

Notes on the 11th PSFB meeting from the NGO Representative to the PSF Board

The People's Survival Fund Board (PSFB) met for the 11th time in 11 August 2017 at the board room of the Office of the Secretary of the Department of Finance. The Fund board meeting was attended by members and alternate members from the Department of Finance (DOF), Department of Budget and Management (DBM), Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), Climate Change Commission (CCC), National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), and the NGO representative. Observers from the office of Senator Loren Legarda and the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) were also present.

National Treasurer Rosalia De Leon on behalf of DOF Secretary Carlos Dominguez convened the 11th PSFB meeting.

SPECIFIC HIGHLIGHTS

Approval of two new proposals

The PSFB approved two proposals from Gerona, Tarlac and San Francisco, Camotes Island, Cebu. The approval was unanimous although conditions were set before disbursement can proceed. On one hand, Gerona's proposal used their experience in their implementation of the Climate Resiliency Field School (CRFS). Rice Watch Action Network, the lead expert on CRFS in the area, is an implementing partner in the proposal. San Francisco's proposal focuses on the water resource management needs of the island. The Philippine Partnership for the Human Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (PHILDRRA)-Visayas is San Francisco's implementing partner.

Earmarking of additional proposals to trigger fund transfer

The PSFB approved the earmarking of more than one billion pesos worth of proposals from eleven proponents including Gerona and San Francisco to trigger DBM to release the current 2017 PSF budget to the Bureau of Treasury (BTr), which will be released to DBP for management. The list is just indicative and does not, in any way, mean automatic approval. The earmarked proposals still have to satisfy the conditions to get full or partial approval.

DOF as the Secretariat

As mentioned in the 9th PSFB meeting and clarified during the 10th PSFB meeting, the PSF secretariatship was moved from the Climate Change Office (CCO-CCC) to the Department of Finance, some of the functions of the secretariat will be outsourced to DBP. In the 11th PSFB meeting, DBP raised the issue that they are still negotiating their share of the work. They also manifested that they would need further technical assistance before they can take on the expected responsibilities to assume the secretariat role. A new draft of the Memorandum of Agreement between the PSF Secretariat and DBP will be circulated for the board members' review and comments before the next board meeting. A noteworthy agreement is that DBP will be facilitating the disbursement of the newly approved proposals.



BROAD COMMENTS

The DOF has been more frequently holding meetings since it assumed the Secretariat role of the PSF. The frequency of recent board meetings is most welcome and reflects the Chair's impatience to move work and deliver faster outcomes that ICSC continues to expressly support. As we wrote earlier, and as we shared to the Board in the last three meetings, leadership is key and right now DOF's focus has fueled the work of the Board and the change in pace is not only noticeable but deserves clear praise and support.

It is important, of course, to ensure speed and frequency combines with a heightened sense of collaboration among government agency members of the Board. As we had recommended in the 10th Board meeting, maintaining the participation of the government board members through the Technical Evaluation Committee (TEC) would make the approval process concerning proposals easier and faster because it embeds scrutiny in the early stages of appraisal. In addition, modules for PSF access are also nearing completion and are currently being tested by CCC to ensure effectiveness. Progress on this agenda appears unequivocally positive. The CCC-PSF Unit conducted a module dry-run and finalization workshop last August 17-18, 2017, which was attended by PSF development partners, including ICSC. All signs indicate robust outcomes, which can only benefit the Board.