

A Gender Analysis of the e-government Ecosystem: State of the Art Review, Philippines

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Abbreviations

APCICT	Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for
	Development
BAS	Bureau of Agricultural Statistics
BEANS	BAS Electronic Archiving and Network Services
BFAR	Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources
BLES	Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics
BNRS	Business Name Registration System
BOT	Build-Operate-Transfer
BPO	Business Process Outsourcing
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
CeC	Community e-Centres
CICT	Commission on ICT
CIRS	Crime Incident Reporting Systems
DBM	Department of Budget and Management
DFA	Department of Foreign Affairs
DOLE	Department of Labor and Employment
DOST	Department of Science and Technology
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
EDGE	Empowerment, Development and Gender Equality
e-FPS	Electronic Filing and Payment System
EGDI	E-government Development Index
FOI	Freedom of Information
GAD	Gender and Development
GFPS	Gender and Development Focal Point System
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IDI	ICT Development Index
IT-BPM	Information Technology and Business Process Management
ITECC	Information Technology and e-commerce Council
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
MCW	Magna Carta of Women
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MITHI	Medium-term Information & Communications Technology Harmonization Initiative
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
NCRFW	National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women
NEDA	National Economic Development Authority
OFWs	Overseas Filipino Workers
OWWA	Overseas Workers Welfare Administration
PCW	Philippine Commission on Women
PhilGEPS	Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System

PNP	Philippine National Police
POEA	Philippine Overseas Employment Administration
PPP	Public- Private Partnership
RA	Republic Act
SSS	Social Security System
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Math
TESDA	Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
TOP	TESDA Online Programme
TVET	Technical-Vocational Education and Training
TWC	TESDA Women's Centre
UHMIS	Unified Health Management Information System
UN-ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UPOU	University of the Philippines Open University
VAW	Violence against Women

1. Introduction

The International Telecommunication Union's 2014 ICT Development Index (IDI) ranked the Philippines 98th out of 166 countries surveyed¹. Within the Asia-Pacific region, the country was ranked 18/28. With regards to e-government, the 2014 UN E-government Development Index (EGDI) classified the Philippines as belonging to the middle EGDI group where e-government services are predominantly delivered through mobile devices. The Philippines ranked 95th out of 192 countries and stood 4th in Southeast Asia.² The country's e-government development is at an advanced level, despite its national income being below the regional average.³

The World Bank's 2012 report on 'Information and Communications for Development: Maximizing Mobile' estimated that there were 101 mobile cellular subscriptions for every 100 Filipinos, of which 96% were prepaid. In fact, in 2010, the mobile cellular network in the country already covered 99% of the population with 80% of households owning a mobile phone.⁴ More recently, in its 2014 country review, GSMA Intelligence reported that there were 50.9 million unique mobile phone subscribers (50% penetration) and 116.6 million unique connections (116% penetration).⁵ The 2014 State of the Broadband Report⁶ states that the percentage of individuals in the Philippines using the Internet is 37%,⁷ showing a 5% increase from the 2012 State of Broadband report.⁸

The Nielsen Report on the Digital Media Habits and Attitudes of Southeast Asian Consumers found that the Philippines is the only country in the Southeast Asian region with nearly equal rates of Internet use for women and men aged 15 years and above, with slightly higher rates of Internet use among women.⁹ It also observed that "a significant proportion of digital consumers (in the Philippines) mainly access the Internet through Internet cafés".¹⁰

The 2014 Nielsen's Pinoy Netizen Report showed that Internet penetration in the Philippines almost doubled in 4 years – to 52% in 2014 from 27% in 2010.¹¹ Mobile phones led this

¹ ITU (2014), Measuring the Information Society, https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/publications/mis2014/MIS2014_without_Annex_4.pdf, Retrieved September 2014.

² United Nations E-government Survey (2014), E-government for the future we want, http://unpan3.un.org/egovkb/Portals/egovkb/Documents/un/2014-Survey/E-Gov_Complete_Survey-2014.pdf, Retrieved 8 November 2015, pp 103.

³ Ibid

⁴ World Bank (2012), Information and Communications Development 2012, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTINFORMATIONANDCOMMUNICATIONANDTECHNOLOGIES/Resources/IC4D-2012-tables.pdf>, Retrieved September 2015.

⁵ GSMA Intelligence (2014), Country overview: Philippines growth through Innovation, <https://gsmaintelligence.com/research/?file=141201-philippines.pdf&download>, Retrieved 13 November 2015.

⁶ Broadband Commission (2014) State of the Broadband Report, <http://www.broadbandcommission.org/documents/reports/bb-annualreport2014.pdf>, Retrieved 07 December 2014.

⁷ United Nations E-government Survey (2014), *op. cit.*

⁸ The Broadband Commission for Digital Development, International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2012), The state of Broadband 2012: Achieving digital inclusion for all, www.broadbandcommission.org/documents/bb-annualreport2012.pdf, Retrieved 13 November 2015

⁹ Nielsen (2011), Digital Media Habits and Attitudes of Southeast Asian Consumers, *op. cit.* See Annex 3 for more details.

¹⁰ Nielsen (2011), Digital Media Habits and Attitudes of Southeast Asian Consumers, <http://www.grahamhills.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/71370794-The-digital-media-and-habits-attitudes-of-South-East-Asian-Consumers.pdf>, Retrieved 13 November 2015.

¹¹ Business World (2014), Mobile access boosts Philippine Internet Use, <http://www.bworldonline.com/content.php?section=Economy&title=Mobile-access-boosts-Philippine-Internet-use&id=89744>, Retrieved 13 November 2015.

exponential growth. In fact, Internet access through mobile phones increased to 35% in 2014 from 9% in 2012. The Pinoy Netizen Report also reported that with the growth of mobile broadband connectivity, the frequency of online visits, and the amount of time spent online, also increased, among the Filipino population. Out of the respondents this report surveyed, fifty eight per cent (58%) said they were online daily – a two-fold increase from the 2013 results.¹²

2. Evolution of e-government in the Philippines

The beginnings of e-government development can be traced to the creation of the National Computer Centre in 1971 to start automating the processes of the Philippine Government. Martial Law was declared in 1972 and was only lifted after the 1986 EDSA revolution.¹³ After the revolution democratic institutions started functioning and growth-oriented policies were implemented. The Philippines has seen six ICT strategic plans and six implementing agencies in over 20 years, as summarized in Table 1 below. These plans have often been introduced by the incoming government administrations, were a guiding influence on their implementation and the strategic thrust.

Table 1: Summary of National ICT Strategies and Policies¹⁴

Year/Implementing agency	National ICT Strategy/Vision	Action Agenda
1986-1992	1987 Constitution Article II “Communications and Information plays a vital role in nation building”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rebuild a democratic government through leveraging ICTs.
1992-1998 Implementing agencies: Department of Transportation and Communication Department of Trade and Industry National Telecommunications Commission	National Information Technology Plan for the 21 st Century (1997) Vision: Philippines as a newly industrialized country and Asia’s Knowledge Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop human capital (technical and professional) • Invest in research and development in high growth sector • Partner with industry and private sector • Expand telecommunications infrastructure for increased access and information sharing through the enactment of the Public

¹² Ibid

¹³ The EDSA or People Power revolution was a series of popular non-violent demonstrations in the Philippines from 1983 to February 22 to 25, 1986 culminating with the departure of then President Marcos, who has been in power through Martial Law since 1972, and the restoration of the country’s democracy. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People_Power_Revolution, retrieved September 2015.

¹⁴ Sherwin Ona et al (2012): “The Philippines: the Quest for Genuine e-Development”, in Hanna, N. K and Knight, P. T., eds., “National Strategies to Harness Information Technology”, Springer ; and the National Economic Development Authority (2012), eGovernment Master Plan, <http://www.slideshare.net/godiane/an-analysis-of-the-current-state-of-philippine-ict>, Retrieved September 2015.

Year/Implementing agency	National ICT Strategy/Vision	Action Agenda
		Telecommunications Policy Act of the Philippines of 1995, for market liberalization.
1998-2001 Implementing agency: Information Technology and Electronic Commerce Council	e-Philippines Strategy Government Information Systems Plan ¹⁵ (2000) Vision: Improvement of the quality of living through ICT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide human resource for IT services (BPOs) • Promote ICT diffusion in government, community development and education • Pass the e-commerce Act • Institutionalize the Government Information Systems Plan
2001 - 2010 Implementing agency: Commission on Information and Communications Technology	Philippine Strategic ICT Roadmap ¹⁶ (2006-2011) Vision: Philippines as an Information Society empowered through ICT Philippine Digital Strategy ¹⁷ (2011-2016) Vision: Philippines empowered by ICT in a connected and networked society to promote economic and social growth, as well as efficient delivery of public services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Push for ICT diffusion through development of relevant content and access • Develop infrastructure for cyber-services (business development) • Develop human capital • Institutionalize the eGov Fund • Push for the creation of a Department of ICT and a national broadband network • Encourage transparent government/open governance • Develop ICT industry and business innovation • Promote digital inclusion • Promote digital literacy
2010 - 2016 Implementing agency: Department of Science	E-government Master Plan ¹⁸ Vision: "A digitally empowered and integrated government that	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve transformative e-Governance by enabling the achievement of good governance goals including

¹⁵ National Information Technology Council (2000), Government Information Systems Plan, <http://www.ncc.gov.ph/files/gisp.pdf> Retrieved 13 November 2015.

¹⁶ Commission for Information and Communications Technology, Philippines (2006), Philippine ICT Roadmap, <http://www.unapcict.org/ecohub/resources/philippine-ict-roadmap>, Retrieved 13 November 2015.

¹⁷ ICT Office (2011), Philippine Digital Strategy, <http://www.ncc.gov.ph/files/PDS.pdf>, Retrieved 13 November 2015

¹⁸ I. gov. ph website (date of upload unavailable), http://i.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/eGovMasterPlan_Final-Version.pdf Retrieved 13 November 2015

Year/Implementing agency	National ICT Strategy/Vision	Action Agenda
and Technology- and Information and Communications Technology Office	provides responsive and transparent online citizen-centered services for a globally competitive Filipino nation.”	operational efficiency, transparency and accountability, enhanced citizen’s engagement, and effective delivery of public services.

2.1 Emergence of E-government

The administration under Corazon Aquino was the first to recognize the potential of ICTs in furthering the democratization agenda. It was during this period that the importance of communication and information in nation-building was constitutionally acknowledged. The new constitution that was ratified in 1987 introduced the following provisions on information and communication:

Article 2 “[...] recognizes the vital role of communication and information in nation building”, Sections 10, 11 and 19 of Article 12 requires 60% Filipino ownership of public utility corporations and associations and provides for the power of government to regulate foreign investment and monopolies;¹⁹ and Sections 10 and 11 of Article 16 instructs that mass media companies shall be “wholly-owned and managed” by Filipinos and that Congress shall regulate monopolies in mass media when required.²⁰

2.2 Development of telecommunications and information infrastructure to develop the Philippines as Asia’s Knowledge Centre

The 1990s saw two key developments in e-government, in particular embraced by the Ramos administration, which were:

- a. The enactment of the Public Telecommunications Policy Act of the Philippines of 1995 (Republic Act 795), which liberalized the telecommunications sector and encouraged private ownership of telecommunication services and market competition in the business environment. This legislation contributed to an increase in tele-density and mobile cellular telephone subscription and provided a “solid base for mobile and land-based telecommunication networks”. However, a 2008 assessment pointed to “massive underutilized infrastructure” and a concentration of services in urban areas.²¹

¹⁹ Philippine Constitution 1987, <http://www.gov.ph/constitutions/the-1987-constitution-of-the-republic-of-the-philippines/the-1987-constitution-of-the-republic-of-the-philippines-article-xii/>, retrieved September 2015.

²⁰ Philippine Constitution 1987, <http://www.gov.ph/constitutions/the-1987-constitution-of-the-republic-of-the-philippines/the-1987-constitution-of-the-republic-of-the-philippines-article-xvi/>, retrieved September 2015.

²¹ Lallana and Soriano (2008), Towards Universal Internet Access in the Philippines, [http://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu/documents/30652696/INTEL - Towards Universal Internet Access in the Philippines-Research.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJ56TQJRTWSMTNPEA&Expires=1447419080&Signature=yfyb3ny7WwwUIQzI7wDI5zmjOyk%3D&r](http://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu/documents/30652696/INTEL_-_Towards_Universal_Internet_Access_in_the_Philippines-Research.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJ56TQJRTWSMTNPEA&Expires=1447419080&Signature=yfyb3ny7WwwUIQzI7wDI5zmjOyk%3D&r)

- b. The launch of the National Information Technology Plan for the 21st Century (IT21) in 1997, which aimed for every business, government agency, school, and home in the Philippines to have access to Information Technology (IT) by 2000. In addition it aimed for IT use to be pervasive in daily life by 2005, and for the country to become a Knowledge Centre for Asia by 2010.²² It directed all government agencies to have Internet connectivity; encouraged outsourcing of IT projects within government agencies to promote ICT growth; stimulated the growth of the Philippine web; and ordered the development of the Philippine Information Infrastructure framework. This effort has been quite successful. Since 2000, the Business Process Outsourcing and Offshoring (BPO) industry has been a significant driver of economic growth, and this is regarded as one of the reasons for the country's resilience during the 2008 global financial crisis.²³ The BPO and IT sectors are regarded as the "most important job generators" as the industry employs a million of Filipino professionals, particularly in the call center and outsourcing businesses.²⁴

2.3 Developing a citizen-centric e-government strategic framework

The Estrada administration introduced the Government Information Systems Plan in the year 2000.²⁵ It recognized ICT as a catalyst for developing new and better services for the public and provided a foundation for creating an "on-line government". According to Ona et al (2012)²⁶, the Plan is a citizen-centric e-government strategic framework that empowers local government units to provide digital connectivity, develop and deploy web applications and content for citizens, and develop human capital. The key objectives for e-government at the local level were envisioned as: generating revenue, promoting local entrepreneurship, providing adequate delivery of public services, mobilizing/engaging citizens, and promoting transparency and accountability. During this period, the Republic Act 8792 (Electronic Commerce Act of 2000) was enacted in order to strengthen and fulfill the Government Information Systems Plan. The Information Technology and e-commerce Council (ITECC) was created to streamline the efforts of various ICT-related government agencies to "provide effective and focused leadership in the implementation of ICT policy."²⁷

[esponse-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3DTowards%20Universal%20Internet%20Access%20in%20the%20.pdf](#), Retrieved 13 November 2015.

²² Philippines National Information Technology Council (1997), Philippines National Information Technology Plan for the 21st Century (IT21), <http://www.unapcict.org/ecohub/resources/philippines-national-information-technology-plan-for-the-21st-century-it21>, Retrieved 13 November 2015.

²³ Paderanga, C. W. (2011), Private Sector Assessment: Philippines, <http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/institutional-document/32479/files/psa-philippines-2011.pdf>, retrieved 16 November 2015

²⁴ IT and Business Process Association of the Philippines, <http://www.ibpap.org/media-room/ibpap-news/880-speech-of-ibpap-chairman-danilo-reyes>, Retrieved September 2015.

²⁵ National Information Technology Council (2000), Government Information Systems Plan, <http://www.ncc.gov.ph/files/gisp.pdf>, Retrieved 13 November 2015.

²⁶ Sherwin Ona et al (2012): "The Philippines: the Quest for Genuine e-Development", in Hanna, N. K and Knight, P. T., eds., "National Strategies to Harness Information Technology", Springer; and the National Economic Development Authority (2012), eGovernment Master Plan, <http://www.slideshare.net/godiane/an-analysis-of-the-current-state-of-philippine-ict>, Retrieved September 2015

²⁷ Information Technology and eCommerce Council (ITECC), <http://www.itecc.gov.ph/>, Retrieved 13 November 2015

2.4 Harnessing technology to promote good governance and digital empowerment

The next phase of e-government development under the Arroyo administration recognized the growth potential of the thriving ICT, e-commerce and Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) sectors, and made developing ICT a priority.²⁸ ITECC proposed the creation of the E-government Fund (eGov Fund) to fund mission-critical, high-impact, and cross-agency strategic ICT projects of government.²⁹ The detailed evaluation criteria used by the eGov fund to select projects were: their potential to contribute to good governance, enhance service delivery, promote social benefits, as well as financial, technical, and operational feasibility, and nature of deliverables and costs involved.³⁰ Among the projects supported by the eGov Fund under the Arroyo Administration were the purchases of vote counting machines as part of the modernization of the Commission on Elections, computerization of the Bureau of Internal Revenue, the establishment of the Philippine Business Registry, the creation of the local government portal and the e-Gov portal, and Community e-Centres.

The Commission on ICT (CICT) replaced ITECC in 2004 and became the “primary policy, planning, coordinating, implementing, regulating, and administrative entity of the executive branch of Government that (would) promote, develop, and regulate integrated and strategic ICT systems and reliable and cost-efficient communication facilities and services”.³¹ It was also responsible for administering the eGov Fund. It drafted the Philippine Digital Strategy for 2011-2016 towards the end of the Arroyo administration with a vision of a “digitally empowered, innovative, globally competitive and prosperous society where everyone has reliable, affordable and secure information access in the Philippines... A government that practices accountability and excellence to provide responsive online citizen-centered services...” It recognized that previous e-government policies were gender blind and redefined the purpose and benefits of ICT for the empowerment of women and men and included plans of action to narrow the digital divide.³²

PPPs were given a lot of importance in the country's e-government strategy, and in fact, “A thriving knowledge economy through public-private partnerships” was one of the key elements of the vision outlined in the Philippine Digital Strategy 2011-2016. However, such arrangements have not been free from tensions, as the case of the electronic passport project in Box 1 demonstrates.

²⁸ The other priorities of this administration included budget reform, providing universal education, automated elections, improving transportation and digital infrastructure, terminating hostilities with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the New People's Army, providing electricity and water to all, providing opportunities for livelihood and generating 10 million jobs, and decongesting Metro Manila.

²⁹ Department of Science and Technology, Republic of the Philippines, What is E-government Fund (EGF)?, <http://icto.dost.gov.ph/what-is-e-government-fund-egf/>, Retrieved September 2015

³⁰ The qualifying criteria also included the project's consistency with established ICT plans and frameworks, its citizen-centricity, the potential multiplier effect, and an assessment of whether it would work across agencies. See De Rivera, T. D (date unknown), E-government in the Philippines based on the 10 point agenda of President G. M. Arroyo, http://www.cicc.or.jp/japanese/kunibetsu/pdf_ppt/Philippines-E-government_Implementation_in_the_Philippines_Rev10.pdf, Retrieved 13 November 2015.

³¹ Republic of the Philippines (2004), Executive Order No. 269 – Creating the Commission on Information and Communications Technology, <http://www.ncc.gov.ph/files/eo269.pdf>, Retrieved 11 November 2015.

³² ICT Office (2011), Philippine Digital Strategy, *op. cit.*

Box 1. Partnership management issues in PPPs – The case of the electronic passport project

The electronic passport project of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) was controversial at the start. It was supposedly a project under Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) Law, but the DFA terminated its contract with the BCA International Corporation, a Philippine-Thai company that won the right to manufacture machine-readable passports and visas. The termination of the contract was due to the company's inability and financial incapacity to implement the project after five years. This decision was upheld and deemed legal by the Supreme Court, allowing the DFA to implement its e-Passport Project with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. The Supreme Court stated that "government can terminate a BOT agreement, even without fault on the part of the project proponent." However, Migrante International, a migrant rights group has highlighted that the e-Passport project still has unresolved issues such as the alleged overpricing of laminates for the passport by PHP50.

2.5 Harmonizing e-government ecosystem through e-government master plan and promotion of open data

Under the Aquino administration, the CICT was placed under the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) in 2011 and renamed the ICT Office³³. In 2012, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), the ICT Office, the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA), along with civil society groups, drafted the e-Government Master Plan.

The ICT Office is responsible for implementing ICT Ecosystem Development, the use of TV White Space, transforming community e-Centers into techno-entrepreneur centers, e-government harmonization, developing digital competencies of public service employees, establishment of Next Wave Cities to support ICT industry growth, providing support for ICT-enabled start-ups, and strengthening the position in high-growth segments of the value chain in various outsourcing sectors,³⁴ in addition to implementing the Government Information Systems Plan and administering the eGov Fund.

The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) has made it mandatory for government agencies to submit Information Systems Strategic Plans³⁵ with their budgets, as part of the Medium-term Information & Communications Technology Harmonization Initiative (MITHI), an e-government and ICT support initiative aiming to ensure interoperability across ICT-related resources, programmes, and projects across government. It launched the Budget ng Bayan³⁶ in 2012, a portal which provides information on the budget cycle, and released the National

³³ Republic of the Philippines (2011), Executive Order No. 47 - Reorganizing, renaming and transferring the Commission of Information and Communications Technology and its attached agencies to the Department of Science and Technology, directing the implementation thereof and for other purposes, <http://www.pcoo.gov.ph/issuances/issuances-EO/EO-47.pdf>, Retrieved 14 November 2015.

³⁴ Department of Science and Technology, Republic of the Philippines, Programs and Projects, <http://icto.dost.gov.ph/major-programs-and-projects/>, Retrieved 14 November 2015

³⁵ National Computer Centre (2003), NCC Memorandum Circular Number 2003-02, <http://www.ncc.gov.ph/files/NCC20MC-2003-02-ISSP-July31.pdf>, Retrieved 14 November 2015.

³⁶ <http://budgetngbayan.com/>, Retrieved 14 November 2015.

Budget Circular 542 reiterating compliance for the display of the Transparency Seal³⁷ on websites of national government agencies³⁸.

The DBM is part of the Open Data Task Force, which “aims to make national data searchable, accessible, and useful, with the help of the different agencies of government, and with the participation of the public”.³⁹ It has engaged government agencies to submit data inventories and sets.

The programmes outlined in the various roadmaps developed under various administrations do have the potential to increase women’s uptake of e-government, if digital literacy and connectivity issues are addressed. However, the country struggles in implementing e-government laws and policies in a manner that can enable specific, targeted actions for producing tangible, improved outcomes for women.⁴⁰ There is a need for the ICT Office to work with the Philippines Commission on Women, and other gender-focused governmental agencies and civil society organizations to address the needs of women and ensure their participation – as the following section on a gender analysis of e-government demonstrates.

3. Examining e-government through a gender lens

3.1 Women's status in the Philippines: An overview

In the UN Gender Development Index 2014, that provides a gendered analysis of a country's human development attainments in the areas of health, education and command over economic resources, the Philippines ranks 17 of 78 countries⁴¹. The 2014 Global Gender Gap Report of the World Economic Forum ranks the Philippines 9 out of 142 countries⁴², with high ratings for educational attainment, health and survival sub-indices, but low for political empowerment and economic participation categories.

Other statistics testify to the achievements of the country in women's education. In its 2014 report on the progress towards MDGs, the National Economic Development Authority observed that in secondary education, girls consistently outnumber boys.⁴³ The percentage of women in higher and professional education is also increasing. For example, in the school year

³⁷ The transparency seal requires that information about the agency’s mandates and functions; names of its officials with their position and designation, and contact information; annual reports; approved budgets and corresponding targets; major programmes and projects; beneficiaries as identified in the applicable special provisions; status of implementation and evaluation reports; annual procurement plan, contracts awarded and the name of contractors/suppliers/consultants, is put out

³⁸ Department of Budget and Management, Republic of the Philippines, Transparency Seal, http://www.dbm.gov.ph/?page_id=4273, Retrieved 14 November 2015.

³⁹ <http://data.gov.ph/about>, Retrieved 14 November 2015.

⁴⁰ Asian Development Bank (2013), Gender Equality in the Labour Market in the Philippines, <http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/31194/gender-equality-labor-market-philippines.pdf>, Retrieved 14 November 2015.

⁴¹ UNDP Human Development Index Report 2014, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/table-5-gender-related-development-index-gdi>, Retrieved September 2015.

⁴² World Economic Forum (2014), The Global Gender Gap Index 2014, <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2014/rankings/>, Retrieved 14 November 2015.

⁴³ NEDA (2014), Fifth Progress Report on Millennium Development Goals 2014, <http://www.gov.ph/2014/08/22/5th-progress-report-millennium-development-goals/>, Retrieved 16 November 2015.

2009-2010, 57.44% of graduates were female. Similarly, in the same year, the percentage of professionally licensed women was 63.7%.⁴⁴ However, access to education is not translating into enhanced economic and political participation.

The Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics-Department of Labor and Employment (BLES-DOLE) placed the total number of employed women in the Philippines in 2014 at 15.3 million, a figure that was lower than the total male employment by over 8.2 million.⁴⁵ Women are also over-represented in the Business Process Outsourcing industries and in unskilled and unprotected jobs (both in the overseas and domestic economies).⁴⁶

In the area of women's political empowerment, the lack of women's meaningful representation and participation in elected office and other decision-making bodies; and lack of electoral mechanisms guaranteeing gender balance in political and decision-making positions, continue to be critical concerns.

With regards health, the Fifth Report on Millennium Development Goals (2014) of the National Economic Development Authority stated that maternal mortality ratio in 1990 was 209 per 100,000 live births but the figure has risen to 221 by 2011, after reaching a low of 162 in 2006.⁴⁷ The performance lag in the health sector can be attributed to the inadequate number of health professionals, the inadequate facilities in rural and marginalized areas, and the influence of the Catholic Church in creating a public discourse discouraging the use of artificial contraceptives.⁴⁸

3.2 Key milestones in the institutionalization of the gender equality agenda in the Philippine government

The National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) was established in 1975. The gender equality principle was enshrined in the 1987 Philippine Constitution and, shortly after, the "Women in Nation Building Act" was passed, which promoted the integration of women as full and equal partners in development and nation building.⁴⁹ The NCRFW became the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) in 2009, the lead advocate for government-wide

⁴⁴ Shahani, L. R. (2015), Engendering development: the Status of Women in the Philippines, <http://www.philstar.com/opinion/2015/03/02/1428959/engendering-development-status-women-philippines>, Retrieved 16 November 2015

⁴⁵ Philippine Statistical Authority 2015, Current Labour Statistics -September 2015, Table 9, <http://www.bles.dole.gov.ph/PUBLICATIONS/Current%20Labor%20Statistics/STATISTICAL%20TABLES/PDF/Tab9.pdf>, Retrieved 16 November 2015.

⁴⁶ Philippine Statistics Authority (2014), One in every two OFWs is an unskilled worker, <https://psa.gov.ph/content/one-every-two-female-ofws-unskilled-worker-results-2013-survey-overseas-filipinos>, Retrieved 16 November 2015; Philippine Commission on Women. Women Empowerment, Development and Gender Equality 2013-2016; Foundation for Media Alternatives (2013), Baseline Reporting of VAW/eVAW and its reporting system in the Philippines, http://www.genderit.org/sites/default/upload/philippines_baseline_report_full_text_0.pdf, Retrieved 16 November 2015.

⁴⁷ National Economic Development Authority (2014), Fifth Progress Report Millenium Development Goals, http://www.neda.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/PH-5TH-MDG-PROGRESS-REPORT_Nov-4-ver.pdf, Retrieved 05 December 2015.

⁴⁸ "Philippines: Maternal mortality rates 'not making sufficient progress'" (2009), IRIN, March 24, <http://www.irinnews.org/report/83609/philippines-maternal-mortality-rates-not-making-sufficient-progress>, Retrieved September 2015.

⁴⁹ Republic Act No. 7192 (1992), http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/population/womenrights/philippines_women_92.pdf, Retrieved 16 November 2015

gender mainstreaming, “the strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies, programmes and projects in all social, political, civil, and economic spheres so that women and men benefit equally”.⁵⁰ The Gender Focal Point System (GFPS) was also introduced. This is a system where a person is identified as a gender focal “in all government instrumentalities tasked to catalyze and accelerate gender mainstreaming.”⁵¹ The highlights of the gender strategies and policies from the Marcos Administration onward are presented in Annex 1.

The Gender and Development Budget Policy of 1992 allocates at least 5% of the budget of national and local agencies for gender and development programmes. However, the limited number of PCW personnel makes monitoring the implementation of this policy a challenge.⁵² In 2014, the PCW started using the Gender Mainstreaming Monitoring System to track gender mainstreaming trends in government. It automates the Gender and Development Plan and Budget and the Gender and Development Accomplishment Report. Many national government agencies and local government units still need to be oriented to the use of the system.

The Philippine government has a strong legal and policy framework to protect and promote women's rights. Aside from the Women in Nation Building (1992) and the Magna Carta of Women (2009), other important legislation for gender equality are the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipino Act, 1995; Anti Sexual Harassment Act, 1995; Anti Rape Law, 1997; Anti-trafficking in Persons Act, 2003; and Anti Violence Against Women and Children Act, 2004.⁵³

Currently, some key priority areas being addressed in policy and programming, which address e-government with regards to furthering the women's empowerment and gender equality agenda are:

(a) the unequal participation of women in the formal labor market: The 2011-2016 Plan of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) has identified the need to address gender equality issues in work and work places; provide labor market intermediation aided by technology to increase geographic, occupational and social mobility; and provide social protection that is critical for equity; among its key priorities.⁵⁴ DOLE also plans to increase ICT literacy competency to promote a globally competent and flexible workforce.⁵⁵

(b) Information for agricultural workers and women farmers: As agriculture is a sector of the economy that employs a large number of women, the extension programmes of the Department

⁵⁰ Philippine Commission on Women and National Economic and Development Authority (2011) <http://www.neda.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/GFP-Memorandum-Circular-2011-1.pdf>

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² The PCW is authorized 63 plantilla positions and only 60 have been filled up. Commission on Audit (2012) http://www.coa.gov.ph/phocadownloadpap/userupload/annual_audit_report/ngas/2012/National-Government-Sector/Office-of-the-pres/PCW_ES2012.pdf, Retrieved 16 November 2015.

⁵³ Asian Development Bank (date unknown), Gender Analysis Summary – Country Partnership Strategy Philippines 2011-16, <http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/linked-documents/cps-phi-2011-2016-ga.pdf>, Retrieved 16 November 2015.

⁵⁴ Department of Labor and Employment(2011), The Philippine Labor and Employment Plan 2011-2016, <http://www.dole.gov.ph/fndr/bong/files/PLEP-26%20April%20version.pdf>, Retrieved 19 November 2015.

⁵⁵ Department of Labor and Employment, The Philippine Labor and Employment Plan 2011-2016, *op. cit.*

of Agriculture such as Farmers' Contact Centers, and the Farmers Information Technology Services Centers where infomeidiaries assist farmers to access information related to agriculture, fisheries and forestry over the Internet, are also critical for women. However, the extent to which women farmers utilize these services is not clearly known at this point.

(c) Protecting the rights of women in low-skilled, low-paid, and unprotected jobs in the informal sector: The PCW's Women's Empowerment, Development and Gender Equality Plan identified the difficulties experienced by women in the informal sector and in the micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs).⁵⁶

(d) Inclusive health services: The Department of Health crafted the National Objectives for Health 2011-2016, which uses ICT in health programmes and administration. The e-Health Strategic Framework Plan 2013-2017 outlines its programmes for better service delivery including improving the Telemedicine programme. The expansion of the coverage of Philippine Health Insurance and the implementation of the PhilHealth Electronic Claims Systems streamlines key processes like membership and benefits for primary health care in all government and private hospitals and rural health units.⁵⁷

Since 2007, the Philippine Commission on Women has been working towards institutionalized gender-mainstreaming efforts in Reproductive Health service delivery and population development planning at the national and local level.⁵⁸

4. E-service delivery

4.1 Key milestones in e-service delivery

The National Computer Centre issued Memorandum Circular 2003-01 to guide national and local government agencies, on the provisions of Section 27 of the e-Commerce Act which mandates that filing, creation, retention, submission of documents, issuance of permits and receipts, and other transactions of governments should be performed using electronic data messages or electronic documents.⁵⁹

In 2003, 373 of the 399 national government agencies had websites. In 2002, local government units that had web presence were the then 79 provinces, 115 cities, and 966 of the 1,496 municipalities, while state universities and colleges had 100% web presence.

⁵⁶ NEWC (2014), Gender and ICT in the Digital Age, NWECL Leader Seminar Report.

⁵⁷ Department of Health and Department of Science and Technology (2013), Philippines eHealth and Strategic Framework Plan, www.doh.gov.ph/sites/default/files/Philippines_eHealthStrategicFrameworkPlan_February02_2014_Release02.pdf, Retrieved 16 November 2015.

⁵⁸ Philippine Commission on Women, Gender mainstreaming and institutionalization in Reproductive Health (RH) service delivery and Population Development Planning, <http://www.pcw.gov.ph/unfpa/gender-mainstreaming-rh-service-delivery-popdev-planning>, Retrieved 18 November 2015.

⁵⁹ National Computer Centre (2003), Guidelines on compliance to the E-commerce Act and stage two and three of the UN-ASP A five stages of e-government, <http://www.elib.gov.ph/results.php?f=subject&q=National+Computer+Center+Memorandum+Circular+No.+2003-01+--+August+20%2C+2003>, Retrieved 18 November 2015

A list of online services available on the websites of national government agencies as of February 2015 is provided in Annex 2. However, the level of web presence of most local government units is still in the initial stages of maturity. This means that on these websites, citizens are only able to get basic information, facility for email communication with departments, and download required forms. Websites are still unable to provide citizens with interactive and integrated features. The National Computer Centre reported in 2011 that 75% of 126 cities had websites, though the majority was in stage 1 or 2 of UN-ASPA e-government development.⁶⁰ The indicators given by the National Computer Centre for these stages are in Annex 3.

The Department of Interior and Local Government launched the Full Disclosure Policy Portal⁶¹ to make it easier for local government units to comply with the Department's Full Disclosure Policy. Compliance with this policy is a criterion for them to be awarded the Seal of Good Housekeeping along with the accounting and auditing standards of the Commission on Audit. In 2014, the Seal of Good Housekeeping was replaced with the Seal of Good Local Governance, which expanded the award's criteria from good financial housekeeping to a more comprehensive set including disaster preparedness, social protection, business-friendliness and competitiveness, peace and order, and environmental management.⁶²

E-government policies and services are drafted and issued at the national level. National government agencies have implemented their own information systems based on their preferred standards. The e-government Master Plan has indicated the importance of standardizing commonly used hardware and software applications to enable interaction between government services. The Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS) intends to reform the government procurement system and increase transparency in transactions, and the Electronic Filing and Payment System (e-FPS) was implemented for more efficient tax payments.

According to the Online Service Index of the UN 2014 E-government Development Index, the Philippines ranks 95th out of 143 countries (a rating of 0.4803), with most online services in the emerging and enhanced stages.⁶³ Most government agencies provide a link to other government websites and related e-services, if available. The government is planning to connect related e-services directed toward serving Overseas Filipino Workers. It also seeks to integrate access to statistical information and data that are currently being produced by multiple national government agencies.

⁶⁰ National Computer Centre (2003), Guidelines on compliance to the E-commerce Act and stage two and three of the UN-ASPA five stages of e-government, *op. cit.*

⁶¹ Full Disclosure Policy Portal, Department of the Interior and Local Government, Republic of the Philippines, <http://fdpp.blgs.gov.ph/>

⁶² Department of the Interior and Local Government (2014), 2014 Seal of Good Local Governance, http://www.dilg.gov.ph/PDF_File/issuances/memo_circulars/DILG-Memo_Circular-2014326-7960dfc5e3.pdf, Retrieved 18 November 2015.

⁶³ United Nations E-government Survey (2014), E-government for the future we want, *op. cit.*

4. 2 Women's inclusion in e-service delivery arrangements

All online government services are open to both women and men. In addition, there are some services that particularly target women. They include:

(a) The Technical Vocational Education and Training programme offered by the TESDA women's centre: The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority in the Philippines (TESDA) was set up in the 1990s to “provide direction (and shape) policies, programmes and standards towards quality technical education and skills development”. TESDA has set up 15 Regional Centres and 45 Provincial Training Centres in the country, one among which is the TESDA Women's Centre (TWC). The TWC is TESDA's lead training institution for mainstreaming Gender and Development in TVET and sustaining the integration of GAD components into existing technology-based training programmes. In 2013, TWC piloted a blended learning programme, combining traditional teaching-learning methods with online training. The idea underpinning this initiative was that blended learning will result in more effective learning outcomes when compared to online training for marginalized women, who constitute the majority of trainees in TWC programmes. ICT mediated interfaces were combined with classroom interactions, peer support networks, and guidance and mentorship from trainers.

(b) The Conditional Cash Transfer Programme of the Department of Social Welfare and Development: The Pantawid Familyang Pilipino Program⁶⁴ is a digitally-enabled conditional cash transfer programme with health and education-related conditions for the participating households implemented by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Government of Philippines. Women beneficiaries make up more than 82% of the programme grantees. Women are also a large proportion of the programme's frontline intermediaries - 'Parent Leaders' - who act as mediators between the programme management and beneficiaries, and whose task is to facilitate grievance redress and track beneficiary compliance in their neighbourhoods.

4. 3 Assessment of gender gaps in e-service delivery

The inclusion of the women's rights agenda is still taking a back seat in e-service delivery, though there are online services addressing women's rights issues.

Despite the gender mainstreaming policies of government, efforts have not deeply penetrated the e-government sector, and as a result, government personnel have varying levels of appreciation for gender concepts and issues. And some emerging issues such as online VAW are not adequately covered in e-government capacity-building. Though there are courses offered by agencies such as the National Computer Centre and the Career Executives Service Board in the area of building e-government leadership, most of these courses are silent on women's empowerment and gender equality issues in e-government. In fact, some trainers

⁶⁴ Roughly translated in English as “Bridging Program for the Filipino Family”.

interviewed for this research insisted that ICT is gender neutral or that it is difficult to integrate gender in ICT courses.

5. Digital Literacy

The promotion of digital literacy has been a priority for successive governments but it has not been systematically implemented or fully institutionalized. The introduction and sustainability of the initiatives depends largely on local and national leadership. This explains the uneven levels of investment in digital literacy efforts at the local level and in educational institutions

The Department of Education has implemented ICT initiatives like the Learning Resource Management and Development System⁶⁵ (an online library containing free teaching-learning materials available for download) and ICT literacy programmes for primary and secondary education. However, there is no update or assessment in relation to these programmes yet.

Currently, the Department of Education does not offer digital literacy in all public schools. According to an observation from Philippine Statistical Authority (2014), "Some public schools are privileged to have a computer laboratory with 15 to 20 computer units. However, with the current population of students in schools run by the government, not all are guaranteed an opportunity to apply what the computer teacher has taught them, since the student-computer ratio is below the requirement. What is worst is the fact that those schools in far flung areas have no computers at all." The Department of Education reports that Science, Technology and Engineering Curriculum programmes are being offered through regional Science High Schools and through special science classes in schools offering science, technology, and engineering courses. In these classes, students go through rigorous training in Math and Science subjects.⁶⁶ The challenge for government is to sustain and improve these initiatives.

Within the Department of Education is the Bureau of Alternative Learning System, which provides free education to out-of-school youth, including those with disabilities, in their Community Learning Centers. Depending on the strength of local government leadership, these learning centers may offer basic computer education or digital literacy courses. Davao City, for instance, offers basic computer literacy courses to youth with disabilities, out-of-school youth, indigent youth, and adult women who are part of the ten tribes living in the city.⁶⁷

In 2011, the ICT Office, in partnership with Telecenter.Org, the University of the Philippines, the Philippine CeC Network, Intel Philippines, telecommunication companies and other non-government organizations, launched the Philippine Digital Literacy for Women Campaign, a programme that offers free digital literacy training to women nationwide. The goal was to teach 10,000 women in marginalized areas on how to use computers and the Internet for enhancing

⁶⁵

An online library containing downloadable and free teaching and learning materials. See Department of Education (2014), DepEd is committed to enhancing the quality of basic education, <http://www.gov.ph/2014/07/26/deped-remains-committed-to-enhancing-the-quality-of-basic-education/>, Retrieved 16 November 2015.

⁶⁶ Department of Education (2014), Robotics Olympiad victors showcase winning creations, <http://www.deped.gov.ph/stories/robotics-olympiad-victors-showcase-winning-creations>, Retrieved 18 November 2015.

⁶⁷ <http://www.davaocity.gov.ph/davao/unesco/ict.pdf>, Retrieved 16 November 2015.

their informational access, networking, and development of skills for socio-economic opportunities to improve their lives.⁶⁸

Despite these efforts, the implementation of digital literacy remains inadequate. Initiatives are still insufficient to enabling citizens to acquire capacities to find meaningful information and network in digital spaces relevant to their critical needs. Weak policy direction and leadership in relation to the appreciation and use of ICTs aside, governmental focus has been mainly on providing or procuring hardware and digital devices.

6. Connectivity infrastructure

The network infrastructure in the Philippines is driven by the private sector and is dominated by two telecommunication companies. According to ASEAN DNA, the Philippines has the slowest Internet speed in Southeast Asia at 3.6Mbps with a very low adoption rate.⁶⁹ The lowest DSL subscription rate is PhP999 (USD22) and the average monthly family income (2009) is PhP10,750.⁷⁰ As an alternative, Filipinos go to Internet cafés and Community e-Centers (when present) to access the Internet and online government services.

7. Online citizen engagement

Citizens have taken to social media to react on issues such as reproductive health, misuse of pork barrel funds⁷¹ and Freedom of Information. The social media platforms most commonly used by Filipinos are Facebook and Twitter. Facebook has 30 million users in the Philippines, accounting for 30% of the total population and 90 per cent of the total online population in the country.⁷² Twitter has 9.5 million users in the Philippines⁷³.

There is no government-wide policy on the use of social media or other forms of digital engagement. But many government agencies have accounts on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Agencies respond to questions on services with varying levels of timeliness. Issuing policies on the use of social media is left to the discretion of the head of the respective agency. Some public officials and civil servants use their personal social media accounts.⁷⁴ There are also

⁶⁸ PCW (2012), Local Government Initiative for Women: Tanauan Local Government Brings Computer Literacy at Women's Doorsteps, http://www.pcw.gov.ph/sites/default/files/documents/resources/GWP_magazine_2012_August_issue.pdf, Retrieved 16 November 2015.

⁶⁹ "PHL Internet slowest in ASEAN: report" (2014), GMA News Online, April 20, <http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/357617/scitech/technology/phl-Internet-slowest-in-asean-report>, Retrieved September 2015.

⁷⁰ PLDT Plan999, <http://pldthome.com/dsl/promos/family-sized-sale>, Retrieved September 2015.

⁷¹ In the [Philippines](#), the term "pork barrel" is used to mean funds allocated to the members of the [Philippine House of Representatives](#) and the [Philippine Senate](#) to spend as they see fit without going through the normal budgetary process or through the Executive Branch. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pork_barrel#Philippines

⁷² Socialbakers, Philippines Facebook page statistics, <http://www.socialbakers.com/facebook-statistics/philippines>, Retrieved September 2015.

⁷³ Montecillo, Paolo (2012), "Philippines has 9.5M Twitter users, ranks 10th", *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, August 9, <http://technology.inquirer.net/15189/philippines-has-9-5m-twitter-users-ranks-10th>, Retrieved September 2015.

⁷⁴ For Example, President Aquino's speechwriter, Assistant Secretary Mislang, complained about the wine being served during an ASEAN function in Vietnam on Twitter. See <http://www.ellentordesillas.com/2010/11/01/tweets-are-forever/>; or the Twitter war on the Aquino administration's lack of preparedness for the tropical storm Falcoln. See <http://www.interaksyon.com/article/6749/valte-mitos-magsaysay-trade-barbs-on-twitter-over-pnoys-disaster-preparedness-or-lack-of-it>

government agencies that do not allow civil servants to use social media during office hours and have no social media presence.

8. Existing legislative and policy frameworks on e-Governance

There is no Philippine law that guarantees the right to Internet access. The e-Commerce Act of 2000 (Republic Act 8792)⁷⁵ provides for the recognition and use of electronic commercial and non-commercial transactions and documents, and penalties for unlawful use. There are no legislative frameworks regulating the delivery of digitally enabled services or the openness of the technical architecture of the underlying e-services or citizen charters guaranteeing responsiveness and accountability of e-government services, and specifying redress mechanisms.

Philippines Congress passed Republic Act 10173 (Data Privacy Act of 2012), which provides the legal framework of protecting digitalized personal information of individuals held by government and the private sector and the creation of a National Privacy Commission. The guidelines for implementation of this law are unavailable and the National Privacy Commission is yet to be constituted.

The Cybercrime Prevention Act of 2012 (Republic Act 10175) is a law drafted to support the Data Privacy Law. The law defines cybercrime and provides for the prevention, investigation, suppression and the imposition of penalties. Other laws that pertain to right to privacy and confidentiality include the Commonwealth Act No. 591 establishing the Bureau of Census and Statistics in 1940,⁷⁶ Republic Act 1161 (The SSS Law),⁷⁷ Republic Act 1405 (Bank Secrecy Law),⁷⁸ Republic Act 4200 (Wire Tapping Law),⁷⁹ Republic Act 9372 (Human Security Act),⁸⁰ Republic Act 8505 (Rape Victim Assistance),⁸¹ and Republic Act 7610 (Anti-Child Abuse Law).⁸² New laws have been enacted to address e-VAW such as : Republic Act No. 9995 (Anti-Photo and Video Voyeurism Act of 2009), Republic Act No. 9775 (An Act Defining the Crime of Child Pornography, Prescribing Penalties Thereof and for other Purposes), and the aforementioned Republic Act No. 10175 (Cybercrime Prevention Act of 2012).

In the absence of a Freedom of Information Law, Section 7 Article III of the Bill of Rights of the 1987 Constitution ensures that “[a]ccess to official records and documents and paper pertaining to official acts, transaction, or decisions as well as to government research data used as basis of policy development, shall be afforded the citizens, subject to such limitations as may be provided by law.” The Freedom of Information Bill (FOI), an integral element of the administration’s Good Governance and Anti-Corruption Plan 2012-2016, pursues “greater transparency, accountability, and citizen participation in governance.”⁸³ Section 7 of the Bill of

⁷⁵ <http://www.pctc.gov.ph/initiatv/RA8792.htm>, Retrieved September 2015

⁷⁶ <http://census.gov.ph/content/commonwealth-act-no-591>, Retrieved September 2015

⁷⁷ http://www.lawphil.net/statutes/repacts/ra1954/ra_1161_1954.html, Retrieved September 2015

⁷⁸ http://www.lawphil.net/statutes/repacts/ra1955/ra_1405_1955.html, Retrieved September 2015.

⁷⁹ http://www.lawphil.net/statutes/repacts/ra1965/ra_4200_1965.html, Retrieved September 2015.

⁸⁰ https://www.senate.gov.ph/republic_acts/ra%209372.pdf, Retrieved September 2015.

⁸¹ http://www.lawphil.net/statutes/repacts/ra1998/ra_8505_1998.html, Retrieved September 2015.

⁸² http://www.lawphil.net/statutes/repacts/ra1992/ra_7610_1992.html, Retrieved September 2015.

⁸³ www.gov.ph/foi/, Retrieved September 2015.

Rights recognizes the right of the people to information on matters of public concern.⁸⁴ An FOI Law would bolster the Code of Ethics of government officials and the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act.

In 2014, the Philippine Senate passed its version of the FOI Bill. The FOI Bill is awaiting its second reading in the House of Representatives, as of March 2015. President Aquino has said that the passage of the FOI Bill is a priority in his final year in office.⁸⁵ Like many other crafted policies the proposed law is silent on gender issues and considerations.

There are bills in Congress that seek to address and fill in the current gaps of the e-government ecosystem (Annex 4). Pending legislation on the right to Internet access, capacity building and digital literacy, the institutionalization of a national government agency dedicated to ICT, e-government, and e-services, will enable the e-government strategy to continue the inclusive and interoperability framework that is being carried out by the e-government Master Plan. Another key legislation that is pending is a bill creating the Department of Information and Communications, which is part of the 2015-16 congressional agenda of the Aquino administration. The bill is expected to establish a more stable and predictable policy and business environment.⁸⁶

9. Conclusions

(a) Strategic vision on women's inclusion and gender equality in policy frameworks: The Philippine government recognizes the challenge of inclusive growth and of making public services, including the online services of government, inclusive. Recent e-government policies, the Philippine Digital Strategy and the e-government Master Plan align and harmonize policies recognizing the role of ICTs for women's empowerment and outline plans of action to narrow the digital and gender divide. Robust scaffolding to the e-government policies and strategies is provided by the country's advanced policies on gender equality and women's rights. The government's gender mainstreaming strategy has been institutionalized through the enactment of the Magna Carta of Women in 2009. Gender mainstreaming is a strategy that establishes gender-responsiveness as a key norm required to promote good governance. The Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Magna Carta of Women focuses on supporting, aligning, and consolidating existing efforts of government agencies including ICT and e-government strategies and activities like "Bottom up Budgeting", that seek to further gender equality.

(b) Critical challenges in e-government development: An analysis of performance of e-government in the Philippines demonstrates slow growth resulting from unclear e-government structure and leadership. As highlighted in the Medium Term ICT Harmonization Initiative (MITHI) of the e-government Master Plan (referred to in Section 2. 4), the key goals of e-government efforts are strengthening collaboration, interoperability, integrated services, and

⁸⁴ The 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines, Article III, Bill of Rights, <http://www.gov.ph/constitutions/the-1987-constitution-of-the-republic-of-the-philippines/the-1987-constitution-of-the-republic-of-the-philippines-article-iii/>, Retrieved September 2015

⁸⁵ Calica, Aurea (2015), "Palace: Noy committed to passage of FOI bill", The Philippine Star, July 30, <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2015/07/30/1482519/palace-noy-committed-passage-foi-bill>, Retrieved September 2015.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

openness in governance. Similarly, the Philippine Digital Strategy (2011-16) and the e-government Master Plan 2011-16 both consider the establishment of infrastructure and the development of required (governance) applications using interoperable and inclusive frameworks – to collaborate and share services among government agencies at national and local levels – as a starting point for e-government. Despite this stated vision, the government's historical mode of functioning in silos continues. In the past, e-government and governance reform strategies only reached start-up stages and found it difficult to progress because of political and structural barriers and the lack of supportive policies and laws, as discussed in the previous section.

(c) Gender gaps in e-government: Officials involved in e-government policy and programme development do not have strong gender perspectives. As a result, ICT policy development tends to become a largely gender-neutral exercise. This is particularly true for infrastructure policy frameworks, which tend to be urban-centric, exclusionary and gender blind, leaving behind marginalized sectors and vulnerable groups in remote rural areas with limited digital infrastructure and connectivity.

10. Recommendations

(a) The ICT Office must work closely with the PCW and other gender-focused stakeholders to address the needs of women and ensure that their concerns are considered from the planning stages of an e-government project until its full implementation. The PCW, through its Focal Point System, must re-double its efforts to ensure gender mainstreaming in e-government. It would be best if a permanent government agency that oversees ICT programmes in the country was present to ensure the continuous and uninterrupted effort of promoting gender in e-government, among others.

(b) Gender perspectives should be incorporated in Internet and ICT policy development by enhancing women's representation in decision-making structures in e-government, and encouraging the direct participation of poor and marginalized women in policy development processes.

(c) Gender concerns, especially women's right to Internet access and digital literacy, should be addressed through e-government laws and policies, as well as in their implementation at the national and local level. Most importantly, strategic attention to growth and sustainability of gender responsive initiatives in e-government is required.

(d) Gender sensitization training should be provided to e-government officials at all levels – those in leadership positions as well as intermediaries at the last mile in e-service delivery systems. The training should include enhancing capabilities to undertake gender sensitive messaging when publicizing e-service delivery arrangements.

(e) Gender-disaggregated and open citizen data systems (keeping in mind Gender Equality Guidelines) should be set up in government agencies to enable gender-grounded policy and programme design. The availability of government data that is easily understood but does not

oversimplify may improve citizen engagement on key political and social issues facilitated by social media.

(f) Government should identify socio-economic groups that are at the risk of being left out from the benefits of connectivity, as well as locate underserved or areas not yet served, and design e-government programmes for with them in mind to ensure universal access. It is important to understand the patterns of use of ICT devices and the Internet to increase the relevance of e-government interventions.

(g) It is necessary to provide adequate budget and strengthen concerted action at national and local levels to successfully implement digital literacy initiatives. ICTs in public school systems are an important strategy for building the digital literacy of the population. Policy development should recognize the interconnections between digital literacy, availability of affordable connectivity and infrastructure. Digital literacy trainings for women and girls should encourage them to pursue STEM careers. Further, the sustainability of these programs should be addressed, as they tend to be demanding, when it comes to financial and human resources.

(h) Mobile-based services, especially information services critical to marginalized groups, are an important future frontier for e-government development. The country has 99% mobile coverage⁸⁷ and in Metro Manila alone, 45% of mobile phone users use their phones to browse the Internet.⁸⁸

(i) Women's access to justice should be ensured, not just offline but also online, not merely by focusing on protectionism and criminalization, but through concrete programmes to prevent VAW in cyberspace.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Trading Economics retrieved November 2015 <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/philippines/population-covered-by-mobile-cellular-network-percent-wb-data>. See also GSMA Intelligence Analysis (December 2014) Country Overview: Philippines Growth through Innovation <https://gsmaintelligence.com/research/?file=141201-philippines.pdf&download>

⁸⁸ PhilStar Global (July 2, 2013) "More Filipinos use cellphones as 'mobile computer' study" retrieved 2015

<http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2013/07/02/961059/more-filipinos-use-cellphones-mobile-computers-study>

⁸⁹ Vichel Juguilon and Liza Garcia (2014) "Philippines Country Report" Presentation for NWECC Seminar for Gender Equality Officers and Women Leaders in the Asia Pacific Region; Retrieved 2015 <http://www.nwec.jp/jp/data/7090dd55d2fda2576782f9aca19e355f.pdf>

Annex 1: National Gender Strategy and Policies under each Government Administration from 1975

Administration/Year	Gender Strategy/Policy	Action Agenda
Marcos 1975	Presidential Decree No. 633 Establishment of Advisory body to the President and the Cabinet on policies and programmes for the advancement of women mandated "to review, evaluate, and recommend measures, including priorities to ensure the full integration of women for economic, social and cultural development at national, regional and international levels, and to ensure further equality between women and men."	Organize women into a nationwide movement Conduct policy studies and lobbying for the issuance of executive and legislative measures concerning women Establish a clearinghouse and information centre on women; Monitor the implementation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).
Aquino (Corazon) 1986-1992	1987 Constitution Republic Act 7192 (Women in Nation Building)	Mainstream Gender Strengthen Institutions through gender mainstreaming
Ramos 1992-1998	Philippine Plan for Gender Responsive Development 1995 - 2015 Passage of the Gender and Development Budget in annual General Appropriation Act	Build capacity of Government Agencies Implement 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action on the UN 4th World Conference on Women Allocate a minimum of 5% of total appropriation for gender and development programmes and projects Strengthen the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women as the coordinating body on policies affecting women
Ejercito-Estrada 1998-2001	Executive Orders 208 and 268 Advocacy for development of programmes and projects that benefit women and enable them to participate in the decision making process.	Strengthen Institutions Advocate for the development of programmes and projects that benefit women and enable them to participate in the decision making process
Macapagal-Arroyo 2001-2010	Support in the poverty alleviation agenda	Advance and protect human rights, promote women's economic empowerment and gender-responsive governance Promote women's rights and empowerment ⁹⁰

Chapter IV of the Magna Carta of Women include the following Rights and Empowerment: Right to protection from violence including those committed by the state; incremental increase in the recruitment and training of women in fields that provide services for women victims of gender related offices; protection and security in situations of armed conflict and militarization; mandatory human rights and gender sensitivity training for all government personnel involved in the protection and defense of women against gender based violence; establishment of VAW desk in every barangay; right to protection and security in times of disasters, calamities, and other crisis situations especially in all phases of relief, recovery,

	<p>Republic Act 9710 (Magna Carta of Women (2009))</p> <p>Magna Carta of Women Implementing Rules and Regulations (2010)</p>	<p>Review and, when necessary, amend and/or repeal existing laws that are discriminatory to women within three (3) years from the year that Magna Carta comes into effect.</p> <p>Implement rules and regulations called on the different branches and agencies of the government to act on the provision.</p> <p>The Magna Carta of Women is a comprehensive women's human rights law that seeks to eliminate discrimination against women by recognizing, protecting, fulfilling and promoting the rights of Filipino women, especially those in the marginalized sectors.</p>
<p>Aquino (Benigno III) 2010 - 2016</p>	<p>Joint Philippine Commission on Women and National Economic Development Authority Memorandum 2011-01 and PCW Memorandum Circular 2014-01</p> <p>Submission of Policy Issuances on the Creation, Reconstitution and or Strengthening of the Gender and Development Focal Point System (GFPS) and Updated Directory of GFPS Members</p> <p>Joint Philippine Commission on Women-Department of Interior and Local Government-Department of Budget and Management-National Economic Development Authority Joint Memorandum Circular 2013-01</p> <p>PCW Memorandum Circulars on the preparation of FY2012-2016 budgets and Gender and Development Accomplishment Reports</p> <p>Republic Act 10354 (The Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act of 2012)</p>	<p>Provide guidelines for the creation, strengthening and institutionalization of the Gender and Development Focal Point System</p> <p>Provide guidelines on the localization of the Magna Carta of Women</p> <p>Provide PCW issuance on the preparation of annual Gender And Development Plans and budgets and Gender And Development Accomplishment reports</p> <p>Provide for a national policy on responsible parenthood and reproductive health.</p> <p>Use of gender-fair language as a first benchmark of gender sensitivity; encourages the use of non-sexist language in all official documents, communications and issuances aligned with the RA 9710</p> <p>The Women's Empowerment, Development and Gender Equality (EDGE) Plan operationalizes the Magna Carta of Women (MCW) and fulfils the President's Social Contract in</p>

rehabilitation and construction efforts including protection from sexual exploitation; right to participation and representations including in the civil service, development councils, planning bodies, international bodies, political parties, private sector, and other policy and decision-making bodies; right to equal treatment before the law; right to equal access and elimination of discrimination in education, scholarships and training; right to equal participation in sports, non-discriminatory and non-derogatory portrayal of women in media and film; right to non-discrimination in employment in the field of military, police and other similar services; right to health –comprehensive health services and education on all aspects of women's health; right to special leave benefits; right in all matters relating to marriage, family relations; Rights of Marginalized Women-right to food security and productive resources; right to localized, accessible, secure and affordable housing; right to decent work; right to livelihood, credit, capital and technology; right to representation and participation in policy-making and decision-making bodies; right to access to information regarding policies on women, including programmes, projects and funding outlays that affect them; right to social protection; recognition and preservation of cultural identity and integrity; and peace and development.

PCW Memorandum Circular No. 2014-06 Promoting the Use of Gender Sensitive Language in the Drafting and Review of Legislative Measures
PCW Memorandum Circular 2014-02: Implementation of the Women's Empowerment, Development and Gender equality plan 2013-2016 (Women's EDGE Plan)

promoting of equal gender opportunity in public policies and programmes. Guides the mainstreaming efforts in government agencies to fulfil obligations in the MCW. Inform the preparation of Gender and Development Plans and budgets of agencies as it highlights priority gender issues and strategies for inclusion in Gender and Development plans and budgets.

Source: Philippine Commission on Women

**Annex 2: List of online services available in the websites of national government agencies as
of February 2015**

Category	Online Service/National Government Agency
Health	<p>PhilHealth Insurance (http://www.philhealth.gov.ph/services/)</p> <p>The Department of Health Intranet: http://home.doh.gov.ph/intra/index.php</p> <p>The Unified Health Management Information System (UHMIS) (http://uhmis.doh.gov.ph/) for data collection, processing, reporting and use of information as necessary to improve efficiency and effectiveness in providing health services.</p>
Agriculture	<p>Philippine Food Security Information System (http://philfsis.psa.gov.ph/index.php/id/1) provides statistical indicators on monthly rainfall, food production index, food available per capita, consumer price index, dietary nutrients and tropical cyclone frequency.</p> <p>Bureau of Agricultural Statistics archiving system (BEANS) (www.bas.gov.ph/)</p> <p>Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) Certification and Accreditation online services (www.bfar.da.gov.ph/)</p> <p>E-Learning for Agriculture and Fisheries (www.tca.edu.ph/; ca.uplb.edu.ph/; e-extension.gov.ph/elearning/)</p>
Documents	<p>The Online Application for Basic Certificates (birth, marriage, and death certificates) of the National Statistics Office (NSO) (https://www.ecensus.com.ph/Secure/OnlineApplication.aspx)</p> <p>The system enables citizens to apply for copies of certificates, payment processing and delivery of these certificates, which are basic requirements for any job, travel, educational, banking, and housing application purposes. The NSO incorporates sex disaggregation of the population in its statistical information as part of its gender mainstreaming strategy.</p> <p>Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) passport application: http://passport.com.ph/set-appointment</p>
Employment	<p>PhilJobnet (http://www.phil-jobnet.dole.gov.ph/Default.aspx) is a free job search, matching, and referral system service for Filipino job seekers provided by the DOLE. The system expedites the recruitment process of job seekers, employers and recruitment agencies to reduce cost, time, and effort. The system reports to have accumulated 630,000 jobs posting from employers and 164,515 registered users of the system for the first year of their new and enhanced operation.</p>
Overseas Employment	<p>The balik-manggagawa online processing system (https://www.bmonline.ph/) by the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) allows individuals to apply and obtain their overseas employment certificate online</p> <p>Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) (http://www.owwa.gov.ph/) information and downloadable forms; 24/7 Hotlines Landline and Mobile numbers</p> <p>Links directing one to OFW services are available in (www.gov.ph) These services are OFW services and procedures, POEA e-registration, Registration of land-based applicants, Registration of seafarers, Documentation of land-based names hires, Hiring and placements of government-hired workers,</p>

	Documentation of Workers-on-leave , Filing/docketing of cases , Legal assistance and License requirements for recruitment agencies
Online Training and Scholarship Programmes	<p>TESDA Online Programme (TOP) (http://e-tesda.gov.ph) offers Information Technology Courses with the intention of making technical education more accessible to Filipino citizens through the use of the Internet. This programme was created for students, out-of-school youth, unemployed adults, workers and professionals, and Overseas Filipino Workers who would like to take courses at their own pace.</p> <p>University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU) (www.upou.ph) Scholarship portals: Scholarships from CHED, DOST scholarship programmes</p>
Business and Trade	<p>The Department of Trade and Industry encourages women's economic empowerment through livelihood participation and enrollment in micro enterprises. The Business Name Registration System's (BNRS) website, (www.bnrs.dti.gov.ph) offers online registration or early renewal of business name registration and payment of fees for sole proprietors of micro and small businesses.</p> <p>Links on how to put up a business in the Philippines is provided in (www.gov.ph). These services are Registering a business name, Registering a partnership or corporation, Trademark registration, Investing in the Philippines, and Public-Private Partnership programmes</p>
Social Security	The Philippine Social Security System (SSS) (https://www.sss.gov.ph/) offers online services for employer and employee registration, to track status of membership and contributions, and online bank payments to SSS.
Housing	<p>Home Development Mutual Fund: Mandatory Monthly Savings for Employees https://www.pagibigfundservices.com/ccpayment/</p> <p>On the Philippine Government portal, www.gov.ph, the Housing & Land Use Regulatory Board forms is included under housing.</p>
Citizen Engagement	<p>Open Data Portal</p> <p>Some government agencies and local government units have social media accounts that allow citizens to provide feedback.</p>
Welfare and on-line grievance	<p>The Department of Social Welfare and Development (www.gov.ph) is the welfare agency that provides welfare services especially for displaced individuals. It is responsible for the nationwide Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programme, which is locally called "Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps)". The programme caters to many marginalized families. One of the programme's goals is women's empowerment through better access to health, education, and livelihood. In the implementation of the programme, the use of ICT is crucial in planning, implementation, and monitoring. The use of ICT is introduced in the education of children, youth and community leaders, while this is also much used for programme monitoring.</p> <p>The Grievance reporting system: 4psreklamo@gmail.com; Pamilya and text hotline 0918-9122813 and the 4Ps Facebook accounts are one of the ways to get immediate feedback from the clients/beneficiaries of the programme. Likewise the communications exercise is also an opportunity for the clients to file complaints and express their thoughts about the programme. Consequently this measure is also able to improve the system and provide</p>

	<p>risk mitigation measures for the programme. One of the interesting design features of the CCT programme is the internal and external convergence strategy of the DSWD. The strategy enables the CCT beneficiaries to avail and gain access to all the DSWD programmes that cater to the marginalized sector that they have reached and other government services designed to empower the poor.</p> <p>Adoption for Filipinos is a link put together by the government website www.gov.ph and the DSWD.</p>
Transportation, Travel and Tourism	<p>Land Transportation Franchising Regulatory Board (http://ltfrb.gov.ph/main/getinvolved#sthash.u5OdRmuU.dpbs) allows people to file complaints, provides online verifiable confirmation of the availability of certificates, stickers, etc.</p> <p>Metro Manila Development Authority (http://www.mmda.gov.ph/) provides traffic updates and livestreaming. It is available as a mobile application. Information on the train systems and motor vehicle registration are provided on www.gov.ph along with information on tourism and travel clearance for minors.</p>
Security	<p>PNP mobile and hotlines for reporting a crime: http://pnp.gov.ph/portal/index.php/present-projects/75-news/2101-report-a-crime-to-the-pnp</p> <p>PNP Crime Incident Reporting Systems (e-CIRS)</p> <p>Commission on Filipino Overseas-Text mobile numbers for human trafficking situation</p>
Information on natural disasters	<p>Nationwide Operational Assessment of Hazards-noah. dost.gov.ph/</p> <p>Typhoons-pagasa. dost.gov.ph/</p> <p>Active Volcanoes-http://www.phivolcs.dost.gov.ph/</p>
Individual and Business Taxes	<p>Bureau of Internal Revenue www.bir.gov.ph</p> <p>www.gov.ph provided links on how Community tax certificate (sedula), Tax Identification Number (TIN) and BIR tax forms and e-filing system.</p>
Civil Service	<p>For Government Service Insurance System members, www.gsis.gov.ph.</p> <p>Information on Career Service Examinations, Services related to eligibility and Ombudsman clearance were provided at www.gov.ph</p>

Annex 3: Stages of e-government description and indicators of the National Computer Centre⁹¹

Stage	UN-ASPAs description	Indicators
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<p>One: Emerging Web Presence</p>	<p>Serve as a public information source Provide static information on the government Find FAQs Provide contact information</p>	<p>Telephone Numbers Postal Address Email Address Services Offered Mandate, Organizational Structure, FAQs, Related RAs</p>
<p>Two: Enhanced Web Presence</p>	<p>Provide access to regularly updated specific information Presence of a central government homepage that may act as a portal to other department sites Enable downloading of useful documents or ordering online Enable search features, e-mail and accessible areas for comments</p>	<p>Updated in the past 1.5 months Forms are available (html, word, sometimes zip, pdf) Search function/Site Map Message Board/Feedback Form Newsletters or Publications/Purchase Information</p>
<p>Three: Interactive Web Presence</p>	<p>Presence of a national government website that frequently acts as a portal Enable users to search specialized databases Enable downloading and submitting forms online Emergence of secure sites and passwords</p>	<p>Downloadable Forms (pdf, zip) Specialized Databases On-Line Forms Submission Interactive Elements (Chatroom/Forum/Discussion Board) User Log-in and Password (internal use or public)</p>
<p>Four: Transactional Web Presence</p>	<p>Enable users to conduct complete and secure transactions online Allow users to customize a portal in order to directly access services based on specific needs and priorities Secure sites</p>	<p>Public Use Log-in and Password (NOT exclusive for internal use) Secure On-Line Payment Confirmation of request (e-mail confirmation / acknowledgment receipt) Display of Security and Privacy Policy</p>
<p>Five: Fully Integrated Web Presence</p>	<p>Provide all services and links through a single portal No defined demarcation between various agencies and departments All transactional services offered by government will be available online</p>	<p>All Department Information and Services may be accessed through the Department Portal Cohesive interface covering all attached agencies, concerned agencies and all services Frontline Services are fully-transactional online User may customize his Department Portal page Search Engine Encompasses attached websites</p>

Annex 4: Bills in the 16th Congress pertaining to E-government

Topic	Filed bills
Magna Carta on Internet Freedom	Senate Bill 53 (Sen. Santiago) Senate Bill 1091 (Sen. Aquino) House Bill 1100 (Kabataan Party List)
Capacity Building and Digital Literacy	Senate Bill 297 Special Computer Literacy and Information Technology Education Programme Senate Bill 1331 Preparing teachers for Digital Age Learners Act Senate Bill 1382 Adult Education and Information Programmes for Workers and Employees Senate Bill 2124 ICT Education Act of 2014 Senate Bill 1145 Workforce Internet Training Senate Bill 2490 Cybersecurity Education Enhancement Act House Bill 295 An Act Strengthening the Information and Communication Technology Training Programme for Basic Education Teachers Providing Certain Policies and Mechanisms for its Implementation
Formation of a Department of ICT	Senate Bills proposing for the formation of a Department of Information and Communications Technology Senate Bill 358 (Sen Legarda) Senate Bill 818 (Sen Trillanes) Senate Bill 1234 (Sen Ejercito) Senate Bill 2144 (Sen Guingona) Bills in the House of Representative proposing for the formation of a Department of Information and Communications Technology House Bill 937 (Magdalo) House Bill 1516 (Teodoro) House Bill 1815 (Evardone)
E-Services	Senate Bill 497 Transaction Windows and E-Services Act Senate Bill 801 Local Management Information System Act of 2013 Senate Bill 1510 Frontline Services in Government Agencies Senate Bill 1660 Convergence Policy Act of the Philippines of 2013

Annex 4: Methodology

Web search

International Telecommunication Union (<https://www.itu.int>)

Asia and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (www.unapcict.org)

Broadband Commission (www.broadbandcommission.com)

UNPAN (www.unpan.org)

GSMA (www.gsma.com)

Philippine Commission on Women (www.pcw.gov.ph)

Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (www.tesda.gov.ph)

Department of Social Welfare and Development (www.dswd.gov.ph)

ICT Office-Department of Science and Technology (www.icto.dost.gov.ph)

National Computer Center (www.ncc.gov.ph)

Philippine Statistics Authority (www.psa.gov.ph)

Philippine Center on Transnational Crime (www.pctc.gov.ph)

Department of Education (www.deped.gov.ph)

National Economic Development Authority (www.neda.gov.ph)

Elibrary (www.elib.gov.ph)

Philippine Senate (www.senate.gov.ph)

Philippine House of Representatives (www.congress.gov.ph)

Official Gazette (www.gov.ph)