

## Development and Delivery of Livelihood-based e-Service for ASEAN Women

### 3.7. Philippines

Indicator	Data				
Basic Information					
1. Country name	Myanmar	Philippine <sup>1</sup>	Singapore	Thailand	Viet Nam
2. Area (km <sup>2</sup> )		<b>300,000</b>			
3. National population		<b>92,337,852</b>			
4. Rural population		<b>50,500,000</b>			
5. Key Economic Sector(s)		<b>Agriculture and Services</b>			
6. Industry (%)					
6-1. Agriculture (%)		<b>10</b>			
6-2. Fisheries (%)		<b>-3.25</b>			
6-3. Livestock industry (%)					
6-4. Other sector (%)					
7. GDP per capita		<b>1581.01USD</b>			
8. Employment (%)		<b>92.7</b>			
8-1. Employment - Urban (%)					
8-2. Employment - Rural (%)					
Gender					
1. Education (% of female)					
1-1. Primary education (% of female)		<b>91.07</b>			
1-2. Secondary education (% of female)		<b>66.09</b>			
1-3. Higher education (% of female)		<b>54.48</b>			
2. Literacy (% of female)		<b>96.1</b>			
3. Labor Force Participation (% of female)		<b>49.8</b>			
3-1. Labor force in agriculture (% of female)					
3-2. Labor force in fisheries (% of female)					
3-3. Labor force in livestock industry (% of female)					
3-4. Labor force in other sector (% of female)					
ICT					
1. Telephone lines (%)		<b>4.07</b>			
1-1. Telephone lines - Urban (%)					

<sup>1</sup> Data used in this table came from various government sources: National Statistics Office, The Philippine ICT Statistical Portal, National Statistical Coordination Board. However, some of the data are still unavailable as concerned government agency uses a different metric in the collection of data, and some do not collect sex disaggregated data.

1-2. Telephone lines - Rural (%)					
2. Cell phone subscriptions (%)		<b>107</b>			
2-1. Cell phone subscriptions - Urban (%)					
2-2. Cell phone subscriptions - Rural (%)					
3. Internet use (%)		<b>36.24</b>			
3-1. Internet use - Urban (%)					
3-2. Internet use - Rural (%)					
3-3. Internet use - Women (%)					
4. Households with internet access (%)		<b>15</b>			
4-1. Households with internet access - Urban (%)					
4-2. Households with internet access - Rural (%)					
5. Telecenters					
5-1. The number of telecenters - Urban					
5-2. The number of telecenters - Rural					

## Introduction

The global growth of information and communications technology (ICT) is unstoppable and has permeated the Philippine society. ICT has transformed and revolutionized Filipino society-drastically changing the manner by which government, business sectors and people conduct their operations and interact.

New technologies such as the Internet, satellite and digital broadcasting offer unprecedented opportunities. ICT has made possible the offsite conduct of transactions and businesses, as well as the rendition of services offshore, without necessarily establishing physical presence. In fact, the Philippines has emerged as one of the world's fastest growing destinations for business process outsourcing with foreign currency earnings exceeding those of any other industry (ADB, 2007). Innovations in technologies have facilitated communication and freedom of information enabling rapid information sharing and cross cultural dialogues. Social networks have greatly affected the manner by which Filipinos interact and communicate with Facebook and Twitter usage among the highest in the world<sup>2</sup>.

As ICT permeate almost every aspect of Filipino lives, it stands to reason that the reach of ICTs would extend to government services. The role of ICT cannot be ignored in the realm of government as ICT applications promises to enhance the delivery of public goods and services to citizens not only by improving the process and management of government, but also by redefining the traditional concepts of citizenship and democracy (Pascual, 2003).

The effects of ICT are far-reaching; however, there remain noticeable disparities in terms of accessibility and benefits. The benefits of knowledge and technology are not available to the large

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<sup>2</sup> Over 80% of the Philippine internet population uses social media networking sites. In Universal McCann's 2008 Wave 3 study on social media, the Philippines had the highest penetration of social networking among Internet users at 83%, compared with the global average of 58%.

majority of the world's population with women in most cases, not only excluded from social and economic opportunities, but also in terms of the benefits offered by ICTs (Primo, 2003). This discrepancy highlights the critical role of government in the age of technology. ICTs have the potential to help bring about substantial changes in women's lives. Governments must pay special attention to not only in providing women with access to ICT but also with ICT training and education. ICT is an instrument that promises much for the Filipino women, in terms of opportunities for learning, employment, business and enjoyment. For instance, e-government can provide marketing and promotion for women's businesses, products and services. Likewise, it can increase the productivity of female farmers with access to information on agricultural inputs and markets.

This section of the research aims to provide the current status of e-services in the Philippines and identify how the government is facilitating in the development and delivery of livelihood-based e-service to Filipino women. The research covers a.) current status of e-services in the Philippines with overview of the national e-government development plan, b.) specific (potential) demand for e-services identifying specific e-service providing women-related information c.) future directions of e-services for women.

### **3.7.1. Current Status of e-Services**

#### **Women and ICT in the Philippines**

When the Philippines ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1981, it made a commitment to ensure that women in different contexts and situations achieve substantive equality. Indeed for the past years the Philippines enjoyed a high rating with regard to international gender equality measures and indices. In 2013, it placed fifth in the Global Gender Gap Report making the Philippines the best performer within the Asia-Pacific region in terms of gender equality.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time, statistics show a rosy picture of status of ICT usage and access in the Philippines. In the last decade rapid growth and development of ICT have been observed in the country. The Philippines is in the top 20 countries with the highest number of Internet users in the world. The number of internet users has steadily grown from the time the Internet was introduced in 1994 with 4,000<sup>4</sup> users to 33 million in 2013 (Philstar, 2013). The average Filipino spends 16.4 hours on the internet per month with 41.5% of the time spent on social media (Infographic, 2013). The 2013 South East Asia (SEA) Digital Future in Focus reported that the Philippines has the highest social network access among SEA countries with women being the most active in social networking sites (Comscore, 2013). The same study revealed that Filipinos preferred using Facebook with 92% of them having a profile and an active account.

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<sup>3</sup> The World Economic Forum (WEF) annually ranked countries on their ability to close gender gap in four key areas- economic equality, political participation, health and survival and educational attainment.

<sup>4</sup> International Telecommunication Union

In terms of mobile phone usage, more than 87 million Filipinos have access to mobile phones (ICTO-DOST, 2011). The Philippines has been dubbed the “text capital of the world” with the average Filipino sending about 600 text messages in a month<sup>5</sup>. With the introduction of smartphones, Filipinos are using mobile phones not only to call and send text messages but also as mobile computers. Smartphones have become a means for users to have “internet-on-the-go”, allowing them to be always online (Philstar, 2013). In fact, Filipinos access the internet using a mobile device 20% of the time (Infographic, 2013). As unlimited internet services and mobile data plans are being offered to Filipinos by several telecommunication providers, it is expected that internet use in the Philippines will continue to grow each year.

### **ICT and the Philippine Government: The State of e-Government in the Philippines**

The perception that the Philippine government is bureaucratic and corrupt make many Filipinos do not look forward to dealing with government (SWS, 2012). Many efforts have been initiated to change such perception and make government services more effective and efficient, but without much success. The advent of ICT has been seen as a potential tool in introducing changes in the current system. ICT applications are expected to enhance public sector efficiencies and streamline governance system as well as provide cost effective and transparent delivery of services to the Filipino people.

The Commission on Information and Communication Technology-National Computer Center (CICT-NCC) in 2005 conducted an evaluation of the state of web presence of national government agencies in the Philippines using the United Nation-American Society for Public Administration (UN-ASP) Five Stages of e-Government. The evaluation revealed that the greatest number of these government agencies is either in the Enhanced Web Presence Stage (Stage II) or in the Interactive Web Presence Stage (Stage III) which means that government websites post updates with regularity and provide users downloadable forms.

In 2012, the National Computer Center (NCC) of the Philippine in partnership with the National IT Industry Promotion Agency (NIPA) of the Republic of Korea conducted an e-Government assessment to determine the current state of e-Government in the Philippines. It involved interviewing select government agencies and conducting a survey of 100 Filipino citizens to surface their perception of government services. The study revealed that e-Government in the country is still at the entry level of digitization with basic infrastructure such as data centres and communication network weak and internet connectivity very low. And according to the feedback from the survey, the speed of government service delivery is still very low and most of the information is not digitized.

Globally, the Philippines ranked 95<sup>th</sup> in the United Nations Global e-Government Survey with 0.4768 e-government development index and placed 51<sup>st</sup> in the e-participation index (UN, 2014). Despite the low ranking, the report noted that e-government in the Philippines has advanced albeit the country relatively lower national income. This could be attributed to creation of national strategic framework and national ICT policy plan.

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<sup>5</sup> 2009 researches conducted by Reuters, Portio research, NY Times, CTIA.org ten percent of the global traffic from short text messaging came from the Philippines.

Conducive ICT policies were cited as well for Philippines improved ranking in the 2014 World Economic Forum (WEF) Global Information Technology report. Based on the WEF Networked Readiness Index, the Philippines ranking among 148 countries improved from 86<sup>th</sup> to 78<sup>th</sup> spot (WEF, 2014). The report noted increase in the Philippines' scores in all the 10 networked readiness pillars: political and regulatory environment, business and innovation environment, infrastructure and digital content, affordability, skills, individual usage, business usage, government usage, economic impacts and social impacts. With stable performance, Philippines is expected to continue its positive trend.

### **ICT Policy Situation in the Philippines**

The Philippine government had been implementing national plans and programs that targeted an ICT-enabled country. It has initiated several motions that signify its belief and trust on ICTs as forceful agents in promoting efficient, credible, transparent, and effective delivery of basic services to the Filipino people.

#### *The 1987 Constitution*

The Philippine Constitution sets the framework of the state's accountability for harnessing the potential of ICTs for development and nation-building. Likewise, the 1987 Constitution states that the Philippine government "recognizes the role of women in nation-building, and shall ensure the fundamental equality before the law of women and men."

The Constitution recognizes the matters of "communication and information" and "science and technology." It "recognizes the vital role of communication and information in nation-building,"<sup>6</sup> and declares that "science and technology are essential for national development and progress."<sup>7</sup> Further, the Constitution says that "the State shall regulate the transfer and promote the adaptation of technology for the national benefit"<sup>8</sup> and "shall give priority to... science and technology... to foster patriotism and nationalism, accelerate social progress, and promote total human liberation and development"<sup>9</sup> (WLB, 2011).

#### *The 2009 Magna Carta of Women*

Republic Act 9710 or the Magna Carta of Women serves as the comprehensive human rights law of Filipino women. Herein, the role of technology is mentioned numerous times as means to fulfil their rights to a life with dignity. It specifically recognizes technology in women's right for a livelihood. It states that women shall be provided with "updated, useful information and gender-sensitive technologies for production, processing, and marketing of food products."<sup>10</sup> At the same time it demands the State to

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<sup>6</sup> Section 24, Article II

<sup>7</sup> Section 10, Article XIV

<sup>8</sup> Section 12, Article XIV

<sup>9</sup> Section 17, Article XIV

<sup>10</sup> 2009 Magna Carta of Women, Rule V Section 23

provide “women-friendly and sustainable agriculture technology”<sup>11</sup> and ensure “right to livelihood, credit, capital and technology.”<sup>12</sup>

### *Overview of the national e-government development plans*

The e-government plan in the Philippines reflects the existing structures, prioritize and ongoing reform processes in the country. For the past five years, the Philippines has become one of the fastest growing economies in the region with a gross domestic product (GDP) growth average of 5-6%. It was even considered a miracle economy amidst the 2008 financial crisis. To sustain its impressive growth and make it more inclusive, the government sees the need to optimize the role of ICT in providing an environment that ensures openness, efficiency in the delivery of services, and spaces for greater competitiveness.

The government considers the ICT industry to be a budding leader in the country’s economic growth, in fact calling it the country’s ‘sunshine industry’ (NEDA, 2007). It boasts not only of international recognition, increase in the national income and the creation of more jobs but the provision of high-paying employment opportunities particularly for women, which are taken as indications of national progress (Laguilles, 2011).

The development of the ICT industry had been part of the government’s economic plans and programs since President Corazon C. Aquino’s time, where technological parks or ‘techno parks’ and similar special economic zones have been in operation (UN, 2002). But it was during President Fidel V. Ramos’ administration that the ICT industry was given a more official focus from the government. In 1993, the National Information Technology Plan 2000 (NITP 2000) was created with a vision of transforming the Philippines into a knowledge society by the year 2000. In 1995, Republic Act 7925, known as the “Public Telecommunications Policy Act of the Philippines,” was enacted in support of the government’s vision. RA 7925 facilitated the creation of a competitive environment fostering private ownership of telecommunication services. This has resulted to the establishment of solid base mobile and land-based telecommunication networks. But with the Asian financial crisis hitting in 1997 together with ongoing economic problems such as debt, these plans remained to be fulfilled to its fullest by the end of Ramos’ term. In 1998, which was during President Joseph E. Estrada’s time, the IT21 Philippines was launched. It echoed the NITP 2000 plan, however, with stricter timeframe to achieve the goals.

It was the Government Information Systems Plan (GISP) that provided the foundation for creating an “on-line government” by highlighting the importance of ICT in developing new and better services for the public. The GISP was a presidential level initiative envisioned to create an on-line Philippine government by 2004. It identified institutional and policy-related issues of e-Government. This thrust was further strengthened through the enactment of RA 98792 or the “Electronic Commerce Act of 2000” which recognizes the vital role of ICT in nation-building.

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<sup>11</sup> 2009 Magna Carta of Women, Rule V Section 23

<sup>12</sup> 2009 Magna Carta of Women, Chapter V, Section 23

By 2001, under President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's regime, the same efforts were not only continued but intensified. In here, the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) for 2001-2004 laid the policy framework for utilizing ICT as a means to leapfrog into the new economy and make the Philippines the "the e-hub of the Asia-Pacific region". Job and wealth creation, as well as poverty reduction are apparent goals of MTPDP which focuses on promoting the development of the needed ICT skills, improving conditions for access, developing the infrastructure and establishing the appropriate legal basis for ICT operations.

### **The e-Government Master Plan (EGMP)<sup>13</sup>**

The previous e-government undertakings can be described as isolated and disjointed initiatives, largely confined to transactional-related and organization projects. Such hampered the Philippines' pursuit of a digitally empowered and integrated government. The EGMP was created to address the gaps in the previous ICT initiatives. It moves on from the non-integrated path of ICT development and agency-specific applications, toward a path that leads to an e-Government model that creates more valuable and meaningful services through interoperability and maximization of resources.

The EGMP is the blueprint for the integration of ICTs for the whole Philippine government. It builds on the past e-government initiatives and at the same time consolidate the current needs of e-government in the country to create a vision for the future. The EGMP envisioned creating "a digitally empowered and integrated government that provides responsive and transparent online citizen-centered services for a globally competitive Filipino nation."

The plan describes the institutions, agencies, processes, resources and policies that need to be strengthened to make its implementation possible and sustainable. Currently, the Information and Communications Technology Office (ICTO) of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) is tasked to be the lead implementing agency in its ICT-related efforts such as industry development, policy formulation, ICT infrastructure development, research and development, ICT capacity building for the public sector and administration of the e-governance fund.

#### *Policy Gap*

Government efforts to maximize the use of ICT for development and delivery of services are laudable. However, gender perspectives in these policies and programs are significantly missing. A clear-cut and unequivocal commitment to advance gender equality and women's empowerment through ICT is yet to be seen (PLCPD and Women's Hub, 2004). The Philippines' strategic framework for ICT development is still silent on gender issues and considerations. For instance, in looking at the EGMP thrusts, it is not clear whether these thrusts will address gender discrimination and inequality in technology. Questions on how the government's plan will address and maximize the newly-opened economic opportunities for women, and at the same time avoid the tendency of stereotyping women into their traditional, menial work such as encoders, telecomm operators, administrative assistants, etc. remain

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<sup>13</sup> Complete details of the Philippine e-Government Master Plan can be accessed at [http://i.gov.ph/pegif/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/eGovMasterPlan\\_Final-Version.pdf](http://i.gov.ph/pegif/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/eGovMasterPlan_Final-Version.pdf)

(FMA, 2013). ICT plans assume that the trickle-down effect will benefit the whole population. It believes that the economic growth that would be generated by the ICT as a process and as an industry would automatically benefit women. However, women's ability to take advantage of ICTs is dependent on conducive policies and an enabling environment in their own country to extend communications infrastructure to where they live.

### **3.7.2. Country Specific (Potential) Demand for e-Services**

Having laid out the women and ICT situations of the country and its accompanying related policies, this section looks at the potential demand for e-Services in the Philippines. It particularly looks at the e-services afforded to Filipino women by examining various government websites/portals. Moreover, this section presents the result of the survey that was distributed to 100 women--- surfacing their e-service usage and identifying their needs to promote their livelihood.

#### **Survey Result**

##### *Survey Methodology*

The research questionnaire was distributed to 100 Filipino women. Two primary criteria served as the basis in selecting women respondents of the questionnaire: first, they must be 20 years old and above, second, they must be internet users.

The survey was administered in two ways---face-to-face and online. In face-to-face method, the researcher approach individual women to answer the printed questionnaire. The researcher went to select government offices and institutions to administer the survey as well as to business centre particularly in the business process outsourcing companies. In online method, the survey questionnaire was distributed as attachment to email or in Facebook.

##### *Profile of the Respondents*

The women who answered the survey are currently based in Metro Manila either working or studying. However, majority of them grew up in the provinces or with family e.g. parents still living in the province. Majority of the respondent are with regular employment, 81%, either working in private companies or government sector. The women are mostly between the ages of 20-30 years, 76%. They are well educated with 75% of them with bachelor degree and 17% of them with higher forms of education. Women income ranges from 186 USD to 3277 USD with majority of them having an income that falls between 251USD-750USD.

Single women account 78% of the total surveyed. Twenty-two (22%) are married with an average of two children. Single mothers account for four percent of women.

##### *Internet Usage and Accessibility*

Ninety-three percent (93%) of the women surveyed claimed they have an easy access to the internet, adding that they have multiple accesses to internet connection. Home is the primary place where women connect to internet, 85 %, followed by work 73%. Women disclose as well that they browse the



internet daily, 48%, and others even said several times a day, 41%. The six percent (6%) who stated that they don't have an easy access to internet connect through internet/cyber café.

The two primary reasons women use the internet are for online communication, 81% and searching information, 75%. Most women spend time on social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, 85%, followed by personal websites such as blogs, 69% and 65% search engine.

Table

<b>Accessibility to the Internet</b>	
Responses	% of Total Responses
Yes	93
No	6
Null	1
Total	100

Table

<b>Place of Access</b>						
Responses	Home	Work	Internet/Cyber Cafe	Public Facilities (Telecenter, Library, etc.)	School	Others
% of Total Responses	85	73	9	2	2	1 Coffee shop

Table

<b>Frequency of internet usage</b>	
Responses	% of Total Responses
Rarely	0
Once a month	0
2-3 times a week	10
Daily	48
Several times a day	41
No answer	1
Total	100

Table

<b>Main purpose for using the internet</b>					
Responses	Searching information	Online Communication (i.e. email, chat)	Purchasing or trading of goods and services	Entertainment (i.e. music, video)	Others
# of Responses	75	81	2	30	4 (for

					work)
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Table

<b>Types of websites visited</b>		
Responses	# of Responses	% of Total Responses
Government	12	
Personal (e.g. blog, email, user-generated site)	69	
School	5	
Search Engine	65	
Social Networking (e.g. Facebook, etc.)	85	
Online Store	10	
News	13	
Others	3 (art stuff, bank online services, sports)	

### *E-service Usage*

The use of government website is not very popular with women with only 12% accessing them. There is also a very low level of awareness among them, 28%, regarding government websites providing women-related information or programs. Women’s awareness of any government policy that support women’s e-Service use is much lower at 8%. However, it has to be noted that albeit low level of awareness and e-service usage among women, majority deemed the development of e-Service can make their life better.

The following are the names of some government agencies accessed by women. Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and Department of Health (DOH) are the three government agencies mostly mentioned to be providing women-related information.

- ✓ Philippine Women Commission
- ✓ Department of Social Welfare and Development
- ✓ Department of Health
- ✓ Commission on Human Right
- ✓ Social Security System
- ✓ Department of Foreign Affairs
- ✓ Philippine Online Business Registry
- ✓ State Health Insurance
- ✓ Department of Labor and Employment

- ✓ Department of Trade and Industry
- ✓ National Bureau of Investigation

Table

<b>Awareness of any government websites providing women-related information or programs</b>	
Responses	% of Total Responses
Yes	28
No	71
Others	1
Total	100

Table

<b>Awareness of any government policy that support women's e-Service use</b>	
Responses	% of Total Responses
Yes	8
No	81
No answer	11
Total	100

Table

<b>Agreement to the idea that the development of e-Service in ones daily life can make life better</b>	
Responses	% of Total Responses
Strongly agree	38
Somewhat agree	49
Neither agree nor disagree	7
Somewhat disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0
No answer	6
Total	100

Table

<b>Needs of e-Service</b>		
Information	% of Responses generally useful	% of Responses crucial for use
Job opportunity	62	35
Talent pool	67	15
Micro-finance	56	37
Bidding opportunity	67	16
Livelihood related information (agriculture, fishery, livestock industry etc.)	61	29

Vocational training opportunity	60	29
Domestic/Sexual violence or Abuse prevention	55	38
Child care	61	34
Maternity	61	33
Free health clinic	56	36
Immunization	56	38
Sanitation	58	32
HIV/AIDS	61	31
<b>Functions</b>	<b>% of Responses generally useful</b>	<b>% of Responses crucial for use</b>
Online registration	60	37
Multiple languages	59	29
Mobile access options (e.g. Applications)	50	39
e-News letter	71	15
Q & A	63	31
Bulletin boards	65	20
Ombudsman	68	14
Downloading of online forms/documents	46	41
Program sign-up	59	28
E-learning	54	34
Audio/Video materials	55	31
Sight/Hearing accessibility for disabled person	65	24

### State of web presence of select national government agencies

In the age of technology, a government online presence can be indicative on how it reaches out, connect and provide services to its citizens. A government agency's decision to open up a website for information and services is influenced by a variety of factors; are often met with challenges and as such implement their e-government projects by phases. Using the UN-ASPA stages of e-government, the research examines the state of web presence of select government agencies namely Philippine Commission on Women, Department of Social Welfare and Development and Department of Health and identify where they are in terms of providing e-services. These are the top three agencies cited to be providing women-related information and services.

### Analysing the contents of the website using the UN-ASPA "Five stages of e-Government"

Stages of e-Government	Philippine Commission on Women (PCW)	Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)	Department of Health (DOH)
<b>Emerging Stage</b>			
Agency name	✓	✓	✓

Agency logo	✓	✓	✓
Write up/History	✓	✓	✓
Organization Structure	✓	✓	✓
Key officials	✓	✓	✓
Plans and Projects	✓	✓	✓
Rules and Regulations	✓	✓	✓
Services		✓	✓
Reports	✓	✓	✓
Statistical information	✓		✓
FAQs		✓	✓
Contact information (postal and email address, telephone numbers	✓	✓	✓
<b>Enhanced Stage</b>			
Accessible information	✓	✓	✓
Updated monthly	✓	✓	✓
Downloadable forms		✓	
Downloadable publications, newsletters	✓	✓	✓
Announcements	✓	✓	✓
Search function	✓	✓	✓
Site map		✓	✓
Feedback form		✓	
<b>Interactive Stage</b>			
User log-in		✓	✓

Online forum/chat room			
Discussion board			
<b>Transactional Stage</b>			
Public user log-in and password			
<b>Fully Integrated</b>			

From the above table it can be observed that PCW, DWSD and DOH are under the emerging and enhanced stages of e-government. This means that the three government agencies are merely disseminating information online. The information offered by the three agencies ranges from static content, such as agency’s history, organizational structure, the vision and mission (VMG) and contact information, to updated materials, such as reports, press releases, announcements, policies, and statistical databases.

The table revealed as well that interaction with the government agency and its citizen is still limited. The three government websites has yet to maximize the internet as a medium to consult with its various publics. Based on the feature of an interactive e-government, these agencies have yet to add e-forums, chats and issue-based discussion boards on their websites. However, it has to be noted that even though these features are absent from the websites, these government are using other online channels to get feedback and suggestions from its citizens. All the three websites post contact information that includes e-mail addresses where its citizens can ask questions and send comments. Some of the agencies offer short messaging service (SMS) facility to connect with the public. For instance DSWD has an interactive portal which features WiServ or Wireless Service wherein it provide different access numbers for asking information about the DSWD various programs. Also, it is noticeable that these agencies are taking advantage of the popularity of social media in the country, as all link their websites to Twitter and Facebook. However, the responsiveness of these online channels such as ensuring quick and substantive response to feedback and comments posted by its users remains a question. As previous study revealed on the use of SMS facility it “merely accommodates the receipt of the incoming message and such replying to these messages involves other channels of communication instead of sending the feedback to the public via SMS as well” (Mirandilla and San Pascual, 2010).

**E-services provided by select government agencies<sup>14</sup>**

*The Philippine Commission on Women (PCW)*

Established in 1975, PCW is the primary government agency mandated to ensure the protection and fulfilment of the rights of Filipino women through policy making. It is also tasked to ensure and

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<sup>14</sup> The selected agencies are the top three agencies mentioned by women in the survey to be providing women-related information.

monitor that all government agencies incorporate gender perspective/responsiveness in their own plans. PCW undertakes as well advocacy campaigns to promote economic, social and political empowerment of women.

### *Content*

PCW provides women and gender related information on its website. Mostly sex disaggregated data and statistics in various areas of concern such education, health, violence against women, labor employment etc. Women-related polices and laws can be downloaded as well from the website. PCW presents its programs and projects in its website, however, specific information and/or advocacy materials on health, sexual/domestic violence prevention and education, vocational training, opportunity, information on microfinance and livelihood-related information are missing.

Because PCW is a policy advisory and coordinating agency, it does not provide services directly to women. However, PCW refers women or other inquiries to government agencies that directly provide the service being asked. For instance it has a quick referral system (QRS) for information on services for women victims of violence. In the PCW website, there is a list of women non-government organizations (NGOs) providing an array of services.

### *Functionality*

As previously mentioned, PCW website can be categorized under the Enhanced Stage of UN-ASPAs stages of e-government which means that it functions mainly to disseminate information. It provides a monthly update of its activities through news bulletin and announcements. It provides a “Search” option for easy navigation and obtaining information. However, the website utilizes English language and majority of its information are written in English which might be challenging to non-English speakers. The interaction between the website and its user is very limited as e-participation tools such as polls, bulletin board, Q&A, ombudsman, satisfaction survey etc. are not present. On a positive note, PCW acknowledges its shortcomings and solicits comments from users on how to improve the website.

<b>Current e-Service Status</b>	
<b>Basic Information</b>	
e-Service Name	Women
Hosting Government Department or Ministry Name	Philippine Commission on Women
Website Address	<a href="http://www.pcw.gov.ph">www.pcw.gov.ph</a>
Start Date	
<b>Contents</b>	
Is there e-Service providing women related issues (women’s health, education, employment, sexual/domestic violence etc.) managed by ministry in charge of such issues?	Yes,

<p>What type of information/service the e-Service is providing currently?</p> <p>i) Health information (child, maternity, women care)</p> <p>ii) Education (women, child)</p> <p>iii) Sexual/domestic violence and abuses including prevention education</p> <p>iv) Job opportunity, vocational training opportunity</p> <p>v) Information on micro finance</p> <p>vi) Livelihood related information (agriculture, fishery, livestock industry etc.)</p>	<p>Mostly sex disaggregated statistics on:</p> <p>Health</p> <p>Education</p> <p>Sexual/ domestic violence and abuses</p>
Does the e-Service provide women related information (such as women NGO directories etc.)?	Yes
Does the e-Service provide information about job and bidding opportunities?	Yes, but limited to job vacancies and bidding opportunities in PCW
Does the e-Service feature women talent pool registration?	No
<b>Functions</b>	
Does the e-Service compile its user statistics?	No
Does the e-Service provide user guide (how to use the website)?	No
Does the e-Service provide e-newsletter service?	No
Does the e-Service provide audio and/or video files as well as documents?	No
Does the e-Service provide online forms/documents for downloading or electronic filing?	No
Does the e-service provide e-participation tools (feedback, polls, bulletin board, Q&A, Ombudsman, satisfaction survey etc.)?	No
Does the e-Service provide single window link for online petition, citizen proposal and information disclosure request?	No
Does the e-Service provide “Search” option (to easily navigate and obtain information)?	Yes
Does the e-Service provide contact directory for corresponding department/person in charge of the menus/issues and web manager?	Yes
Does the e-Service provide “Contact Us” option where you can directly contact web manager or person in charge and ask questions?	Yes
Does the e-Service provide security features such as log in or pin access to protect your personal information?	No



Does the e-Service provide mobile access option? (Can you access the web service with your cell phone?)	No
Does the e-Service provide information in multiple languages?	No
Does the e-Service provide access option for people with disabilities?	No

*Department of Health (DOH)*

The DOH is the primary health agency in the Philippines. It is mandated to ensure access to basic public health services to all Filipino people through the provision of quality health care and regulation of providers of health goods and services.

*Content*

Women-specific information can be found in the website of DOH. DOH provides health statistic on maternal deaths, live births by gender and live births by pregnancy. One of DOH key programs is the National Safe Motherhood Program wherein DOH aims to improve the maternal health of women and child mortality. Information about the program can be found in the website such as goals and strategies to achieve it. In the website, one can search for health promotional materials on safe motherhood, prenatal check-ups and emergency signs to watch out for when one is pregnant. There are also posters informing pregnant women of facility based-health centers.

DOH provides a variety of health-related information resources. It has a monthly publication called *Healthbeat* which brings out different health issues such as measles, tuberculosis, marriage and health, etc. The magazine can be downloaded from the website. One can also look for a particular health concern by clicking the links provided such as health journals and availing online subscriptions. DOH keep the public inform as well of any health scare through news clips and health advisory bulletins.

DOH keeps the public inform of possible epidemics. It has a specific feature in the website called Disease Surveillance in which it monitors the development of a particular disease or health problem by providing a monthly statistic and demographic updates. One on the health conditions DOH keeps an eye is HIV. However, information given about a particular disease is limited. For instance, in the case of HIV there is no information on prevention. DOH does not provide a list of clinics where patients can get tested/treatment and counseling services. Nor does DOH connect the patients with other organizations that maybe providing HIV-related services.

*Functionality*

DOH keeps track of the number of users accessing information from its website. It displays the number of users that have read the articles posted on its website. It has an accessibility statement which provides an instruction for the user on how to use the website efficiently. It lists down key board short cuts and has quick navigation features. It also has a magnifier features for users that are visually

challenged. However, instructions may not be easily understood as the website uses English language only.

Using the UN-ASPA stages of e-government, DOH website is entering in the Interactive Stage of e-government with its log-in feature. However, it is with limited functionality as e-participation tools remain missing from the website. Online forums and chat rooms where users can exchange experiences regarding their health conditions and concerns are absent.

<b>Current e-Service Status</b>	
<b>Basic Information</b>	
e-Service Name	Health
Hosting Government Department or Ministry Name	Department of Health
Website Address	<a href="http://www.doh.gov.ph">www.doh.gov.ph</a>
Start Date	
<b>Contents</b>	
Is there e-Service providing women related issues (women's health, education, employment, sexual/domestic violence etc.) managed by ministry in charge of such issues?	Yes
What type of information/service the e-Service is providing currently? i) Health information (child, maternity, women care) ii) Education (women, child) iii) Sexual/domestic violence and abuses including prevention education iv) Job opportunity, vocational training opportunity v) Information on micro finance vi) Livelihood related information (agriculture, fishery, livestock industry etc.)	Sex disaggregated statistics on: Maternal mortality Live births  Information on: Safe motherhood HIV
Does the e-Service provide women related information (such as women NGO directories etc.)?	No
Does the e-Service provide information about job and bidding opportunities?	Yes, but limited to job vacancies and bidding opportunities in DOH
Does the e-Service feature women talent pool registration?	No
<b>Functions</b>	
Does the e-Service compile its user statistics?	Yes
Does the e-Service provide user guide (how to use the website)?	Yes, can be found in the accessibility statement

Does the e-Service provide e-newsletter service?	Yes
Does the e-Service provide audio and/or video files as well as documents?	No
Does the e-Service provide online forms/documents for downloading or electronic filing?	No
Does the e-service provide e-participation tools (feedback, polls, bulletin board, Q&A, Ombudsman, satisfaction survey etc.)?	No
Does the e-Service provide single window link for online petition, citizen proposal and information disclosure request?	No
Does the e-Service provide “Search” option (to easily navigate and obtain information)?	Yes
Does the e-Service provide contact directory for corresponding department/person in charge of the menus/issues and web manager?	Yes
Does the e-Service provide “Contact Us” option where you can directly contact web manager or person in charge and ask questions?	Yes
Does the e-Service provide security features such as log in or pin access to protect your personal information?	Yes
Does the e-Service provide mobile access option? (Can you access the web service with your cell phone?)	No
Does the e-Service provide information in multiple languages?	No
Does the e-Service provide access option for people with disabilities?	No

### *Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)*

The DSWD is the executive department of the Philippine Government responsible for the protection of the social welfare rights of Filipinos and to promote social development. DSWD function is not limited to policy making, it includes providing direct services through its various programs.

#### *Content*

DSWD presents in its website the details of its programs. DSWD programs specifically targets vulnerable groups of people, one of which is women in poverty and difficult circumstances. In the website, women can found information on DSWD center based programs for women. INA Healing Center which provides psychological support to bereaved mothers is one of them. One can also find in the website information on community based services for women wherein residential care services are given to women in difficult circumstances to enable them solve their problems and prepare them to eventual return to their families. Another program of DSWD where women are the primary beneficiary is the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program wherein it provides cash grants to poor households with children 18 years

and below provided that they fulfill the conditions set by the program. The website provides updates and status of implementation of the program by sharing the stories of women beneficiaries. It provides regular news update of women who became empowered through the programs.

Information on livelihood opportunities for women can be found in the website under the DSWD Sustainable Livelihood Programs (SLP). The SLP aims to capacitate and develop the entrepreneurial and socio-economic skill of poor households through income-generating opportunities and access to employment. The beneficiaries of the project are at times provided with occupational guidance and counseling, skills training and granting of cash assistance. Other women-related information can be found in DSWD e-magazine, Infolink, wherein it features women and their issues.

DSWD provides comprehensive information about its programs; however, one of its limitations is that it fails to provide step-by-step procedures on how to avail the above-mentioned services<sup>15</sup>. There is no information as well as to where and who they should contact to get the services. For instance, there is no list of shelters and their addresses in the website. It is assumed that women should coordinate to respective DSWD near them.

### *Functionality*

DSWD strives to make its website accessible. In the DSWD accessibility statement, it says that it is committed in making the website accessible for all users, including people with disabilities. The accessibility statement explains the websites lay-out and provide short cut function keys. However, the websites mainly uses English language, thus, it might not be accessible to Filipino women who can't read and comprehend the English language. It is not clear as well on how it is making its websites accessible for person with disabilities as for instance there are no audio materials or videos for persons who might have visual or hearing impairments.

DSWD strives as well to engage with the public. Though the website e-participation functions are limited e.g. no chat/forums or discussion boards, DSWD has a citizen interactive portal where people can report, ask questions by sending text messages. DSWD proactively seeks comments and suggestions of the general public by linking the website to social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter. As of August 8, 2014, DSWD has 39, 116 likes on Facebook. Twitter feeds are also stream in the website. DSWD is particularly concern with violence against women and their children (VAWC). It has a special SMS hotline where women can report. And for concerns about DSWD specific programs, it has an online grievance redress form where one can ask queries, raise concerns or complaints about of the program be it about the mode of implementation, the staff or anyone involved in the program.

Table

<b>Current e-Service Status</b>	
<b>Basic Information</b>	

<sup>15</sup> In the website FAQs one can requirements and procedures for adoption, travel clearance for minors and persons with disabilities privileges.

e-Service Name	Welfare Services
Hosting Government Department or Ministry Name	Department of Social Welfare and Development
Website Address	<a href="http://www.dswd.gov.ph">www.dswd.gov.ph</a>
Start Date	
<b>Contents</b>	
Is there e-Service providing women related issues (women's health, education, employment, sexual/domestic violence etc.) managed by ministry in charge of such issues?	Yes
What type of information/service the e-Service is providing currently? i) Health information (child, maternity, women care) ii) Education (women, child) iii) Sexual/domestic violence and abuses including prevention education iv) Job opportunity, vocational training opportunity v) Information on micro finance vi) Livelihood related information (agriculture, fishery, livestock industry etc.)	Livelihood related information Reporting incident of violence against women and their children
Does the e-Service provide women related information (such as women NGO directories etc.)?	No
Does the e-Service provide information about job and bidding opportunities?	Yes, but limited to job vacancies and bidding opportunities in DSWD
Does the e-Service feature women talent pool registration?	No
<b>Functions</b>	
Does the e-Service compile its user statistics?	No
Does the e-Service provide user guide (how to use the website)?	Yes
Does the e-Service provide e-newsletter service?	Yes
Does the e-Service provide audio and/or video files as well as documents?	No. The videos that can be found in the website are clips from news reports where DSWD department head is giving an interview.
Does the e-Service provide online forms/documents for downloading or electronic filing?	Yes
Does the e-service provide e-participation tools (feedback, polls, bulletin board, Q&A, Ombudsman, satisfaction survey etc.)?	No
Does the e-Service provide single window link for online petition, citizen proposal and information disclosure request?	No

Does the e-Service provide “Search” option (to easily navigate and obtain information)?	Yes
Does the e-Service provide contact directory for corresponding department/person in charge of the menus/issues and web manager?	Yes
Does the e-Service provide “Contact Us” option where you can directly contact web manager or person in charge and ask questions?	Yes
Does the e-Service provide security features such as log in or pin access to protect your personal information?	Yes
Does the e-Service provide mobile access option? (Can you access the web service with your cell phone?)	No
Does the e-Service provide information in multiple languages?	No
Does the e-Service provide access option for people with disabilities?	No

## Survey Result

### *Survey Methodology*

The research questionnaire was distributed to 100 Filipino women. Two primary criteria served as the basis in selecting women respondents of the questionnaire: first, they must be 20 years old and above, second, they must be internet users.

The survey was administered in two ways---face-to-face and online. In face-to-face method, the researcher approach individual women to answer the printed questionnaire. The researcher went to select government offices and institutions to administer the survey as well as to business centre particularly in the business process outsourcing companies. In online method, the survey questionnaire was distributed as attachment to email or in Facebook.

### *Profile of the Respondents*

The women who answered the survey are currently based in Metro Manila either working or studying. However, majority of them grew up in the provinces or with family e.g. parents still living in the province. Majority of the respondent are with regular employment, 81%, either working in private companies or government sector. The women are mostly between the ages of 20-30 years, 76%. They are well educated with 75% of them with bachelor degree and 17% of them with higher forms of education. Women income ranges from 186 USD to 3277 USD with majority of them having an income that falls between 251USD-750USD.

Single women account 78% of the total surveyed. Twenty-two (22%) are married with an average of two children. Single mothers account for four percent of women.

*Internet Usage and Accessibility*

Ninety-three percent (93%) of the women surveyed claimed they have an easy access to the internet, adding that they have multiple accesses to internet connection. Home is the primary place where women connect to internet, 85 %, followed by work 73%. Women disclose as well that they browse the internet daily, 48%, and others even said several times a day, 41%. The six percent (6%) who stated that they don't have an easy access to internet connect through internet/cyber café.

The two primary reasons women use the internet are for online communication, 81% and searching information, 75%. Most women spend time on social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, 85%, followed by personal websites such as blogs, 69% and 65% search engine.

Table

<b>Accessibility to the Internet</b>	
Responses	% of Total Responses
Yes	93
No	6
Null	1
Total	100

Table

<b>Place of Access</b>						
Responses	Home	Work	Internet/Cyber Cafe	Public Facilities (Telecenter, Library, etc.)	School	Others
% of Total Responses	85	73	9	2	2	1 Coffee shop

Table

<b>Frequency of internet usage</b>	
Responses	% of Total Responses
Rarely	0
Once a month	0
2-3 times a week	10
Daily	48
Several times a day	41
No answer	1
Total	100

Table

<b>Main purpose for using the internet</b>					
Responses	Searching information	Online Communication (i.e. email, chat)	Purchasing or trading of goods and services	Entertainment (i.e. music, video)	Others
# of Responses	75	81	2	30	4 (for work)

Table

<b>Types of websites visited</b>	
Responses	% of Total Responses
Government	12
Personal (e.g. blog, email, user-generated site)	69
School	5
Search Engine	65
Social Networking (e.g. Facebook, etc.)	85
Online Store	10
News	13
Others	3 (art stuff, bank online services, sports)

#### *E-service Usage*

The use of government website is not very popular with women with only 12% accessing them. There is also a very low level of awareness among them, 28%, regarding government websites providing women-related information or programs. Women's awareness of any government policy that support women's e-Service use is much lower at 8%. However, it has to be noted that albeit low level of awareness and e-service usage among women, majority deemed the development of e-Service can make their life better.

The following are the names of some government agencies accessed by women. Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and Department of Health (DOH) are the three government agencies mostly mentioned to be providing women-related information.

- ✓ Philippine Women Commission
- ✓ Department of Social Welfare and Development
- ✓ Department of Health
- ✓ Commission on Human Right
- ✓ Social Security System
- ✓ Department of Foreign Affairs
- ✓ Philippine Online Business Registry
- ✓ State Health Insurance
- ✓ Department of Labor and Employment
- ✓ Department of Trade and Industry



✓ National Bureau of Investigation

Table

<b>Awareness of any government websites providing women-related information or programs</b>	
Responses	% of Total Responses
Yes	28
No	71
Others	1
Total	100

Table

<b>Awareness of any government policy that support women's e-Service use</b>	
Responses	% of Total Responses
Yes	8
No	81
No answer	11
Total	100

Table

<b>Agreement to the idea that the development of e-Service in ones daily life can make life better</b>	
Responses	% of Total Responses
Strongly agree	38
Somewhat agree	49
Neither agree nor disagree	7
Somewhat disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0
No answer	6
Total	100

Table

<b>Needs of e-Service</b>		
Information	% of Responses generally useful	% of Responses crucial for use
Job opportunity	62	35
Talent pool	67	15
Micro-finance	56	37
Bidding opportunity	67	16
Livelihood related information (agriculture, fishery, livestock)	61	29

industry etc.)		
Vocational training opportunity	60	29
Domestic/Sexual violence or Abuse prevention	55	38
Child care	61	34
Maternity	61	33
Free health clinic	56	36
Immunization	56	38
Sanitation	58	32
HIV/AIDS	61	31
<b>Functions</b>	<b>% of Responses generally useful</b>	<b>% of Responses crucial for use</b>
Online registration	60	37
Multiple languages	59	29
Mobile access options (e.g. Applications)	50	39
e-News letter	71	15
Q & A	63	31
Bulletin boards	65	20
Ombudsman	68	14
Downloading of online forms/documents	46	41
Program sign-up	59	28
E-learning	54	34
Audio/Video materials	55	31
Sight/Hearing accessibility for disabled person	65	24

### 3.7.3. Future Directions of e-Services

#### Challenges and Opportunities

E-services promises much to Filipinos particularly to women. The Philippine government has shown its commitment to e-government through the development of a national strategic framework for e-government. However, the government is faced with several challenges that it must address towards the full implementation of e-government plan.

#### *Infrastructure and Cost*

Like any government infrastructure, e-government implementation entails cost. e-Government projects are, more often than not, long-term endeavors, requiring large capital infusion in software, hardware, infrastructure and training. The more complicated and sophisticated the kind of services the government wants to offer, the more expensive it is. Inadequate ICT infrastructure to support interconnectivity and wider public access to government information and services remains a problem in the Philippines.<sup>16</sup> There is a need to establish a high speed, secure and reliable networks connecting

<sup>16</sup> An update report on Information and Communication Technology Development in the Philippines as presented by Assistant Secretary Cecilia V. Reyes of Department of Transportation and Communications. <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/apcity/unpan006170.pdf>

different government agencies. Thus, a viable financing plan should be available, not only to jumpstart e-government; but one that consider its long-term financing options for the sustainability of the project.

### *Affordability and accessibility*

Lack of access to ICT is a constraint on e-government development. One of the challenges for the government is to provide an affordable internet access for all. Being an archipelagic country with 7,100 islands, the cost of internet infrastructure and connectivity is very expensive in the Philippines<sup>17</sup>. In terms of internet connection prices, fixed-broadband pricing in the Philippines is among the highest in the world<sup>18</sup>. Despite increasing trend in internet penetration, majority of the population remains without access or with consistent internet connectivity. Rural areas have limited access to broadband services. There is an inadequate or at times total lack of communal/collective public access to ICT facilities throughout the country for those without access to internet.

### *Privacy and Security*

A central challenge to e-government is the need to strengthen confidence in data privacy and security measures. Protecting the privacy of citizens and assuring them that their personal information will not be compromised is critical in e-government because this is the key to user trust. Without this assurance, no one will be prompted to use e-government services. Philippines has enacted the Data Privacy however, implementing rules and regulations have yet to be drafted. There is no governing body creating or assigned to oversee its implementation.

### *Digital and Gender Divide*

e-Government can make possible the delivery of basic human services that are more pressing and more primary to marginalized communities and sectors. ICT is a powerful tool for improving the quality and efficiency of government services, such as health and education, especially in places where resources are scarce and geography is an obstacle for communication. Disadvantaged groups often require interaction with government but are among the most to likely miss out on what e-government has to offer. ICT can create a digital divide that results not only in the marginalization of those individuals who do not have access to or the skill to use the technology, but also in reducing the ability of citizens to engage government in public debate. Unequal access is likely to limit and fragment e-government usage in the country. Notably, this affects individuals or sectors in society that are already marginalized to begin with, such as women. The situation of women and ICT in the Philippine reflects the global phenomenon of gender divide wherein women have been unreservedly associated with low Internet use and overall

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<sup>17</sup> ICANN vice president for global stakeholder engagement Christopher Mondini told reporters on the sidelines of a forum Friday that the Philippines' archipelagic geography was one major deterrent to improving Internet infrastructure. <http://negosentro.com/ph-internet-infrastructure-lags-behind-asean-neighbors/>

<sup>18</sup> Philippines ranked 95<sup>th</sup> in fixed broadband Internet tariffs-not only one of the most expensive in the world but also one of the most expensive in ASEAN region.

disinterest in technology. They are also underrepresented in their ownership and use of computers and mobile phones and access the Internet less frequently than men.

The rising social media and networking tools show some promising gender trends. Women demonstrate higher levels of engagement with social networking sites than men. Although they account 47 they consume and spend more time on it. Government can take advantage of this by linking its websites to social networking sites, blogging software and mobile technology to tap into the collective knowledge of society quickly and directly.

### *ICT Awareness and Capability*

Public awareness and support for e-government is critical for its success and its sustainability. A sound e-government must consider a citizen-centered approach wherein various stakeholders are consulted in the process. This also means that e-government is an end-user or demand driven service. While e-government may provide ease and convenience in the delivery of public services, many do not use e-government for various reasons. The survey of 100 women revealed some concerns with using government websites such as user-friendliness of the websites, delivery of updated information, concerns about privacy and security and lack of access. These concerns must be addressed first before to encourage citizens to use e-government.

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