

DBM Invites Civil Society Organizations and Other Stakeholders To Participate in the Preparation of the FY 2012 Budget

The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) now formally invites citizen groups to participate in the FY 2012 budget preparation process.

Within February and March this year, consultations will be conducted with citizen groups—civil society organizations (CSOs), non-government organizations, people's organizations, cooperatives, professional associations and other stakeholders—in preparing the FY 2012 national budget. Their participation is being sought in the evaluation of existing national government programs, activities and projects, to provide valuable inputs in the application of zero-based budgeting for FY 2012.

This process will cover six national government agencies (Departments of Agriculture, Agrarian Reform, Education, Health, Public Works and Highways, and Social Welfare and Development) and three government corporations (National Food Authority, National Housing Authority and National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation). Other government agencies and corporations are however, also encouraged to initiate their own consultations with CSOs. Further details on this process will be covered in a national budget memorandum soon to be issued by the DBM.

DBM believes that active citizen participation will help significantly improve the quality of budgetary allocations for 2012: identify and weed-out inefficient and ineffective programs, and refine their geographical/regional distribution. Most importantly, the DBM believes this unprecedented process will enhance the beneficial impact of public expenditure on poverty reduction and employment generation.

This consultative process is being done in line with the Aquino Government's commitment to ensure transparency, accountability and citizen participation in the use of public funds. Earlier, the DBM and some CSOs committed to work together to advocate budget reforms; and on September, 2010 formally agreed to principles that guide their partnership (see *attached document: Principles of Constructive Engagement*).

How to participate?

Citizen groups interested in participating in this process may contact the nearest regional office of the six NGAs or three GOCCs in charge of the program, activity or project they have been monitoring, assessing or evaluating in line with their advocacy work for inquiries. They are asked to submit a letter of intent—in person, via courier or email—no later than February 21, 2011 (*see attached directory of physical and email addresses of NGA and GOCC central and regional offices*).

Their letter of intent should also mention the specific budget program(s), activity(ies) or project(s) that their CSOs have been monitoring or evaluating. The CSOs are expected to submit recommendations on which of the projects they monitored may be expanded for showing clear beneficial impact to key constituents, especially the poor and the marginalized; those which may be scaled down for having minimal impact; and those which may be discontinued for not achieving their intended purposes.

The DBM looks forward to the active participation of CSOs, towards strengthening transparency and accountability in the allocation of funds; and towards ensuring a Government that is efficient, effective and corruption-free. In other words, *kung walang corrupt, walang mahirap*.