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Department of Social Welfare and Development

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Administrative Order No. 02
Series No. 2012

**SUBJECT: GUIDELINES IN THE ORGANIZATION OF ABSNET
REGIONAL AND NATIONAL FEDERATION**

I. RATIONALE

As the lead agency in Social Protection by virtue of Resolution No. 02 issued by the Social Development Committee-NEDA dated October 29, 2009 entitled Approving the Creation of a Sub-Committee on Social Protection, the Department recognizes the vital role of social welfare and development agencies (SWDAs) as partners in governance and implementing programs and services.

In 2002, the DSWD started organizing the Area Based Standards Network (ABSNET) in all the DSWD Field Offices. This is inspired by the positive responses yielded by the consultation dialogues aimed at institutionalizing partnership relative to registration, licensing and accreditation of SWDA of the DSWD pilot-tested a strategy for engaging SWDAs and LGUs in Regions IV and XI in CY 2001.

ABSNET was proven to be an effective strategy for a participative and collaborative endeavor amongst SWDAs and LGUs along capability building, technical assistance and resource augmentation. It is also instrumental in assisting DSWD Field Offices in its advocacy in promoting registration, licensing and accreditation of SWDAs. ABSNET assists the DSWD in accelerating the registration, licensing and accreditation of SWDAs through the involvement in the initial assessment.

There are national and regional (ASEAN) activities like GO-NGO ASEAN Forum and Foundation for the Welfare and Education of Asian People (FWEAP) that needs representation from Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) or Social Welfare and Development Agencies (SWDAs) which are usually identified by the DSWD. The current ABSNET structure, however, only represents per cluster which could not carry all the concerns of the ABSNET nationwide.

Based on regular consultations with ABSNET, the members manifest the need to organize themselves into a federation both in the regional and national levels to promote a stronger and more effective working bodies that will assist and coordinate with the Department and other government and non- government agencies in the promotion of the general welfare of the disadvantaged sectors. The federations will also provide support on social legislations, programs and activities that will benefit all social welfare and development agencies and their clientele groups. To date, we have sixty-one (61) ABSNET associations organized in all the sixteen (16) Field Offices composed of 1,896 SWDAs as members including DSWD Centers/Institutions and P/C/MSWDO run facilities.

Further, the DSWD has developed its Performance Governance System-Balanced Scorecard (PGS-BS) which envisions that by 2030, the DSWD will be the world's standards for the delivery of coordinated social services and social protection programs for poverty reduction. In implementing the strategy, the Department hopes to obtain the intermediaries adopting and/or supporting the coordinated efforts in social welfare and development; continuously earn and enjoy the high trust rating of the stakeholders, and mold them into high-performing partners nationally and internationally.

This guideline is therefore promulgated to facilitate the formal organization of Regional and National ABSNET Federations.

II. LEGAL BASIS

This guideline is hereby promulgated based on the following legal mandates of DSWD.

1. *Republic Act No. 4373 amended by RA 5175 of 1965 – An Act to Regulate the Practice of Social Work and the Operation of Social Work Agencies in the Philippines and for other purposes*
 - a. Article IV, Section 23, - “No Social Work Agency ... shall operate and be accredited as such unless it shall first have registered with Social Welfare Administration (now DSWD) which shall issue the corresponding registration certificate”.
 - b. Article IV, Section 25 – “The Certificate of Registration issued to any social work agency may be revoked if after due investigation, Social Welfare Administration (now the DSWD) finds that it has failed to perform the function of social work agency or it has violated existing laws, rules and regulations”.
2. *Executive Order 292 (Administrative Code of 1987), Title XVI, Chapter I, Section 3. Powers and Function*, to accomplish its mandates and objectives, the Department shall:
 - a. (7) accredit institutions and organizations engaged in social welfare activities and provide consultative and information services to them.
 - b. (14) set standards, accredit and monitor performance of all social welfare activities in both public and private sector.
3. *Executive Order 221 Series of 2003 (Amending Executive Order no. 15 series of 1998, entitled Redirecting the Functions and Operations of the DSWD)*
 - a. Sec. 2 Roles of the DSWD – (d) Licensor and accreditor of social welfare development agencies and service providers.
 - b. Sec. 3 Powers and Functions of the DSWD – (a) Set standards, accredit and provide consultative services to institutions, organizations, and persons

engaged in social welfare activities and monitor performance of institutions, organizations and persons engaged in social welfare activities, both public' and private.

III DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. Area Based Standards Network (ABSNET) - is a strategy to for a participative and collaborative endeavor amongst registered, licensed and accredited SWDAs which are all located within the same geographical area, and assists the DSWD in monitoring the implementation of SWD programs and services for the disadvantaged and vulnerable sectors they serve.
2. ABSNET Cluster - refers to the organization of ABSNET cluster within the geographical jurisdiction of the province/city/municipality.
3. Regional ABSNET Federation (RAF) refers to the organization of ABSNET clusters within the geographical jurisdiction of the DSWD Field Office.
4. National ABSNET Federation (NAF) refers to the organization of RAFs into a National ABSNET Federation.

IV OBJECTIVES

General:

To organize Regional and National ABSNET Federations for a stronger and more effective strategy to assist the Department in enforcing its regulatory functions.

Specific:

1. To strengthen the capacity of ABSNET Federations and ensure quality implementation of social welfare and development programs and services among its member agencies.
2. To promote active participation of ABSNET federations in the review/amendment of social welfare and development standards, policies, rules and regulations along the Department's regulatory function.
3. To provide a more unified and dynamic organization which advocates for the passage of social welfare and development related legislations, development of programs and services.
4. To have an ABSNET representation in the national and regional (ASEAN) activities such as but not limited to the Philippine Social Work Consortium.

V. GENERAL POLICIES

1. *ABSNET Cluster*

- a. SWDAs located in the city within the province may form or organize one (1) ABSNET Cluster provided at least any of the following sectors are represented namely: children; youth; family and community women; persons with disabilities and older persons/senior citizens. The Provincial/ City/ Municipal Social Welfare Development Office (P/C/MSWDO) may represent any of the said sectors since they are implementing SWD programs and services to such sectors.
- b. The ABSNET Cluster will follow the Administrative Order No. 18 series of 2008 entitled “Amended Guidelines in the Organization and Strengthening of ABSNET” for structured and formal organization. However, instead of two (2) years that all elected Officers shall hold office as stipulated in AO 18, it should now be for three (3) years and until their successors are duly elected.
- c. All DSWD heads of centers and institutions and local government units are automatic members of the ABSNET Cluster in the region. They shall participate in the selection process of the sectors to be represented in the ABSNET cluster.
- d. The DSWD Field Office shall assign a staff from Standards Unit to be the secretariat and shall be responsible in preparing the needed documents during the conduct of election, regular and special meetings.

2. *Regional ABSNET Federation (RAF)*

- a. All existing ABSNET Clusters in the respective regions shall be organized into a Regional ABSNET Federation.
- b. The DSWD FO shall convene the nine (9) elected officers of each ABSNET Cluster organized for the election of the Regional ABSNET Federation (RAF).
- c. The Regional ABSNET Federation Officers shall be composed of the following elective positions:
 - i. Chairperson
 - ii. Vice Chairperson
 - iii. Secretary
 - iv. Six (6) Sectoral Representatives representing the following sectors:
 - ❖ Children
 - ❖ Youth
 - ❖ Family and Community

- ❖ Women
- ❖ Persons with Disabilities
- ❖ Older Persons/ Senior Citizens

- d. The Head of the Agency shall be qualified to be elected as Chairperson provided that his/her agency has valid certificate of registration and license to operate. Likewise, for Vice Chairperson and Secretary, the SWDA should have valid registration certificate.
- e. Each Regional ABSNET Federation shall also elect its permanent and alternate sectoral representatives from among the officers and sectoral representatives of each ABSNET Cluster. The sectoral representative may be the head of the agency or its social worker with agency's valid registration for auxiliary SWDAs and Registration and License and/or Accreditation for social welfare agency (SWA).
- f. The DSWD Field Office shall assign a staff from Standards Unit to be the secretariat and shall be responsible in preparing the needed documents during the conduct of semestral and special meetings and election.
- g. The elected officers of the Regional ABSNET Federation shall serve for a period of three (3) years. But will not serve for more than two (2) consecutive terms in the same position.
- h. Election of Officers for the Regional ABSNET Federation shall be held every three (3) years on the last week of November.
- i. The RAF Chairperson shall represent the region during the National ABSNET Federation meeting.

3. *National ABSNET Federation (NAF)*

- a. All RAF Chairpersons are automatically eligible for candidacy as officer in the NAF .
- b. The officers of the NAF shall be composed of the following elective positions:
 - i. Chairperson
 - ii. Vice Chairperson for Luzon
 - iii. Vice Chairperson for Visayas
 - iv. Vice Chairperson for Mindanao
 - v. Secretary
 - vi. Five (5) NAF Board Members

- c. The election of Officers of the National ABSNET Federation shall be held on the second week of December.
- d. All elected officers of the National ABSNET Federation shall serve for a period of three (3) years. but will not serve for more than two (2) consecutive terms in the same position.
- e. All Officers elected to the Regional and National ABSNET Federation will retain their elected post in the ABSNET Cluster where they were elected.
- f. The Standards Bureau shall act as the secretariat during the national meeting which shall be held bi-annually.
- g. The Standards Bureau shall act as the secretariat during the national election of the National ABSNET Federation held every three (3) years during the second week of December.

4. *Manner of Election*

- a. The DSWD Field Office shall appoint Committee on Nomination and Election which shall be composed of one (1) Chairperson and two (2) members. All of whom are members of the ABSNET Cluster. The main task of the committee is to facilitate and manage the conduct of nomination and election of the Regional ABSNET Federation.
- b. The DSWD-FO and the ABSNET clusters must ensure that their sets of officers are present during the scheduled election of the Regional ABSNET Federation officers.
- c. The Committee on Nomination and Election shall determine the quorum before proceeding with the election. The quorum shall be 50% plus one (1) or majority of the cluster members.
- d. The election shall be done by secret balloting.
- e. The election for the RAF allows one (1) authorized representative to vote and be voted with an endorsement letter addressed to the FO Director of the region. It is understood that he/she is only representing a candidate and therefore not a substitute candidate. Authorization for proxies should be in writing and filed in the Regional Office before the schedule election

VI. DUTIES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND GENERAL FUNCTIONS

1. *ABSNET Cluster*

The ABSNET Cluster will follow the provisions of Administrative Order No. 18 series of 2008 entitled "Amended Guidelines in the Organization and

Strengthening of ABSNET” for the duties and responsibilities and general functions of its officers.

2. *Regional ABSNET Federation*

- a. Adopt and issue resolutions for the effective management of the federation and benefits of its member agencies.
- b. Participate in the review/amendment of social welfare and development standards, policies, rules and regulations adoptive to the area/locality.
- c. Participate in the DSWD-FO Review Committee session whenever there is a complaint against a SWDA.
- d. Generate resources consistent with the solicitation and fund raising policy of the department to augment funds for administrative expenses and capability/capacity building activities of ABSNET members.
- e. Exchange knowledge, experience and ideas as well as best practices to be replicated among social welfare agencies.
- f. Advocate for compliance to Social Welfare and Development Standards.
- g. Assist the DSWD Field Offices in accreditation assessment of social welfare agencies, senior citizens centers and day care centers/workers.
- h. Establish, maintain and update directory of SWDAs operating in the region.
- i. Represent the SWDAs in regional activities along social welfare and development concerns upon recommendation/endorsement of DSWD.

3. *National ABSNET Federation*

- a. Adopt a national policy to ensure that all member associations and social welfare and development agencies comply with the established national standards in the implementation of social welfare and development programs and services.
- b. Implements projects related to the enhancement of the organization and standards in the management of social welfare and development agencies and the implementation of its programs and services.
- c. Develop guidelines for providing incentives and benefits for its members.
- d. Assist the DSWD in the conduct of ABSNET consultation every two (2) years and other capacity building for SWDAs.
- e. Assist the DSWD in monitoring the SWDAs.

- f. Participate in the National Review Committee session whenever there is an appealed complaint against a SWDA.
 - g. Recommend guidelines for the selection of most outstanding SWDAs and Service Providers implementing residential and community based programs and services.
 - h. Ensure proper representation in the formulation and implementation of policies, standards and programs for SWDAs.
 - i. Support the DSWD in the development of the national situationer and consolidated accomplishment report and best practices of SWDAs.
 - j. Improve communication, coordination and collaboration efforts between the DSWD and among its member SWDAs and other partners in social welfare and development.
 - k. Represent the SWDAs in national and international conference/forum/workshop along social welfare and development concerns upon recommendation/endorsement of DSWD.
3. Duties and Responsibilities of RAF and NAF Officers
- a. RAF
 - i. Chairperson
 - ❖ Presides in all meetings of RAF
 - ❖ Oversees the activities of RAF
 - ❖ Carries out and implement the approved work and financial plan of RAF
 - ❖ Represents RAF in any meetings/consultations related to social welfare and development activities at the regional level.
 - ❖ Submits project proposal to DSWD for mobilization and capability building activities.
 - ❖ Convenes general assembly.
 - ❖ Coordinates closely with DSWD Field Office in the resolution of issues and concerns for the effective management of the federation and benefits of its member agencies.
 - ❖ Submits RAF quarterly and annual accomplishment reports to Field Offices
 - ❖ Ensures that the stated functions of RAF in the Guidelines are observed and complied with.

- ii. Vice Chairperson
 - ❖ Assists the Chairperson in carrying out the function of RAF.
 - ❖ Exercises all the powers and perform all duties of the Chairperson during the absence or incapacity of the latter.
 - ❖ Performs duties that may be assigned by the Chairperson
- iii. Secretary
 - ❖ Gives notices of meetings and/or relevant information to RAF officers and members.
 - ❖ Act as the rapporteur during meetings and submit minutes to the Chairperson for approval.
 - ❖ Keeps all official records of the RAF, notice of meetings, minutes of meetings, proceedings and/or photo documentation of conferences, and directory of SWDAs, among others.
 - ❖ Regularly updates information in the directory of SWDAs within the RAF in coordination with the ABSNET members and DSWD Field Office.
- iv. Sectoral Representatives
 - ❖ Represents the sector during the RAF meetings.
 - ❖ Conducts feedback sessions/meeting with the members of the sectors on ABSNET activities.
- b. NAF
 - i. Chairperson
 - ❖ Presides in all meetings of NAF
 - ❖ Oversees the activities of NAF
 - ❖ Carries out and implement the approved work and financial plan of NAF
 - ❖ Represents NAF in any meetings/consultations related to social welfare and development activities at the national level.
 - ❖ Represents NAF in national bodies like Philippine Social Work Consortium
 - ❖ Submits project proposal to DSWD for mobilization and capability building activities.
 - ❖ Assists SB in the conduct of ABSNET National Consultation
 - ❖ Coordinates closely with DSWD Standards Bureau in the resolution of issues and concerns for the effective management of the NAF

- ❖ Submits NAF semestral and annual accomplishment reports to Standards Bureau
 - ❖ Ensures all information in the ABSNET directory is updated.
 - ❖ Ensures that the stated functions of NAF in the Guidelines are observed and complied with.
- ii. Vice Chairperson for Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao
- ❖ Assists the Chairperson in carrying out the function of NAF.
 - ❖ Exercises all the powers and perform all duties of the Chairperson during the absence or incapacity of the latter.
 - ❖ Represents NAF at the respective national ABSNET activities in Luzon, Visayas or Mindanao as delegated
 - ❖ Coordinates the national activities to the regions and island cluster
 - ❖ Promotes and supervises the operations of RAF
 - ❖ Performs duties that maybe assigned by the Chairperson
- iii. Secretary
- ❖ Gives notices of meetings and/or relevant information to NAF officers and members.
 - ❖ Keeps all official records of the NAF, notice of meetings, minutes of meetings, proceedings and/or photo documentation of conferences, directory of SWDAs and among others
 - ❖ Acts as the rapporteur during the meetings and submit report to the Chairperson for approval.
 - ❖ Regularly updates information in the directory of SWDAs within the NAF in coordination with the ABSNET members and DSWD Standards Bureau
- iv. NAF Board Members
- ❖ Leads the Committees to be organized in any national ABSNET activities
 - ❖ Assists the Standards Bureau in monitoring the SWDAs implementing SWD programs and services in more than one region
 - ❖ Assists the DSWD on lobbying the priority bills affecting the SWDAs
 - ❖ Assists the DSWD on publication and advocacy of SWDAs good practices and other materials.

VII. ABSNET MONITORING

The monitoring of ABSNET shall be observed through the following activities:

1. Every semester, the RAF shall convene to discuss issues and concerns related to the regulatory functions of the Department. The concerned DSWD Field Office shall immediately act upon the needs referred to their attention.
2. The National ABSNET Federation shall also meet twice a year and special meetings may be called by the Chairperson whenever necessary or upon written request to take urgent or pending matters which shall be stated in the notice.
3. All meetings and other activities of the ABSNET Cluster, RAF and NAF shall have minutes/report which shall be reviewed by the FO-Standards Unit and Standards Bureau respectively. The reports of Cluster and RAF shall also be endorsed to the Standards Bureau for reference and appropriate action.
4. Accomplishment and financial reports shall be submitted to concerned DSWD-Field Offices and Standards Bureau every 10th day of January of the preceding year.

VIII FUNDING SUPPORT TO ABSNET

1. The Standards Bureau shall allocate funds for the capability-building and mobilization activities of the RAF to the FOs upon submission of project proposal.
2. The FO shall disburse the funds accordingly and submit liquidation report to the Finance Service, copy furnished the Bureau.
3. The fund for the mobilization shall be utilized for operational expenses, which include transportation of ABSNET officers during the visits to SWDAs, meals during the orientation/consultative/assessment meetings, supplies and materials and other related expenses.
4. The Bureau shall provide financial augmentation to the Regional ABSNET Federation thru the FOs in the first three years of operation. The FOs shall take care of the budget for the succeeding years of implementation, integrating it in their budget proposal.
5. The Standards Bureau shall allocate funds for the capability-building and mobilization activities of the National ABSNET Federation.

IX INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT

1. DSWD FIELD OFFICE

- a. Ensures that all ABSNET Cluster and Regional ABSNET Federations are knowledgeable on the policies/guidelines in order to be active in advocating compliance to social welfare and development standards among its members. All standards that are not complied with by the SWDA must be reflected in the minutes of the meeting.
- b. Ensures functionality of Cluster and Regional ABSNET in terms of performing their duties and functions as stated in the guidelines.
- c. Ensures that Standards Units participate during quarterly ABSNET Cluster meeting and RAF semestral meeting not only as the secretariat but also as a technical person of the FO.
- d. Provides technical assistance to ABSNET members in terms of organizational development and capability building.
- e. Prepares regional accomplishment reports and ABSNET best practices.
- f. Issues Identification Cards for all ABSNET officers and sectoral representatives at the regional and cluster level.

2. DSWD STANDARDS BUREAU


- a. Assists in the conduct of National ABSNET Consultation every three (3) years.
- b. Provides augmentation support for the mobilization and capability building activities of ABSNET thru FOs.
- c. Provides technical assistance to FO, Regional and National ABSNET Federation.
- d. Ensures functionality of the National ABSNET Federation.
- e. Ensures that the Bureau participate during NAF meeting not only as the secretariat but also as a technical person.
- f. Prepares national accomplishment reports and consolidate the ABSNET best practices.
- g. Facilitates the annual search for the most outstanding SWDA.
- h. Issues Identification Cards for all National ABSNET officers and sectoral representatives.

- i. Establishes a website where useful internet links can be accessed by all cluster members and social welfare and development agencies.

X. EFFECTIVITY

This order shall take effect immediately and supersedes other DSWD guidelines and issuances inconsistent thereof. Let copies of this Administrative Order be given to all DSWD Field Offices, Local Government Units and Social Welfare and Development Agencies.

Issued this 8th day of March, 2012 at Quezon City.


CORAZON JULIANO-SOLIMAN
Secretary *AMB*

A CERTIFIED COPY:


NICOMEDES P. SULLER
Chief, General Services Division