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DOST eyes rice sufficiency via remote sensing technologies

By **Joy M. Lazcano**
S&T Media Service, DOST-STII



Scientists suggests using remote sensing technology to improve rice sufficiency in the country

A cutting edge technology called remote sensing will help boost the country's rice production, according to a scientist. Remote sensing uses satellite imagery and ground data processing to generate data and information on agricultural conditions.

During the recent press conference for the upcoming 2015 Asian Conference on Remote Sensing at the Crowne Plaza on October 19-23, 2015, Dr. Enrico Paringit, explained that through the said technology, experts can make an inventory of the agricultural resources and immediately discover any irregularities in the crops before these spread. Paringit is the program leader of the Department of Science and Technology's (DOST) Disaster Risks Exposure Assessment for Mitigation (DREAM).

"The El Niño phenomenon was detected using remote sensing technologies," says Paringit while explaining the benefits of

remote sensing technologies in the areas of agriculture, forestry, and disaster mitigation.

Remote sensing is the technology used in getting information on an object or phenomenon without making any physical contact. It is done through aerial scanning of a location or through satellite images. "We can say that remote sensing is more like feeling without touching," says Paringit.

Under the DREAM program which Paringit heads, DOST will be sending two microsatellites in two years starting 2016 to enable the remote transmission of data. These images will be verified using data coming from other sources.

The data which will be obtained on a daily basis and will be sent to a ground receiving station in Subic, Zambales. The station, to be called the Philippine Earth Data Resources and Observation Center (PEDRO), will provide crops and climate experts with information on a particular area's vegetation conditions. Also,

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US Peace corps volunteers hail STARBOOKS as S&T learning tool

By **Rodolfo V. De Guzman**
S&T Media Service, DOST-STII

A group of US Peace Corps volunteers who recently got a first-hand experience of the STARBOOKS praised the DOST's first and only "library in a box" in the country as a very good "S& learning tool."

In a visit to the Science and Technology Information Institute (STII) of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Ji Yusi of the US Peace Corps volunteers said, "It was awesome! Very easy to use and when you log in, it's very easy to search with lots of videos and news, there's a lot of information that people can use."

A volunteer from Chengdu, China, Yusi said that she has never seen anything like the STARBOOKS, not in her hometown or in her country. "That is why we are here, we are learning from your experience," added Ji.

STARBOOKS, acronym for Science and Technology Academic Research-Based Openly Operated Kiosk System, is an innovative product of STII aimed at bringing closer to communities with no or limited internet access

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Members of the US Peace Corps volunteers try the STARBOOKS during their brief visit at the DOST-STII library.

US Peace Corps volunteers and DOST-STII personnel welcome a photo session during the former's brief visit at the DOST-STII library to personally experience STARBOOKS.

a myriad of science and technology information gathered through the years by STII.

With the excitement already running high for the 11 visitors from the US Peace Corps, Louise Ian de los Reyes of the Information Resources and Analysis Division (IRAD) of STII gave the group a short backgrounder and updates on STARBOOKS. De los Reyes started off with the short history of STII, how STARBOOKS came about and the extent of its implementation with regard to deployment of STARBOOKS kiosks to different schools all over the country. According to de los Reyes, there are already 745 kiosks installed in different regions from Tuguegarao in the north to Davao in the south.

IRAD chief Rosie Almocera likewise gave a brief welcome message to the volunteers and encouraged them to create something similar to STARBOOKS that they can apply in their home countries.

"STARBOOKS is a unique innovation that provides our students even in far flung areas access to science and technology information that they can use for research projects and to upgrade their personal knowledge on various subjects like Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics and other disciplines," Almocera said. She further challenged the group to come up with their own versions of the STARBOOKS so that the vast wealth of information on science and technology can be shared to as many people as possible.

After the briefing, the volunteers navigated the STARBOOKS on their own so they can actually experience how it works.

"You can see how advance you are with STARBOOKS and how cutting-edge this is because in the U.S. internet is more prevalent we don't see something like this that much and books are expensive," said Elizabeth Karr, Peace Corps Librarian.

Karr added that the database resources are very expensive and she commends the institute for bringing the information to the communities who otherwise have no access to, transparent access that is right in front of them.

The immersion activity by the US Peace Corps was organized by the US Peace Corps national organization through the United States Embassy in Manila. The group was led by \Sheila S. Chan, Resource Coordinator of US Peace Corps Philippines.

"STARBOOKS is user-friendly and so easy to navigate; ideal for students and this encourages exchange of knowledge which you cannot find in just one place, you have to share it and that is, I think, what STARBOOKS is all about. You are not restricted by copyrights and knowledge is free-flowing, and a lot of people will benefit from this."

At present, the US Peace Corps supports the development of the Philippines in three sectors, namely: environment, education and coastal resource management. Since 1961, some 8,000 volunteers from different countries have already served the Philippines in various capacities. (S&T Media Service)

it will receive, process, and distribute spatial data to provide government officials with intelligent decision-making tool on various areas of concern such as the occurrence of pests, annual yield of rice to prevent shortages in the production, and other issues.

"Just imagine, we can now determine if our rice production is sufficient by comparing our annual yield data against our needs. Through this we can now have empirical basis if there is a real need to import rice so we can truly help our local farmers in optimizing their profits," said Paringit.

Initially, PEDRO will run for two years and promises to strengthen the country's capabilities in weather information and forecasting as well as in forest and agricultural resource assessment.

According to Dr. Gay Perez, president of the Philippine Geoscience and Remote Sensing Society, the recent remote sensing conference aims to update the country's experts on the latest technologies and enable participants to take a peek at what global leaders in remote sensing are working on in the past years. The country likewise presented its initiatives on Phil-LiDAR technology, a high-resolution hazards mapping of the 15 major river systems and the two microsatellite program. The Philippines hosted the conference for the second time in almost two decades.

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DOST Region II gets Philippine Quality awards

By Veronica Hernandez
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The Department of Science and Technology Region II in Cagayan Valley received the prestigious national Philippine Quality Award (PQA) Recognition for Commitment to Quality Management (Level 1) during the conferment ceremonies of the 17th Philippine Quality Awards at Malacañang Palace recently.

Assistant Secretary Dr. Urdujah A. Tejada with DOST-II Officer-in-Charge Engr. Sancho A. Maborang received the PQA Trophy from President Benigno S. Aquino III. Dr. Tejada was the incumbent DOST-II Regional Director during the PQA application.

"We are recognizing your pursuit of quality in the most profound sense of the word—because it does not only mean a stronger institution, a larger share in the market, or a higher quality of performance, but an infinitely higher quality of life for more Filipinos," President Aquino said in his keynote speech.

The Philippine Quality Award is the country's highest level of recognition given to government and private organizations for performance excellence equivalent to the very prestigious Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Program of the United States. The PQA focuses on seven criteria categories: (1) leadership; (2) strategic planning; (3) customer focus; (4) measurement, analysis, knowledge management; (5) workforce focus; (6) process management; and (7) results.

The DOST office in Cagayan Valley is the first national government agency in Region II accorded with the PQA award and the only government sector awardee in the 17th PQA Cycle. Other Level 1 awardees were the Colegio de San Juan de Letran-Manila and the Lyceum of the Philippines-Laguna.

Meanwhile, Level 2 awardees were SMC Yamamura Fuso Molds Corporation; ROHM Electronics Philippines, Inc.; and STMicroelectronics Inc.

"DOST-II's relentless efforts to achieve (excellent) organizational performance (lies) on believing in the human capital, placing the highest importance to its workforce, (and) enhancing their learning skills in order to provide quality service to its customers," according to DOST-II's statement.

"Also, the reason behind DOST-II's successes it had achieved is along the lines 'We are a platoon, but we work like a battalion.' And as a team, whatever success is celebrated, valuing contributions done by everyone, living by the tagline 'Working Together, Sharing Together, Celebrating Together,'" the statement also said.

DOST-II started working on attaining PQA with the creation of its Performance Excellence



President Benigno S. Aquino III confers the Recognition for Commitment to Quality Management to the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) – Region II, represented by Assistant Secretary Dr. Urdujah Tejada and DOST Region II Assistant Director and Officer-In-Charge Sancho Maborang. **(Photos by the Malacañang Photo Bureau.)**



DOST-II PQA Team – (Back, L-R): Engr. Marcelo G. Miguel, provincial director of DOST's Provincial Science and Technology Center (PSTC)- Isabela; Engr. Jonathan R. Nuestro, provincial director of PSTC Nueva Vizcaya; Engr. Sancho A. Maborang, OIC of the Office of the Regional Director; and Lucio G. Calimag, OIC of PSTC Quirino. Front (L-R): Jessamyn B. Jadulos, center manager for training; Nora T. Garcia, provincial director of PSTC-Batanes; Mary Ann P. Maglasin, assistant regional director of Finance and Administrative Support Services; Virginia G. Bilgera, center manager for SETUP; Dr. Urdujah A. Tejada, assistant secretary and program manager for Countryside Development; Victoria B. Maborang, planning officer; Dr. Teresita A. Tabaog, provincial director of PSTC-Cagayan; and Engr. Sylvia T. Lacambra, center manager for Regional Standards and Testing Laboratory.

Team, putting in place the ISO 9001 Quality Management and the ISO/IEC 17025:2005 of its Chemical and Microbiological and Metrology testing laboratories. Apart from the ISO/IEC 17025:2005, the DOST-II laboratories also pursued other certifications

and accreditation from regulatory bodies like the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environmental Management Bureau; Department of Health-Food and Drug Administration; and the Department of Health. *(S&T Media Service)*

DOST, Chamber of Commerce ink partnership for more competitive Cordillera enterprise

Baguio City- The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) and Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) in Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) at Camp John Hay in Baguio City to strengthen the capability of local Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector in the region.

Under the said MOU, DOST and PCCI in the Cordilleras will sustain and expand their partnership towards helping the MSMEs in the region to have access to different technological innovations to improve their production efficiency and competitiveness. The MOU includes providing mentoring and related assistance to MSME beneficiaries of DOST-CAR to help them become world class business enterprises.

Signatories of the MOU were DOST Secretary Mario G. Montejo, DOST-CAR Regional Director Julius Caesar B. Sicat, PCCI-CAR Regional Governor Marciano L. Garcia, President of PCCI Baguio-Benguet Chapter Rhodora A. Ngolob, Assistant Regional Director for Technical Services of DOST-CAR Nancy A. Bantog, President of PCCI Benguet Chapter Rex D. Balong-Angey, and Executive Director of PCCI Benguet Chapter Trinidad Cayading-Trinidad.

The said MOU also stated that DOST-CAR and PCCI-CAR will execute separate Memorandums of Agreement (MOA) for specific engagements that will detail the collaboration and responsibilities of both institutions.

"One way of achieving inclusive development, especially for areas in the countryside, is by helping local MSMEs to improve their productivity and competitiveness. In recent years, DOST has been at the forefront of creating conducive



Department of Science and Technology (DOST) Secretary Mario G. Montejo (middle), DOST-Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) Director Julius Caesar B. Sicat (left), and Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) Regional Governor Marciano L. Garcia (right) sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) at the Camp John Hay in Baguio City. The goal of said MOU is to improve the quality of production of the MSME sector in CAR. According to Sec. Montejo, forming a partnership with PCCI will help DOST in strengthening its programs for MSMEs and bring inclusive growth in the region. **(Photo by Arjay Escondo, S & T Media Service)**

business environment for MSMEs to allow them to develop quality products and increase efficiency through the infusion of appropriate technologies," said DOST Secretary Mario G. Montejo.

According to Sec. Montejo, building a partnership with the Chamber of Commerce will further improve the quality of assistance that DOST is providing to various local firms in CAR, particularly under DOST's Small Enterprises Technology Upgrading Program or SETUP.

SETUP is a nationwide strategy to encourage and assist MSMEs to adopt technological innovations that will improve their business operations. The said program offers MSMEs

equipment and technical assistance to upgrade the quality of their products and services conform to national and international standards of excellence.

According to Montejo, DOST-SETUP program assists some 3,000 MSMEs all over the country every year. For the first semester alone, from January to June 2015, a total of 1,236 firms have been given assistance.

"DOST-CAR and PCCI-CAR will work together to promote business growth and sustainable development among MSMEs sector in the region through providing advance knowledge on entrepreneurship," Montejo added.

in focus



Science Secretary Mario G. Montejo during the recent Bulong Pulungan sa Sofitel discusses the different innovations of the Department of Science and Technology for the past five years. He bannered technological advances in agriculture; enterprise development; disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation; connectivity and government services; and persistent and emerging problems. Montejo highlighted the technical and financial assistance extended to MSMEs through the Food Innovations Centers in the regions, enabling local food manufacturers to produce globally competitive food products. Likewise, DOST chief presented remarkable headways in disaster preparedness through Project NOAH and DREAM for early warning and generation of multi-hazard maps. **(S&T Media Service/Text by Rodolfo de Guzman/Photo by Gerry Palad)**