

Reviving cultural practices
of using Nanohana
(rapeseed blossoms) for
community business:
A case of citizen-government
partnership in Iga, Japan

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Our paper ...

- Presents a case study of "Community Business" (CB) project in Japan
 - CB: a community endeavor to solve local issues with business-like approaches allowing for financial autonomy
 - CB using *Nanohana* (rapeseed) as a cultural resource
- Illuminates innovativeness and creativity of the ways the project uses Nanohana as a cultural resource and coordinates local actors



Background 1

Emerging Community Businesses in Japan

- Strict fiscal conditions of public sectors in Japan
 - Local communities facing challenges to continue providing social services and solving local issues
 - Calls for private sector's resources & local community's self-help
- CB as a solution
 - More financially autonomous, community engagement for solution of local issues



Background 2

Growing attention to local agriculture, food, and environment

- Agriculture as the basis for sustainable community development
 - Food localization movement
- Linkage b/w food as a cultural resource & community development discussed in recent literature
- Cultural resources are NOT limited in fine arts
 - Farming and food can be a valuable cultural resource

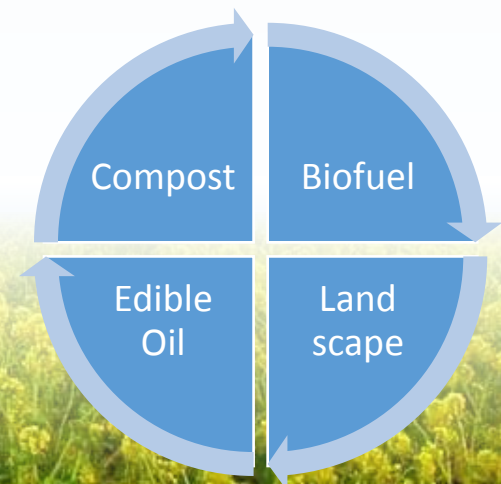
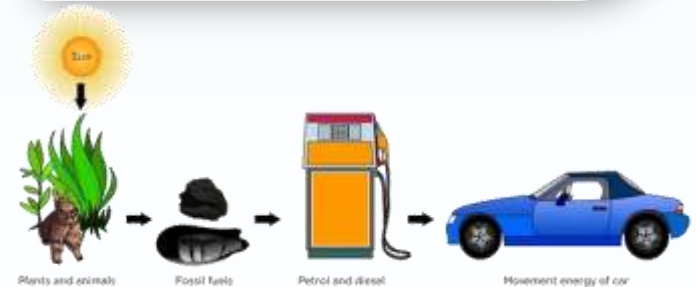


Nanohana as a cultural resource in Japan

- Nanohana in rural life and culture
 - Sources for edible and lighting oil
 - Compost
 - Blooms on paddies as a distinctive spring landscape

- Nanohana culture once lost due to
 - Proliferated use of fossil oil
 - Changes in patterns of rice farming

- Recent Nanohana Project movements
 - Multiple uses of Nanohana Resources, including edible oil, bio-diesel fuel (BDF) from recycled oil, and animal feed
 - To establish local chain of resource use



Many Nanohana Projects tend to be...

- Initiated and led by private sectors (community groups) with limited public sector's initiative
- Interested mainly in environmental concerns
- Small-scale operation and low profitability, resulting in financial challenges



Our case study Iga Nanohana Project

- Large-scale operation
- Instigated with the local government's initiative but developed as a CB
- With the interests in
 - Not only environmental conservation
 - But also economic development using Nanohana as a cultural resource



Questions

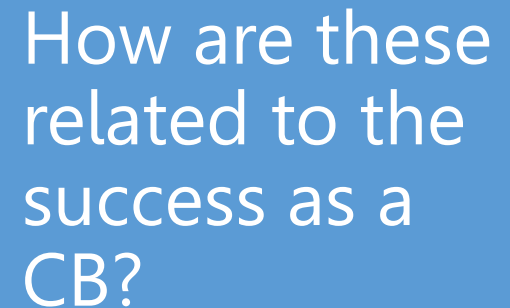
In the Iga Nanohana Project...



How is Nanohana
as a cultural
resource used?



What are
innovative and
creative?



How are these
related to the
success as a
CB?

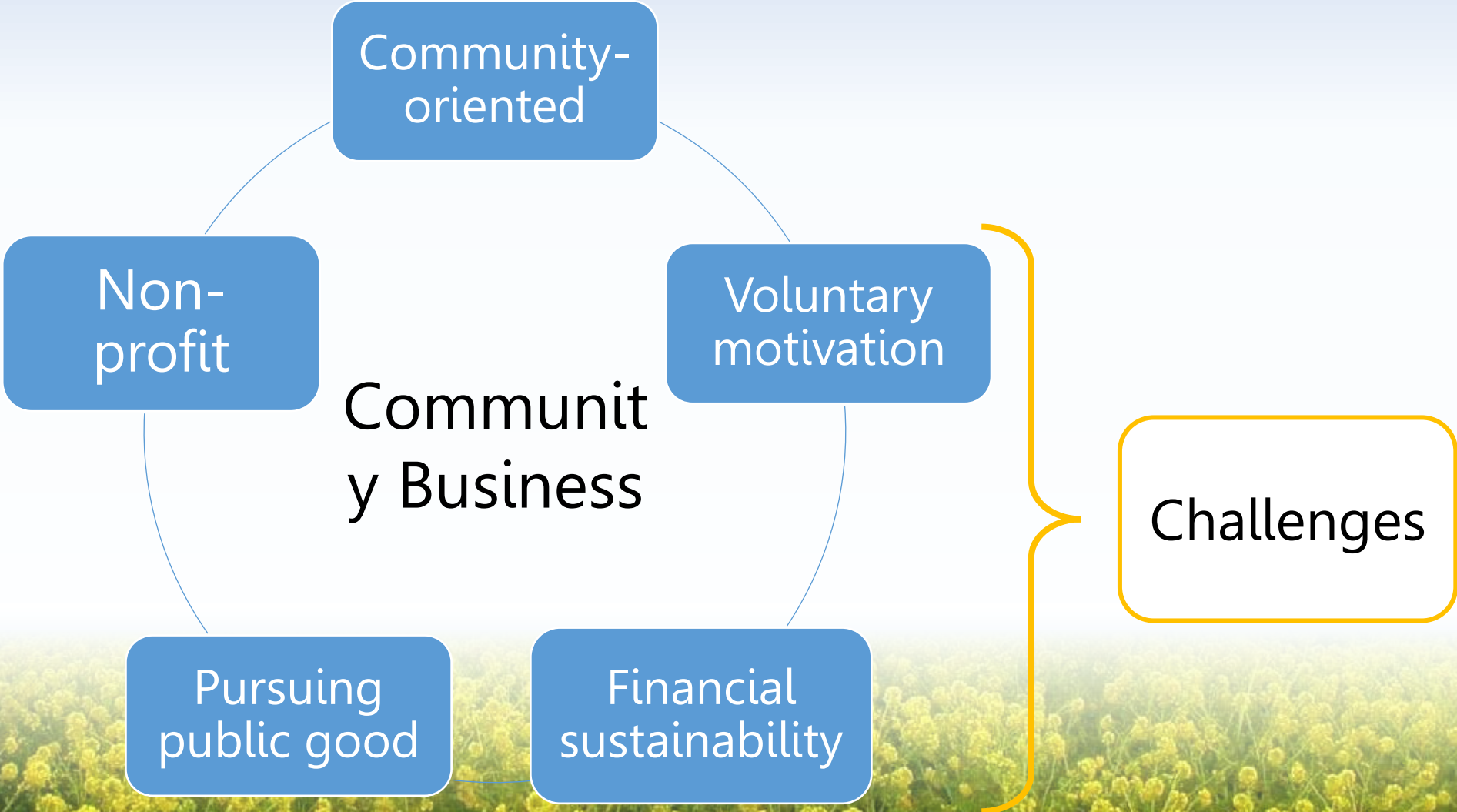
Community Business in Japan

- Community endeavor to solve local issues with "business" approaches
 - Pursuing financial efficiency, autonomy and sustainability
 - Emerged 1990s through 2000s responding to fiscal austerities in public sectors
 - Shift from traditional unpaid transactions to paid transactions in social support in the community

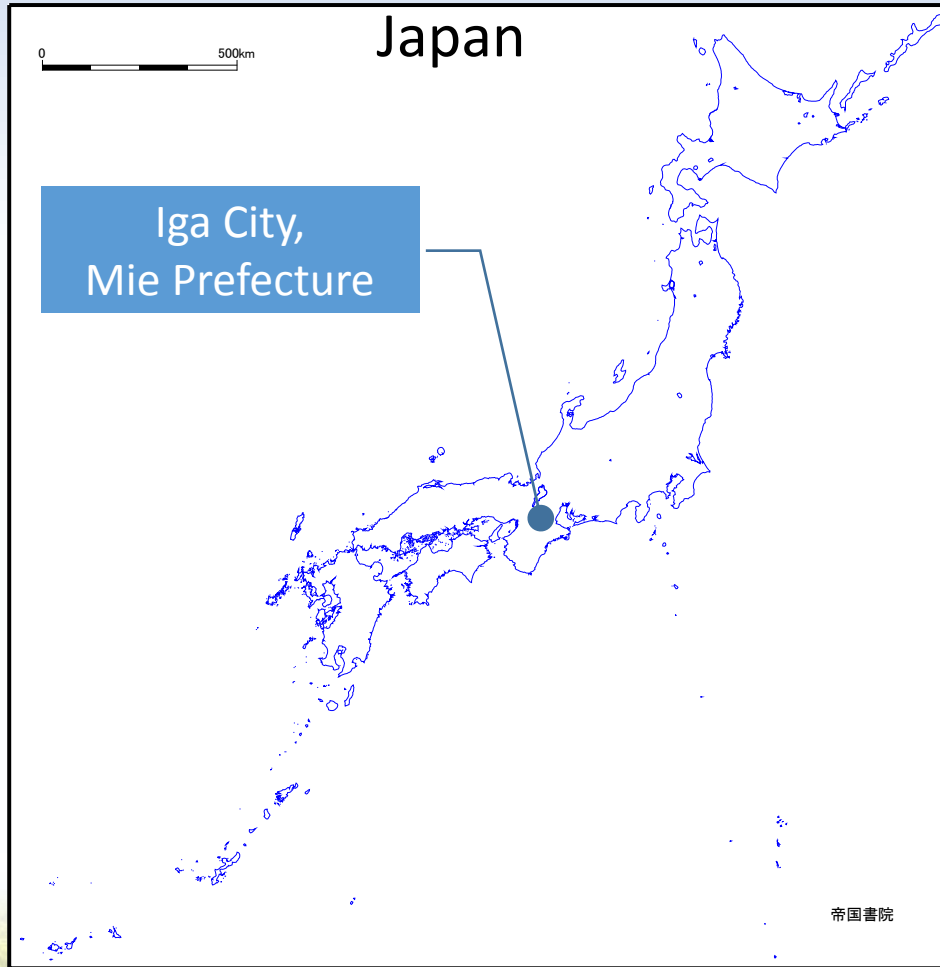


Community Business in Japan

5 elements of CBs elicited from literature



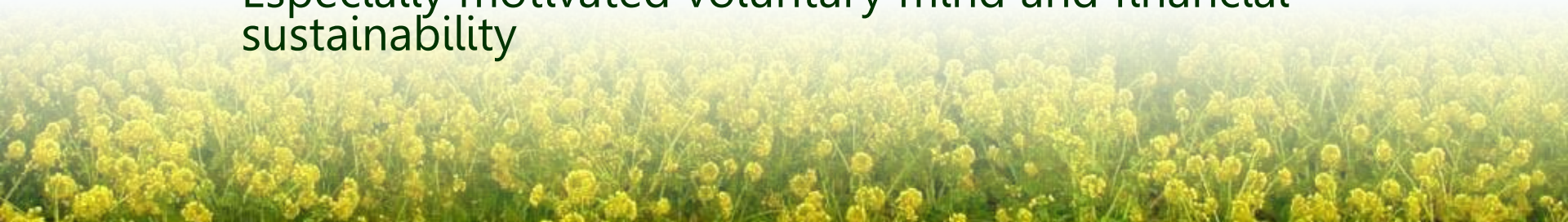
Location of Iga City



- Population: 92,000
- Major economies
 - Agriculture (but in decline, creating unused/abandoned farmlands)
 - Recently, manufacturing and service (esp. tourism) sectors
- Birthplace of Ninjas

Iga Nanohana Project – Overview

- Iga city office started in 2007 and purchased pressing and bio-diesel fuel (BDF) plants
 - Operated and managed by Ohyamada Agri-forest Enterprise (a quasi-government agency, OAFE) under entrust contract
 - Called for citizen's participation & provided free seeds
- Production of Nanohana
 - Total production areas: 61 hectares (150 acres)
 - Diverse growers (80) participated
 - Farmers, neighborhood organizations, schools, etc
- Successful CB led by the local government
 - Especially motivated voluntary mind and financial sustainability



Spring landscape with Nanohana in Iga



Iga Nanohana Project

Using Nanohana as a cultural resource

Growing Nanohana

- In unused farmlands
- Landscape reviving local heritage and attracting tourists

Producing edible oil

- Local brand edible oil products

Recycle remains to soil



Recycle used oil

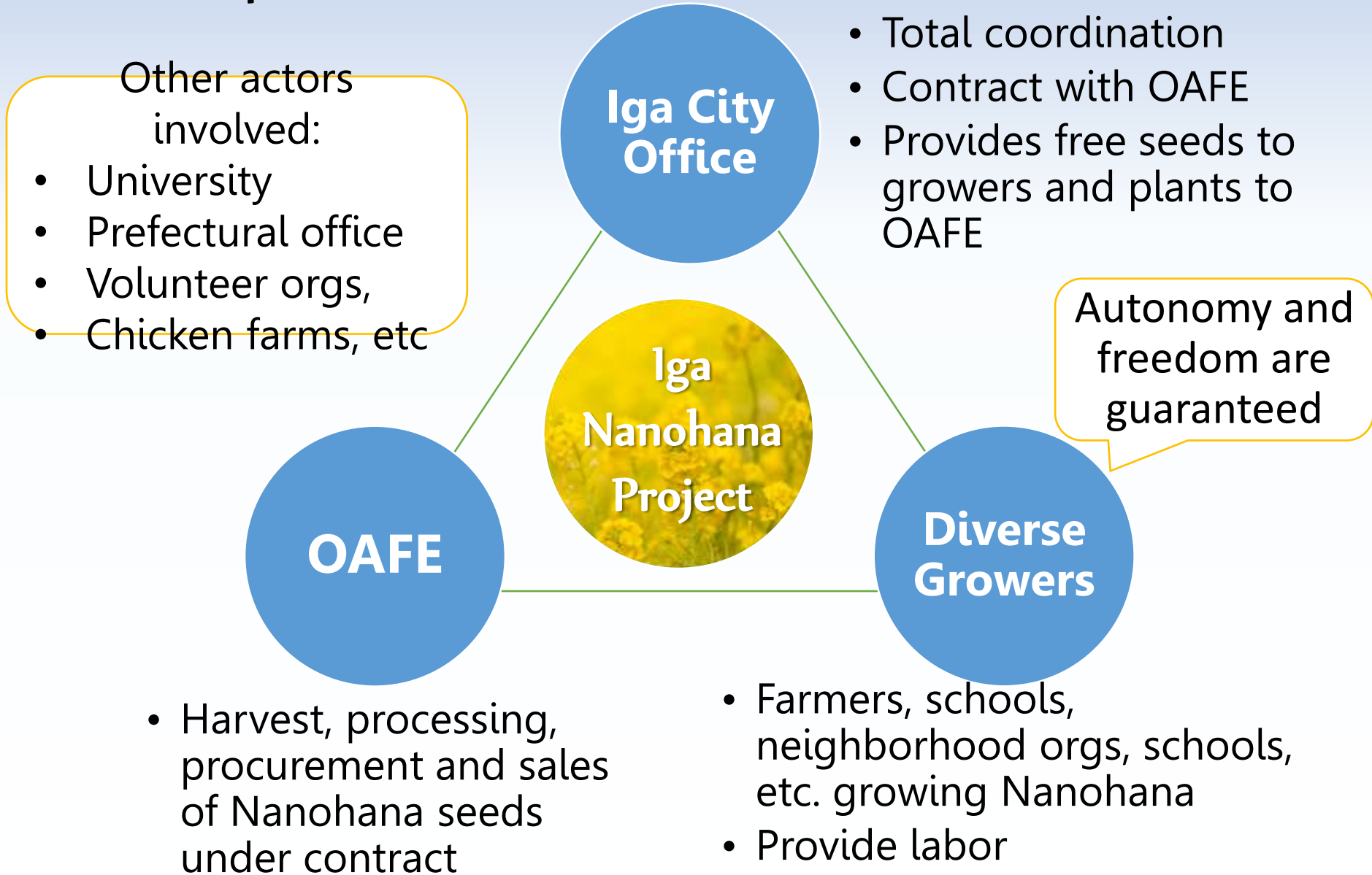
Using as a source of BDF

- Collect and refine used Nanohana oil

Local resource recycling chain, economic development, community solidarity

Iga Nanohana Project

Principal actors and their roles



Nanohana as a cultural resource

Tapping into rural heritage

- Spring Nanohana Festival
 - Food and farmers markets and other attractions



Walk-through in Nanohana field



Flyer of Nanohana Festival tied-up with local railway

Nanohana as a cultural resource

Exploring new possibilities

- Products from rapeseeds (Edible oil)
- An extensive product lineup
 - From premium extra-virgin oil to commercial-use
- An attractive brand name & design



Brand logo tags

Table condiment oil



Gift package



Edible oil (Natane abura) product line-up

Product name	Suggested use	Volume
Ichiban-shibori Natane	General heat cooking (frying oil)	
Extra Virgin Natane	Non-heat cooking: Salad dressing, Marinating	50ml 100ml
Fine Virgin Natane	Non-heat cooking: Salad dressing, Marinating	200ml 500ml
Roasted Natane	Heat and non-heat cooking: Chinese (condiment for soup)	5000ml

Diversified products respond to diversified demands in market

Nanohana as a cultural resource connecting the past and the future

Tapping into
Cultural Heritage

Attracting diverse interests

- Reviving rural landscape
- Environmental conservation
- Education
- Earning income

Nanohana

Exploring future possibilities

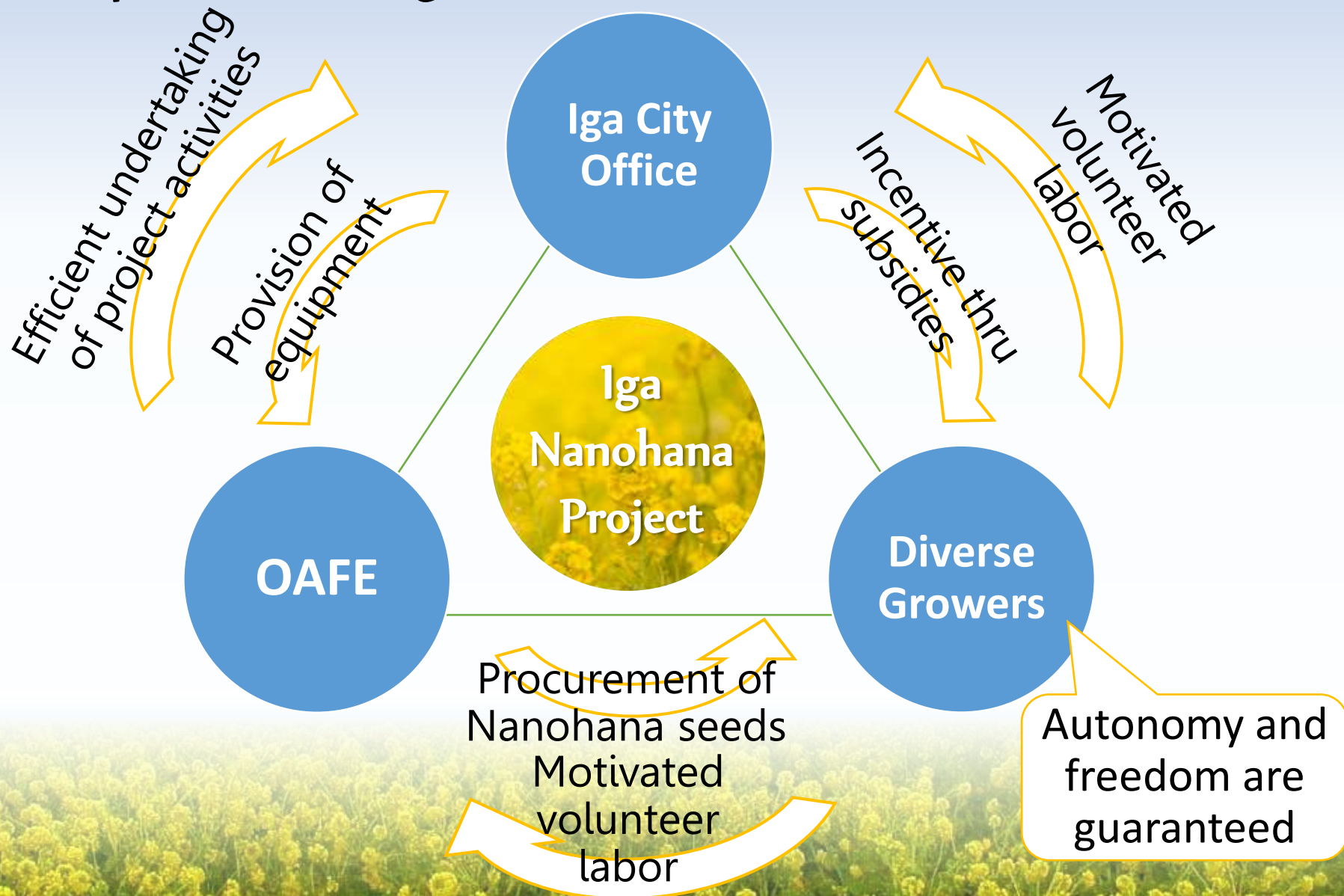
Responding to diverse demands

- Novel products, modern package design
- Tie-up with other tourist events

Better sales improving financial sustainability

Not only revival and preservation, but also renewal and (re-)creation, of cultural heritage

Linkage b/w diverse actors & institutions to keep motivating volunteer mind



Conclusion

- Use of Nanohana as a cultural resource
 - Not solely preserves, but also revives and renews the culture by exploring new possibilities (new products)
 - But, needs should be carefully identified and appropriate marketing skills should be incorporated
- Linkage between different actors and institutions
 - Effectively coordinating strengths and advantages of public, quasi-public & private sectors
 - Especially, roles of the public sector should be reevaluated
 - Should be cautious about success stories