Exit Report M&E Specialist, December 2005



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SUMMARY

The M&E mission was undertaken in the period November-December 2005 (3.5 weeks) and was basically a follow-up/continuation of the previous mission (see Exit Report 4 – September 2005) with regard to the remaining weeks of the 2 months TA that were added for 2005.

The following activities were undertaken:

- follow-up visits of MISonBDP-AIP to all participating LGUs except for Mati which has a hardware problem and did not yet encode any data.
- meetings with DOST and NCC for assessing their interest and capacity for providing future support on the MISonBDP-AIP and GIS and with ECPAC (the company that distributes e-NGAS accounts software) to assess the possibility of linking up the MISonBDP-AIP to the e-NGAS system.
- meetings with the PPDC of South Cotabato for planning of comprehensive BLUP/MIS activities and support
- other activities/recommendations with regard to the revision of the logframe and TOR for assessments and evaluations

The follow-up showed that most piloted MPDCs are positive about the system but that they face problems in obtaining the required data from other offices. A number of LGUs also experienced unnecessary technical problems due to inadequate coaching by UDP.

In order to address the concerns raised with respect to the lack of integration and under-utilisation of the MISonBDP-AIP, especially of the M&E modules, it was decided to undertake an intensive effort in a few selected MLGUs that will involve all relevant offices in the actual use, integration and testing of the system and that will serve as a model for replication in other LGUs. A proposed action plan was discussed and agreed with the MPDC of Lake Sebu, the PPDC of Souh Cotabato and the mayor and MPDC of Taragona (for details see 2.1.4 and 3).

- In January the LGUs will start with the encoding of the AIPs for 2006.
- In the first quarter (February) the M&E Specialist will establish the
 comprehensive system in the MLGUs of Taragona and Lake Sebu, and in the
 PLGUs of South Cotabato and Davao Oriental. He will also train a
 consultant/service provider who will be responsible for further coaching and
 replication in the other piloted LGUs.
- During the second quarter the M&E Specialist will follow-up the implementation, make a few mofidications if necessary and conduct a practical M&E workshop for all piloted LGUs that will also include the link to the MISonBDP-AIP.
- During his last mission, the M&E Specialist will make final adjustments and document the model and the approach for replication in other LGUs.

In the meantime, until a consultant/service provider has been contracted, monthly onsite coaching by the PMED Encoder to the existing pilot schemes must be undertaken.

1 Introduction

The M&E mission was undertaken in the period November-December 2005 (3.5 weeks) and was basically a follow-up/continuation of the previous mission (see Exit Report 4 – September 2005) with regard to the remaining weeks of the 2 months TA that were added for 2005.

The report discusses the activities undertaken with respect to the MISonBDPAIP pilot testing and institutionalisation. The PMED Data Encoder accompanied the M&E Specialist in the follow-up activities.

2 Tasks undertaken and results

2.1 Follow-up of Encoding by pilot LGUs

2.1.1 Implementation of Action Plan (September – December)

During the last visit an action plan was made for coaching and close follow-up of the pilot testing. The action plan was only partly implemented (see table 1).

Table 1 - Agreed Action Plan September 2005 and Status Mid-December 2005

Action	Responsibility	Status Dec 2005
Regular monitoring of implementation: - progress - technical problems/bugs - conceptual problems - quality of encoding - use of the system	PPO Planners, PMED	PPO Planners followed-up implementation progress and installed updates – however incorrectly in some cases, which caused some problems. In November they sent databases to PMED Encoder who provided support through phone and email but she did not visit the LGUs except for Taragona.
Determine additional reporting requirements, provide suggestions for improvement, report problems and submit needs for further support	MPDO Planners & Encoders	They reported some encoding problems but did not give suggestions for improvement, reports, etc.
Design of reports:	PMED Encoder	Not done
Further hands-on training if required	PPO Planners, PMED Encoder	Not done
Correction of errors (only bugs) if found	M&E Specialist (through email)	No bugs were reported

2.1.2 Follow-up by M&E Specialist and PMED Data Encoder (December)

The M&E Specialist and PMED Data Encoder conducted another follow-up of the MISONBDP-AIP implementation in all pilot municipalities except for Mati that did not encode any data due to hardware problems. Table 2 presents the results for each LGU.

Table 2 - Follow-up of MISonBDP-AIP implementation

Municipality	Date visited	Observation – status of MISonBDP-AIP	Action undertaken
Tupi S. Cotab.	5 Dec	 Encoded many projects but only proposed status (no implementation data). Encoder (on contract basis) is highly capable. Constraints: some data such as disbursements for AIP 2005 are no longer available on hard copy. exchange of info between departments is difficult as computers are not connected through LAN 	Discussed constraints for encoding of other data with MPDC, Accounts and Engineer. Studied Infra monitoring format Excel. The MPDC agreed that for AIP 2005 some data will be retrieved from Accounts (3 ^d or 4 th quarter) and from Engineering office to test the system.
		Some data on activities were lost as the encoder accidentally saved the wrong changes instead of cancelling. She created separate databases for BDP and AIP with different sector definitions.	Merged the databases (changed the SectorID references manually in the tables). Updated the system and instructed encoder on how to back-up the database.
Lake Sebu S. Cotab.	6 Dec	Encoder was sick but turned up to attend discussion. Recorded most of the basic data of all 29 projects including obligations, disbursements and visits. Problem is the structure – activities are defined as cost items. Also here update of data from LGU offices is difficult.	Had discussion with MPDC and PPDC in Marbel and agreed that intensive exercise will be done with relevant depts next year: workshop, installation of system at various depts and coaching.
		The directories were mixed up. System was installed in my documents and other directories with patched updates being installed at different places.	Removed all redundant directories, old patches and files. Updated the system and instructed encoder on how to back- up the database.
Alabel Sarangani	7 Dec	The PPO planner could not join because of other commitments. The encoder had not much updated the system. She used different databases and old executables. The correct figures were spread over different databases. No accounts data was entered despite the fact that the Accounts Chief showed interest in the system during previous meetings.	Unfortunately no meeting with the MPDC was planned and as the PPO Planner was also not available it was not possible to discuss the structural constraints and solutions for better encoding and use of the system.

		The patches were not properly installed by PPO Planner – the MIS updates and directories were all over the place.	Merged the databases manually. Updated the system and instructed encoder on how to use and back-up the database.
Malalag Davao del Sur	7 Dec	The MPDC, Chief Accountant, Information Systems Analyst (ISA) and Encoder attended the meeting. The Accountant who did not participate in the previous MIS workshops showed great interest in the system. The LGU will invest in the development of IT and the ISA is also programming some software for the LGU. The LGU stresses the need for integrating and sharing the data in a common MIS. Until now only basic project data has been encoded.	It was agreed that the Encoder will encode some relevant implementation data of AIP2005 that will be provided by the different departments. The LGU will assess the system at the beginning of next year. The intention is to connect the departments through a network. Further training and coaching of the departments is expected from UDP. The LGU seems to have good potential for institutionalisation of the MIS.
		The previous updates were properly installed.	Updated the system and instructed encoder on how to use and back-up the database.
Kapalong Davao del Norte	12 Dec	The AIP only has only project level and no sub-project-level. Only basic project data were encoded. The MPDC said M&E modules are not used yet as little monitoring is undertaken but he agreed that this must be improved in the near future. He also thought that the system's financial modules are good as it provides the LGU with an overall picture of the projects, physical and financial. The encoder received some data on obligations from accounts that he could not encode as he used an old version of the system and wrong database.	After installing the new version tested the obligations module and other data entry screens, which all worked well. Had a discussion with accounts and saw the NGAS system. Integration of the two systems might be difficult but the company who developed NGAS should be contacted to find out the possibilities for linking the two systems. This would really ease the burden of data transfer and re-encoding.
		The system directories were installed in different drives and the application and database structure were not properly updated,	Updated the system, removed old directories and instructed encoder on how to use and back-up the database.
Laak Compost. Valley	12 Dec	The encoder lost all the project data and re-entered the information. The problem could not be re-produced and the reason could not be determined. Possibly two applications were opened at the same time (although	Will investigate the possible reasons for data loss and take measures for improvement of safety if needed. Tested the obligations form on the basis of reports provided by accounts.

		this is not easily done). Apart from basic data, the encoder also entered some data on obligations.	
		The previous updates were properly installed.	Updated the system and instructed encoder on how to use and back-up the database.
Taragona	13 Dec	Had a discussion with the mayor and the MPDC who appeared very supportive to the BDP approach and MIS. The Budget Officer was also very interested to use the system for budgeting and accounting purposes. LGU does not use e-NGAS software. The MPDC experienced hardware problems as the only computer they have is shared with other offices and is overloaded with data. The MIS sometimes does not run properly because of memory problems. The monitor is also defect and is sent for repairs. Only basic project data was included. The AIP does not use sub-project level.	 Agreed with MPDC and PPO Planner on following: LGU will continue with BDP/BLUP exercise for all 10 Barangays (expected to be finished mid 2006) MIS Encoder will focus on AIP 2006, starting in January to ensure that all relevant implementation data is encoded (i.e. budgets, disbursements, progress) and also encode finished BDPs M&E Specialist will visit LGU in February to integrate system with relevant offices (i.e. MPDC, Major's Office, Budget Office, Accounts, Engineering Office, others). For proper development and testing of the model a good computer is required that will only be used for UDP purposes. It is recommended that UDP helps the LGU with the purchase of this equipment.
		The previous updates were properly installed.	Updated the system, gave a refresher course to encoder on how to encode and to back-up the database.
Mati	Was not	assessed because has not yet recorded any data due to he	ardware problems.

2.1.3 Conclusions

a. Under-utilisation of the system – constraints

Most of the LGUs increased the number of projects in the MISonBDP-AIP (see table in the Annex), but did not encode the financial and monitoring modules because:
(i) the Encoders cannot easily obtain the information from other offices and
(ii) little monitoring is done by the LGUs other than for infrastructure/engineering projects and even in that case M&E is mostly limited to estimating activity progress in terms of time (slippage) and financial performance.

The problem is recognised by the MPDCs and although some promised to encode some data from the AIP2005, a more structural solution is required if the MISonBDP-AIP is to be used as a useful M&E tool. The underlying causes of the problem are not just practical (physical separation of offices) but also conceptual and perceptual as it requires the offices to understand the benefits of integration of all project-related data for better planning and M&E.

With respect to financial performance, the MISonBDP-AIP integrates all modules that are required for monitoring of budgets and expenditures (as requested by MPDCs and Accounts staff in the workshops held in 2004). However, it duplicates somewhat the e-NGAS, an accounting software that is distributed by ECPAC, a company based in Davao. The software is developed in Visual FoxPro. It is simple, its functionality is quite limited and the database (dBase) seems vulnerable to corruption. The LGUs pay PhP 5000 per computer per month for maintenance, which most consider quite high. Its advantage however, is that it exactly follows the COA's NGAS requirements. As there is no other alternative software, most LGUs opted for buying this e-NGAS. The comparitive advantage of the MISonBDP-AIP on the other hand, is its integration of financial and physical output performance, its link to the AIP projects, its userfriendliness and the fact that the software is free. In fact, with very few changes the MISonBDP-AIP could easily replace the e-NGAS. However, as most municipalities have already purchased e-NGAS, we should look at ways to link up the two systems rather than competing with it. This might not be easy because of different database structures and platforms. Nonetheless, the ECPAC technicians who we demonstrated the MISonBDP-AIP to were impressed by its functionality and were interested in playing a role in its further deployment, maintenance and coaching as they already visit the same LGUs every month for e-NGAS. This option could be further explored. The M&E Specialist contacted the programmer of e-NGAS to determine the options for linking up the systems.

M&E of <u>physical performance</u> is officially the role of the MPDO but for infrastructure projects this is actually done by the Engineering Office (MEO). As acknowledged by the MPDCs, M&E is generally very weak and monitoring is mostly confined to determining slippage (infra) and financial progress (actual disbursements against budgets).

In addition, the level of integration is low. Now each office is doing its own thing in its own way. Integration of project data in one system requires agreements on certain standards, formats and procedures. Some offices might consider the MISonBDP-AIP as extra work.

In order to overcome these constraints it was proposed that an intensive effort be undertaken in a few selected MLGUs that involves all relevant offices in the actual use, integration and testing of the system and that will serve as a model for replication (see 2.1.4).

b. Inadequate coaching and installation of updates

The follow-up by the M&E Specialist clearly indicates that the coaching by UDP since September has not been very effective in a number of provinces as the updates were not properly installed in 4 LGUs and the Encoders were not supported in the encoding of other data than basic project information. At least some PPO Planners apparently lack the technical skills for installing updates and the PMED Encoder could not visit the LGUs except for Taragona during the absence of the M&E Specialist, which in fact would have prevented many of the "technical" problems.

c. Conceptual issues – structure of AIPs

The following issues should be looked into:

- Structure of AIPs (levels) the MISonBDP-AIP requires the MLGUs to encode sub-projects but as some AIPs do not have sub-projects the encoders now copy the project data also to the sub-project level. This is a bit awkward and the system should make the encoding of sub-projects optional.
- Some AIPs follow an accounts-based approach whereby sub-projects are being defined as cost items. This is conceptually wrong and defeats the purpose of the system as a tool for output monitoring. It also duplicates the financial modules and therefore mixes up the conceptual set up of the MIS.
- Apparently, in NGAS there is a direct link between obligations and disbursements which have some common fields. The MIS should provide a link so that upon encoding a disbursement the relevant data is automatically copied from the obligation slip.

2.1.4 Recommended actions

a. Development and testing of a comprehensive model in selected LGUs

With UDP management, it was agreed that an intensive effort will be undertaken in a few selected MLGUs and PLGUs with the involvement of all relevant offices in the actual use, integration and testing of the system, that will serve as a model for replication in other LGUs. Initially, the idea was to linit the exercise to the 2 LGUs that will be selected for the comprehensive BDP/BLUP exercise (i.e. Lake Sebu, Taragona).

However, as some of the other piloted LGUs also show encouraging encoding results and potential for further development and integration, the exercise could be extended and gradually include more LGUs. Based on the current assessment, the following LGUs could also be targeted: Malalag, Laak, Kapalong. For implementation at PLGU level it would also be good to include Tupi as this would provide the PLGU with 2 MLGU databases that could be used for development and testing of a consolidated database and reports at the provincial level.

An action plan for each MLGU has to be established that includes the following activities:

- demonstration of MISonBDP-AIP for all relevant offices and authorities
- analysis of planning and M&E systems and utilisation of data for decisionmaking process – identification of weaknesses and proposed improvements
- identification of data collection and reporting procedures and formats for each office and the inter-linkages between offices (data flow between offices)
- identification of applicability of MISonBDP-AIP and required changes

- practical support to data encoding process and reporting of each office: encoding of relevant reference data and records, analysis functions - design of reports and queries, database maintenance procedures
- establishment of protocols (responsibilities, processes, schedules)
- training on improved M&E (could be combined with other LGUs see below)
- general testing and improvement of the system

A similar exercise will have to be implemented at PLGU level with respect to the province AIP and the consolidated MLGUs database.

The best strategy would be to undertake these activities in a short period of a few days to a week in each selected LGU. Agreement on the schedule must be reached with the LGU authorities prior to the TA visit in order to ensure that all offices are prepared. The schedule would entail the following 3 steps:

- 1. introduction, demonstration of MISonBDP-AIP with all relevant offices and authorities, and analysis of overall process (1/2 day)
- 2. analysis and support to each office (1/2 1) day per office
- 3. establishment of protocols, final presentation and plan for testing (1/2 day).

Depending on the analysis, needs assessment and testing, small modifications to the MISonBDP-AIP might have to be made. After the first visit, the M&E Specialist will follow-up and coach the LGU a few times during the first mision to ensure smooth implementation. In between missions, frequent monitoring and coaching is still required.

As the pilot testing so far has clearly indicated that M&E is very weak, which also forms a constraint for the effective use of the MISonBDP-AIP, it is also recommended that a M&E training workshop of 2-3 days be conducted for LGUs (MPDCs, Engineers). The training must be practical and relevant to the needs and capacity of the LGU officers. It would comprise 4 modules:

- (i) assessment of current M&E practices and needs,
- (ii) introduction of relevant and practical M&E methodologies (theory),
- (iii) practical exercise visit field project,
- (iv) linkage of results to MISONBDP-AIP.

The workshop should be held after the (comprehensive) MISONBDP-AIP has been tested but not too late in 2006 – probably during the second mission of the M&E Specialist.

The following schedule is proposed for TA M&E Specialist: 3 missions of 1 month:

- 1 establishment of comprehensive MIS in selected LGUs (maximal 3-4 MLGUs)
- 2 follow-up implementation MIS, modifications, M&E workshop for LGUs
- 3 follow-up, final system, write up and support to replication

As the TA M&E is limited to 3 months, it is recommended that the selected service provider for MIS/GIS attends the M&E Specialist's LGU visits and training during first and second visit and starts replication in the other piloted LGUs right after the first visit.

b. Coaching of piloted LGUs

Some of the LGUs could be gradually included in the replication of the comprehensive models. But for the meantime, further encoding and testing of the system should be continued. As long as a service provider for the technical back up and support to the LGUs with regard to MIS and GIS has not been found and trained,

direct support from UDP to the pilot LGUs is still required, particularly since most of the LGUs are now in the process of trying to encode some other data (financial and physical monitoring). They should be given the chance to test the system unless monitoring results indicate that the perspective for the MISonBDP-AIP is really low. It is therefore imperative that the PMED Encoder visits the LGUs once every month as was agreed in September. If this is not possible, a local consultant must be hired urgently to provide the support or the pilot scheme must be suspended. The PPO Planners can still play a role in monitoring the implementation but not in the actual coaching.

A review of the pilot LGUs should be undertaken at the end of March to determine the progress and issues. Depending on the results, some might be considered for further support and replication of the comprehensive model.

c. Conceptual issues, pending activities

Some improvements to the system will be made during the first visit of the M&E Specialist with respect to the required changes and also the pending activities that were listed in the previous report

2.2 Institutionalization of MISonBDP-AIP support mechanisms

With respect to future support to the implementation and maintenance of the system, meetings were held with relevant government agencies, particularly the National Computer Centre (NCC) and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST). However, both agencies do not seem to provide much perspective for concrete practical support in the short term. DOST proposed to establish a Technical Working Group with its major network partners and appeared to be more interested in the GIS. The NCC has only one representative per Region who serves all the municipalities. Although the person is very interested, he would not be able to provide support.

The contacts with UPM (IT Department) are more promising as they do not have manpower limitations and they showed interest in providing practical support. Their interest might also be more related to the GIS but they are willing to work with the MIS as well.

On request of the Provincial Manager of PPO5 the M&E Specialist also prepared a brief report on the AIPMISONBDP-AIP that explains the procedures, structure and functions and includes some screenshots. This document could be a useful reference guide for the Provincial Managers and others who want to understand the system.

2.3 Other activities - logframe, PCR

The M&E Advisor gave some input to the revision of the logframe for the extension period which was undertaken because of the PCR's recommendation that policy changes be better reflected in the logframe and also because of the wish of UDP management that the activities be more grouped on a scheme basis.

Although the logframe needed to be updated, the M&E Specialist totally disagrees to the PCR's conclusion that the logframe showed serious flaws as it did not reflect the activities of some of the programme's components. The PCR clearly failed to

understand the structure of the logframe and in particular the fact that it is designed on the basis of UDP's strategic approach, with on the one hand a major effort towards the institutionalization of the UDP model – particularly improving the government and other stakeholder's capability for planning and management of the model (now called SUD) and on the other hand the development and implementation of practical approaches in the field that form the basis of this model.

Therefore, the PCR's recommendation that the programme either presents its activities in the form of components or in the form of schemes was not adopted. Although UDP has already decided to base its activities on the scheme approach this does not necessarily imply that the logframe should only include schemes without considering other strategic activities that are not limited to a specific scheme, such as the activities related to mainstreaming of the SUD model. In addition, the schemes are inter-related and although the activities of each scheme should indeed be presented in the logframe, at the strategic result level it was though more logical to combine the contribution of different schemes rather than just putting each scheme as a separate result. It was still considered relevant to maintain the logic of the 2003 logframe by having 3 major results that closely follow the SUD model with one result reflecting the activities for mainstreaming and institutional development for SUD including BDP/BLUPs, another result related to the core land use based schemes (agricultural extension delivery system for DFS, and Barangay Forest Protection and Management) and the third result representing the supportive schemes (village enterprises, labour based road maintenance and rural finance).

In order not to make the revised logframe too long and at the same time address UDP management's wish to include very practical indicators, it was decided to include a few general OVIs at result level and attach an annex with the detailed output indicators for each of these general OVIs, as a quick reference on how the general OVIs are further operationalised in the planning and monitoring system.

3 Proposed Work Plan 2006

Three months TA are being planned for M&E in 2006. The activities should focus on the comprehensive support to the establishment of MISONBDP-AIP models in few selected MLGUs and PLGUs. Based on the conclusions and recommendations of this report, the following schedule is proposed. The reason to split up the TA into 3 missions is to allow the LGUs to do some testing of the approaches in between missions. For the detailed activities, see section 2.1.4

- Mission 1 after approval of the AWPB (first quarter February):
 - a) comprehensive MISonBDPAIP model establishment in 2-3 MLGUs and 2 PLGUs (3-5 days each)
 - b) training/instruction of consultant/service provider
 - c) review follow-up results of 7 pilot LGUs (no travel)
 - d) improvement of system (programming)
- Mission 2 second quarter:
 - d) follow-up comprehensive model testing, adjustments to MIS
 - e) M&E workshop for LGUs (2-3 days)

- Mission 3 third or fourth quarter:
 - f) follow-up comprehensive model testing and M&E
 - g) documentation of model/approach for replication
 - h) support to service provider for replication

For continuous follow-up in between missions a local consultant or service provider should be contracted who could also play a role in the replication of the model to other LGUs. In the meantime, the PMED Encoder must visit the LGUs every month.

The schedule for TA is really tight. It is therefore crucial that the schedule and arrangements for TA visits to LGUs are made prior to the arrival of the M&E Specialist.

Table 3 – Action Plan AIP 2006 (3 months TA M&E Specialist – 3 missions)

Activity	1 st (1 st quarter			2 ^d quarter			3 ^d quarter			4 th quarter	
	J	F	М	Α	М	J	J	Α	S	0	Ν	D
Encoding of AIP 2006												
Establishment of comprehensive model in 2		1										
MLGUs and 2 PLGUs (TA 1 month)*												
Implementation and testing of model												
F/up and coaching of all pilot LGUs												
Improvements of system - TA												
M&E Training of LGUs (3 days) - TA												
Replication of model by consultant/provider												
Final changes to system, link to BDPs/GIS												
Documentation of model												
Support to replication												

^{*} Exact starting date depends on approval AWPB, extent of LGU encoding AIP 2006, and availability TA.

Annex 1 - Assessment data encoding of AIPMIS

Follow-up report September – December 2005: number of projects encoded

LGU	Monito- ring dates	Projects (basic info)	Sub- projects	Appropr. Budget (project)	Detail Budget	Output Indicat	Location	Obligat Budget	Project Status	Disburse ments	Project Progress	Project Visits
Tupi	Sep-05	15	27									
	Dec-05	33	181									
	increase	18	154	-	-	-	-	1	1		-	-
Lake Sebu	Sep-05	24	70	24								
	Dec-05	29	77	29		4	23	56		33	15	14
	increase	5	7	5	-	4	23	56	0	33	15	14
Alabel	Sep-05	4	17	4								
	Dec-05	6	15	6	3		12	2			1	1
	increase	2	-2	2	3	-	12	2	-	-	1	1
Malalag	Sep-05	2	2	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1
	Dec-05	28	3	28	1		1	1	1	1	2	1
	increase	26	1	27	ı	ı	ı	ı	ı	ı	1	-
Kapalong	Sep-05	3										
	Dec-05	14	17	14								
	increase	11	17	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Laak	Sep-05	4	3				3					
	Dec-05	15	7	7		3	19	2				
	increase	11	4	7	-	3	19	2	-	-	-	-
Taragona	Sep-05											
	Dec-05	47	7	47								
	increase	47	7	47	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-