



NOMINATION FORM
Work Innovation towards Service Excellence (WISE) Award

This Award seeks to recognize officials and employees of DENR MIMAROPA who initiated a novel policy, program or project that improved operational process or methods, and have assisted in meeting organizational sustainability and/or wellness.

Name of nominee : MAYLENE S. UDTOJAN
Position : INFORMATION SYSTEMS ANALYST II
Office : DENR PENRO PALAWAN
Date Innovation was Implemented/Adopted: JUNE 2021

(You may use additional sheets if necessary.)

I. Briefly describe the nominee's innovation(program/project, process, policy or others) using the STAR Framework below:

SITUATION: (Challenges/situations that the nominee faced)

DENR Palawan consists of 6 CENROs strategically located in different municipalities of the province. The nearest CENR Office is CENRO Puerto Princesa which is only few meters away from PENR Office; while the farthest is CENRO Coron, Palawan which takes about 8hrs or more away from the Puerto Princesa depending on the type of transportation taken. With the geographic locations of CENR Offices, the entire DENR Palawan faced several challenges in the conduct of its activities and mandate. Internally, the agency faces concerns/challenges in recording its accomplishments and meeting the target on time. The documents from CENR Offices need to be sent out to PENRO for approval or processing. In case of financial documents, it is also sent to MIMAROPA Regional Office for the approval of PENRO Accountant. This causes concerning impact on the financial accomplishments and cash flow of the office. Common concerns which have been communicated by CENR Offices and employees in terms of their financial targets and transactions to PENRO are as follows: 1) *recording and reconciliation of fund utilization of each office*; 2) *monitoring of fund balances of each activity and offices*; 3) *reporting of monthly financial accomplishments*; and 4) *monitoring and tracking*.

Challenge 1: Recording and reconciliation of fund utilization of each offices and division/section

Recording of fund utilization were done individually by CENROs, PAMOs and PENRO. Each office has assigned their respective designated Planning Officers to record, monitor and reconcile their office's fund utilization. They maintained an Excel file of all spending/obligations charged in each activity as defined in the Work and Financial Plan and Implementation Plan. The designated Planning Officers also identified the object of expenditures in every obligation incurred in each activity following the approved Implementation Plan. Hence, their record became the basis of their monthly financial accomplishments. They also became the counterpart of PENRO Budget Officer. However, since the processing of Disbursement vouchers are done at the PENRO Accounting Office, they missed out on the report of disbursements. They rely solely on the report submitted by Budget Unit to PENRO Planning Section on disbursements.



On the other hand, the PENRO Budget Unit itself also maintained an excel file of all obligations incurred coming from CENROs and different Division/sections of PENRO and disbursements from Accounting/Cashier Unit. The PENRO Budget Unit submits the financial utilization of all CENROs and PAMO in every activity from the Work and Financial Plan.

This practice became the bottleneck of the office when it comes to reporting and accuracy of fund utilization. Discrepancies in the recorded utilization between the CENROs/PAMOs and PENRO Budget Unit were evident during the presentation of financial accomplishments at the FDU meetings. Likewise, uncoordinated charging of obligations to CENRO/PAMO funds was also apparent which often resulted to inconsistencies of financial accomplishments between the CENR Offices and Budget Unit.

As a counter-measure, the Budget Officer and staff were often sent on official travel to each CENRO for reconciliation of fund utilization.

Challenge 2: Monitoring of fund balances of each activity and offices

Since the recording of obligations and disbursements were done manually by the PENRO Budget Unit, monitoring of actual fund balances were difficult for CENROs. Oftentimes, the CENROs were unaware of the obligations charged against their fund and these only came to light during reconciliation. The outdated fund balances in respective record often resulted to over obligation or insufficient fund balances when they submitted their budget utilization requests to PENRO.

Challenge 3: Reporting of monthly financial accomplishments and other budget reports

Reporting and presentation of financial accomplishments are done by the Planning Section. Its data relied on the submitted report of the Budget Unit. Since the designated CENRO Planning Officers can only monitor its obligations, they rely heavily on the monthly accomplishment reports submitted by the PENRO Planning. The CENROs were only informed of its actual utilization rate after the Budget Unit has submitted its report to the Planning Section. The utilization rate is an important metric in every agency to track as it helps the office to come up with strategies or measures to ensure that the financial targets were met efficiently. With this practice, the CENR Offices could not come up with efficient strategies to meet its target on time or come up with an efficient catch-up plan as they only been made aware of it financial status during the FDU meetings.

Challenge 4: Monitoring/tracking of status of financial document submitted to PENRO

Monitoring and/or tracking of status of disbursement vouchers are difficult especially on the part of CENRO personnel. More often, the employees were not informed of the deficiencies and/or payment status of the vouchers submitted to PENRO. Hence, it is often resulted to a pile of pending vouchers for completion or low disbursement rate at the Accounting Unit. The CENRO personnel can only track the status of their DVs submitted through their assigned liaisons.

TASK: (Tasks involved in those challenges/situations; what the nominee tried to achieve from the situation)

The nominee as an Information Systems Analyst was tasked to come up with a strategy(ies) to overcome the challenges faced by CENROs and PENRO in terms of



monitoring, reconciliation and reporting of fund utilization and accomplishments. The nominee conducted Needs Assessment where all head offices, division chiefs, section/unit chiefs, Planning Officers and the entire Finance Section as respondents. The nominee conducted interviews, focus-group discussions and observation of different data processing procedures which the respondents do to complete the Obligation-Disbursement cycle of a single disbursement voucher. She also studied reports, templates, policies and journals on best practices in financial management. She also convened with the PENRO and other head of sections/units to discuss their data needs and how they want to improve their financial accomplishments. The nominee also consulted external resource persons in financial management and internal audit.

ACTION: (Actions the nominee took and why, what were the alternatives)

The nominee applied data analytics how to best solve all the identified challenges. Since most of the stakeholders are computer-literates, she probed on the feasibility of utilizing information technology in terms of financial management. Several alternatives were compared and contrasted to come up with the best solution to solve the identified challenges, such as:

a.) Google sheets

The use of Google sheets is one of the commonly used tool in collaboration at the workplace. It allows simultaneous editing and updating of Google sheets' contents. However, this tool is not suitable for complex data search, report generation and data security which stakeholders needed.

b.) eBudget System

The eBudget System which was developed by Commission on Audit is an efficient tool in recording, monitoring, and reporting of financial reports. It provides different report templates which the COA often requires the Finance section to submit. It also uses database for data storage and security. However, the system is only accessible to the Finance Section particularly to the Budget Unit. It is not designed to run or become accessible to other clients outside the office's local area network.

c.) Web-based eBudget System

The Web-based eBudget System emanated from the COA eBudget System. They have similar functionalities and features. The system is used to *a.) encode activities and allotment from WFP, and UACS Object of Expenditures from Implementation Plan and Financial Plan; b.) facilitate obligation charging; c.) encode disbursement voucher details and accounting entries; d) encodes payment details such as ADA No, Gross amount, deductions and net amount; e.) generate fund balances in each activities per office; f.) prints fund utilization summary; g.) tracks document location and status of disbursement vouchers.* While COA's eBudget System runs on the local area network, the Web-based eBudget System is an online platform accessible to all end-users 24/7 regardless of its geographic locations. It utilizes the use of internet, and its functionalities and features were customized based on the specific needs of the office. With this, the nominee has proposed this alternative to the PENRO as it is the most suitable according to the identified problems and needs of the office.



RESULT: (Outcome of the nominee's actions, were the objects met?)

This system aims to combine the Work and Financial Plan, Implementation Plan and Obligation and Disbursement Reports in a single web-based Information System. Given the geographic locations of CENR Offices, The baseline data of the system is the office's Work and Financial Plan to ensure that the updated and correct version of activities, fund sources and allotment shall be used by both the CENROs and Budget Unit. To avoid misappropriating the budget, the CENRO Planning Officers were provided access to the system to facilitate Budget Utilization Request which they are the one to identify the obligation charging and fund sources of their respective budget request. Since the system is web-based, all end users can view their actual fund balances in real-time. The system also generates several reports such as Fund Utilization Summary report and Monthly Accomplishment reports for Planning Section and Financial Monitoring Report and Summary of Fund Balances for Budget Unit, and Payment List for Cashier Unit. All employees can also track the status and location of their submitted vouchers using the assigned ORS No.

Since the implementation of the Web-based eBudget System, monitoring of allotment, fund balances, fund sources (SAA)s and report-generation became more efficient and accurate compared with previous system of recording. The use of the system minimizes/reduces the cost of travelling of Planning Officers or Budget Officers to and from CENR Offices for reconciliation.

II. Please check the appropriate boxes that best describe the nominee's innovative initiatives

1. Novelty (uniqueness of the accomplishment)

- ☐ It is a new and original concept.
☒ It is a variation of an existing idea.
☒ It was developed independently.
☐ It was developed in collaboration with others.
☒ It is unique to the agency.
☐ It is unique to a corresponding field or area of expertise

Others: _____

2. Creativity: (Ability to make new things or think of new ideas, to think outside of the box, ability to find hidden patterns and generate solutions)

- ☒ It significantly improved services
☒ It significantly improved processes
☒ It achieved stated goals
☒ It overcame or circumvented constraints in acceptable way
☒ It continued to work over-time with high degree of reliability
☒ It is well designed, well-crafted and well-executed.

Others: _____

3. Relevance: (Innovation/Accomplishment is logical, useful, systematic, understandable, doable for the intended benefits; simple and direct as possible for the desired outcome)

- ☒ It is applicable or useful to a greater number of employees/stakeholders
☐ It is applicable/useful only to employees/stakeholders belonging to a particular area of expertise
☒ It is applicable or can be integrated into existing operations in the agency or department
☐ It is applicable only to a separate operating system in the workplace

Others: _____



4. Impact: (Significance or major effect)

- ☒ Reduced costs/improved cost savings or increased revenue
- ☒ Enhanced internal or external communications
- ☒ Resolved a long-standing problem
- ☒ Highly recommended by the agency head
- ☐ Replicated by other agency's stakeholders
- ☒ Elicited positive feedback both from internal and external policies

Others: _____

Nominator : FELIZARDO B. CAYATOC
Position : PENRO
Office : DENR PENRO PALAWAN
Contact No. : (048) 434-8791
Date Submitted : 12/04/2023
Signature : 