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Department of Social Welfare and Development

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MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR

No. 14

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Subject : Revised Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Research and Development Technical Working Group (RD-TWG)

I. Background and Rationale

Research is an essential tool of the Department in its continuing effort to address issues and concerns of the disadvantaged and marginalized sectors of society. Through Department Order no. 15, series of 2002, the Social Welfare and Development Research Program Framework was crafted. This served as the basis for planning, policy and program development, including management decision-making.

The Framework institutionalized a comprehensive and integrated research program within the Department, which is relevant, responsive and supportive to the needs of the social welfare and development sector, the achievement of our vision, mission and goals, as well as the fulfillment of our mandate. One of the main features of said research program is the creation of the Research and Development Technical Working Group (RD-TWG).

Considering the Department's thrust to embark on research for evidence-based decision-making and policy and program development, this Memorandum Circular is hereby issued to:

1. Enhance the functions and structure of the RD-TWG; thereby, setting up national and regional compositions, including a secretariat;
2. Establish a review process of research proposals for the guidance of concerned organizational units and
3. Enhance and develop skills of the RD-TWG members and other DSWD staff along research and development.

II. Functions of the Research and Development Technical Working Group (RD-TWG)

A. National RD-TWG

The National Research and Development Technical Working Group (RD-TWG) shall be responsible in overseeing and providing advisory role to all priority, Department-wide and Department-funded research activities. The National RD-TWG shall also provide support services to primary office/s responsible for the research agenda of the Department.

The National RD-TWG shall perform the following specific functions:

1. Research Development and Implementation

- 1.1. Review proposed research topics/agenda/proposals submitted and recommend to the Secretary for consideration and approval. The National RD-TWG shall also provide technical inputs in the development/enhancement and implementation of research topics/agenda/proposals.
- 1.2. Provide necessary technical assistance to the field offices in line with research.
- 1.3. May act as co-researchers¹ in the conduct of researches of the Offices/Bureaus/Services/Units (OBSUs) of Central Office.
- 1.4. May identify/recommend resource person/s (depending on the topic of the research) to review the ethical issues/concerns of research.

2. Research Protocol Development

- 2.1. Recommend and/or provide inputs to policies and guidelines for the agency's research agenda and related activities. The RD-TWG shall determine/set standards for researches under the Department.
- 2.2. Provide inputs to advocacy plan/s in coordination with Social Marketing Service (SMS) and other concerned bureaus for presentation and dissemination of research findings.
- 2.3. Provide comments/inputs and endorse approval of developed systems and procedures in research management and implementation. These systems and procedures shall serve as blueprint/framework for the National and Regional RD-TWGs, as well as other offices/bureaus/services/units in the Department that will be undertaking research activities.

3. Capability Building

- 3.1. Recommend regular capability building and skills enhancement activities for both the national and regional RD-TWG members and other DSWD staff along Research and Development.

4. Research Monitoring and Utilization

- 4.1. Monitor conduct and completion of researches reviewed and endorsed to the Secretary for approval.
- 4.2. Recommend research utilization strategies such as formulation of plan of action for social welfare and development plans, policy and program development anchored in researches conducted by the Department.

¹ As co-researchers, the National RD-TWG *may assist* the office/bureau/service/unit during the actual conduct of research study (data gathering, research writing, presentation, etc.).

B. Regional RD-TWG

The participation of the Department's Field Offices is significant in the development of its research agenda and in the conduct of researches at the regional level. Therefore, a Regional Research and Development Technical Working Group (RD-TWG) shall be established in every region.

The Regional RD-TWG shall perform the following specific functions:

1. Identify research topics and priorities for research studies in the region.
2. Review and endorse regional research proposals (*to be funded by the Field Office*), designs, and research tools/instruments, as well as other research-related matters to the Regional Director for approval.
3. Provide necessary technical assistance to the proponent for the enhancement of the research design/proposals.
4. Assist the proponent/s in the conduct of research in terms of data gathering, research writing and presentation.
5. Oversee and monitor the conduct of research studies/activities together with the proponent.
6. Assist the proponent/s in the presentation of research results and information dissemination at the regional level (administrative and technical assistance).

III. Composition and Frequency of Meetings of the Research and Development Technical Working Group (RD-TWG)

A. National RD-TWG

The National RD-TWG shall be chaired by the Director of the Policy Development and Planning Bureau (PDPB) with the Division Chief of the PDPB-Policy and Research Division as alternate. Members of the National RD-TWG shall come from the following Bureaus:

1. Social Technology Bureau (STB)
2. Policy Development and Planning Bureau (PDPB)
3. Standards Bureau (SB)
4. Program Management Bureau (PMB)
5. Social Welfare Institutional Development Bureau (SWIDB)
6. Financial Management Service (FMS)
7. Human Resource Management and Development Service (HRMDS)

The member shall be a Division Chief, with an alternate technical staff of not lower than Salary Grade 18 and with training and experience in conducting research².

² Training and experience in research may include: research as a university subject (part of education/training); involvement in program evaluation/audit may also be considered.

B. Regional RD-TWG

The Regional RD-TWG shall be chaired by the Chief of the Technical Assistance Division (TAD). Its members shall be the Division Chiefs of Operations Division (OD) and Management Division (MD), the Management Audit Analyst and Planning Officer. The RD-TWG may invite Heads of centers/institutions and/or representatives of other concerned offices on ad hoc basis.

In case of limited number of experienced/trained staff on the conduct of research, the inclusion of one (1) research consultant/adviser may be considered. This shall be chargeable against the Field Office's funds under Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE). For researches to be funded by the Central Office, the Field Office should indicate the hiring of research consultant/adviser in the research proposal. Appropriate terms of reference (TOR) for the research consultant/adviser, including a strong justification for hiring, should be subject for approval of the National RD-TWG Chair.

Preferably, the members of the National and Regional RD-TWG should come from those who were trained intensively on research by the Department.

C. Frequency of Meetings

The National and Regional RD-TWGs shall be convened every quarter of the year or as necessary. For the National RD-TWG, the budgetary requirements for meetings and resource persons shall be chargeable to PDPB's funds. For the Regional RD-TWG, budgetary requirements shall be considered in the Work and Financial Plan of respective Field Offices.

IV. The RD-TWG Secretariat

A. Composition

The Policy Development and Planning Bureau (PDPB), specifically its Policy and Research Division (PRD), shall be the Secretariat of the National RD-TWG. The Planning Unit, on the other hand, shall function as Secretariat at the regional level.

B. Functions

The National and Regional RD-TWG Secretariat shall mainly be responsible in coordinating and monitoring research activities of the Department/Field Offices in consultation with other concerned bureaus, units, field offices of the Department, non-government organizations, other national government agencies and stakeholders.

In addition to its primary functions, the Secretariat shall perform the following:

1. Prepare agenda for discussion of the National/Regional RD-TWG.
2. Document and distribute to group members the highlights/summary of agreements of the meetings.
3. Provide initial inputs/comments on the submitted research proposal before the endorsement to the RD-TWG members.
4. Consolidate all the comments and inputs of the RD-TWG members on the research proposals and communicate comments and recommendations to the proponent.

5. Monitor and prepare reports of the activities, agreements, and accomplishments of the RD-TWG. Provide the Coach and Monitor of the Policy and Programs Group with said reports (for National RD-TWG Secretariat).
6. Coordinate with the Regional RD-TWG regarding the monitoring of research proposals and other research-related activities.
7. Maintain databank of all research-related documents/references.
8. Convene and provide for all the administrative and logistical requirements of the National/Regional RD-TWG in line with the functions of the RD-TWG.
9. Implement advocacy plans/activities in coordination with Social Marketing Unit for the presentation of research policies.

V. Review Process for Research Proposals

A. Regional RD-TWG

All regional researches to be funded by the Field Office shall be subject for review by and endorsement of the Regional RD-TWG.

1. The proponent shall submit the following requirements to the Regional RD-TWG Secretariat:
 - a. Research Proposal
 - b. Researcher's Profile/Qualifications (for research adviser/consultant), if any.
2. The Secretariat shall immediately acknowledge receipt of the proposal within two (2) working days after receipt thereof.
3. The Secretariat shall notify the Regional RD-TWG members on the research proposal submitted and shall forward the proposal to the Regional RD-TWG for review and assessment within 5 working days upon receipt of proposal.
4. The Regional RD-TWG will then evaluate/assess the research proposal using the evaluation guide for research proposals (See *Annex C*) and shall submit comments/inputs and recommendations to the Secretariat within 5 working days upon receipt of research proposal.
5. The proponent shall be informed in writing by the Secretariat on the comments and recommendations of the Regional RD-TWG. Further, any revision or clarifications shall be submitted to the Regional RD-TWG, through the Secretariat, within 10 working days upon receipt. In case of revisions, the proponent can only revise the research proposal twice. Otherwise, the proponent shall be invited to present the proposal as well as to provide clarifications on queries by the National RD-TWG members.
6. When deemed complete in substance and form, the research proposal shall be endorsed by the Regional RD-TWG, through its Secretariat, to the Regional Director for approval.

7. A written notice of approval/disapproval shall be sent to the proponent through the Secretariat within 5 working days upon receipt of the notice from the Regional Director.
8. A copy of approved research proposal/s shall be submitted to the Central Office for reference of the National RD-TWG.
* *Review process flow chart is hereto attached as Annex A.*

B. National RD-TWG

All researches to be undertaken by the DSWD Central Office OBSUs (except for researches funded by the Field Office), whether contracted out or not, shall be subject for review and endorsement of the National RD-TWG.

1. The proponent³ shall submit the following requirements to the National RD-TWG Secretariat:
 - a. Research Proposal
 - b. Researcher's Profile/Qualifications (for research adviser/consultant), if any.
 - c. Endorsement Letter from the Regional Director (for researches proposed at the regional level) or from the OBSU Head/Director (for researches proposed within the Central Office).
2. The Secretariat shall immediately acknowledge receipt of the proposal within two (2) working days after receipt thereof.
3. The Secretariat shall notify the National RD-TWG members on the research proposal submitted and shall forward the proposal to the RD-TWG for review and assessment within 5 working days upon receipt of proposal. The Secretariat shall also provide initial inputs/comments on the submitted research proposal before the endorsement to the RD-TWG members.
4. The National RD-TWG will then evaluate/assess the research proposal using the evaluation guide for research proposals (See *Annex C*) and shall submit comments/inputs and recommendations to the Secretariat within 5 working days upon receipt of research proposal.
5. The proponent shall be informed in writing by the Secretariat on the comments and recommendations of the National RD-TWG. Further, any revision or clarifications shall be submitted to the National RD-TWG, through the Secretariat, within 10 working days upon receipt. In case of revisions, the proponent can only revise the research proposal twice. Otherwise, the proponent shall be invited to present the proposal as well as to provide clarifications on queries by the National RD-TWG members.
6. When deemed complete in substance and form, the research proposal shall be endorsed by the National RD-TWG, through its Secretariat, to the Secretary for approval.

³ Proponent/s – may refer to DSWD Office/Bureau/Service/Unit/Field Office.

7. A written notice of approval/disapproval shall be sent to the proponent through the Secretariat within 5 working days upon receipt of the notice from the Secretary.

** Review process flow chart is hereto attached as Annex B.*

Researches and/or studies that are part of social technology development process may no longer be covered in the review process in order to fast track the approval of such studies. Furthermore, the review process will not cover urgent researches/studies directed by the Secretary. Nevertheless, these researches/studies shall be approved by the respective cluster head of concerned office/s.

VI. Effectivity

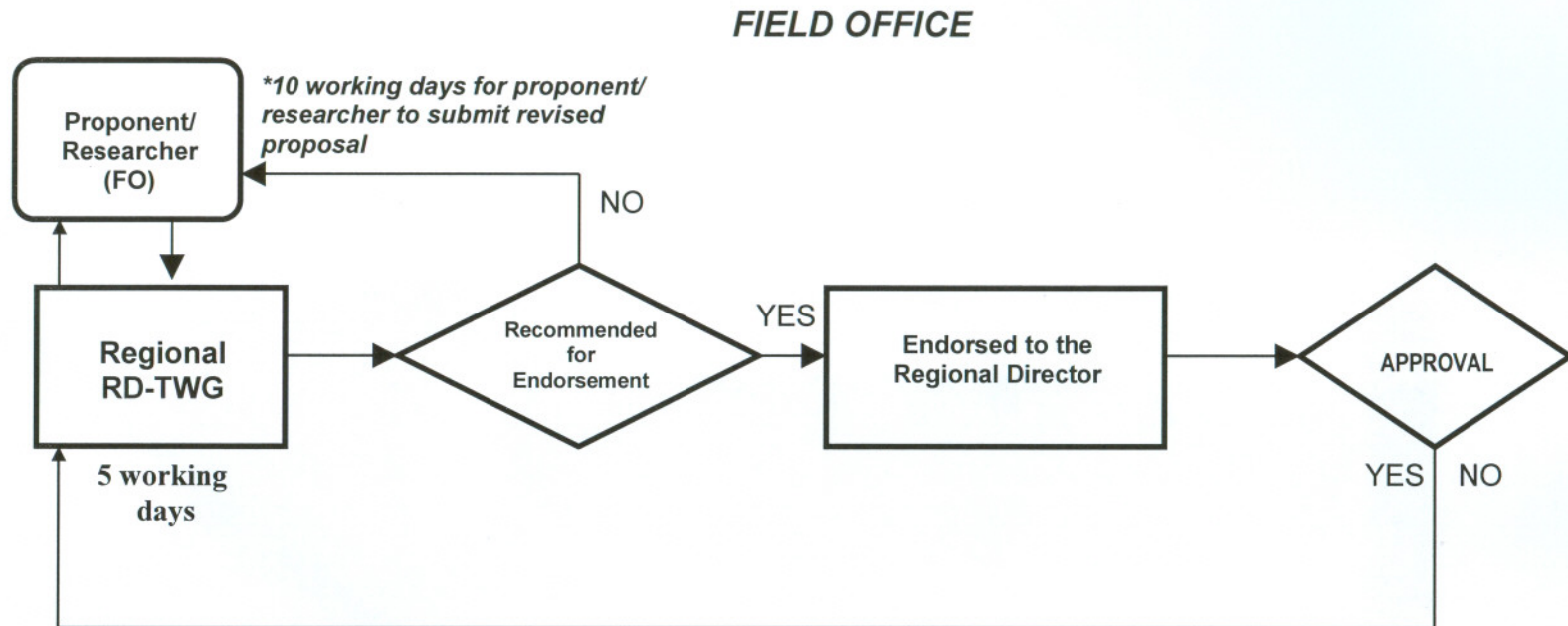
This Memorandum Circular shall take effect immediately.

Issued in Quezon City, this 17th day of June 2009.


DR. ESPERANZA I. CABRAL
Secretary *lee*

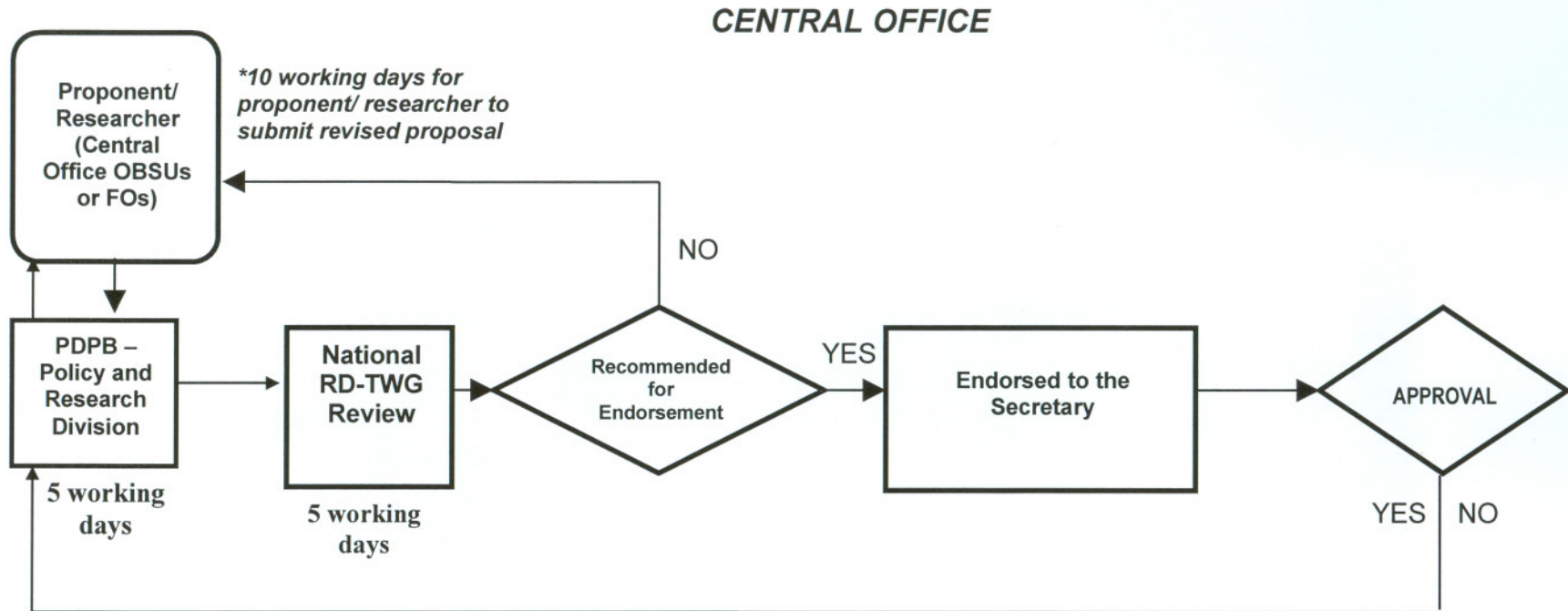
Annex A:

Review process flow chart for researches to be funded by the Field Office



Annex B:

Review process flow chart for researches to be undertaken by the Department - CO and FOs (except for researches funded by the Field Offices)



ANNEX C

**Department of Social Welfare and Development
Research and Development Technical Working Group (RD-TWG)
Guide for Evaluating Research Proposals**

Proponent (Office/Bureau/Service/Unit/Regional Office): _____
Duration of research: _____

Note:

1. Please put a check (✓) opposite the item: YES if the item is adequately presented in the proposal; NO if inadequately presented; and N/A if not applicable.
2. Kindly provide remarks/recommend changes on the parts which need to be improved.

Criteria	YES	NO	N/A	Remarks / Recommended Changes
A. Title				
The title is concise and descriptive.				
B. Problem and Its Setting				
1. Study's focus on the problem/need/issue				
2. The problem/need/issue is significant in terms of:				
2.1. the needs of the sectors/community/region/country				
2.2. Contribution to new knowledge				
2.3. Alignment with thrusts and priorities of the agency				
C. Objectives of the Study				
1. General Objective reflects the over-all purpose of the research study.				

2. Specific Objectives clearly break up the general objective into smaller, logically connected parts.				
D. Scope and Limitations of the Study				
The scope and limitations of the study clearly specify the focus of study.				
E. Conceptual/Theoretical Framework				
There is a logical relationship between the conceptual/theoretical framework and the problem/objectives of the study.				
F. Review of Related Literature				
The review of related literature adequately identifies previous studies done related to the problem/need stated; (theoretical and empirical studies).				
G. Research Design				
1. Research type/approach: The type and design of the study should be based on the proposed objectives of the study and availability of resources.				
2. Sample Selection - The following items should be clearly defined:				
2.1. Definition of sample and inclusion/exclusion criteria:				
2.2. Sampling technique				
2.3. Sample size				
3. Variables to be collected/studied (should be specific and measurable; should be based on the objectives)				

4. Instrumentation / Data Collection tools: The variables to be studied (based on the objectives) should be reflected in the data collection tool/s.				
5. Plans for Data Processing and Analysis should be in accordance with the proposed objectives and types of variables.				
6. Schedule of Activities (e.g. use of Gantt Chart)				
H. Budgetary Requirements				
Presents a justifiable and itemized breakdown of the total cost of the research study.				
I. Bibliography/References				
Bibliography, sources and references should be specified.				

General Comment/s: _____

Recommendation: (please check one)
 For endorsement _____
 For revision _____

Other Recommendation/s: _____

Note:

In case of revisions, the proponent can only revise the research proposal twice. Otherwise, the proponent shall be invited to present the proposal as well as to provide clarifications on queries by the National RD-TWG members.

Name and Signature of RD-TWG Member:

Date:

Reference:

> Training Materials/Manual; DSWD's Enhancing Research Skills in Social Welfare and Development Planning/Policy Development Training. 23-27 October 2007