

RP's iSchools project receives Asian IT award

Thursday, 22 October 2009

The government's iSchools Project received an award in the "Digital Inclusion category" at the 3rd Government Technology Awards in Bali, Indonesia, last week.

The Government Technology Awards is a brainchild of FutureGov, the largest regional organization of government, education and healthcare officials in the Asia Pacific.

The Awards seeks to recognize outstanding government modernization projects across Asia.

One of the twelve categories available, the "Digital Inclusion Award" distinguishes "projects and programs that use technology to bridge the digital divide."

The iSchools Project is a flagship project of the Commission on Information and Communications Technology, which aims to close the digital divide in public secondary education.

With a budget of P350 million annually, the iSchools Project served 680 schools in the Philippines with internet literacy training and Internet laboratories, making it the largest ICT-in-education initiative in the country.

Antonette Torres, iSchools project manager, said efforts to penetrate the underserved localities in far-flung public schools, and the emphasis on community involvement through sustainability planning were keys to the Project's recognition by the international community.

To ensure sustainability, the project requires recipient schools to attend regional project briefings, community mobilizations and a sustainability planning workshops.

Torres said the success of the project lies in the partnership between the CICT and State Universities and Colleges.

She likened the implementation of the project to going to battle with SUCs as the project's "first line of defense and at the same time intelligence and field generals."

"They assisted the CICT from coordination to monitoring and served as lecturers, technical consultants, project coordinators and leaders," Torres said.

"This is not only a tribute to the [CICT] and the project team, but also to the partners who stayed with us through the years," she added. CICT has 37 SUC partners that implemented the project.