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Administrative Order No. 287  
Series of 2002

**SUBJECT:** *Guidelines in the Selection and Management of Social Laboratories*

**I. Rationale**

Executive Order No. 15 series of 1998 mandates the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) to formulate, develop and promote policies, plans, programs and projects in the field of social welfare and development (SWD). The policies it formulates and program it develop set the parameters within which social welfare agencies – local government units (LGU), non-government organizations (NGO) and other members of the civil society define and implement various programs and services that address the specific needs and emerging issues affecting the marginalized and disadvantaged sectors of the population.

To effectively fulfill its role as lead in SWD concerns, the Department saw the need to develop the concept of a social laboratory. Hence, this guidelines is formulated to provide guidance and direction in the selection, management and operation of Social Laboratories.

**II. Description**

A social laboratory is an area or locus for the development, enrichment, and demonstration of social welfare and development technologies. It is a venue where a newly developed or enriched SWD technology is tested to ensure that such strategy, technique or approach is proven effective in responding to the needs of a particular clientele group. It may either be a government or non-government center or institution or a community where new strategies/interventions for community organization or community development can be demonstrated or piloted. The social laboratory is designed to show case the new or enriched SWD program or strategy which other SWD agencies may want to replicate.

The social laboratory is also a resource/learning center where intermediaries could acquire the technical know how to effectively implement certain programs, services, interventions, strategies, and other social technologies.

Further, it shall be available for study and observation tour and hands-on training student placement/practicum and conduct of short term capability building e.g. training seminar/workshop, or orientation on the new approaches, strategies or methods. It may also serve as a venue for demonstration of direct or indirect supervision where cliniquing and case conferences will be facilitated. The media and the public may use it also as a source of information for advocacy purposes.

### **III. Objectives**

The objectives of the social laboratory are as follows:

1. To recognize initiatives of intermediaries to develop innovative or new social welfare and development technologies
2. To develop specialization/expertise in a particular SWD strategy, technique or approach
3. To intensify networking and collaboration between and among intermediaries
4. To strengthen capabilities of intermediaries in the implementation of SWD programs and services
5. To provide a venue for program enrichment and development

### **IV. Implementing Guidelines**

#### **A. Selection**

##### **1. Criteria**

To become a Social Laboratory, the following criteria should be met:

- a. The facility should be licensed and accredited by the DSWD.
- b. Must have demonstrated the success of a particular social technology in facilitating or fostering the social functioning of its clientele which is worth sharing to other social welfare and development agencies.
- c. Must have an intensive institutionalized advocacy and network system as manifested by the following:
  - 1) An inter-agency linkage with GAs, NGOs, POs, and the academe.
  - 2) Documented network system that meet regularly for institutional building, resource generation and mobilization, and technical exchange.

- 3) Developed primers, brochures and other program materials to promote public awareness on their programs and services, as well as its clientele situation
  - 4) Involved in community mobilization and other activities and has positive relationship with the community where it is situated.
  - 5) A well organized volunteer program.
- d. Must have proper and complete documentation of the programs and services and its clientele served as reflected in the following:
    - 1) Proper records management
    - 2) Updated case recordings, preferably computerized
  - e. Must have a concept of a new social technology to be tested and has at least initiated the preparatory activities for the implementation.

## **2. Procedure**

The selection of a social laboratory shall follow these procedures:

### **a. Identification**

The DSWD Field Offices/intermediaries shall identify the proposed social laboratory following the criteria in this guideline and shall submit a proposal on this to the Programs and Projects Bureau (PPB) of the Department. The proposal to be submitted will include a narrative report on the previous year's accomplishments and status of the proposed social laboratory.

### **b. Validation and Approval**

The concerned FO staff shall conduct an assessment visit to the proposed social laboratory as basis for endorsement or submission of proposal to the PPB for validation. An assessment and recommendation will be prepared by the Bureau for the approval of the Undersecretary for Programs and Policy Group. Once approved, the FO is informed by the PPB. Should the proposal be disapproved the PPB shall provide the necessary technical assistance. The disapproval shall not disqualify the facility to be nominated again as social laboratory.

Previously identified social laboratories of the Department prior to this guideline shall conform to the criteria set in this guideline. The PPB shall provide the necessary technical assistance to these laboratories in order to meet the criteria set for the purpose.

c. Technical Capacity Building Activities and Assistance

Once approved, the Programs and Projects Bureau shall access the facility to available capability/technical building activities and shall provide technical assistance where and when necessary.

d. Recognition as Social Laboratory

The identified social laboratory shall be awarded a certificate of recognition, duly signed by the Secretary of the Department stating therein the specific program/project for which it shall serve as a social laboratory.

B. Institutional Arrangements

1. Establishment of Social Laboratory

The government agency LGU, NGO, PO or DSWD Field Office, who manages the operation of a center/institution or is implementing a program in a particular community which is being proposed or identified to be a social laboratory, shall conduct consultations/planning workshop/s with the PPB in coordination with the Field Office concerned. The program and administrative aspects of the implementation of the social laboratory shall be agreed upon. An action plan, which is an output of the workshop/consultation, shall serve as guide and contract of the team in the implementation/maintenance of the social laboratory.

The LGU, NGO, PO or DSWD personnel/s, who manage/s the center/institution or implementing the program in the community, shall continue to maintain the management and operation while piloting a new SWD technology. The Programs and Projects Bureau shall provide the necessary technical assistance.

2. Documentation of Social Technology

As a social laboratory, it is expected that the SWD technology being piloted is fully documented. The documentation shall serve as basis for assessment, monitoring and replication of innovative aspects and procedures of social technology implemented in the social laboratory.

3. Monitoring and Evaluation

The PPB in coordination with the Field Office shall conduct a regular quarterly on-site monitoring of the social laboratories to ensure a smooth flow of operations. Technical assistance shall be provided by the PPB and the FO concerned through demonstration of skills and theoretical inputs as necessary.

A yearly program review and evaluation shall be conducted in order to improve and ensure quality service implementation and its conformity to the standards of a social laboratory.

Quarterly and year-end narrative reports shall be submitted to the Field Office by the concerned agency which shall forward this to the Programs and Projects Bureau (PPB).

4. Termination / Disqualification


The social laboratory recognition given for a specific program or service may be revoked if found that it no longer meets the criteria and standards set by the Department and if it refuses to conform to the guidelines and agreements during the provision of technical assistance.


It is important that the management of the social laboratory shall have as its ultimate goal the provision of maximum opportunities to enable the disadvantaged group served to restore their/its normal social functioning whether as an individual, family or community. As such, Administrative Order No. 148, Series of 2001: Guidelines on the Management of Residential Care Services shall be strictly complied with as applicable to the facility. Non-residential and community-based structures shall strictly conform to the manual of operation and other guidelines of the programs or services that it intends to implement.

5. Incentives

Incentives shall be provided to the selected government, non-government or LGU center or community-based facility as social laboratory in the form of technical assistance and resource augmentation, awards, etc. An awards committee shall be established and be composed of the Directors of Standards Bureau, Social Welfare and Development Institute (SWADI), National Operations Office (NOO) and Policy, Plans and Information System Bureau (PPISB). The PPB Director shall chair the Committee. The committee shall develop and implement specific guidelines in the identification and provision of incentives for the social laboratory.

This Order shall take effect immediately and revokes previous issuances inconsistent herewith.

  
**CORAZON JULIANO-SOLIMAN**  
Secretary *✱*  
Department of Social Welfare and Development

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**RENATO F. GILERA**  
Records Officer III