INSIGHT FROM A DBM JUNIOR LEADER

The OSBP Experience

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It was in 2009 when I first experienced the department-wide rationalization. I was then with the Regional Operations and Coordination Service and was transferred to the Budget Technical Service. I was initially assigned at the Standards and Policy Division and then moved to the Budget Preparation Division (BPD).

My division mates in the BPD taught me how to use the Budget Preparation Management System (BPMS), into which we input the following: actual obligations of the preceding year, current appropriations of the current year, and proposed budget for the following year. Encoding each agency's data takes about day, and three days for big agencies, such as the DPWH, the DENR, and the DepEd. We would render overtime or overnight work in order to meet deadlines.

The Budget Forum signals the budget preparation season that starts in January. By March, the agencies submit their actual obligations. By April, we at the BPD input into the BPMS these data, which are used in the Technical Budget Hearing (TBH). Consequently, the agencies submit their budget proposals in April. In June, our division enters into the system these data, which are used during the Executive Review Board. These occasions are the toughest for the BPD, most of which are spent on encoding data into the BPMS, notwithstanding we have other tasks, to name a few: We act as the technical secretariat during the Budget Forum and we sit in during the TBH. We also serve as the technical secretariat and in-charge of the minutes during the ERB. We proofread the drafts of the NEP and the BESF before and after printing, and effect all the errata.

A big change happened in 2013—the DBM, the lead agency for budget reforms, adopted the Unified Account Code Structure (UACS). To support the changes entailed by its use, the management customized the budget preparation systems.

Secretary Abad signed the Office Order No. 2013-62, creating the DBM Budget Preparation Systems (BPS) Functional Testing Team, of which I was one of the members. The Online Submission of Budget Proposals (OSBP) was likewise launched in the same year. The OSBP allowed the agencies to encode and submit their budget proposals directly to the DBM, which were automatically uploaded into the BPMS.

Our team studied and analyzed the OSBP. We provided inputs, recommendations, and suggestions to the management, which we believed would help the system work efficiently and effectively, as used by the NGAs. We encountered many trials, some failed although most were successful, before we came up with a functioning and ready-to-use OSBP. After the OSBP was established, I thought it was already the end of our special project. The Office Order 2013-62A was signed, and it indicated that we would serve as resource persons and support group in the DBM's rollout of the UACS and the OSBP training activities for the NGAs. Nevertheless, I had a great experience because I was able to share my knowledge in using the OSBP.

I faced some challenges as the OSBP was being introduced. For example, not all the NGAs agreed that they would use the system because they believed it meant additional work for them. The internet connection of some NGAs were too slow that logging in was already a problem. Some of them did not want to accept changes and reforms.

Despite the challenges we faced, we carried on. We found the reform successful because the agencies had used the OSBP in submitting their budget proposals. Today, the online system submission is fully functional. Being part of the team that helped in making the OSBP successful was truly an honor for me.