

OCT - DEC
2020



The DBM Bulletin

The Official Newsletter of the Department of Budget and Management



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MESSAGE FROM THE Secretary



The year 2020 tested our grit as a people in the face of the series of calamities that befell our country – from the eruption of Taal Volcano in January, to the onslaught of the COVID-19 pandemic and the declaration of a nationwide public health emergency by March, and most recently, the devastating typhoons and rampaging floods in different parts of the country this November.

These events have burdened our spirit, expectedly and understandably so, as many of our people have been severely affected. Some have lost loved ones and homes. Sources of income were ravaged, and plans and opportunities were missed or cancelled. Sadly, the list goes on.

Given our country's inherent vulnerability to many natural hazards, there are lessons we have learned and can make use of to improve future disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) programs in hopes of reducing the damage and loss or alleviating the suffering of potential victims. These include approaches and strategies in the preparation, response coordination, and contingency planning that have proven effective in the past. We have also come to realize the importance of ensuring that these plans are well-communicated to and fully understood by the public, and that government responses are guided by and adhere to these policies that effectively address the crisis.

On the other hand, one reality that has again stood out through all these events – and indeed never fails to surface in times of calamities – is the distinctly Filipino spirit of “*Bayanihan*”. And it is edifying to note that the spirit remains alive and strong in the Department of Budget and Management.

Our Budget Union for the Declaration of Genuine Employees' Thrusts (BUDGET) has so far conducted six donation drives this year, providing cash assistance and relief goods to our brothers and sisters in disaster-stricken areas and extending help to our colleagues who had tested positive of the Coronavirus. I have noted as well the same effort in our Regional Offices (RO), which have been quick to extend help to their communities through such initiatives as RO VI's Love Thy Neighbor and other donation drive projects. Meanwhile, some show their support by words of encouragement and prayers.

We recall around this time last year, children were already on the streets singing Christmas carols while we were caught up in frenzied preparations for our annual office Christmas party. This year, celebrations may feel different given the restrictions on social gatherings. Yet, I hope the spirit of Christmas remains as intimate as before, thankful that we and our loved ones are safe from the pandemic and natural disasters. For those who have lost a family member or a friend during this difficult period, I send my prayers that you may find comfort and healing.

As we feel the cold breeze of December, listen to joyful Christmas songs, savor the sumptuous food and beverages on the table, marvel at the Christmas lights and trimmings, and relish the precious smiles and laughter from the young and old, I wish that the celebrations lift your spirit once more and be the light that dispels the shadows of a tough and challenging year. But do remember to always follow our government's health protocols for everyone's safety.

May the Yuletide Season give us the strength and courage we need to welcome 2021 with rekindled hope and renewed enthusiasm as we continue to remember the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ and that by His great love, mercy and compassion, we shall overcome all the trials and challenges that we face each day of our lives.

Merry Christmas to my DBM family and a Happy New Year! All the best and God Bless us all.


SECRETARY WENDELL E. AVISADO

Project DIME highlighted in 2020 transparency webinars

BY: REY ANGELO JOSE M. GONZAGA

Project DIME of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) was one of the featured transparency initiatives presented during the 2020 Transparency Webinars conducted by the Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO) from October to December this year.

The webinars focused on informing and engaging the public on the transparency initiatives and programs of the government, including the DBM's Project DIME or Digital Information for Monitoring Evaluation.

Project DIME, one of the reform innovations introduced by the DBM, is a key program and game-changing initiative that utilizes digital data and imaging to monitor the status of implementation of government programs and projects.

During the webinars, speakers from the DBM discussed the role of Project DIME as a more efficient and effective mechanism for the monitoring and evaluation of government programs and projects. They further explained the monitoring workflow, its initial gains, and the DIME Transparency Website, among others.

“The government, through its various initiatives, is committed to the promotion of transparency and accountability. As one of the reform programs of the department, Project DIME is one with this mission by providing ways to hold the government accountable through disclosure of information and use of up-to-date digital data imaging technologies to monitor the status and progress of high-value infrastructure projects,” said Kenneth Quisado, IT Officer, during his presentation.

In addition to Project DIME, other programs tackled during the webinars were the Freedom of Information Program and other transparency initiatives, including the DevLIVE and Full Disclosure Policy of the Department of the Interior and Local Government, and the COVID-19 Tracker and the DataCollect Application of the Department of Health.

NEWS BRIEFS

USAPANG

EDUKASYON



TRABAHO



OFW



AGRI



AYUDA



STIMULUS



FOOD SECURITY, NUTRITION



TRABAHO, ENDO, JO



PPE, BAKUNA



NATIONAL ID



Dagyaw goes virtual, enhances government-public dialogues

BY: CRISPIN MAHRION B. ABACAN

Following the enthusiastic public reception and successful run of Dagyaw in 2019, convenors of this breakthrough government-public dialogue series have reinforced the program, adopting a virtual format in order to provide a more accessible platform for the public.

Dagyaw, the Hiligaynon term for “*bayanihan*” or “togetherness”, is a series of Town Hall Meetings of the Participatory Governance Cluster (PGC) of the Cabinet whose primary objective is to bring the government closer to the people by gathering various stakeholders to discuss local and national issues, particularly those that are of direct concern to them. The program is jointly designed and implemented by government and non-government organizations.

For its 2020 run, dubbed as “Dagyaw 2020: Open Government Virtual Town Hall Meetings”, the National Technical Working Group (NTWG) tapped various civic technology and online platforms such as Zoom, Facebook Live, and Youtube in the conduct of the said activity. The NTWG is composed of the government conveners Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Budget and Management (DBM) and Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO) and non-government co-conveners Right to Know Right Now Coalition (R2KRN) and Caucus of Development NGO Networks (CODE-NGO). Adapting to the challenges wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic, the NTWG shifted to online-based tools to increase the public's access to Dagyaw activities while still observing the current health and mass gathering protocols.

The Dagyaw 2020 meetings were also conducted in all regions operationalized by the Regional Technical Working Group (RTWG) which is composed of DBM, DILG, PCOO-Philippine Information

Agency, and their respective non-government co-conveners at the local level.

A total of ten Dagyaw episodes were conducted this year, involving various sectors/industries engaged in discussions of topics related to programs under the National Action Plan Against COVID-19, especially those in the Recovery phase.

The episodes featured the following topics: Usapang Edukasyon: Is PH Ready for Distance/Blended Learning? – October 8, 2020; Usapang Trabaho: Paano? – October 15, 2020; Usapang OFW: Kalagayan at Kinabukasan ng OFWs sa Panahon ng Pandemya – October 22, 2020; Usapang Agri: Ahon Lahat Para sa Pagkaing Sapat – October 29, 2020; Usapang Stimulus: *Bayanihan* Para sa ReCHARGE, Pilipinas! – November 19, 2020; Usapang Ayuda: Mga Program Resulta at Pagtataya – November 26, 2020; Usapang Food Security at Nutrisyon: Mga Hakbangin Tungo sa Zero Hunger – December 3, 2020; Usapang Trabaho, Endo, at JO: A Social Dialogue – December 9, 2020; Usapang PPE at Bakuna: Pondo, Procurement, Deployment – December 10, 2020; and Usapang National ID: On-Track, Off-Track, Safe Ba? – December 17, 2020.

The video replays may be accessed through the Dagyaw Tracker in the PH-OGP Website via facebook.com/opengovPH. This platform serves as the repository of emerging issues raised by the citizens during public dialogues held under the Dagyaw platform, as well as the responses and status of actions taken by government and other organizations that participated in this initiative.

The outputs from these dialogues shall then serve as key references of government in public decision-making, and in shaping and updating government policies that can lead to better public sector performance and service delivery.

Through the years, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) has been resolute in its mission of assuring the Filipino people of a better life through the efficient and effective management of government resources.

But the year 2020 – the year of the COVID-19 pandemic – has been exceptionally challenging for the country and for government agencies and organizations, particularly in terms of crafting the proper response to the national health crisis.

The challenges have not been insurmountable for the DBM, however, as the agency has managed not only to foster fiscal transparency, promote judicious management of government resources, and cultivate competent and better paid public servants – it has also proven to be one of the key instruments in the country's fight against COVID-19. Below are the DBM's major undertakings for the Fiscal Year 2020:

Promoting Fiscal Openness

PH Bests Other SE Asian Countries in Budget Transparency

In the 2019 Open Budget Survey (OBS), the Philippines ranked first among the other Southeast Asian countries in budget transparency. The country received an Open Budget Index score of 76, climbing nine notches in its global ranking from 19th to 10th place. A transparency score of 61 and above implies the comprehensive, timely and online publication of all eight (8) key budget documents, specifically the Pre-Budget Statement, Executive's Budget Proposal, Enacted Budget, Citizens' Budget, In-Year Reports, Mid-Year Review, Year-end Report, and the Audit Report.

DBM Bags Kabalikat PCIEERD Award

The DBM received the Kabalikat Award for Government Agency, a partnership recognition by the Department of Science and Technology-Philippine Council for Industry, Energy, and Emerging Technology Research and Development (DOST-PCIEERD) awarded to its partner agencies that have made substantial contributions in enhancing the country's science and technology initiatives through various collaborative activities under several sectoral concerns for the last five years. The award was for Project DIME (Digital Information for Monitoring and Evaluation) which aims to monitor selected high-value government projects using existing technologies such as satellites, drones, and geotagging.

Upholding Efficient and Effective Management of Government Resources

Reset, Rebound, and Recover: PhP4.506 T FY 2021 National Budget Signed

On December 28, 2020, the PhP4.506 trillion Budget for FY 2021 was signed into law by President Rodrigo Roa Duterte. It was submitted to the Congress last August 25, 2020 before the Constitutional deadline. Bearing the theme "Reset, Rebound, and Recover: Investing for Resiliency and Sustainability," the financial blueprint for next year lays out the government's three-pronged approach that is focused on containing the spread and mitigating the effects of the virus while restarting the economy to help the nation reset, rebound, and recover from the pandemic.



DBM IN 2020

RIISING ABOVE THE CHALLENGES

BY: REY ANGELO JOSE M. GONZAGA

2019 OBS

Global Average	45
Philippines	76
Indonesia	70
Thailand	61
Malaysia	47
Timor-Leste	40
Vietnam	38
Cambodia	32
Myanmar	28

Procurement Process Simplified under Emergency Cases

In order to effectively respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government Procurement Policy Board (GPPB) has undertaken a number of procurement reforms and interventions to simplify the government procurement process. The GPPB released on March 23 the guidelines on Negotiated Procurement (Emergency Cases) to guide all Procuring Entities (PEs) in their efficient response to COVID-19 pandemic. [Cont'd on Page 5](#)

Providing Just and Equitable Pay for the Government Workforce

Salary Adjustment for Gov't Workers Enacted

Republic Act No. 11466 or the Salary Standardization Law (SSL) of 2019, which increases the pay of civilian government employees starting 2020, was signed into law on January 8, 2020. Under the measure, government workers will receive salary increases in four tranches until 2023. It also establishes a performance-based incentive scheme to reward exemplary civil servants and well-performing organizations. In this light, the DBM issued National Budget Circular No. 579 on January 24, 2020 to provide the guidelines on the implementation of the first tranche of the Modified Salary Schedule for Civilian Personnel in the National Government.

Government Workers Granted COVID-19 Hazard Pay



The DBM issued on March 24 the guidelines on the grant of COVID-19 Hazard Pay to government employees, including those employed under contract of service (COS) or job order (JO) arrangement. Qualified civilian and military personnel, as well as those employees in the Legislative and Judicial Branches, Local Government Units, and Local Water Districts, received an amount not exceeding PhP500 per person. This benefit was granted to government employees who were exposed to health risks and hazards during the period of the Enhanced Community Quarantine.

Sustaining the Administration's COVID-19 Pandemic Response

Hiring of Additional COS Medical Workforce Approved

To supplement the current health workforce in the country, the DBM approved the request of the Department of Health for authority to engage the services of a total of 16,614 contract of service (COS) workers for a period of three months. The additional COS medical workers will support the existing medical, allied medical, and support personnel in the COVID-19 referral hospitals, quarantine areas, emergency health call centers, and health facilities undertaking critical tasks during the COVID-19 pandemic.

16,614 COS WORKERS

		17%	nursing attendants
24%	40%	14%	other allied medical professionals
		5%	administrative/support staff

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The Procurement projects allowed under Negotiated Procurement (Emergency Cases) cover:

- Goods
- Medical relief services
- Civil works
- Aid distribution locations
- Lease of real property or venues such as those used as quarantine centers and evacuation sites

Government COS & JO Workers' Salaries Continued Amid COVID-19 pandemic

The DBM and the Commission on Audit issued Joint Circular No. 1, s. 2020, or the "Interim Guidelines Governing Contract of Service (COS) and Job Order (JO) Workers in the Government for the Duration of the State of Calamity and Community Quarantine Due to the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)." The Joint Circular provides that COS and JO workers who will be required to work from home shall be paid their corresponding salaries/wages during the community quarantine period. The Resolution covers 100,000 contractual workers categorized as either job order or contract of service.

Pay Hike for Entry-level Nurses Implemented

Entry-level nurses in public health institutions received a salary increase from the start of Fiscal Year 2020, following the issuance of Budget Circular (BC) No. 2020-4 or the Upgrading of the Entry Level of Nurse Positions last July. Nurse 1 positions will be upgraded by four salary grade (SG) levels, from SG 11 to SG 15. Consequently, the position attributes of the remaining nurse positions are modified, but only in their respective numerical suffix as there will be no diminution in the salary of the present incumbents of the positions.

FROM	SG	TO	SG
Nurse II	15	Nurse I	15
Nurse III	17	Nurse II	17
Nurse IV	19	Nurse III	19
Nurse V	20	Nurse IV	20
Nurse VI	22	Nurse V	22
Nurse VII	24	Nurse VI	24

Consequently, the GPPB also issued Circular No. 01-2020 on April 6, 2020, which set the guidelines for Emergency Procurement under the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act. The Circular aims to expedite the procurement of highly needed supplies, materials, equipment, utilities, telecommunications, and other critical services authorized under the *Bayanihan* to Heal as One Act at the most advantageous price to the government, with the necessary safeguards for the prevention of abuses and corruption in the procurement process.

GETTING THE WORK DONE

BY: JOY S. ALMAZAN

The COVID-19 pandemic has altered the way we live, the way we work, and the way we socialize and relate with one another. We have had three-quarters of the year go by, but have not seen much or done much outside of our homes in those months – a situation no one could ever have imagined about a year ago.

We were thrust into a health crisis, and we witnessed how it changed our world, and forced us to adjust and adapt.

But despite the drastic changes, one thing remains unchanged, especially in the workplace – the commitment to get the work done regardless of the circumstances and challenges.

Getting the work done requires the willingness and ability to adapt to the “new normal”. And this was certainly evident in the various offices of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), as innovative strategies were developed and employed in order to continue the work while ensuring the employees’ safety and protecting their health.

In the Online Operational Planning Sessions of the Department held in 2020, various bureaus, services, and offices (BSOs) recounted and shared some of their best practices, which enabled them to effectively accomplish their tasks despite the challenging situation. Here are some of them:

Creation of Group Chat. To ensure close coordination and monitoring among staff/colleagues, several offices in the Department, particularly those that had adopted the work-from-home arrangement, created group chats within their offices and divisions. This enabled them to establish a reliable and efficient communication system to facilitate the accomplishment of tasks, even without being physically present at the office.

For DBM Regional Office (RO) VII, online group messaging was also utilized to communicate with their clientele, staff, and outsourced personnel for fast dissemination of advisories, updates, and administrative instructions, as well as discussion of budget-related issuances.

Use of Online Platforms to Conduct Meetings. In addition to group chats, several BSOs have likewise tapped Google Meet, Zoom and other video and audio conferencing platforms to conduct meetings with staff and clients.

For some offices such as the Corporate Planning and Management Service (CPMS), staff meetings are done regularly to monitor or follow up pending tasks.

Use of Electronic Customer Feedback Survey. To ensure continued improvement of services, many BSOs have shifted to electronic survey forms to sustain feedback from clients. The DBM Regional Office (RO) XI took it a notch higher by installing the Quick Response or the QR code for its Customer Feedback Survey in lieu of manual survey forms. Aside from promoting contactless transaction, which safeguards the health and welfare of both employees and clients amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the Electronic Customer Feedback Survey (ECFS) also provides an open, neutral, and protected space for customer feedback. Through the ECFS, the DBM RO XI is able to reach out to clients and efficiently generate data in real time.

Adoption of Proactive Strategies. Being proactive by planning ahead and/or anticipating future needs or problems helps the office and staff deal with change, and even uncertainties.

■ **Creation of Task Force on COVID-19 and Cluster Teams.** Prior to the declaration of an Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) in Cebu City on 28 March 2020, the DBM RO VII had already established a Regional Task Force (RTF) on COVID-19 to ensure the continuous conduct of its budget and management functions, tasks and processes. During the ECQ, the RTF on COVID-19 held meetings twice a week and devised a monitoring mechanism to ensure that all deliverables were fulfilled. The task force also regularly monitored the health status of DBM RO VII employees and outsourced personnel. Upon the recommendation of the RTF on COVID-19, the management provided timely support to the staff, both regular and outsourced, at the height of COVID 19 pandemic. Among the provisions given to them were personal protective equipment, shuttle service, reimbursement for communication expenses of all staff below Division Chiefs, vitamin C supplements for DBM RO VII regular staff, and free meals during RTF meetings and other important office activities.

Aside from the RTF on COVID-19, the DBM RO VII also created Composite Cluster Teams which were tasked to regularly engage with their counterparts in clientele agencies and ensure timely dissemination of

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A Focus on Business Process Management

BY: SHERYLL GRACE AROMIN, DIVISION CHIEF, PROJECT COORDINATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE DIVISION, ICTSS

“If it does not make at least three people mad, it is not a process.”

- HAMMER AND STANTON (1995)

This is a subtle reminder from the gurus of Business Process Management (BPM) – Michael Hammer and Steven Stanton – that business processes are meant to capture inter-related activities performed by multiple actors to produce value for the bottom-line stakeholder – the customer or the client.

All organizations, whether in the public or private sector, are made up of systems and processes. Business processes are considered as among the most essential organizational assets and are present from the moment the organization is created. For the public sector, it is quite hard to imagine running a government without structured processes in place and implemented – from simple payment claims to the more complicated processes of procurement, accounting and the like.

While BPM is crucial for any organization, the competence to assess effectiveness of processes and identify possible areas for improvement is still lacking, especially in government.

Fortunately, however, there are available learning opportunities that could help enhance our skills in BPM, such as the one offered to the Philippine government this year by the Australian government, through the Australia Awards and Alumni Engagement Program-Philippines (AAEP-P) and the Queensland University of Technology (QUT). And I was among the 29 Philippine public financial management practitioners privileged to participate in the three-month Short Course on the Process Review and Reengineering for Integrated Financial Management Information Systems (IFMIS) provided by said institutions.

The course is linked with the Executive Course in BPM of the QUT, and aimed to provide PFM practitioners with a competency-based approach in developing the applicable system and process re-design specifications, and detailed IFMIS roadmap, as well as a responsive change management strategy, to name a few.

It envisioned to equip the participants with the skills and confidence to undertake BPM for better and re-engineered processes for the target IFMIS. In fact, all the proposed re-entry action plans of the participants focused on the systems and processes supporting the strategic vision of the IFMIS.

One of the key lessons from the course, specifically with regard to the IFMIS, addresses the question – Why can we not just automate everything through information technology?

In business process management, we learned, information technology should NOT dictate the process change; instead it

should just enable the process change which should eventually yield value.¹ Bill Gates explains it thus: “The first rule of any technology used in business is that automation applied to an efficient operation will magnify the efficiency while the second rule is that automation applied to an inefficient operation will magnify the inefficiency.”

Hence, BPM is more than automation or digitization. It covers the management, improvement, and innovation of processes aimed at enhancing transparency and maximizing value for the organization and its clients. It involves the entire exercise of process identification, process discovery, process analysis, process redesign, process implementation, and process monitoring and controlling. This life cycle produces the process architecture, as-is and to-be processes, analysis of issues, workable courses of action, and process mining or model-based analytics. Along the way, business continuity planning and change management should also be considered.



IFMIS Short Course participants, DBM Officials and QUT facilitators make the “equal” hand sign to manifest equity and inclusiveness in all facets, including learning, as they pose for an online photo during the Re-entry Action Plan Colloquium last November 5, 2020.

To illustrate, BPM is like undertaking a house renovation project. As a start, there is a need to look at the existing architecture, understand the current house model, and the issues or reasons for renovating it in the first place. After which, the prescriptive or target renovated house model is designed. Then follows the execution of the renovation plans, achieved by either driving a sledge hammer through the walls to tear them down, or by simply enhancing existing walls. Of course, after renovating, it is best to check on the walls and other improvements every now and then to determine if they indeed added value to your home and if safety measures are in place.

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Getting the work... from page 6

appropriate information/updates on the availability and use of funds for COVID 19.

Preparation of Annual Work Assignments. At the beginning of the year, the divisions of the Budget Information and Training Service (BITS) prepare their annual work assignment schedule, which indicates the projects and tasks to be accomplished for the year, the person(s) in charge, and corresponding timeline per task. Through this tool, work is efficiently managed and monitored.

Other Best Practices Identified

- Provision of feedback reports to BSOs concerned
- Prompt response to queries/clarifications/needs of BSOs
- Ready templates with uniform sequential review points in providing feedback for BSOs' submitted reports
- Updated/complete monitoring tools, for various processes, shared in the drive;
- Team effort regularly exercised and strong inter-division linkages
- Creation of online/digital repository for knowledge/file sharing
- Weekly updates/monitoring of tasks/deliverables

While these best practices may not be applicable to all, there is much we could learn from these strategies/methods and, where practicable, tweak or innovate to make them more responsive or better adapted to our office's situation or needs.

A Focus on Business... from page 7

At this time of pandemic, when the call for more efficient and effective governance and public service resounds more strongly than ever, it is time for the Philippine government GOP to make smart process “renovations” through BPM. For how else can we hope to achieve the strategic IFMIS in the next normal?

As we create a vision for the IFMIS, the future is filled with so many “what-ifs”. What if we can fully complete a transaction at the touch of a button? What if we can transform government services to become more digitally responsive for the next normal? What if we can indeed adopt a full paperless system? What if we can achieve near real-time reporting?

The what-ifs are endless – but not impossible. Let BPM enable those possibilities. And, if indeed BPM involves looking into why a process makes at least three people mad, and finding a way to make it better, then it would certainly be a means to a worthwhile end.

¹ Divinagracia, G. (2020), BPM Short Course Module 1, Queensland University of Technology

PH-OGP holds online launch of Revised 5th NAP

BY: HAZEL ANNE T. INTIA

In the Philippines, as in the rest of the world, the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted lives and posed serious threats to the physical health and financial well-being of many individuals. Its impact on lives and livelihoods has been starkly different by income group, race, gender, geography, and age. However, this health crisis has also shown that the Open Government values of transparency, accountability, public participation and innovation cannot be an afterthought.

Recognizing that an open government framework is a powerful tool in making progressive and inclusive changes even in the midst of the pandemic, the Philippine Open Government Partnership (PH-OGP) has made

unprecedented shifts in revising and co-creating the PH-OGP 5th National Action Plan (NAP) to adapt to the “new normal”.

To celebrate this milestone, the PH-OGP recently launched its revised 5th NAP on December 16, 2020 via ZOOM teleconference. The online event was graced by several public sector reformers from national government agencies and non-government organizations. DBM Secretary Wendel E. Avisado was also present to provide his keynote address together with Mr. Sanjay Pradhan who is the Chief Executive Officer of the OGP.

The Philippines is among the eight founding countries of the OGP, a multilateral initiative that aims to secure concrete commitments from government and non-government sectors to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. The DBM currently serves as Chair and Secretariat of the PH-OGP.

PH-OGP 5th National Action Plan (NAP) 2019-2021

In December 2019, the Philippine Open Government Partnership (PH-OGP) launched its most inclusive and genuinely co-created National Action Plan (NAP) with the widest geographical and sectoral reach. The action plan went through a rigorous consultation process across 16 regions, engaging more than 1,335 participants from civil society organizations, public sector unions, business groups, indigenous groups and academic institutions.

The PH-OGP 5th NAP includes ten (10) commitments which responds to good governance values, namely: Access to Information, Civic Participation, Public Accountability as well as Technology and Innovation. Of these ten (10) commitments, six (6) are new commitments while four (4) are continuing or enhanced commitments from the previous PH-OGP 4th NAP. Twelve agencies and five (5) non-government organizations shall lead efforts and work together towards achieving the targets and milestones set under these commitments until 2021.

Extension of the Implementation of the PH-OGP 5th NAP

The implementation of the commitments under the action plan commenced in 2020. However, with the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, governments around the world imposed various containment and mitigation measures which affected the implementation of government programs, activities, and projects. In this regard, the OGP Criteria and Standard Subcommittee provided a one-year extension in the implementation of the Action Plan commitments. This implies that commitments under the PH-OGP 5th NAP can now be implemented until 2022.

In this light, the PH-OGP Steering Committee issued Guidelines on the Extended Implementation of the 5th NAP which aims to provide guidance to commitment holders in

revising their respective milestones and/or the timeframes.

Highlights of the Revised PH-OGP 5th NAP 2019-2022

Under the revised action plan, most commitment holders have revised their milestone activities to leverage on and utilize various civic technology and online platforms. This is in observance of the required health protocols and limitations to travel and conduct mass gatherings to effectively curb the spread of the virus. For example, the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) committed to use online platforms in the conduct of the Dagyaw 2020: Virtual Town Hall Meetings. Although conducted virtually, the main essence of the Dagyaw remains, which is to provide a safe and open platform for dialogues on pressing governance and operational issues at the national and local levels.

Moreover, several commitments have also added new milestone activities related to COVID-19 response. Notably, the Department of Education (DepEd) has added a milestone activity in enabling participatory monitoring in the distribution of computer packages to learners and educators. The Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO), on the other hand, will also facilitate the proactive and transparent disclosure of all COVID-19-related information from national government agencies.

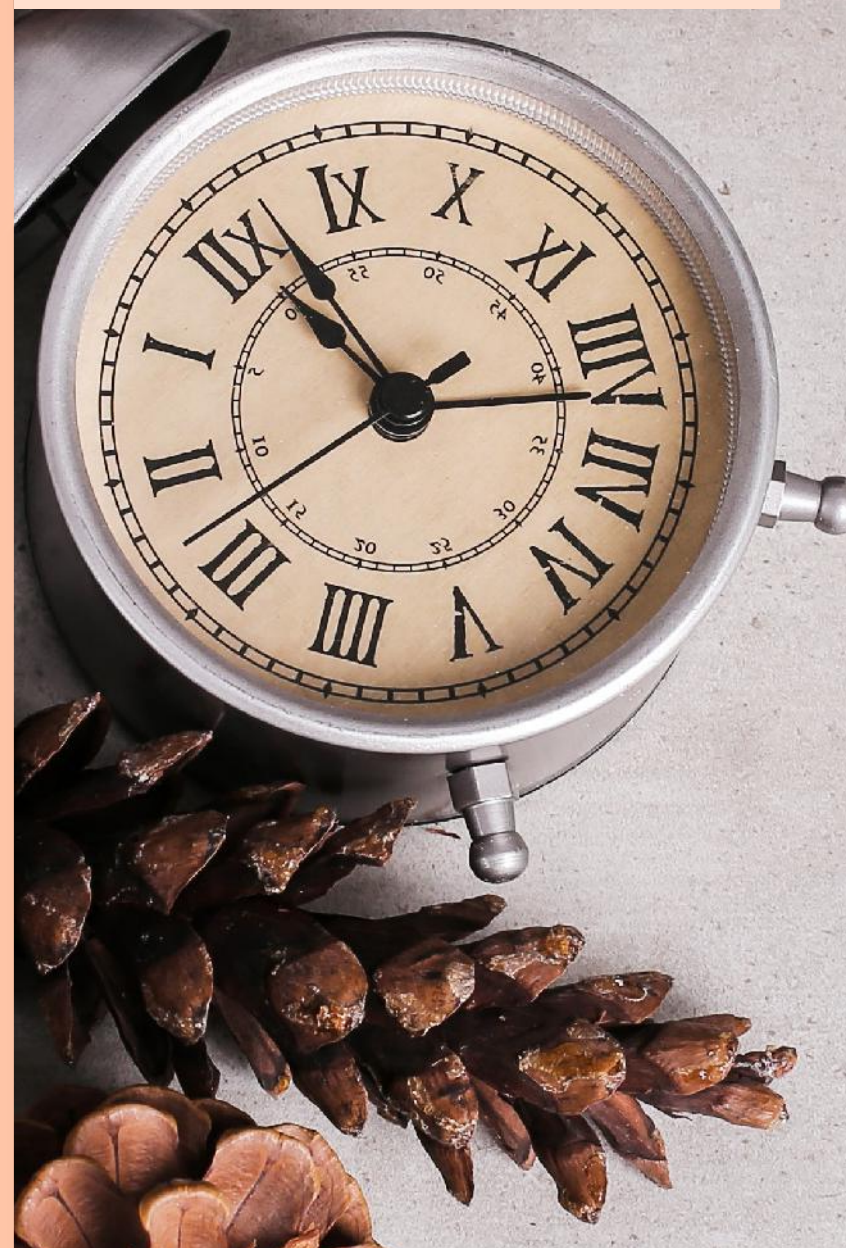
The PH-OGP continued to make unprecedented shifts by adopting an innovative co-creation process in revising the 5th action plan. The PH-OGP conducted several virtual meetings and consultations – two (2) PH-OGP Orientations and fifteen (15) one-on-one consultation meetings – with both government and non-government commitment holders. Agencies have also initiated their own online stakeholder consultations, totaling to 52 virtual collaboration meetings conducted, as of date.

Towards a More Transparent and Open Government

It is important to emphasize that a good government is one that actively listens and effectively responds. That is, an effective government is one that is highly trusted and felt by the citizens.

As Secretary Avisado mentioned in his speech, “Moving forward, our vision should be a democracy that addresses both the harsh lessons of the pandemic and incorporates the incredible innovations of the open government community. And so, with this revised action plan, we aim to restore the people's trust and faith in government by listening better and doing the most that we can to deliver the government's promise to provide more efficient and effective public services to the Filipino people, even amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.”

In this note, dealing with COVID-19 pandemic requires tremendous effort from society and government. Hence, the government must continue making concrete commitments that work best for the citizens – by opening civic space, tackling digital threats, making our contracts and budgets open, and tackling systemic inequalities.



LS NOOK

BY: THE LEGAL SERVICE

Validity of the Allotment Identified for Coronavirus Disease 2019 Operations

The enactment of Republic Act (RA) No. 11469¹ granted the President temporary special powers in order to address the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. One of the authorized powers granted is to direct the discontinuance of appropriated programs, projects or activities of any agency of the Executive Department, in the FYs 2019 and 2020 General Appropriations Act (GAAs), including unreleased appropriations and unobligated released allotments, in view of the crisis brought about by the COVID-19².

Accordingly, the DBM issued National Budget Circular (NBC) No. 580³, which orders the adoption of economy measures in the government due to the national health emergency situation. Hence, all agencies of the National Government and its instrumentalities were advised to evaluate those authorized under the available appropriation sources as of March 31, 2020, which include FY 2019 GAA Unreleased Appropriation and Unobligated Allotments considered as Continuing Appropriations pursuant to RA No. 11464⁴.

In compliance with NBC No. 580, a national government agency (NGA) identified unobligated allotments as of March 31, 2020 to fund the operations and response measures to address COVID-19.

However, the identified unobligated allotments were not withdrawn, as provided in Section 4.5⁵ of NBC No. 580, nor was a corresponding negative

Special Allotment Release Order (SARO) issued, as required in Section 3.3⁶ of Budget Execution Advisory No. 6⁷.

Now, the NGA wants to be clarified on the validity of the allotment identified for the COVID-19 response after the effectivity of RA No. 11469.

Section 9 of RA No. 11469 provides that the said law, which took effect on March 26, 2020, shall be in full force and effect only for three (3) months (i.e., June 25, 2020), unless extended by Congress. Related thereto, Section 5 of NBC No. 580 provides that the same shall be in full force and effect for the duration of RA No. 11469.

Therefore, with the belated submission of certification/list, as well as the non-issuance of negative SARO for the purpose, the offered unobligated allotments identified for the COVID-19 operations of the NGA were not effectively discontinued. Also, RA No. 11469, in which NBC No. 580 was issued, was only in full force and effect until June 25, 2020.

Accordingly, the general procedure or usual guidelines will apply on the validity of allotment. The validity specified in the SARO notes is the usual validity period of the allotment. In this case, the validity of the unobligated allotments of the NGA is until December 31, 2020, consistent with RA No. 11464 and the guidelines under NBC No. 578, s. 2020⁸.

^{1/} Bayanihan to Heal as One Act

^{2/} Section 4. Authorized Powers. xxx

(v) Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, direct the discontinuance of appropriated programs, projects or activities (P/A/P) of any agency of the Executive Department, including government-owned or -controlled corporations (GOCCs), in the FYs 2019 and 2020 General Appropriations Act (GAA), whether released or unreleased, the allotments for which remain unobligated, and utilize the savings generated therefrom to augment the allocation for any item directly related to support operations and response measures, which are necessary or beneficial in order to address the COVID-19 emergency, consistent with herein declared national policy: Provided, however, that the following items in the budget shall be prioritized for augmentation:

xxx

^{3/} Adoption of Economy Measures in the Government due to the Emergency Health Situation

^{4/} 4.4.1 FY 2019 GAA Unreleased Appropriation and Unobligated Allotments considered as Continuing Appropriations pursuant to R.A. No. 11464

^{5/} Each NGA/SUC/GOCC shall identify and compute their FYs 2019 and 2020 unobligated allotments for MOOE and CO as of March 31, 2020, based on item 4.3 of this Circular. The Certification signed by the Head of Agency, duly certified by the authorized budget and finance officers concerned, shall include the specific source P/A/Ps covering the released amount/s, as well as the corresponding amount to be offered. Said certification shall be submitted to the DBM not later than April 30, 2020.

^{6/} BMBs/ROs shall prepare the negative Special Allotment Release Orders (SAROs) to withdraw the funds appropriated for P/A/Ps offered for discontinuance, with the withdrawn amount to be consequently and specifically made available for COVID-19 initiatives.

^{7/} Prescribing Additional Procedures to Effect the Discontinuance of Program/Activities/ Projects (P/A/Ps) Pursuant to National Budget Circular (NBC) No. 580

^{8/} Guidelines on the Release of Funds for FY 2020 dated January 6, 2020

COMPENSATION COMPENDIUM

BY: THE ORGANIZATION, POSITION CLASSIFICATION AND COMPENSATION BUREAU

The Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) has sent a request to the DBM for the postponement of the implementation of the Civil Service Commission (CSC)-Commission on Audit (COA)-DBM Joint Circular (JC) No. 1, s. 2017¹, as amended by CSC-COA-DBM JC No. 1, s. 2018², relative to the engagement of the contract of service (COS)/job order (JO) workers in the government in view of the state of the national emergency in the country due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As represented by the CCP, the current situation in the country has slowed down the conduct of necessary activities to fully implement the provisions of said JCs. Thus, the proposed deferment in the implementation of subject JCs will truly benefit the workforce in an agency hired under the COS/JO arrangement.

It is to be noted that CSC-COA-DBM JC No. 1, s. 2018 was issued to authorize national government agencies concerned to engage the services of COS/JO workers and renew the contracts of their respective COS/JO workers until December 31, 2020.

Thereafter, the hiring of COS/JO workers shall be subject to the conditions and limitations prescribed under CSC-COA-DBM JC No. 1, s. 2017.

However, may we highlight that COA-DBM JC No. 2³ was issued on October 20, 2020 to update the rules and regulations governing COS/JO workers in the government.

Among others, Item 11.1 thereof states that agencies may engage the services of new COS/JO workers through individual contract, as well as renew the individual contracts of their existing COS/JO workers until December 31, 2022. After which, the engagement of COS/JO workers in the government shall conform to the provisions of said JC.

The transition period on the matter has been extended until the end of FY 2022 to provide agencies concerned with ample time to assess their respective organizational and staffing requirements while ensuring the unhampered delivery of public services, as well as to fully comply with the provisions of COA-DBM JC No. 2, s. 2020.

In view of this, the CCP and other government agencies concerned may continue to engage COS/JO workers to provide the necessary services for the implementation of their priority programs, projects, and activities, subject to the determination by the responsible officials therein of the need of their services, availability of funds for the purpose, and the existing pertinent budgeting, accounting, and auditing rules and regulations.

^{1/} Rules and Regulations Governing Contract of Service and Job Order Workers in the Government dated June 15, 2017

^{2/} Amendment to CSC-COA-DBM Joint Circular 1, s. 2017 dated November 9, 2018

^{3/} Updated Rules and Regulations Governing Contract of Service (COS) and Job Order (JO) Workers in the Government

GAD CORNER

Upskilling GAD warriors for a gender-responsive DBM

BY: EMIL JOHN MANGUERRA

The COVID-19 pandemic may have drastically changed lives and lifestyles around the world, but some goals remain constant. And thus do activities in pursuit of these continue.

In this spirit, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) has never lost sight of its advocacy and goal of fostering gender and development. Community quarantines and alternative work arrangements notwithstanding, the Department took advantage of the series of online GAD seminars offered by the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) to upskill its GAD warriors.

Last October 13, all 36 members of the GAD Technical Working Group (TWG) from the DBM's Central and Regional Offices attended the half-day webinar titled "Beyond Attribution: Use of the Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines (HGDG) to Mainstream GAD Elements in the Project Development Cycle."

The webinar guided the DBM's GAD advocates on the use of HGDG in the planning, preparation, implementation, and monitoring of the Department's programs and projects.

Jefflynne Valerie B. Lunes, Budget and Management Specialist II and GAD Focal Point System TWG Secretariat of DBM-CAR, shared that the webinar aided her in addressing gender issues at work.

"The webinar helped me to check if the programs and activities that we conduct in the region are gender-responsive," Lunes said.

She added that "the programs and activities should be checked and monitored before, during, and after their implementation in order to adjust and improve them. It also made me realize that there are issues for which we, as an office, can do something, in order for them to be addressed."

The HGDG for Project Development, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation was crafted in 2004 to provide a common instrument for integrating gender perspectives in development programs and projects among government agencies, donor organizations, and other stakeholders. The HGDG has successfully facilitated gender mainstreaming efforts, including the recognition of the value of GAD checklists, at the national level.

The said instrument may be used by the DBM to guide its program and project developers, implementers, and monitoring and evaluation team in ensuring that the GAD perspective is integrated in the design, implementation, management, and monitoring and evaluation of programs and projects in the agency.

Further, it is beneficial for the members of the DBM GAD Focal Point System to determine the corresponding budget of the program or project that may be attributed to the Department's GAD budget.



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