

The People's Survival Fund Board (PSFB) met for the 14<sup>th</sup> time yesterday, December 13, 2018. The meeting was held at the Bureau of Treasury from 15:00-18:00. The meeting was attended by Usec. Pangandaman of DBM, Asec. Mercy Sombilla of NEDA, Peter Perfecto of the business sector, Comm Rachel Herrera and DED Cuenca of CCC, DED Balmes of PCW, and me on Red's behalf. The meeting was chaired by National Treasurer De Leon with the head of PSF Secretariat Mr. Narag of DOF.

The 14<sup>th</sup> PSFB meeting in general is a success if you look at it on the policy and process perspective, but not so much as to the approval of new proposals (or at least what's left of the proposals, since many are already tagged as non-responsive and inactive). Here are the highlights that we can share for now, which would support my general update:

- a. The status of the disbursement of the six approved proposals: Lanuza, Del Carmen, Gerona, San Francisco, Sarangani, and Kitcharao was the initial discussion in the board meeting. The Board signified that it will help through the members' respective offices and through the PSF Secretariat to help expedite the release of additional requirements needed to trigger disbursements. San Francisco was underscored, because it is the only noncompliant LGU among the first four originally approved with signed financing agreements. Updates are expected in the next few weeks.
- b. The Board has agreed to make the approval and prioritization process more inclusive. Instead of just being DOF- DBP, it would now be open to all board members. CCC and ICSC were initially identified to be part of the team that would lead this new arrangement. If you would still remember, one of the things that were removed from the process after the transfer of secretariatship from CCC to DOF is the Technical Evaluation Committee (TEC), which is composed of different PSFB members. The TEC injected a sense of predictability during the approval process, since the proposals are already being debated and discussed by the technical teams prior to the meeting. With the new, more inclusive, process of approval and prioritization, hopefully proposals from LGUs and local organizations would have a quicker assessment time.
- c. No new approval doesn't mean that there is no progress. The only proposal that was endorsed for approval was blocked, when ICSC voted NO on its approval. The dividing of the house, since PSFB usually votes unanimously, opened the proposal for further scrutiny. ICSC voted no because of two main reasons. First, the proposal doesn't have a strong case in showing that its primary vulnerabilities would be addressed through the proposed interventions. NEDA and PCW supported this argument. Second, it sends a very bad signal as to the integrity of the processing of proposals, coming from a first class municipality, the question "whether is this really the right proposal that we should process at this point in time?" was raised by ICSC. As the discussions go on, it was later established that the proposal doesn't only lack the linkages necessary to build its climate rationale, it is also technically flawed since it seeks to finance activities on private lands. The "private lands" component was omitted in the appraisal reports that CCC used to come up with its endorsement. CCC in essence withdrew its endorsement, everyone in the board agreed to do so and reminded the secretariat that this was a lucky save and could have been a problem if voted blindly.
- d. PSF allocations next year is still alive. The board will still wait for DBM's final written notice, but according to Usec. Pangandaman, PSF's current fund will only expire on

December 2019. Additionally, Sen. Legarda is also likely to push for additional resources to PSF in next year's budget. This is already good talking points for those who are saying that PSF is bound to die by next year.

e. Call for proposals should be expected to be officially issued soon. The Board now is practicing leniency to those who are submitting without the call, but this would change once the backlogs have been settled once and for all.

f. The next board meeting will be scheduled on January. Everyone agreed to do it more often, to ensure that the funds are disbursed to worthy proposals and that the processes continuously mature to become the ideal climate finance flow in the country.

As a network, there is so much that we can do, especially now that the process for local organization access is still untested, not to mention existing local work by a lot of us. I leave it to the membership if you want to have a deeper conversation on this, meeting on how we can work together, among other issues related to PSF.