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Enhancing Policy Frameworks: Analysis of the Agreeability of Standard Operating Procedures in DOST – FICs, Philippines

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Abstract

This paper focused on the Standard Operating Procedures of Food Innovation Centers participated in by 55 employees of DOST FICs. Specifically, it looked into the following aspects of FICs standard operating procedures: eligibility of firm / MSMEs, Provisions of Services and use of Facilities, Intellectual Property (IP) Management, Marketing / Promotional Strategies, Monitoring and Evaluation, Sustainability Mechanism, Procedure for Customer Transactions, Schedule for Fees, Equipment Rental Rates, and Schedule for Operation, and the degree to which the employees perceived them as agreeable or not. Further, it also gives us idea as to extent to which these standards are used by the employees. The study utilized the descriptive-survey method and the questionnaire as the main instrument to gather the needed data on perception and extent of use. These data were treated and interpreted using the mean and standard deviation. Results revealed that the employees of the FICs in the region have homogenous responses as to the agreeability of the SOPs of FICs in the region and that the use of the employees of the standard operating procedures is oftentimes which means that their tasks and the operations of the FICs are governed and guided by these operational procedures which make the centers functional. The researcher recommends that FICs should look into variables other than the areas mentioned in the SOP. The variables are limited so there might be others that are equally important, and might be needing attention. FICs should work on acquiring intellectual property rights as this is a form of preserving ownership. Since the study show positive results, the centers might want to maintain or consider more criteria to add which may help improve the services of the FICs.

Keywords*: intellectual property management, promotional strategies, standard oprating procedures, sustainability mechanism*

INTRODUCTION

If economic returns are to be realized from agricultural production, the development of the agro-industry sector as well as commercial farming and related agricultural enterprises is important in all countries. Although many of the challenges differ between highly sophisticated agri food systems and those of less sophistication, it is notable that the need to innovate is common to all. Recent trends in agri- food systems are demanding that farmers produce traders, agro-processors, and other stakeholders improve the efficiency of their operations and be more responsive to consumer demands as well as regulatory frameworks.

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In the food industry, just as any other industry, product and process development is considered a vital part – indeed the lifeblood – of smart business strategy. Failure to develop new and improved products relegates firms to competing solely on price which favors the players with access to the lowest cost inputs (land, labor, etc.). Adopting a low-cost strategy can have unexpected consequences for the economy as a whole when another country, which has a lower cost structure, enters the market.

Consumers' demands keep changing over time. These changes range from basic considerations such as improving food safety, shelf life, and reducing wastage, to demands for increasingly sophisticated foods having special characteristics in terms of nutritional value, palatability, and convenience. The actual product development process is determined by the interaction between consumer expectations and demand, the technical capacity of the food producer, and emerging knowledge from food science research.

The Purpose of this paper is to present a clear description of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) of Food Innovation Centers, how they are perceived by employees as agreeable or disagreeable, and how these might become a basis for enhancing the existing policies of the firm for food product innovation and processing.

A **standard operating procedure** (**SOP**) is a set of step-by-step instructions compiled by an organization to help workers carry out complex routine operations. SOPs aim to achieve efficiency, quality output and uniformity of performance, while reducing miscommunication and failure to comply with industry regulations.

Procedures are extensively employed to assist with working safely. They are sometimes called safe work methods statements (SWMS, pronounced as 'Swims'). They are usually preceded by various methods of analyzing tasks or jobs to be performed in a workplace, including an approach called job safety analysis, in which hazards are identified and their control methods described. Procedures must be suited to the literacy levels of the user, and as part of this, the readability of procedures is important. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Standard_operating_procedure)

Core to any food manufacturer's food safety/Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) plan are the facility's prerequisite programs. The foundation of each prerequisite program is its corresponding Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).
By definition, an SOP is a set of written instructions that document a food manufacturer's routine or repetitive activity. Specific to food manufacturing plants, the term SOP is commonly applied to production, manufacturing and support area processes, jobs or activities. For all sanitation-related processes, jobs or activities, the term SSOP (Sanitation SOP) is reserved.

The development and use of SOPs/SSOPs are integral parts of a successful food safety, quality and sanitation system, as they provide individuals with the information required to properly perform their jobs. Furthermore, the use of SOPs and SSOPs promotes quality through consistent implementation of a process, task or job. Also, if clearly written, SOPs and SSOPs can minimize miscommunication and variation between individuals or organizations.
The term SOP may also be used interchangeably with "protocol," "job instruction" or "work instruction." (https://www.foodsafetymagazine.com/magazine-archive1/december-2013january-2014/food-plant-sops-the-backbone-of-your-food-safety-system/)

This study is governed by the theory of Scientific management - a theory of management that analyzes and synthesizes workflows. Its main objective is improving economic efficiency, especially labor productivity. It was one of the earliest attempts to apply science to the engineering of processes and to management. Scientific management is sometimes known as Taylorism after its founder, Frederick Winslow Taylor. Most of its themes are still important parts

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of industrial engineering and management today. These include: analysis; synthesis; logic; rationality; empiricism; work ethic; efficiency and elimination of waste; standardization of best practices; disdain for tradition preserved merely for its own sake or to protect the social status of particular workers with particular skill sets; the transformation of craft production into mass production; and knowledge transfer between workers and from workers into tools, processes, and documentation. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scientific_management)

Workforce productivity, often referred to as labor productivity, is a measure for an organization or company, a process, an industry, or a country. Workforce productivity can be measured in 2 ways, in physical terms or in price terms.

- the intensity of labor-effort, and the quality of labor effort generally.
- the creative activity involved in producing technical innovations.
- the relative efficiency gains resulting from different systems of management, organization, co-ordination or engineering.
- the productive effects of some forms of labor on other forms of labor.

These aspects of productivity refer to the qualitative dimensions of labor input. If an organization is using labor much more intensely, one can assume it's due to greater labor productivity, since the output per labor-effort may be the same. This insight becomes particularly important when a large part of what is produced in an economy consists of services. Management may be very preoccupied with the productivity of employees, but the productivity gains of management itself is very difficult to prove.

In a survey of manufacturing growth and performance in Britain and Mauritius, it was found that:

"The factors affecting labor productivity or the performance of individual work roles are of broadly the same type as those that affect the performance of manufacturing firms as a whole. They include: (1) physical-organic, location, and technological factors; (2) cultural belief-value and individual attitudinal, motivational and behavioral factors; (3) international influences – e.g. levels of innovativeness and efficiency on the part of the owners and managers of inward investing foreign companies; (4) managerial-organizational and wider economic and political-legal environments; (5) levels of flexibility in internal labor markets and the organization of work activities – e.g. the presence or absence of traditional craft demarcation lines and barriers to occupational entry; and (6) individual rewards and payment systems, and the effectiveness of personnel managers and others in recruiting, training, communicating with, and performance-motivating employees on the basis of pay and other incentives. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Workforce_productivity)

The design of an employee's job can have a significant effect on their job motivation, too. Job design includes designing jobs that create both a challenging and interesting task for the employee and is effective and efficient for getting the job done.

A study conducted by Campion and Thayer (1985) used a job design questionnaire to determine how job designs fostering motivation affected employees. Campion and Thayer found that jobs with more motivational features have lower effort requirements, a better well-being, and fewer health complaints. The study also found that jobs scoring high on the motivational subscale of the questionnaire contained employees who were more satisfied and motivated, had a higher rating pertaining to job performance, and had fewer absences. Hackman (1980) conducted a study pertaining to work redesign and how redesigning work could improve productivity and motivation through job enlargement or enrichment. The study's results found that redesigning a job can improve the quality of the product or service that is provided, increase the quantity of work, and can increase work satisfaction and motivation. The last study on job design was conducted by Dunham, who wanted to determine if there was a relationship between job design characteristics and job ability and compensation requirements. Dunham believed organizations were

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overlooking job ability requirements and compensation when they enlarged or enriched employee's jobs. The study found that organizations were not taking into account the increased job ability requirements that job enrichments or enlargements entail nor were the organizations increasing compensation for employees who were given extra tasks and/or more complex tasks. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Employee_motivation)

Whatever the tasks the employees do, it is believed that management systems and procedures contribute greatly to its success as an organization.

Statement of the Problem

This study sought answers to the following:

1. What are the standard operating procedures of FICs in terms of the following:
   a. Eligibility of firm/MSMEs
   b. Provision of services and use of facilities
   c. Intellectual property management
   d. Marketing/promotional strategies
   e. Monitoring and Evaluation and Schedule for Operation.
   f. Sustainability Mechanism
   g. Procedure for Customer Transactions
   h. Schedule for Fees
   i. Equipment Rental Rates
   j. Schedule for Operation
2. What is the degree of agreeability or perception of the respondents to FICs' SOP?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study made use of Descriptive-Survey method as it tried to describe the degree to which the employees agree with standard operating procedures of the Department of Science and Technology-Food Innovation Centers in the Region. Further, it also described the performances in the different services offered by the unit.

Locale and Respondents of the Study

This study was conducted in region 2, specifically among Department of Science and Technology-Food Processing Innovation Centers (DOST-FIC) employees during the calendar year 2018. There fifty-five (55) of them chosen on the basis of their legal connection with the organization as employees. They were also chosen since they are the most reliable source of data needed to make this study as objective as possible.

Research Instrument

This study made use of the Survey Questionnaire to gather the needed data. The questionnaire enumerates the standard operation procedures of the FICs with the following indicators: eligibility of firm / MSMEs, Provisions of Services and use of Facilities, Intellectual Property (IP) Management, Marketing / Promotional Strategies, Monitoring and Evaluation, Sustainability Mechanism, Procedure for Customer Transactions, Schedule for Fees, Equipment Rental Rates, and Schedule for Operation. These were rated by the employees depending on the degree to which they agree with the indicator and the extent to which they use these procedures in the performance of their tasks using these interpretations and descriptions:

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Mean Range	Interpretation	Description
4.51 – 5.00	Highly agree	Always
3.51 - 3.50	Moderately agree	Often
2.51 – 3.00	Slightly agree	Sometimes
1.51 – 2.50	Disagree	Rarely
1.00 – 1.50	Highly disagree	Never

Statistical Tools and Analysis

The data gathered on the degree and extent of agreeability was treated by using the mean and standard deviation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The independent variable of this study using the IV and DV model is the operational procedures of DOST-FIC as measured by the indicators are the following: eligibility of firm / MSMEs, Provisions of Services and use of Facilities, Intellectual Property (IP) Management, Marketing / Promotional Strategies, Monitoring and Evaluation, Sustainability Mechanism, Procedure for Customer Transactions, Schedule for Fees, Equipment Rental Rates, and Schedule for Operation.

Table 1. Mean Distribution of Operational Procedures of DOST-FICs in terms of Eligibility of Firm / MSMEs, and Provisions of Services and Use of Facilities

1. Eligibility of Firm/MSMEs	$\bar{x}$	SD	Interpretation
a. The company or individual firm is based in the Philippines and is wholly owned by Filipino citizens.	4.45	0.79	Moderately Agree
b. The micro, small, or medium scale business firm is willing to apply technological innovations to the existing operations; or adopt the technology, case of start-ups.	4.18	0.86	Moderately Agree
c. The interested individuals, organizations an institution is engaging in food research and development.	4.31	0.72	Moderately Agree
Average	4.32	0.79	Oftentimes
2. Provisions of Services and use of Facilities			
a. The center provides a GMP compliant food processing facilities and acquires License to Operate from Food and Drug Administration; The use of the centre's LTO by customer is included in Terms of Reference; Compliance to Occupational Safety and Health requirements shall also be observed.	3.55	1.63	Moderately Agree
b. Customers that initially avail of the FPIC services are given prior orientation on GMP and OSH.	4.13	0.98	Moderately Agree

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c. All engagements with stakeholders (firms, public and private entities) is covered by Terms of reference (TOR). A specific and customized TOR is prepared by the Center based on a generic template.	4.40	0.85	Moderately Agree
d. Each center formulates appropriate guidelines, vis vis, terms and conditions on the use of each equipment to include among others the prioritization, length of use, and responsibilities of stakeholders.	4.55	0.69	Highly Agree
Average	**4.15**	**1.04**	**Oftentimes**

Legend:

Mean Range	Interpretation	Description
4.51 - 5.00	Highly Agree	Always
3.51 - 4.50	Moderately Agree	Often
2.51 –3.50	Slightly Agree	Sometimes
1.51 - 2.50	Disagree	Rarely
1.00 – 1.50	Highly Disagree	Never

Table 1 presents the mean average of the respondents' perception on the operational procedures in terms of eligibility of firm / MSMEs and provisions of services and use of facilities of DOST – FIC. It shows the mean average of the respondents' perception in terms of eligibility of firm / MSMEs and provisions of services and use of facilities of DOST – FIC. It obtained a mean average of 4.03, with the interpretation that the respondents moderately agree that DOST – FIC follows its standard procedures especially on eligibility of firms / MSMEs with ($\bar{x}$=4.32), provisions of services and use of facilities with a ($\bar{x}$=4.15). All the small SD values are close with each other that denote homogeneity of responses.

The findings reveal that this operational procedure particularly on eligibility of firm/MSMEs and provisions of services and use of facilities are oftentimes used by the DOST-FIC in performing their services to their clients.

Table 2. Mean Distribution of Operational Procedures of DOST-FIC in terms of Intellectual Property (IP) Management and Marketing / Promotional Strategies

Intellectual Property (IP) Management	$\bar{x}$	SD	Interpretation
a. Facilitate processing of information on intellectual property related matters to all its clients as requested.	3.53	1.44	Moderately Agree
b. Link with the Innovation and Technology Service Office (ITSO) or the Intellectual Property Office (IPO) Satellite at DTI.	3.35	1.61	Slightly Agree
Average	**3.44**	**1.53**	**Sometimes**
Marketing / Promotional Strategies			
a. Produce information/educational and communication (IEC) materials such as brochures, fliers, posters, etc.	4.45	0.63	Moderately Agree
b. Conduct Innovation Summit/Fora to disseminate new technological innovations, market trends/requirements, and related information	3.85	0.85	Moderately Agree
c. Conduct Focus Group Discussion (FGD) to solicit information on technology needs and feedback from firms, MSMEs and other stakeholders	3.05	1.39	Slightly Agree
d. Conduct Road Show in all region provinces	2.05	1.34	Disagree

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f. Formal Launching of the center	3.58	1.12	Moderately Agree
g. Develop a Marketing Plan	5.00	0.00	Highly Agree
Average	**3.73**	**0.97**	**Oftentimes**

Table 2 presents the mean average of the respondents' perception on the operational procedures in terms of intellectual property (IP) management, and marketing / promotional strategies of DOST – FIC. It is shown that intellectual property management procedures are sometimes done by the DOST-FIC as perceived by the respondents with the average mean (X=3.44). On the indicator facilitate processing of information on intellectual property matters (X=3.53) was moderately agreed by the respondents, described as oftentimes done by the DOST-FIC; however, the indicator links with the ITSO and IPO satellite DTI was slightly agreed (X=3.35), conduct focus group discussion to get feedback from SMEMs and stakeholders (X=3.05), described that the DOST-FIC sometimes perform the operational procedure. On the other hand, marketing and promotional strategies was moderately agreed by the respondents with an average mean (X=3.73) described that the DOST-FIC oftentimes perform the operational procedure. The indicators: produce educational information materials (X=4.45); conduct summit, and educational fora to disseminate new technological innovations (X=3.85); and formal launch the Center (X=3.58) were all moderately agreed by the respondents, meaning that DOST-FIC oftentimes perform the operational procedure. Highly agreed is the indicator that the institution developed a marketing plan (X=5.0) described that the operational procedure is always done by the DOST-FIC. One of the operational procedures was disagreed by the respondents described that the institution rarely perform this particular operational procedure of conducting road show in all regions, and provinces, (X= 2.05).

Table 3. Mean Distribution of DOST-FIC's Operational Procedures
In terms of Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation	$\bar{x}$	SD	Interpretation
a. Customer feedback survey every after use of equipment and availing of services	4.09	1.02	Moderately Agree
b. Recordkeeping/tracking of equipment utilization (hours used, utilities consumption, user's name/client's name, equipment breakdown)	4.65	0.70	Highly Agree
c. Recordkeeping/tracking of testing services	4.35	0.84	Moderately Agree
d. Recordkeeping of trainings conducted	4.53	0.86	Highly Agree
e. Tracking of visitors/clients (e.g. frequency of visit)	4.53	0.86	Highly Agree
f. Recordkeeping of products developed, and products manufactured in the Center and other relevant information	4.53	0.81	Highly Agree
g. Monitor financial status	4.25	1.04	Moderately Agree
h. Concerns on Issues and problems	4.31	0.92	Moderately Agree
Average	**4.40**	**0.88**	**Oftentimes**

Table 3 shows the mean average of Monitoring and Evaluation ($\bar{x}$=4.40) interpreted as moderately agreed by the respondents, which means that the DOST-FIC oftentimes perform this particular operational procedure. In terms of its sub-scale measures as to: customer feedback survey every after use of equipment and availing of services is ($\bar{x}$=4.09); and record keeping and tracking of testing services (X=4.35) were

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both moderately agreed, which is done oftentimes; as well as monitor financial status (X=4.25); and concerns on issues and problems (X=4.31); record keeping/tracking of equipment utilization (hours used, utilities consumption, user's name/client's name, equipment breakdown), ($\bar{x}$=4.65); highly agreed or done always by the DOST-FIC; record keeping of trainings conducted ($\bar{x}$=4.53); and tracking of visitors/clients as to the frequency of visit ($\bar{x}$=4.53); were all rated highly agreed, always performed by the institution; as well as record keeping of products developed and products manufactured in the Center and other relevant information ($\bar{x}$=4.53). The responses of the survey is homogeneous as shown by the values of SD.

The result implies that the DOST-FIC conducts oftentimes the monitoring and evaluation of their projects and other activities most especially in recordkeeping/ tracking of equipment utilization (hours used, utilities consumption, user's name/client's name, equipment breakdown), recordkeeping of trainings conducted tracking of visitors/client (e.g. frequency of visit) recordkeeping of products developed and products manufactured in the center and other relevant information.

Table 4. Mean Distribution of Operational Procedures of DOST-FIC in terms of Sustainable Mechanism and Procedures for Customer Transactions

Sustainability Mechanism	**$\bar{x}$**	**SD**	**Description**
a. Prepare a sustainability plan	3.60	0.76	Mod. Agree
b. Prepare resource generation scheme	3.65	0.82	Mod. Agree
c. Prepare business plan	3.53	0.81	Mod. Agree
Average	**3.59**	**0.80**	**Mod. Agree**
Procedure for Customer Transactions			
a. The student/client or the representative of the client company may be a walk-in or a referral by any authorized personnel and other networks.	4.75	0.62	Highly Agree
b. The FIC staff fill up the Client Profile Record/Student Profile Record (CPR/SPR) wherein the details of the client/student is reflected. This profile the client/student including the company/school name, business/school address, type of industry/course, number of employees and services needed.	4.44	0.88	Moderately Agree
c. The FIC staff request the machine operator for the specific operation. A Personnel Requisition (PR) form is submitted to the management for approval.	4.07	1.30	Moderately Agree
d. Draft Terms of Reference (TOR) which clauses in compliance to the operations, rules and implementing policies of the FIC, client responsibilities and appropriate fees is sent to the client company for approval and comment. An approved TOR is indicated with a signature of the company authorized representative on the lower portion of the TOR, and hereby signifies the company's agreement to the terms presented by the FIC.	4.47	0.88	Moderately Agree
e. Finalize the schedule once the agreed TOR is received by the FIC.	4.51	0.81	Mod. Agree
f. Transactions are conducted through the staff of the FIC. If there are inquiries coursed through the FIC members, these have to be transferred or referred to the FIC staff for finalization of transaction. Any training transaction finalized without the attention of the FIC staff is void and invalid.	4.40	0.83	Moderately Agree
g. The staff of the FIC fills up the Client Service Form/Student Service Form (CSF/SSF) to indicate the number of hours the client/student consumed and the total amount due for payment.	4.24	0.84	Moderately Agree

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h. The client/student pays the amount due to the cashier of the FIC. After payment, the client/student present the Official Receipt (OR) to FIC staff for their product/s released.	4.47	0.69	Moderately Agree
Average	**4.42**	**0.86**	**Moderately Agree**

Table 4 presents the mean average of the respondents' perception on the operational procedures of DOST-FIC in terms of sustainability mechanisms, and procedures for customer transactions. As shown all the sustainability mechanisms are all moderately agreed by the respondents with mean ratings (X=3.60); (X=3.65); and (X=3.53) respectively. This shows that sustainability mechanisms are oftentimes implemented by the DOST-FIC.

The same table shows that the respondents moderately agreed on the procedure for customer satisfaction (X=4.42). This finding is described that the DOST-FIC oftentimes implements this procedure. All the indicators were moderately agreed by the respondents as evidenced by the means: (X=4.47); (X=4.07); (X=4.47); (X=4.51); (X=4.40); (X=4.24) respectively. However, one indicator was highly agreed (X=4.75) by the respondents, which means the procedure is always implemented by the DOST-FIC. The small values of SD denote homogeneity of responses.

Table 5. Mean Distribution of DOST-FIC Operational Procedures in terms of Schedule for Fees for Equipment Rental Rates and Schedule of Operation

Schedule for Fees/ Equipment Rental Rates	**$\bar{x}$**	**SD**	**Description**
a. The equipment rental rates are standardized	4.45	0.74	Mod. Agree
b. The customers rental rate is per day / hour	4.67	0.58	Highly Agree
c. The student's rental rate is 20% off	4.18	1.22	Mod. Agree
Average	**4.44**	**0.85**	**Oftentimes**
Schedule for Operation			
a.Services are on a first come first served basis.	2.58	1.71	Slightly Agree
b.The FIC opens from 8:00 – 5:00, Mondays to Fridays.	2.65	1.77	Slightly Agree
c. Special arrangements are made for operations after 5:00 p.m., Saturdays, and Sundays.	2.62	1.79	Slightly Agree
Average	2.62	1.75	Slightly Agree
Grand Mean Average	**3.53**	**0.99**	**Oftentimes**

Table 5 presents the mean average of the respondents' perception on the operational procedures of DOST-FIC in terms of schedule for fees: equipment rental rates and schedule of operation. As perceived by the respondents the scheduling of fees for equipment rental rates got a mean ($\bar{x}$=4.44) interpreted that the respondents moderately agreed that the DOST-FIC has done the operational procedure. This has been done oftentimes. As shown the indicators have the means (X=4.45); interpreted moderately agree; (X=4.67) highly agree; and (X=4.18) moderately agree respectively. With regards to the scheduling for operations, the respondents' perceptions resulted to an average mean of (X=3.53), slightly agreed by the respondents, described as sometimes performed by the DOST-FIC. All the indicators were agreed by the respondents

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slightly as shown by the means (X=2.58); (X=2.65); and (X=2.62) respectively. As a whole these procedures are done by the DOST-FIC oftentimes. The computed values of SD denote homogeneous responses of the respondents.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, it is concluded that:

1. The employees of the FICs in the region have homogenous responses as to the agreeability of the SOPs of FICs in the region.
2. The use of the employees of the standard operating procedures is oftentimes which means that their tasks and the operations of the FICs are governed and guided by these operational procedures which make the centers functional.

RECOMMENDATION

On the basis of the conclusions made from this study, the researcher recommends the following:

1. FICs should look into variables other than the areas mentioned in the SOP. The variables are limited so there might be others that are equally important, and might be needing attention.
2. FICs should work on acquiring intellectual property rights as this is a form of preserving ownership.
3. Since the study show positive results, the centers might want to maintain or consider more criteria to add which may help improve the services of the FICs.

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