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RULES AND PROCEDURES ON THE EVALUATION, APPROVAL AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE PROJECT PROPOSALS, AMENDMENT TO ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 04, SERIES OF 2012 RE GUIDELI...

BAFPS ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 01, January 15, 2013

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Pursuant to Republic Act No. 10068 (Organic Agriculture Act of 2010) and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) and in line with the National Organic Agriculture Program (NOAP), the Department of Agriculture (DA) hereby issues the following rules and procedures on the evaluation, approval and implementation of organic agriculture project proposals. This Administrative Order is an amendment to Administrative Order No. 04 Series of 2012 - Guidelines on the Evaluation and Approval of Organic Agriculture Project Proposals.

Part I
PROJECT QUALIFICATION

ARTICLE 1. GENERAL FRAMEWORK

Section 1. Objective - This Order is issued to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of the activities supporting the promotion, propagation, and development of organic agriculture in the Philippines.

ARTICLE 2. ELIGIBILITY OF PROPONENTS AND PROJECTS FOR FUNDS ASSISTANCE –

Section 1. Eligible Project Proponents - Eligible project proponents for funds assistance would include any of the following:

1. People’s Organizations (POs) such as farmers’ and fisher folks’ organizations, cooperatives, federations and/or consortia of these groups;
2. Agribusiness enterprises including industry associations;
3. Non-profit organizations such as NGOs and foundations;
4. Government organizations such as local government units (LGUs), government corporations, and other local and national government agencies; and
5. Academic and educational institutions such as State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) and private academic institutions.

Section 2. Eligibility of Projects - Projects eligible for funding shall be limited to those which are directly related to:

(a) National Organic Agriculture Program (NOAP);

Specifically listed are those priority projects that shall support the key components of a comprehensive organic agriculture program[3], as follows:

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- Production and technology support;

- Extension and capability building;

- Research and development;

- Institutional development and strengthening;

- Market development; and

- Promotion, advocacy and education

(b) Enhancing the global competitiveness of Philippine organic agricultural products;

(c) Advancing the organic farming sector such as but not limited to the establishment of common service facilities; and

(d) Catering to the indigenous peoples, agrarian reform beneficiaries, tribal and marginalized communities among others.

Section 3. Minimum Project Criteria - The projects that shall qualify for funds assistance, shall, at the minimum be consistent with the policies and priority thrusts under RA 10068, its IRR and the NOAP:

1. Be complementary to, supportive and not duplicative of the various and current funding assistance windows/programs of DA and other government institutions;
2. Exhibit market, technical, financial, socio-economic, ecological, and organizational viability and feasibility as applicable;
3. Enhance the competitiveness of target project beneficiaries or sector(s), especially the small farmers and/or fisherfolk;
4. Provide product/service competitiveness in the local and/or foreign markets in terms of product/service prices/fees and quality;
5. Promote upstream and downstream linkages with related and/or complementary agricultural activities;
6. Provide clear and verifiable proof of sustainability of operations; and
7. Beneficial to most, and not only selected, firms or groups within a sector.

Part II
PROJECT EVALUATION

Project evaluation shall be done at the National level or in the Regional/Implementing Agency level depending on the total amount of project cost being requested from the DA Organic Agriculture Fund, as follows:

1. By the National Technical Working Group (NTWG) when request for project funds amounts to more than Five Million Pesos (PhP5,000,000.00); and
2. By the Regional Technical Working Group (RTWG)/Implementing Agency Technical Working Group (IATWG) when request for project funds amounts to Five Million Pesos (PhP5,000,000.00) and below.

ARTICLE 1. NATIONAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP ON ORGANIC AGRICULTURE PROJECT PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Section 1. Composition- The TWG on Organic Project Proposal Evaluation shall be composed of the following:

Chair Chief, Policy Advocacy & Legislative Support Division

Vice-Chair Director, Project Development Service

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Members Representative, National Agriculture and Fishery Council (NAFC)

Representative, Field Operations Service (FOS)

Representative, High-Value Commercial Crops Development Program (HVCDP)

Representative, Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI)

Representative, Office of the Undersecretary for Special Concerns (OSC)

Representative, Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM)

Representative, Agri-business and Marketing Assistance Service (AMAS)

Representative, Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization (PHILMECH)

Representative, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR)

Representative, Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI)

Representative, Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR)

Representative, Agricultural Training Institute (ATI)

Representatives from other DA Bureaus, Attached Agencies and Implementing Units and other concerned agencies such as DILG, DENR, DepEd, DAR, DTI, DOST-PCAARRD and DOH to act as resource persons, as needed

Section 2. Functions - The NTWG shall perform the following functions:

1. Develop a set of criteria for evaluating projects for approval by the NOAB;
2. Evaluate detailed project proposals endorsed and pre-screened by the Technical Secretariat;
3. Conduct interviews/site validation whenever necessary to ensure veracity of the data or information contained in the project proposals;
4. Rank and prioritize proposals for endorsement to NOAB based on project feasibility/acceptability indicators and the minimum project requirements listed in Article 2, Section 3 of this Order; and
5. Recommend to NOAB any changes to the Project Guidelines.

ARTICLE 2. REGIONAL FIELD UNIT AND IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES TECHNICAL WORKING GROUPS

The Regional Field Unit (RFU) and the concerned Implementing Agency (IA) shall constitute a technical working group similar to the NTWG with the following functions:

1. Develop a set of criteria for evaluating projects for approval by the Regional Executive Director/IA Head;
2. Evaluate detailed project proposals endorsed and pre-screened by the Technical Secretariat of the RFU/IA;
3. Conduct interviews when necessary to ensure veracity of the data or information contained in the project proposals; and
4. Rank and prioritize proposals for endorsement to Regional Director/Implementing Agency Director based on project feasibility/acceptability indicators and the minimum project requirements listed in Article 2, Section 2 of this Order.

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ARTICLE 3. THE NATIONAL TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT

Section 1. Composition - The Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Product Standards (BAFPS) of the Department of Agriculture (DA) shall serve as the Technical Secretariat of the Organic Agriculture (herein referred to as the National Technical Secretariat).

Section 2. Functions - The Secretariat shall perform the following functions:

1. Together with the DA Office for Special Concerns, undertake initial screening (e.g. whether all necessary requirements/documents as indicated in Annex A of this Order are submitted prior to Evaluation Meetings by the TWG) and preappraisal of the project proposals;
2. Inform and update the proponents on the status of the application of project proposals;
3. Facilitate processing of fund transfer to implementing agencies and DA Regional Field Units (RFUs) for approved projects;
4. Prepare regular reports to the NOAB of the status of the implementation of the approved project proposals; and
5. Maintain database of approved and disapproved project proposals including assessment, monitoring, and completion reports.

ARTICLE 4. EVALUATION PROCEDURE

Section 1. Project Identification and Formulation

1. Projects for possible assistance shall be identified and formulated by prospective project proponents from the private sector, government sector, and non-governmental sector.
2. A substantive project proposal following the minimum criteria, prescribed project concept note (Annex B) and project proposal (Annex C), together with other application requirements as requested by the TWG other than specified in Annex A of this Order, shall be prepared and submitted to the concerned Regional Field Unit and DA Implementing Units.
3. The conduct of feasibility studies should be the responsibility of the proponent. However, concerned DA Units, Bureaus and/or Attached Agencies/Corporations may be consulted in the preparation of the project proposals/feasibility studies;
4. If necessary, corresponding technical assistance shall be tapped to assist small farmers/fisher folks groups in the preparation of their project proposals.
5. Minimum of twenty percent (20%) of the total project cost shall be shouldered by the proponent as counterpart either in the form of cash, labor and others.

Section 2. Pre-screening and Pre-appraisal

1. The submitted project concept notes, project proposal and documents shall be initially screened and pre-appraised by National Technical Secretariat, Technical Working Group of Regional Field Units, DA Bureaus, Attached Agencies and Implementing Units.
2. Proposals with fund request greater than Five Million Pesos (PhP5,000,000.00) will be forwarded to National Technical Secretariat.
3. National Technical Secretariat shall check on the conformity of submitted documents with Annexes A, B and C as well as all other provisions of the guidelines herein.

Section 3. Evaluation

1. The Regional Field Units, DA Bureaus, Attached Agencies and Implementing Units through their TWG for the evaluation of proposals are given the authority to decide on the approval/disapproval of the projects amount not

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greater than Five Million Pesos (PhP5,000,000.00) request. The Heads of RFU, DA Bureaus, Attached Agencies and Implementing Units, shall inform the NOAB of the approved projects for information of the latter.
2. Project Proposals with fund request greater than Five Million Pesos (PhP5,000,000.00) that have passed the initial screening and pre-appraisal process of the National Technical Secretariat shall be submitted to the NTWG for evaluation.
3. Project proposals that have failed the initial screening and pre-appraisal process shall be returned to the proponent for improvement in accordance to the recommendations of the concerned TWG (regional and national).
4. Proponents of disapproved concept notes shall be notified and may submit their revised and/or improved proposal for reapplication.
5. For projects requesting more than Five Million Pesos (PhP5,000,000.00), a short list of project proposals that have passed the evaluation and prequalification process including the Project Evaluation Report (PER) by the TWG shall be submitted to the NOAB for review and approval.
6. A list of project proposals that have failed the TWG evaluation and prequalification process shall also be submitted to the NOAB for information.
7. Any fraudulent submission of documents by a prospective proponent shall cause the disqualification of the said proponent to avail of any assistance and future funding.

Section 3. Approval and Financing

1. All approved project proposals shall be given Project Code for documentation purposes.
2. Proponents shall be notified immediately of evaluation result and shall be requested to submit final Work and Financial Plan (WFP) based on the approved funds within one (1) month to the Secretariat upon receipt of approval notice;
3. Proponents shall be required to sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the DA2[2] together with the Implementing Agency;
4. The release of funds and disbursement procedures shall follow existing government accounting, auditing rules and regulations.

Section 4. Implementation, Monitoring and Post-Project Evaluation

1. All projects shall be monitored by the Implementing Agency to ensure that they are progressing in line with the time-frames, budgets, and methods specified in the approved project proposal.
2. The regular monitoring of the actual implementation of projects shall be done by the Implementing Agencies and RFUs, to include but not limited to the following:

- Actual usage of total funds released;

- Status of implementation/completion of project;

- Status of project operations;

- Competitiveness aspect of the project;

- Employment generated and other social benefits gained;

- Value-added on project;

- Gender concern; and

- Other relevant information.

3. The Implementing Agency shall also monitor environmental/ecological impact of the project, pursuant to IRR

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of R.A. 10068.
4. The Implementing Agency shall facilitate the conduct of an external audit in monitoring the operational, financial, and management aspects of all assisted projects.
5. All monitoring activities shall be done by the Implementing Agency in coordination with concerned DA Units including the Commission on Audit (COA), based on a set of monitoring guidelines (Annex F) to be approved by the NOAB.
6. All projects must submit a completion report (Annex G).
7. Project monitoring and completion reports shall be submitted by the Implementing Agency / Regional Field Unit to NOAB through the Secretariat.
8. Completion reports are due within two (2) months after the completion of the project as indicated by the proponent in their project proposal. DA through NOAB shall be notified of projects that have failed to provide a completion report. A project is deemed completed when all the expenses has been liquidated according to relevant COA Circulars and DA Administrative Orders.
9. Proponents whose projects have not met the Monitoring and Completion Report requirements shall be ineligible to submit any future project proposal for prioritization. 10. All completed projects should be given final appraisal by NOAB and TWG on Project Success.

Part III MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Section 1. Annexes

The following documents are deemed part of this guideline:

- Annex A - Application Requirements

- Annex B - Project Concept Note Template

- Annex C – Organic Agriculture Project Proposal Format

- Annex D – Guide Organic Agriculture Project Proposal Evaluation Report

- Annex E - Project Evaluation Report (PER) of Project Proposals

- Annex F – Project Monitoring Report

- Annex G - Project Completion Report

- Annex H – Site Validation Report

- Annex I – Memorandum of Agreement

- Annex J – Summary of Project Evaluation Procedure and Timeline

Section 2. Subsequent Assistance - Successful Project Proponents may again avail of financial assistance for other projects provided:

1. Funds previously received has been properly liquidated;
2. Previous project has passed evaluation satisfactorily; and
3. The project proponent submits a favorable recommendation from the implementing agency of the previous project.

Section 3. Penalty Clause - A proponent shall be black listed and perpetually banned from receiving financial assistance under the Organic Agriculture program under the following grounds:

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1. Failure, without justifiable cause, to submit completion report after receiving at least three (3) formal requests by the Implementing Agency or the NOAB; and
2. Failure, without justifiable cause, to liquidate funds previously received.

Section 4. Separability - Should any provision of this order or any part thereof be declared invalid, the other provisions, so far as they are separable, shall remain in force and in effect.

Section 5. Effectivity. This order shall take effect immediately.

SO ORDERED.

(SGD.) PROCESO J. ALCALA
Secretary

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[3] 1. Attendant infrastructures, machineries and equipment can be included in the above projects.
2. Multi-component projects are eligible for fund support provided they are officially endorsed by appropriate Regional Field Units (RFUs)/Implementing Agencies (IAs) to the National Technical Working Group (NTWG) on Organic Agriculture Project Proposal Evaluation.
3. The NTWG shall identify and make a list of allowed project types and sub-components and update the same from time to time.
4. Projects should be in accordance with National Organic Agriculture Board (NOAB) priorities for the year.

[2] DA may be represented by concerned RFU provided that the latter and its Regional Executive Director (RED) is authorized thru a Special Order issued for such purpose.

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