

PFM Briefings Familiarize National Agencies on the PFM Reforms Roadmap of the Philippine Government

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Government managers and executives from national agencies were familiarized on the PFM Reforms Roadmap.

The Philippine Public Fiscal Management System is beset with poor reporting, planning and implementation due to the fragmentation of oversight agencies that complicate the system of budget reporting, transparency, predictability and control in budget execution, internal audit and payroll. To address the weaknesses, the Public Financial Management (PFM) Reforms Roadmap was created to reengineer and integrate financial management processes and information systems. From March to May 2012, total of nine Consultation-Briefings for national government agencies on the PFM Roadmap were held in Department of Budget and Management (DBM), Manila. A total of 1,044 government personnel comprising of heads of offices, financial and planning officers, accountants, budget and planning staff were familiarized on the PFM gaps and weaknesses, strategies employed and the initiatives currently underway. On September 2011, by virtue of Executive Order no. 55, the PFM committee consisting of COA, DBM, DoF and BTr was created to develop and implement the PFM Reforms Roadmap. Key priority strategies include the following:

- Government Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS) that will provide real time financial information to all government and the public

- Treasury Single Account that will improve cash management and can keep daily cash balances of government at appropriate levels
- Harmonization of budget reporting and performance management aims to generate real time reports on budget utilization and financial performance
- Liability management system that will minimize financial exposure
- Standardize accounting and auditing rules to enhance government accounting systems and strengthen external audit capacity.
- Capacity Building on PFM competencies and stakeholder support

During the open forum, the participants raised questions and provided feedback to the panelists on the current reform measures discussed. Majority of the topics covered the GIFMIS and National Payroll System from design, functionality, roll-out plan, time frame, training, maintenance and enhancements, network to hardware and security. Among the major issues raised were on the need for a standard policy or procedure for payroll preparation from the national, regional to local, roll-out guidelines particularly on accountabilities and responsibilities of agencies and personnel, progressive training that links work outputs to outcomes and security plan to address virtual corruption and manipulation.

At the end of the training, a survey was conducted to assess readiness of the participants in the changes that will be brought about by the PFM reforms. Total respondents covered for the managerial group is 264 while the technical group is 637. Highlights of the survey that garnered positive results on the benefits of the GIFMIS in improving transparency and accountability in their agencies.

“With [GIFMIS], there will be great control and checking on the financial management of the different government agencies”, said a participant. Although the participants expressed enthusiasm for the reform measures, some have shared their reservations on the timeline of project activities to successfully complete implementation of the system.