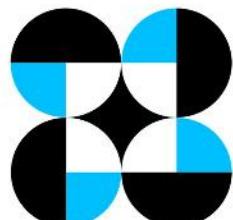


# SCIENCE FOR THE PEOPLE:

# STORY

*we heal  
as one*

STORIES OF RESILIENCE IN THE  
FACE OF THE COVID PANDEMIC  
(IN THE COUNTRYSIDE)



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There is no need stressing the fact that this COVID-19 pandemic has severely affected our communities – altering the way we live and work, and disrupting businesses. These days, reports about the sad state of our countrymen have become a constant subject of mass media. We hear people asking for personal protective equipment, food, and testing kits, among others. They have been calling out for help... and I am very happy to note that our DOST Regional Offices (DOST-ROs), passionate as they are to help our people, did not hesitate to lend a helping hand. DOST-ROs donated face shields, face masks, alcohol, disinfectants, food packs, and many others. They have sustained their operations by implementing work from home arrangement and maintaining skeleton workforce for essential services. DOST-ROs continued to provide laboratory and calibration services, especially to hospitals, other agencies, and businesses providing basic needs to our people such as the water refilling stations. They have also been active in deploying and implementing DOST COVID-19 related projects and initiatives in the regions, bringing technologies to hospitals and communities in the hope that they can help win this fight against COVID-19.

Worth highlighting also are the initiatives of our Small Enterprise Technology Upgrading Program (SETUP) cooperators who, despite being affected by the crisis, still went out of their way to help frontline workers and communities in need. Featured in this publication are just some of the many SETUP cooperators that made a difference in time of crisis. Kudos, our dear SETUP cooperators! Thank you for your generosity!

To the DOST Regional Directors and DOST-ROs personnel, thank you for your service! Continue to bring science closer to the Filipino people. Let science be an agent for us to heal as one!



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*Fortunato T. de la Peña  
Secretary*



# *The Undersecretary's* **FOREWORD**

Science for the People: Stories of Resilience in the Face of the COVID Pandemic (in the Countryside) is a compilation of the learnings and accomplishments of the DOST Regional Offices amid the health crisis. The Regional Directors also shared their insights on the strategic way forward after the Enhanced Community Quarantine is lifted in the different parts of the country. This ePublication also features inspiring stories of DOST-assisted Small Enterprise Technology Upgrading Program (SETUP) Cooperators in the regions who have gone out of their way to help those affected by the crisis. These stories show that science, technology, and innovation (STI), coupled with the undying Bayanihan spirit among Filipinos, can make life in the face of a crisis bearable.

This ePublication is a testament to how dedicated and passionate our people from the DOST Regional Offices are in fulfilling their duties as agents of STI – always doing their best to make a difference and to uplift the lives of the people in the countryside. May we all be inspired by these stories and continue to heal as one!

# GOOD PRACTICES TO ENSURE PUBLIC SERVICE CONTINUITY

*Disinfection and sanitation measures were established.*

## DOST CAR

On the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic, and prior to the declaration of a National Emergency putting the entire Luzon under Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ), DOST-CAR issued an advisory addressing the matter. After said declaration, the agency implemented the “work-from-home” scheme to ensure public service continuity. The following are the best practices implemented by the agency to ensure that programs and services are still brought to the people despite the pandemic:

**The office acted fast** as soon as the directive was received, a web meeting was conducted to include the PSTCs on the actions to be taken. Critical activities which required staff to report to the office for a specific period of time were identified. Open communication was practiced by all staff and immediate cascading of information was done from the Regional Office down to the Provincial Science and Technology Centers (PSTCs) and Units.

DOST-CAR enforced a **14-day quarantine policy** for officials and staff who travelled to infected areas to ensure the safety of the entire institution and of those with whom they interact.

### **Resources needed for the Work-from-Home scheme were identified and provided:**

- communication allowance;
- transportation service for those who need to go to the office;

- hygiene/sanitation/disinfection kits for office frontliners (security guards, drivers, utility workers);
- laptops, desktops, printers, and WIFI routers – some staff were allowed to bring desktops and printers home; and
- other needed supplies and materials.

### **Disinfection and sanitation measures were established:**

- alcohol & sanitizer, foot bath, and temperature monitor were in place at the entrance of the office;
- anti-bacterial soaps, alcohol and hand sanitizers were made available at the comfort rooms and in all the offices and waiting areas;
- more thorough cleaning and disinfection of the office and its surroundings;
- vehicles were constantly disinfected and provided with disinfectant sprayers and alcohols; and
- facemasks were provided to staff who had to report to the office to perform crucial functions.

**Work process changes or new arrangements** were also observed to ensure minimal work disruption. For transactions that need to be attended to in the office, a skeleton workforce policy was enforced and the use of facemasks and observance of social distancing were required. Utility workers are requested to report twice a week for cleaning and disinfecting of the office. The use of official vehicles was arranged to ferry employees to and from their residences and offices, with the drivers having alternate schedules. Drivers also help route documents to the residence of the concerned staff for appropriate action. For emer-

gency situations, the use of e-signatures was granted but strictly monitored.

**Attendance to webinars and online trainings** by employees as alternative learning and development activities was highly encouraged.

#### **Optimal use of ICT:**

- a. web-based information systems
- b. collaboration tools like google drive, Facebook, Messenger, others; and
- c. virtual meetings thru skype, webex, and others

The DOST-CAR **capitalized on existing inter-agency linkages/networks** and expansion of the same to deliver services efficiently and effectively to clients, especially COVID-related interventions. DOST-CAR also led the training and deployment of the CAR Real Time COVID-19 Surveillance and Community Needs Mapping Project that was developed by the University of the Cordilleras to various external partners. This is a DOST-funded initiative to fast track tracing and to provide a real-time information on the status of COVID-19 in the Cordilleras.

**Extra effort** was exerted **to locate** and **monitor the scholars** to ensure their welfare.

A **survey** was administered to employees, and out of the 83 respondents, 90.4 % said that they were able to perform all of their duties despite the Enhanced Community Quarantine.

## DOST I

The imposed enhanced community quarantine did not stop the Department of Science and Technology Region 1 (DOST-1) from rendering #ScienceForThe-People. Despite constraints, DOST-1 **managed to make do with the available resources** to ensure service continuity. Each unit of DOST-1 has established a work plan for the duration of the quarant-

tine. Part of this work plan are initiatives that cater to clients as well as COVID-19 frontliners. Targets were also set.

First, the Scholarship Unit prioritized securing **scholars' stipends**, and depositing these to the scholars' respective bank accounts.

Second, the Small Enterprise Technology Upgrading Program's (SETUP) project cooperators were given a **moratorium in the refund** of their innovation funds. This is to help our micro, small, and medium enterprises cope with the losses they have incurred and continue to incur during the health crisis.

Third, the Information Technology Services Management (ITSM) Unit has set up **DOST 1's communication platform through Microsoft Teams**. The use of Microsoft Teams allowed personnel to share and save files, receive and send messages, and make audio and video calls and presentations. This proved essential and useful, given the work-from-home setup. The ITSM Unit also conducted an orientation and has been continuously responsive to the members' queries and concerns not just on Microsoft Teams but also on all IT-related matters. Moreover, two members of the Unit, Enrique Rimando and Ryan Jan Borja, were selected to be part of the team that developed the RapidPassPH, a system that enables frontliners to easily and quickly obtain quarantine passes so they may be allowed to pass through checkpoints.

Fourth, the **DOST 1 administrative staff were on-call** and have been very quick to respond to requests and provide documents needed to carry out the office's initiatives and financial needs.

Lastly, the **DOST-1 Regional Standards and Testing Laboratory (RSTL) has been in close collaboration with other RSTLs in fighting the war against COVID-19**. Together with the Disaster Risk Reduction Management (DRRM) Unit, they

## DOST-R01



spearheaded DOST-1's efforts to help our uniformed personnel, health workers, local government unit employees, and other frontliners. Through the **One DOST against COVID-19 project**, DOST-1 donated face masks, face shields, alcohol, and ready-to-drink calamansi juice to various hospitals, local government units, checkpoints, and other offices that render lead services during this pandemic. Also, with the help of our SETUP Cooperators, DOST-1 was able to purchase food products that were distributed to the frontliners. SETUP cooperators also donated a sizeable quantity of their products to frontliners, communities, and individuals affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Amid this anxious and challenging time, DOST-1 **remains steadfast in its commitment to serve the people**. It will continue to foster the spirit of Bayanihan as we strive to #BeatCOVID19 and heal as one.

## DOST II

Following are the good practices being implemented by DOST 02:

**Early orientation of all staff on what ECQ is, its requirements, and implications to the DOST 2 operations.** This was undertaken through a series of meetings. The highlight of the general staff meeting on March 17, 2020 was the immediate preparation and submission of individual workplans and accomplishment reports while on a Work-From-Home scheme.

**Conduct of online meetings of RD with DOST 2 staff.** These were conducted three (3) times a week using the GOTO and ZOOM applications. Special meetings with the Assistant Regional Directors (ARDs) and Provincial Directors (PDs) were also done online. PSTCs also conducted online meetings with their staff.

**Mobilization of e-trike and Hybrid Electric Road Train (HERT) for frontliners.** The HERT in Cauayan City and e-tikes in both Cauayan and Tuguegarao were used to transport frontliners, especially those working in hospitals.

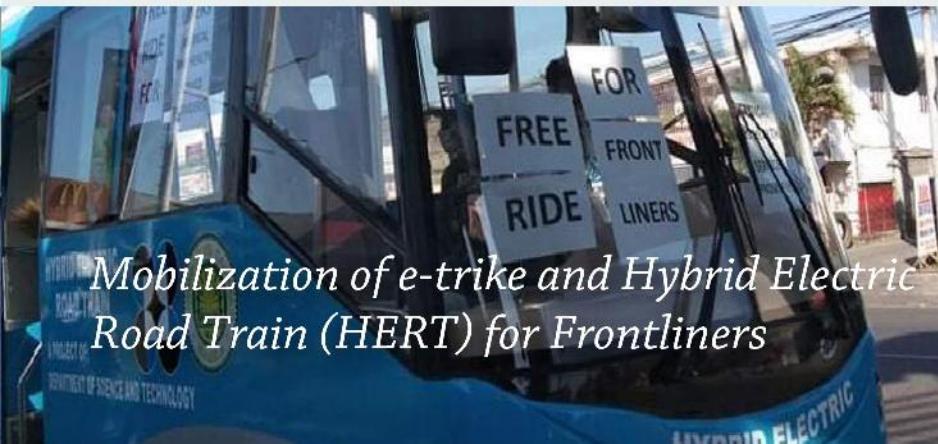
**Release of P41 Million SETUP fund.** DOST 02 released a total of 41 million pesos to 47 new SETUP qualified firms. This reflected the agility of the DOST 2 PSTCs to help their respective MSMEs, especially during these trying times.

**Release of P500 thousand GIA fund.** This was used to purchase various food packs, alcohol, sanitizers, vitamins, etc. which were distributed to frontliners in the region.

**Active participation in various regional meetings.** The Regional Director of DOST 2 actively participated in all meetings called for by the Regional IATF and RDRRMC for continuous updates. The meetings were avenues to share about the Bayanihan interventions of DOST national office and those being initiated by DOST in Region 2.

**Regular live feeds.** The DOST 2 Regional Director has been interviewed several times by the following: Radyo Pilipinas – Region 2 and Manila stations, PIA Region 2, DZCV, DWDD, and Radyo Agila. These activities are opportunities to update the public on the various interventions of the DOST, especially during the ECQ.

**Self-Enabled Delivery Service (SEDS) for MSMEs in Region 02.** SEDS is an initiative of the oneSTore team of DOST 2 to help MSMEs in marketing their products. DOST, through oneSTore, does the online promotion while the firms deliver the goods to customers within a 20-25 km radius to limit movement of people as required during the ECQ.



*Mobilization of e-trike and Hybrid Electric Road Train (HERT) for Frontliners*



**System development for business continuity.** The DOST 02 Management Information System (MIS) team developed and deployed three (3) infosystems during the ECQ, namely: e-learning system on DOST Academy; laboratory.ph; and COVID tracker. Meanwhile, two (2) more systems are being developed and will soon be deployed – the mobile attendance and payroll with payslip.

**Regular posting of S&T articles on Facebook.** On the average, around three (3) news stories on science, technology, and innovation and two (2) articles on SETUP concerns are posted daily.

**Encouragement for SETUP cooperators to participate in the Bayanihan activities during ECQ.** SETUP-assisted MSMEs were encouraged to do their corporate social responsibility to help frontliners as well as communities and individuals severely affected by the ECQ.

**Conduct of webinars/video conferences for DOST 02 Staff.** Video conferences and webinars on the DOST Strategic Plan, Industry 4.0, Biosafety, Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS), Solid Waste Management, Stay Safe, Tanod-COVID, and FASSSTER, among others, were conducted by some staff to all regional personnel as a way of re-echoing seminars attended by the former.

**Attendance to Webinars on COVID.** Webinars on “Pag-iwas sa sakit sa Panahon ng COVID 19”, STI, Stay Safe, and other related seminars online were attended by most of the DOST 02 staff.

**Enrolment to online courses.** Eight (8) DOST 02 staff enrolled in the Smarter Philippines Through R&D, Training and Adoption (SPARTA) program of DOST as scholars for a two-year period.

**Linkage with DA and DTI.** DOST 02 converged with DA and DTI for the implementation of the “KADIWA ni Ani at Kita” program through which, SETUP cooperators were assisted in marketing their products.

*Continued assistance to MSMEs:  
Release of 41 Million SETUP fund*

**Voluntary contributions of DOST R02 personnel and scholars for frontliners.** A total donation of P87,780.00 from DOST 02 personnel and scholars was used to purchase food packs, alcohol, and other needs of frontliners in the Region.

**SETUP online monitoring.** Regular monitoring of SETUP projects was done online. In one of the online meetings of DOST 02, PSTC personnel presented how they conduct online monitoring. Comments for improvement were given afterwards. A common spiel on how to conduct the monitoring was developed by the DOST 02 Information Team as a result of the presentations.

**Sustained operation of the Regional Metrology Laboratory (RML).** Regular services of the RML unit did not cease during the lockdown. Due to continuous demand for their services, DOST 02 RML staff strategized reporting schedules so as not to miss requests of customers. This inspired the MIS team to develop a system called laboratory.ph to easily address booking requirements at the RSTL. The other two laboratories of DOST 02, the chemistry and biology laboratories, have also started adopting the laboratory.ph system.

**Release of employees' salaries and scholars' stipends.** Considering requirement for provision during the ECQ, RD Sancho ordered the early release of salaries/benefits of all DOST 02 personnel and the stipend of DOST scholars in the region.





## DOST III

Amidst the coronavirus pandemic, the DOST Region III managed to continue its services through the following strategies. Some strategies were lifted from the existing Public Service Continuity (PSC) Plan of the agency while others were initiated by the functional divisions and units.

**Crafting of PSC Operational Plan in light of COVID-19.** The 2019 coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has called for the activation of the DOST Region III's PSC Plan. The agency prepared its Operational Plan in the light of COVID-19.

**Work from home and skeleton workforce.** The DOST III implemented the work-from-home scheme during the entire period of ECQ, following the order from Malacañang.

**Weekly Reporting System.** To monitor the performance of DOST III staff, the Weekly Reporting System was put in place. Necessary tool was devised to identify weekly assignments and report accomplishments.

**Open Communication.** The agency utilized different communication channels to get the message across the organization. Aside from the usual emails, phone calls, and text messages, DOST III took advantage of the social media to facilitate communication between the regional office and PSTCs. A group chat via Messenger was created for exchanges of ideas to conceptualize COVID-19 response projects and the implementation of the same, and for cascading instructions from the Regional Director to the concerned PSTC,

unit, or staff. It has also been used to disseminate updates on DOST projects from the Central Office for deployment in Region III. The PSTCs also created similar group chats.

**Continued but Reduced Service Level.** The agency managed to continue its services though the service level was reduced due to limitations on movement of staff brought about by the ECQ. Some activities had to be postponed to comply with the guidelines set by the Inter-Agency Task Force for Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) and DOH on ECQ. Among these activities are the technology training and technical consultancy programs, which require face-to-face encounters between participants and trainers and/or consultants.

**Teleconferencing.** In the face of ECQ, DOST III staff used teleconferencing for meetings, project monitoring, reporting and coordination, and en banc evaluation of project proposals.

**Testing and Calibrations Services.** The Chemistry and Microbiology Laboratories of the RSTL continued to provide services and conducted laboratory tests on samples, which are being studied as potential drug components to cure COVID-19.

**Reprogramming of Activities Under the “New Normal” Scheme.** DOST III held on May 13, 2020 a teleconference attended by the ARD for Technical Operations, PSTDs, and Public Service Continuity Coordinators to conceptualize how to implement the technology training and technical consultancy programs of the agency under the “New Normal” or during the post-quarantine period.

# DOST NCR

DOST-NCR proactively engaged its officials and personnel to comply with its internally issued guidelines on 'work from home' as the agency's alternative work arrangement. The Human Resource (HR) Unit finalized the schedule for voluntary skeleton workforce and issued a Special Order, which shall remain effective for the duration of the ECQ. Furthermore, all **DOST-NCR personnel were tasked to submit individual work plans (IWP)**s, which include target deliverables, period and date of accomplishment, and actual accomplishment. Concerned personnel update and monitor the IWPs periodically to ensure that delivery of services as well as the agency's financial and physical accomplishments will not be impeded during the ECQ period.

Maximizing the use of technologies in a remote work arrangement, **DOST-NCR holds virtual consultancy program for SETUP adoptors titled "Zooming into the Success of Filipino MSMEs".**

The DOST-NCR partnered with the Entrepinoy Volunteers Foundation, Inc. (EVFI) to continuously strengthen and provide assistance to MSMEs amidst the quarantine through virtual Kapihan or Zoom meetings. This virtual Kapihan is a series of consultative sessions on relevant topics, knowledge sharing, and sharing of best practices among MSMEs and consultants. The EVFI's 'Volunteer Executives' – whose sets of expertise delve deep into various subjects concerning the current situation of MSMEs – serve as the consultants and moderator during each session.

On April 21 and 28, 2020, a total of 45 SETUP adoptors actively participated during the session on "Government Assistance and Tax Relief Available to MSMEs" led by Asian Consulting Group (ACG) Founding Chairperson and "Philippine Tax Whiz" Mr. Raymond Abrea. He tackled the assistance currently provided by different government agencies, including but not limited to the Social Amelioration Program (SAP), DOLE's COVID-19 Adjustment Measure Program (CAMP), and the Small Business Corporation (SB Corp.)'s Covid-19 P3-ERF. Moreover, he also highlighted the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR)-imposed tax exemption, suspension, and extension resulting from the suspension of audit activities for six months from the declaration of State Emergency, together with some of BIR's Revenue Regulations (RRs) and Revenue Memorandum Circulars (RMCs).

MSME participants were also encouraged to conduct a self-assessment in preparation for the resumption of BIR's halted activities.

The lined-up topics of the **virtual Kapihan** are as follows: (1) How to Make a Continuity Plan; (2) Selling Product Online: Ensuring Products Sold Online are Delivered as Promised; (3) New 4H: "Health, Happiness, Hope, and Harmony" for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises; and (4) Food Safety and Innovation Initiatives. In addition, EVFI's Volunteer Executives and Board of Trustees also took into consideration suggestions from the participants about possible topics to discuss, which are related to financial matters such as Cash Flow Management, Basic Financial Management, and Financial Analysis for SMEs, among others. Beyond the virtual meetings, EVFI remains amenable to provide assistance to MSME participants by accommodating their additional questions and concerns outside of each session.

Further, as part of the initiatives under SETUP, **DOST-NCR conducted its first online Technology Needs Assessment (TNA)** with Manna Shamelyn Enterprise – a SETUP applicant that designs and fabricates hospital beds and other medical equipment and Kape King – a SETUP applicant engaged in coffee



processing. Participants of the online TNA were composed of company owners, an expert from DOST-MIRDC, DOST-NCR officials, an expert from the DOST-NCR Food Safety Team (FST), and technical staff from MUNTAPARLAS and PAMAMAZON Clusters. The online TNA was held to assess technological and other technical interventions needed by the company. The evaluation was carried out through an online interview with the owners and holding a virtual tour within the company's production facility in lieu of a physical ocular inspection. A number of online TNAs are already lined-up for the next batches of SETUP applicants in NCR.

Aside from the continuous delivery of services for its stakeholders, **DOST-NCR undertakes the Work-from-Home Learning Plan through participation in webinars** facilitated by public and private organizations as well as the conduct of internal **Knowledge Sharing Sessions (KSS)** among all DOST-NCR personnel. These aim to further hone personnel's knowledge and skills as applicable to their line of work and scope of duties. Weekly staff meetings done through video conferencing are also held to keep everyone informed about the major activities and specialized tasks that the agency and its constituents are spearheading as part of its support

to Republic Act No. 11469 or the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act.

Reflecting on the government's crucial role in alleviating risks and threats brought about by the pandemic while performing duties within one's mandate, **DOST-NCR established a Crisis Management Committee** wherein members primarily communicate through the messaging and calling application, Viber. Immediate concerns, especially those involving special projects, which aim to provide assistance during the pandemic are directly relayed to and addressed by designated DOST-NCR officials and/or personnel on any given day. Committee members residing near the premises of the office are called upon or report on their own initiative when immediate actions relating to the aforementioned projects are requested from them.



The graphic features a large circle with a light blue gradient background. Inside the circle, there are two logos: the DOST-NCR logo (a stylized 'B' shape) and the Entrepinoy logo (a map of the Philippines with the text 'Entrepinoy VOLUNTEERS FOUNDATION INC. "Young Smiling Soul"'). Below the logos, the text reads: "ZOOMING INTO THE SUCCESS OF FILIPINO MSMES: A VIRTUAL CONSULTANCY PROGRAM". At the bottom of the circle, the text specifies the dates: "APRIL 21 TO MAY 22, 2020 (SELECTED WEEKDAYS ONLY)" and "ZOOM CLOUD MEETINGS". In the bottom right corner of the circle, the text "DOST-NCR" is displayed in a green box.

# DOST CALABARZON

## Public Service Amidst Crisis

The COVID-19 crisis and ECQ posed challenges to the work setup of DOST-CALABARZON but these were turned into opportunities as the Public Service Continuity Plan (PSCP) provisions were implemented while also updated based on actual application and requirements. The PSCP highlighted DOST-CALABARZON's preparedness, resiliency, sacrificial work commitment, and public service amidst the crisis.

## Preparedness and Resiliency

DOST-CALABARZON has long been providing support to mobile working through its reliable ICT infrastructure. The online in-house-developed

tools, cloud-based collaboration, and productivity applications. Online collaborative working has been innate in the agency prior to the ECQ thus, very minimal adjustments were needed. The MIS Unit also ensures that files stored at Network-Attached Storage (NAS) are automatically backed up daily and can be remotely accessed by staff, including their office computers through MIS assistance.

## Sacrificial Work Commitment

DOST-CALABARZON has been responsive to the needs of the organization and community. A skeleton workforce consisting of security guards, laboratory personnel, and FAS personnel still report to the office, when needed, to assure business continuity and public service. On-time salaries of all staff and stipends including benefits of scholars are also being provided. This is part of the PSCP as a mission essential func-



*Support to mobile working through reliable ICT Infrastructure*

systems that support mobile bundy (Human Resource Management Information System), task delegation and document tracking (Tracking, Retrieval, Archiving of Communications for Efficiency), project documentations retrieval and status monitoring (Information & Monitoring of Projects, Services and S&T Interventions), financial transaction monitoring (Tracking, Retrieval, and Archiving of Documents for Efficiency), and knowledge management (Knowledge Management and Information System), complemented by systems policies are already in place and operational, making it easier for the staff to shift to a work from home (WFH) setup. The co-location of DARIUS server at DOST-PCIEERD data center provided redundancy in infosystems hosting.

Moreover, the workforce is already accustomed to working online, making full use of video conferencing

tion. Staff working from home are required to submit individual daily accomplishment reports through Google Sheet monitored by supervisors.

## Public Service

DOST CALABARZON was able to assist not only its own employees but also those of other agencies by providing technical assistance and public service as deemed needed. It tapped the resources of its Ideation, Design, and Development (IDD) Laboratory and Center for Hazard and Environment Resource Mapping (CHERM) by adjusting their functions to address the present needs. The IDD Laboratory developed PPEs for Laguna frontliners while CHERM developed maps of COVID-19 cases in CALABARZON, which were used by the Office of the Civil Defense (OCD) 4A. The implementation of the project

BANGON TAAL, which was approved before the ECQ, still pushed through despite the community lockdown.

Through resilient governance and effective communication management system, DOST-CALABARZON spearheaded the deployment of 1,000 RxBox units for telemetry monitoring in UP-PGH and selected health-care facilities. Moreover, the agency has shown its capability to immediately develop projects and converge collaborative efforts with different DOST councils, Research and Development Institutes (RDIs), NGAs, and LGUs even in the absence of face-to-face meetings. This brought DOST-CALABARZON to lead in the overall coordination from conceptualization, fund sourcing, and implementation of the project “The Beneficial Effects of VCO (Virgin Coconut Oil) among Suspect and Probable Cases of COVID-19” and provided Php1.31M as counterpart to the total fund requirement of Php6.27M.

RSTL donated alcohol to the Los Baños MHO and offered free alcohol testing for LGUs/NGAs and provided 20% discount to manufacturers. DOST-CALABARZON assisted three (3) DOST agencies in operationalizing their online bundy system. It has also provided technical support to the RAMDAM, FASSSTER, and RapidPass projects. Lastly, PSTC-Batangas initiated an “Online Seminar on Self Care and Self Love” for SETUP cooperators as a form of psycho-social intervention during this crisis. This became the start-up point for the identification and conduct of technical online seminars for MSMEs and other clients.

## DOST MIMAROPA

Benevolence and the bayanihan culture of the Filipinos really surface during the most challenging times. During this coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic situation, the indomitable spirit of Filipinos provided many the strength to stand firm and face the potentially overwhelming odds.

The Department of Science and Technology-MIMAROPA Region and its Provincial Science and Technology Centers in Occidental Mindoro, Oriental Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon, and Palawan have banded together in the spirit of bayanihan to provide support to brave and hardworking frontliners— health workers, basic needs and services providers, police, military



### Production of Face Shields for Frontliners

#### DOST-MIMAROPA

peace enforcers, and researchers, among others combatting the COVID-19 outbreak.

The “Bayanihan to Heal as One Act” guided the DOST-MIMAROPA to ensure the continuous delivery of its basic services and, at the same time, give a hand to the nation’s fight against the disease through the utilization of existing projects like the **Disaster Resiliency Awareness and Mitigation (DReAM)** and strengthening linkages with institutions, partners, and clients in the provision of resiliency support to the frontliners and addressing related LGU challenges amid the threat of COVID-19 pandemic. A **strategic communication process within the organization was also implemented** through the use of online teleconferencing application, social media group messaging, mobile calls and SMS for senior leaders and workforce to smoothly exchange ideas as quick response to any eventualities.

The shortage of Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) since the outbreak has been one of the major challenges, which has taken a heavy toll on the country’s healthcare sector. DOST-MIMAROPA responded to this crisis in collaboration with institutions in the region such as Fulbright College, Western Philippines University (WPU), and the UP Alumni Association (UPAA) Palawan Chapter, for the **production of face shields with make-shift frames designed using the autoCAD software and printed using the industrial 3D printer**, both provided by the regional office to the Innovation Laboratory (InnoLab) located in WPU, Puerto Princesa City, Palawan. To date, a **total of 1,977 ready-made facemasks and 651 face shields were distributed to frontliners in the provinces**, in cooperation with SETUP-assisted clients and LGUs as well.

# DOST V

For the duration of the implementation of the ECQ, the DOST V carried out efficient risk management procedures and business continuity strategies to ensure the safety of its workforce and the continuity of essential public service activities.

In compliance with the announcement of an ECQ through the national and local executive orders, DOST V suspended its regular office operations on March 17, 2020 and implemented a Work from Home (WFH) protocol to continue performing its mission and fundamental functions. It was necessary then to **maximize all available ICT resources to facilitate communication and transactions across DOST V personnel and its stakeholders**. For the Daily Time Record, the office uses the online Vehicle Reservation and Management System (VRAMS). When logged-in, officers and staff are expected to be accessible via mobile phone calls/SMS, email, or messenger/chat. Regular online ManCom meetings were also initiated through internet-based meeting facility such as Zoom and Webex to facilitate discussion of directives and fast diffusion of other official information. Constant communication through the said platforms are done to attend to the needs and queries of all clients.

To further guarantee the effective delivery of public service, all division heads, unit heads, Provincial S&T Directors (PSTDs), and project coordinators were directed to submit weekly home-based workplans and accomplishment reports via Google Sheets and Google Docs. All accomplishments are accompanied by a soft-copy of its corresponding proof of completion. Monitoring and review of all workplans against submitted accomplishment reports are also facilitated by the division heads and by the Regional Director.

**Business continuity was also ensured** through the following: (1) continuation of DOST programs using e-signature for the signing of MOA, press releases, publication of vacancy, and others; (2) sending of disaster-related notification through Project HANDA; (3) coordination with OCD for updates, notices, advisories and other concerns; and (4) consistent reply to queries of clients thru email, SMS, Facebook, and other social media platforms. While observing the mandated safely protocol, it was necessary for DOST V to deploy its version of service frontliners through the skeleton workforce that had to report to the office weekly for the processing of payroll and other financial and legal documents despite the lockdown and travel restrictions.

DOST V also responded to the call to participate in the implementation of RA 11469 or the “Bayanihan to Heal as One Act”. Thus, in support of the government's efforts against COVID-19, the **DOST V-RSTL extended its services by providing free alcohol and disinfectants to LGU-Legazpi City**. Technical assistance was also provided to the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) Legazpi City in the formulation and preparation of disinfecting solutions for the city-wide decontamination activities. Succeeding efforts included DOST V's assistance in the distribution of aerosol boxes and disinfectants donated by Philippine Science High School Bicol Region Campus (PSHS-BRC). DOST V-PSTCs also participated in the collective effort through their donation of improvised face shields and coordination of the manufacturing and distribution of PPE components through its SETUP beneficiaries.

*Strengthened linkages to promote growth and development of MSMEs*



# DOST VI

In compliance with the ECQ being imposed in various parts of Western Visayas due to the COVID-19 pandemic, DOST VI implemented the “Work from Home” scheme starting March 20, 2020. This is to ensure that our organization remains productive without compromising the health and welfare of its employees and stakeholders.

To effectively carry out the “Work from Home” scheme, **information systems such as TRACE (Tracking, Retrieval and Archiving of Communications for Efficiency), HRMIS (Human Resource Management Information System) and FIRRST (Fast and Interactive Processing of Requests for S&T Assistance) are being extensively utilized.** The office ensured that all these information systems as well as local network-attached storage are accessible anytime by setting up automated uptime monitoring of servers and necessary analytics tracker. For easy access, all information systems are housed in one portal that can be accessed through <http://www/dost6.info>.

As support to these information systems, **the office also utilized other online applications and platforms such as Google Groups, Google Meet, Zoom, Jitsi Meet, Viber, and Facebook Messenger.** In line with this, communication allowances were granted to the employees to defray communication expenses incurred in the continued conduct of their respective duties and responsibilities and work from home assignments. The DOST VI ManCom continues to conduct its weekly and special meetings through videoconferencing. The office likewise participated in various other videoconferencing meetings of the Regional Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (RDRRMC), Regional Development Council (RDC), and other agencies.

DOST VI has also **strengthened its existing human resource development efforts despite the implementation of the ECQ through the Individualized Training and Empowerment for Advancement of Competent Human Resource (iTEACH) portal.** This portal was developed in-house and rolled out to, primarily, allow DOST VI personnel to take online S&T-related courses at home. As of 27 April 2020, iTEACH has already conducted 13 trainings with a total of 1,010 learners/subscriptions. Table 1 shows the trainings conducted and the corresponding number of learners.

## GMP ORGANIZATION

### ✓ Training

- **all employees** who are directly engaged in manufacturing activities
- conducted by **qualified individuals**
- on a **continuing basis**

## DOST-R06



*Strengthened existing human resource development efforts*

Table 1. Training Courses and Number of Participants as of April 27, 2020.

TOPIC	No. of Registered Learners
1. Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points	64
2. DOST-FIC Developed Food Equipment and Technologies	69
3. Unit Operations	62
4. Awareness on Current Good Manufacturing Practices	72
5. Packaging 101: Basic Principles on Packaging and Labeling	79
6. Mandatory Labeling Requirements	79
7. Five Keys to Safer Food	86
8. Basic Food Hygiene	86
9. Food Safety Hazards	86
10. Intellectual Property Rights of the Philippines (Law on Patents)	83
11. Intellectual Property Rights of the Philippines (Law on Trademarks)	83
12. Intellectual Property Rights of the Philippines (Law on Copyrights)	83
13. Philippine Technology Transfer Act of 2009	78
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,010</b>

DOST VI is currently working on making the modules available at the oneExpert portal so that other stakeholders may also benefit from it.

Moreover, **DOST VI actively conducts information-dissemination activities through regular posting of IEC materials on the DOST VI website and official Facebook page**. The Knowledge Management Unit (KMU) and Management Information Services (MIS) Unit developed these IEC materials to help promote proper precautionary measures and support the advocacy against COVID-19. Important announcements such as the moratorium on the payment of refund of SETUP Innovation-enabling Funds, temporary closure of the DOST VI Metrology Laboratory including all Satellite Metrology Laboratories, and the implementation of the Work from Home scheme of the office were also published. All communication channels in the regional office and the Provincial S&T Centers are also regularly monitored to make sure that questions and concerns of clients are addressed efficiently and appropriately. Lastly, DOST VI is issuing new protocols through an office memorandum in case of the implementation of the General Community Quarantine (GCQ), with emphasis on ensuring the health and safety of the personnel. The **heightened level of awareness and precaution as to exposure will be imposed to minimize possible risks for the personnel**.

Household bleach (5.25% inexpensive and effective water you can make a hit)

Proper Hand Washing

"Handwashing is the single most important means of preventing the spread of infection."

- US Center for Disease Control

FACE SHIELDS

Ideally, face shields are disposable. In case reused, strict precautionary measures should be observed.



## DOST VII

The scenario of a pandemic caused by a biological substance or a virus was not included in the design or crafting of the Public Service Continuity Plan (PSCP) of DOST 7. Hence, the office was caught flatfooted when it occurred, especially when the community quarantine was implemented. Specifically, the plan should provide policy and guidance to ensure to the public that services can be restored as quickly as possible, but the present situation is different because it affects not only DOST 7 but the whole community.

We then get from the BCP the critical business function of DOST 7, which is the technology transfer and services and Finance and Administrative functions. At the start of the quarantine when we were allowed to have a skeleton workforce only at the office, we divided the technical and administrative staff to report three (3) times in a week for the continuous operation of the office. The top management also had to report three (3) times in a week or more frequent, when needed. The DOST 7 management, foreseeing harder times ahead, created a communication platform for all DOST 7 employees via Facebook messenger (Mga Buotan sa DOST 7) and a Videocon platform (DOST7 Execom) for the Regional Execom, which facilitate communication among the employees and the top management during the ECQ in the whole region, especially in Cebu City where the contagion of COVID-19 is high.

How do we go about the continuation of the critical business function of the office during the ECQ where



## DOST-R07

personnel are required to work from home? For the Small Enterprise Technology Upgrading Program (SETUP), the external members of the Regional Technical Evaluation Committee (RTEC) are evaluating proposals online for project amounting to 1 million pesos and below. All project documents are sent to them via email, including all supporting documents for a thorough evaluation of the project. They then send their comments and/or approval thru email. With the implementation of ECQ in all provinces of the region, this mode of evaluation was later on adopted to include all projects, including those with project amount of more than 1 million pesos. Thus, we were able to process all SETUP proposals while the staff are working from home. The same practice was also adopted for processing project proposals for the Grant-in-Aid program, especially those that address COVID-19 concerns. Established guidelines on SETUP and GIA program were still observed. For the period of the ECQ, starting on the last week of March up to the third week of April, DOST 7 was able to evaluate and approve 10 SETUP project proposals and five (5) GIA project proposals coming from the four (4) provinces of the region.

For the finance and administrative services, three (3) critical services were identified, namely: budgeting, accounting, and cashiering. These services require personnel to be at the office for essential and required transactions. Hence, FAD personnel are required to report for a certain number of days in a week. DOST 7 provides a driver and vehicle for the fast and quick mobility of staff who needs to do a transaction outside of the office premises.

## DOST VIII

The COVID-19 pandemic has indeed negatively impacted the different sectors of our society and has affected all segments of the population. Anticipating the trying times ahead and to ensure the unimpeded delivery of public service, the top management shortly before the declaration of ECQ, called for an emergency meeting with the key officials and staff and planned out activities for the continuity of the office's operations, including the appropriation of necessary funds for their implementation.

**A COVID-19 Committee was also created.** The committee's functions are mainly focused on the COVID-19 guidelines and actions, among others. Appreciating the importance of its workforce among anything else, and in order to protect the DOST VIII employees from the possibility of contracting the virus, the DOST VIII implemented a work-from-home scheme while maintaining the required skeleton workforce in the office. Some identified personnel are on an on-call basis work arrangement. The skeleton workforce was constituted in order to ensure the continuation of necessary transactions under the Finance and Administrative Services Division and the timely submission of reportorial requirements to the DOST Central Office, Department of Budget and Management, Commission on Audit, and other agencies. The office also ensured the maintenance of DOST VIII employees' good health through provision of disinfectants to each unit, foot bath, alcohol, alcohol dispenser, face masks, and liquid hand soap at the office premises and through the conduct of disinfection in the regional office, PSTCs, and RSTL buildings as well as the distribution of vitamins/supplements to each DOST VIII staff, including the outsourced workers.



## DOST-R08



The alternative work arrangement implemented by DOST VIII did not hinder the institution to deliver its vital services to the public. **DOST VIII utilized alternative modes of communication channels to address the needs of its clientele.** The most notable of which are the following: dissemination and reporting of DOST-VIII contribution to COVID-19 initiatives in Region VIII through DOST-VIII official website, Facebook and blogspots; dissemination of Public Advisory/Announcement to ensure continuity of DOST-VIII's public service operation (i.e., processing of claims by the suppliers, release of stipends for DOST undergraduate scholars in the region, clients' service needs and their availment, contact information of PSTDs/PPA's Unit Heads, etc.); utilization of video conferencing to ensure attendance of head of office to vital meetings (task force/task group/cluster's meeting) and conferences; employment of group chat to ensure a direct, pointed and productive connections and conversations with the DOST-VIII employees, other DOST agency's representatives/focal staff, and media practitioners; utilization of group chat rooms for communication, discussion and a means for preparation of various reports required; utilization of video conferencing in the office operation; and online evaluation of SETUP and GIA's Proposals by the Internal RTEC members, using emails, messenger, SMS, and other available online platforms.

**DOST VIII also initiated online services related to COVID-19 such as the development of infographics** on do-it-yourself (DIY) preparation of disinfectant solutions and dilution of alcohol to 70% concentration and the hosting of webinar in lieu of face-to-face forums and presentations, some of which are COVID-19 related webinars.

## DOST IX

When the Local Government Units in Zamboanga Peninsula declared the implementation of an ECQ, no one had ample time to prepare for unexpected situations. With the limited time, the **DOST IX management maximized the use of information and communications technology (ICT) to ensure continuity of essential services to its customers, both internal and external.** A well-maintained ICT facility is one of the critical components of DOST IX's Public Service Continuity Plan to ensure continuous provision of essential public services amidst crisis or emergency.

The Work from Home (WFH) arrangement, obligatory under ECQ, was implemented. Prior to the implementation of the WFH arrangement, a teleconference was conducted to discuss strategies, set new policies and procedures, and most importantly, to get the entire workforce on board with the newly introduced WFH mechanism.

Communication is vital in a WFH setting. Optimum use of appropriate ICT resources has resulted to the continued interactions between the management and staff. The tools facilitated quick access to relevant updates, issues and concerns, and made possible the conduct of urgent meetings. The personnel made use of the online Tracking, Retrieval, Archiving of Communication for Efficiency (TRACE) for incoming and outgoing documents. For online sample referrals and other laboratory concerns, the IT-Project Monitoring Office of the OneLab Program addressed inquiries from the member laboratories. Scholars were constantly

updated through an online group chat administered by the Scholarship Unit. The **DOST IX facilitated a nationwide quick survey on the operations of SETUP beneficiaries amidst COVID-19**. This aided the DOST Regional Offices in the formulation of policies and adaptive measures to support the MSMEs. To ensure proper monitoring of accomplishments, the Human Resource Unit keeps track of the different deliverables vis-à-vis accomplishments of each personnel. The top management ensured proactive interactions with all DOST IX employees through the exclusive group page of the agency. With the full commitment of DOST IX workforce and appropriate use of communication technologies, the WFH targets and deliverables were achieved despite less physical supervision.

Moreover, the strong linkage of DOST IX with the Zamboanga Consortium for Health Research and Development (ZCHRD), a local health network organization with member agencies throughout the Zamboanga Peninsula, effectively facilitated the implementation of the ongoing DOST IX COVID-19 initiatives on “**DOST**

**SAVES PROGRAM: Devising Operational Strategies and Tools to Safeguard Against the Virulent Epidemic Situation**, with Project 1: DOST DEFENDS – Deter Epidemic Flow and Escalation through Non-traditional Designs and Solutions; and Project 2: DOST TESTS – Thorough Evaluation of Sterilization Thresholds of Substances”.

While the WFH scheme is observed, the DOST IX laboratory personnel are also on an on-call work arrangement, ready to render services to institutions that require laboratory tests for their formulated disinfectants, which are to be distributed to frontline agencies. DOST IX also collaborated with a SETUP beneficiary for the production of BLAZED face shields (Beneficial Life Apparatus by Zinex Express and DOST). This innovative personal protective equipment is currently being distributed to the different hospitals and frontline facilities throughout the region. DOST IX has also been actively giving insights during meetings of the Regional Task Force for COViD-19.



# DOST X

To ensure the continuity of its operations and the delivery of essential services as well as respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, DOST-X adopted strategies which include: clear work-from-home action plans; employees are on-call anytime to report for work; constant and effective communication thru Slack, Messenger, email and SMS; pre-identified minimum employee learning online modules; creation of working COVID-19 response teams that include employee welfare; round-the-clock on-line presence of supervisors and top management; and continuity of inter-agency coordination, networking, and engagements in the provision of innovative services to the community.

A memorandum issued by DOST Secretary Fortunato T. de la Peña regarding the modified work-from-home learning arrangement was immediately implemented at DOST-X regional and provincial offices upon the issuance of the community quarantine order. Employees were given targets to be accomplished while at home. Those employees called for special assignments that can be performed only at the office were being fetched from and to their homes to limit outdoor exposure.

**The top management maintained open communication within the organization, and inter-agency coordination** with the Regional Development Council (RDC), Northern-Mindanao Inter-agency Task Force (NM-IATF), LGUs, academe,

and private sectors. Meetings, especially convocation every Monday are being held through video conferencing with attendance being checked, at the highest 98 employees out of 102 attended. The accomplishments of all employees were monitored and consolidated in a google drive. **To assure delivery of fast and quality COVID-19 specific tasks, different teams were created.** These teams are the: (1) Face Mask Team; (2) Face Shield Team; (3) Disinfectant Team; (4) FASSSTER-TanodCOVID Team; (5) Media-info Team; (6) Quick Queueing Team; (7) Ventilator Team; and (8) Specimen Collection Booth Team.

A web-based service provision became the best way for communication. MIS staff facilitated the maximum utilization of the agency's G Suite subscription, for example, the use of "google meet" in video conferencing. Other applications (e.g., "slack"), social media platforms, calls, texts, and emails are also listed as additional means for keeping and sharing information within and outside the organization. The Media-info Team has been committed in providing the public with result-oriented updates from the agency's accomplishments and initiatives.

The top management encouraged all employees to make use of the time for self-growth related to their work through the work-from-home learning arrangement. Learning materials and videos could be accessed from DOST websites, DOST mobile applications, Khan Academy, DICT website, CSC website, and other free online course providers.

DOST-X has performed functions even beyond its mandate to support DOH in the fight against



**DOST-R10**



**DOST-R11**

COVID-19. The Regional Standards and Testing Laboratory (RSTL) offers free thermal scanner calibration, water analysis, alcohol content analysis, and ventilator repair, to mention some. The different teams created were tasked to do research on relevant questions at hand. Reports, infographics, FAQs, DIY instructions were released to guide and inform the public. To put into realization the agency's initiatives and plans in supporting frontliners, DOST-X approved the **DoStopCOVID19 Project: a project to combat COVID-19 through provision of personal protective equipment and conduct of preventive measures.** DOST-X, led by the five (5) Provincial Directors, also launched the #DOST10SETUPfights-COVID-19: a battle cry to consolidate the bayanihan efforts of SETUP proponents in fighting COVID-19 and supporting frontliners.

## DOST XI

The unprecedented coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has caused a worldwide unparalleled crisis in our health, economy, society, livelihood, and tourism. Hence, the Philippine government have devised and implemented several measures to mitigate the growing and inevitable risks in the country.

At a trying time such as this, the Department of Science and Technology Region XI (DOST XI) – Technical Support Services Division (TSSD) proactively

carried out the following precautionary measures, operational work flow, and initiatives to ensure public service continuity amidst the implementation of ECQ in Davao Region:

### **Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)**

DOST XI's Occupational Health and Safety Team made sure that all its staff and customers are protected from the disease when inside its premises. The OHS Team provided infrared thermometers at entry points for daily monitoring of body temperatures; 20 boxes of surgical masks for the workforce and walk-in customers; 70% ethanol which is available at all entry points in the regional office; disinfectant solutions for regular cleaning and disinfection of the regional office; foot baths at entry points in the regional office; face guards for DOST XI frontliners; and receiving trays for a no-contact servicing protocol.

Internal guidelines on employee safety and work environment were deployed in observance of the quarantine protocols, social distancing, and proper disinfection procedures. An OHS focal person and deputy officer were also designated for easy and fast health monitoring response.

DOST XI also adopted alternative work assignments and schedules and provided free transportation for the reporting skeleton workforce. Pregnant and lactating women as well as those who have pre-existing

health conditions were exempted from the selection of skeleton workforce.

## **Regional Standards and Testing Laboratory (RSTL) Operation and Initiatives**

During the community quarantine period, the Regional Standards and Testing Laboratory (RSTL)-Davao staff initiated “DOST XI Simultaneous Disinfection: Sabayang Paglinis Contra Covid-19”. It also opened its laboratory to provide the critical services – consultancy on the preparation of disinfectant solution, testing of samples implicated in food poisoning cases, and testing of products pending for export.

RSTL-Davao also sent out letters to petroleum clients and depots to consider expired calibration certificates of tankers and calibrating buckets until the ECQ is lifted. When the city was under ECQ, RSTL has remained operational, analyzing samples of alcohol for detection and quantification of methanol, ethanol, and isopropanol to help address the issue on the proliferation of unlabeled, mislabeled, and adulterated alcohol-based hand sanitizer products in the market. Analysts are on an on-call basis should there be a need to perform testing and calibration services.

## **DigiHub Fabrication Laboratory Davao’s production of PPEs**

DOST XI’s DigiHub, in collaboration with DTI XI and the University of Southeastern Philippines, fabricated and distributed 2,551 face shields and 36 aerosol intubation boxes across the Davao region for Southern Philippines Medical Center, Davao Region Medical Center, Doctors to the Barrio (of Lupon, Kapalong, Asuncion, Digos), Malagos Rehab Facility, DSWD XI, Davao Del Sur Provincial Hospital, Medical Center of Digos Cooperative Hospital, DBM XI, Central 911 Headquarters, Philippine Red Cross, Barangay 25-C, and Philippine Genome Center (DRMC Diagnostics Lab).

## **Assistance to DOST XI Scholars**

DOST XI scholars’ allowances were released early for the 307 August starters. Scholars who are stranded in Davao City due to lockdown were given food packs and immuno-boosting ready-to-drink (RTD) beverages.



## **Food and Innovation Processing Center's immunity-boosting juice and chips**

The Food Innovation Processing Center (FIPC) has prepared and distributed 5,510 ready-to-eat (RTE) food packs to DSWD XI, and 795 healthy beverage bottles to the frontliners of the Southern Philippines Medical Center (SPMC) and stranded DOST XI scholars due to lockdown.

## **DOST XII**

Service continuity is all the more a must for government agencies to effectively uphold public welfare in times of emergency/calamity/pandemic. The DOST XII strongly supports the Secretary and the current administration in their conviction that ensuring continuity of mission-critical services amidst the threats of COVID-19 necessitates cooperation and synergy between and among government agencies, LGUs, and other sectors of society.

DOST XII, as a government agency, significantly supported frontliners and provided basic needs and necessary services to the public in response to RA No. 11469 or the “Bayanihan to Heal as One Act”.

One of the good practices which the office employed to ensure service continuity in Region XII in spite of the nationwide implementation of quarantine period/lockdown is **maximizing the use of readily available communication systems and social**

**media.** Through a group chat created via Facebook Messenger, DOST XII management and staff are able to discuss openly actions needed, status and updates, as well as future plans of the office. Anyone, regardless of rank, can share relevant information and give comments and suggestions, while approval of certain matters is left solely to the OIC-Office of the Regional Director. With the use of email, concerns from other agencies/organizations are duly routed to concerned personnel for appropriate action/s. **DOST XII's official website is regularly updated for advisories and announcements.** Given the prevalence of fake news nowadays, the office makes sure that only information and updates from credible sources are posted in its website.

Another good practice is the **instigation of great sense of volunteerism.** Essential staff willingly chose to serve and report to work whenever necessary, for the greater good. Upon the President's declaration of State of Public Health Emergency due to the threats of COVID-19, essential services were identified such as laboratory testing and analysis particularly of alcohol, supply and general services as well as the financial unit to facilitate mobilization of resources. As member-agency of the IATF-Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases of RDRRMC XII, constant coordination among relevant agencies is being carried out by no less than the head of office and the focal person for DRRM.

## DOST CARAGA

The private and public sectors were both heavily affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the continuity of public services were put to test. To ensure the continuity of DOST-Caraga's operations and services, the office established and implemented alternative workplans since the outbreak of the crisis.

Before the quarantine period, DOST-Caraga issued a memorandum to implement precautionary measures for the safety of its personnel and clients within office premises. An orientation was also conducted regarding the matter. Important advisories were disseminated to the public thru the DOST Official Website and Facebook Page. Moreover, a **Social Distancing Online Daily Time Record (mobile application)** developed by the DOST-Caraga ICT Unit and a **Touch-free Hand Sanitizer Dispenser developed by the DOST-Caraga iMake Project Team** were utilized in the office premises as safety measures. A receiving station for the whole office and per division were also established.

During the quarantine period, DOST-Caraga utilized various online platforms (such as Google Meet, Jitsi Meet, Discord, Email, Facebook Messenger) in conducting meetings, discussions, and planning sessions. The online discussions yielded various ideas and seven (7) project concepts/proposals that may be funded and



**DOST-R012**

implemented post ECQ. These include: 1) Online Makers Fair 2020 Challenge: Design and Development of Technology for COVID-19 related Devices; 2) iMake Training for Regional Office Personnel and Staff with topics such as: Basic Electronics, Arduino Programming, 3D Modeling and Printing, which include the Designing of Arduino Based-Contactless Hand Sanitizer to fight COVID19; 3) Development of Wearable Tracking Devices to Suspects and Probables within Caraga Region with Real Time Monitoring System and Data Logger to ensure that strict home quarantine is practiced.

Furthermore, the **office made sure that official hotline numbers are always available to entertain and address concerns of the clients without necessarily visiting the office**, especially for the SETUP and Scholarship Unit.

DOST-Caraga also conducted monitoring of its SETUP proponents to determine the status of the firm's operations during the period of the enhanced community quarantine, particularly the amount of sales, extent of product distribution, and problems encountered so as to assess if there is a need of repayment restructuring. A total of thirty-eight (38) firms from the food processing, agriculture, aquaculture, and forestry sectors in the region were found to be still operating amidst the health crisis. **A number of SETUP adoptors also stepped up to help the Caraganons in time of this pandemic.** To name a few, the Allenstick Trading of Agusan del Sur, the Butuan Agusan Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative (BAFMP) of Agusan del Norte, and the Del Rosario Rice Mill and Gloria's Embroidery of Surigao del Norte. Stories of the various activities and initiatives of **SETUP proponents who are doing community services are**

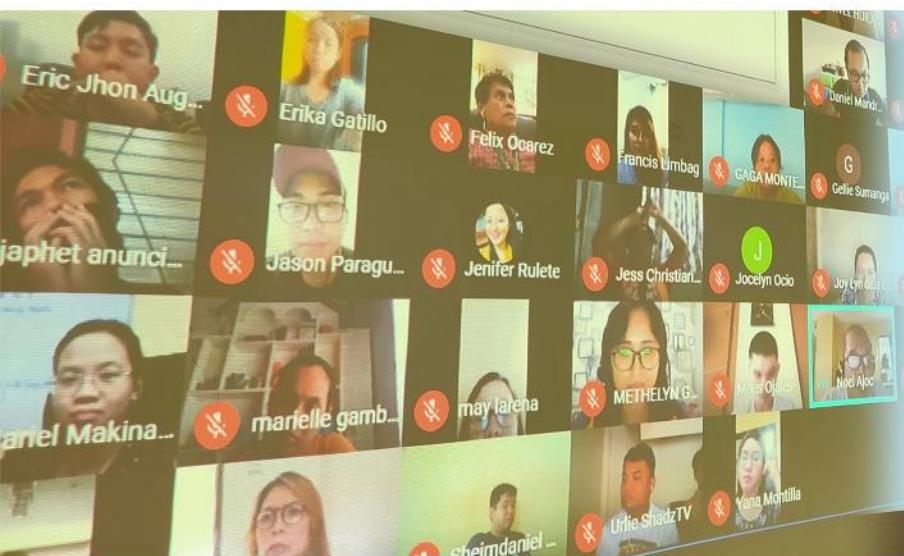
**being featured in the DOST-Caraga official website and Facebook page.**

The DOST-Caraga and its PSTCs maintained skeleton workforce to ensure continuous delivery of services while a work from home arrangement is observed for those who are unable to physically report to the office. A weekly report of accomplishment by all personnel is required and submitted every Wednesday.

As part of the human resource development program of the office, **all personnel are directed to register and participate in webinars, online capability building, and other mentoring activities** while under a work from home scheme, including enrollment in the online learning system called SPARTA, which aims to upskill Filipinos in the field of Data Science.

The staff are also encouraged to be proactive in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic – they are allowed to **participate in donation drives and volunteer works in support to the Bayanihan Act and the Department of Health**, while strictly complying with the quarantine guidelines set by their respective Local Government Units.

The regional office also actively participated in the collaboration of institutions and agencies, especially with the academe (Caraga State University, Father Saturnino State University), consortia (CHRDC, CCAARRD) LGUs, and the RDC members in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The collaboration between institutions and agencies were able to produce outputs that catered to the needs of the front-liners in relation to the crisis.



## MOOCs Massive Open Online Courses and DOST- Coursera Learning Program Grant



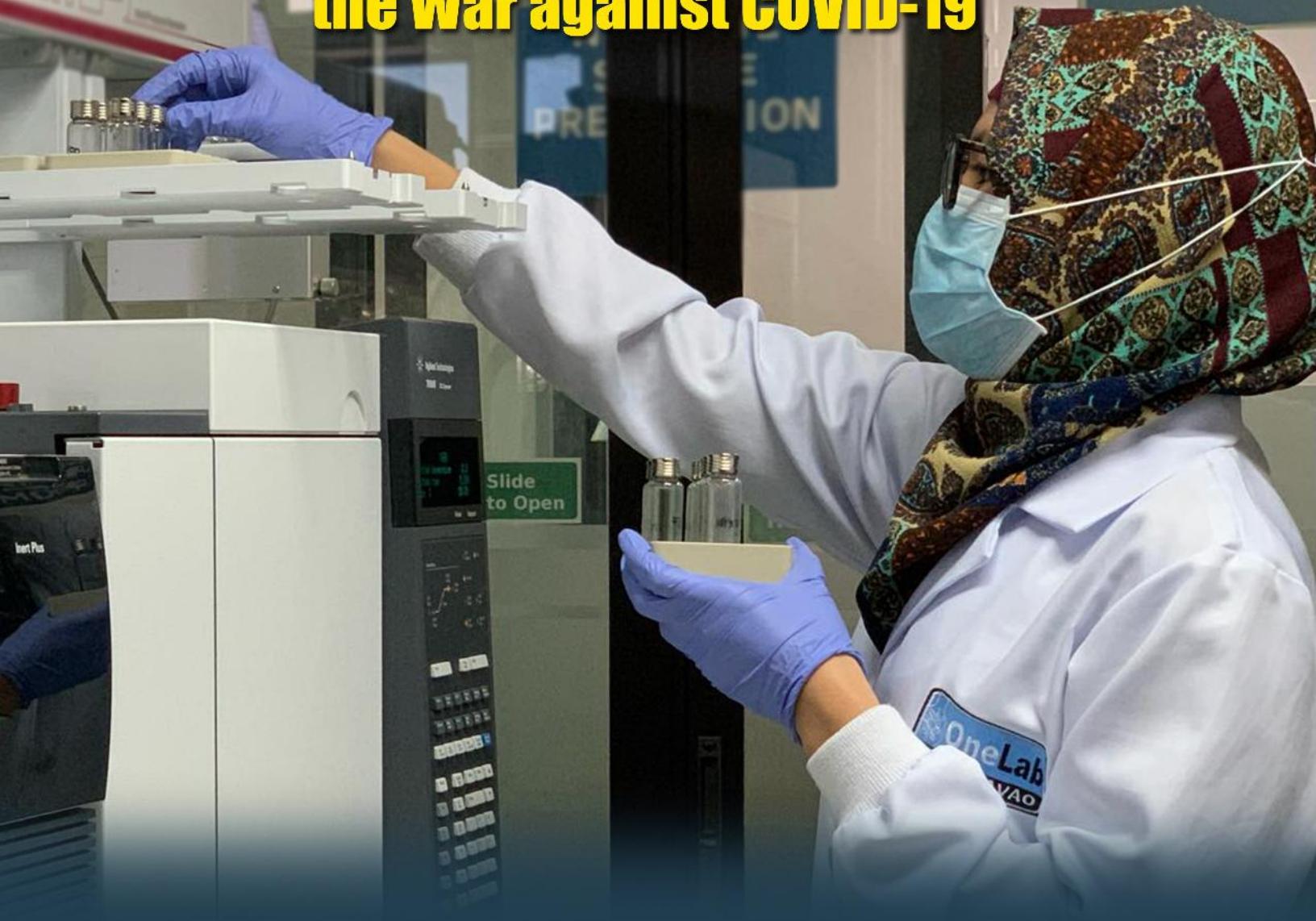


WE  
HeAL

as  
ONE



# One with the Nation in Fighting the War against COVID-19



Onelab, through its member-laboratories joins the nationwide efforts in battling the war against COVID-19. While the work from home scheme is observed in almost all regions, this never hindered laboratory staff to take part in their respective agency's initiatives to help in the fight against the deadly virus. OneLab member-laboratories offered free laboratory testing to determine the quality and purity of disinfectants and alcohol before these are distributed to frontline institutions and personnel by the Local Government Units (LGUs), government agencies, and private companies.

Personal protective equipment (PPEs) such as face masks and lab gowns, are being sterilized through dose mapping and irradiation by the Philippine Nuclear Research Institute (PNRI). Material and product testing are also being conducted by laboratory staff of the Philippine Textile Research Institute (PTRI) on their REwear (Reusable, Washable, and Re-wearable) face masks, which are to be distributed for free to frontliners. Sourcing from their laboratory supply, OneLab staff distributed approximately 160L of 70% ethyl alcohol (prepared by them), surgical masks, and

masks, and nitrile gloves to several hospitals in the country. In addition, the Reverse Transcript Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) machine of the Industrial Technology Development Institute (ITDI) and Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI) were lent to Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM) while those of DOST CALABARZON and

DOST XI were offered to COVID referral hospitals in support of the call for mass testing.

Dedicated to providing awareness to the public, DOST Regional Standards and Testing Laboratories (RSTLs) and Research and Development Institutes (RDIs) disseminated information on the basic protective measures against COVID-19 such as proper handwashing, use of disinfectant, gloves, and face masks as well as other related information to help flatten the curve of the pandemic. Articles and advisories were posted in their respective websites and/or official Facebook pages. They also linked LGUs to laboratory suppliers of disinfectants and PPEs such as face masks and gloves.

Despite the temporary suspension of services of several laboratories, the OneLab IT referral system remained running and functional, allowing the unimpeded referral of samples to member-laboratories that are in operation. In fact, DOST IX was able to refer eight (8) coffee samples for microanalysis and two (2) samples for nutritional fact analysis to Intertek Philippines in Manila.

The following DOST laboratories remained open to serve the immediate needs of their customers: DOST XII Satellite Laboratory in General Santos City to accommodate the microbiological testing needs of the tuna canneries in the area; DOST II to provide road tanker calibration; DOST XI to complete the analyses of all samples already accepted; and the Pharmacology and Toxicology Section of the DOST ITDI to maintain the laboratory animals being used for research by the Institute. the Institute.



LOOKING AHEAD,  
THE ONELAB TEAM  
COMMIT TO CONTINUE  
TO WORK TOGETHER  
WITH ITS PARTNER  
ORGANIZATIONS TO  
DEFEAT COVID-19 AND  
HEAL AS ONE!

Among the 31 Non-DOST member-laboratories, the following remained open to serve their customers: Philippine Institute of Pure and Applied Chemistry (PIPAC); National Reference Laboratory (NRL); Intertek Testing Services Philippines, Inc.; SGS Philippines, Inc.; Optimal Laboratories, Inc.; Analytical Solutions & Technical Services (ASTS); Negros Prawn Producers Cooperative (NPPC); and Jefcor Laboratories. In the international

front, the following OneLab members are categorized under essential services and thus, remained fully operational: Australian Food Microbiology-Australia; Geoscience Testing Laboratory-UAE; SGS Thailand; Cordina Chicken Farms-Australia; and Intertek-Thailand.

Looking ahead, the OneLab Team commit to continue to work together with its partner organizations to defeat COVID-19 and heal as one!



# ONESTORE.PH GOES “SEDS”

DOST's oneStore.ph has shifted to the Self-Enabled Delivery Service (SEDS) system in marketing the products of SETUP-assisted MSMEs to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 crisis on local businesses.

SEDS is a strategy focused on the development and conduct of online promotion activities for firms that commit to handle the delivery of their products within a limited distance – usually, within a 20 to 25-kilometer radius. The oneStore team did the usual boarding of products into the e-commerce platform and used Facebook and other media to aid in product promotion. Meanwhile, delivery of products to customers was done by the firms themselves. Initiated by the oneStore core team at DOST 02, this strategy is now being implemented in Regions 2, 6, 9, 11,



12, and CAR. A gross sale of P141,500.00 was realized from March 15 to April 26, 2020 using this strategy.

OneStore.ph continued to upload products of DOST-assisted MSMEs from the different parts of the country. As of April 2020, the oneStore team had already uploaded 844 products, representing 34% of their target for the year. Region 02 already recorded 51% accomplishment for this indicator. OneStore.ph also facilitated the advertisement of products of the Women Micro Enterprises (WMEs) under the Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) project of DOST with the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW).

The lockdown, however, resulted in a slowdown in the operations of oneStore. This can be

attributed to the lack of logistic support from partner-courier companies which were forced to suspend operations since the third week of March 2020 as their services require frequent human physical contact, an operational activity not allowed during the ECQ.

The DOST oneSTore team commits to continue innovating to ensure the effective use of its e-commerce platform by local enterprises as well as the consuming public. Once their employees are allowed to report back to work, DOST 02 will establish a oneSTore Kiosk within the Regional Government Center in the Cagayan Valley Region. Through this effort, they aim to bring DOST SETUP-assisted products closer to the employees working at the Government Center so the latter won't have to go to the oneSTore hubs situated in heart of the cities in the region. DOST 02 is also encouraging the other DOST Regional Offices to do the same.

ONESTORE X KADIWA

# KADIWA on APP

a quick guide  
HOW TO PLACE AN ORDER USING  
ONESTORE CITY MOBILE APPLICATION

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The newest innovation launched by the team is the oneSTore City Android App. This innovation is aimed at making oneSTore more accessible to the consumers in the countryside – thus, increasing the market reach of our local MSMEs. OneSTore has also linked with the #PinasMuna-Tayo initiative – an online movement spearheaded by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry which, among others, encourages Filipinos to buy locally made products.



# When Work Becomes a Prayer: A HOLY WEEK RELECTION

BY: JOSE B. PATALINJUG III

We are now placed in a very unique situation, a situation where no man can claim absolute safety from this virus.

Immediately after the declaration of the Metro Manila lockdown, I created our DOST-NCR Crisis Management Team composed of Technical Operations Division (TOD) and Finance and Administrative Services (FAS) personnel living nearby the office. There were a lot of questions running through my mind as to how things will work out for my staff – how will they adjust and adapt and how will they sustain their needs and those of their family in the provinces?

I called for a meeting. The first order of the day is to make sure salaries and wages are not delayed; second is to provide an initial supply of personal protective equipment (PPEs) to our staff from our DOST-NCR DRRM supplies; third is a discussion on the list of assignments to be done while the work-from-home scheme is observed; and lastly, is a request I asked all my staff, which is to prepare a weekly reflection paper for me to know what their thoughts are so I can reach out to them and make the necessary actions.

I remember Oscar Sevilla's reflection paper, which started with: "From the start of the Enhanced Community Quarantine and with the bad news arising from the

health crisis brought by the COVID-19, I constantly ask myself, "How can I help and somehow be part of the solution to the growing problems amidst the COVID-19?" Many of my staff have thought about how to be of good use during this health crisis and the answer to this question will be revealed later in this article.

Fast forward. Holy Week came. All the traditional practices and rituals are gone. No Palm Sunday to celebrate with the community, no Alay Lakad to Antipolo Church, no Pascal Triduum, no Washing of the Feet... Nothing. Everything was uncomfortably new. It became more mind blowing when USec Gev added me to the DOST-DevCon COVID TF Viber Group on April 10, 2020, Black Friday. There were actually a lot of questions going through my head at that time on what will be expected from my team and how we will execute the task, so many "what ifs" and "how wills".

It was Easter Sunday when everything was finalized as to what our tasks will be. Installation of tarpaulin in five (5) pre-identified checkpoints was set to be done on the following day. I asked my staff if there are any 'volunteers' for I know that it was a Monday and still within the Octave of Easter. I was not confident to get the numbers I needed to do the job, but I think I kind of underes-

timated my staff – in less than three minutes I already have an eight-man team!

One of them was surprised as I asked for volunteers, that he eagerly nominated himself to be part of the call for a mission, "I nominated myself as a volunteer on the call of our Regional Director, Sir Jojo. Our task was to assist and oversee the trial run

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and implementation of the RapidPass system. Finally, after what felt like 10 years of homestay, I saw the outside world again and I will be free again at last. Fieldwork woke up the dragon inside my body. Not just that I can help front-liners but also learn something new," Kim Atienza said on his reflection paper.

Arjay Rasco was also excited, as we give support to the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) Training and Seminar for the deployment of the system. According to him, he got high hopes as the RapidPass will soon be implemented, "When the DOST-NCR RapidPass Team was tasked to participate in the users training on RapidPass App for Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) members at Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City, my hope to ease and speed up the checkpoint process increases... the number of congested checkpoints will be assumed to be re-

duced as RapidPass will give every holder a faster pass-through at checkpoints as they can use RapidPass lanes."

However, fear filled my heart as a realization set in – I will be exposing my staff to this dreaded virus – one of them is a newlywed, two are young parents to beautiful babies, another is a family man of five daughters, and so on.

I did not understand how my fear turned into an inspiration after seeing our fellow civil servants performing their duties, which is more difficult than ours – the valor group of men and women in the military and police department. This moment also has pricked the heart of Jansen Hernandez as he clearly saw how love bears sacrifice.

Just like how the Lord sacrificed for the world, "our brothers and sisters from the police, army and navy gave their time and efforts to serve our country, working

tirelessly for 24/7," he said. This inspiration they brought within us is a sort of reminder to boost our soul and refocus our hearts and minds that this is a worthwhile task, an actual work.

Jansen also added that though in just a short period of time, he was grateful to be part of combatting our unseen enemy. "I'm happy that in my own little way, I felt that I contributed something for my country," he concluded.

Brimming with optimism, Erwin Ariola was quoted saying, "It is a great privilege to serve our countrymen even in the darkest hour of our nation. I do hope that all our efforts with the JTF-NCR, Inter Agency Task Force (IATF), will result to a better way of living for our countrymen and for my family. It is important that government personnel know their duties and responsibility as servants of the people. And I believe that from my small capacity to help achieve the goal of my



agency, any crisis that our nation faces likewise the mourning of Catholics to the death of Jesus Christ – we, as a nation will soon pass this problem.”

Through being part of this project, we can see how a little sacrifice becomes a solution to this awful situation. “Working on the Holy Week, the Rapidpass.ph made me volunteer and sacrifice,” Oscar now has answered his question. “Jesus Christ volunteered and sacrificed himself to save us. I do not say that I can save the country by just being part of this project, but I hope that volunteerism and my little act of sacrifice will somehow impart success to the program.”

previous clients because they were not able to operate normally and supplies are really hard to get by. His wife told me that the job order was a blessing because they were already asking their relatives who can lend them money to buy necessities for their baby and maintenance medicines for their elderly mother living with them.”

“For me it was just a normal business transaction, but I didn’t know it will have such a big impact to them. Anybody can be an instrument of hope, love and peace at this time. No good deed is ever too small because all acts of kindness are BIG in their own way,” she added.

para sa iba pang bagay, and I think pwede sya sa unified ID kung sakaling ipapatupad sya – records ng mga tao per LGU, marami syang pag gagamitan pero may kalakip padin na security issue... kaya yan ng mga Pilipino IT natin,” believing that Filipino ITs can dig deeper to produce a more secured and long-time use pass.

It dawned on me that our not being able to observe the traditions and sacramental practices of Holy Week should not be perceived as a difficult state, because what we were doing at that time was a form of sacrifice – we were deeply within the practice and involved in the celebration of the



*Jesus Christ volunteered and sacrificed himself to save us....  
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somehow impart success to the program.*

We offer help because we know someone needs it. However, there are times when we are able to help someone unknowingly. Jan Bravo testified how her initiative to help in printing out the tarpaulins needed for the checkpoints led her to be a channel of blessing to her friend.

“When I picked up the tarps, he told me how thankful they were for the call. Since the start of the ECQ, they were forced to decline

With all that, Mr. Almazan gave a suggestion. He said, “ang dapat lang bigyan ng rapidpass is yung mga dumadaan sa fast lane or yung mga kababayan natin na kailangan na mag trabaho sa labas o mga frontliner.”

In addition, he also suggested to reuse the database created containing information of those who will register to get a pass, “yung database na ganyan ay reusable sana in the future they can use it

Holy Week. It was a sacrifice and a thanksgiving that my team and I personally offered to our Lord Jesus Christ. This should never be a burden from the start, for the act of performing our duty in this time of crisis is a conversion of a work to an outmost prayer.

# DEPLOYMENT OF RAPIDPASS, FASSSTER, TANODCOVID, SPECIMEN COLLECTION BOOTH:

## *Issues and Challenges*

With the desire to help flatten the curve and win the country's fight against COVID-19, the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) is deploying technologies such as the Feasibility Analysis of Syndromic Surveillance using a Spatio-Temporal Epidemiological ModeleR (FASSSTER) for Early Detection of Diseases, TanodCOVID, and Specimen Collection Booths (SCBs).

FASSSTER is a localized disease modelling and simulation platform, which provides real-time disease surveillance and forecasting. The FASSSTER dashboard shows verified statistics such as the number of confirmed cases, asymptomatic, with mild, severe, and critical conditions, recovered, and deaths in a certain area up to the barangay level. It also shows data on age group and sex. Using the data verified by the DOH, FASSSTER can show case growth factors over time, time series projections, and map visualizations considering testing capacity and type of quarantine control.

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Lastly, as part of the government initiatives to strengthen the mass testing capabilities of the country in the detection of COVID-19 cases, the DOST through PCIEERD, PCHRD and DOST Regional Offices collaborated with the Futuristic Aviation and Maritime Enterprise, Inc. (FAME) for the fabrication and deployment of Specimen Collection Booths (SCBs). The SCBs will be used for mass collection of samples from patients to complement the rapid testing kits and accredited testing centers.

In the course of deploying these technologies, the DOST Regional Offices encountered some issues and challenges – some of which were already resolved, while others are still being addressed.





# DOST CAR

## FASSSTER/TanodCOVID

The DOST-CAR started promoting the FASSSTER, TanodCOVID, and Specimen Collection Booth (SCB) in the region through various means such as (a) meetings of the Cordillera RIATG, Technical Working Group on Economy Cluster, and Joint Cordillera Regional Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council – Cordillera RIATG on April 14, 21 and 23, 2020, respectively; (b) posting and discussion in Viber groups or group chat of various committees; (c) brief orientation of DOH partners; and (d) virtual meeting with the PSTDs and representative from DOH-CAR on April 24, 2020 purposely to orient the participants on these projects. Currently, the regional office is coordinating with the Cordillera RDRRMC for orientation of the members to further promote the FASSSTER and TanodCOVID in the region and provinces.

### Specimen Collection Booths (SCBs)

Of the 132 units of specimen collection booths (SCB) requested by the Health Department from DOST to boost and increase hospital testing capacity for COVID-19, seven (7) units were allocated for CAR as follows: two (2) for Benguet General Hospital and Medical Center; two (2) for Luis Hora Memorial Regional Hospital; one (1) for Conner District Hospital; one (1) for Far North Luzon General Hospital and Training Center; and one (1) for CHD, DOH-CAR.

The DOST-CAR will assist the DOH-CAR and the identified hospitals during the delivery of the SCBs. Hence, the DOST staff in the region and provinces should be oriented ahead as to the standard proce-

dures in the SCB installation, including specifications and minimum requirement on its fabrication. This is important especially if the SCB design is to be given for free to interested manufacturers and DOST-CAR staff are expected to provide the necessary support to guide these manufacturers in the region.

# DOST I

## FASSSTER/TanodCOVID

The deployment of various tools and technologies to help in flattening the curve for COVID-19 is quite challenging due to the ongoing implementation of community quarantine. The limited movement of people is one of the challenges that affects the promotion and/or deployment of the technologies. However, despite the current status of community quarantine in Region 1, DOST 1 managed to promote FASSSTER, TanodCOVID, and the Specimen Collection Booths. The FASSSTER with its component system, TanodCOVID were presented during the joint meetings of the Regional Task Force against COVID-19 and the Regional Inter-Agency Task Force, led by the OCD 1, DOH-CHD 1, and the DILG 1. These technologies were also discussed during DOST 1's guesting in the Kapihan sa Ilocos hosted by PIA-1. With these promotion efforts, the Regional Task Force passed a resolution enjoining the LGUs and their constituents to adopt the FASSSTER and TanodCOVID Systems. DOST 1 also requested for support and assistance from the DILG 1 in the deployment of the systems to the LGUs. A pilot setup and orientation with a local government unit will be done as the next step.

### Specimen Collection Booths

The deployment of the Specimen Collection Booths

(SCBs) faced no big issues and concerns other than the lacking components like the heat sensor, self-tapping screw, nylon cord, trash bags and busted LED light bulbs, which can be immediately solved. As of now, the initial four (4) recipients (Mariano Marcos Memorial Hospital and Medical Center in Batac, Ilocos Norte; Ilocos Training and Regional Medical Center in San Fernando City, La Union; Region 1 Medical Center in Dagupan City, Pangasinan; and the DOH-CHD Region 1) of the seven (7) SCB units donated are preparing the sites where the units will be deployed. Related to this, DOST 1, through the La Union Provincial S&T Center, managed to coordinate with a SETUP beneficiary who is interested to fabricate nine (9) SCB units to be donated to the hospitals and Provincial Health Offices. The SCB specifications and design provided by the PCHRD were shared to interested firms and/or individuals for free. Some private hospitals have expressed intent to acquire SCBs.

## DOST II

### FASSSTER/TanodCOVID

On April 23, 2020, the Chairperson of the Cagayan Valley Regional Task Force (RTF) on COVID-19 issued Memorandum No. 37, Series of 2020, advising all members of the RTF to register for a FASSSTER account. In an online meeting with DOST 02 personnel on April 24, 2020, RD Sancho Mabborang gave instructions to the DOST 02 staff, particularly those in the PSTCs to start promoting FASSSTER to their respective LGUs. The Information Unit of DOST Region 02, upon pronouncements from the RD, immediately started the promotion of the systems through the social media.

## Specimen Collection Booths

As regards the deployment of the Specimen Collection Booths (SCBs), a concern was raised as to why Quirino was not included in the list of recipients. As of this writing however, a request for inclusion was already submitted.



# DOST III

## FASSSTER/TanodCOVID

The adoption of the TanodCOVID application will be initially piloted in the municipality of Pulilan, Bulacan. An orientation meeting was held on April 21, 2020 between DOST-III and LGU-Pulilan to discuss its deployment in the municipality. The FASSSTER disease surveillance platform, on the other hand, was presented to the Regional IATF on May 13, 2020 to encourage its use, especially in the decision-making processes of the regional task force.

### Specimen Collection Booths

SCBs were deployed to the following hospitals and health centers in Region III, namely:

- a. Bataan General Hospital and Medical Center
- b. Dr. Paulino J. Garcia Memorial Research and Medical Center
- c. Jose B. Lingad Memorial General Hospital
- d. Mariveles Mental Wellness and General Hospital
- e. Talavera General Hospital
- f. Central Luzon Center for Health Development



instance, CHO Head and DRR Chief are in quarantine while other CHO staff are in-charge of the mass testing. In addition, two LGUs reported that they are already using similar text-based reporting technologies for COVID-19 cases, but they still signified their interest to join the next batch of TanodCOVID implementation.

From the first batch of selected LGUs, the following are the issues and challenges encountered during the trial period:

- 1** Residents may hesitate to report their symptoms unless they are already manifesting severe or critical symptoms.
- 2** Instances of discrepancy between the address reported through SMS and the pinned address in the report dashboard were observed. This was noted and reported to FASSSTER team for the improvement of the system.
- 3** There were instances when the system sent delayed replies.

Considering these issues and challenges as well as feedback received, FASSSTER and TanodCOVID team continuously improved the technologies. Further, DOST-NCR has expanded its invitation to other LGUs in Metro Manila. Some LGUs have already submitted their commitment letter to join the teleconference Orientation Meeting and are scheduled to submit an account request form to the TanodCOVID Team. LGUs are yet to finalize a list of personnel that will be designated as TanodCOVID users.

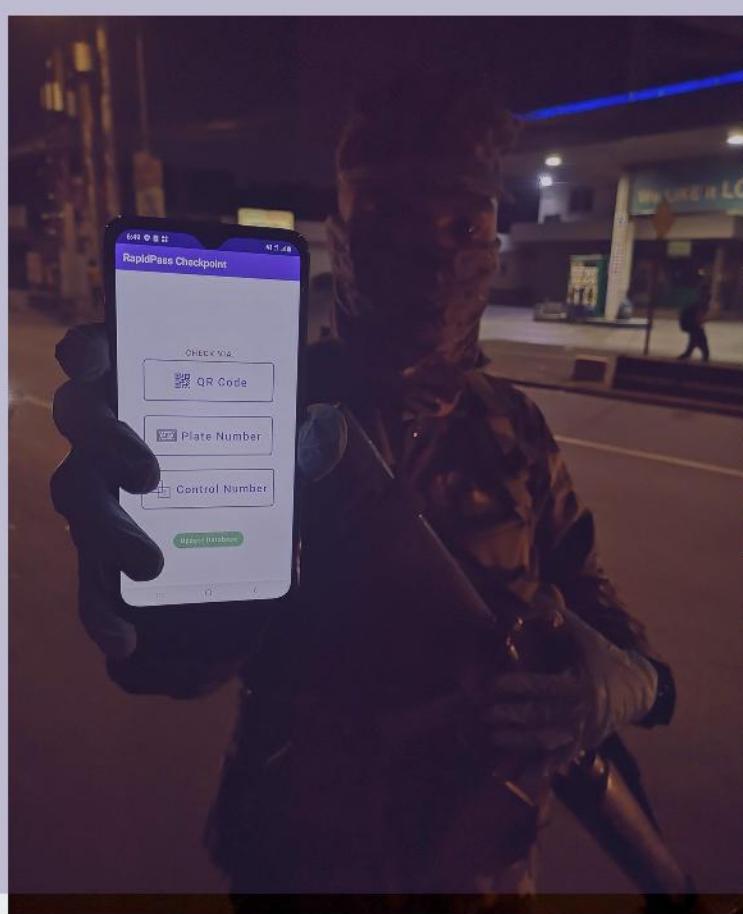
Aside from access to the dashboard and own mobile number for reporting, LGUs will also be given information materials or promotion collaterals ready for dissemination to the public in their area. The DOST-NCR is scheduled to hold the second project presentation and orientation for the next batch of LGUs to be facilitated by the TanodCOVID and FASSSTER team on May 4, 2020.

The Malabon LGU was the first to implement this program despite of its own “TeleKonsulta” application in gathering data on COVID-19 cases in the city. To ensure full implementation, the office of the Mayor designated the Ospital ng Malabon and DRRM office of Malabon LGU to directly handle the program.

## Specimen Collection Booths

DOST-NCR coordinated with 22 DOH-identified hospital-recipients in the region for the deployment and installation of 36 SCBs. While the acceptance/pilot testing evaluation of the prototypes was ongoing, DOST-NCR validated the installation and contact details with the concerned hospital-recipients to ensure efficient distribution and setting-up of fabricated materials. Since hospital-recipients are fully engaged in their efforts against COVID-19, communication and coordination on the verification of details among partner agencies; as well as credibility of information on delivery and installation process, specifications/dimensions of SCBs, and fabrication status were the main concerns encountered. Contact information of the hospitals seeking donations through news articles online were also used as alternative contacts to reach the focal persons. A contact list database of hospital recipients was created and maintained to facilitate ease of communication and coordination activities.

DOST-NCR assisted during the setting up of fabricated materials in the hospitals. DOST-NCR has also identified SETUP adoptors who can be tapped for possible fabrication and mass production of SCBs.



# DOST IVA

## FASSSTER/TanodCOVID

It was observed that LGUs are more focused on relief operations, enforcing ECQ, and other community issues which make it hard to push for the adoption of TanodCOVID. As of writing, both FASSSTER and TanodCOVID have no national level approval from the DOH and DILG. Approval and endorsement from these agencies will provide significant support in the promotion and adoption of both systems. In terms of FASSSTER data, only health-related data are available. The system lacks data for its socio-economic and security modules. Completion of these data will provide a more holistic view for decision making on efforts to combat COVID-19. Lastly, there are graphs and information that are not well understood by the staff and in effect, they cannot be discussed with confidence when promoting FASSSTER.

## Specimen Collection Booths

SCBs will be helpful as it is an additional layer of protection for the medical personnel. However, the hospitals' setup varies which makes it harder for some hospitals to use SCB. There is also a need for filters inside the SCB to better ensure the protection of the medical personnel. With its high cost (amounting to Php 130k), procurement of SCB is not included as one of the priorities in the realignment of GIA funds since DOST-CALABARZON prioritizes more the procurement of PPEs, testing kits, and swabbing kits.

# DOST IVB

## FASSSTER/TanodCOVID

Tasked to promote FASSSTER and its component application, TanodCOVID in the region, DOST-MIMAROPA has successfully carried out three (3) orientation meetings via Zoom despite internet connectivity and power interruption issues in the island provinces. The participants of the meetings were from Local Government Units (LGUs), selected members of the MIMAROPA Regional Development Council (RDC), and the MIMAROPA Regional Inter-Agency Task Force (RIATF), which highlighted the relevance of science and data analytics in the prevention of COVID-19 spread in their respective locality. An orientation for the Provincial Governors of MIMAROPA and another one for the members of the Economic Development Committee (EDC) of the RDC will be conducted where a resolution supporting the deployment of the system to the LGUs will be endorsed for the approval of the RDC.

## Specimen Collection Booths

DOST MIMAROPA, in coordination with the Department of Health (DOH), identified three (3) hospitals in the region to be recipients of SCBs: Oriental Mindoro Provincial Hospital; Ospital ng Palawan; and Coron District Hospital. The regional office is in close coordination with the recipients and DOST Central Office, especially on the logistical plans in the deployment of the units from the contractor given the challenging geographical feature of MIMAROPA.





## DOST V

### FASSSTER/TanodCOVID

The immediate issues that were apparent as early as the orientation stage about the project was its accessibility, user friendliness, reliability, and overall readiness. It was not easy to register and gain access in the website that it was even necessary to separately coordinate with the developer the problems in the registration. While information in the dashboard were straightforward and critical, the figures in the epidemiological status were missing important definitions. Correlation and fitness value in the time-series projections were at the- low 82%+ values for Region V which then casted doubts on the reliability of the scenario being reported by the model. While the project is impressive in terms of its updated information and ease of use, the pages were redesigned at least twice since DOST personnel were given access to the site. The ongoing improvements, while necessary, confused our earlier audience on the project's readiness. During the Regional Director's orientation with the provincial officers, the project's accessibility, persons/institutions allowed to access the program, compliance to privacy act, and implementation protocols were the major concerns raised by PSTDs. The expectation is that an Inter-Agency effort will be needed to facilitate successful deployment of the program, which will require presentation of the program to the LGUs, DOH, DILG, DSWD, DOLE, DA, AFP and other government/private institutions responding to COVID-19 situation. Board/Executive Resolutions from LGUs should take effect to ensure adoption of the program. It is also recommended to generate data

down to the municipal level for a closer look of community situation. All PSTDs have expressed their commitment to assist in coordination with these said institutions in their respective provinces.

### Specimen Collection Booths

Some of the information provided under the DOST selected recipient list were not accurate and had to be verified. However, given the expected overload and alert level in the target health institution beneficiaries, it took time before the hospital's focal person replied to letters and other queries sent thru electronic mails. To avoid the same difficulty during the installation of the SCBs, the coordinators suggest that a separate instruction or directive should come from the DOH. There is also a lingering concern on the protection over the exposure of non-medical personnel who will be designated to supervise the delivery, installation, and turnover of the SCB units in the hospitals. There is also a clamor coming from other medical institutions, LGUs, and organizations that an SCB be also provided in their facilities.

## DOST VI

### FASSSTER/TanodCOVID

For some time, our scientists and researchers have worked unobtrusively in the background, seemingly apart from the needs of the public; but at crunch-time, the esoteric concepts and complex equations were translated into technologies and innovations that helped mitigate the impacts of COVID-19.

The DOST initiatives answer the immediate concerns the society needs to fight the devastating scourge of the pandemic health crisis. There are however, some issues that need to be resolved. FASSSTER in particular has a very complex process for registration and access of stakeholders. In this critical time, the massive approval on the applications of users is important to expedite the implementation at the regional and provincial levels.

Likewise, it is not clear whether the reflected health capacity in a certain municipality covers both government and private hospitals or only that of the government hospitals and health care facilities.

DOST VI already started the promotion of both FASSSTER and TanodCOVID to Iloilo City LGU and the stakeholder cannot fully appreciate the features of the monitoring app as open access is not available. It would be valued if they can access and explore it during the orientation. The TanodCOVID on the other hand is a very good venue for the citizens to report their current health status. However, the Iloilo City Government would want to access first the data reported through its Command Center before retrieval of BHERTs on the reports.

## Specimen Collection Booths

As for the deployment of SCBs in Region VI, the recipients are already asking for the definite schedule. We understand that the fabrication is currently ongoing and that recipients in the Luzon area will first receive the units. However, it would be more practical if the design and specifications of the SCBs can be downloaded to the regional offices for local fabrication of the units.

And finally, the DOH Center for Health and Development (CHD) VI was included among the list of recipients. We would like to suggest that the unit for the DOH-CHD VI be added to that allocated for the province of Negros Occidental as there is only one (1) unit allotted for the province. DOST VI is set to deploy one (1) unit of SCB to Corazon Locsin Montelibano Memorial Regional Hospital and if granted, the unit for DOH CHD VI will be allotted to Teresita Jalandoni Provincial Hospital.

## DOST VII

**Timeliness:** Regional/Local Institutions are already using applications like WeTRACE being adopted by the Cebu Provincial Government. The Cebu City Government is also using different applications.

**Suitability:** Introduced technologies can be easily suited to intended/local users.

**Customization:** Availability of manuals, operations guide, "how to", and others.





## DOST VIII

### FASSSTER/TanodCOVID

Some of the issues raised by DOST-8 PSTDs regarding coordination with LGUs in their respective provinces are the following:

1. The existing protocols of LGUs and RHUs require that information on symptoms at the barangay level passes through and are verified first by the Barangay Health Emergency Response Team (BHERT). Thus, the TanodCOVID Team may consider the role of the BHERT and adjust the interface of the platform such that information passes thru the BHERT before forwarding the same to TanodCOVID;
2. Due to material time constraint, it would take time to sell the platform to LGUs as they have their existing protocols. With this, for LGUs to easily adopt the TanodCOVID, the DOST may consider arrangements with the DILG at the national level for easy deployment at the regional/local level;
3. To lessen issues regarding adoption of the project, the platform should be completely refined based on issues raised by the Regional Directors during the orientation;
4. The issue on who will maintain the TanodCOVID portal may also be considered to encourage receptiveness of LGUs to adopt, taking note of their strong IT capabilities; and
5. To clarify things about the platform, an orientation for interested LGUs be conducted with the presence of DOST Focal persons and the speakers from PCHRD, ADMU, and UP.

## DOST IX

### FASSSTER/TanodCOVID

DOST-IX initially introduced FASSSTER to the Regional Task Force on COVID-19, headed by OCD IX. Official communications were also sent to DILG IX and DOH IX to promote FASSSTER, as well as to seek their support and suggestions to effectively deploy the initiative in the region. Information materials/FAQs on FASSSTER were furnished to the said agencies.

#### Issues and Challenges:

1. Initial unofficial feedback from LGU-Zamboanga City's Epidemiology Office: Not keen on adopting the system considering that they have already established mechanisms which is already responsive to their needs;
2. DILG IX would like to see the updated relevant data (Time-Series Projections) specifically for areas within the region.
3. They suggested to allow the DILG/LGU to populate the relevant data.

### Specimen Collection Booths

#### Issues and challenges:

1. The transfer and delivery, installation, and troubleshooting of the booth for the Sulu Sanitarium has been requested to be either handled by MOST-BARRM or DOH-BARRM considering the local lockdowns and territorial jurisdiction.



# DOST X

## FASSSTER/TanodCOVID

The challenges that were encountered for the both platforms were on the issuance of MOA directing the LGUs and National Agencies to adopt the technologies. The DOST-10 FASSSTER and TanodCOVID team attended the 2nd Health Cluster meeting hosted by the DOH CHD-Northern Mindanao to make a presentation and promote the use of these technologies. It was during the meeting that the presiding officer asked the LGUs for their commitments in using both system platforms, but no one responded. Some LGUs are keen on guideline matters and will be looking for it before proceeding with the adoption of the technologies.

It seems that there is yet no guidance communicated to the local level either from the DILG and the DOH. Some LGUs have their own reporting system for COVID-19 and they might think of TanodCOVID as an additional workload for them. However, their systems may not be as good as TanodCOVID.

Nevertheless, the Office will continue to promote the technologies and facilitate the authorizations and submission of account registrations for those who are interested. The others might realize eventually the utility of these tools, which are applicable not just during pandemic but also even for localized epidemics or simple outbreaks.

## Sample Collection Booths (SCBs)

Additional requests for SCBs in some areas that are difficult to reach but with suspected cases are

anticipated. DOST will need to mobilize more SCBs in the worst-case scenario where massive testing will be necessary. It is also important that the effectiveness of the SCBs in protecting the medical personnel is assured as questions on this will most likely be asked. Furthermore, monitoring the effectiveness should also be considered as part of Standard Operating Procedure.

# DOST XI

## FASSSTER/TanodCOVID

FASSSTER and TanodCOVID deployment in Davao region has just begun, with the Regional Director and Alternate Focal Person having attended the Orientation on 20 April 2020. A team from the ICT/DRR Section and the RHRDC will be working hand in hand for the implementation of this project.

A list of employees to be authorized to use TanodCOVID has been drafted and will be sent to the TanodCOVID Team who shall then create the requested accounts. The authorized users are composed of PSTDs and the implementation team. An orientation for the PSTDs will be done once accounts are already approved for both FASSSTER and TanodCOVID.

It is foreseen that there will be hesitations from the LGUs to use the System. Thus, it is suggested that the Central Offices of DOST, DOH, OCD and DILG work in unison and create a joint memorandum for the utilization of the systems by the LGUs.



# DOST XII

## FASSSTER/TanodCOVID

Last April 24, 2020, the Regional IATF approved the resolution enjoining Region XII LGUs and other related agencies to adopt ASAP the DOST-developed FASSSTER and TanodCOVID19 Information System and maximize its use by allocating personnel and budget and promote participation of constituents.



# DOST CARAGA

## FASSSTER

### Issues and Concerns

1. Long waiting period (24-hours) for account activation of users – if possible, it should be just within one (1) to three (3) hours.
2. Predictive model or forecasting using confirmed cases is not applicable in regions with low confirmed cases. The low data on confirmed positive cases for Caraga Region affects forecasting and therefore, it cannot be shown that the model works.
3. It is suggested that the Developer/Management Team allow DOST Regional Offices to view NCR data for orientation purposes, showing trends such as peak dates, forecast on the number of infections, confirmed positive cases, deaths and recoveries and the effect of such interventions as social distancing, mass testing, or the ECQ on the reduction/increase of positive cases.
4. Nowcasting data per municipal LGU of Suspects and Probables (using current DOH data) be included – this is useful for the LGU's planning and decision-making for the possible establishment of laboratories and procurement of testing kits.
5. Presence of other predictive or forecasting models which the LGUs could also adopt
6. Limitation in the promotion and briefing/orientation of FASSSTER due to restriction in mobility imposed by the ECQ with each LGU imposing their own guidelines and checkpoints. Thus, orientation is



done only thru video conferencing, hampered by the unstable to weak internet connection particularly in remote municipalities

### **Recommendation**

1. DOST Agreement with National IATF or directive from the National IATF that FASSSTER will be the official data analytics model for COVID-19 for adoption by all LGUs in the country.

## **TanodCOVID**

### **Issues and Challenges**

1. Several tracking or contact tracing systems such as StaySafe.ph, CovidClear of Butuan LGU, contact tracing of DILG.
2. Technical Capability of LGUs to implement TanodCOVID not only on the ICT part but also on the capability of trained LGU personnel who will attend to and verify the conditions of texters experiencing symptoms and validate if the text is not a hoax or scam.
3. Reliability of data generated is important in order for the information to be valuable to the LGU for planning and policy making.
4. Presence of a stable internet connection in far-flung municipalities
5. Weak to intermittent SMS signal in remote LGUs and barangays
6. DOST personnel assignment to monitor the implementation of TanodCOVID and FASSSTER to

orient and assist the LGUs.

### **Recommendation**

1. DOST Agreement with National IATF or directive from the National IATF that TanodCOVID contact tracing and monitoring for COVID 19 cases shall be adopted by all LGUs in the country.

## **Specimen Collection Booths (SCBs)**

In addition to the five (5) SCB units provided by the DOST Central Office, DOST-Caraga will provide four (4) more units as requested by DOH CHD-Caraga for two (2) hospitals.

### **Issues and Challenges**

1. Lack of local fabricator
2. Only one (1) fabricator located in Manila where delivery is a problem due to limited transportation/shipping services caused by the ECQ implementation
3. Even if technical design be provided without cost to local fabricators, raw materials and accessories may not be available.

### **Recommendation**

1. DOST Central Office to request FAME to provide the technical specification and material balance to regional offices as soon as possible, without waiting for the 132 units to be completed and delivered since time is of the essence

# INSIGHTS

FROM THE REGIONAL DIRECTORS ON THE

## STRATEGIC WAY FORWARD POST ECQ



“  
EXISTING  
INFORMATION SYSTEMS  
AND COLLABORATION  
TOOLS MUST BE  
INSTITUTIONALIZED  
AND MAXIMIZED BY  
THE STAFF AND THE  
DEVELOPMENT OF  
INFOSYSTEMS THAT  
ARE RESPONSIVE TO  
THE NEEDS OF ALL  
CUSTOMERS SHALL  
BE PRIORITIZED  
”



**Dr. NANCY A. BANTOG**  
Regional Director,  
DOST-CAR

The DOST-CAR recognizes that it must be prepared to meet the “new normal” once the enhanced community quarantine or general community quarantine (ECQ/GCQ) is lifted and regular/normal government operations will resume. The provision of services both to external and internal customers is now seen to be highly dependent on ICT as well as the availability of satisfactory internet connectivity. Existing information systems and collaboration tools must be institutionalized and maximized by the staff and the development of Infosystems that are responsive to the needs of all customers shall be prioritized. The COVID-19 pandemic brought about several realizations, one of which is that the risks considered in the Public Service Continuity Plan (PSCP) must include health emergencies, and that the agency’s PSCP should be revised and implemented. With this, measures will already be in place, should another pandemic occur in this lifetime.

The DOST-CAR shall also be guided by the tagline, “#SciTech: Connecting STI and Communities in CAR” in bringing technology transfer and commercialization programs to the Cordillera region. As mentioned, ICT will be the major solution in bringing such programs to the communities such that the improvement of the ICT capability of the Provincial Science and Technology Centers (PSTCs) shall be prioritized. Likewise, collaboration with other agencies shall be considered for the capacity building of client communities who will have to use ICT in order to avail of DOST services.

DOST-CAR will also be guided by the tagline, “Strengthening Within” as it looks into not only the improvement of ICT resources available to the staff but also the conduct of HR interventions such as trainings on the use of appropriate web-based applications, mental health briefing, stress and crisis management, and technical enhancement for the agency not to be too dependent on outsourced trainers.



NOW, MORE  
THAN EVER,  
THE HEALTH  
AND WELL-BEING  
OF THE EMPLOYEES  
ARE OF PRIMARY  
IMPORTANCE.



**Dr. ARMANDO Q. GANAL**  
Regional Director,  
DOST-I

The Corona Virus pandemic has taught us a lot of lessons, especially on the way we do our work in the office; implement projects with the micro, small and medium enterprises, community-based organizations and other clients; and link with other agencies, people's/civil society organizations, and our local and political leaders.

Now, more than ever, the health and well-being of the employees are of primary importance. We need to care for each other. We need to strictly observe proper hygiene protocols set by the health authorities such as physical distancing, use of disinfectant, and use of face masks and other personal protective equipment to safeguard ourselves, including the members of our family and others from being contaminated. We also have to consider the security and economic concerns imposed by other agencies post ECQ. With movement restricted, quarantine passes should be secured and only persons authorized to be outside of residence for essential necessities should go out.

These conditions have drastically changed protocols in our Office operations, dealing with fellow employees and more especially, with the clients. Laboratory testing and analysis will be re-designed to cater to the changing needs of our customers. Project identification, Technology Needs Assessment and validation, project implementation, monitoring and evaluation will be done in the form of site visits, online meetings or document reviews.

Despite these "new normals," however, the working relationship with our clients and other stakeholders in the region have not changed. There is open communication among each other, with more frequent discussions on various issues concerning our operations. Linkage with other government entities has become knit and sharing of experiences has become a norm during meetings.



“  
POST ECQ IS A  
GREAT OPPORTUNITY  
TO START EXPLORING  
AS MANY ADP  
TECHNOLOGIES  
LIKE BIG DATA  
ANALYSIS, INTERNET  
OF THINGS, CLOUD,  
CYBERSECURITY, AND  
MANY MORE.  
”



**Engr. SANCHO A. MABBORANG**  
Regional Director,  
DOST-II

The “New Normal” will now dictate the operations of the DOST Regional Office No. 02 after ECQ. This will rely heavily on digitization to perform various tasks. If in the past, large scale digitization is just one of the “way forward” for most agencies, after ECQ, this will now become the most normal thing to do to sustain operations. Hence, online transactions will be the new normal for office activities like: conduct of meetings, seminars and or conferences, attendance, communication, reporting, monitoring, consultations and many more. Actually, DOST 02 had already started doing these in the past, but much heavier use for WIFI services shall be needed. Apparently, “WIFI” will become one of the most basic needs in the new normal.

Post ECQ is a great opportunity to start exploring as many ADP technologies like Big Data Analysis, Internet of Things, Cloud, Cybersecurity, and many more.

At DOST 02, basic requirement for hiring and performance would be the possession of a SMART phone to ensure working with high quality and maximum agility with required IT competency in support to laptops/desktops/and tablets being issued to personnel. Communication allowances of essential personnel shall also be increased to cope up with increasing data requirements while connected to the Internet, especially when everyone needs to be online even on weekends and holidays.

Majority of communications shall also be made online through SMS, chatrooms, meeting rooms, Facebook, email, Viber, etc. During the lockdown, all DOST 02 staff were 100% active in using the agency’s “DOST R02 Personnel”, the official Group Chat (GC) of DOST 02.

To be able to maintain our branding as “the game changers”, we shall see to it that ALL DOST 02 essential staff are IT literate to be able to properly cope up with the required changes. Also, all supporting hardware like laptops, printers, scanners and the like should be “state of the art”, including required servers.

Termination of some COS staff to comply with the DBM requirement to return 35% of PPA budget and 10% of MOOE budget to the national government in support to our fight against COVID-19 shall be implemented.

The following shall be made mandatory: use of footbath , temperature check, wearing of masks, alcohol/ sanitizer use, observance of physical distancing, limited face-to-face meetings (will hold online meetings instead), no over-time (will follow a sliding schedule from 7:00AM to 7:00PM only to give way to curfew schedule required by the LGU at 8:00PM).

For laboratory and metrology services, the laboratory.ph, a new system developed by the DOST 02 MIS team shall be used. Webinars shall be conducted in lieu of

physical trainings to avoid mass gathering of people. Supporting the webinars will be the posting of resources in DOST 02's e-learning system – the DOST Academy. DOST 02 customers will also be encouraged to transact with the office online, especially for priority programs like SETUP, scholarship, S&T information, and laboratory services.

Travels within the region and to Manila and other parts of the country will be restricted. Use of government facilities will be limited too to contribute to the government's stringent measures against COVID.

Since there will be no additional releases of SETUP budget due to a recently issued DBM Circular, DOST 02, for the remaining period of 2020, will focus on monitoring SETUP refunds to improve its SETUP fund collection rate.

OneSTore Kiosks shall be made available at the Regional Government Center so employees within the center need not go to the oneSTore Hub located at the city center.

The above new normal in the DOST 02 operations shall be made part of the upgraded Quality Management System (QMS), especially on risk management and opportunity assessment of DOST Region 02.

BUSINESS RECOVERY STRATEGIES AS WELL AS BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANS WILL ALSO BE ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF OUR TRAINING AND CONSULTANCY ENGAGEMENTS IN THE REGION TO HELP OUR PANDEMIC-AFFECTED COOPERATORS TO RISE FROM THE CRISIS.



**Dr. JULIUS CAESAR V. SICAT**  
Regional Director,  
DOST-III

The unprecedented and rigorous efforts taken by the Philippine government to stop the spread of the Corona virus, wherein strict community quarantine was imposed in virus-stricken regions and provinces of the country, have left an indelible and significant impact on the economy as these efforts hampered both supply and demand. The economic shutdowns have seriously disrupted supply chains while layoffs, lower income, and uncertainty have reduced demand.

Because of the widespread disruptions brought about by this pandemic, there is a need to think ahead particularly on how to build a more resilient and sustainable future. It is important for us to understand the parameters of a "new normal" in which Philippine society is expected to operate and live. An understanding of the new normal is crucial in formulating the appropriate DOST interventions and policies as we move forward from this crisis.

In the manufacturing sector, production of goods will be tilted towards essential goods, particularly food, medicine, medical and pharmaceutical products, and other essential goods mostly related to efforts to contain the outbreak. As demand for personal protective equipment (PPEs), face masks, alcohol and other disinfecting materials increase, there might be new MSMEs that will be created for these or will be shifting to these products in the immediate term.

In many service-oriented organizations in the private and public sectors, flexible-work arrangements (e.g. work from home) will have to be implemented to comply with strict physical distancing protocols. In many instances, part of the new normal is working and interacting virtually instead of face-to-face. Workspaces (e.g., factories & office spaces) will be re-configured to address the need for physical distancing and implementation of hygiene protocols such as accessibility of disinfection areas and disinfectants.

As companies, schools, and government agencies implement work from home arrangements, the use of digital technology is likely to increase significantly. In addition, business transactions such as online retail, online banking, digital payments, and online medical consultations that limit interaction between patients and medical personnel will increasingly become a necessity rather than convenience. All these need to be supported by a reliable digital infrastructure system with strong cyber security protection as well as a streamlined process for approval and testing.

As we move forward to the future, we at DOST-III will be shifting our focus to web-based or IT-supported delivery of our programs, projects, and services. To address physical distancing protocols to avert another relapse of the pandemic situation, we will allocate our resources for the development and production of instructional videos on-demand as well as developing computer programs/apps that will enable us to deliver our services via virtual methods in lieu of face-to-face engagements. Business recovery strategies as well as business continuity plans will also be essential components of our training and consultancy engagements in the region to help our pandemic-affected cooperators to rise from the crisis.

“  
WE ARE READY TO  
EMBRACE CHANGE, TO  
ADAPT, AND TO ADJUST  
NO MATTER WHAT THE  
NATIONAL SITUATION  
BRINGS US. THE  
DOST-NCR WILL KEEP ON  
MOVING FORWARD EVEN  
IF WE ANTICIPATE  
BLINDLY THE CHANGES  
THAT LIE AHEAD.  
”



**Dir. JOSE B. PATALINJUG III**  
Regional Director,  
DOST-NCR

Moving past the ECQ means coping with the “new normal”. With the current regulations imposing 10% reduction in our operational budget, coping with the new normal will be at a slower pace, but will still be a forward move for DOST-NCR. Despite the budget reduction, we will continue to do our best to move forward with the same number of manpower, with no layoffs and as one team as before. As we have the same number of public servants, the changes coming in with this new normalcy will not compromise the number of initially targeted outputs for CY 2020, reaching these outputs within our means and resources.

To ensure continuity without hampering and compromising the quality of public service, our effort in digitizing services and information will be doubled. Our staff are encouraged to utilize digital technologies as the new normal necessitates digital transformation. Where feasible, available technologies in the office will be maximized to sustain a remote work arrangement and unhampered delivery of services to stakeholders. Teleconferencing shall be continuously conducted for meetings and consultancies, and webinars for stakeholders will be organized to facilitate contactless services.

Digitization in the office such as electronic copy of documents and records, paperless activities, use of online platforms for customer feedback, cloud for online storage, and online remote access shall be implemented to promote digital transactions, speedy retrieval of data and files, and ease of communications among personnel and

units/sections/agencies. Digitization of files and documents is also a part of the DOST-NCR's contingency protocol as included in the Public Service Continuity Plan (PSCP). The PSCP further includes the risks and corresponding recovery strategies associated with the ECQ, internal system downtime, and data breach/hacking.

These impose the need for continuous improvement in our ICT infrastructure through the MITHI project. For internal processes, acquisition of software and capitalizing on expertise on management of information systems to develop and improve existing information systems and databases are ensured for an effective and efficient work environment for all personnel.

Further, disaster risk reduction management-related activities will not only include management of innovations for community and enterprise disaster resilience but will also now expand to crafting their own business continuity plans, which will include coping mechanisms during pandemic situations like COVID-19. In this manner, we can contribute to the government's initiatives on keeping the MSMEs in the supply chain and sustaining MSMEs' operations, particularly the food sector to attain food security. Likewise, through its enterprise development interventions, the CEST Program will prioritize provision of support to the displaced workers in communities.

Moreover, as this pandemic causes awareness of a healthy lifestyle and proper hygiene, the DOST-NCR will ensure a COVID-19 free workplace. A sanitation tent has already been set-up in the office premises; hygie-

nic practices and guidelines on preventions and management of cases shall be observed. observed.

On top of these, the DOST-NCR is committed to provide continuous assistance in the coordination and monitoring of DOST-funded projects (RapidPass, TanodCOVID, FASSSTER, DWARM, Gulayan sa Panayanan of PCAARRD, and Specimen Collection Booth, among others) deployed to communities for the management of COVID-19, while also leading nationwide projects implemented in all Regional Offices, such as the Regional Fairness Opinion Board (FOB) Secretariat and SETUP 2.0.

### **Way Forward for FOB Project**

The DOST-NCR will spearhead the drafting of internal guidelines for harmonized procedures and practices for the operationalization of the FOB Secretariat in the Regional Offices, considering the protocols of the national government with the 'new normal'. As such, FOB related activities like meetings and consultations, coordination with SUCs/RDI and MSMEs, promotion of publicly funded technologies, technology fora, and webinars will be conducted through online platforms.

To maintain collaborations among members of the regional FOB Secretariat, quarterly virtual teleconference meetings for reporting of accomplishments, sharing of good practices, and experiences will be facilitated.

### **Way Forward for SETUP 2.0**

Priority industries/sectors for SETUP 2.0 will now include the

health sector with sub-groups in biomedical devices, pharmaceuticals, and food supplements for national roadmapping. This will replace the shipbuilding/ marine transport sector as an identified priority previously. The furniture and creatives sector will also expand the current natural fibers priority to include textiles and garments, especially the industries involved in the production of personal protective equipment. Recognizing the importance of digitization of information and teleconferencing, the electronics sector will focus on the ICT and ICT services sub-sectors.

The supposed face-to-face focus group discussions will be conducted via teleconferencing; while planned technology scanning in ASEAN countries will be done through survey questionnaires.

### **Way Forward for SETUP 2.0 iFund and Technical Consultancy Services**

Our services with the industry will still push through with the set targets for SETUP 2.0 innovation enabling fund (iFund) and technical consultancy even with reduced financial resources. For iFund, we will still maintain the number of targeted beneficiaries by lowering project amount per company. Technical consultancy and Technology Needs Assessment (TNA) will be done via teleconferencing, following the regular Technical Assistance and TNA protocols with virtual facility tour.

We are ready to embrace change, to adapt, and to adjust no matter what the national situation brings us. The DOST-NCR will keep on moving forward even if we anticipate blindly the changes that lie ahead.

“

PUTTING PREMIUM  
TO PERSONNEL AND  
CLIENTS' HEALTH  
AND SAFETY BY  
RECONFIGURING  
WORK AREAS,  
TRANSACTION  
ECOSYSTEMS AND  
PROCEDURES,  
NON-FACE-TO-FACE  
FINANCIAL AND  
DOCUMENT  
TRANSACTIONS...

”



#### **Dr. ALEXANDER R. MADRIGAL**

Regional Director,  
DOST-CALABARZON

Going “back to normal” is out, as we move forward to the “new normal”.

The “new norm” will pose a gigantic challenge and obstacles as DOST-CALABARZON joins the whole government to be more innovative, strategic, relevant, and focused on health, economic revival, service platform reconfiguration yet more emphatic to the needs of our fellowmen in addressing poverty, economic slowdown, natural hazards, and health pandemic. The realization of a smart office and agile workforce of DOST-CALABARZON will accelerate in a faster mode of ICT internet-based technology acquisition, human resource empowerment, and system enhancement to ensure deliveries of technical and community services, putting premium to personnel and clients' health and safety by reconfiguring work areas, transaction ecosystems and procedures, non-face-to-face financial and document transactions, predisposition of logistics' supplies aligned with the enhanced Public Service Continuity Plan that are now pandemic and Taal eruption risk management sensitive mitigation and response capabilities. Planning process and project development, same as resource allocation for laboratory and technical services, will adopt a system approach that integrates sensitivities to pandemic and natural calamities for sustainable and long-term outcome and impacts without overlooking the health, safety, and resiliency of its personnel and its customers.



MOVING FORWARD,  
THE EXPERIENCES  
AND INFORMATION  
THAT WE GAIN FROM  
THIS PANDEMIC ARE  
RELEVANT INPUTS IN  
UPDATING THE R&D  
PRIORITIES SO WE  
MAY BETTER COPE  
WITH SITUATIONS  
SUCH AS THIS IN THE  
FUTURE.



**Dr. MA. JOSEFINA P. ABILAY**

Regional Director,  
DOST-MIMAROPA

The Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) in Luzon has led to the closure of the physical offices including that of the government. This pushed for a work-from-home setting as a proactive safety measure against the disease. The use of technology has accelerated and those with slow internet connection and those forced to avail of costly broadband subscriptions especially in the island provinces are at a disadvantage.

Success of the new norm relies greatly on a solid ICT infrastructure, particularly on the speed and quality of internet connection as it allows people to remain connected and productive remotely with or without crisis. It is time to harness again the ambition of a National Broadband Plan for the Philippines to make internet connectivity ubiquitous and within reach for every Filipino.

Moving forward, the experiences and information that we gain from this pandemic are relevant inputs in updating the R&D priorities so we may better cope with situations such as this in the future. Now that the role of Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) is recognized and appreciated more than ever, it is high time to stir up support and investments for Research, Development, and Innovation (RDI) to further unleash the innovative spirits of the S&T workforce and enforce massive changes in the STI ecosystem for us to overcome the challenges that this pandemic brings and the “New Normal” scenario it entails.

A WELL-THOUGHT  
DIRECTION THAT  
WILL GUIDE  
PROGRAM AND  
PROJECT  
IMPLEMENTATION  
AND DESIGN...



**Dir. ROMMEL R. SERRANO**  
Regional Director,  
DOST-V

With the massive severity and impact of COVID-19 to the quality of life and the economy, the DOST needs to re-think, re-calibrate and reframe its implementation strategies that are resilient, adaptive, and reflective of new information and conditions, to offer and ensure reliable and timely services to the public. With no modern precedent to determine critical and appropriate steps, a well-thought direction that will guide program and project implementation and design is needed. Initially, the following are for consideration:

1. Enhancing Work-From-Home arrangement as the new normal, following policies and guidelines cascaded by the national arrangement, and the concomitant resource requirements of the Human Resource;
2. Strengthening the Regional Offices through building of an omnichannel staff, and rapid digitization and automation of periodic processes;
3. Embedding a customer-centric electronic-government approach for a more efficient and effective delivery of S&T programs and services like adding alternative modalities for the person-to-person technical assistance through current online platforms and tools available for frontline services;
4. Improving online linkage with current customers or stakeholders as well as expanding their base while developing a more rapid feedback loop to capture information and insights on whether engagements are working or not;
5. Localizing some approaches of project implementation, but still within or aligned to national guidelines, recognizing the levels of readiness of the industry within each region;
6. Ramping up capability and capacity for data analytics to contribute to the decision making and compliance activities of government; and
7. Enhancing crisis management, adopting scenario planning, and strengthening digital platform of point of interaction of organizations' clustered mandates.

“  
WE SHALL ASSESS  
THE IMMEDIATE  
NEEDS OF OUR  
CLIENT-MSMES SO  
THAT WE CAN  
RECONFIGURE THE  
MODE BY WHICH  
WE PROVIDE  
S&T SERVICES.  
”



**Engr. ROWEN R. GELONGA**  
Regional Director,  
DOST-VI

The pandemic has definitely demonstrated how Science and Technology can significantly mitigate the debilitating impacts of COVID-19 and other possible societal problems in the future. This is an opportune time to further strengthen the position of the science and technology sector by aggressively harnessing research outputs and fast-tracking innovations as society moves on from disaster response towards rehabilitation, recovery, and establishing a new normal.

Of foremost importance is for DOST to further level up its focus on the health and nutrition sector. Renewed vigor should be given towards the promotion and utilization of technologies, particularly in the areas of diagnostic test kits, telemedicine, nutritious food, PPEs, medical devices, and of course, drug discovery and development. For the latter, it is suggested that significant resources be shifted towards developing the local pharmaceutical industry in manufacturing off-patent drugs and medicines that are needed by the general population instead of focusing too much on novel drugs discovery. This is to ensure a certain degree of self-sufficiency because the pandemic has shown the country's high dependency on foreign importation even of basic medicines.

In another area, we shall assess the immediate needs of our client-MSMEs so that we can reconfigure the mode by which we provide S&T services. We will contribute to the revival of the economic activities and livelihood in the region through digital transformation so that MSMEs can operate within the confines of social distancing, changing consumer preferences, and supply chain disruption. We shall continue implementing the SETUP iFund and the GIA program in order to rebuild consumer and business confidence. We shall support innovative start-ups through the DOST-Technology Business Incubators (TBIs) and Innovation Centers. We will likewise maximize the capabilities of the oneExpert portal to provide online technical and consulting services.

To protect the DOST VI employees' safety and well-being, the office shall implement precautionary measures in structure and in practice. These include creating physical barriers and modifying the workflow in order to avoid the possible spread of infection. We will maximize the use of digital technologies for communication to minimize travel and practice social distancing. We will institutionalize iTEACH (Individualized Training and Empowerment for the Advancement of Competent Human Resource) as a digital platform to provide learning materials to our learners.

Clients will be encouraged to call in for scheduling as well as communicate online or through SMS in order to limit their exposure to the environment while at the same time be provided with the services that they require. The post ECQ environment is the new revolution that heralds the so-called new normal. It requires us not only to recover but also to move forward to live the new paradigm.



THERE IS A NEED TO  
THINK OUT OF THE BOX  
(NEW NORMAL) IN  
PLANNING, FUNDING,  
AND IMPLEMENTING  
S&T PROGRAMS.



**Engr. EDILBERTO L. PARADELA**  
Regional Director,  
DOST-VII

The regional office shall change its mindset to address new normal in the implementation of S&T programs in the region. DOST Regional Office has to be more proactive in addressing current and future needs of the people and community.

A need to establish regional STI or Innovation Value Chain will serve as basis for joint undertakings of all players in meeting demands and needs for regional economic sustainable and inclusive development. This will also serve as source of strategies that can be used in implementing programs initiated by national government in the new normal period. (e.g. Balik Probinsya program, & others).

Allocation of funds for the regional programs will be made available by not depending on any crafted national program. There is a need to think out of the box (new normal) in planning, funding, and implementing S&T programs.



COLLABORATE WITH  
SUCS AND OTHER NGAS  
FOR THE HARMONIZED  
AND HOLISTIC APPROACH  
ON THE DEVELOPMENT  
AND IMPLEMENTATION  
OF REGIONAL COVID-19  
RESPONSE AND  
RECOVERY PLAN.



**Engr. ERNESTO M. GRANADA**  
Regional Director,  
DOST-VIII

In compliance to the National Budget Circular No. 580, series of 2020 which calls for the discontinuance of some of the agency's appropriated programs, projects, and activities (PAPs), the following way forward plans are to be initiated by DOST VIII. One strategy is for the PPAs funded through Local Grants-in-Aid (GIA) to be re-identified and/or re-categorized in accordance with the present COVID-19 efforts of DOST VIII to be part of the government's "Bayanihan" efforts, which is generally directed towards response and recovery efforts. An example of which is the project on calamansi juice production, which is in the list of proposed GIA projects – a source of health and nutrition drink for frontliners, who are the prospective beneficiaries. Next is to revisit the list of proposed local GIA projects and consider balancing health and economic priorities and/or identify new S&T-based livelihood project. Matters such as the following should be considered: (a) the essentiality of the livelihood projects; (b) the implementability/workability of the projects in the light of health protection aspect – example of this is the social/physical distancing; (c) the importance of the products at this period in time; and (d) the availability of raw materials for production and the market (supply chain).

In addition to these, DOST VIII also plans to do the following measures:

1. Continue to allow the smooth flow of communication for directives, instructions, and guidance coming from the DOST Central Office and feedback coming from the regional office to the former.
2. Identify projects that would assist on-going SETUP and existing GIA funded projects in ensuring continuation of their business.
3. Identification and Implementation of COVID-19 Response S&T projects.
4. Realigning of some local GIA-funded internally managed projects in view of the “new normal”.
5. Build SETUP beneficiaries’ confidence on the government and coordinate with DTI, DOF, NEDA, and other appropriate government agencies for the SETUP beneficiaries to be included/enrolled and avail of the funding assistance extended by the government to MSMEs under the Enterprise Rehabilitation Financing Program and other stimulus and amelioration packages for businesses and workers of MSMEs, respectively.
6. Continued implementation of alternative work schedule until community quarantine is lifted.
7. Continue the daily disinfecting of the workplaces and work environment; and make the daily practice of personal hygiene of washing of hands, applying of isopropyl alcohol, practice on social distancing, and temperature monitoring for both employees and walk-in clients as the new normal in operations and delivery of public service.
8. Implement strategy wherein an emergency fund to be taken from agency’s GAA, is made available to the management in cases where disaster/calamity, man-made or otherwise, strikes the country and/or region to ensure that un-targeted actions and/or plans to address its impact can be employed immediately.
9. Make video-conferencing a common activity of the organization, using either, “.govmail” or other application.
10. Scholarship staff to travel to the different provinces to conduct contract signing of the passers of SEI Scholarship while observing proper measures to avoid contracting the corona virus.
11. Utilization of online services by the Scholarship unit for submission of the required documents for ongoing scholars and application of the SEI Scholarship.
12. Consider online/OTT (over-the-top) formats for the conduct of S&T promotion activities to avoid mass gatherings.
13. Consult with resource speakers/lecturers of trainings and consultancy for external clients the identification of strategies and development of platforms to implement trainings and consultancy services in the “new normal” situations.
14. Conduct consultations with/online surveys to Local Government Units (LGUs) on the S&T needs vis-à-vis their “new normal” priority programs and projects.
15. Collaborate with SUCs and other national government agencies for the harmonized and holistic approach on the development and implementation of regional COVID-19 response and recovery plan.
16. Consider the inclusion of COVID-19 related R&D projects and activities in the revision of the Regional Research and Development Agenda.
17. Consider in the office operations the adaptation of the “new normal” behavior of the industries such as the food chain, transportation, retail businesses, and others.
18. Continue active participation in the Regional Development Council (RDC), Regional and Local Task Force on COVID-19, RDRRMC, and other committees.
19. Revisit and review the present Public Service Continuity Plan (PSCP) of DOST-VIII.
20. Revisit and review office’s guidelines, policies, rules and regulations to be attuned with the new normal.



ADOPT A NEW NORM  
OF BUSINESS PROCESSES  
AND PROCEDURES THAT  
ARE RESPONSIVE AND  
RELEVANT TO THE NEW  
DIRECTIVES OF THE DOST  
AND THE NATIONAL  
GOVERNMENT, ALIGNED  
WITH THE INTER-AGENCY  
TASK FORCE (IATF)  
FRAMEWORK.



**Dir. MARTIN A. WEE**  
Regional Director,  
DOST-IX

By threatening disruption of public service delivery, the COVID-19 pandemic touched a cardinal principle of public service, that of continuity. In a show of courageous response however, DOST-IX have been quick to adapt and re-adjust the way in which services are delivered so as to minimize the negative impact of the pandemic on our employees and customers.

After ECQ, stringent control measures are to be taken into serious consideration to sustain our level of achievement and to avoid complacency and resurgence of cases. Ensuring maximum protection of the DOST IX employees, partners and stakeholders and continual provision of essential services to the public amidst the COVID-19 crisis, the regional office readies its innovative approaches and mechanisms to adopt a new norm of business processes and procedures that are responsive and relevant to the new directives of the DOST and the national government, aligned with the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) Framework.

While on ECQ, DOST IX revisited and checked its QMS for relevance given the new norm. It crafted new mechanisms, policies, and procedures for the conduct of its front-line services, including the conduct of Technology Needs Assessment (TNA) and Project Monitoring and Evaluation for SETUP; receiving of samples for laboratory testing and

calibration services; conduct of important meetings; and even receiving and handling its external customers. Internal control measures for DOST IX personnel shall also be strictly observed. For the new normal, peer-to-peer interaction shall be limited. Documents will be electronically distributed and the use of phone and online tools in communicating will be encouraged instead of face-to-face interactions. As we work on the new normal operations, the agency shall continually review, assess, evaluate, and improve existing ICT systems/databases to make it more responsive and relevant to the changing time, and to the needs and expectations of the customers.

The on-going DOST COVID-19 initiatives on DOST SAVES PROGRAM: Devising Operational Strategies and Tools to Safeguard Against the Virulent Epidemic Situation, with Project 1, DOST DEFENDS: Deter Epidemic Flow and Escalation through Non-traditional Designs and Solutions; and Project 2, DOST TESTS: Thorough Evaluation of Sterilization Thresholds of Substances, shall be sustained to help mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 in the communities.

Furthermore, the DOST IX Public Service Continuity Plan will also be revisited and updated to make it responsive to the effects of the pandemic and other similar hazards in the future.



MOVING FORWARD,  
THE EXPERIENCES  
AND INFORMATION  
THAT WE GAIN FROM  
THIS PANDEMIC ARE  
RELEVANT INPUTS IN  
UPDATING THE R&D  
PRIORITIES SO WE  
MAY BETTER COPE  
WITH SITUATIONS  
SUCH AS THIS IN THE  
FUTURE.



**Dir. ALFONSO P. ALAMBAN**  
Regional Director,  
DOST-X

As the coronavirus pandemic takes a heavy toll on the health and lives of the people in the different parts of the world, the Philippines is not spared in facing enormous challenges that eventually introduced us to what is now called the “new normal”. Social distancing, wearing face masks, and even frequent handwashing with soap and water have suddenly become part of everyone’s daily life.

In this public health crisis, both the rich and poor countries realize the importance of contingency plans and proper response and management during a pandemic or even just an epidemic. Contingency plans should be science and technology-based yet understandable to the layman; comprehensive yet specific; firm yet flexible; and most of all, made always timely and relevant. Contingency planners should base measures not only on what has happened in the past, but also, on what is theoretically possible – the what ifs? This will allow the instrumentalities of government to move quickly to recovery rather than wait for instructions. The DOST should take the lead in crafting such S&T-based Pandemic Contingency Plan.

The economy in Region 10 has been affected beyond imagination. The dilemma of prolonged community quarantine, tighter safety protocols, depressed market demand, and disrupted supply chains slowed down the business activities in the Region. These measures resulted in difficulty in navigating financial and operational challenges brought about by the current situation. Some businesses have to shift directions and operate in new systems and ways. The government is

doing its best to provide interventions such as social amelioration and business recovery packages. Novel technologies, innovations, and ideas are also introduced to start-ups as aid for business development. Also, various financial institutions are offering low-interest rates for loans even if borrowers’ capacities to pay are affected due to lesser business activities. The aim is to rise above these challenging times.

An overall rehabilitation and recovery plan is deemed necessary to continue business operations. It outlines tailored-fit protocols, procedures, and instructions under the “new normal”. The economic sector shall be working hand-in-hand with science, technology, and innovation (STI) in the road to normalcy. STI will focus on providing current health protocols, new regulatory standards, and systems such as the implementation of more stringent and responsive food safety mechanisms, and adoption of strengthened product standards that are applicable for online transactions. It shall also take charge of the advanced automation and digitization, which will help in the operation of businesses and understanding their trends. This will include data management systems, analytics, and data value chain which can help them in coming up with science-based imperatives. Additionally, the STI shall provide the technical support in various information systems for online transactions and operations, including cybersecurity and data privacy. Meanwhile, the business community shall take the lead in crafting a more responsive “market outlook” and an easily executable “supply chain outlook”.

The DOST can and shall play a major role in providing S&T-based guidance for the recovery of the country. Research and development (R&D) needs to be further enhanced, specifically in understanding the virus more deeply to halt its spread and to find the cure of the disease. Allotment of more resources to PCHRD or for R&D would make a difference to aid the medically and scientifically knowledgeable. DOST shall continue and strengthen its existing programs and services such as that on food safety and quality, to include closer evaluation of home-based food production to ensure the safety of consumers, including online ones. The FNRI and ITDI can help along this line. The organization shall also consider upgrading, modernizing, and expanding more its laboratory services to cope with the market demand.

The investments we make today will generate relevant information that we can use in the future; the more we comprehensively understand the situation, the better we handle the next unanticipated crisis. Complacency is out of the picture as another wave of the pandemic is not impossible. With the collective effort of everyone, we shall triumph to recover and heal as one.

“

## ADDRESS THE CRITICAL NEEDS OF DOST XI WORKFORCE AND STAKEHOLDERS DURING EPIDEMICS AND PANDEMICS IN THE PURSUIT TO BE MORE RESILIENT AND AGILE IN RESPONDING TO THIS CRISIS FOR EXCELLENT PUBLIC SERVICE

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**Dr. ANTHONY C. SALES**  
Regional Director,  
DOST-XI

The DOST serves as the Vice Chair for Disaster Prevention and Mitigation of the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (DRRMC) both at the national and regional levels.

As an integral part of DRRMC, DOST XI has developed and implemented programs and projects to combat the hazards and risks associated with natural disasters and calamities, using Science and Technology as basis for interventions. However, biological hazards including viruses, bacteria, and other infectious microorganisms, as well as chemical hazards have not been included in the list of hazards to be managed as part of the disaster management plans in the country. The recent COVID-19 pandemic has shown the extensive damage that biological hazards can have on human lives and the economy and brought to bear on all individuals, communities, and government agencies the need to prepare, mitigate, and build resilience to epidemics and pandemics.

A Procedures Manual on Prevention, Mitigation, and Building Resilience to Epidemics and Pandemics is now being crafted by DOST XI. It details the various procedures that DOST XI shall take before, during, and after the occurrence of epidemics and pandemics. It shall highlight the best practices of the agency and all R&D initiatives through its various programs, projects, and activities. The documentation of these procedures translates the lessons learnt by the agency during the COVID-19 situation. The procedures in this Manual shall be developed to address the critical needs of DOST XI workforce and stakeholders during epidemics and pandemics in the pursuit to be more resilient and agile in responding to this crisis for excellent public service.



**Engr. MAHMUD L. KINGKING**

OIC, Office of the Regional Director,  
DOST-XII

IN ORDER TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE FAST ECONOMIC RECOVERY OF THE NATION AFTER THE ENHANCED COMMUNITY QUARANTINE, THERE IS A NEED TO STRATEGICALLY INCREASE HUMAN PRODUCTIVITY IN COPING WITH THE MULTI-DIMENSIONAL CHALLENGES OF GROWING GLOBAL UNCERTAINTIES THROUGH S&T.



RETOOLING AND CAPABILITY BUILDING OF REGIONAL OFFICE AND PSTC PERSONNEL TO IMPLEMENT R&D IN COOPERATION WITH HEIS



**Dir. DOMINGA D. MALLONGA**

Regional Director,  
DOST-CARAGA

#### National Level

1. Streamline the Harmonized National R&D Agenda (HNRDA) and DOST should assert its mandate as the agency that will provide central direction, leadership, and coordination of all scientific and technological efforts in the country for efficient use of funds and other resources; Niche centers shall be promoted with collaboration and complementation as the key – not competition; More R&D on food sufficiency/security, energy, and health needs as these are most crucial in times of crises;
2. Review the relevance or applicability of SETUP to the mandate of DOST and consider:
  - a) CEST – showcasing DOST generated technologies and shifting or realigning funds to CEST communities; provide measurable parameters of assessing the outcome and impact of the interventions; review also the basis of selecting CEST communities, which may not be limited to the poorest of the poor communities where the impact of DOST-generated technologies may be demonstrated; and
  - b) R&D in cooperation with the Regional Offices and PSTCs and SUCs and private HEIs.
3. To adopt teleconferencing for meetings and conferences in order to minimize traveling expenses and to minimize exposure to health risks. The office shall take advantage of the use of internet to connect with stakeholders and clients on matters that do not necessarily require personal interaction. This strategy may not only prevent crowd infection, but also helps reduce resource requirements such as funds, transportation, time, and even physical stress;



## Regional Level

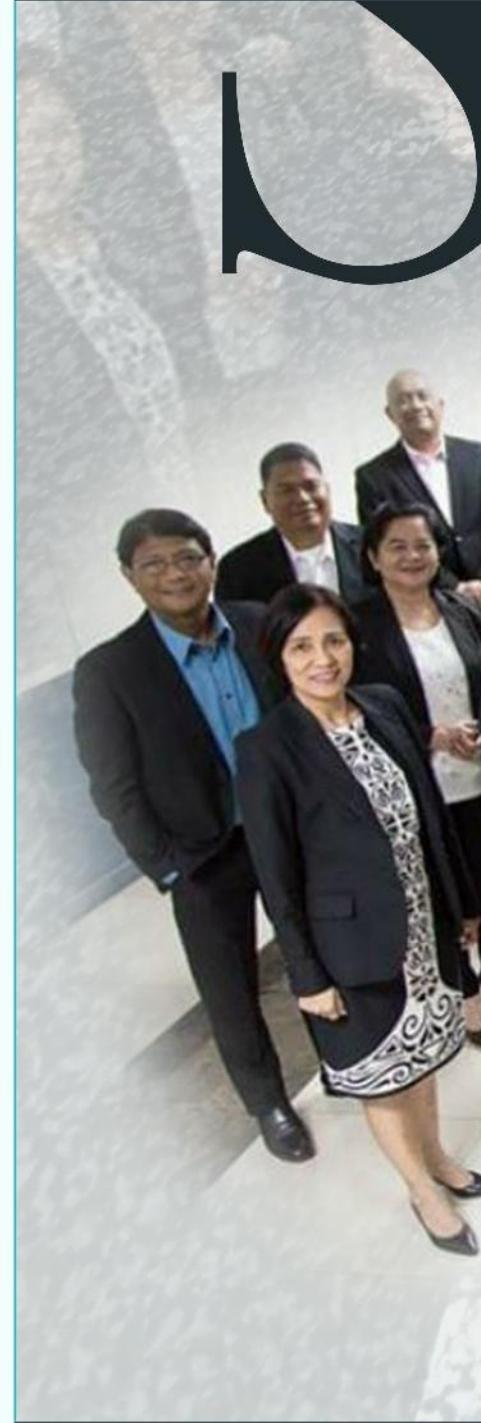
4. Retooling and capability building of Regional Office and PSTC personnel to implement R&D in cooperation with HEIs;
5. Close coordination with the Regional Development Council and the different consortia in the prioritization and endorsement/approval of project proposals for funding;
6. Review/revisit the agency's Public Service Continuity Plan (PSCP), aligned with the inter-agency PSCP to cover not only natural disasters such as earthquake, tsunami, typhoon, storm surge, floods and flooding, landslides but also to include human-induced events and health risks due to virus, bacteria and the like, food poisoning, food shortage, water-shortage, and even internet connectivity. Review as well the Communication Plan, the Risk Management Plan and the Human Resource Development Plan (HRDP) of the agency to align with the PSCP;
7. Teleconferencing in the conduct of meetings and conferences to minimize traveling expenses and to minimize exposure to health risks. The personnel will have in-house training for ICT;
8. Implementation of the 4-day workweek to ensure continuous operations and delivery of quality service to clients;
9. Physical restructuring of the office wherein holding area will be arranged for clients and receiving stations per division at the lobby will be done as one of the safety measures post ECQ;
10. DOST-Caraga, along with different government agencies and

other sectors in the region, will propose and implement more COVID-19 related projects such as the establishment of TeleMedicine Centers and laboratories capable for COVID-testing and development of products such as 3D-printed face shields. A Mobile Anti-COVID Hand Washing Station and the use of Universal Contactless Hand Sanitizers powered by sensors and a food demonstration site for urban gardening and hydroponics will also be established;

11. The office will also focus on the rollout of the FASSSTER and Tanod-COVID to aid the policymakers in understanding the trend of the spread of the virus;

12. With the continuous provision of basic services needed by the public, the limited movement may be used to advantage by developing innovative projects to assist business establishments such as teaching firms to make their products and services available online and expand their market range. In addition, the Small Enterprise Technology Upgrading Program (SETUP) is set to organize its clients and establish online portal for concerns and online payments; and

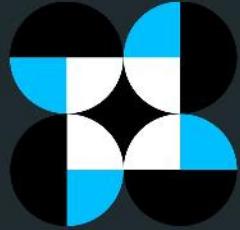
13. The Metrology Laboratory of the Regional Standards and Testing Laboratory will be strengthened/ reinforced to cater to the calibration needs of hospitals and health centers. It shall implement a Caraga-wide calibration and verification of contactless thermal scanners used by frontliners in hospitals, barangays, and checkpoints. There is a need to ensure that the temperature reading of the thermal scanners are accurate in support to DOST Caraga's initiative for COVID-19 mitigation.



# INCE FOR THE PEOPLE



**SCIENCE FOR THE PEOPLE:**  
STORIES OF RESILIENCE IN THE  
FACE OF THE COVID PANDEMIC  
(IN THE COUNTRYSIDE)



**DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**