

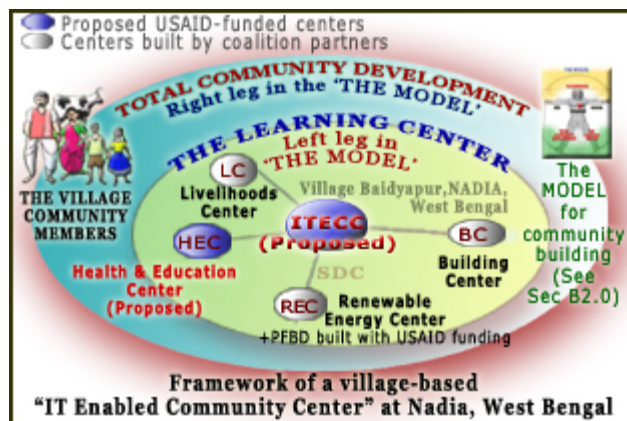
# Concept Note

**Title:** Building an IT-Enabled 'Learning Center' at Baidyapur Village, District Nadia, WB, India as a demonstrative model for holistic rural development.

**Submitted to:** Mr. Daniel Miller  
U.S. Agency For International Development (USAID) – New Delhi  
American Embassy, Shanti Path, Chanakya Puri, New Delhi -110 021  
Internet E-mail: < damiller@usaid.gov >

**Declaration:** This proposal has not been submitted to any other organization (federal or non-federal) for funding.

**Preamble:** The 'IT-Enabled Community Center' (ITECC) and the 'Health & Education Center' (HEC) are proposed to be built with USAID funds. In conjunction with the 'Livelihood Center', 'Building Center' and 'Renewable Energy Center' that will be built by the coalition partners—all based on the participative/market creation approach—the Village Baidyapur community will have access to modern ICT tools and appropriate technologies to help them to create assets and (a) Implement a 'Learning Center' for alternative education & capacity building programs; (b) Improve the knowledge-base and health of their community and c.) Network with the global community for 'Total Community Development'.



## **A. This project is a collaborative effort between:**

**a.) Sankalpa Trust, INDIA** (Registered Trust/Non Governmental Organization devoted to rural development)

**Contact Person:** Dr. Subhrankar Mukherjee, Managing Trustee

**Address:** P6: Cluster 2, Purbachal, Salt Lake, Calcutta 700097, India.

**Tel:** + 91 94330 19821 ; **eMail:** <subhrankar@gmail.com> ; Alternate: <subra@engr.colostate.edu>

**b.) Village Earth/Colorado State University, USA** (Higher Education & Research/Non-profit corpn. 501-c-3)

**Contact Person:** Dr. Maurice Albertson, Professor Emeritus

**Address:** Dept. of Civil Engineering, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO 80523, U.S.A.

**Tel:** 303-491-5753; **Fax:** 303-491-2729; **eMail:** alberts@engr.colostate.edu

**c.) Millennium Inst. of Energy & Environment Management (MIEEM), (Think Tank)**

**Contact Person:** Professor H. S. Ray—President

**Address:** 203, Sarat Bose Road, Kolkata 700 029.

**Fax:** 91-33-24730957 **Mobile:** 9339865451; **eMail:** [hs\_ray@yahoo.com]

**d.) Engineers Without Borders - India, India** (Registered Society/NGO devoted to engineering excellence)

**Contact Person:** Dr. Ali Uddin Ansari, Chairman

**Address:** 8-2-332/7, Road #3, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad-500034, Andhra Pradesh, INDIA.

**Tel:** +91-40-23555121 **Mobile:** +91 98492 89850. **eMail:** ewbindia@ewb-india.org

**Project Website:** [http://www.sankalpacmfs.org/src/04ite/04ite.html]

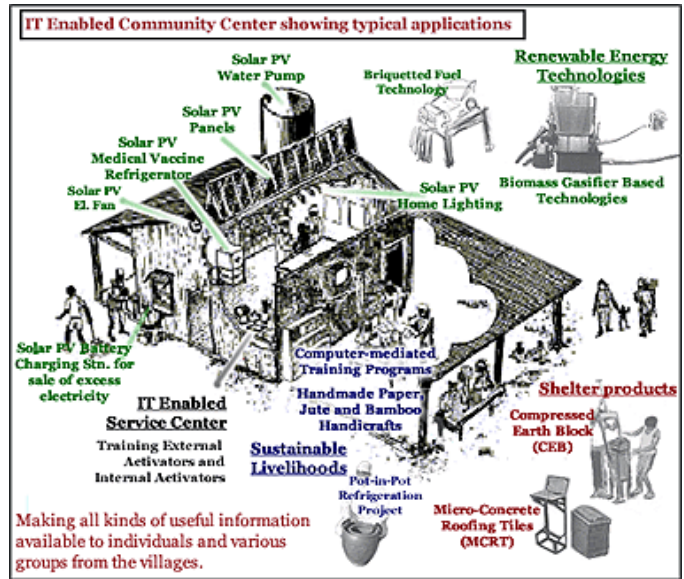
**Prepared by:** Subhrankar Mukherjee PhD, MBA  
Managing Trustee - Sankalpa Trust, Calcutta & Affiliate Professor - Colorado State University, USA

**Date:** 25<sup>th</sup> August 2008.

## **B. Summary of Program:**

### **B1.0 Background:**

The ‘IT-Enabled Community Center’ is based on a participative model that provides rural community members with access to modern ICTs and ‘Appropriate Technologies’—both ‘hard’ and ‘soft’—that will help them to implement (a) a ‘Learning Center’, (b) a ‘Health & Education Center’ and (c) a platform to network with each other for ‘Total Community Development’. The project empowers ordinary people in general, and women and children in particular, not only to understand the new technologies but how to use them to communicate on a global level and to improve their assets and knowledge-base.



The funding request from USAID for this two-year project is US\$275,561, with in-kind contribution from partners of US\$295,300 (see Tables B3.1 & B3.2, respectively)—yielding a leveraging ratio of 1:1.07.

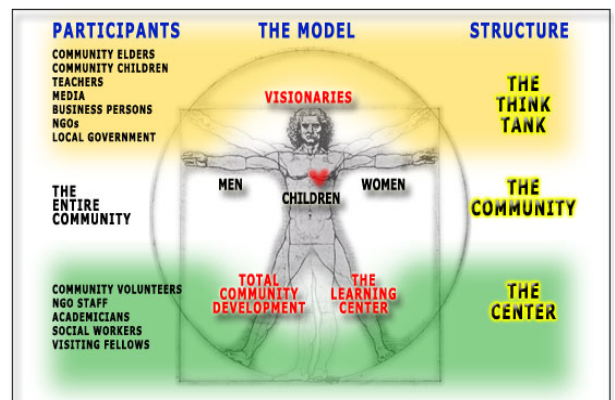
### **B2.0 Brief Program Description:**

The *primary goal* of this project is to develop and disseminate a model by which a village-based community can get sustainable livelihoods, while preserving Mother Nature for future generations.

The objectives of the ITECC project at Village Baidyapur may be summarized as follows:

- Build an IT-enabled knowledge center that will enable all community members to build capacity for self-development, engage in rural commerce and to communicate and network globally;
- Develop an alternative village education model, especially ‘primary’ education, that uses local knowledge extensively and instills a sense of pride within the community;
- Develop a decentralized ‘Telemedicine Center’ for enhancing community-based health services, modeled on the lines of Aravind Eye Hospital’s hugely successful rural ‘Vision Center’ programs;
- Develop methods and systems for cost recovery of services provided through user fees.

The **Operating Model of the ITECC**, shown on the right, uses the analogy of a human being—and for emotive clarity, Leonardo Da Vinci’s ‘Vitruvian Man’ as the central motif—to model the operational characteristics<sup>1</sup> and the three-tiered structure of the ITECC, as (a) The Think Tank; (b) The Community; and (c) The ‘Center’.



<sup>1</sup> The sustainability of the ITECC is exemplified by the **head, body** and **legs** which explain the function of the key elements:

- Visionaries** (*The Head* – thinking ability): The community elders and children, teachers, media, business persons, NGOs and the *Panchayat* leaders, who will design and formalize the rules for running and operating the ITECC, sustainably.
- The Community** (*The Body* – denoting action): All men and women of the community constitute the right and left hands - to do the main work of community building through participatory approaches, and at the heart of the body are all the children of the community—for they are the future not only of the rural community, but the nation and the world at large;
- The Center** (*The Legs* – motive power for carrying the community forward): The community volunteers, NGO staff and academicians, social workers and Visiting Fellows comprise (a) the “*Learning Center (LC)*” (left leg) and (b) the “*Total Community Development*” (right leg); the left/right marching analogy shows the community *learns first* and then implements **community development** program, in a continuous cycle to achieve **sustainable community development**.

### B2.1 Sustainable Development Center

The funds requested from USAID will be used to build and operate the ITECC and the ‘Health & Education Center’. Health care services will be provided through capital-intensive Telemedicine services.

The coalition partners (see Section B2.2)—with Sankalpa Trust as the Lead Partner—will set up and operate the ‘Livelihoods Center’, ‘Building Center’ and ‘Renewable Energy Center’.

These five centers, working in tandem for the benefit of the village-based communities, will effectively comprise a fully functional ‘Sustainable Development Center’.

### B2.2 Coalition Partners

**(a) Sankalpa Trust (Lead Partner):** A registered Trust and non-profit NGO; implements rural development programs through ‘Society for Appropriate Rural Technology for Sustainability’ (ARTS), which is also registered under Section 12AA and certified for exemption under Section 80G of the I.T Act 1961. ST has signed an MOU with Development Alternatives, New Delhi to collaborate in the development of technologies and promotion of products, processes and services in programs relating to environmental management, shelter, agriculture, water, energy, recycling, small-scale industry and such other fields of common interest. It has completed a **World Bank** funded project on Environmental Economics of “Biomass Gasification Based Power Plants”, run a “**Sustainable Development Center**” at Santiniketan, WB and is implementing (a) a **VSBK** project funded by DST/GoI and (b) a **PFBD** project funded by USAID, also at Village Baidyapur, Dist: Nadia, West Bengal.

**(b) Village Earth/Colorado State University:** The Consortium for Sustainable Village-based Development was born out of an international conference on sustainable village-based development at CSU in Fort Collins, Colorado in 1993. The VE participatory approach of working together to improve each village and the area around it simultaneously has helped to give Village Earth a unique perspective in understanding the impact of soft and hard technologies. Dr Albertson has also pioneered research and development of various biomethanation strategies and intervention techniques in farmlands and urban areas. His perspectives in this project will be very valuable.

**(c) Millennium Inst. of Energy & Environment Management (MIEEM),** headquartered in Kolkata, is a Think Tank engaged in energy and environmental policy formulations and capacity building program development.

**(d) Engineers Without Borders - India:** EWB-India seeks to involve engineers, and other professionals with special or general skills, in a movement of constructive change. A major goal is to create a network of chapters across the country and seed a movement of constructive voluntary work by engineers and engineering/non-engineering students in India.

### B2.3 Beneficiaries

The direct beneficiaries of this project—numbering about 25,000 men, women and children—are the poor people of Village Baidyapur. The expected **outcome**—within the first two years of this project—is poverty reduction in the target beneficiary population, which can be classified broadly into ‘Tribal’ and ‘non-Tribal’ groups, and further classified as follows: (a) landlord; (b) farmers; (c) landless labor; (d) artisans; (e) women; and (f) youth and children.

The participatory processes in this project will socially empower the disadvantaged groups in the villages—such as women and children or the landless labourers. The success of this project will catalyze & promote a plethora of sustainable livelihood projects. Checks and balances will be put in place to ensure full fiscal accountability of all project personnel. There will be an independent and standard internal accounting procedure, with the provision of standard external auditing procedures, to ensure that all monies are spent according to predetermined and approved budgeting patterns and norms.

### B2.4 Criteria for success

Important measures of success are:



- (a) An advanced technology base for meeting the challenges for establishing ‘Public-Private Partnerships’ (PPP) and a convergence of rural development paradigms;
- (b) An intellectual community that is ready and able to tackle the need for ‘Advanced Technologies’ and concepts, such as process-centric and scientific methods for total rural development (TRD).<sup>2</sup>

### B2.5 Applicant’s financial as well as in-kind participation

Details of the ‘In-kind contribution from partners’ for the two years period is shown in Table B3.2; it amounts to US\$48,000 and Rs 90.4 Lakhs, totaling ~ US\$ 295,300 (at Rs 40 to 1 US\$).

The ITECC is proposed to be built on about 1.5 acres of land near the ‘PFBD’ and ‘VSBK’ facilities at Baidyapur Village, in Nadia District, West Bengal.

We will also approach, amongst others, the various departments of the Government of India devoted to rural development, as well as the local governmental bodies and other agencies, to request them to become co-sponsors of this deserving project.

### B2.6 Proposed time-line/duration of the project:

#	Activity Description	Time Taken (Months)																				
		2 <sup>nd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>	14 <sup>th</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup>	18 <sup>th</sup>	20 <sup>th</sup>	22 <sup>nd</sup>	24 <sup>th</sup>									
1	Literature review & Project Design	Preliminary																				
2	Construction of ITECC	Preliminary		Final																		
3	Integration with health/other centers		Preliminary		Final																	
4	Conduct PRAs and RRAs <sup>3</sup>		Preliminary		Final																	
5	Develop ‘Learning Center’				Preliminary				Final													
6	Implement ‘Total Rural Devlpmnt.’						Preliminary				Final											
8	Project documentation & Closure																					

**Legend**  
▬ Preliminary  
▬ Final  
▬ Deliverables

The following are the **milestones** of the ITECC Project:

- 12<sup>th</sup> month - Completion of integration of ITECC with other centers; Interim report on 12<sup>th</sup> month.
- 18<sup>th</sup> month - Completion of ‘Learning Center’ and functional rural development programs
- 22<sup>nd</sup> month - Completion of ‘Total Rural Development’ and rural development initiatives
- 24<sup>th</sup> month - Final Report & Project Closure.

### B2.7 Monitoring and Evaluation

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) program will provide a framework and structure to (a) validate the assumptions that have been made in the project; and (b) fine-tune the design and implementation plans of the project. The M&E Program will also provide a continuous feedback loop of information to project managers, staff, funding agencies, public-private and village-based partners and other stakeholders, for achieving continuous improvement and project sustainability.

<sup>2</sup> Under TRD, the benefits of improved health and regular income from ICT-based enterprises to particularly the weaker segments of society (WSS) - such as women and children - can be characterized as follows:

- *Improved financial & physical assets:* Enables contributions to family welfare, savings, land purchase, etc.
- *Improved human assets:* Personal and professional development, particularly technical skills & confidence.
- *Improved social assets:* Improvements in social relations - (a) business linkages; (b) links to support agencies; and (c) links to other WSS working in the enterprise or in similar/nearby enterprises.
- *Empowerment:* Gaining confidence to apply new skills, to tackle problems, to deal with businesses and agencies. Thereby having an enhanced role in their families due to their new income and status.

<sup>3</sup> PRA = Participatory Rural Assessment and RRA = Rapid Rural Assessment

### B3.0 Budgetary Estimates

Table B3.1: Summary of Budget of Cost to be paid by USAID:

#	Budgetary Head	Funding Request from USAID (for 2 years period)					
		VE/CSU	Sankalpa	MIEEM	EWB-India	USAID Funding	
		US\$	Rs	Rs	Rs	US \$	Indian Rs
1	Personnel		1,720,500	60,000	30,000		1,810,500
2	Travel	5,000	627,888	25,000	12,500	5,000	665,388
3	Equipment		5,888,500				5,888,500
4	Supplies		184,944				184,944
5	Contractual		1,509,392				1,509,392
6	Construction		150,000				150,000
7	Other Direct Costs	2,000	533,720			2,000	533,720
	<b>TOTAL USAID</b>	<b>7,000</b>	<b>10,614,944</b>	<b>85,000</b>	<b>42,500</b>	<b>7,000</b>	<b>10,742,444</b>
						US\$	<b>268,561</b>
	<b>Total Funding Request from USAID @Rs40/US\$</b>				<b>US\$</b>	<b>275,561</b>	

*Notes:*

1. "Personnel" costs relate to projected expenses for recruitment of direct service delivery personnel.
2. "Equipment" cost does NOT include building or immovable property; it relates primarily to cost of assets that (a) would directly impact livelihoods, market creation & capacity building programs; (b) enhance service delivery mechanisms for effectiveness.
3. "Contractual" costs relate to capacity building programs, internal process and financial audits, media costs and health camps.

Table B3.2: Summary of In-kind contribution or leveraging from partners and total project cost:

#	Budgetary Head (No support from USAID)	In-kind contribution from partners (for 2 years period)					
		VE/CSU	Sankalpa	MIEEM	EWB-India	Total Contribution	
		US\$	Rs	Rs	Rs	US \$	Indian Rs
1	Manpower contribution by partners	48,000	2,392,000	300,000	150,000	48,000	2,842,000
2	Land		500,000			0	500,000
3	Livelihoods Center		550,000			0	550,000
4	Renewable Energy Center		1,250,000			0	1,250,000
5	Building Center		3,000,000			0	3,000,000
6	ITECC+HEC Construction		500,000			0	500,000
7	Other external partners					0	1,250,000
	<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>48,000</b>	<b>8,192,000</b>	<b>300,000</b>	<b>150,000</b>	<b>48,000</b>	<b>9,892,000</b>
						US\$	<b>247,300</b>
	<b>Total In-kind contribution from partners</b>				<b>US\$</b>	<b>295,300</b>	
	<b>Leveraging ratio (USAID Funding request:Partner In-kind contribution) = 1:</b>						<b>1.07</b>
	<b>Total cost of project</b>				<b>US\$</b>	<b>570,861</b>	

*Note:* Details of the above cost estimates in Tables B3.1 and B3.2 will be made available on request; Conversion rate is assumed to be US\$ 1.00 = Indian Rs. 40.00.

### B4.0 Conclusion:

The attainment of sustainable livelihoods for the beneficiaries while preserving Mother Nature for future generations are twin objectives of this project. It is believed that this model, when fully developed, can be replicated anywhere in India, and indeed globally. The total project cost of US\$570,861 translates to spending a total of about \$6 on each community member over the two year period.

#### References:

- [1] S. Mukherjee, 'Total Rural Development—A New Paradigm for Sustainability—Introducing object orientation for the development of reusable models for rural development', Sankalpa Research Center, Ref # SRC/SLD/TRD07, Revision 3.5, 25<sup>th</sup> September 2007.
- [2] Mission 2007: 'Every Village a Knowledge Centre', M S Swaminathan Research Foundation.