# APPENDIX 5 School Const ruction Assessment for the SPHERE IPR Report

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This report has been compiled as an Appendix to the SPHERE IPR report and provides a technical assessment of construction activities undertaken under SPHERE Component 1: Translation of system-level policies into actions, and Component 3: Classroom construction in high need locations in Southern Philippines The report includes specific recommendations based upon a small number of site visits. As such it cannot be taken as representative of the situation across all sites provided with construction support under the SPHERE program.

# **Component 1.3 Establishment of Learning Resource Centres**

# Observations

DepED plans to develop Learning Resource Management and Development Centers (LRMDCs) in which learning resources can be localized or indigenized based on the expressed needs of regions and divisions, together with the process of evaluating digitized materials. It also will serve as the physical facility support for the ICT (Internet Connectivity Technology/Internet Communication Technology). The ICT component is supported by project STRIVE (Strengthen the Implementation of Basic Education in the Visayas)

The construction and refurbishing of the LRMDCs is proposed in the 16 Regions (ARMM not included) and 16 Divisions of the DepED. To date, there are only three (3) Regional LRMDCs (Iloilo, Cebu & Tacloban) that were awarded construction contracts; one (1) having been physically completed while the other two (2) are in different stages of construction. On the Division level, there has been only one (1) site (Catarman, Northern Samar) that has started. During interviews with the EDPITAF, the responsible office of the DepED in-charge of this project, there has not been any criteria set on the selection of the Division Offices to be provided with the LRMDC buildings though for the first six (6) packages, priority is given to recipient Divisions under STRIVE. Therefore, there has not been a final decision from the DepED Central Office on where to specifically build these facilities at the Division level.

Of the first batch of six (6) LRMDCs, two (2) sites to be built in Negros Occidental and Bohol whose construction plans have already been completed but tender was stopped for the following reasons:

Bohol - the tender was stopped due to a change in decision to integrate the center in the ongoing 4-Storey (new) Division Office rather than a standalone building. It was approved by DepED Central Office as of Feb. 19, 2010 to implement the project at the ground floor of the building occupying an area of approximately 100m2.

Negros Occidental - there is a pending request to transfer the facility to a better site as a new construction project rather than refurbishing an old building structure as originally planned.

The LRMDC component has a total budget allocation of Php151.59Million for all the 32 sites covering a period of 23-months to successfully implement the project. The support from SPHERE is the provision of the building, furniture and office equipment with a budget of Php1.3~1.4Million per LRMDC site. To date, only Php4.7Million has been contracted or only

3.1% of the total budget allocation with 13-months lapsed time or 10-months remaining period to physically complete the project by end of December 2010.

The piloting of the first 6 sites (3-regional & 3-divisions) was originally dependent on the recipient regions and divisions funded by STRIVE. These were no other criteria for selection. However, the remaining division sites will have to be based on set criteria which are yet to be decided.

At the moment, there are no problems experienced with disbursements. Billing so far has only been for the on-going construction of the LRMDC in Catarman Division, Northern Samar which is approximately 50% completed. Provision of computers are to be funded under STRIVE while EDPITAF will provide the furniture and basic office equipment for the first batch of six (6) packages. EDPITAF will provide the complete package of office furniture, basic office equipment and computers for the remaining LRMDC packages.

#### Recommendation:

With the remaining 10 months to physically complete the project funded by SPHERE and with the remaining 26 LRMDC sites whose location are still to be determined and site appraisals to be made due to uniqueness of each site, there is a need for EDPITAF to present an "aggressive but realistic catch-up plan" to justify that the targets can be achieved within the remaining project period. A possible recommendation to meet the targets is to tap the services of the PFSED Regional and/or Division Engineers to assist in the site appraisal, design and construction supervision of the project. However, there may be a need to assess the present workloads of the said Division Engineers. There may also be a need to hire additional Architects/Engineers to augment the present staffing of EDPITAF.

# Component 3: Classroom construction in high need locations in Southern Philippines

#### SCHOOLS VISITED:

General Santos City: Bawing E.S extension at Changco village; Habitat E.S.

Catarman, Northern Samar: Cawayan Integrated school; Las Navas National High School; Catarman-1 Central E.S.

# Observations

**SITE OWNERSHIP** Of the 5-schools visited by the TEAM, the first school BAWING E.S Extension at Changco Village has not acquired an acceptable legal ownership document for the property on which the school extension site is occupying.

#### **Recommendation:**

The importance of landownership prior to any building construction project is implemented in a school site is mentioned in the DepED Educational Facilities Handbook. Considering that the assistance from SPHERE is classified as a "foreign-assisted" project, site ownership is a primary criterion for the selection of recipient schools for the project. The existing document available in the school should be referred to the DepED Central Office for evaluation and for proper titling of the land occupied by DepED schools.

**DESIGN -** Under the SPHERE, the school building construction follows the DepED standard designs for the following:

- a) TWO-CLASSROOMS 7 x 9 meters (modified) with 2.20m x 4.00m CR attached and Reinforced Septic Vault
- b) ONE-CLASSROOM 7 X 9 meters with 2.20m x 4.00m CR attached and Reinforced Septic Vault

During a consultative meeting with Teachers from the CAWAYAN Integrated School (Catarman, Northern Samar), we gathered that the school building financed under SPHERE to be very appropriate for their teaching needs. However, they wished that electric ceiling fans be provided to add comfort to the 2<sup>nd</sup> year students as well as the Teachers occupying the 2-classrooms provided under SPHERE. The discomfort may be caused by improper orientation of the building due to limited buildable area in the school campus as well as the inadequate minimum setback required from existing buildings of the campus which prevents adequate cross ventilation inside the classrooms. The Teachers also hoped that the classroom be provided with bulletin boards to display teaching aides which are normally replaced every quarter or four times a school year.

- Proper school planning is an attributing factor in achieving comfortable temperature inside the classroom but given the limited school property as well as the limited availability of buildable space, the ideal school building orientation cannot always be achieved. It may be worth re-assessing every detail in the existing architectural design of the roof eaves ventilation slats as to its location and its effectiveness to ventilate heat accumulated between the roofing sheets and the ceiling in order to make the classroom interiors cooler and more comfortable in spite of the building's orientation.
- The requests of the Teachers for bulletin boards inside the classrooms could have been realized if the Principal could have given inputs in the design of their preferred classroom setting. To achieve the real sense of a "Principal-led" undertaking, it is recommended that the School Principal be given the opportunity in giving his/her inputs in designing the classroom interior to achieve its conduciveness to learning.
- The typical 2-classroom (type-1) school buildings implemented under SPHERE do not have the flexibility for "multi-grade" classroom instruction nor be able to accommodate large school or community gatherings.
- Review school designs specifically redesigning the common wall between the classrooms to be either collapsible or demountable in order to achieve a level of flexibility. As a consequence, the blackboards shall now be installed at the end walls of the building.
- A set of construction plans in A3 size sheets are used during the bidding process and this becomes the basis for the construction plans during actual implementation by the winning contractor in the specific recipient school. It was observed in Bawing E.S. Ext.
  @ Changco Village that the classroom floor line at one end of the building was lower than its adjacent ground level. A retaining wall was built to control erosion of the land

that was higher than the classroom floor. This wall made the electrical service connection line very dangerously reachable to the pupils occupying the said building. The IPR Consulting Team observed these kind of lapses in achieving proper site adaptation of the school buildings under SPHERE in a few schools visited.

• Develop site adaptation construction drawings to illustrate the clear elevation of the finished floor line (FFL) against the finished grade line (FGL), the required setbacks from adjacent buildings/fences, the extent of site works needed to achieve the proper positioning of the school building, as well as the extent of the tapping points for the necessary utilities such as water supply and electrical power. This would guide the contractor of the site preparation works to be done on the site and be the basis for them to compute the site works as part of their contract amount for the project. This would also be the basis to check whether the plans do not jeopardize the safety of the school children.

As to the toilet fixture allocation, the toilets provided under SPHERE follow the standards of DepED as mentioned in their Educational Facilities Handbook. The ratios used are as follows:

Water closets –	Male (1 seat per 100 male pupils/students)
	Female (1 seat per 50 female pupils/student)
Lavatories -	1 lavatory per toilet seat
Boy's Urinal -	1 detached urinal per 50 pupils/students

However, the requirement of toilets for disabled pupils was provided only in the female toilet, area of which meets the minimum floor area requirement for a handicap toilet plus the necessary grab bars next to the toilet seat. A common wash basin was provided between the male and female toilet accessible from the outside. This allocation seems to meet the occupant requirements of the school building financed under SPHERE with an assumption of a 50-50 proportion between male and female students.

#### **Recommendation:**

- A more in-depth analysis is recommended to find out the total number of toilet seats and other toilet fixtures available in the campus against the total enrolment of the students taking into consideration the proportion between male to female students.
- There may be a need to establish alternative options for water supply adaptable to school sites that do not have any water source at all or may be appraised to have difficulty in the provision of permanent sources of water due to its geographical location (ex. School sites located in a mountain with hard rock subsoil conditions) making it costly to drill wells or do water pump staging to bring community water supply to the school. A suggested option to look into is "rain collector" tanks to store gray water for toilet maintenance purposes only.

**PRIORITIZATION OF SCHOOLS -** The prioritization of schools to be recipients of the SPHERE is taken from the BEIS (Basic Education Information System) color coding system based on the rainbow spectrum under the RED and BLACK Color Codes. RED being the schools classified under severe classroom shortage (classroom: pupil ratio of 56 or more) and BLACK which are classified as most deprived with no existing instructional rooms OR newly established schools without any permanent instructional rooms.

Of the five (5) schools visited by the Team, it was noted that the Catarman-1 C.E.S. was coded BLUE (pupil:classroom ratio of less than 45) and had a reasonably acceptable pupil:classroom ratio of 42+ before the SPHERE assistance while all the other four (4) schools were found to be coded RED with pupil:classroom ratio ranging from 94+~315+.

# **Recommendation:**

 There is a need to evaluate the criteria for prioritization of the recipient schools under SPHERE. PFSED Central Office should re-evaluate the priority list submitted by the Division Office to check whether indeed they comply with the criteria set. PFSED should also re-evaluate the criteria for the allocation on how the number of classrooms per recipient school are being done as all the five (5) schools visited were allocated the same Two 2-Classrooms 7 x 9m (Type 1) buildings, the same number of fixtures for the CR, 2.0 x 2.2m SIDE Attached toilets (per building) with CHB Septic Vault in spite the huge disparity in color codes and actual classroom requirements.

**PROGRAMMING OF BUDGET ALLOCATION -** The total budget for a specific phase of the school building project is coming from the DepED Central Office that will cover the 17-Regions nationwide. As a result of the DepED Central Office analysis based on the BEIS, allocations are made per Region. These are then allocated by the Regional Offices to the different Division Offices based on the allocated amount decided upon by the Region. Based on these allocated budget to the Division Offices, the latter will submit their priority listing (determine the number of recipient schools) to the Central Office who will collate and summarize these for submission to the DBM (Department of Budget & Management) for SARO. After receiving notice from the Central Office that the priority listing in a specific Division is approved, the Division Engineers commence the actual school site appraisal. The type of school building facility is determined and the program of work in each school is prepared.

During interviews with the PFSED Area Manager, Division Engineers, and Division Physical Facilities Coordinator, we found out that since the allocation of the specific budget per school was determined prior to the actual school site appraisal, the final program of work in each school is adjusted to provide the most important facility requirements of the school that fits the budget allotted for the specific school. Thus there are times when the following school building amenities become optional items in the final program of work. These amenities are:

- a) window grills
- b) blackboards
- c) ceiling fans
- d) toilet fixtures
- e) water supply connection from nearest source &/or pressure tank with pump
- f) electrical service connection to nearest source

This may be the reason why in some schools visited, some of the items, as mentioned above, were not provided in the completed school building under SPHERE.

Budgetary costs for the school building facilities under SPHERE range from Php690,000 (1classroom w/o toilet) to about Php1.7Million (2-classroom with attached 2m x 4m toilet). Should there be a need for extensive site preparation work or additional hauling costs to deliver construction materials, the optional amenities as mentioned earlier are deleted to cover up for these additional costs. Therefore there is not much flexibility on the budget allocation for a school site to be able to provide the complete amenities as per typical design.

#### **Recommendation:**

 There is a need to review the processes in programming of budget allocations distributed to the different Division Offices. The budget allocated to a school should include the additional expenses for site adaptation/preparation work, provision for water supply, acceptable sewerage disposal and power supply, in addition to the cost of the school building complete of all its amenities. This means that prior to submission of the request for budget allocation in a specific Division Office; the proposed recipient schools should have had a thorough appraisal of the site and site adaptation drawings already been prepared as the basis for the program of work.

**TENDER PROCESS** - The bidding procedure for school buildings funded under SPHERE follows the "PRINCIPAL-Led" mode of implementation as this is classified as a foreign-assisted project but may not be applicable to the Regular School Building Program funded under the GAA Budget which is mandated to follow the Philippine Procurement Act or the R.A. 9184.

After review of the actual files of the different recipient schools, it was observed that the bidding process under the "Principal-led" procurement mode of "SHOPPING" or submission of "SEALED BIDS" was followed in all the schools visited. A minimum of three (3) contractors were invited to submit their intent to participate in the bidding, necessary pre-qualification documents of the contractors were submitted and evaluated, and the submitted sealed bids were carefully evaluated before the notice of award was issued. The process went through the perfection of contract before the Notice to Proceed (NTP) was issued to the winning bidder.

# **Recommendation:**

• The bidding process is efficient and should be maintained for the remaining period of SPHERE or even after the project. However, DepED should persuade the Government to include this scheme in the IRR of Republic Act 9184 as this is beneficial to the SBP of the Department and has been tested and proven to be successful.

#### CONSTRUCTION IMPLEMENTATION

As a result of the visits to the different identified schools in General Santos City and Catarman, Northern Samar, we observed areas for which improvement in the implementation of the school buildings funded under SPHERE could be considered for the remaining period of the project. They are categorized as follows:

STANDARD CONSTRUCTION PLANS & SPECIFICATIONS - Though there is a standard typical construction plan being followed for specific building types, we noticed that they were implemented differently in several schools visited. Some of the building features not commonly followed are as follows:

- a) standard height of building Finished Floor Line (FFL) we observed that the height of the finished floor line (FFL) of the classroom against the finished grade line (FGL) is not standardized;
- b) ceiling design inside the classroom some have the "cathedral ceiling" while others have the "dropped ceiling";

- c) layout of windows and doors along the front corridor some adjacent doors overlap each other when opened and the doors nearest the end walls sometimes exceed the building endwalls when totally opened;
- d) ramps to comply to the handicap laws a few schools visited did not comply to this important feature of the building and all do not have continuity of access for the handicapped towards the toilets at one end of the building. In the review of the architectural plans, it was not intended to have continuity of corridors from the classrooms to the toilets;
- e) roof ventilation along the length of the building standard detail for the vents were not followed, some schools implemented a different design, other schools had very limited number of vents, and a school visited had no vents at all in the roof overhang at the rear of the building;
- f) grab bars for handicap toilet most of the schools visited did not install handicap grab bars next to the water closet;
- g) lighting fixtures at the exterior overhangs some schools follow the specification of 40watt fluorescent lighting fixtures while other schools visited used flush-mounted incandescent lighting receptacles;
- h) end-wall louver vents details of the louver vents indicated in the construction plans are not followed in other schools;
- i) blackboards there is no consistency in the construction of the blackboards;
- school nameplate provision of the mandatory school nameplate in all recipient schools built under SPHERE was present in only one out of the five schools visited;
- k) septic vault manhole design standard plans not followed in all the school sites visited.

- There is a need to prepare site adaptation drawings reflecting the land preparation work required per individual site. These drawings should reflect the extent of the "cut & fill", the established reference point to determine the setbacks as well as the final finished floor line (FFL) of the classroom, the height difference between the finished grade line (FGL) and the FFL, the location of the tapping points for water supply and electrical power service connections, the necessary civil works (riprap or natural ground slope) to be established to avoid soil erosion as well as the correct slope of the ramps connecting to the main corridor. Careful considerations on the SAFETY of the school children is a PRIMARY CONCERN and therefore required vertical heights of electrical service connections should be checked and strictly followed when preparing the site works.
- Additional architectural/engineering detailed drawings should be prepared by the PFSED to guide the contractors in achieving a standard building design. The inconsistencies on the proper location of the doors and windows along the front corridor may be due to the lack of dimensioning along this wall grid to clearly define the dimensions of the windows and the doors so that adjacent doors do not overlap each other when both are opened. Lacking details in the drawings lead to different interpretations in the field thus resulting to different levels of accomplished work.
- There is also a need for additional detailed drawings for the blackboards, window & door jambs, louver vents at end wall where toilets are attached, etc. to achieve a standard output.
- It may also serve useful and practical to include "door stoppers" in the design in order not to cause premature damage to the door locks as without these door stoppers, the

doors tend to slam on the jambs during sudden gusts of wind thus causing stress to the door locks. In the actual condition at the site, Teachers tend to use large boulders as door stoppers thus causing damage to the lower portion of the panel doors.

QUALITY OF CONSTRUCTION - High accomplishment ratings have the tendency to sacrifice the quality of the outputs. There is now a question of whether there was a need to accelerate the implementation of the classroom construction. What would be the benefits of accomplishing the targets ahead of schedule?

In General Santos City, the two school sites visited had varying quality of construction. HABITAT E.S. had a much better overall quality of construction compared to BAWING E.S. Extension at Changco Village. This may be attributed to the experience and level of competence by the different contractors of the projects; HABITAT E.S. contracted by Triple-Z Merchandising & Electrical Services while BAWING E.S. by Sagittarius Commercial & Construction Supply.

In Catarman, Northern Samar it was surprising to know that the three sites visited were constructed by a single construction company (J. Custorio Construction) but had varying qualities of construction. More surprisingly was that CAWAYAN Integrated School and CATARMAN-I C.E.S. being located in the urban area of the Municipality and the latter school just within the compound of the DepED Catarman Division Office resulted to the poorest quality of construction amongst all the schools visited in Catarman. While the farthest school visited (LAS NAVAS National High School) which is approximately 1.5 hours drive away from Catarman Municipality, resulted to a reasonably acceptable overall quality of construction.

The school building construction projects financed under SPHERE did not go through the standard process of applying for Building Permit at the Office of the Building Official thus NO BUILDING PERMITS and therefore NO OCCUPANCY PERMITS were issued. The same applies in General Santos and Catarman, Northern Samar. This raises a question on lack of proper technical evaluation as to whether the accomplished school building project complies with the minimum requirements dictated by the National Building Code of the Philippines as well as the Local Ordinances of the locality. We gathered from the PFSED Central Office that the typical school building designs used under SPHERE were presented to the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) Central Office prior to implementation.

It was also discovered that NO MATERIAL TESTINGS were conducted at any phase of the construction project. Therefore, the quality of the construction boils down to the sincerity of the contractor as well as the technical skill of its construction Foreman and/or Site Engineer, if there is any assigned to the project. Likewise, there is no specific mention in the specifications that only materials with PS (Product Standard) markings can be used in the project thus raising possible doubt on the quality of the construction materials used in the project. The only consolation to safeguard the project against defects or substandard construction materials installed and poor workmanship is the ONE-YEAR WARRANTY Clause mentioned in the Construction Contract which is meant as a safeguard against inferior materials & poor workmanship.

# **Recommendation:**

• A sound building structure cannot be judged only on the basis of the quality of its physical accomplishment. It is mandatory that material testing especially tests on the

compressive strength of the concrete samples should be done to guaranty that the strength of concrete was achieved in the constructed school building.

- Securing of Building Permits and Occupancy Permits is mandatory under the National Building Code of the Philippines for both private or public buildings and structures. This requirement is likewise mentioned in the Physical Facilities Handbook of the DepED and therefore should be obtained in the construction of school buildings under SPHERE.
- There should be more frequent site inspections by the Division Engineers in order to notice defects or inconsistencies in the construction. Periodic visits by the Engineers only during critical stages of construction, is not sufficient to meet the standards of quality expected under SPHERE.

MONITORING & SUPERVISION - As a result of all the observations and noticeable infractions mentioned earlier, there seems to be lack of frequent monitoring and supervision on the part of the DepED PFSED Division Engineers in the different on-going construction sites. Though under the "principal-led" undertaking, the School Principal is expected to perform minimum supervision functions during the construction of the building in their respective schools, we cannot expect much from them as they are not technically capable to know all these critical details of construction that have to be monitored.

Interviews with one Division Engineer indicated that there was one (1) Division Engineer assigned to the Division. As part of his responsibility, he is tasked to handle the following projects at a given period of time:

Division level:

- a) SPHERE (Principal-led) 8 schools (6-months)
- b) TFG Comfort Room Project 6~8 sites (these are projects under the Regular SBP on the request of Congressmen)
- c) RED & BLACK Priority Schools (GAA funded) 8 sites (6-months); 1-classroom/2classrooms without toilets
- d) Repair of Schools Php20Million budget per year

Regional level:

- a) Repair of Schools Php12.5Million budget; 120-sites (Php100K~150K/site)
- b) Preschools 4 school sites (1-classroom)

With the number of projects being handled by a single Division Engineer plus the responsibilities he/she has from the school appraisal, preparing the final program of work, tender process, monitoring/supervision during construction implementation, assessing accomplishments to justify requests for payments, etc. we assess the present manpower to be inadequate to meet the demands of quality performance from the Division Engineers.

In the Division of Catarman, there are schools located in the far flung barangays as well as the islands. There is NO TRAVEL ALLOWANCE given to the Division Engineer as he/she is handling projects in only one Division. A SERVICE VEHICLE (ex. motorcycle) is NOT PROVIDED to facilitate his/her monitoring responsibilities.

The monthly salaries of the PFSED Engineers assigned to the Division and Region come from the 3.5% of the total budget earmarked as "administrative costs". With several sites to be

monitored during the same period and with the lack of logistical support, it would be impossible for the Engineer to be able to monitor and supervise the different on-going construction sites sufficiently frequently. Periodic visits to the construction site only during critical stages of construction cannot guarantee that plans and specifications are strictly followed by the contractors making this inefficient to maintain quality especially for grant aid projects such as SPHERE. This is evidenced by the different variety of designs and quality standards noticed during the field visits.

# **Recommendation:**

 Additional logistical support or provision of additional Technical Staff by the PFSED should be considered in order to accomplish the necessary improvements in site appraisal, preparation of site adaptation drawings, preparation of program of works needed for budget allocation, accomplish the mandatory applications for Building Permits and subsequently Occupancy Permits, witness material testing at DPWH accredited material testing centers, more frequent site inspections and other incidental works to be able to achieve an acceptable quality of building construction projects.

**SITE APPRAISAL** There were two school sites out of the three visited in Catarman, Northern Samar that had flooding incidents in the past but were not considered in the construction of the school buildings financed by SPHERE. LAS NAVAS N.H.S. was a former rice field and the natural ground level of the school site is relatively level with the adjacent rice paddies. We gathered that the flood level last November 2009 was a high of 800mm above the natural grade line (NGL). In CATARMAN-I C.E.S., we noticed an existing drainage canal traversing parallel to the school building financed by SPHERE as well as the raised floor lines of existing classroom buildings adjacent to it. It was further observed that the FFL of the SPHERE school building was not raised to equal or to a higher floor height to prevent flood waters from entering the classrooms. Instead, we noticed that the electrical convenience outlets and lighting switches were raised instead. This we find to be improper and definitely not the correct solution for such a situation.

In Bawing E.S. Ext. @ Changco Village, the exit pipe from the septic vault was just protruding from the leaching chamber. In Las Navas NHS, the septic vault exit pipe was also protruding from the septic vault but this time just next to the inlet pipe of the sewer line from the toilets.

- As part of the site appraisal conducted by the Division Engineer prior to determining the final program of work in a specific school, they should determine critical site conditions like "flooding incidence," when and what was the highest level of flood waters inside the school campus. This information would help in their decision making on establishing the appropriate height of the classrooms finished floor line (FFL) such that it would prevent water from coming inside the classroom should flooding recur in the future. The FFL should be at least 200~300mm higher than the recorded flood level that affected the specific school campus.
- For environmental and health issues, it may also important to investigate possible tapping points to connect the exit pipes from the septic vault. This should be in compliance with the environmental laws defined by the DENR. In most schools visited, exit pipes were just protruding from the septic vault's leaching chamber which makes it very unsanitary and unhealthy for the pupils as well as the school environment.

It is also recommended to look into risk assessment during site appraisal (ex. away from large trees that may fall on the building; safe distance from cliffs, mountain sides, rivers that may be susceptible to flash floods, etc.). This would safeguard the buildings constructed under SPHERE and guaranty safety of its occupants especially when these facilities are used as evacuation centres or places of refuge during natural calamities like typhoons,

Although there were limited opportunities to review documents in the schools in order to assess the dates on which key stages were completed, the review in one schools revealed the following:

Contract Amount:	Php1,628,085.09
Notice to Proceed (NTP)	December 10, 2008
Notice of Completion	February 15, 2009
Request Letter of Accountant to DO	October 28, 2009
Request for Payment (1 <sup>st</sup> )	July 3, 2009 (Php1,467,230.30;90.12%)
Request for Payment (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	No date given (Php160,854.81(100%)
Voucher:	January 25, 2010
Request for 10% Retention	(January 25, 2010)

The specific project was completed in two (2) months which is the normal contract period (December 10, 2008 ~ February 15, 2009) BUT Request for the 1<sup>st</sup> Payment was only on July 3, 2009 OR six (6) months after the school building was assessed to have been completed. From the 1<sup>st</sup> Payment to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Payment, it took another six (6) months for the payment to be released. This confirms the findings of the Mid-Term Review last December 2009 that indeed there are issues of concern on the payment releases to the Contractors.

- Review the causes for the delays in the releases of payments to the contractors and resolve bottlenecks to achieve better disbursement of funds particularly payment to contractors.
- It was noted that requests for payment come months after the completion of the project. In the Philippine setting, contractors procured at the local level (Regional or Provincial) tend to collect their progress payments as soon as possible to avoid unnecessary interest payments. Given reported delays in liquidating funds advanced from central level, it is recommended that a further evaluation of billing documents be conducted across all classroom construction projects under SPHERE in order to find out if there is a trend in this practice or whether this is just an isolated case. Delays in requests for payment may be a reason to hide the delays in the completion of the project thus avoiding liquidated damages or the Contractor opts to get his collections in a single billing request to minimize the efforts in accomplishing the necessary documentation required for every billing.