

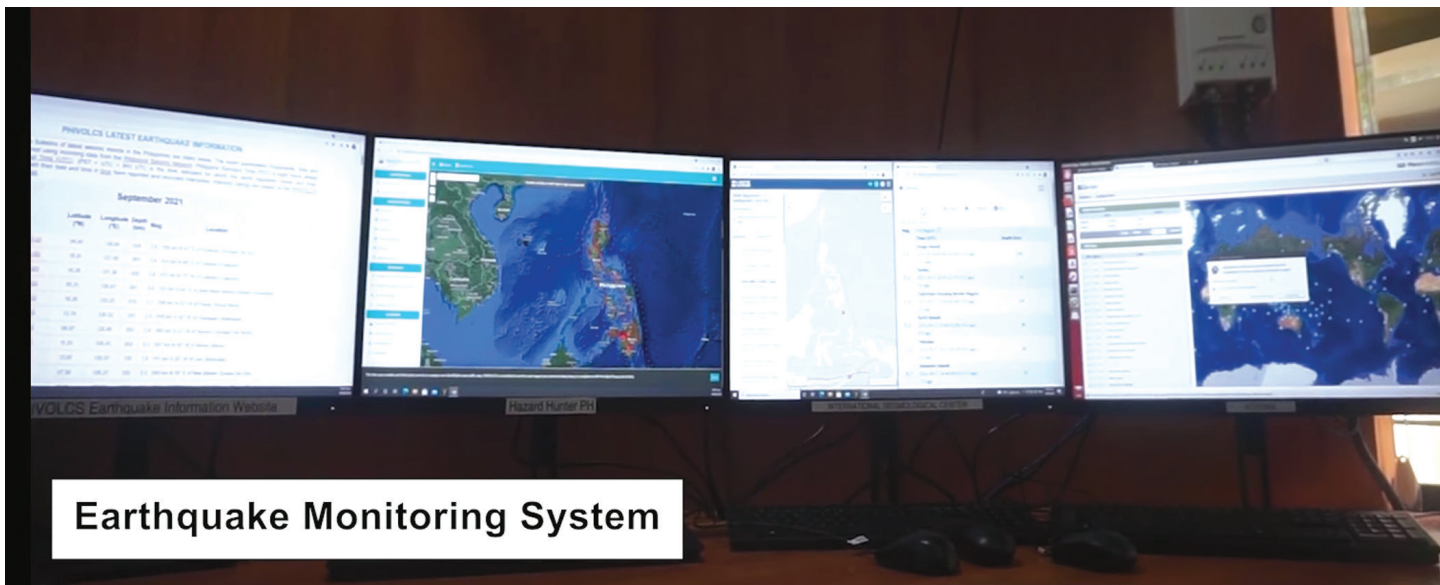


Inside

- DOST-ASTI signs 3-year agreement with Bizooku Philippines for Cloudlink technology.. p2
- Future of work in the government: what do workers say p3
- Private sector employees signed up in DOST-Coursera program..... p4

First Cluster Center for Earthquake and Tsunami Monitoring in Mindanao set in motion

By Eunice Anne Narvadez, DOST-STII



Inside the PHIVOLCS Mindanao Cluster Monitoring Center for Earthquake and Tsunami, which is set to further increase the protection capabilities of the Philippine Seismic Network (PSN) in monitoring and warning in Mindanao.

The thrust for community resilience and preparedness continues for the Department of Science and Technology – Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (DOST-PHIVOLCS) as the agency unveils the PHIVOLCS Mindanao Cluster Monitoring Center for Earthquake and Tsunami (PMCMCET) on 24 September 2021 via a virtual presser.

A first in the region, DOST Undersecretary Renato U. Solidum Jr. said that the center is set to further increase the protection capabilities of the Philippine Seismic Network (PSN) in monitoring and warning in Mindanao.

It aims to safeguard continuity of operations should the key operations of the PHIVOLCS Data Receiving Center (DRC) in Quezon City get hampered by any disaster.

Similar to PHIVOLCS DRC, PMCMCET can generate and deliver reliable earthquake and tsunami information for both DOST-PHIVOLCS and the public.

The newest earthquake and tsunami monitoring center is situated at the Philippine Science High School – Southern Mindanao Campus in Mintal, Davao City and is envisioned to be beneficial not only for monitoring activities but also serve as a facility for students' education in the region.

In the virtual presser, DOST Secretary Fortunato T. de la Peña stressed that the department has always pushed for better appreciation of scientific information to transform people's lives.

"With the inauguration of this cluster center, we hope to bring the products and services of our earth science team in our department closer to the people whom we serve, and they will truly appreciate the meaning of earth sciences sa rehiyon at sa local level," Sec. de la Peña said.

On the other hand, Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte-Carpio extended her commendation to DOST-PHIVOLCS for continuing its mandate to mitigate disasters by disseminating relevant information on disaster preparedness and risk

reduction through a video message.

With PMCMCET as the newest addition to the PSN, the Philippines now has 111 seismic stations, consisting of nine staff-controlled seismic stations, 18 satellite-telemetered seismic stations, and 12 sea-level detection stations and tsunami alerting stations.

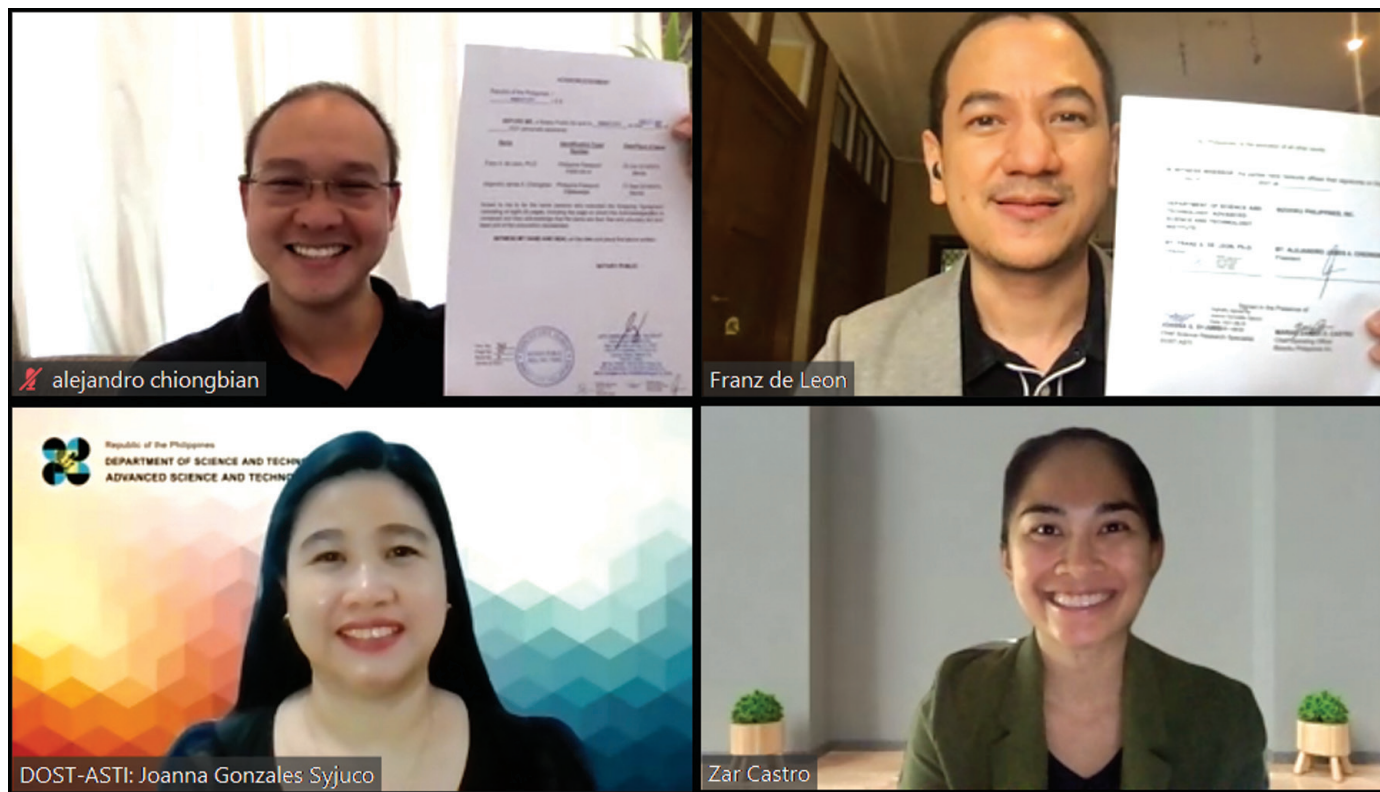
The agency eyes to have a total of 115 seismic stations by 2022.

Furthermore, Usec. Solidum thanked partner institutions for their support and contributions as the PMCMCET finally comes full circle this year.

"*Ang kahandaan po sa sakuna ay hindi po puwedeng bawat isa lang po sa atin ang kikilos,*" Usec. Solidum said, reiterating the agency and partner institutions' mission to strengthen community resilience and disaster preparedness. He added that they must collaborate and build on each party's efforts and expertise to ensure provision of right service to the people to bring forth safe and disaster-resilient citizenry especially in the region of Mindanao.

DOST-ASTI signs 3-year agreement with Bizooku Philippines for Cloudlink technology

By DOST-ASTI



In this photo, from top left clockwise: Bizooku Philippines President Alejandro James A. Chiongbian, DOST-ASTI Director Dr. Franz A. de Leon, Bizooku Philippines Chief Operating Officer Zar Castro, and DOST-ASTI Chief Science Research Specialist Joanna G. Syjuco.

As part of its aim to improve business and government agency efficiencies through the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), the Advanced Science and Technology Institute (ASTI), a research and development institute of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), has signed a three-year partnership with Bizooku Philippines on 27 August 2021.

This is to collaborate in the implementation of various ICT Solutions of Bizooku, starting with Cloudlink, a machine vision and machine learning technology that is capable of analyzing official receipts and documents such as Articles of Incorporation, Income Tax Returns (ITR), and other various documents.

The technology is currently being used by multinational brands, where establishments nationwide issue an official receipt, and customers that have opted-in can upload those receipts in the system for loyalty and redemption transactions. Brands can gather consumer buying behaviors, with the data being used to come up with bundling promos or rewards that would be relevant to their market.

Cloudlink can also be used to provide actionable responses for end users or customers. For example, customers can send the official receipt with a specific product purchase and send it to Cloudlink via a messaging platform. Cloudlink will then read and digest the data on the official receipt, and if parameters such as a minimum purchase were met, the user will be rewarded with prepaid credits and/or gift certificates.

Given the DOST-ASTI and Bizooku Philippines partnership, the Cloudlink technology will be the first anchor technology jointly released and offered to other government agencies, and it can be expected that together, both Bizooku and DOST-ASTI will work hard to offer other advanced technology to help the country recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We are very excited to work in close collaboration with DOST-ASTI, and we would love to demonstrate the Cloudlink system to any other agency that may be interested to learn more about it. This partnership sets the stage for more ICT solution offerings Bizooku and DOST-ASTI can provide to our country,



in our joint effort to help strengthen the technological capabilities of our government agencies,” said Alejandro James A. Chiongbian, President of Bizooku Philippines.

“True to ASTI’s commitment of bringing innovative ICT solutions to Filipinos, ASTI is partnering with Bizooku to deliver an application for a more transparent and efficient governance. We are very excited to be part of this initiative, as we believe that the technology the Cloudlink brings to the table will be of significant service to many government agencies in the long run. We hope that this joint effort will also demonstrate the importance of industry-government collaborations in developing better solutions for the society,” DOST-ASTI Director Dr. Franz A. de Leon concluded.

Future of work in the government: what do workers say

By Jenny Leigh Daquioag-Porca, DOST-NRCP

This project aims to describe telecommuting schemes in government organizations in terms of the level of participation across organizational, job, household, and individual characteristics. It also intends to describe perceived effects of telecommuting on people, work, and environment. The study will also identify and differentiate preferred telecommuting schemes of government workers, as well as determine significant factors that either promote or inhibit telecommuting success; whether telecommuting is preferred over office work, and identify reasons for the preference. Likewise, this project will determine the willingness of government workers to adopt telecommuting as a work arrangement option in the post Covid-19 pandemic.

The team used this survey <https://telecommutingph.questionpro.com/> which was disseminated to all government institutions. The data collection commenced last May and will end this August.

This project, Telecommuting Preferences of Government Workers in the Philippines, led by Dr. Rowena Paz L. Gelvezon, Department of Science and Technology - National Research Council of the Philippines member of the Division of Social Sciences, and UP Visayas professor, is one of the three projects under the program titled, Conduct of a National Work from Home Experience (WFH) in the Philippine Public Sector.

The targeted participants / beneficiaries of this study are (1) employees and employers of Government Agencies, Local Government Units, State Colleges and Universities, and Government-Owned and Controlled Corporations (i.e., telecommuting as a Human Resource scheme), (2) legislative bodies (i.e., policies anchored on scientific and empirical evidence), (3) executive bodies (i.e., implementing guidelines anchored on scientific and empirical evidence), (4) funding agencies and (5) academe and other researchers.

The Social Impacts, with the inclusion of telecommuting as a regular work arrangement alternative for the public sector post – COVID-19 will: (1) promote the protection of rights of public employees while telecommuting (like the setting of minimum labor standards for telecommuting); (2) provide the government workers the flexibility to work during their most productive time, resulting in increased productivity; (3) allow government workers more time for themselves and their families, allowing them to experience work-life balance; (4) provide an opportunity to government workers who may not be able to travel to continue working such as mothers, handicapped, persons with comorbidities, and senior citizens; and (5) lessen government workers' exposure to occupational and environmental hazards, hence, reducing their stress and anxiety.

Meanwhile, the Economic Impacts will: (1) help the public sector become more competitive and equitable as a result of higher productivity of employees brought about by more flexible work arrangements (can work at their most productive time and allows those with disabilities to work); (2) support continuance of government operations even during times of calamities, pandemic, and emergency situations thereby ensuring continuous delivery of public services; (3) generate savings in terms of energy and electricity costs; (4) decrease health care costs because government employees are less exposed to contagious diseases and other hazards such as traffic accidents and other occupational hazards (savings can be reprogrammed to other worthwhile government projects); (5) reduce time and travel costs as well as lesser medical bills (able to consume homemade nutritious meals and have the time for exercise); and (6) reduce energy usage and greenhouse gases, thereby improving air quality. Solid waste, noise, and space pollution will also be reduced.

By the end of this study, the government workers' preference will be revealed, thus used

as reference in rationalizing existing policies and guidelines for working arrangements in the country's government institution.

The two other projects under the National WFH program include: Telecommuting Preferences of Government Workers in the Philippines G-TWICE (Government Telecommuting Work Infrastructure Cost Estimator), and MATINO – Modeling Analysis of Telework Impact in the 'New Normal'.

Meanwhile, in a separate study done in 2020 by DOST-NRCP Executive Director Marieta Bañez Sumagaysay on Gender-responsive WFH scheme in a post-ECQ scenario, it was revealed that majority of the women no longer prefer a WFH arrangement. According to the study, as much as they want to do "office work" at home, they are not able to, due to the stronger blurring of work time and home time divide, exposure to a range of vulnerabilities, and multiple burdens. In contrast, more men chose WFH to lessen physical and psychological stress (from commuting), more family time and better relationships, better work-life balance, among others.

This study of Dr. Sumagaysay was participated in by 310 respondents, 195 females (62.90%) and 115 males (37.10%) who are DOST-NRCP members (professionals from SUCs/ Higher Education Institutions), who are mainly engaged in teaching, research, administrative work, and consultancy services.

Will other respondents of Gelvezon's study on telecommuting choose the same option? The future of work in the government depends now on what they have to say.



ABOUT US

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Private sector employees signed up in DOST-Coursera program

By Geraldine Bulaon-Ducusin, DOST-STII



Following the success of the Coursera Workforce Government program, DOST-Caraga has allocated funds under the Grants-In-Aid (GIA) for a project that will provide 270 online learning accounts to DOST personnel and partner agencies, institutions, and private sector in Caraga.



“Over 50% of those who enrolled in the DOST-Coursera program are employees, and over half of these (54.4%) came from the private sector,” said DOST-Caraga Program Administrator Engr. Noel M. Ajoc.

DOST-Caraga’s partnership with Coursera’s Workforce Recovery Initiative Learning Program, which intended to provide learners access to thousands of courses from top universities and organizations worldwide, was participated in by 75,000 Filipino scholarship grantees.

The top courses based on enrollments were COVID-19 Contact Tracing; Work Smarter, Not Harder: Time Management for Personal and Professional Productivity; and Excel Skills for Business Essentials.

According to one of the grantees, “Through the program I expanded my knowledge on how to analyze and present my biodiversity data that would make it more meaningful and more impactful.”

Of the 30,140 courses completed that were related to science and mathematics, the most number of completions were in Health (28.7%), Computer Science (25.3%), and Information Technology (21.8%).

“Python programming is one of the most favorite courses of the program,” Ajoc said.

However, this new mode of learning poses some challenges particularly with regard to the state of internet infrastructure in the country. “The most common problem for learners is internet connectivity. Unless the coverage of high-speed internet access is improved, remote areas will have problems accessing MOOCs courses,” Ajoc further said.

Moreover, some in the health industry also benefited from the program. One grantee, a freelance writer, who writes about mental health and climate change, said that the course taken under the DOST grant helped build a more concrete foundation for the advocacies

being written about, and also provided updated knowledge on the latest developments on various science issues.

The regions with the highest number of scholarship grantees/enrollees are the National Capital Region (31.4%), Regions IV-A (20.9%), and Region III (9%).

Following the success of the Coursera Workforce Government program, DOST-Caraga allocated funds under the Grants-in-Aid (GIA) for a project that will provide 270 online learning accounts to DOST personnel and partner agencies, institutions, and private sector in Caraga. More than 90% of the new slots are already provided to more than 30 partner agencies, institutions, LGUs and MSMEs.

Coursera is a web-based online learning platform or Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) with professors from several universities to give everyone access to quality education without the expense of a traditional college or university.