

Memorandum Circular No. 12
Series of 2022

SUBJECT: Enhanced Guidelines in the Organization, Mobilization and Strengthening of Area-Based Standards Network (ABSNet)

I. RATIONALE

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) serves as the Philippine government's regulatory arm for Non-Government Organizations engaged, or intending to engage, in the delivery of social welfare and development programs and services, pursuant to RA 4373 of 1965¹, RA 5416 of 1968², and RA 10847 of 2016³. This mandate resulted to a growing number of registered, licensed and accredited Social Welfare and Development Agencies (SWDAs) by the Department.

With the continuous growth in numbers of these SWDAs, the Area-Based Standards Network (ABSNet) was conceptualized and organized. In 2002, the Department first developed guidelines that promote the organization and mobilization of Area-Based Standards Network (ABSNet).

ABSNet is perceived as an effective strategy with the end goal of institutionalizing collaboration, cooperation, consultation, capacity building and client-service with the SWDAs that are registered, licensed and accredited by the DSWD. These are the same SWDAs that constitute the intermediaries for social welfare service delivery. The ABSNet aims to provide participative and consultative mechanisms in the areas of standards development; registration, licensing and accreditation; capability building; and technical assistance. It also becomes the avenue in promoting the guidelines and standard set by the Department to all SWDAs. ABSNet assists the DSWD in advocating the registration, licensing and accreditation of SWDAs through their involvement in the initial assessment and peer consultation.

From 2002 until the present, the ABSNet has been consistent in advocating the Department's set of guidelines on standards as well as in the monitoring of SWDAs (registered or not) in their respective jurisdiction and the provision of Technical Assistance to the same SWDAs.

¹ An Act to Regulate the Practice of Social Work and the Operation of Social Work Agencies in the Philippines and for Other Purposes

² An Act Providing for Comprehensive Social Services for Individuals and Groups in Need of Assistance, Creating for This Purpose a Department of Social Welfare or the Social Welfare Act of 1968

³ An Act Lowering the Age Requirement for Applicants Taking the Board Examination for Social Workers, Providing for Continuing Social Work Education, and Upgrading the Sundry Provisions Relative to the Practice of Social Work



This enhancement of the guidelines is therefore done not only to facilitate the formal organization, mobilization and strengthening of the local clusters and its regional and national counterparts, but **also** to address issues on matters related to the conduct of meetings and elections and other activities in the new normal; the representatives of the ABSNet members who are elected to become officers; the financial matters of the Local ABSNet Cluster and Regional ABSNet; and the issues raised by the Field Offices and ABSNet officers relative to the implementation of the previous guidelines (MC 4 s 2018).

II. LEGAL BASES:

These guidelines are hereby promulgated based on the following legal bases:

1. 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines.

a. **Article II, Section 23.** The State shall encourage non-governmental, community-based, or sectoral organizations that promote the welfare of the nation.

b. Article XIII, Sections 15 and 16. Roles and Rights of People's Organization

SEC.15. The State shall respect the role of independent people's organizations to enable the people to pursue and protect, within the democratic framework, their legitimate and collective interests and aspirations through peaceful and lawful means.

People's organizations are *bona fide* associations of citizens with demonstrated capacity to promote the public interest and with identifiable leadership, membership, and structure.

SEC. 16. The right of the people and their organizations to effective and reasonable participation at all levels of social, political, and economic decision-making shall not be abridged. The State shall, by law, facilitate the establishment of adequate consultation mechanisms.

2. Republic Act No. 10847 of 2016. Sections 4. Sections 23 and 29 of the Same Act are hereby likewise amended as follows:

SEC. 23. Registration with the Department of Social Welfare and Development. – No social welfare and development agency, as defined herein, shall operate and be accredited as such unless it shall first have registered and secured a license with the Department of Social Welfare and Development which shall then issue the corresponding registration certificate and license to operate: *Provided*, That existing social welfare



and development agencies at the time of approval of this Act shall have a period of one (1) year within which to secure the corresponding certificate of registration and license to operate.

Before any social welfare and development agency shall be duly registered and licensed, the following requirements must be duly complied with to the satisfaction of the Department of Social Welfare and Development:

(1) That the applicant must be engaged mainly or generally in social welfare and development activities;

(2) That the applicant has employed a sufficient number of duly qualified staff and/or registered social workers to supervise and take charge of its social welfare and development activities in accordance with the set standards;

(3) That the applicant must show in a duly certified financial statement that at least seventy percent (70%) of its funds are disbursed for direct social work services; and

(4) That the applicant keeps a record of all social development and/or welfare activities handled by it.”

SEC. 29. Penal Provisions. – The following shall be penalized with a fine of not less than one hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00) but not more than two hundred thousand pesos (P200,000.00), or imprisonment for not less than six (6) months but not more than two (2) years, or both, at the discretion of the court:

Any person, corporation or entity operating as a social welfare and development agency, without the corresponding valid Certificate of Registration and License to Operate issued by the Department of Social Welfare and Development shall be penalized with a fine of not less than one hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00) but not more than five hundred thousand pesos (P500,000.00) and/or imprisonment for not less than one (1) year but not more than three (3) years, at the discretion of the court. These penalties shall be without prejudice to the seizure of equipment, instruments and other facilities of the social welfare and development agency.”

III. OBJECTIVES:

1. **General:** To enhance the organization, mobilization and strengthening of the Area Based Standards Network (ABSNet). This would strengthen cooperation and coordination among Social Welfare and Development



Agencies (SWDAs). This is aimed to ensure quality implementation of Social Welfare and Development (SWD) programs and services for the disadvantaged and marginalized sectors of the society.

2. Specific:

- a. To promote meaningful participation of the intermediaries as partners of DSWD along standards development, promotions and compliance.
- b. To continuously organize Local ABSNet Cluster networks, and build their capabilities along standards development, registration, licensing and accreditation assessment;
- c. To mobilize the networks to assist in the actual registration, licensing and accreditation assessment;
- d. To provide a vehicle for mutual help and learning among intermediaries for coordination and partnership building;
- e. To strengthen Regional and National Area Based Network to assist the Department in the implementation of its regulatory functions;
- f. To define the membership, qualifications and structure of ABSNet from the Local ABSNet Cluster level to its counterpart in the regional and national level;
- g. To mobilize the network in advocating and enforcing the regulatory services of the Department;
- h. To mobilize the network in mapping out and provision of technical assistance to unlicensed organizations planning to engage or already implementing social welfare and development programs and services

IV. DEFINITION OF TERMS:

1. **ABSNet**–Area Based Standards Network is an organization of DSWD registered/licensed/accredited social welfare and development agencies (SWDAs) that assists the DSWD in the implementation and monitoring of social welfare and development programs and services, provision of technical assistance and the conduct of advocacy activities on regulatory services of the Department.
2. **Local ABSNet Cluster** – refers to the organization of local ABSNet cluster that represents the six (6) sectors (Children, Youth, Family and Community, Older Persons, Women, and Persons with Disability) and within the geographical jurisdiction of the province/city/municipality.



3. **Regional ABSNet** – refers to the organization of Local ABSNet Cluster within the geographical jurisdiction of the DSWD Field Office.
4. **National ABSNet** – refers to the organization of Regional ABSNet into a national ABSNet.
5. **Network** – a group of people or organizations that shares common interests and goals.
6. **Provisional Members** – refers to Social Welfare and Development Agencies whose Registration/Licensing and Accreditation (R/L/A) is expired. Right to suffrage is denied pending the result of their application of renewal of R/L/A.
7. **Social Welfare and Development Agency (SWDA)** – refers to a public or private corporation or organization, engaged in providing directly or indirectly social welfare services and obtains its finances either totally or in part, from any agency or instrumentality of the government and/or from the community by direct or indirect solicitations and/or fund drives and other fund-generating activities as authorized by law and/or endowment.

V. GENERAL POLICIES:

These guidelines shall provide the required structure of ABSNet at the local cluster, regional and national level.

A. Basic Formation

	Local CLUSTER	REGIONAL	NATIONAL
FORMATION AND ORGANIZATION	SWDAs may form a Local ABSNet Cluster provided that they are located in the same geographical area that belongs to the same region and broken down to provinces or cities or municipalities that represent the six main sectors namely: a. Child Welfare; b. Youth Welfare; c. Family and Community Welfare; d. Women’s Welfare; e. Persons with Disabilities Welfare; and	All existing Local ABSNet Clusters, represented by their respective officers, in each region shall be organized into a Regional ABSNet.	Regional ABSNet Chairpersons shall form the National ABSNet Board.

	<p>f. Senior Citizens Welfare.</p> <p>One SWDA may have one or more sectors as their beneficiaries, hence the same SWDA can then represent all the sectors they are serving.</p>		
	<p>A new Local ABSNet Cluster can be formed in either province, or city or municipality, provided that the new Local ABSNet Cluster formed represent the six (6) main sectors and conform to the required number of officers.</p> <p>Until a new Local ABSNet Cluster is established, SWDAs will be members of the nearest active Local ABSNet Cluster (where their area of operation is located) in the region.</p>		
	<p>In the event that a Local ABSNet Cluster fails to conform to the composition (for failing to represent the six sectors) or becomes inactive due to some unavoidable circumstances or the officers' organization has failed to renew its license and/or accreditation and no organization can take their place, the members may be merged to the nearest active Local ABSNet Cluster where their area of operation is located in the region.</p>		
	<p>Classification of membership for ABSNet:</p> <p>a. Private Social Welfare Agency</p>		



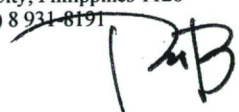
	<p>b. Auxiliary Social Welfare and Development Agency</p> <p>c. Local Social Welfare and Development Office</p> <p>d. DSWD Centers and Institutions</p>		
<p>MEMBERSHIP</p>	<p>The following SWDAs are eligible to become members of the ABSNet in their respective geographical Cluster:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For public SWDAs – with valid DSWD Accreditation • For private SWDAs (auxiliary SWDAs and Social Work Agencies) – with valid DSWD License <p>Subsequently, application for new and/or renewal of Licensing/Accreditation will not be processed unless a Certificate of Membership to ABSNet, signed by the Local ABSNet Cluster Chair, is submitted (Annex A).</p> <p>If in cases that the Local ABSNet Cluster Chair has to secure a Certificate of Membership, the Regional ABSNet Chair shall issue the said certificate.</p> <p>Provisional membership will be given to all SWDAs which have pending application for their License and/or Accreditation.</p> <p>All provisional members will have no voting capacity and cannot be elected as officers.</p> <p>SWDAs which are operating in more than one region but have no office in other Regions are not obliged to apply for membership. However, its Central/Main Office must be a member in the place it is located.</p> <p>Likewise, for SWDAs which are operating in more than one region but have offices only in selected regions, should only apply for membership in regions where they have set up their own office.</p> <p>Furthermore, if an active SWDA has transferred its office to another region or cluster, it can present its Certificate of Membership from its previous cluster in its application for membership in the new place.</p> <p>Only ABSNet members that have active membership status shall be allowed to renew their license, and/or accreditation.</p> <p>An active membership status means that the member was able to post a 75% attendance in meetings and in set activities of the Local ABSNet Cluster. The 75% is based on the invitation of the Local ABSNet Cluster /DSWD FO to the ABSNet members vis-à-vis their attendance or participation (in any way) in any ABSNet initiated activities (e.g. general assembly, meetings, capacity building, monitoring, advocacy activities among others and/or provision of comments to reviewed draft guidelines from the Standards Bureau). If an applicant SWDA has not been invited to</p>		

	<p>any ABSNet activity, then there will be no basis for the assessment. ABSNet officers must therefore look into their basis for their invitation.</p> <p>Attendance in all activities mentioned can either be thru virtual or face to face.</p> <p>For those who failed to meet the required 75% attendance, an undertaking shall be accomplished (Annex B). This will be issued only once. After which, no certification of active membership will be issued in their succeeding application for renewal of licensing and accreditation.</p>		
	<p>Newly licensed social welfare and development agencies in the area will be notified by the Local Cluster Chairperson on how they can become a member of the Local Cluster. Clear clustering of jurisdiction or boundaries of geographical area must be established among the existing Local ABSNet Cluster in the region.</p>		
<p>REPRESENTATION</p>	<p>Member SWDAs shall designate their Executive Director or Program Head as permanent representative and identify the permanent alternate to the ABSNet. They will be officially endorsed by their organization's Board of Trustee or its equivalent for the LGU and DSWD Centers. The permanent and the alternate are required to participate in the Local Cluster/Regional/National ABSNet activities. Only authorized SWDA representatives may participate in the elections and ABSNet activities. In the event that the Executive Director or Program Head representing the SWDA resigns/retires from the SWDA s/he is representing, s/he will automatically be replaced by the new Executive Director/Program Head/OIC officially designated by the Board of Trustee. On the other hand, while in case the organization has not replaced yet the Executive Director/Program Head/OIC, the alternate shall continue to represent the organization.</p>		
<p>COMPOSITION & QUALIFICATION OF OFFICERS</p>	<p>One (1) Chairperson</p>		
<p>Chairperson</p>	<p>Elected by the General Assembly.</p>	<p>Elected among the Chairpersons of the Local Clusters.</p>	<p>Elected among the Chairpersons of the Regional ABSNet.</p>
	<p>SWDA being represented should have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A valid License and Accreditation if SWA • A valid License if Auxiliary SWDAs. 		

Vice Chairperson	2 Vice Chairperson		Three (3) Vice Chairpersons
	Elected by the General Assembly	Elected among the Chairpersons of the Local Clusters.	Elected among the Chairpersons of the Regional ABSNet.
	SWDA being represented should have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A valid License and Accreditation if SWA • A valid License if Auxiliary SWDAs. 		
	There are two (2) Vice-Chairpersons positions available at the Local ABSNet Cluster and Regional ABSNet, in the event that the Chairperson of the Local ABSNet Cluster is elected to any Regional or National ABSNet position, an election will be held that would decide who among the Vice Chairpersons would be the new Chair. Meanwhile, the role and responsibilities of the two (2) Vice Chairs shall be decided amongst the officers of the Local ABSNet Cluster and Regional ABSNet.		They will represent Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao island groups respectively
In the event that one of the Vice Chairs will be elected in either the Regional ABSNet or National ABSNet, no election shall take place as there is still one Vice Chair left to take on the roles and responsibilities of the Vice Chair.			
Secretary	One (1) Secretary		
	Elected by the General Assembly	Elected among the Chairpersons from the Local ABSNet Cluster who is not holding any position yet.	Elected among the Chairpersons from the Regional ABSNet who is not holding any position yet.
	SWDA being represented should have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A valid License and Accreditation if SWA • A valid License if Auxiliary SWDAs. • A valid Accreditation if Public SWDA 		
Committee Heads	Committee Heads for Policy Review Committee, Capability Building Committee, and Membership and Communication.		
	Elected by the General Assembly	Elected among the Chairpersons from the Local ABSNet Cluster.	Elected among the Chairpersons from the Regional ABSNet who is not holding any position yet.
	SWDA being represented should have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A valid License and Accreditation if SWA • A valid License if Auxiliary SWDAs. • A valid Accreditation if Public SWDA 		

	After the election of Chairperson and Vice Chairpersons, the remaining SWDAs in the Local ABSNet Cluster that have no valid License and/or Accreditation must at least have a pending application for the renewal of their License and/or License and Accreditation.		
Focal Persons / Representatives	One (1) LSWDO Focal Person - LSWDOs, electing among themselves, shall select their point person to the Local ABSNet Cluster.		
		DSWD Center and Residential Care Facilities Representative	
		All other Local ABSNet Cluster Representatives who were not elected for any of the above positions shall automatically become Board Members and would become a member of the committee of their choice.	
Executive Committee	The Officers listed above shall form the Executive Committee (ExeCom) of the Local ABSNet Cluster and Regional ABSNet. The ExeCom shall lead in the planning, implementing, monitoring of programs and activities that will lead in the attainment of the goals of the organization.		
TERM	The ABSNet officers shall hold their position for a three-year (3) term but not more than two consecutive terms.		
	Election shall be held every 2 nd week of September of the third (3 rd) year.	Election shall be held every 2 nd week of October of the third (3 rd) year.	Election shall be held every 2 nd week of November of the third (3 rd) year.
	In case election was not pushed through in the stated months, ABSNet Chair shall inform the Standards Section and Standards Bureau respectively of the reason and specific plan/s for the actual election.		
GENERAL ASSEMBLY	All members of the Local ABSNet Cluster shall form the General Assembly.	Composed of all SWDAs who are members of their respective Local ABSNet Cluster in their particular	Composed of all SWDAs who are members of their respective Local ABSNet Cluster nationwide. National

		<p>region. Regional general assembly can be organized once a year depending on the availability of funds.</p>	<p>general assembly can be organized once every two years depending on the availability of funds.</p>
<p>VOTING MEMBERS</p>	<p>Remaining members who were not able to get a post shall select the committee, which they shall be a member of.</p> <p>Only the following SWDAs are eligible to vote:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Public SWDAs – with valid DSWD Accreditation • For Private SWDAs (Auxiliary SWDAs and Social Work Agencies) – with valid DSWD License <p>Provisional members do not have the right to vote in the elections.</p> <p>However, if the SWDA has already submitted their application for License and/or Accreditation with acknowledgement from the Standards Section/Standards Bureau on the completeness of the submitted requirements, they will be allowed to vote.</p>		
<p>RESIGNATION/ RETIREMENT/ DEATH of the MEMBERS of the EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</p>	<p>In the event that the Chairperson resigns/retires or dies, s/he will be replaced by one of the 2 Vice Chairs thru election. If one Vice Chair resigns/retires or dies, s/he will be replaced thru election and the same goes for the Secretary. All resignation letters will be submitted to the Local ABSNet Cluster Chair/Regional Chair which shall be forwarded to the Standards Section. In case of death, the organization shall inform the Standards Section.</p> <p>If the Regional Chair resigns/retires or dies, a letter will be submitted to the Standards Section.</p>		<p>In the event that the Chairperson resigns/retires or dies, s/he will be replaced by one of the 3 Vice Chairs thru election. If one Vice Chair resigns/retires or dies, s/he will be replaced thru election and the same goes for the Secretary. All resignation/information letter will be submitted to the National ABSNet Chair and forwarded to the Standards Bureau.</p> <p>If the National ABSNet Chair resigns/retires or dies, a letter will be addressed to the Standards Bureau.</p>
<p>In the event that one of the officers' agency fails to renew its license and/or accreditation while holding one of the positions above, the officers will be replaced by holding a special election.</p>			
<p>In the event that the officer will resign/retire from his/her agency, it is automatically deduced that s/he has also resigned from his post in the ABSNet (even if the officer has transferred to another agency in the same</p>			



	<p>area) and thus shall be replaced by holding an election. However, if there will only be six months left before the next election, the officers shall then hold an Executive Meeting to decide who will act as the interim replacement of the resigned/retired officer.</p>
<p>IDENTIFICATION of OFFICIAL STATION of ABSNet</p>	<p>The Local ABSNet Cluster /Regional ABSNet shall identify an official station, a venue for holding regular consultation meetings and provision of technical assistance to SWDAs relative to application for registration, licensing and accreditation. Accessibility and visibility to both the ABSNet members and the SWDA applicants shall be the primary consideration in the selection. This can either be the office of the LGU or a SWDA as long as there is permission/consent from the head of office. However, venues can be changed in accordance to the need of the Local ABSNet Cluster /Regional ABSNet.</p>

B. Election of Candidates and Process

1. The Candidates who will vie for the post are the representatives of their respective agencies and thus election paraphernalia will bear their names and not the name of the agency they are representing.

In the event that the Elected Officer has transferred to another agency (even if re-employed in an agency in the same area), s/he will be considered as resigned as Officer.

2. In the Local Cluster and regional level, the DSWD Field Office Director shall appoint a Committee on Election which shall be composed of one (1) Chairperson and two (2) members, preferably from DSWD Centers and Residential Care Facilities or Field Office Staff. The following would be the tasks of the committee:
 - a. To facilitate and manage the conduct of nomination and election.
 - b. To determine the quorum of the members which should always be 50% plus one (50%+1).
 - c. For the DSWD Center and Residential Care Facilities Representatives serve as the oversight and shall have the role as the tie breaker.
 - d. To ensure that all sectors are represented.
 - e. In the regional level, for the local clusters to ensure that their sets of officers are present during the scheduled elections as only present officers will be allowed to be nominated.

3. In the national level, the Standards Bureau shall appoint a Committee on Election.

4. The elections shall be done by secret balloting.
5. Proxies (for casting of votes) will be allowed provided that request has been submitted and approved by the Field Office/Bureau Director at least 3 working days prior to the scheduled election.

C. Secretariat

1. In the local cluster and regional level, the Standards Section shall act as the Secretariat of the Local ABSNet Cluster and Regional ABSNet.
2. At national level, Standards Bureau shall act as the Secretariat of the National ABSNet.

D. Housekeeping

1. In line with what has already been stated in these guidelines, the National ABSNet will take the lead in the creation of policy relative to the ground rules for the conduct of meeting, attendance to meetings, condition on continued membership, resolution of issues and grievances, and other related matters. Created policy is subject to the review of the Standards Bureau to check its alignment with the existing guidelines/policies of the Department.
2. Creation of policy may start from the ground up. This can be done by drafting suggestions from the Local ABSNet Cluster which can be raised during Regional ABSNet meeting and endorsing the same to the National ABSNet.
3. Local policies can be made however by the Local ABSNet Cluster with the approval of the Regional ABSNet, attesting to the uniqueness of their needs.

E. State of Emergency/Calamity

In times of natural or human-induced emergency/calamity when the state of emergency/calamity is declared by the proper government authority (i.e. Local Chief Executive, Sangguniang Pambayan /Panglungsod or by the Sangguniang Panlalawigan or the NDRMC or its equivalent in the Province/City/Municipality), alternative mode for all the activities, meetings and capability buildings, are encouraged. Likewise, an Election process can also be held virtually as long as the pertinent officials are present (COMELEC) and the process is understood by all the members.

Likewise, electronic exchange of messages of Local ABSNet Cluster, Regional and National ABSNet are deemed acceptable.

VI. DUTIES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND GENERAL FUNCTIONS:

A. General Functions of the three (3) ABSNet Structures



1. Local ABSNet Cluster

- a. Assists the DSWD in mapping out/locating and providing technical assistance to unlicensed organizations and submit monthly or quarterly report to Standards Section.
- b. Promotes registration, licensing and accreditation to SWDAs involved in the implementation of SWD programs and services in their respective places through provision of assistance to DSWD in the conduct of orientation and advocacy activities.
- c. Conducts consultation dialogues with SWD agencies that are not yet registered, licensed and accredited to clarify issues and concerns relative to registration, licensing and accreditation and promote compliance to SWD standards.
- d. Participates in the review/amendment of social welfare and development standards, policies, rules and regulations adaptive to their programs and services and to the area/locality.
- e. Assists the DSWD in monitoring and conducting of validation assessment on the existence of SWDAs applying for registration/licensing. A Local ABSNet Cluster member/officer will be assigned to visit an applicant organization in their area to validate information provided in the documents submitted.
- f. Submits within one week after the site visit the registration / licensing / accreditation validation report to the DSWD Field Office concerned, signed by the Chairperson.
- g. Establishes, maintains and updates directory of SWDAs operating in the local area. Submit the same list to the Regional ABSNet copy furnish the Field Office quarterly.
- h. Ensures close coordination with the SU of the Field Office to be updated of those with newly issued Registration, License and Accreditation.
- i. Issues a Certificate on the status of operation of the SWDAs recommended for delisting, in case LSWDO Certification cannot be produced.
- j. Exchanges knowledge, experience and ideas as well as good practices to be replicated among social welfare agencies.
- k. Attends quarterly meetings with Local ABSNet Cluster members as venue for updating exchanging ideas, discussion of issues and concerns, sharing of best practices, planning and evaluation as well as fostering camaraderie among ABSNet members.
- l. Promotes the SWD standards by facilitating/providing technical assistance to SWDAs application for registration, licensing and accreditation and the monitoring of existing SWDAs.
- m. Conducts regular meeting of the Local ABSNet Cluster.

2. Regional ABSNet

- a. Assists the DSWD in mapping out/locating and providing technical assistance to unlicensed organizations and submit monthly or quarterly report to Standards Section.



- b. Participates in the review/amendment of social welfare and development standards, policies, rules and regulations adoptive to the area/locality.
- c. Advocates/Promotes social welfare and development standards to be observed by the member SWDAs and those newly operating SWDAs in the region through provision of assistance to DSWD in the conduct of orientation and advocacy activities.
- d. Assists the DSWD in the validation assessment of social welfare agencies.
- e. Establishes, maintains and updates directory of SWDAs operating in the region based from the validation report from the Local ABSNet Cluster which is submitted to the FOs on a quarterly basis.
- f. Adopts and issue resolution for the effective management of the Regional ABSNet and benefits of its member agencies.
- g. Participates in the DSWD-FO Review Committee session whenever necessary.
- h. Exchanges knowledge, experience and ideas as well as best practices to be replicated among social welfare agencies.
- i. Represents the SWDAs in regional activities along social welfare and development concerns upon recommendation/endorsement of DSWD.
- j. Issues a Certificate on the status of operation of the SWDAs recommended for delisting, in case LSWDO Certification cannot be produced.
- k. Assists in re-activating non-functional local clusters and intervene on issues/concerns that could not be resolved at the level of Local ABSNet Cluster.
- l. Conducts regular meetings of the Regional ABSNet.

3. National ABSNet

- a. Improves communication, coordination and collaboration efforts between the DSWD and among its member SWDAs and other partners in social welfare and development.
- b. Ensures proper presentation in the formulation and implementation of policies, standards and programs of SWDAs.
- c. Assists the DSWD in the conduct of ABSNet consultation every three years and other capacity building for SWDAs.
- d. Participates in the DSWD Central Office Review Committee (CORC) meetings whenever there is an appealed case against a SWDA.
- e. Participates in the selection of Most Outstanding SWDA as endorsed by DSWD and other entities.
- f. Supports the DSWD in the gathering/sharing of the national situation and good practices of SWDAs as well as serve as conduit in possible sharing of resources amongst ABSNet members.
- g. Represents the SWDAs in national and international conference/forum/workshop along social welfare and



development concerns upon recommendation/endorsement of DSWD.

B. Duties and Responsibilities of the Officers:

1. Local ABSNet Cluster Officers

a. Chairperson

- i.* Presides in all meetings of Local ABSNet Cluster.
- ii.* Facilitates the conduct of Annual General Membership/Assembly meeting.
- iii.* Oversees the activities of Local ABSNet Cluster.
- iv.* Carries out and implement the approved work and financial plan of Local ABSNet Cluster.
- v.* Represents Local ABSNet Cluster in any meetings/ consultations related to social welfare and development activities.
- vi.* Submits project proposal to DSWD for mobilization and capability building activities.
- vii.* Submits the quarterly updated list of SWDAs to the Field Office, copy furnish the Regional ABSNet. Master list is divided into with R/RL and RLA and without R/RL and A, but existing and operating in the Region.
- viii.* Convenes the General Assembly and prepare an Annual and Accomplishment Report of ABSNet.
- ix.* Coordinates closely with DSWD Field Office in the resolution of issues and concerns related to registration, licensing, and accreditation of SWDAs.
- x.* Ensures all information in the ABSNet directory is updated.
- xi.* Ensures that the stated functions of ABSNet in the Guidelines are observed and complied.

b. Vice-Chairperson

- i.* Assists the Chairperson in carrying out the function of ABSNet.
- ii.* Exercises all the powers and perform all duties of the Chairperson during the absence or incapacity of the latter. However, since there will be two Vice-Chairpersons, the order of succession will be decided by the Board.
- iii.* Performs duties that maybe assigned by the Chairperson.
- iv.* Carries out all the duties and responsibilities of the Chairperson once the current Chairperson wins in the Regional ABSNet and only when selected by the majority of the members to do so.

c. Secretary

- i.* Submits quarterly accomplishment report and minutes of quarterly meetings to FO-Standards Section.
- ii.* Acts as the rapporteur during the meetings and submit report



- to the Chairperson for approval.
 - iii.* Gives notices of meetings and/or relevant information to Local ABSNet Cluster group officers and members thru verbal or written information or other means of communication.
 - iv.* Is responsible for the safekeeping of all the official records of the local cluster: notice of meetings, minutes of meetings, proceedings and/or photo documentation of conferences, directory of SWDAs, etc.
- d. Secretariat**
- i.* Assists in the preparation of project proposals regarding the ABSNet activities;
 - ii.* Ensures allocation of budget per approved Work and Financial Plan for the capability building, mobilization and other activities related to performance of their assistive roles along regulatory services;
 - iii.* Provides technical assistance in the implementation of ABSNet activities.
 - iv.* Serves as coordinator of ABSNet activities.
- e. Local Government Units Representative**
- i.* Coordinates with other P/C/M SWDO to submit reports regarding SWD agencies not yet registered, licensed and accredited by DSWD.
 - ii.* Assists SWDA operating in their area of jurisdiction in securing permits and accreditation from the LGUs.
 - iii.* Explores the possibility of augmenting fund support to the program implementations of ABSNet members.
- f. Committee Members**
- i.* Performs the assigned roles in each committee they are member of.
- g. ABSNet members**
- i.* Complies with the guidelines, rules and regulations of the Local ABSNet Cluster and of the DSWD.
 - ii.* Attends the Annual General Membership Meeting/Assembly and/or other meetings convened by the Local ABSNet Cluster Chairperson.
 - iii.* Elects the sectoral representative.
 - iv.* Elects Committee membership.

2. Regional ABSNet

a. Chairperson

- i.* Presides in all Regional ABSNet meetings
- ii.* Facilitates the conduct of Annual General Membership/Assembly meeting.
- iii.* Oversees the activities of Regional ABSNet

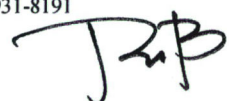


- iv.* Carries out and implement the approved work and financial plan of Regional ABSNet
 - v.* Represents Regional ABSNet in any meetings/consultations related to social welfare and development activities at the regional level
 - vi.* Submits project proposal to DSWD for mobilization and capability building activities
 - vii.* Submits the quarterly updated list of SWDAs to the Field Office, copy furnish the National ABSNet. Master list is divided into with R/RL and RLA and without R/RL and A, but existing and operating in the Region.
 - viii.* Convenes general assembly
 - ix.* Coordinates closely with DSWD Field Office in the resolution of issues and concerns for the effective management of the Regional ABSNet and benefits of its member agencies
 - x.* Submits Regional ABSNet quarterly and annual accomplishment reports to Field Office following the attached template (Annex 2).
 - xi.* Ensures that the stated functions of Regional ABSNet in the Guidelines are observed and complied with.
 - xii.* Issues Certificate of Membership of the SWDA applying for Registration/Licensing/Accreditation.
 - xiii.* Participates in the DSWD Field Office Review Committee (FORC) whenever there is a case being reviewed and/or heard.
 - xiv.* Ensures that a Regional ABSNet Officer is identified to attend the FORC case review/hearing in lieu of his attendance. The names of at least two permanent alternatives are submitted to the Field Office, copy furnished the Standards Bureau.
- b. Vice Chairpersons**
- i.* Assists the Chairperson in carrying out the functions of Regional ABSNet
 - ii.* Exercises all the powers and perform all duties of the Chairperson during the absence or incapacity of the latter
 - iii.* Performs duties that may be assigned by the Chairperson
- c. Secretary**
- i.* Submits quarterly accomplishment report and minutes of quarterly meetings to FO-Standards Section.
 - ii.* Acts as the rapporteur during the meetings and submit report to the Chairperson for approval.
 - iii.* Gives notices of meetings and/or relevant information to Regional ABSNet officers and members thru verbal or written information or other means of communication.
 - iv.* Is responsible for the safekeeping of all the official records of the Regional ABSNet: notice of meetings, minutes of

- meetings, proceedings and/or photo documentation of conferences, directory of SWDAs, etc.
- v. Is responsible in the distribution of policies/documents for comments and in the consolidation of comments before submission to the Chair.
- d. Secretariat
- i. Assists in the preparation of project proposals regarding the ABSNet activities;
 - ii. Ensures allocation of budget per approved Work and Financial Plan for the capability building, mobilization and other activities related to performance of their assistive roles along regulatory services;
 - iii. Provides technical assistance in the implementation of ABSNet activities.
 - iv. Serves as coordinator of ABSNet activities.
- e. Board Members
- i. Represents their members during the Regional ABSNet meetings
 - ii. Conducts feedback sessions/meetings with their respective local cluster member on ABSNet activities.
- f. Committee Members
- i. Performs the assigned roles in each committee they are member.

3. National ABSNet

- a. Chairperson
- i. Presides in all National ABSNet meetings
 - ii. Oversees all activities of National ABSNet
 - iii. Carries out and implement the approved and work financial plan of National ABSNet
 - iv. Represents National ABSNet in any meetings/consultations related to social welfare and development activities at the national level
 - v. Represents National ABSNet in national bodies like the Philippine Social Work Consortium
 - vi. Submits project proposal to DSWD for mobilization and capability building activities
 - vii. Assists the Standards Bureau in the conduct of ABSNet National Consultation
 - viii. Coordinates closely with DSWD Standards Bureau in the resolution of issues and concerns for the effective management of the National ABSNet
 - ix. Submits National ABSNet semestral and annual accomplishment reports to the Standards Bureau



- x. Ensures all information in the ABSNet directory of officers and members is updated.
 - xi. Ensures that the stated functions of National ABSNet in the Guidelines are observed and complied with.
 - xii. Participates in the DSWD Central Office Review Committee (CORC) whenever there is an appealed case against SWDA is being reviewed/heard.
 - xiii. Ensures that a National ABSNet Officer is identified to attend the CORC case review/hearing in lieu of his attendance. The names of at least three (3) alternatives are submitted to the Standards Bureau.
- b. Vice Chairperson for Luzon, Visayas, Mindanao
- i. Assists the Chairperson in carrying out functions of National ABSNet
 - ii. Exercises all the powers and performs all duties of the Chairperson during the absence or incapacity of the latter.
 - iii. Represents National ABSNet as delegated at their respective islands all National ABSNet activities
 - iv. Coordinates all national activities to their respective regions and island local clusters.
 - v. Promotes and supervises the operations of Regional ABSNet
 - vi. Performs duties that may be assigned by the Chairperson
- c. Secretary
- i. Submits quarterly accomplishment report and minutes of quarterly meetings to FO-Standards Section.
 - ii. Acts as the rapporteur during the meetings and submit report to the Chairperson for approval.
 - iii. Gives notices of meetings and/or relevant information to National ABSNet officers and members thru verbal or written information or other means of communication.
 - iv. Is responsible for the safekeeping of all the official records of the National ABSNet: notice of meetings, minutes of meetings, proceedings and/or photo documentation of conferences, directory of SWDAs, etc.
 - v. Is responsible in the distribution of policies/documents for comments and in the consolidation of comments before submission to the Chair.
- d. Secretariat
- i. Assists in the preparation of project proposals regarding the ABSNet activities;
 - ii. Ensures allocation of budget per approved Work and Financial Plan for the capability building, mobilization and other activities related to performance of their assistive roles along regulatory services;
 - iii. Provides technical assistance in the implementation of



ABSNet activities.

e. Board Members

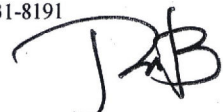
- i. Leads the Committee to be organized in any national ABSNet activities
- ii. Assists the Standards Bureau in monitoring SWDAs implementing SWD programs and services in more than one region
- iii. Assists the DSWD in lobbying the priority bills affecting SWDAs
- iv. Assists the DSWD in publication and advocacy of good practices of SWDAs

f. Committee Members

- i. Performs the assigned roles in each committee they are member to

C. Committees

1. Policy Review – The Committee is in charge of ensuring that all Regional ABSNet and National ABSNet officers and members shall receive a copy of the draft guidelines for comment. The Committee is also responsible in setting the deadline to be observed by members in submitting of the comments in consideration of the deadline set by the Standards Bureau. It is also responsible for consolidating the comments and preparing a ready document to be forwarded to the Standards Bureau.
2. Membership and Communication – There is nothing more effective in increasing the number of members than recruiting a person who is of equal standing. Hence, it is imperative that this Committee be formed. However, the National ABSNet's Membership Committee's role would only be of oversight as the bulk of the roles and responsibilities of the Committee shall be found in the Local ABSNet Cluster. The members of Membership and communication committee in the local cluster shall have, but not limited to, the following responsibilities:
 - a. Contacts prospective members by all means, in person, by phone, letters (snail or electronic) and/or in social media.
 - b. Contacts present members whose R/L/A is about to expire on the status of their R/L/A.
 - c. Welcomes and give recognition to all new members.
 - d. Informs all the Officers and Board members of any updates or news affecting their group.
3. Capability Building – in charge in the placement of systematic approach to learning and development of the members. The



committee shall continuously identify, build and sustain targeted capabilities needed to continuously improve.

VII. ABSNet MONITORING

The monitoring of the ABSNet shall be observed through the following:

1. **Meetings of ABSNet ExeCom and Board.**
 - a. **Local ABSNet Cluster** – will hold meeting quarterly
 - b. **Regional ABSNet** – will hold meeting once per semester
 - c. **National ABSNet** – will hold meeting once per semester

Special meetings of the ExeCom and Board may be held and shall not be limited to physical meetings as they can use the technology through social media, skype, tele/video-conferencing, messenger and other methods to hold such.

The Local Cluster ABSNet, Regional ABSNet and National ABSNet shall among others discuss issues and concerns related to the regulatory functions of the Department which they will forward to the concerned Field Office or in the case of National ABSNet, the Standards Bureau at once.

2. **Minutes of the Meetings.** All minutes of the meetings of the Local ABSNet Cluster and Regional ABSNet shall be forwarded to the Standards Section of the Field Office while the National ABSNet shall forward its minutes to the Standards Bureau. The Field Office shall endorse the minutes of the Local ABSNet Cluster to the Regional ABSNet and minutes of Regional ABSNet to the National ABSNet, copy furnished the Standards Bureau. All minutes shall be for appropriate action of the Standards Bureau.
3. **Accomplishment and Financial Reports.** The reports shall be submitted to the concerned DSWD Field Offices every 10th day of January of the preceding year to be forwarded to the Standards Bureau at once.
4. The National ABSNet, despite scheduled semestral meetings, may be called by the Chairperson whenever necessary or upon written request to take urgent or pending matters which shall be stated in the notice.

VIII. FUNDING SUPPORT TO ABSNet

1. The Standards Bureau shall:



- a. Allocate financial augmentation to the Regional ABSNet, through the FOs, for its mobilization funds. However, the FOs shall take charge of the Local ABSNet Cluster and Regional ABSNet budget by integrating it in the FOs annual Work and Financial.
- b. Advocate to FOs to ensure that mobilization funds shall be utilized for its operational expenses, which would include transportation expenses of ABSNet officers during visits to SWDAs, meals during orientation/consultative/assessment meetings, supplies and materials and other related expenses.
- c. Allocate funds for the capability building and mobilization activities of the National ABSNet.

2. Subsidy

a. *Local ABSNet Cluster*

The Local ABSNet Cluster officers and members who are not employees of the Department and LGUs shall have their valid expenses reimbursed at the Field Office during their conduct of validation visits and consultations with non-registered, non-licensed and non-accredited SWDAs not exceeding two (2) in a month, subject to existing government accounting auditing rules and guidelines.

Officers and members who are employees of the Department and LGUs shall follow the usual rules and regulations of the Department in reimbursing and/or liquidating of their cash advances used during their performance of their set task.

b. *Regional ABSNet*

The Regional ABSNet ExeCom members who are not employees of the Department and the LGUs shall reimburse their valid expenses at the Field Office for every Regional Meeting they have attended not exceeding two (2) times in a year based on the accomplishment report submitted and recommendation of the concerned DSWD Field Office.

c. *National ABSNet*

The National ABSNet Board who are not employees of the Department and the LGUs shall have their valid expenses reimbursed at the Field Office for every National Meeting attended not exceeding two (2) times in a year based on the accomplishment report submitted and recommendation of the concerned DSWD Field Office.

IX. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT

1. Field Office



- a. Ensures that all Local ABSNet Cluster and Regional ABSNet are knowledgeable on the regulatory policies/guidelines to enable them to become active in advocating compliance to the social welfare and development standards among its members. All set standards that cannot be complied with by the SWDA or the guidelines that are noted difficult to understand must be reflected in the minutes of meeting.
- b. Ensures functionality of all Local ABSNet Cluster and Regional ABSNets.
- c. Ensures that a staff from Standards Section is assigned as the Secretariat in every ABSNet activity, whether in the Local ABSNet Cluster or regional. The Secretariat shall be responsible for preparing all needed documents during regular and special meetings and conduct of elections.
- d. Ensures that the Standards Sections participate during quarterly Local ABSNet Cluster meeting and Regional ABSNet semestral meetings both as the Secretarial and as a technical person of the FO.
- e. Provides technical assistance to ABSNet members in terms of organizational development and capability building.
- f. Prepares regional accomplishment report (Annex D) and identify ABSNet's good practices.
- g. Ensures that all elected officers of each Local ABSNet Cluster are organized and present for the election of Regional ABSNet officers.
- h. Ensures that mobilization funds of Local ABSNet Cluster and Regional ABSNet that conduct monitoring of SWDAs shall be included in the Regional Work and Financial Plan starting 2020.
- i. Monitors the operation and set activities of the ABSNet.
- j. Awards the Certificate of Registration/License/Accreditation during FO flag ceremony or during ABSNet meetings.
- k. Prepares and submits a Project Proposal to their respective FOs to cover the monitoring expenses (Transportation and Meal) and attendance to Local ABSNet Cluster /Regional ABSNet meetings of their ABSNet officers.
- l. Submits the quarterly updated and consolidated list of SWDAs to the Standards Bureau. The master list is divided into with R/RL and RLA and without R/RL and A, but existing and operating in the Region.

2. Standards Bureau

- a. Provides the necessary consultative and technical services to National ABSNet and DSWD FO on ABSNet issues and concerns.
- b. Assists in the conduct of National ABSNet consultation every three (3) years with the participation of National ABSNet, and Regional ABSNet (in time for the election of National ABSNet).

- c. Ensures functionality of National ABSNet in terms of performing their duties and functions as stated in the guidelines.
- d. Provides minimal augmentation for the mobilization funds and capability building funds of Regional ABSNet.
- e. Provides continuous TA to Field Office and National ABSNet /Regional ABSNet officers on new laws/policies/guidelines on regulatory functions.
- f. Assists in the conduct of National ABSNet semestral meetings.
- g. Prepares and submits a Project Proposal to cover the expenses (Transportation and Board & Lodging) relative to the attendance to the National ABSNet meetings of the National ABSNet officers.

3. ABSNet

- a. Performs the functions as stated in the guidelines.
- b. Keeps records of the minutes of assessment meetings/conferences for monitoring purposes.
- c. The Local ABSNet Cluster to issue a certificate of membership of a new SWDA applying for R/L/A.
- d. The Regional ABSNet to issue a certificate of good standing to SWDAs applying for renewal of R/L/A upon consultation with the concerned Local ABSNet Cluster.
- e. The Regional ABSNet to provide SB, through the Field Office, an updated SWDA Directory using the attached template (Annex 1).
- f. The National ABSNet to issue a certificate of good standing to SWDAs operating in more than one region applying for renewal of R/L/A upon consultation to the concerned Regional ABSNet.
- g. The National ABSNet to establish Facebook page that can be accessed by all ABSNet members.
- h. Recommends SWDAs for the most outstanding SWDA/PANATA/Best NGO.
- i. Conducts national consultation every three years
- j. Ensures the conduct of meetings as indicated in the guidelines.
- k. Prepares project proposal related to ABSNet activities.

X. INFORMATION DESSIMINATION

DSWD Field Offices, the LGUs and Social Welfare and Development Agencies shall be provided with copies of this Department Memorandum Circular.

XI. FORMS, TEMPLATES and ADVISORIES

As delegated by the Secretary, the Cluster Head supervising the Standards Bureau shall have the authority to approve as well as instruct on the needed revision of the prescribed forms and templates. If necessary, the concerned

cluster head reserves the authority on the issuance of clarificatory memorandum and advisories to address emerging issues in the implementation of specific provision/s of these guidelines.

XII. EFFECTIVITY

This order shall take effect immediately and supersedes all other DSWD guidelines and issuances on ABSNet.

Issued this 20th day of June at Quezon City.


ROLANDO JOSELITO D. BAUTISTA
Secretary

ANNEXES:

- Annex A – Certification on Membership
- Annex B – Undertaking
- Annex C – Updated SWDA Directory
- Annex D – Accomplishment Report

Cert. True Copy:


MYRNA H. REYES
OIC, Division Chief
Records and Archives Mgt. Division
01 JUL 2022

Annex A
Guidelines on ABSNet
Certification on Membership

(Letterhead of ABSNet)

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify
that _____
(Name of SWDA)

located at

(Office Address)

is an **ACTIVE** Member of ABSNet _____
(Name of Local ABSNet Cluster)

This certification is issued to

(Name of SWDA)

to support its application with DSWD for:

- Licensing
- Accreditation
- Others, please specify:

Issued this _____ day of _____, 20__.

(ABSNet Regional Chairperson of Local Cluster/Authorized Officer)

(Designation/Position)

Annex B
Guidelines on ABSNet
Undertaking

UNDERTAKING

Relative to my application for renewal, I hereby undertake to attend the 75% of all ABSNet activities/meetings, where our organization was invited, for the next three (3) years. I understand that in the event I fail to comply after this issuance, our organization will no longer be given this undertaking for active membership.

(Signature Over Printed Name of the Executive Director or Program Head)

(Position/Designation of the Agency Head or Authorized Representative)

(Date)



DSWD Regional ABSNet Report
UPDATED SWDA DIRECTORY
 Field Office _____
 For the _____ semester of 20____

NAME OF AGENCY MEMBER Address/Contact Details (Telephone number, Fax, email, website)	Contact Person / Position / mobile number	STATUS			PROGRAMS AND SERVICES	SERVICE DELIVERY MODE	CLIENTELE	AREAS OF OPERATIONS	REMARKS
		R	L	A					

ABSNet ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORT
 For _____ Quarter of 20__
 Field Office _____

Total Number of Local ABSNet Clusters:
 Total Number of Members:

Regional Officers:

NAME OF THE AGENCY	NAME OF THE REPRESENTATIVE	POSITION	SECTORAL GROUP REPRESENTED
		Chairperson	
		Vice Chairperson	
		Vice Chairperson	
		Secretary	
		Policy Review Committee Head	
		Capability Building Committee Head	
		Membership and Communication Committee Head	
		LGU Representative	
		DSWD Centers and Institution Representative (for Regional ABSNet)	



Members:

NAME OF THE AGENCY	NAME OF THE REPRESENTATIVE	DATE OF MEMBERSHIP	COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Highlights of Accomplishments:

1. Activities Conducted
2. Number of SWDAS with no R/L/A monitored
3. Number of SWDAs visited for R/L/A
4. Number of SWDAs recommended for R/L/A
5. Number of SWDAs with new R/L/A
6. Number of SWDAs with R/L/A to expire within six months

Issues/Concerns and Recommendations:

Prepared by:

 Chairperson
 Regional ABSNet
 Field Office _____