DICT – UNDP Free Wi-Fi for All Project

DICT-UNDP Emergency Project Board Meeting

30 December 2021, 4:00PM – 5:00PM, via Zoom

Participants:

DICT

1. Mr. Emmanuel Caintic, Acting Secretary
2. Mr. Alan Silor, Undersecretary for Resilient Government Emergency Communications
3. Atty. Kristoffer Tiansay, Assistant Secretary for Regional Operations and Countryside ICT Development

UNDP

1. Mr. Edwine Carrie, Deputy Resident Representative
2. Ms. Maria Luisa Jolongbayan, Team Leader, Institutions & Partnerships
3. Ms. Alka Aneja, Procurement Specialist
4. Ms. Marian Co, M&E Analyst
5. Engr. Ronel Vincent Vistal, Officer-In-Charge, Free Wi-Fi For All PMO
6. Ms. Sunshine De Guzman, Finance and Administrative Assistant, Free Wi-Fi For All PMO

Highlights:

Topics	Discussion Highlights
On Budget and Accrued Interest	DICT asked how much of the project budget is left. To which UNDP replied 12.6M USD with an accrued interest amounting to 1.2M USD. DICT also asked where the money was invested. UNDP answered that HQ handles it and the CO does not have an idea regarding this. Per UNDP, the interest grew because it was a considerable sum of money to begin with and it took a little bit of time before the project started using it. Hence, it has been accruing interest since 2018. UNDP also noted that Interests of projects are usually incorporated into the larger UNDP program envelop. However, considering the size of the interest, it is important to disclose the amount and communicate this with DICT to get guidance on how to use the money.
On Typhoon Odette	DICT mentioned that 21 typhoons usually occur in the country. He is expecting another typhoon to come in January and would like to be prepared for the worst. The Eastern Seaboard should be covered, explaining that communication loss was due to the winds that affected the fiber connections and not because of the flooding. DICT asserted that flyaway VSATs and 3 to 5 satellite phones for each governor on the Eastern Seaboard particularly the provinces of Cagayan, Isabela, Quezon, Catanduanes, Camarines Norte, Sorsogon, Samar, Leyte and Surigao should be provided as a preparedness measure. There should also be

	standby satellite phones, flyaway and land VSATs for each regional cluster in case disaster strikes. DICT would like to press on the following: 1. Consistent with what the congress instructed, procurement and project management should now be done by DICT. UNDP will simply be more of a payor and M&E support. 2. Compensate suppliers who have gone the extra mile to immediately deploy VSATs and satellite phones to Typhoon Odette affected locations. DICT specified that at present, there are 20 deployed VSATs for typhoon response. It is a limited subscription, but DICT is planning to procure for the long term. There are also satellite phones loaned via subscription that DICT must pay.
On Procurement	UNDP established that currently the project is on DIM. The project has not yet finished the HACT which will take 4 weeks upon engagement with the HACT audit firm. Until this is completed, the quickest route would be to use the UNDP system to do the procurement of the urgent equipment. DICT agreed to use UNDP procurement for payment of the vendors since their service is essential. Some affected sites, Surigao for instance, will likely take a couple of months to rebuild their network. Hence, the need to keep the vendors. Further, DICT provided the go signal to use the funds for the procurement of vehicles, stating that their cluster offices do not have ones at their disposal. Personal vehicles of the staff were utilized to transport goods and services in Palawan, Negros, Bohol, Cebu, Surigao, Siargao and Dinagat. Gasoline costs should also be included in the budget since fuel prices went up the market. DICT reiterated using the funds for the procurement of flyaway VSATs and to compensate the ones deployed. The remainder should be budgeted to the eastern seaboard deployments of at least 1 VSAT per province. There should be back-up on communications especially for emergency response during the storm and after the storm left.
On HACT Process	UNDP reported that there is already a memo to form a group that will support the HACT process within DICT, however it has not commenced. To which DICT explained that they are in a state of limbo because of Sec. Honasan's resignation. But expressed their agreement to go through with the process. UNDP suggested that DICT may continue with the process if the latter is ready. But since there is an emergency, it is best to carry on with the UNDP system for procurement to provide immediate support.

	UNDP also stressed the importance of moving forward with the HACT process so DICT can also use the resources themselves in the future.
On the Legality of Accrued Interest	Although DICT is thankful for the amount, they conveyed their concern about using the interest earnings as it will surely be questioned during audit. UNDP explained that the interest is UNDP's money. In consideration that when a donor gives money to execute a project, the interest from that project becomes UNDP property. Technically, utilization is completely up to UNDP, but because it is a huge sum, and for transparency reasons UNDP reverted to DICT. The action being more of a moral than a legal obligation since the money came from DICT. DICT responded that they will study this matter and assigned Asec. Alvin to review the legality of using the accrued interest.
On Phase 4	DICT mentioned that it was decided last PBM to close Phase 1 and allocate the remaining funds to develop a COVID-19 response project for Phase 4. But because of the recent typhoon there is a need to shift focus on response and preparedness to future disasters. DICT further clarified that since Phase 4 has no signed document yet and has not commenced as well, it should be altered to reflect a typhoon response and preparedness project.
Ways Forward	DICT assigned Usec. Alan to decide on what equipment to procure. UNDP will communicate with Usec. Alan to discuss procurement details. UNDP confirmed that what is most urgent is (1) to pay up the vendors, (2) procure typhoon preparedness equipment (3) start with Phase 4 documentation and the HACT process in parallel. DICT requested to have another meeting on Thursday, 6 January and would like to see some developments in the procurement of emergency equipment.

<u>Action Points:</u>

Action Point	Responsible Unit	Timeline
1. UNDP to discuss procurement details with Usec. Alan Silor's office.	UNDP, DICT	6 January
2. UNDP to look into suppliers/ vendors of specified equipment	UNDP	1st week of January