



Department of Agriculture
**UPLAND DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAMME in
Southern Mindanao**
ALA/97/68

Exit Report MIS Operations & Trainer Specialist

(March - December 2006)

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The opinions expressed are those of the consultant and are not necessarily those of the Commission.



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Abbreviations

COA – Commission On Audit

e-NGAS – electronic New Government Accounting System

IT – Information Technology

ITCD – Information Technology and Communication Division

LCE – Local Chief Executive

M&E – Monitoring and Evaluation

MIS – Management Information System

MIS for LGUs – Management Information for Local Government Units

MIS on AIP – Management Information System on Annual Investment Plan

MIS on BDP – Management Information System in Barangay Development Plan

MIS on BDP-AIP – Management Information System on Barangay Development Plan and Annual Investment Plan

MLGU – Municipal Local Government Unit

MPDO – Municipal Planning and Development Office

NGAS – New Government Accounting System

P/MLGUs – Provincial and Municipal Local Government Units

PLGU – Provincial Local Government Unit

PPDO – Provincial Planning and Development Office

RAO – Registry of Allotment and Obligation

SUD – Sustainable Upland Development

UDP – Upland Development Programme

UDTF-LB – Upland Development Trust Fund – Land Bank

UDTF-MIS – Upland Development Trust Fund Management Information System

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1 Introduction

A number of MIS mission interventions were undertaken in the period of March to November 2006 that involved the following tasks:

- “MIS on BDP-AIP” comprehensive model establishment in 3 selected MLGUs
- Follow-up technical support (installation/ training/ coaching) in all MIS pilot P/MLGUs and installation (early replication) of the MIS in other UDP covered P/MLGUs
- Establishment of the link of the MIS on AIP with the existing financial system of the P/MLGUs (i.e. COA e-NGAS/RAO and ECPAC NGAS/RAO)
- Institutionalisation of technical support mechanism
- Support to the UDP and UDTF-Landbank MIS

2 Activities undertaken and results

2.1 “MIS for LGUs” comprehensive model establishment in three (3) selected P/MLGUs

Within the context of the LUB-BDP scheme of the SUD model and LGU capacity building programme, the provision and implementation of a computer-based tool such as the “MIS on BDP-AIP” which was developed by the GIS and M&E consultants was considered an important input. The system was expected to integrate all aspects of the LGU’s AIP (“MIS on AIP”, developed by the M&E Specialist) and not to be limited to UDP-related interventions. Second, the system also integrates management of the Barangay Profiles and Barangay Development Plan (“MIS on BDP”, developed by the GIS Specialist).

During the pilot-testing and modeling of the system in three (3) selected MLGUs, the MIS Specialist was tasked to provide support in the implementation of the system that involved the following activities done in March to mid April 2006:

- Conducted system demonstration in the P/MLGUs selected with all the head of offices as participants
- Installation of the system in the P/MPDO and coaching of the assigned data encoder or user of the system
- Conducted follow-up monitoring in the implementation of the system thereby gathered the status of the system in the aspects of regular data encoding, availability of progress data and problems/ issues encountered during the operation of the system
- Documented and discussed the findings and recommendations with the GIS Specialist and M&E Specialist being the developers of the system accordingly for possible system adjustments/ debugging

2.2 Follow-up technical support in the installation of updates/ training/ coaching of users in all pilot P/MLGUs and other P/MLGUs covered by UDP

Due to the major changes made by the GIS and M&E Specialists, the system became more flexible and integrated the suggestions and recommendations of the pilot

P/MLGUs. Therefore, in order to apply the changes to the pilot P/MLGUs, the MIS Specialist with the UDP Data Controller (Sherds) conducted follow-up technical assistance to the P/MLGUs that involved the following activities done in May to mid August 2006:

- Installation of system updates and follow-up training/ coaching of users
- Conducted regular implementation monitoring
- Conducted MIS demonstrations, installation, user's coaching in other P/MLGUs covered by UDP (early replication) that showed interest through letter of request submitted at the PMO
- Conducted MIS road shows by UDP and PPDO in the three (3) provinces (Compostela Valley, Sarangani and South Cotabato) which were participated by the MPDOs and other staff from the covered and non-covered MLGUs. The purpose of the road shows was to make the whole province aware of the existence of the MIS, its usefulness and most important is for the LGUs to prepare their respective offices in adopting the MIS. The "readiness" to embrace technology such as the MIS is often times one of the major factors causing delays in the smooth implementation of the system.

2.3 Establishment of the link of the "MIS on AIP" to the existing financial system of the P/MLGUs particularly the e-NGAS/ RAO being implemented by the Commission on Audit (COA) and the NGAS of ECPAC Systems, a private local company in Davao City.

One of the factors that somehow affecting the continues usage of the "MIS on AIP" part is the encoding of the financial data. Majority of the P/MLGUs with MIS installed are using computerized financial system either the version that came from COA or the one that came from a private local company in Davao, the ECPAC Systems. The P/MLGUs see the encoding of the financial data into the MIS as redundancy of work already done by the Accounting/ Budget office in the financial system.

Therefore, the recommendation to have a link between the MIS and the financial system is considered as a major factor that would somehow promote the continues usability of the MIS since updating of the financial data will be done automatically and the users of the MIS on AIP will just have to concentrate in recording the physical and qualitative progress of the AIP.

In this regard, the following activities were undertaken:

- Worked/ discussed with ECPAC Systems Corporation for the NGAS program link

Follow-up visit to ECPAC Systems Corporation was made and discussed with the Operations and Maintenance Officer, Mr. Jim Avila and with the CEO – President Mr. Euberto P. Avila, if possible to establish a link between the MIS on AIP to their NGAS program, particularly on the financial obligations and disbursement transactions tables.

Together with the ECPAC staff and M&E Specialist, we have studied the structure of the ECPAC's NGAS and came up with the solution on how to establish the link. ECPAC will provide additional feature into their system to export the required financial data in Excel format and the M&E Specialist

already made a function into the MIS on AIP that will import (read from Excel file) the data.

However, during the course of preparing the contract for ECPAC to provide the abovementioned technical service, the CEO – President asked to defer the contract with the premonition that he might not be able to do the work because he will be out of the City for most of the time for a bigger project. Furthermore, the Operations and Maintenance officer resigned and there is no one in the company knows how to revise the system except him and the staff that has resigned.

Follow-up can be done in the future, if the work will still be possible for ECPAC, since COA has released a memorandum that no P/MLGUs is allowed anymore to acquire financial software from private companies with the mandate to prepare the P/MLGUs in adopting the COA's financial system (e-NGAS and RAO) starting next year.

- Collaboration with the PPDO, Accounting office, Budget office and ITC division of Sarangani Province (pilot LGU of COA's e-NGAS/ RAO software).

The MIS Specialist together with the M&E Specialist asked the province to show how the system works and verified the point where the system can be linked to the MIS on AIP. Discussions were made with the Accounting office using the e-NGAS (where recording of the financial expenditure transactions is being done) software and with the Budget office (where recording of the financial obligation transactions is being done) using the RAO software.

The finding was it is possible to establish the link between the two (2) programs to the MIS using the same procedure as of ECPAC version. In this case, following the protocol of COA, a letter of request was made by the Accounting office of Sarangani for COA to provide the necessary reports in Excel with the required financial transactions to be imported by the MIS on AIP, but sad to note that until now there's no response from COA National office regarding the request. The Governor of Sarangani even followed-up the said request.

To be able to fast-track the results of the said request, one option that will be done by the MIS Specialist in the next few weeks is to collaborate directly to the COA National office. An initial conversation was already made by the MIS Specialist with the staff in COA in Manila and will be followed-up through personal visit in the COA office to further discuss this matter.

2.4 Institutionalization of technical support mechanism

With the increasing number of P/MLGUs expressing their interest in having the system installed in their respective offices, the need to involve the Provinces not only in monitoring the implementation of the system but also to provide technical support both in the installation/ database management and the conceptual operation of the system. Therefore, the following activities were undertaken in August 2006:

- Visited the Provinces and identified existing division/ staff that can be trained to provide technical support to the MLGUs in the aspects of installing/ restoring the MIS, database management and coaching in the operation of

the system. During this period, there were 4 additional MLGUs provided with the MIS by the Province themselves, although the coaching in the operation of the system was still conducted by the MIS Specialist. Therefore, it is imperative that early next year the Provinces must be capacitated in both aspects.

- In addition, some MLGUs with existing I.T. staff were also visited and trained in the technical installation and maintenance of the MIS, in which case can also provide same support to their neighboring MLGUs

In 2007, additional inputs shall be provided to the Provinces' ITCD and PPDO staff that will improve their capacity in implementing the MIS themselves.

2.5 Support to the UDP and UDTF-Landbank MIS

2.5.1 UDP-MIS

- In the entire duration of the consultants' mission, there are no major problem reported in the operation of the UDP MIS both from the PMO and from the PPOs, except for the additional fields to that have been added to the structure to accommodate the per scheme recording of the project/ activity documents.
- Furthermore, the consultant added five (6) report formats in the consolidated version of the UDP MIS installed at the PMO. The reports mainly show the year-to-date expenditures of the Programme per SUD schemes, and combination of per SUD schemes by Component and by FA Rubric. These reports shall be used to monitor the expenditures made by the Programme so far in the implementation of projects/activities per SUD schemes against the budget.

2.5.2 UDTF-MIS

The consultant had a chance to discuss and follow-up the status of the UDTF-MIS with the IB Coordinator of the UDTF. Apparently, the system is not use in full where only certain modules of the system.

According to the IB Coordinator, the structure of certain modules of the system installed in their office such as the "Coop Monthly Monitoring sheet", "IB Plans and Progress monitoring" and the "Credit Utilization" modules are not appropriate anymore with the UDTF's improved procedures, reports formats and monitoring forms. Therefore, the following activities were undertaken:

- Discussed with UDTF staff with the assistance of the European Co-Director the changes in the monitoring forms, procedures and report formats of the UDTF
- Re-structure the UDTF-MIS database; re-program the software in accordance to the collected system specifications and the required report formats both for UDP and UDTF consumption were integrated.
- Installed the revised system in the UDTF-LB office and coaching on how to operate the revised system was done

At this point, it is up to the UDTF Secretariat to regularly encode the progress data to be able for the system to generate the reports with complete and accurate

information. As of this date, the updating of the system is being done by the MIS Specialist of the UDTF.

3 Conclusions and recommendations

The experiences with the MIS piloting clearly show that the system will only work if:

- M&E is institutionalized and data are regularly available
- Availability of technical support in restoring the MIS in case of system breakdown
- Availability of technical support in the operational aspect of the MIS
- Clear procedures and collaboration for regular data exchange from the LGU offices is established
- The system is fully supported by the LCE. Otherwise the MIS will remain an ad-hoc system that runs isolated at the MPDO.

In order to address the abovementioned issues, the following could still be done by UDP on its remaining time.

- Ensure that the LGUs have M&E, not just Planning. UDP could follow-up the application of the results in the M&E workshops conducted in November. The MIS is a tool for M&E, without M&E or even a weak M&E hampers not only the utilization of the MIS but also the capacity of the LGU to assess and make crucial decisions in the implementation of their activities
- Involve the P/MLGU in the aspects of technical installation/ maintenance of the MIS and operations for them to have the capacity to replicate the system
- Provision of manual both in the technical setup/ maintenance of the system and the MIS operations
- Conduct activities to promote the MIS and its usefulness that can be appreciated and supported by the LCE for continuous support

4 Tentative MIS related activities in 2007

The following activities are envisaged for the coming months particularly in 2007:

1. Coordinate with COA and/or ECPAC to finalize the link of the MIS-AIP financial module to the financial system
2. Documentation of the technical manual in setting-up the MIS (for the IT department reference in the installation) and finalize user's operation manual (for PPDO reference in coaching)
3. Training in each Province
 - a. IT department – on technical aspect of MIS installation, maintenance with 2 setup options (i.e. standalone or network), database structure, report designing, etc.
 - b. PPDO – on the operational aspects, how to support LGUs in the proper operation of the system, organizing data, recording and exchange of protocol, etc.
4. Updating (with the final version) and follow-up monitoring/ coaching of P/MLGUs that have installed the system
5. Support the PLGUs (if needed) in the installation and implementation of the MIS in the MLGUs not yet supported

6. Design of report templates for the system's ReportBuilder and training of Provincial IT departments on how to design customized reports using the ReportBuilder
7. Support to the UDP and UDTF-MIS (as needed)
8. Support to the formulation and implementation of I.T. related matters exit/ turn-over plan (i.e. computerized systems/ databases, website, equipment, etc.)

P/MLGUs with "MIS on BDP-AIP"
As of 31 October 2006

LGU	END OF 2005	2006					CUMULATIVE
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL	
1. COMPOSTELA VALLEY	●					-	1
1. Laak	●						
2. Mabini				●			
3. Maco			●				
4. Maragusan			●				
5. New Bataan							
6. Pantukan							
7. Nabunturan*							
Sub-total MLGUs	1	-	2	1	-	3	4
2. DAVAO DEL NORTE*					●	1	1
1. Asuncion*							
2. Carmen*							
3. Kapalong*	●						
4. New Corella*							
5. San Isidro*							
Sub-total MLGUs	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
3. DAVAO ORIENTAL						-	-
1. Baganga		●					
2. Banaybanay							
3. Caraga							
4. Cateel							
5. Lupon							
6. Manay					●		
7. Mati	●						
8. San Isidro				●			
9. Tarragona**	●						
Sub-total MLGUs	2	1	-	1	1	3	5
4. DAVAO DEL SUR				●		1	1
1. Don Marcelino							
2. Jose Abad Santos							
3. Magsaysay							
4. Malalag	●						
5. Malita							
6. Sta. Cruz							
Sub-total MLGUs	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
5. SARANGANI	●					-	1
1. Glan				●			
2. Kiamba							
3. Maasim							
4. Maitum							
5. Malapatan					●		
6. Malungon			●				
7. Alabel***	●						
Sub-total MLGUs	1	-	1	1	1	3	4
6. SOUTH COTABATO	●					-	1
1. Tampakan					●		
2. Tantaran					●		
3. Tupi	●						
4. Lake Sebu**	●						
Sub-total MLGUs	2	-	-	-	2	2	4
Total MLGUs	8	1	3	3	4	11	19
Total PLGUs	3	-	-	1	1	2	5

* Replication areas

** Municipal-wide comprehensive model

● - with MIS on BDP-AIP