



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Social Welfare and Development

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Administrative Order

No. 15

Series of 2015

SUBJECT: OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE DSWD CORE GROUP OF SPECIALISTS

I. RATIONALE:

Over the years, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) has been responding to the needs of the poor and the disadvantaged groups in improving the quality of their lives. The Department ensures the achievement of this commitment through a variety of interventions, one of which is the technical expertise and assistance of social welfare and development specialists.

EO 15 series of 1998 redirect the functions and operations of the Department of Social Welfare and Development and devolved the basic social services to the Local Government Units. The devolution brought enhancement to DSWD mandates as well as the redirection of its functions and operations, however, the leadership role in Social Protection and Social Welfare and Development remained. One of the lead roles remains programmatically intact along the major sectors namely: Family and Community, Children, Youth, Women, Disaster Victims and IDPs, Older Persons, and Persons with Disabilities.

Taking the lead in these fields requires skills and competencies that have been demonstrated, verified and acknowledged. These are measured internally by the Department's ability to respond to the said sectors through an efficient and effective performance of its core functions – Social Welfare Policy Development and Planning, Social Technology Development, Protective, Preventive and Promotive Services, Standards Development and Compliance Monitoring, Capability Building Services, and Provision of Technical Assistance and Resource Augmentation. Externally, these are gauged through the request for assistance from intermediaries for specialists along the sectors.

The approved Reform Agenda of the Department identified organization of resource and expert pools as a key mechanism for harnessing internal expertise and resources within the Department and its partners. Along with this, the Department envisions as the world's standard for the delivery of coordinated social services and social protection for poverty reduction, and the creation of the DSWD core group of specialists is seen as strategies in addressing the demands for competent human resource and high performing internal workforce necessary for the effective delivery of social protection programs and services.

The creation and operationalization of the Core Group of Specialists have faced many challenges since its inception in 2006 by virtue of Memorandum Circular number 16 and

Memorandum Circular 6 Series of 2010 subsequently amending portions of the previous MC. Currently, most of the previously identified sectoral experts have retired and/or nearly retiring, whilst, there is a need to develop or pool new sets of experts. Also, the majority of the provisions in the previous guidelines are no longer responsive, hence, the revocation and creation of the new guidelines is proposed.

OBJECTIVES:

The general objective of the creation and operationalization of a core group of specialists is to be able to provide appropriate and relevant technical assistance to the DSWD's intermediaries and partners of social welfare and development, as well as sustain the agency's leadership in the development and promotion of the five (5) major social welfare programs of the agency namely: Family and Community Welfare, Child and Youth Welfare and Development, Women's Welfare, Older Persons and Persons with Disability Welfare and Disaster Management Program.

It will also include specialists along the functional expertise of the Department namely; SWD Policy and Plan Development, Social Technology Development, Standards Development and Compliance Monitoring, Direct Service Delivery and Transfer of Technology, Advocacy on Behalf of the Vulnerable Sector, and Networking and Partnership.

Specifically, this administrative order will:

1. Provide the minimum criteria for identifying and/or selecting the core group of specialists for the different sectors;
2. Organize the DSWD Core Group of Specialists; and
3. Establish a system of mobilizing and sustaining the DSWD Core Group of Specialists.

II. ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS:

The Creation and Operationalization of the DSWD Core Group of Specialists shall help the Department in performing its role in providing technical assistance along program development, policy formulation, standards review and updating, and all other related decisions/actions in relation to the sectoral programs

A. Execom Champion

The concerned Undersecretary and/or Assistant Secretary shall serve as sectoral Champions and will provide leadership and stimulation in pursuing the roles of the specialists.

Specifically, the Execom Champion shall:

- i. Provide direction to the specialists as experts themselves in particular sectoral programs;
- ii. Champion to the management the needed support of the specialists in terms of the following:
 - a. Provide opportunities and access to the core group to sustain the specialists to harness their abilities and be recognized for their contribution/s;
 - b. Elevate and champion the concerns of the CGS with Execom.

- iii. Provide expert advice to the CGS relative to current and evolving issues affecting the sectoral programs;
- iv. The concerned Execom Champion of the sectoral specialists will observe periodic discussion with the Mentors to check on the progress of each Mentees;
- v. Serve as Resource Person to CGS capability building initiatives;
- vi. Provide inputs to technical papers;
- vii. Perform other related tasks as directed by the Secretary.

B. Convener

By virtue of election by the members of the Core Group of Specialists, the conveners and co-conveners were appointed. The convener/s is expected to serve as the chair/organizer of the designated sector and lead in carrying out plans and activities for the sector.

Specific tasks are as follows:

- i. Convene the specialists at least once per semester for purposes of planning and aligning activities of the Specialist per the set roles they are expected to perform, with the Department's thrusts and priorities, in coordination with CBB as the secretariat;
- ii. Coordinate with other sector conveners regarding emerging/critical sectoral concerns;
- iii. Help the Champion in linking the needs of sector/s to specific office/unit in the Department that needs immediate action and/or follow-thru results/actions;
- iv. Coordinate with the Capacity Building Bureau which is the Secretariat in the operationalization of the Core group of Specialists in terms of preparations, facilitations of meetings and documentation of the activities of the Conveners and the Specialists;
- v. Serve as Resource Person to trainings, fora, conferences, seminars initiated by the DSWD and partners, on a per invitation basis; and
- vi. Have a fixed term of office of 3 years.

Co-Convener

The co-convener is expected to serve as the co-chair/co-organizer of the designated sector and assist the convener in carrying out plans and activities for the sector.

Specific tasks are as follows:

- i. Help the convener to convene the specialists at least once per semester for purposes of planning and aligning activities of the Specialist per the set roles they are expected to perform, guided by the Department's thrusts and priorities
- ii. Identify and recommend priority areas for research affecting the sector;
- iii. Serve as Resource Person to CGS capability building initiatives and to trainings, fora, conferences, seminars initiated by the DSWD and partners, as per invitation basis; and
- iv. Have a fixed term of office of 3 years.

C. Specialists

Serve as expert in a particular field of expertise. As such, he/she has authority and knowledge and practice skills, in the programs, policies and services delivery and serves as TA provider to intermediaries.

Specific roles of the Specialist are:

- i. Provide inputs to enhance guidelines pertaining to field of expertise prior to further review by MANCOM/RMANCOM and approval by the EXECOM;
- ii. Serve as Mentor to identified Mentee/s and shall conduct mentoring sessions with the identified mentees at any given time as need arises, or at least once every quarter;
- iii. Serve as Resource Person during trainings, fora, conferences, seminars initiated by the DSWD and partners;
- iv. Join TWG/similar body and participate in Focus Group Discussions (FGD) concerning their field of expertise to provide inputs for direction setting;
- v. Attend case conferences on high profile/problematic cases to provide inputs on resolution of such cases;
- vi. Connect to broader network of external experts that allow for access to professionals who can advise/exchange information on policy issues, assist and coach in program development, fundraising, communications and evaluation; and strengthen the networks of partnership with GOs, LGUs, Private Sectors, NGAs, and CSOs fields such as education, energy, youth and development, workforce development, humanitarian assistance, health and economic sustainability, among others;
- vii. Attend meetings convened by designated Execom Champion/Convener as they provide direction to the specialists of a particular sectoral area;
- viii. Undertake research pertaining to the respective sectors as part of the continuing professional education.

D. Junior Specialists

Serve as the understudy of the Specialists in a particular field of expertise. As such, he/she is expected to gain deeper knowledge and practice skills along sectoral area.

Specific roles are:

- i. Provide inputs to proposed policies/measures concerning the sectors;
- ii. Attend coaching and mentoring sessions with the chosen mentor/specialist/s;
- iii. Serve as the Focal Persons to implement programs/projects/services in partnership with LGUs, NGOs and CSOs’;
- iv. Act as technical assistance providers to LGU and NGO implementers of Programs, Activities and Projects per respective sectoral specialization.

III. ORGANIZATION AND OPERATIONALIZATION:

The core group of specialists shall be identified, organized from among DSWD staff and personnel regardless of employment status such as Regular, Contractual, Casual and MOA or Cost of Service Workers, provided that they meet the set criteria.

A. Selection Process

The core of specialists shall be selected from among the social workers and allied social science professionals regardless of their current place of assignment. Using the criteria developed, the following procedures shall be adopted in the selection of specialist:

- i. The CBB in coordination with HRDB shall conduct the initial screening and assess the eligibility of the specialists at the Central Office based on their records and credentials. Institutional Development Division, Personnel Unit and the Regional MANCOM shall conduct the same at the regional level and shall submit the result of assessment to CBB. In the same manner, if the endorsed specialist/s both from the Central Office has completed the minimum requirements, endorsement shall be made to the Central Office MANCOM for the 2nd screening.
- ii. The MANCOM shall conduct 2nd screening and validation of the submitted documents; and should select those to be recommended to the Executive Committee (EXECOM). The Regional MANCOM shall conduct the same and submit to CBB for endorsement to the Execom;
- iii. CBB shall submit the list of the screened and validated list of mentors/mentees for approval to the Execom, then issuance of a Special Order.

B. Criteria

This is open to Regular, Contractual, Casual employees, and MOA or Contract of Service Workers with the following qualification standards:

i. Specialist:

- a. Should be SG 18 and above positions with at least 5 years of continuous service*;
- b. Recognized by DSWD as a specialist;
- c. Meets 3 of the following sub-criteria:
 - i. Formal trainings / participation in learning conferences either local/international with focus in field of specialization;
 - ii. Years of experience in the field of expertise- at least more than 5 years;
 - iii. With various involvement in networks in that selected field;
 - iv. With capacity to develop technical papers for publication;
 - v. Willing and interested to be part of the pool of experts.

ii. Junior Specialist:

- i. With regular position SG 15 up to 22 positions with at least 3 years continuous service in the Department (could only be mentored by equivalent position and higher positions with tasks related to area of specialization)*
- ii. Recognized by the DSWD as a junior specialist;
- iii. Meets three of the following criteria:
 - i. Formal trainings / participation in learning conferences either local/international with focus in field of specialization;

- ii. Years of experience in the field of expertise- at least more than 3 years;
- iii. With various involvement in networks in that selected field;
- iv. Willing and interested to be part of the pool of junior experts

*In the case of Field Offices with limited plantilla positions, SG 15 and SG 11 is given due consideration for the Specialists and Junior Specialists respectively; provided that he or she is recognized by DSWD as potential experts and junior experts in the field of sectoral specialization and must meet at least 3 of the abovementioned criterion.

IV. Management of the Core Group of Specialists:

A. Utilization

Each specialists or core group of specialists from different sectoral and/or functional area shall be deployed and/or utilized per request of the OBSU/intermediaries/stakeholders seeking any form of technical assistance (e.g. consultation, subject matter experts, facilitation, provision of technical inputs to a policy/program/project document)

- i. The plan and/or request for the specialists shall be endorsed by CBB to the specialists being requested and to its current supervisor. The specialist's supervisor will assess whether the current work or original job of the specialists will not be affected by the technical assistance deployment.
- ii. Performance Contract negotiations between the specialists and its supervisor shall ensure if the deployment will not hamper any current work engagements. If it will hamper the current workload of the specialist, the request may be rescheduled or referred to another specialist. The specialist requested shall inform CBB of its non-occurrence to the technical assistance request or plan.
- iii. Orientation and team building with the requesting party of the proponent requiring the specialists shall be made to ensure that expected outputs are clear. The Regional Director of the proponent unit shall be assigned as the supervisor to ensure that the specialists undertaking are within the agreed technical assistance plan or request and the technical administrative support is provided
- iv. Expenses to be incurred by the specialists shall be charged against the funds of the requesting unit

B. Support Structures

i. Organization of Execom Champion

The concerned Undersecretary and Assistant Secretary shall serve as the sectoral champions and duly recognized by the Secretary by virtue of a Special Order.

ii. Election of Convener and Co-convener

The convener and co-convener are elective positions which are duly elected by the specialists per sectoral group every 3 years and shall be recognized by the Secretary by virtue of a Special Order.

iii. Formation and Organization of Core Group of Specialists

The identified and selected specialists shall be grouped according to their sectoral expertise. They shall be formed and organized by the CBB and to be recognized by the Secretary by virtue of a Special Order, which shall be the basis for availment of the continuing professional growth, rewards and incentives, and inclusion of their performance as CGS in the IPC.

C. Accreditation of Specialists:

The criteria shall use a standard rating that will measure the suitability of qualifications of the specialist/s for accreditation. The percentage points assigned to each criterion shall be the base value of the standard rating with a passing rate of 75%.

- i. Three to five years of experience in developing and managing sustainable and successful SWD programs and projects along any of the major sectoral and/or functional areas enumerated. The coverage of specialization shall include the following areas: policy and plan development, standards development and compliance monitoring, social technology development (project development and management), direct service delivery (operations), and transfer of technology (50%)
- ii. Must be a Masters and/or Doctoral Degree holder (15%)
- iii. With specialized training on the development and management of policies/programs and services for a particular SWD sector (15%)
- iv. With citation/s and recognition/s on professional contributions to the SWD sector, and/or articles and researches made relevant to the SWD sector (20%)

D. Sustainability:

- i. Mentor/Mentee mode of intervention (transfer of knowledge)

One mechanism for tacit knowledge and sectoral expertise transference is through coaching and mentoring. The coaching and mentoring sessions will be a venue for the specialists to gauge the performance of their mentees and shall be the basis for recommendation to promote the mentee from junior specialist to specialist. An assessment process will be done to evaluate the progress of the Junior Specialists/Mentees.

- ii. Inclusion in the PC

The roles and responsibilities of the specialists shall be included in their IPC as part of their performance and their rating shall be regarded as one grade higher.

- iii. Continuing Professional Growth

CBB and HRDB shall implement a program for the continuing professional growth of the specialists such as:

- a. Attendance of experts to fora, professional association conventions, conferences, and training programs along the said area of expertise (as incentive for services rendered) in line with the Department's Career Development and Management System (CDMS).
- b. Involving them in technical working groups/ special projects (local/foreign funded) as "advisers/consultant" on an interim basis
- c. Provision of grants for research or publication along said lines of expertise for which the Department shall claim ownership
- d. Cross posting wherein experts/specialists are temporarily assigned to other OBSU and FOs to lend their expertise/ specialization until such time when said OBSU and FOs have acquired expertise/ specialization rendered
- e. Annual nationwide DSWD Specialist Convention

E. Rewards and Incentives

i. Specialists:

- a. The specialists' accomplishment could be considered for promotion and could be provided a rating of one grade higher.
- b. Qualified for Civil Service Commission awards nomination.
- c. Reward in terms of recognition and monetary valuation if the specialists or junior specialists is a PRAISE awardee.
- d. Sabbatical leave/s shall be availed in accordance with CESB Memorandum Circulars 8 and 9 S, 1991.

ii. Junior Specialists:

- a. The junior specialists' accomplishment could be considered for promotion.
- b. Priority to avail of trainings, specialized courses and scholarships.
- c. Qualified for PRAISE recognition.

REVOCATION CLAUSE:

Above provisions revoked Memorandum Circular No. 16, Series of 2006 and Memorandum Circular 06, Series of 2010, and shall take effect immediately.

Issued in Quezon City, this 29th day of Sep, 2015.


CORAZON JULIANO-SOLIMAN
Secretary