

Terminal Evaluation

Asia

1. Outline of the Project

- Country: Philippines
- Project title: Information and Communication Technology
- Issue/Sector: ICT
- Cooperation scheme: Third Country Training Program
- Division in charge: Southeast Asia Division, Regional Department I
- Total cost: JICA - P11.293 M FIT-ED : 1.812 M
- Period of Cooperation:
- Fiscal year : 2001 - 2003
- Partner Country's Implementing Organization: Foundation for Information Technology and Education, Inc (FIT-ED)
- Supporting Organization in Japan:
- Related Cooperation:

1-1 Background of the Project

The last decade of the 20th century had challenged the efficiency and effectiveness of governance, business, commerce and industry globally through the introduction of a new breed of information and communication technologies (ICT) driven primarily by the Internet. The relevance of web-based ICT in governance, commerce and business was then recognized worldwide and had been repeatedly taken as a priority agenda in many development discussions between and among developed and developing countries, particularly to address the issue of "digital divide" especially among developing countries.

Responding to this issue, the Association of South East Nations (ASEAN), formed in 8 August 1967 originally by five countries and later expanded to 10 countries in Asia, created the e-ASEAN Task Force in 1999 to develop competencies within ASEAN to be able to compete in the global information economy. One of the priority pilot projects then of the e-ASEAN Task Force was conducting e-Entrepreneurship seminars, which targeted government and private entrepreneurs in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam (CLMV), the least electronically networked and the least ready for e-commerce of the ASEAN member countries.

To advance its role in the e-ASEAN Task Force, the Government of the Philippines (GOP) through the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) endorsed the request of FIT-ED in 2000 seeking funding assistance from the Government of Japan (GOJ) in the conduct of ICT training courses for the country representatives from CLMV. Responding to the request and after series of bilateral discussions, the GOJ through JICA granted a technical cooperation to GOP and FIT-ED in conducting 3 training and seminars spread over 3 years since 2001 under JICA's Third Country Training Program (TCTP). The technical cooperation project then was called, the "Third Country Training Program on Information and Communications Technology for Entrepreneurship" - the subject of this Terminal Evaluation Study.

1-2 Project Overview

The Third Country Training Program on Information and Communication Technology for Entrepreneurship aims to provide participants from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam (CLMV) an opportunity to improve their knowledge and techniques in the field of information and communication technology for entrepreneurship.

At the end of the Course, the participants were expected to have obtained the techniques in the use of information and communication technologies, particularly the Internet and the World Wide Web, to achieve and sustain a competitive advantage in the global information economy.

(1) Overall Goal: Based on Reconstructed PDM

The countries Cambodia LaoPDR, Myanmar, Vietnam and Philippines (CLMVP) achieve and sustain a competitive advantage in the global information economy

(2) Project Purpose

Participants from CLMVP provided with an opportunity to improve their knowledge and techniques in the field of ICT for entrepreneurship

(3) Outputs

At the end of the training course, the participants have :

- a. obtained techniques in use of ICT particularly Internet and World Wide Web
- b. formulated an e-strategy for their existing business or future start – ups
- c. learned from study trips to leading ICT companies

(4) Inputs

Japanese side:

1. Dispatch short term experts who will give the necessary advice to FIT-ED and deliver some of the lectures, subject to JICA available budget and number of suitable experts in Japan
2. Bear some portion of the following expenses to be consulted between both governments thru JICA:
 - a) International economy – class airfare , accommodation, per diems, and medical insurance premiums to participants from invited countries; and
 - b) Expenses relevant to FIT-ED such as study tours, texts, teaching aids, expendable supplies, copies, honoraria for external lecturer (s) and opening and closing ceremonies.

Philippine Side:

1. Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA)
 - a) Forward the general information (G.I.) brochure of the course governments of invited countries through diplomatic channel
 - b) Receive application forms and forward these to FIT-ED
 - c) Notify results of the selection of participants to their respective governments through diplomatic channels
2. National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA)
 - a) Review and if necessary, recommend appropriate changes or modifications in the proposal's content including budget and G.I.
 - b) Participate in the selection of participants for the course
 - c) Facilitate the application procedure through diplomatic channels
 - d) Participate in the post-training evaluation
3. Foundation for Information Technology Education and Development, Inc. (FIT-ED) to formulate the curriculum based on Annex 1, draft and print the G. I. Brochure, receive nomination forms through diplomatic channels, select participants for the course along with DFA, NEDA and JICA and notify the results of selection of participants

(5) Participating Countries : Cambodia, Laos PDR, Myanmar, Vietnam and Philippines

2. Evaluation Team

Members of Evaluation Team:

JICA Philippines Office (contracted out to Center for Local Development Studies)

Period of Evaluation:

October 21, 2004 - January 28, 2005

Type of Evaluation:

Terminal Evaluation: By Overseas Offices

3. Results of Evaluation

3-1 Summary of Evaluation Results

At the end of the program, the 92 participants were expected to have obtained the techniques in the use of ICT, particularly the Internet and the World Wide Web, to achieve and sustain a competitive advantage in the global information economy. Success of the training program in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, impact sustainability and relevance was determined with the survey conducted and an analysis of the findings follows.

Achievement of the Project

There were 33 respondents in the survey conducted for the ex-training participants. Thirty-one respondents were from Cambodia, Laos PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam and two (2) from the Philippines. Nineteen of the 33 respondents filled - up the

survey questionnaires while the remaining 14 were interviewed using guide questionnaires during the Focal Group Discussions. Of the FGD respondents, five (5) respondents or 36% came from the public sector while nine (9) or 64% from the private sector. Those from the public sector came from the Ministry of Post and Communications, Ministry of Trade and Ministry of Interior. Private sector respondents were from the Chamber of Commerce of Cambodia, ICT-related companies, and textile and insurance companies. The two participants from the Philippines came from the private sector.

(1) Efficiency

Efficiency of the training program is high because there were no delays in the training program preparation (in terms of identification, formulation and appraisal) and the outputs justify the amount of inputs invested. All inputs and resources identified in the Records of Discussion were provided to the Project. This in turn, resulted in the delivery of outputs as the 92 participants from Lao PDR, Myanmar, Vietnam and the Philippines were trained from 2001 to 2003 on ICT for entrepreneurship. Based on the results of the survey questionnaires and the focus group discussions, most of the participants commented that the design of the training program in terms course objectives was adequate (52%) and more than adequate (35%) as they were provided with an opportunity to improve their knowledge and techniques in the field of ICT for entrepreneurs. On the curriculum design, they replied that coverage of the subject matter, scheduling of subjects, time allocation for lecturers/ discussions/ exercises/observations and intensity in the delivery of the training program were generally more than adequate. Management of the course (in terms of capability of lecturers to train, teaching methods, applicability and hand-outs) was generally very good according to most (48%) of the participants. They also agreed that the administration of the course in terms of coordination and logistics was very satisfactory. Budget allocations agreed between JICA and FIT-ED were adequately and timely provided for and utilized in the implementation of the three rounds of training courses.

(2) Effectiveness

Effectiveness of training program is moderate as the training program was simply an introductory course on ICT enabled entrepreneurship which seeks to train young entrepreneurs with small and medium enterprises or has plans to build and make profitable digital economy organizations and businesses, and maintain a competitive edge in the complex global electronic marketplace of today. While it is too early to conclude that the project objectives have been fully achieved since the last training course was conducted in 2003, the evaluation survey results show that there is likelihood that these can be achieved. A majority of the participants who have responded to the survey questionnaires have expressed confidence that the objectives can be fully achieved in two to three years time. They have benefited much from the Course which they have foreseen at the beginning of the training program. Most of the respondents (84%) are using the knowledge and techniques acquired in the field of ICT for entrepreneurship in the communications sector. A few (10%), however, cited that they have not been able to apply the knowledge and techniques from the Course. They added that these can only be fully achieved if; a) follow-through training programs will be conducted; b) application to business is assured with continuous practice; c) there is greater market demand for their businesses; d) there is government support for the development and growth of ICT infrastructure in their country.

(3) Impact

Based on the survey, project impact is low as it can not be established at this time because the likelihood of achieving the project purpose will happen in two to three more years. A number of necessary conditions have to be put in place to achieve the project's purpose as stated in section 4-1-2 and subsequently its goal. However, some of the participants were already able to apply the Action Plan formulated during the training program. They have also updated their knowledge and techniques on ICT by: a) using the internet more frequently; b) participating in ICT training courses and website development; and c) reading books and magazines on ICT. Some participants are also planning to create an email account and website for their small/medium scale business within a year's time from the date of the survey.

(4) Relevance

Relevance is high as the project purpose and goal continue to be relevant to the participating countries. The survey shows that the course did address the needs of the participants as most of them have applied the acquired knowledge and techniques in the current jobs and businesses. The survey shows that 68% responded positively that indeed there was a training needs assessment conducted prior to their participation in the training program. This was considered by FIT-ED in the formulation of the training curriculum. The implementing agency, FIT-ED continues to play a strategic role in the enhancement of ICT for business in the ASEAN countries as it used to be the e-ASEAN Task Force Secretariat and is currently the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) Secretariat. Survey results likewise show that 61% of the participants agreed that the participants to the Course were selected appropriately, as evidenced by the participant's ICT/entrepreneurship – related job or occupation whether they are in the private or public sector, prior to the conduct of the training.

(5) Sustainability

Sustainability is high as there are strong indications that project benefits will be continued. This is clearly shown by FIT-ED's commitment to take on future training programs to achieve the project objectives. It has established an e-group to allow networking among participants and for FIT-ED to share knowledge and enhance their capacities. As an institution committed to

help increase IT awareness in government and business sectors in the ASEAN countries, FIT-ED will continue to be in the forefront of ASEAN activities related to ICT. On the financial aspect, FIT-ED's adequate and timely allocation of resources for the three training courses proves its commitment to sustain the training program. The participants have likewise expressed commitment to support the initiatives of the project. They have acknowledge the importance of ICT in their businesses and a substantial number (84% of those interviewed) have already applied knowledge and skills absorbed form the training program in their work and businesses. These are in the areas of website development, communications, textile and apparel, exports and imports of handicrafts, construction, coffee production and government undertakings, among others. The respondents expressed that they have benefited much form the course which they have already foreseen at the beginning of the training program. Aside from using the strategic e-business plan drafted during the training program as reference, the participants also made use of the internet and WWW to apply the knowledge gained from the course to promote the sectors above-cited.

(6) Conclusion

3-2 Factors that promoted realization of effects

Nomination of participants by respective countries

An important factor in promoting effects was the fact that the participants to the training program were nominated by their respective countries. This means that ownership of the program has been established as early as selection of the participants. As a result, the participating governments are fully aware of the requirements for the sustainability of the Program. In addition, the respective government's can monitor the application by the participants of skills and techniques in ICT for entrepreneurs. It can assist in further enhancing the participant's skills by tapping his expertise by allowing him to conduct in-country echo-training to entrepreneurs.

Appropriate identification of the implementing organization.

Another important factor which can prom ote the effect of the training program is the fact that FIT-ED is the implementing agency for the Course. FIT-ED used to be the e-ASEAN Task Force Secretariat and is now the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) Secretariat. As Secretariat to these two bodies, it can ensure that an assessment on ICT for entrepreneurship in the ASEAN countries are regularly conducted. It can also identify appropriate courses of action to achieve the TCTP on ICT for Entrepreneurship's goal of sustaining a competitive advantage in the global information economy.

Government policy on ICT

A major success of the training program is the government's support to the ICT sector. The presence of the participants in all the training courses is an indication of support of these countries for ICT. The substantial growth of major ICT indicators (particularly internet users) in the participating countries is another indication of support for the sector as reported by the World Bank. In the case of Cambodia and Lao PDR, growth in internet users from 1999 to 2002 was 650%, for Vietnam 1,400% and for Myanmar 4,900%.

3-3 Factors that impeded realization of effects

A possible threat to sustaining achievement of the Training Program's objective is getting full support by participating governments in the use of ICT for e-entrepreneurship. While a study on ASEAN countries revealed that Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam are the least ready for e-commerce (in terms of infrastructure, promotion and facilitation activities and skills development), some participants highlighted the need for their governments to encourage and support the use of ICT.

Outmoded or outdated ICT infrastructure/equipment could also inhibit the effects of the training program as these would have to be regularly updated given the rapid pace of development in ICT. This ICT infrastructure is significantly important for the participants in e-commerce. It will also allow continuous networking and linking up with ex-participants and FIT-ED and provide ample opportunities for knowledge sharing, and even resources sharing.

Finally, FIT-ED cannot rely on the full JICA support for its continuing training programs as Japan's dwindling resources are expected to grow even smaller in the next years. There is need to allocate resources for the conduct of training courses (participant's transport and accommodations expenses, allowances for resource persons and lecturers, etc.) Along this line, FIT-ED must generate other fund sources to sustain the Program. As an NGO, it has greater flexibility in generating funds, compared to government agencies.

3-4 Conclusion

The objectives of the training program were substantially achieved in the conduct of the three training courses. JICA and FIT-ED have effectively carried out their respective terms of reference in ensuring the success of the Program. With FIT-ED's more than adequate capability in implementing training courses on ICT and JICA's full support to the Program, the participating countries shall continue to achieve project benefits by allowing entrepreneurs to be trained on ICT and applying the knowledge and techniques acquired from the Course in their respective jobs and businesses.

3-5 Recommendations

The objectives of the training program were substantially achieved in the conduct of the three training courses. JICA and FIT-ED have effectively carried out their respective terms of reference in ensuring the success of the Program. With FIT-ED's more than adequate capability in implementing training courses on ICT and JICA's full support to the Program, the participating countries shall continue to achieve project benefits by allowing entrepreneurs to be trained on ICT and applying the knowledge and techniques acquired from the Course in their respective jobs and businesses.

FIT-ED continues to play a lead role in increasing information and communication technology (ICT) awareness in the Philippines. It is equipped with highly capable staff, responsible with the development of ICT training curriculum and coordination of the conduct of training courses on ICT for entrepreneurs.

The training curriculum that was designed, developed and refined during the conduct of the Course including the participant's reference materials is a good benchmark for reference which maybe used by FIT-ED in the conduct of future training courses on ICT.

Through JICA assistance under the TCTP on ICT for Entrepreneurship (2001-2003), the participants from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Vietnam and Philippines were provided an opportunity to improve their knowledge and techniques in the field of ICT for entrepreneurship. With the conduct of the Course, the participants were able to obtain the techniques in the use of ICT particularly the Internet and the World Wide Web. The e-strategy for their existing business or future start – ups formulated by the participants during the Course have guided them in their attempt to apply what they learned in the training course in their respective countries. Moreover, the study trips to leading ICT companies in the Philippines have broadened their perspective on the use and importance of ICT.