Negros Women for Tomorrow Foundation (NWTF), one of Philippines’ earliest microfinance institutions has been providing sustainable financial developmental services and helping less-privileged women achieve self-sufficiency and self-reliance, to live dignified and independent lives. To keep up with its rapid expansion to other islands in the Philippines, NWTF requires reliable and scalable connectivity between its branches and headquarters. Since deploying VMware SD-WAN™, NWTF has been able to ensure priority transmission for mission-critical applications, enhancing connectivity and productivity across rural and urban areas of the Philippines.

**In Need of Business Agility**

Having expanded to almost 200 branches in the Philippines, NWTF continues on its aggressive growth plan. Operating in rural regions of the Philippines where telecommunications coverage is extremely weak poses a major hurdle with the limited availability of bandwidth.

With its service deployments in new locations hindered by branch network availability, NWTF faced hurdles in setting up a reliable and secure infrastructure. The difficulty in accessing the company’s internal online banking application was mainly due to the spread-out locations of NWTF’s staff members, being situated in different branches throughout the Philippines. Without a scalable network platform to complement its robust expansion plans, the organization had to reconsider the effectiveness of its existing
Powering NWTF’s Future with VMware SD-WAN

infrastructure. Whenever a branch encounters network downtime due to Internet instability, employees could be stuck without Internet access from a few hours to days, depending on the severity of the network issue.

NWTF’s scalability and speed-to-market was severely impacted as a result of a disparate network with limited visibility and management. The solution was to obtain a fast-to-deploy, plug-and-play network solution.

Branch Network Challenges
As a cost-conscious organization with network challenges across its branch offices, it was difficult for NWTF to help clients achieve self-sufficiency whilst securing easy access to convenient financial services, including access to mobile banking digital services. There were also significant upfront costs for NWTF to invest in on-premise Internet broadband services for all branch offices.

Branch complexity was also a major issue for NWTF, with numerous single-function devices in the branch leading to device sprawl and silo management requiring multiple truck rolls to deploy, monitor and troubleshoot network issues.

Additionally, the backhauling of branch network traffic through the data center slowed down real-time performance of internal enterprise apps. Provisioning new apps for branch use required intensive, time-inefficient network reconfiguration. NWTF needed to simplify its network and improve visibility over IT infrastructure, in order to enhance agility and reach more people needing their services.

Serving the Community with VMware SD-WAN
In assessing NWTF’s challenges, VMware Professional Services determined that the core issues could be solved with VMware SD-WAN - a solution that could deliver low-cost bandwidth,

“VMware is a pioneer in the networking sector and highly regarded by our peers in the industry. We made a strategic move to utilize VMware SD-WAN to simplify our branch and remote site deployments, in order to scale up fast and future proof our organization.”

EMMA GARCIA
SYSTEMS DEPARTMENT
NWTF

increased throughput, greater reliability, exceptional application performance and better access to cloud applications and services.

VMware SD-WAN optimizes network performance and connectivity between NWTF’s branches and head office. As a network overlay, VMware SD-WAN delivers assured application performance, simplified branch networking and management, and increased network agility.

NWTF now has a simplified branch infrastructure with the ability to insert network services on the branch edge, in the cloud, or in the regional and enterprise data centers. It can provision branch offices faster with automated zero-touch deployment, simplified configuration, orchestration and ongoing monitoring with centralized troubleshooting tools.

NWTF has enhanced application performance over hybrid or internet links with direct, secure access to enterprise and cloud
Powering NWTF’s Future with VMware SD-WAN

applications, including consolidated monitoring and visibility across multiple WAN links and service providers. For organizations like NWTF that are distributed across critical branch operations, VMware SD-WAN helps streamline its operations and enhance security by unifying its network, endpoint, identity and cloud security control points.

NWTF now has full visibility into its network and securely supports application growth. VMware SD-WAN provides better accuracy in processing microloans and enables NWTF to be agile with reliable access to cloud services, private data centers and SaaS-based enterprise applications. Designed with a cloud-first approach for operational efficiency and future readiness, VMware SD-WAN simplifies connectivity to the cloud and enhances the performance of SaaS-based applications. With VMware SD-WAN, NWTF has seen high quality, consistent performance and availability of mission-critical applications from the office, home, and anywhere.

By enabling digital application of business loans, customers can now accelerate the start of their small businesses, instead for waiting for months to book a physical application at a branch office.

Accelerating speed-to-market for NWTF

VMware SD-WAN is an incremental and cost-effective solution that has enabled the agility NWTF needed without sacrificing its existing network infrastructure investment. With better network uptime, NWTF has increased business productivity and improved customer experience at the branch, while also gaining cost savings of 16 percent by spending less on dedicated telecommunications services.

Having needed just under an hour compared to traditional VPN solutions which would take up at least a day for setup, VMware SD-WAN also significantly improved branch network quality—extremely crucial for NWTF’s business-critical applications. This branch network uptime ensures that NWTF’s loan app, Cesuco, is always accessible by agents across branches and provides enhanced user experiences for customers. Efficient operations are key for NWTF because the less investment spent on setting up business services, the more money freed up for focusing on their core mission.

VMware SD-WAN is also highly secure, offering NWTF state-of-the-art cybersecurity with targeted and more granular control over its network. With centralized management of the network enabled by VMware SD-WAN Orchestrator, NWTF now has a clear view of its branches’ network traffic and increased visibility of network performance, allowing for easy monitoring and troubleshooting of real-time issues. NWTF can deploy branch networks quickly with the zero-touch provisioning capability of VMware SD-WAN. This provides them the ability to scale out fast—setting up new branches with an improved network at the speed of business growth.

VMware SD-WAN enables NWTF to preserve the investment in their existing wide area network infrastructure, while taking advantage of all of the benefits of SD-WAN – from provisioning branch offices faster with automated zero-touch deployment, to enabling multiple links, devices and services to coexist and interoperate with incumbent solutions. 600,000 banking customers are experiencing improved loan app performance brought about by VMware SD-WAN.

Looking ahead (Future)

VMware SD-WAN plays a crucial role in powering NWTF’s future expansion and enables the organization to operate as a fully-virtualized environment. With the business climate changing rapidly, VMware SD-WAN is a predictable and dependable solution that allows NWTF to find new ways to empower their employees and serve customers. NWTF’s next steps includes plans to team up with VMware to pilot a joint social enterprise together where NWTF’s branches are used during non-peak hours as remote learning centers for underprivileged students who do not have resources to do home-based learning.

Negros Woman for Tomorrow Foundation (NWTF) has expanded its digital banking offerings across branch offices in the Philippines with #VMware SD-WAN, together enabling improved financial inclusion and female empowerment across rural and urban areas of the country.