

National Telecommunications Commission

Status Report on **NTC EDGE PROJECT**

NTC Electronic Data Governance & Evaluation Project

BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

NTC recognized the need to contribute to the national government's effort to integrate ICT in government processes for responsive, effective, efficient, and as enablers of good governance in compliance with RA 8792 Electronic Commerce Act and RA 11032 also known as "Ease of Doing Business".

NTC designed and initiated the Electronic Data Governance and Evaluation (EDGE) System Project. The project is anchored on the various processes and sub-processes identified in the Citizen's Charter of the Commission in compliance to the Anti Red Tape Act (ARTA) Law of 2007 or RA 9485.

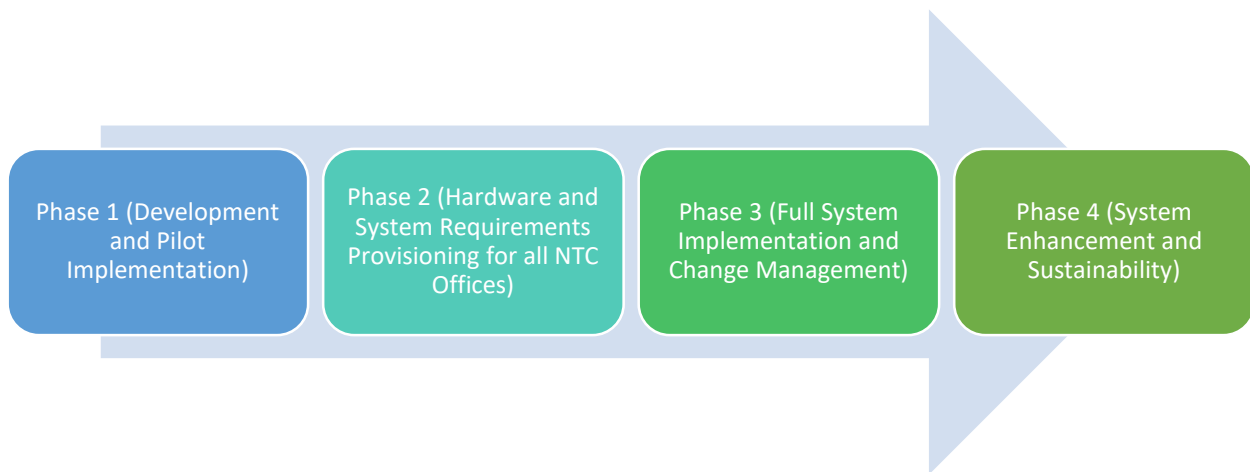
Besides, the COVID-19 pandemic has opened the eyes on the manner of service delivery. The adoption of an online licensing (automated system) is a good response to serve the public under the "new normal" and beyond. The said project is expected also to limit face-to-face transactions, eliminate possibility of the exercise of personal discretion, and optimize revenue collection efforts for a corruption-free system.

Thus, the objectives of the Project are the following:

1. To establish an on-line licensing system in line with Republic Act 8792 or the Philippine Electronic Commerce Law.
2. To attain the goals and objectives of Executive Order 605 which promotes Quality Management System (QMS).
3. To connect all NTC Offices through video conferencing system promoting a cheaper, lesser alternative way of handling meetings (Initial: CO & R7 & R10).
4. To link all NTC Offices electronically for better file/information handling, sharing and others to avoid, among others, the issuance of various authorizations to applicants with pending or decided cases leading to a more transparent transaction.
5. To maximize economies of scale due to common infrastructure, content provisions and others.
6. To enhance data gathering and retrieval for better industry intervention, policy development and others.

7. To lessen the prevailing information asymmetry.
8. To enhance collection effort of NTC.
9. To lessen face-to-face transaction and discourage too much discretion.
10. To serve as portal of IP telephony (VoIP) of the organization, thus cheaper alternative to conventional long distance telephone services; and
11. To keep at pace with the world's best practices.

EDGE is an information system project envisioned in four (4) various phases:



PHASE 1

- Focuses on System Development and Pilot Implementation
- Pilot Implementation: NTC Region 10 & Region 7
- System Development: Licensing, Permitting, Certification, Application Evaluation, etc.

PHASE 2

- Hardware & System Requirements Provisioning for Central & Regional Offices (Provision of Kiosks and Video Conference in the Central & Regional Offices)

PHASE 3

- Full System Implementation and Change Management

PHASE 4

- System Enhancement and sustainability

PROJECT STATUS

1. Initially, Dir. Teodoro D Buenavista of NTC Region X and Dir. Jesus Laureno of NTC Region 7 were the proponents of the project “**NTC Electronic Data Gathering/Governance & Evaluation System with VOIP Network**”. But it should be noted that Engineer Buenavista has been pursuing the project since 2006 or after obtaining a degree of Master in Public Policy from the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore.
2. The goal of the project is to automate the issuance of various licenses being processed by the National Telecommunication Commission in order to increase the productivity as well as to expand the reachability of NTC to the people in general.
3. Director Buenavista thinks that it is high time that NTC adopt an online licensing system in order to serve the public even better. The said project is expected also to limit face-to-face transactions, eliminate possibility of the exercise of personal discretion, and optimize revenue collection efforts for a corruption-free system, thus improvement of the quality of life.
4. The **NTC Electronic Data Gathering/Governance & Evaluation System with VOIP Network** project will link all NTC Offices (NTC Central Office and 16 ROs) electronically for better file/information handling and sharing to avoid, among others, the issuance of various authorizations to applicants with pending or decided cases leading to more transparent transactions. The project also intends to eliminate delays and reduce transaction costs in compliance with Republic Act 11032 otherwise known as the Ease of Doing Business Act. Thus, the project’s goal is for the public to have access to the different services of the Commission online.
5. This Project was included in the Information System Strategic Plan (ISSP) of the Commission and was duly endorsed by DICT-MITHI to DBM.
6. For FY 2020, the DBM finally approved the budget of the said project in the total amount of P5.280 million representing Phase I for the development of software and hardware components of the project;
7. It was then agreed during the NTC Strategic Planning & Programming held in Pasig City on January 22 – 24, 2020 that since Director Jesus Laureno will be retiring in 2020, it will be Director Teodoro Buenavista who will be tasked to implement the EDGE Project.
8. Pre-procurement activities have been undertaken by Dir. Buenavista who is an ICT professional. He initially resorted to a series of consultation with some of his peers in the ICT Industry.
9. Several crucial information had transpired and among the inputs for considerations are the experiences of the Land Transportation Office (LTO), the National Bureau of Investigation

(NBI), the National Single Window (NSW) and others. These subject agencies had encountered significant problems on data storage and end of service contract obligation that resulted to a total halt of their automated services and information being compromised or breached.

10. Another consideration is the amount approved which is also relatively small vis-à-vis the current market price for the automation of the licensing processes of the Commission.
11. It should be noted that the software to be developed will be perpetually to be owned by the National Telecommunications Commission and for a nationwide deployment and utilization.
12. And after several meetings with ICT experts, a Government-to-Government transaction would be the best arrangement in order to maximize the limited budget of the project and to protect a very vital resource – public data. The services of the University of Science and Technology of Southern Philippines in Cagayan De Oro City was the identified developer of the software and hardware components of the EDGE Project; and
13. USTP has a Digital Transformation which intends to contribute innovative and technology solutions towards the accomplishment of the Philippine Digital. They have a good track record in the development of projects that automatize various business processes.
14. Taking into consideration the above-stated facts and the importance of the said project, there is a need to enter into an agreement with the University of Science and Technology of Southern Philippines (USTP) under the government-to-government arrangement in order to maximize the limited budget and importantly for the public data to be protected.
15. However, ***NTC EDGE project was temporary halted*** considering that there were several projects under the Information and Communications Technology (ICT). The Commission agreed to hold a meeting to harmonize the different ICT projects to avoid duplication.
16. There were two identified ICT projects that were observed to have possible duplication. There were the NTC EDGE and the Digital Payment System – Online Payment System (DPS-OPS).
17. The Commission then held a meeting on April 12, 2021 to harmonize the different ICT projects. The meeting which was presided by Deputy Commissioner Edgardo R. Cabarios and attended by participants coming from the central and regional offices had decided to revise the Program of Work for the Phase 2 of NTC EDGE (for all the Regional Offices). The revision was intended ***to make the Phase 2 of NTC EDGE project a complimentary project for both NTC EDGE and OPS-DPS if ever any of the two projects will be pursued.***
18. During the meeting, the group had decided to pursue in acquiring servers which can be utilized either with the Online Payment System Project or EDGE. The presiding officer then instructed Director Monroy to prepare the technical specifications of the server that can be

used either for the Online Payment System or for the NTC Electronic Data Gathering/Governance & Evaluation System (NTC EDGE) for the Commission approval.

19. In compliance thereto. The NTC Region VI through Director Monroy submitted a technical specification as listed below:

Technical Specification:

Based on NTC ISSP	Summary of Equipment submitted by NTC Region VI			
Set of three (3) Dekstop and one (1) Server per Regional Office	Description	Unit Price	Qty	Total
Wireless Internet Router	1. Server	180, 000.00	1	180, 000.00
1 Windows Server 2003 OS	2. Server Rack	40, 000.00	1	40, 000.00
SQL Server 2005	3. UPS 2KVA	50, 000.00	1	50, 000.00
Hosting Service	4. LED TV 55"	40, 000.00	1	40, 000.00
Biometric Device	5. Kiosk PC	63, 500.00	2	127, 000.00
Norton 360 for Server	TOTAL AMOUNT			437, 000.00
Software Development				
Three (3) Dekstop (Hub)				
2 Server (1 for Portal, 1 for Back Up)				

20. *The Revised Program of Work clearly which was approved by the Commission* intends to make it complimentary to either NTC EDGE or the DPS-OPS. There are components intended to store data as a back-up server and for offline system in case of internet disruption. There are also components for video conference which is part of the NTC EDGE project.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The full deployment of NTC EDGE will materialize during the Phase 3 of the project. For the meantime, NTC EDGE is present in region 7 and 10 as part of the incubation period based on the existing terms of reference. NTC EDGE project is now ready for operation pending issuance of an Office Order for the adoption of Digital Certificate equivalent to Licenses, Certificates, Permits, etc. NTC EDGE is also waiting for the completion of DPS-OPS as it is the official platform for digital payment.