

June 6, 2002

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SUBJECT: Guidelines in the Organization and Mobilization of Area-Based Standards Network (ABSNET)

I. RATIONALE

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) recognizes the vital role of its partners in governance, particularly those of the Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), the Local Government Units (LGUs) and People's Organizations (Pos), among others.

Inspired by the positive responses yielded by the consultation dialogues aimed at institutionalizing partnership relative to licensing and accreditation of SWD agencies, the DSWD pilot-tested a strategy called Area-Based Standards network (ABSNET) in Regions IV and XI in CY 2001. It confirmed the enthusiasm and willingness of NGOs and LGUs to forge partnership with the DSWD to ensure quality social welfare service delivery to the poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, thus, uplifting their living conditions.

The Area-Based Standards Network is a strategy with the end goal of institutionalizing partnership with the NGOs licensed and accredited by the DSWD, and the Social Welfare and Development Department of the LGUs, which constitute the intermediaries for social welfare service delivery. It aims to provide participative and consultative mechanisms in the areas of standards development, licensing and accreditation, capability building, technical assistance and resource augmentation.

It involves the organization and mobilization of the intermediaries at the local level to evolve and implement an adaptive social welfare and development standards and licensing and accreditation system. Partnership is operationalized through involvement of NGOs and LGUs in the conduct of licensing and accreditation assessment, peer helping, exchange of information and expertise, policing their own ranks, and complementation of resources.

While the issuance of the license and accreditation certificate and setting of SWD standards are inherent to the functions of the DSWD, the ABSNET will have a recommendatory role.

These guidelines are therefore promulgated to facilitate installation of ABSNET in the regions.

I. OBJECTIVES:

General: To strengthen cooperation and coordination among area-based intermediaries aimed to ensure quality implementation of SWD programs and services for SWD constituencies and clientele.

Specific:

- To promote meaningful participation of the intermediaries as partners of DSWD along standards development, promotions and compliance.
- To organize local networks and build their capabilities along standards development, licensing and accreditation assessment;
- To mobilize the networks for actual licensing and accreditation assessment; and
- To provide a vehicle for mutual help and learning among intermediaries for coordination and partnership building.

II. ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESSES:

1. ***Conduct of consultation-dialogue.*** The DSWD Field Offices (FOs) shall initiate a consultation dialogue with the NGOs and LGUs in coordination with the Standards Bureau to promote the concept of ABSNET. The Terms of Reference (TOR) on ABSNET shall be presented and discussed during the dialogue. The expected output of said dialogue is the acceptance of the concept and commitment of intermediaries to the partnership.

1.1. ***Clustering of Provinces.*** Clustering of provinces shall be done according to its strategic location or where there is concentration of NGOs in the area or any other arrangement deemed appropriate as long as said clustering is accessible to the members. The Field Offices may have more than one ABSNET.

1.2. ***Selection of Core Group.*** The SWD agencies shall be grouped into six sectors namely: 1) Child Welfare; 2) Youth Welfare; 3) Family and Community Welfare; 4) Women's Welfare; 5) Persons With Disabilities Welfare; and 6) Senior Citizens Welfare. Each sector shall select their principal representative and permanent alternate to the ABSNET. Likewise, from among the LGUs, specifically from the PSWDO they shall select their point person or representative to the ABSNET. The expected output is that the ABSNET is organized.

1.3. ***Election of Chairperson and other officers.*** The members of the ABSNET shall elect their Chairperson who shall manage the operation of the ABSNET and preside during the consultative/assessment meetings and other officers as deemed necessary.

1.4. Identification of official station of ABSNET. The core group shall identify an official station, a venue for holding consultation meetings and review of licensing and accreditation application/s among others. Accessibility and visibility to both the ABSNET members and the NGO applicants shall be the primary consideration in the selection. The expected output is that the official station to be utilized by the ANSNET shall have the consent of either the LGU department Head, or NGO Executive Director which ever is applicable.

2. Capability-Building

2.1. The DSWD Standards bureau shall conduct the 3-day capability building session in coordination with the concerned FO.

2.2. The core group in each ABSNET shall be trained on the detailed operation of ABSNET, enhancing their knowledge, attitudes and skills in coordination with the Social Welfare Institutional Development Bureau (SWIDB).

2.3. The ABSNET shall develop an initial six months plan of action and yearly plan thereafter, which shall be the basis for the monitoring activities of the FOs.

3. Mobilization of ABSNET. The mobilization activities shall be undertaken by the ABSNET, which include but not limited to the following:

3.1. Inventory of NGOs and POs engaged in SWD activities operating in the area which are not yet registered, licensed or accredited by the DSWD.

3.2. Orientation of prospective NGOs/POs in coordination with DSWD Field Office on registration, licensing and accreditation systems and procedures.

3.3. Convening of the members for the review of the documents submitted and determines compliance with the registration, licensing or accreditation requirements.

3.4. Assignment by member of the ABSNET to visit the applicant organization in their area to validate information provided in the documents submitted.

3.5. Submission within one week after the site visit the registration/licensing/accreditation assessment report to the DSWD Field Office concerned, signed by the Chairperson. The decision to recommend NGOs for registration/licensing/accreditation shall be undertaken by a quorum of not less than 3 members. The concerned FO shall further review the assessment report and validate when necessary.

- 3.6. Release of approved registration/licensing/accreditation certificates of NGOs/POs shall be done by the concerned FO in the presence of the ABSNET members.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation:

- 4.1. The Standards Bureau shall provide the necessary consultative and technical services to the DSWD FO to ensure effective and efficient project implementation.
- 4.2. The FO shall monitor the operation of the ABSNET specifically the implementation of the formulated work and financial plan. It shall conduct a regular quarterly project assessment in coordination with the Standards Bureau.
- 4.3. The ABSNET shall keep records of the minutes of assessment meetings/conferences for monitoring purposes.

III. FUNDING SUPPORT TO ABSNET

1. The Standards Bureau shall allocate funds for the capability-building and mobilization activities of ABSNET to the FOs upon submission of a project proposal for the purpose.
2. The FO shall disburse the funds accordingly and submit liquidation report to the Finance Service copy furnish the Bureau.
3. The fund for mobilization shall be utilized for operational expenses, which include but not limited to: transportation of ABSNET members during the visits to NGOs, meals during the orientation/consultative/assessment meetings, supplies and materials and other related expenses.
4. The Bureau shall provide financial augmentation to the ABSNET thru the FOs in the first year of operation. The FOs shall take care of the budget for the succeeding years of implementation, integrating in their budget proposal.

II. EFFECTIVITY

These guidelines shall take effect immediately.

(Sgd.) CORAZON JULIANO-SOLIMAN
Secretary

Functions and Responsibilities of the ABSNET

1. Establish, maintain, and update directory of SWD agencies/organizations operating in the local area.
2. Advocate for and participate in the review/amendment of standards, policies, rules and regulations adaptive to the area/locality.
3. Promote licensing and accreditation to NGOs/POs involved in the implementation of SWD programs and services in the area.
4. Conduct orientation on the policies, procedures of registration, licensing and accreditation to potential NGOs/POs engaged in SWD service delivery.
5. Review application for registration, licensing and accreditation of NGOs/POs.
6. Conduct assessment visit/s to NGOs/POs applying for license/accreditation and renewal of accreditation.
7. Recommend NGOs/POs for the issuance of registration/license/accreditation to concerned FO.
8. Participate in the review committee to hear cases of suspension and revocation of license as NGO representative to the said committee.