

Tambuli

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Improving Infrastructure Project Physical and Financial Monitoring

Now a Reality Through Information Technology



Left: Assistant Secretary for Operations (Luzon) Eugenio Pipo; Right: Assistant Secretary for Operations (Visayas and Mindanao) Dimas Soguilon presenting at the Region and District Physical and Financial Monitoring Meetings

Despite the challenges of having a standalone Project Monitoring System (PMS) that is more than 25 years old and the Commission on Audit developed standalone accounting (eNGAS) and budget (eBudget) systems, the Department has a new tool for improving both the physical and financial monitoring of infrastructure projects—the Electronic Project Life Cycle (ePLC).

To overcome the challenges of these standalone systems, a data warehouse was developed by the Monitoring and Information Service (MIS) in conjunction with the Bureau of Construction (BOC) with the assistance of the Institutional Capacity Development (ICD) Project Management and Coordination (PMC) Consultant and the Financial Management Consultant. This effort was made possible by the hard work of the Regional and District Engineering Offices in ensuring that the Project IDs in eNGAS and eBudget are reconciled with PMS, as directed by the Secretary in Department Order (DO) 36,

series 2012, and in assigning Project IDs in accordance with DO 56, series 2012.

The new tool furthers the Department's efforts on good governance and provides tools to management at all levels to ensure they are overseeing both the physical and the financial aspects of projects and their associated construction contracts.

With physical progress data from the PMS (and PMO-MS) and financial data from eNGAS and eBudget merged, the system now generates Merged Monitoring Reports from the official sources of financial information (eNGAS and eBudget) versus, in the past, having to enter financial data twice, which might not be as timely and reliable, into the PMS/PMO-MS systems. One of the significant value-adds of the ePLC is the ability to test the data quality for potential data entry errors and highlight "red flags" for management through reports called Exception Reports.

Exception Reports

The ePLC generates Exception Reports based on data from the PMS (Physical Exception Report), from eNGAS and eBudget (Financial Exception Report), and a Report that highlights inconsistencies between the merged physical and financial data (ePLC Exception Report). The Physical Exception Report tests for a number of potential data errors—from simple data entry errors wherein the contract end date is less than the contract start date to inconsistencies in the start and end dates versus the start and end dates in the S-Curve. The Financial Exception Report highlights critical data quality issues in eNGAS and eBudget, such as the financial progress (disbursements) being greater than 100%. The ePLC Exception Reports highlight potential data integrity problems such as the disbursement amount being greater than the obligation amount and the contract cost being less

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than the disbursement amount. There are also “red flag” type exceptions, meaning the data may be accurate, but the management should look into the situation for process or other related problems. One example of a “red flag” exception is an unreasonable variance between the physical progress and the financial progress based on the size of the contract.

Physical and Financial Monitoring Meetings

Through a memorandum signed by Secretary Rogelio L. Singson on February 6, 2013, Regional Directors, Assistant Regional Directors, District Engineers, Assistant District Engineers, Division and Section Chiefs, Monitoring Engineers, Project Engineers, Accountants, and Budget Officers were directed to participate in the Region and District Physical and Financial Monitoring Meetings being conducted in every Region by Assistant Secretaries for Operations Dimas S. Soguilon (Visayas and Mindanao) and Eugenio R. Pipo (Luzon).

The purpose of these meetings is to improve the physical and financial monitoring of projects and ensure data accuracy and timely reporting. The Department’s policy on the assignment of Project IDs as well as other BOC- and Planning Service-related issuances are discussed with the participants to ensure clarity of the requirements to all staff concerned. The Assistant Secretaries wanted to ensure that all staff involved in project implementation and monitoring (including financial) are in attendance in order for everyone to be clear on the instructions and have the opportunity to ask for clarifications. It is imperative that participants take the opportunity to ensure clarity in order to prevent any misunderstandings of the expectations of management, given they will ultimately be held accountable for any noncompliance with associated Department policies and procedures.



Engr. Melrose I. Pailma of BOC presenting to the Regional and District delegates of Region I on March 2, 2013.



Regional and District delegates are given an overview of ePLC as part of the morning session of the Region VII Monitoring Meeting, held on February 22, 2013.

During the afternoon breakout sessions, each exception (potential data quality issue or “red flag”) is reviewed, exception by exception, office by office, to discuss why these exceptions are occurring for the project and to ensure clear directives on the analysis and correction of any inaccurate data, or investigation into “red flags”. During the meetings, the Regions and Districts are provided electronic copies of their respective Merged Project Monitoring Reports and the Exception Reports. The Exception Reports provide the specific Project ID to enable staff to analyze and improve upon the data quality; in some cases, the statistics highlight to the Management the need for potential process or internal control improvements.

The Assistant Secretaries stress that these meetings are held in advance of the

issuance of a forthcoming Department Order that will include deadlines for compliance and resulting sanctions for any personnel not complying with the directive of ensuring physical and financial monitoring of projects, along with accurate and timely reporting of project physical and financial data.

Feedback on these meetings and ePLC has been very positive. One District Engineer stressed, “We are fortunate to have the ePLC to link physical and financial data to improve our monitoring. We now have the much-needed capability to reconcile our physical and financial progress.”

During their respective Regional Meetings, both Assistant Secretaries reiterate the directives of the Department and the benefits of the ePLC, informing the participants that the information is being utilized by the Executive Committee with their own new tool—the Executive Information System (ExIS), which is now available on their iPad. As emphasized during these meetings by the Assistant Secretaries of Operations, this ePLC effort is in line with the Government’s and Department’s policies on transparency and good governance. The Department has made progress in its anticorruption campaign. According to a 2009 SWS survey, the Department’s corruption perception index was -65%. In 2012, it had improved to -20%. As part of good governance, the Department must have information that is factual, accurate, and timely. Data quality improvements are urgently needed to continue the Department’s drive toward improved transparency and good governance, furthering the anticorruption campaign.

In addition to the Assistant Secretaries for Operations, resource persons for the Monitoring Meetings are Dr. Diane Wacker, NRIMP-2 ICD PMC Consultant; Mr. Michael Cleary, AusAID Financial Management Consultant; Representatives from the BOC Project Monitoring Group (predominantly ePLC Team Member Engr. Melrose Pailma)

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Update on DPWH Communication Network Upgrade: Additional 16 Sites Connected

The transformation of the Department, with improved processes and operations enabled by information technology (IT), cannot be fully achieved without an IT infrastructure. Just like our road network is essential in moving people and goods to market, our communication network is essential for timely and accurate sharing of data through the computerized application systems.

In line with the ongoing Communication Network Upgrade Project under the World Bank National Road Improvement and Management Program – Phase 2 (NRIMP-2) Institutional Capacity Development (ICD) Component, an additional sixteen (16) District Engineering Offices have now been connected to the Department's Wide Area Network (WAN). The additional sixteen (16) sites are part of the 45 new sites being implemented under the NRIMP-2 G-06 Communication Network Equipment and Installation Project, which is expected to be completed by the end of August 2013.

As of May 2013, eighty four (84) out of the one hundred eighty one (181) Districts are successfully connected to the DPWH communication network.

As part of the network expansion, forty-seven (47) additional sites under

the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and thirty-seven (37) sites under the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) projects are expected to be connected by the end of 2014.

In connection to this network expansion, the Department is upgrading its communication lines into the latest connectivity technology through Globe Telecom, providing more reliable and faster voice and data connection between offices. This will also improve the performance of the computerized application systems.

The expected benefits from the projects are greatly improved communication, both internal and external. It also provides the technology infrastructure for data communications, which enables the implementation of application systems, the use of electronic mail, the utilization of Internet service, and all other communication services.

There are many application systems that the Department implements over this network, including the Road and Bridge Information Application (RBIA), Geographic Information System (GIS), Pavement Management System (PMS), Bridge Management System (BMS), Civil Works Registry (CWR), Traffic Accident Reporting and Analysis System (TARAS), Electronic New Government

A c c o u n t i n g System (eNGAS), Electronic Budget (eBudget), and the D o c u m e n t Tracking System (DoTS) to name a few.

The voice and data infrastructure enables data and service delivery from the Central Office to the Regional and District Offices. This allows the Department to significantly cut down on transport


16 Additional DEOs Connected to the DPWH WAN

Albay 1st	Eastern Samar
Benguet 1st	Ilocos Norte 2nd
Benguet 2nd	Ilocos Sur 2nd
Cagayan 1st	Mindoro Occidental
Cagayan 2nd	Pangasinan 3rd
Camarines Norte	Northern Samar
Catanduanes	Quirino
Cebu 4th	Samar 2nd

costs and long distance service charges between offices and ensure timely update of data.

Aside from the connection to the network, the Central, Regional, and District Offices connected, or being connected, to the network will receive computers. The MIS is distributing an average of 26 computers per Regional Office and an average of 16 computers per District Engineering Office under local- and ADB-funded projects. These computers are designed for specific Department enterprise applications, and it is important that each computer goes to the personnel utilizing the specific application as specified in the MIS Distribution Letter. Otherwise, there will be problems in operating the applications and as application upgrades are being rolled out to these Offices.

Offices connected to the network (intranet) are reminded that access to the Department Orders, Special Orders, and Memorandums are available by clicking

on the Internet Explorer  button and selecting the Department Issuances tab. Offices not yet connected to the Communication network can go to the Department's Internet website at www.dpwh.gov.ph and select Department Issuances for Department and Special Orders.

Engr. Cyrus V. Canto
Network Administration Section,
MIS



Left (Top): WAN connectivity radio antenna and utility service entrance pedestal.
Bottom: Generator power house at the Kalinga District Engineering Office.
Right: Network room at the Benguet 2nd District Engineering Office.

