Following the amendment of Joint Circular No. 1, s. 2017 issued by the Civil Service Commission, the Commission on Audit (COA), and the DBM, agencies may still hire and renew the services of workers under contract of service (COS) and job order (JO) status until December 31, 2020.

Likewise, beginning January 1, 2019, said workers shall be paid a salary or wage equivalent to comparable positions in the government, and receive a premium of up to 20% of their salary charged against the Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses budget of the agencies.

Two trainings have been conducted this Quarter by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) - Procurement Service and the joint venture of NextIX Inc. and Nextenders (India) Pvt. Ltd, in preparation for the nationwide roll out of the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS) Virtual Store:

1) October 18 - for the Depot representatives of the Procurement Service (PS) - PhilGEPS; and
2) November 21 - for the first batch of agency representatives to use the System.

As of December 20, 2018, a total of PhP2,131,680.69 worth of transactions for common-use supplies and equipment have been processed under the virtual store from three agencies where the Project was piloted: the DBM – Central Office, PS, and the Government Procurement Policy Board-Technical Support Office (GPPB-TSO).

Joint Circular extends contracts of COS and JO workers

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A total of 62 technical and local persons from different agencies, including the DIME (Digital Imaging for Monitoring and Evaluation) Task Forces from the Regional Offices of the DBM, participated in a two-day Project workshop and Open Roads platform training last October 29-30, 2018 at the DBM Central Office.

Said participants underwent trainings on the use of remote sensing technologies such as satellite imagery, geo-tagging applications, and other project processes, which will be used in verifying the status of programs, activities, and projects being monitored under the Project. A discussion on Open Roads, a web-based application which gives timely and updated overview of projects and sub-projects, was also conducted. Said platform will eventually be integrated into the DIME portal.

After the official launching of the Green, Green, Green Program last October 1, 2018 at the National Museum of Natural History, the DBM conducted a walking tour and best practices lecture with City Architects, Engineers, Planning and Development Officers (CPDOs), and local government unit (LGU) representatives from 51 cities on November 22, 2018. The Green, Green Program aims to assist the country’s cities in developing public open spaces to improve urban living.

Participants visited the Jackson Park in Greenhills, San Juan City, a 3,700-sqm. underutilized park before it was transformed into an inviting, multi-purpose, and accessible urban sanctuary. They then headed to Makati City for lectures and tours by experts from the PGAA Creative Design, Ayala Land Inc., and Philippine Association of Landscape Architects, among others.
As a reform leader and a champion of transparency, accountability, and participation in governance, the DBM was conferred three recognitions during the annual Freedom of Information (FOI) Awards last November 28, 2018, the most number of awards for an agency during the ceremony.

Said awards are the following:
1) Plaque of Recognition for being one of the top requested and performing agencies in the eFOI Portal and for its efforts in providing the public with convenience in requesting data from the government;
2) Plaque of Appreciation given to OGP, where the DBM serves as the Secretariat and the DBM Secretary as the Chairperson of the PH-OGP Steering Committee, for its efforts and accomplishments that support the implementation of the FOI Program in the Executive Branch; and
3) Plaque of Appreciation given to the AO 25 Task Force (InterAgency Task Force on the Harmonization of National Government Performance Monitoring, Information and Reporting Systems), which is chaired by the DBM, for including the posting and submission of the FOI Manual as one of the requirements in the grant of the FY 2018 Budget.

DBM releases 96.5% of FY 2018 Budget
Around 96.5% or PhP3.633 trillion of the PhP3.767 trillion National Budget for fiscal year 2018 has been released by the DBM as of November 30, 2018.

Aside from continuing appropriations from the 2017 Budget equivalent to PhP3.05 billion, unprogrammed appropriations worth PhP12.32 billion were also released, as follows:
• PhP3.5 billion in support of foreign-assisted projects;
• PhP8 billion in support of infrastructure projects and social programs; and
• PhP800 million in general fund adjustments.

Other automatic appropriations worth PhP3.89 billion were also covered by the release. This included funding for the AFP Modernization Program, and grants and donations, among others.

GPPB-TSO expands Professionalization Program in SUCs
Last December 18, 2018, the DBM signed a Memorandum of Agreement for the Professionalization Program for Public Procurement Practitioners with four more SUCs, namely: 1) Mariano Marcos State University (Region I); 2) Cavite State University (Region IV-A); 3) Cebu Normal University (Region VII); and 4) University of Southeastern Philippines (Region XI).

The GPPB-TSO launched the Public Procurement Specialist Certification Course in partnership with SUCs to institutionalize the professionalization of parties involved in the procurement process. The GPPB-TSO targets to establish partnership with at least one (1) SUC per region. To date, 12 regions have been covered under the Program.

Six (6) of the partner SUCs have already implemented the Program. A total of 784 participants have attended the Basic Level, 194 participants have advanced to the Intermediate Level, and 37 completed all three (3) levels.

The DBM is set to cascade and integrate to its human resource processes the Competency-Based Framework in 2019. The framework was developed to identify competency requirements of positions in the DBM, and level with international standards in human resource management and development.

Said Framework is responsive to the Department’s mission, vision, and objectives, including the Organizational Performance Indicators Framework and other key result areas.
FDI inflows in the first 8 months rise by 31%

From January to August of the year, foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows increased by $1.75 billion or 31% year-on-year, which stood at $7.42 billion from $5.67 billion for the same period last year. Said increase was attributed to the sound policy reforms and robust macroeconomic fundamentals of the Philippine economy.

Secretary Benjamin E. Diokno noted that the progress in the country’s flagship infrastructure program, the Build, Build, Build Program, has helped stir investor optimism. Around PhP8 trillion is expected to be spent for the said Program. Around PhP505.6 billion, higher by PhP168.0 billion or 50% in the same period last year, have been spent on infrastructure and capital outlays.

Omnibus guidelines on motor vehicles released

The acquisition of government-owned motor vehicles will now be under a centralized procurement system, following the issuance of Administrative Order No. 14, s. 2018 last December 12, 2018.

The DBM, as the agency responsible for the efficient and sound utilization of government funds and revenues, backed the issuance of the Order aimed at ensuring that the acquisition of vehicles will be guided by the principles of functional suitability, affordability, and practicability.

The new system will also ensure that the guidelines on the technical specifications of motor vehicles are up to date, and will prohibit the acquisition of luxury motor vehicles in all national government agencies, including government-owned or -controlled corporations (GOCCs), government financial institutions (GFIs), state universities and colleges (SUCs), as well as local government units (LGUs).

As of December 2018, the DBM has entered into twinning arrangements with six (6) selected state universities and colleges (SUCs) across the country in the implementation of the Public Financial Management Competency Program (PFMCP).

These SUCs are the University of the Philippines-National College of Public Administration and Governance, Bicol University, Mariano Marcos State University, West Visayas State University, University of Southeastern Philippines, and University of Southern Mindanao.

Selected personnel of these universities are being trained and equipped to serve as learning service providers for the Program.

A total of 145 participants composed of PFM practitioners from the DBM and the Bureau of the Treasury Regional Offices and faculty members and staff from the six (6) partner SUCs have undergone the training in 2018.