



26 JUN 2019

DEPARTMENT ORDER

No. 08

SERIES OF 2019

TO : ALL OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE - CENTRAL OFFICE, BUREAUS, REGIONAL FIELD OFFICES, AND ATTACHED AGENCIES

SUBJECT : MERIT SELECTION PLAN (MSP)

Pursuant to the Revised Policies on Merit Selection Plan (MSP) provided under CSC Resolution No. 010114, CSC Memorandum Circular No. 3, s. 2001 dated January 26, 2001, CSC Resolution No. 1701009 and CSC Memorandum Circular No. 24, s. 2017 dated June 16, 2017, this Merit Selection Plan (MSP) is hereby established for the guidance of all concerned.

I. OBJECTIVES

It is the policy of the Department to strictly adhere to the principles of merit, fitness and equality. The selection of employees shall be based on their relative qualification and competence to perform the duties and responsibilities of the position. There shall be no discrimination in the selection of employees on account of gender identity, sexual orientation, age, civil status, pregnancy, disability, religion, ethnicity or political affiliation.

In this pursuit, the department Merit Selection Plan aims to:

1. Establish a system that is characterized by strict observance of the merit, and fitness equality principles in the selection of employees for appointment to positions in the career and non-career service in all levels.
2. Create equal opportunities for employment to all qualified persons to enter the government service and for career advancement in the department.

II. SCOPE

This Merit Selection Plan shall cover all positions in the first level, second level, and executive/managerial which is also in the second level in the Department including its Bureaus, Regional Field Offices, and Attached Agencies.

However, these offices are not precluded from formulating or establishing their own internal rules and procedures peculiar to their situation provided that these are in accordance with the basic policies stated in the System.

III. DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. **Department**- includes any of the executive departments or entities having the category of a department including the judiciary, Commission on Elections and Commission on Audit. Whenever DA is used in this Department Order, it shall refer to the Department of Agriculture Office of the Secretary and its Regional Field Offices, DA for brevity.
2. **Agency/Agencies**- shall refer to Bureaus and Attached Agencies of the Department.
3. **Career Service** – the Career Service shall be characterized by (1) entrance based on merit and fitness to be determined as far as practicable by competitive examination, or based on highly technical qualifications, (2) opportunity for advancement to higher career positions; and (3) security of tenure.
4. **Deep Selection** – the process of selecting a candidate for appointment who is not next-in-rank but possesses superior qualifications and competence.
5. **Discrimination** – is a situation wherein a qualified applicant is not included in the selection of line-up on account of gender identity, sexual orientation, age, civil status, pregnancy, disability, religion, ethnicity or political affiliation.
6. **First Level Positions** – shall include clerical, trades and crafts, and custodial service which involve sub-professional work in a non-supervisory or supervisory capacity.
7. **Job Requirements** – requisites not limited to the qualification standards of the position, but may include knowledge, skills, competencies, potential, physical and psycho-social attributes necessary for the successful performance of the duties required of the position.
8. **Next-in-Rank Position** – refers to a position which by reason of the hierarchical arrangement of positions in the agency is determined to be in the nearest degree of relationship to a higher position as contained in the agency's System of Ranking Positions (SRP).
9. **Non-Career Service** – positions expressly declared by the law to be in the non-career service; or those whose entrance in the service is characterized by (1) entrance on bases other than those of the usual tests of merit and fitness utilized for the career service; and (2) tenure which is limited to the duration of a particular project for which purpose employment was made.
10. **Human Resource Actions** – any action denoting the movement or progress of human resource in the civil service such as original appointment, promotion, transfer, reinstatement, reemployment, detail, reassignment, secondment and demotion.

11. **Promotion** – is the advancement of an employee from one position to another with an increase in duties and responsibilities authorized by law and usually accompanied by an increase of salary.
12. **Psycho-Social Attributes** – refer to the characteristics or traits of a person which involve both psychological and social aspects. Psychological includes the way a person perceives things, ideas, beliefs, and understanding and how such a person acts and relates these things to others in social situations.
13. **Qualification Standards** – is a statement of the minimum qualifications for a position which shall include education, experience, training, civil service eligibility, potential and personality traits required in the performance of the job.
14. **Qualified Next-in-Rank** – refers to an employee appointed on a permanent status to a position next-in-rank to the vacancy as reflected in the SRP approved by the head of agency and who meets the requirements for appointment to the next higher position.
15. **Second Level Positions** – shall include positions up to division chief level, characterized by professional, technical and scientific work in a non-supervisory or supervisory capacity requiring at least four years of collegiate studies. This includes Second Level Executive/Managerial Positions.
16. **Second Level Executive/Managerial Positions** – includes professional, technical and scientific positions, the functions of which are managerial in character, exercising management over people, resource, and/or policy and exercising functions such as planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, controlling and overseeing activities of an organization, a unit thereof or of a group, requiring some degree of professional, technical or scientific knowledge and experience, application of managerial skills required to carry out basic duties and responsibilities involving leadership, functional guidance and control. These positions require intensive and thorough knowledge of a specialized field.
17. **Selection** – is the systematic method of determining the merit and fitness of a person on the basis of qualifications and ability to perform the duties and responsibilities of the position.
18. **Shortlist** – is a listing of qualified and competent applicants for consideration to a vacancy which includes, but is not limited to, the comparative information of their education, experience, training, civil service eligibility, performance rating (if applicable), relevant to work accomplishments, psycho-social attributes, personality traits and potential.
19. **Superior Qualifications** – shall mean outstanding relevant work accomplishments, educational attainment and training appropriate for the

position to be filled. It shall include demonstration of exceptional job mastery and potential in major areas of responsibility.

20. **System of Ranking Positions** – is the hierarchical arrangement of positions from highest to lowest, which shall be a guide in determining which position is next-in-rank, taking into consideration of the following:

- a. Organizational structure;
- b. Salary grade allocation;
- c. Classification and functional relationship of positions, and
- d. Geographical location.

21. **Third Level Positions** – generally require either Career Service Executive Eligibility (CSEE) or Career Executive Service Eligibility (CES), and/or is a Presidential Appointee. This includes Undersecretary, Assistant Secretary, Bureau Director, Assistant Bureau Director, Regional Director, Chief of Department Services and other officers of equivalent rank.

22. **Merit Promotions** – is a systematic method of selecting employees for advancement or promotion on the basis of their qualifications, fitness and ability to perform the duties and assume the responsibilities of the position being filled.

23. **Functional Relationship** – shall mean the correlation between the current position and the position to be considered next-in-rank taking into consideration the duties and responsibilities of both positions.

24. **Geographical Location** – shall mean the location of the position to be filled and position/s to be considered next-in-rank to the same. If the position to be filled is in the first level, the determination of the next-in-rank position may be limited in a particular Region/Office/Department/Bureau where the position is.

25. **Open Position** – refers to those positions that do not have any positions next-in-rank or residual positions to each level or group which may be filled by lateral/ vertical entry.

26. **Promotional Line-Up** – is a listing of incumbents of positions next-in-rank to a vacancy as well as those who, though not next-in-rank are deemed qualified and competent together with all necessary information about each incumbent.

IV. **BASIC POLICIES**

1. Selection of employees for appointment in the government service shall be open to all qualified men and women according to the principle of merit and fitness.

2. The Merit Selection Plan shall cover positions in the first level, second level, and executive/managerial which is also in the second level and shall also include original appointments and other related human resource actions.

~~There shall be no discrimination in the selection of employees on account of gender identity, sexual orientation, age, civil status, pregnancy, disability/impairment, beliefs and religion, race and ethnicity or political affiliation.~~

Screening for differently-abled applicant/s shall be coursed through an external service provider.

3. When a position in the first and second level becomes vacant, applicants for employment who are competent, qualified and have possessed appropriate civil service eligibility shall be considered for permanent appointment.

The list of candidates aspiring for vacant position/s, either from within or outside the agency, including qualified next-in-rank employees, shall be posted in conspicuous areas within the office premises.

4. List of vacant positions authorized to be filled, including second level executive/managerial positions, and its corresponding Qualification Standards and plantilla item numbers, shall be published in accordance with Republic Act 7041, otherwise known as An Act Requiring Regular Publication Of Existing Vacant Positions In Government Offices, and shall be submitted in electronic and printed copies to the CSC Field Office pursuant to CSC Resolution No. 1800692. The same shall be published in the CSC Bulletin of Vacant Positions and in at least three (3) conspicuous places in the Department/Agency for at least ten (10) calendar days. Other appropriate modes of publication, such as but not limited to, posting in DA/Agency's Official Website may also be considered.

Anticipated vacancies based on the agency's succession plan may be published. In case of retirement, resignation or transfer, the publication should not be earlier than 30 days prior to retirement, resignation or transfer (Section 30, Rule VII of CSC Resolution No. 1800692).

Filling of vacant positions in the Department/Agency shall be made after ten (10) calendar days from their publication.

The publication of a particular vacant position shall be valid until filled up but not to extend beyond nine (9) months reckoned from the date the vacant position was published. Should no appointment be issued within the nine-month period, the DA/Agency has to cause re-publication and re-posting of the vacant position (Section 29, Rule VII, CSC Resolution No. 1701009).

5. The following positions are exempt from the publication requirement:
 - a. Primarily confidential;

- b. Policy determining;
 - c. Highly technical;
 - d. Coterminous with that of the appointing authority, and other non-career positions;
 - e. Reappointment (change of status to permanent) of those appointed on temporary status for Category II positions under CSC MC No. 11, s. 1996, as amended; and
 - f. Positions to be filled by existing regular employees in the agency in case of reorganization/rationalization; provided, the approved staffing pattern is posted in the agency bulletin board.
6. A Human Resource Merit Promotion and Selection Board (HRMPSB) for first and second level positions shall be established in all Regional Field Offices, Bureaus, and Attached Agencies.
 7. The HRMPSB members including alternate representatives for first and second level positions shall undergo orientation and workshop on the selection/promotion process and CSC policies on appointments.
 8. The HRMPSB shall be represented by at least the majority of the members during the deliberation of candidate for appointments (Section 93, Rule IX of CSC Resolution No. 1701009).
 9. All candidates for appointment to first and second level positions shall be screened by the HRMPSB, except for appointment to the following positions:
 - 9.1 Substitute appointment due to their short duration and emergency nature.
 - 9.2 Reappointment to change the employment status from temporary to permanent upon meeting the deficiency or to renew the appointment of a temporary employee, if upon publication there are no qualified applicants and his/her performance rating is at least Very Satisfactory for two (2) rating periods; or
 - 9.3 Appointments to casual, contractual, coterminous and other non-career positions as identified under Section 9, Subtitle A, Title I, Book V of EO No. 292.
 10. As far as practicable, DA/Agency shall ensure equal opportunity for men and women to be represented in the HRMPSB for all levels.
 11. For vacancies in the first and second levels, all qualified next-in-rank employees shall be automatically considered candidates for promotion to the next higher position. However, those who are not next-in-rank but qualified, shall submit their written application subject to Rule V Procedure on Recruitment of this Order.
 12. The Background Investigation team, headed by the highest HRMO, as established through issuance of a Special Order, shall provide its evaluation to the HRMPSB for its reference in assessing candidates for promotion

and/or recruitment to first and second level, including executive/managerial positions.

13. The HRMPSB shall maintain fairness and impartiality in the assessment of candidates for appointment.

14. The appointing authority shall take into consideration the merits of the HRMPSB's assessment of shortlisted candidates for vacant positions and in the exercise of sound discretion, select, in so far as practicable, from among the top five ranking applicants deemed most qualified for appointment to the vacant position.

15. The appointing authority may appoint an applicant who is not next-in-rank but possesses superior qualification and competence, and has undergone selection process.

16. The comparative competence and qualification of candidates for appointment shall be determined on the basis of:

16.1 PERFORMANCE - for appointment both by promotion and transfer, the performance rating of the appointee in the last rating period prior to the date of assessment or screening should be at least Very Satisfactory.

16.2 EDUCATION and TRAINING – include educational background, successful completion of training courses accredited by the Civil Service Commission, scholarship, training grants and others which must be relevant to the duties of the position to be filled.

16.3 EXPERIENCE and OUTSTANDING ACCOMPLISHMENTS – include occupational history, relevant work experience acquired either from the government or private sector and accomplishments worthy of special commendation.

16.4 PSYCHO-SOCIAL ATTRIBUTES – refer to the characteristics or traits of a person which involve both psychological and social aspects. Psychological includes the way a person perceives things, ideas, beliefs and understanding and how such person acts and relates these things to others and in social situations.

16.5 POTENTIAL – refers to the capacity and ability of a candidate to assume the duties of the position to be filled and those of higher or more responsible positions.

17. An employee may be promoted to a position which is not more than three (3) salary grades higher than the employee's present position except when the promotional appointment falls within the purview of any of the following exceptions:

- The position occupied by the person is next-in-rank to the vacant position as identified in the Merit Selection Plan and the System of Ranking Positions (SRP);
- The vacant position is a lone or entrance position, as indicated in the agency staffing pattern;
- The vacant position is hard to fill, such as Accountant, Medical Officer/Specialist, Attorney, or Information Technology Officer/Computer Programmer positions;
- The vacant position is unique and/or highly specialized, such as Actuarial, Airways Communicator positions;
- The candidate passed through a deep selection process taking into consideration the candidates' superior qualifications in regard to:
 - Educational achievements
 - Highly specialized trainings
 - Relevant work experience
 - Consistent high-performance rating
- The vacant position belongs to the closed career system, i.e., the scientific and technical positions in scientific or research institutions, all of which establish and maintain their own merit systems;
- Other meritorious cases:
 - i. When the appointee is the lone applicant who meets all the requirements of the positions and passed through the deep selection process;
 - ii. When the qualified next-in-rank employees waived their right over the vacant position in writing;
 - iii. When the next-in-rank positions, as identified in the agency SRP is vacant;
 - iv. When the next-in-rank employee/s is/are not qualified;
 - v. When the qualified next-in-rank employees did not apply

18. An employee who is in local or foreign scholarship or training grant or on official leave/maternity leave may be considered for promotion.

For this purpose, performance rating to be considered should be at least Very Satisfactory in the last period prior to the scholarship, training grant or official leave/maternity leave.

If promoted, the effectivity date of the promotional appointment shall be on the assumption to duty or upon return from scholarship or training grant or official leave/maternity leave.

19. An employee with pending administrative case may be considered for promotion.

20. Promotion within six (6) months prior to compulsory retirement shall not be allowed except as otherwise provided by law.

21. Agencies shall not fill up vacancies resulting from promotion until the promotional appointments have been approved/validated by the CSC, except in meritorious cases, as may be authorized by the Commission (Section 93, Rule IX of CSC Resolution No. 1701009).
22. A notice announcing the appointment of an employee shall be posted in three (3) conspicuous places in the agency for at least fifteen (15) calendar days to start on the day following the issuance of the appointment.
23. The approved agency Merit Selection Plan shall be used as one of the bases for the expeditious approval of appointments, for attestation and accreditation to take final action on appointments.

V. PROCEDURES ON RECRUITMENT

1. Publish the vacant position/s in accordance with Section IV Basic Policies, Item Nos. 4 and 5.
2. Cross-check the applicant's documentary requirements as determined by the guideline set by the agency's HRMPSB.
3. List candidates aspiring for the vacant position, either from within or outside the agency, including qualified next-in-rank employees.
4. Conduct preliminary evaluation of the qualification of all candidates. Those initially found qualified shall undergo further assessment such as: written examination, skills test, interview and others. After which, a shortlist shall be prepared.
 - 4.1 The shortlist shall reflect the comparative competence and qualification of candidates on the basis of their qualifications as prescribed in Section IV Basic Policies Item Nos. 14.1 to 14.5.

The Distribution of percentage weights are allocated as follows:

PROMOTION		
FACTOR		% WEIGHT
PERFORMANCE	.....	35%
EDUCATION	.....	20%
EXPERIENCE	.....	15%
TRAINING	.....	10%
PSYCHOSOCIAL ATTRIBUTES	.....	10%
POTENTIAL	.....	10%
TOTAL		100%

RECRUITMENT	
FACTOR	% WEIGHT
EDUCATION	30%
EXPERIENCE	20%
TRAINING	10%
PSYCHOSOCIAL ATTRIBUTES	20%
POTENTIAL	20%
TOTAL	100%

5. Submit the shortlist to the HRMPSB for interview and deliberation by at least a majority of its members.

Submit the list of candidates who passed the HRMPSB assessment, from which the appointing authority shall choose the applicant to be appointed.

The list of candidates should specify the top five ranking candidates whose over-all scores are comparatively at par based on the comparative assessment under Procedure 4.1 hereof.

To determine candidates who are comparatively at par, the HRMPSB shall set reasonable difference or gap between point scores of candidates for appointment.

6. Take into consideration the merits of the HRMPSB's assessment of shortlisted candidates for vacant positions and in the exercise of sound discretion, select, in so far as practicable, from among the top five ranking applicants deemed most qualified for appointment to the vacant position.
7. Issue appointment in accordance with provisions of the agency Merit Selection Plan.
8. Post a notice announcing the appointment of an employee in three (3) conspicuous places in the agency a day after the issuance of the appointment for at least fifteen (15) days. The date of posting should be indicated in the notice.

VI. PROTEST ON APPOINTMENT

A protest on appointment shall be directly filed with the appointing authority who shall resolve the same in accordance with CSC MC 4, s. 2010 dated February 8, 2010 (Revised Policies in the Resolution of Protest) and Rule 18 of CSC Resolution No. 1701077 dated July 3, 2017.

VII. COMPOSITION OF THE HRMPSB

The composition for the Main Office shall be as follows:

FIRST AND SECOND LEVEL POSITIONS		
	MEMBERS	ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVE
Chairperson	Undersecretary for Administration	Assistant Secretary for Administration
Vice-Chairperson	Assistant Secretary for Administration	Director for Administrative Service
Members	1. Chief of Personnel Division 2. Division Chief or Director of the Organizational Unit where the vacancy exists	Assistant Secretary or Undersecretary concerned
Secretariat	3. 1 st and 2 nd Level rank and file employee duly chosen by the DAEA At least three (3) Personnel Officers	Alternate representatives for the 1st and 2nd Level duly chosen by the DAEA

The prescribed composition for Bureaus, Attached Agencies, and Regional Field Offices shall be as follows:

FIRST AND SECOND LEVEL POSITIONS		
	MEMBERS	ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVE
Chairperson	Assistant Bureau Director/ Deputy Director/ Assistant Regional Director or Highest official in-charge of human resource management	Not applicable
Vice-chairperson	Chief, Administrative Division*	Not applicable
Members	1. HRMO directly responsible for recruitment, selection and placement 2. Division Chief of the Organizational Unit where the vacancy exists	Not applicable Assistant Division Chief where the vacancy exists

	3. 1 st and 2 nd Level rank and file employee duly chosen by the Employees Association	Alternate representatives for the 1st and 2nd Level duly chosen by the Employees Association
Secretariat	At least two (2) Personnel Staff/designated employees	

**In case there is no Chief Administrative Officer Plantilla position in the Agency, the Vice-Chairperson position shall not be part of the HRMPSB.*

EXECUTIVE/MANAGERIAL POSITIONS	
	MEMBERS
Chairperson	Undersecretary/Vice-President or its equivalent, or his/her authorized representative
Members	1. Assistant Secretary or its equivalent, or his/her authorized representative or designated alternate 2. Director for Administration or his/her authorized representative or designated alternate

In case there is no accredited employees' association in the agency, the representatives shall be chosen at large by the employees through a general assembly. The candidate who garnered the second highest votes shall automatically be the alternate representative. Any other mode of selection may be conducted for the purpose.

The first level representative or alternate shall participate during the screening of candidates for vacancies in the first level; the second level representative or alternate shall participate in the screening of candidates for vacancies in the second level. Both rank-and-file representatives shall serve for a period of two (2) years.

The agency head shall issue an Office Order identifying the principal members of the HRMPSB and their designated alternates. The CSCRO and CSCFO should be furnished with a copy of the Office Order.

VIII. FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The Human Resource Management Officer (HRMO) shall have the following functions and responsibilities:
 - 1.1 Disseminate copies of the agency Merit Selection Plan (MSP) and its annexes to all human resource after approval thereof by the Civil Service Commission. An orientation shall also be conducted by the HRM Unit within six (6) months upon approval of the MSP. This orientation is meant to ensure awareness and understanding of the plan. A report on the same

shall be submitted to the Civil Service Field Office concerned for record purposes;

- 1.2 Develop a System of Ranking Positions which will be submitted for approval of the appointing authority, copy furnished the Civil Service Commission and its Field Office concerned, for reference purposes;
- 1.3 Develop a plan which shall set forth the number, knowledge, and skills of human resource needed to achieve the organization's goals, objectives, and programs;
- 1.4 Develop and maintain an updated qualification database of employees of the agency to include education, training, experience, skills, competencies, and other similar information;
- 1.5 Develop a program to fast track the career movement of employees with superior qualifications; and
- 1.6 Publish positions in the first and second level and second level executive/managerial authorized to be filled in the CSC Bulletin of Vacant Position/s and through other modes of publication in accordance with Section IV Item Nos. 4 and 5.
- 1.7 Prepare list of candidates aspiring for the vacant position in accordance with Section V Item No.3.
- 1.8 Conduct preliminary evaluation of the qualification of all candidates, in accordance with the provision of Section V Item No.4.
- 1.9 Submit shortlist to the HRMPSB for deliberation by at least a majority of its members.
2. The employees shall be responsible for updating their Personal Data Sheet annually, if deemed necessary, and submit supporting documents thereof to the HRM Unit.
3. The Human Resource Merit Promotion and Selection Board for first and second levels shall have the following functions and responsibilities:
 - 3.1 Adopt a formal screening procedure and formulate criteria for the evaluation of candidates for appointment, taking into consideration the following:
 - a. Reasonable and valid standards and methods of evaluating the competence and qualifications of all applicants competing for a particular position.
 - b. Criteria for evaluation of qualifications of applicants for appointment must suit the job requirement of the position.

3.2 Disseminate this Merit Selection Plan to all agency officials and employees and interested applicants. Any modification of the procedure and criteria for selection shall likewise be properly disseminated;

3.3 Prepare a systematic assessment of the competence and qualifications of candidates for appointment. Maintain fairness and impartiality in the assessment of candidates. Towards this end, the HRMPSB may employ the assistance of external or independent resource persons and may initiate innovative schemes in determining the best and most qualified candidate.

The external or independent resource persons may assist the HRMPSB but are precluded to give the final ratings on the factors mentioned in Item No. V, No. 4.1 as would be shown on the Comparative Assessment Sheet or the individual Evaluation Form;

3.4 Evaluate and deliberate on the qualifications of individuals listed in the selection line-up by at least a majority of its members;

3.5 Submit the shortlist of candidates who passed the HRMPSB assessment, from which the appointing authority shall choose the applicant to be appointed.

3.6 Maintain records of the deliberations which must be made accessible to interested parties upon written request, subject to the approval of the HRMPSB, and for inspection and audit by the CSC until deemed for disposition by the agency's Records Disposition Schedule (RDS); and

3.7 Orient the officials and employees in the agency pertaining to policies relative to the human resource actions, including the gender and development dimensions of the Merit Promotion Plan.

4. The appointing authority shall have the following functions and responsibilities:

4.1 Establish a HRMPSB and see to it that all HRMPSB members undergo orientation and workshop on the selection/ promotion process and CSC policies on appointment. The agency head shall, as far as practicable, ensure equal opportunity for men and women to be represented in the HRMPSB for all levels;

4.2 Take into consideration the merits of the HRMPSB's assessment of shortlisted candidates for vacant positions and in the exercise of sound discretion, select, in so far as practicable, from among the following:

- Top five ranking applicants deemed most qualified to the vacant position;
- Applicants who have undergone deep selection and found to possess superior qualifications;

4.3 Establish a unit/team through issuance of a Special Order that will be responsible for the conduct of the Background Investigation for shortlisted applicants; and

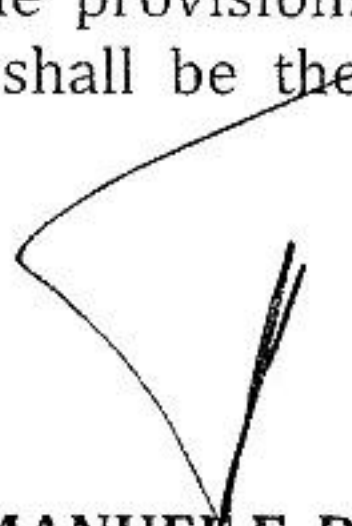
4.4 Issue appointments in accordance with the provisions of the agency MSP.

IX. EFFECTIVITY

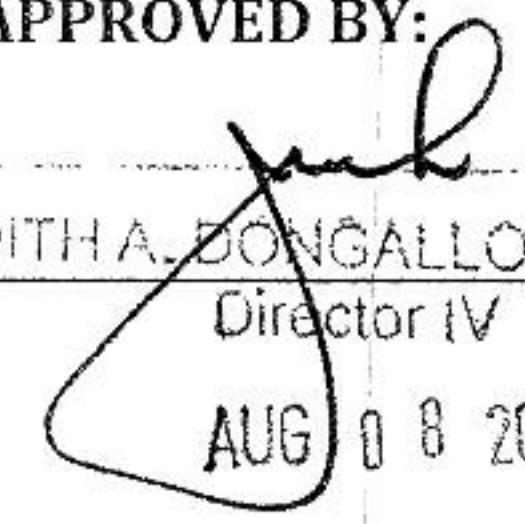
The Merit Selection Plan and subsequent amendments thereto shall take effect immediately after its approval by the Civil Service Commission.

X. COMMITMENT

I hereby commit to implement and abide by the provisions of this Merit Selection Plan. It is understood that this MSP shall be the basis for the expeditious approval of appointments.


EMMANUEL F. PIÑOL
Secretary

APPROVED BY:


JUDITH A. DONGALLO-CHICANO
Director IV

AUG 08 2019

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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