

Philippine Cyberservices Corridor Is the Country's 5th Super Region

To make the country globally competitive in information and communications technology (ICT), the Philippine Cyberservices Corridor is now in place.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo herself announced in her State of the Nation Address (SONA) last July 23 that the corridor will be one of the five “super regions” that will receive priority attention in terms of investments for infrastructure.

The other super regions are: North Luzon Agribusiness Quadrangle; Metro Luzon Urban Beltway; Central Philippines; and Mindanao.

The President designated Commissioner Ramon P. Sales, chairman of the Commission on Information and Communications Technology (CICT), as the “champion” for the Cyberservices Corridor.

The champions of the other super regions are: Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap for North Luzon; Secretary Ed Pamintuan of the Subic-Clark economic zones for Metro Luzon; Tourism Secretary Ace Durano for Central Philippines; and Jesus Dureza, Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process for Mindanao.

Making the Cyber Region Work

As a “super region” envisioned by the present administration, the Philippine Cyberservices Corridor aims to



strengthen the regions outside Metro Manila and transform them into viable investment destination for ICT.

Commissioner Sales says the “CICT will continue to pursue a breakthrough value proposition for the ICT industry.” This means programs in the cyber region will focus not only on providing ICT services alone. Equally important will be education, promotions, career advocacy and training in the areas of IT network and project management, finance and accounting, engineering and other related services, as well as cross-discipline areas of expertise.

Since the Cyberservices Corridor’s primary objective is “to boost telecommunications, technology and education,” the CICT shall lead in addressing the need to develop competencies English, enhance skills in ICT among others, in the areas covered by the Corridor.

The Philippine Cyberservices Corridor project is three-tiered and is located primarily in places that have strategic ICT plans in place. First tier is Metro Manila, Sta. Rosa, Metro Cebu, and Metro Davao.

The second tier includes Baguio, Poro Point, Dagupan, Tarlac, Batangas, Lipa, Legazpi City, Naga, B, Tacloban, Iloilo, Duamguete, Cagayan de Oro, and Gen. Santos City. The third tier includes Cabanatuan,

Tuguegarao, Tagbilaran, Puerto Princesa, Iligan, and Zamboanga.

The Chairman explained that the “programs in the Cyberservices corridor include those that are to be implemented by the various government agencies like the Departments of Education and the Trade and Industry, the Commission for Higher Education (CHED) and the TESDA.”

The CICT continues to implement, in partnership with its partners, several programs to enrich the country’s ICT human capital through training and education. The development of the Cyber Corridor is a continuing thing, with multi-stakeholder consultations being conducted with the private sector, academe, NGOs and other associations can identify the gaps that need to be addressed so that ICT can be developed further, according to the Commissioner.

Cyber Corridor Backbone

The working structure, or backbone, for the Cyber Corridor is already in place, mainly through the existing telecommunications centers in the regions which will be strengthened.



Thus, the Commission has transformed and rationalized the Telecommunications Office (TELOF) from a common carrier into the network manager of the government’s integrated telecommunications network, the CICT revealed.

The government’s contact points with its citizens from all over the country are the 41,939 barangays, 1,501 municipalities, 117 city halls, and 79 provincial capitals, or a total of 43,636 sites.

“We need to aggregate these sites into groups and connect them to 117 concentration hubs,” Commis-

sioner Sales pointed out. The 117 hubs are currently owned by the TELOF which also operate as community e-Centers (CeCs). The government’s various agencies, departments, bureaus and other offices will be integrated across two or three concentration service hubs at the core.

Then the 117 concentration hubs and the three concentration service hubs will interconnect with each other. The portal, which will be “defended by the best of breed security applications” will be located at the concentration service hubs.

The VoIP (voice over Internet protocol) for voice communications, as well as VPN (virtual private network) for data management in government are being encouraged. “This should lead to greater efficiencies and cost-effectiveness,” the Commission said. “This should adhere to both the austerity policies of government and the democratization of communications across government.”

The CICT, with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), have already developed the Philippine Broadband Deployment Plan Strategy to provide a flexible approach to migration to an IP-based environment. A common VoIP platform for a communications system for the national government will enable citizens to avail of government services and goods under an all IP-environment.

The Commission has also implemented the ICT Blueprint for micro and small scale entrepreneurs (MSMEs) to enable these groups to use ICT more productively.

It also pursued the professionalization of IT personnel by completing the National ITC Literacy Standards (NILS), after having conducted 10 consultative meetings with various stakeholders such as the academe, ICT specialists, industry executives – in Metro Manila, Cebu and Zamboanga.

Aside from this, a National ICT Competency Standard for Teachers was drafted, alongside a National Competency Standard for ICT Specialists in government. These standards are being complemented by examinations for computer systems analysts and programmers.

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Sources: *President’s 2006 SONA; 2006 Accomplishment Report, Commission for Information, communications and Technology (CICT)*