

This approach focuses on building and reinforcing enabling structures that promote the growth of MSMEs linked to smallholder producers. It involves:

- *Supporting the formation or strengthening of inclusive value chain governance bodies under the framework of the Hub and Spoke Model*
- *Promoting policy and institutional support mechanisms that enhance enterprise-farmer collaboration*
- *Aligning local development plans with value chain strategies to improve coordination among stakeholders.*





Business Development Services for Farmers and MSMEs.

To help Farmer Organizations, smallholders, and MSMEs transition from subsistence to commercial operations, this key services delivers targeted business development services, including:

- Capacity building in key Hub and Spoke Systems, entrepreneurship, financial management, and product development
- Support in adopting appropriate technologies and production practices
- Assistance in business planning, certification, and market compliance
- Linking MSMEs and farmer groups to financing institutions and investment opportunities

Anchor Firm-Led Value Chain Development.

At the core of the Commercial Partnership strategy is the anchor firm-led approach, where:

- Farmer Organizations assigned as Hubs must establish a formal partnership agreement with a lead enterprise (anchor firm) before receiving project support
- Agreements align agricultural production with the market requirements of the Anchor Firm

Anchor Firms provide essential support, including but not limited to the following: technical assistance, input supply and production planning, financial services such as cash advances and loans, quality control guidance, logistical coordination.

This approach transforms traditional farming into market-driven agri-production, increasing profitability and sustainability for smallholder producers.





c) Eligibility Criteria for Anchor Firms

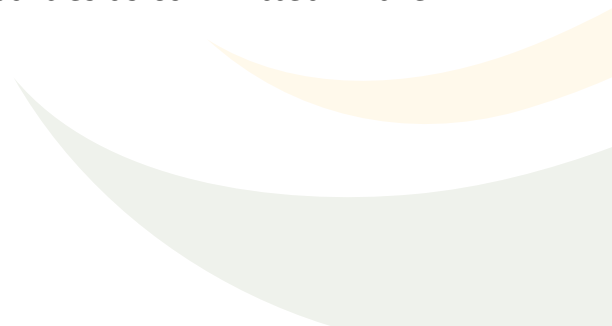
To ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of Commercial Partnership Agreements (CPAs), especially under the anchor firm-led model, it is critical to establish clear eligibility requirements for participating value chain actors—particularly anchor firms.

Anchor firms play a central role in the value chain as the primary buyers and integrators of smallholder produce. As such, only firms that meet a defined set of criteria should be engaged to guarantee their ability to deliver on their commitments and absorb the production outputs of smallholder partners.

Key eligibility criteria for anchor firms may include:

- *A verifiable track record in the relevant industry or value chain*
- *With complete business permits*
- *Export license or established domestic market access*
- *Capacity to absorb volume as stated in the CPAs*
- *Proven ability to provide technical and logistical support to smallholder producers*
- *Commitment to inclusive business practices, particularly involving women- indigenous peoples, and youth-led enterprises and organizations*
- *Willingness to enter into formal, performance-based agreements with beneficial incentives for farmer organizations and smallholder farmers*

Other eligibility requirements for value chain actors—particularly the anchor firms—should also include their track record, export licenses (where applicable), capacity to absorb volume, and other relevant qualifications. Similar to the Hub-and-Spoke model, only those value chain actors who meet these criteria should participate in the CPAs to ensure they can effectively absorb and support the production of the other parties as committed in their agreements.





This approach mirrors the Hub-and-Spoke framework, wherein the anchor firm functions as the hub, providing stability, integration, and market access for multiple producer groups (the spokes). By establishing and enforcing clear eligibility standards, the project ensures that CPAs are realistic, performance-driven, and capable of generating mutually beneficial outcomes for all value chain partners.

d) Mutual Benefits for Stakeholders

Following the architecture of the Hub and Spoke Model, if implemented successfully, the following are its transformative benefits to agricultural value chains:

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Other eligibility requirements for the value chain actors, especially the anchor firms should also include track record, export license and capacity to absorb volume and others

Just like the Hub and Spoke Model, the value chain actors that will participate in the CPAs should meet the eligibility requirements, especially the anchor firms, in order to ensure their capacity to absorb the produce of the other parties, as stated in their respective CPAs.



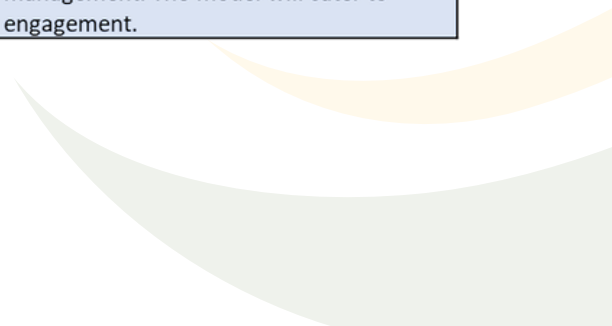


This approach aligns with the hub-and-spoke model, where the anchor firm must be capable of integrating and supporting multiple producer groups (Hub and Spokes). Establishing and enforcing these eligibility standards will help ensure that CPAs are realistic, performance-oriented, and lead to mutually beneficial outcomes for all value chain partners.

d) Mutual Benefits for Stakeholders

Following the architecture of the Hub and Spoke Model, if implemented successfully, the following are its transformative benefits to agricultural value chains:

Efficiency and Profitability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Hubs serve as a bridge between farmers and larger markets, enhancing access to more competitive buyers and reducing intermediary layers. ✓ Hubs enables greater aggregation, processing, and distribution, reducing duplication of efforts and inefficiencies in logistics. ✓ Spokes deliver products to the hubs, ensuring a consistent and seamless flow of goods and services. ✓ Bulk handling at Hubs lowers transportation, storage, and processing costs per unit. ✓ Efficient route planning and coordinated logistics minimize travel distances and logistical costs. ✓ ICT-enabled hubs can optimize inventory management, demand forecasting, and transaction transparency.
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Hubs can promote resource-efficient practices like shared storage or renewable energy-powered processing facilities. ✓ Reduced transportation distances contribute to lower carbon emissions. ✓ The model encourages sustainable farming practices by providing hubs as platforms for knowledge dissemination. ✓ Aggregation of products in Hubs minimize post-harvest losses through proper storage, grading, and timely market access. ✓ Byproducts from processing at Hubs (e.g., organic waste) can be recycled into compost or energy, reducing waste, and enhancing resource utilization. ✓ Hubs can serve as focal points for community development, fostering collaboration and shared benefits among farmers and local businesses.
Scalability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The modular nature of the hub-and-spoke model makes it adaptable to diverse agricultural contexts under the RAPID Growth Project, from provincial to regional or national scales. ✓ Hubs can start small and grow as demand increases, reducing upfront investment risks. ✓ The model's efficiency and clear structure make it attractive for private investors and agribusinesses to establish partnerships or provide services. ✓ Government and development agencies can leverage the model as part of larger rural development strategies, aligning with sustainable development goals (SDGs). ✓ Digital platforms integrated into Hubs facilitate scaling by connecting more spokes and expanding their reach without substantial physical infrastructure investment.
Inclusivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The model allows smallholder farmers to participate in larger, structured value chains without needing to individually manage market complexities. ✓ Provides access to essential resources such as inputs and financial services. ✓ Hubs can offer training and extension services to spokes, empowering farmers with knowledge on sustainable practices, quality standards, and productivity improvements. ✓ Targeted policies at hubs can ensure participation of women, youth, and indigenous peoples in value-added activities, such as processing or cooperative management. The model will cater to marginalized groups by providing equal opportunities for engagement.





e) Building Business Linkages

As part of the Value Chain Mapping process, the RAPID Growth Project will facilitate the identification and engagement of anchor firms—key enterprises that can drive market access and value chain integration. Anchor firms may include processors, consolidators, or exporters operating at the provincial, regional, or national levels.

Identification of anchor firms will be led by:

- The PCU through the Value Chain Facilitator (VCF) at the provincial level;
- The RCU through the Marketing Coordinator (MC) at the regional level;
- The NPCO through the Value Chain Officer (VCO) at the national level.

While national-level companies offer scale, local MSMEs will also be prioritized as anchor firms, given their role in stimulating local economies and generating inclusive growth.

Facilitating Commercial Partnerships. Identified anchor firms will be invited to participate in Value Chain Workshops at the provincial and regional levels. These sessions aim to:

- Introduce anchor firms to farmer cooperatives and associations;
- Align market demand with production capacity;
- Lay the groundwork for formal business partnerships.

If an anchor firm has not yet identified a farmer organization to partner with, the VCF will assist in matchmaking with suitable cooperatives or associations.





Target Companies and Expected Outcomes. Priority will be given to companies operating within the value chains of the project's priority sectors, either as potential anchor firms or as support industries. Increasing the number of anchor firms participating in the project is expected to:

- Engage more smallholder farmers
- Improve sectoral production performance
- Expand market access and service delivery
- Increase the number of smallholder farmers benefiting from project interventions

Market Linkaging Session. To formalize business linkages between farmer organizations (FOs) and anchor firms, the Value Chain Facilitator (VCF) and Market Coordinator (MC) will organize structured Market Linkaging Sessions, where:

- Anchor firms present their business models and partnership proposals
- Farmer cooperatives and associations engage in direct business negotiations
- Appropriate marketing agreements are discussed, drafted, and refined based on mutually agreed terms

Partnership Agreements. While the Tripartite Commercial Partnership Agreement (CPA) was initially introduced as the standard mechanism for formalizing value chain partnerships, recent policy adjustments now allow for greater flexibility. Tripartite agreements are no longer required; instead, bilateral agreements between farmer groups and anchor firms—and other suitable marketing instruments—are considered sufficient to establish formal market linkages.





Types of acceptable agreements [A2] may include:

- Bilateral Marketing Contracts or Supply Agreements tailored to specific value chain needs
- Purchase Orders as an evidence of commercial transactions
- Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) for exploratory partnerships
- Framework Agreements that allow for rolling commitments and adaptive sourcing
- Letters of Intent as precursors to formal contracts

The use of these alternative instruments allows partners to customize arrangements based on their capabilities, business model, and market dynamics—encouraging more inclusive and responsive engagement.

Incentives Programming Guide. To support the formation and sustainability of these partnerships, the project will adopt the Incentives Programming Guide, which outlines the support packages or facilitation services that may be provided to encourage and reward formal collaboration between FOs and anchor firms. These may include but not limited to:

- Priority access to project support or funding for joint initiatives
- Capacity building for compliance with quality, volume, or delivery requirements
- Access to post-harvest or logistics support linked to active agreements
- Recognition or branding support for market-aligned farmer groups and anchor firms

The guide will also provide criteria for assessing the strength of proposed agreements and determining the level of project facilitation or intervention required.





f) Participation in Industry Events and Conferences

To expand the RAPID Growth Project's network and foster stronger linkages with the private sector, project staff are encouraged to actively participate in:

- Business conferences
- Industry summits and fora
- Business and technology seminars

Registration fees for such events may be charged to the project. Moreover, the RAPID Project may also serve as a sponsor or major partner in industry cluster conferences, with participation costs covered under the budget for industry cluster strengthening.

Promotional Strategy and Visibility. To increase visibility and engagement with potential value chain actors, the project will implement a targeted promotional strategy during events such as business forums, trade shows, and market brokering sessions. These promotional activities will be led by the NPCO, RCU, VCO, MC, and VCF. The following materials will be developed and distributed:

- Informational brochures and flyers outlining the project's value chain strategy and partnership opportunities
- Banners and standees for event booths
- Sample products from supported MSMEs or farmer groups to showcase quality and market readiness
- Case stories or success profiles highlighting existing partnerships and impact
- Promotional materials such as brochures, banners, and sample products to be distributed.





Feedback and Performance Evaluation. To continuously improve promotional efforts and event effectiveness, the project will incorporate feedback and performance evaluation mechanisms after each engagement. These will include:

- Participant feedback forms or surveys
- Post-event debriefings with organizers and partners
- Basic metrics such as: Number of leads generated, partnerships initiated, and follow-up actions completed

Insights gathered will be used to refine messaging, improve outreach materials, and strengthen future promotional activities.

g) Management Structure

Based on the preceding discussions on the design and delivery of institutional strengthening activities, the table below outlines the general management structure for this component. It defines the key implementing units across national, regional, provincial, and local levels, along with their respective roles and responsibilities.

Level	Unit / Office	Lead Role	Key Functions
National	National Project Coordination Office (NPCO) - Value Chain Management Unit (VCMU)	Strategic oversight, policy direction, Technical leadership, and thematic support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Manage national-level partnerships (DTI, DA, TESDA, etc.) - Ensure M&E and quality assurance - Allocate and monitor budget for institutional strengthening - Develop national training frameworks, policies, and guidelines - Develop sector-specific capacity-building tools - Provide coaching and technical backstopping to the RCUs - Review and approve DIPs - Coordinate with BDSPs and subject matter experts
Regional	Regional Coordinating Unit (RCU)	Regional implementation and supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide coaching and technical backstopping to the PCUs - Integrate institutional strengthening into RSIPs and DIPs - Coordinate region-wide capacity-building delivery - Secretariat of the RTWGs - Report progress to NPCO
Provincial	Provincial Coordination Unit (PCU)	Field-level coordination and delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify capacity gaps of MSMEs and FOs - Prepare BIPs and DIPs - Coordinate with BDSPs, LGUs, and NCs - Mobilize local trainers and track outcomes - Submit documentation and feedback
Local	Negosyo Centers (NCs)	Access point and training venue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Serve as liaison to PCUs - Host and co-facilitate sessions - Maintain training records and follow-ups - Submit reports to PCU
Cross-cutting	Regional Technical Working Groups (RTWGs)	Technical review and governance support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review and endorses RSIPs, DIPs, and BIPs - Ensure GESI, youth, and climate resilience integration - Provide technical and financial support or complementation to project implementation - Provide formal feedback to proponents - Support monitoring of institutional outcomes



h) Monitoring and Evaluation

The RAPID Growth Project's Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) and Knowledge Management system is designed to support evidence-based decision-making, ensure accountability, and capture learnings that inform both implementation and policy. A key element of this system is the Management Information System (MIS), which serves as the central platform for data collection, progress tracking, performance reporting, and knowledge sharing across all components of the project.

i) MIS Continuity and Sustainability

To ensure that the MIS remains functional, relevant, and up-to-date beyond the life of the project, a continuity and sustainability plan will be developed. This plan will clearly outline:

- The institutional home or agency responsible for maintaining and updating the MIS after project completion
- Training and turnover protocols to capacitate staff from national and regional partner institutions.
- Potential integration of the MIS into existing government systems or platforms used by DA, DTI, or partner LGUs.
- Budgetary considerations and partnerships for long-term system support and development

This ensures that data-driven planning and monitoring will continue to benefit supported value chains even after the project ends.





j) Capacity Building Timeline

A comprehensive Planning and Capacity Building Program will be implemented throughout the project lifecycle to ensure that project teams, partners, and value chain stakeholders can effectively utilize M&E tools and apply knowledge management practices. Key activities include:

- Training on results-based management, data collection and validation, reporting protocols, and outcome harvesting
- Orientation on the use and management of the MIS
- Capacity development on knowledge documentation and dissemination

k) Knowledge Management for Learning and Adaptation

Beyond compliance and reporting, knowledge management under the RAPID Growth Project is positioned as a tool for adaptive learning. Regular synthesis of lessons learned, success stories, and field insights will be used to:

- Refine project strategies and approaches
- Inform policy recommendations
- Promote replication and scaling of best practices

l) Enhancing RTWG Functionality for Monitoring and Quality Assurance.

The Regional Technical Working Groups (RTWGs) play a vital role in reviewing and endorsing key project documents such as RSIPs, DIPs, Business Improvement Plans, and FMR proposals. To enhance the quality and consistency of these processes within the M&E system, the project will implement the following improvements:

- Standardized Evaluation Toolkit – A unified set of tools will ensure objective and consistent assessments across regions.
- Integration of GESI, Youth, and Climate Resilience Indicators – Reviews will include cross-cutting criteria to align with inclusive and sustainable development goals.





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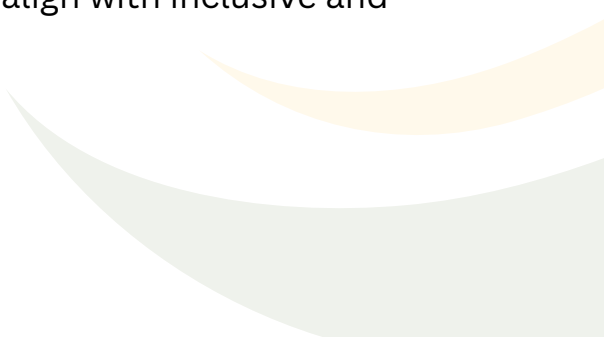
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- 



p) Measuring Accomplishments

Through integrated M&E and knowledge systems, RAPID ensures that project results are not only measured—but also shared, sustained, and used to drive broader impact.

The Framework of the Hub and Spoke Model will serve as a guide for the RCUs and PCUs in measuring accomplishments, indicators, information and data to capture pursuant to the updated definitions of the Project's Logical Framework.

