



Republic of the Philippines
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Elliptical Road, Diliman
1100 Quezon City

DEPARTMENT ORDER

No. 06
Series of 2021

SUBJECT: REVISED POLICY ON RATIONALIZATION AND STRENGTHENING OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (DA) NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LABORATORY SERVICES

WHEREAS, there were efforts to rationalize the DA laboratory services and establish institutional links between national laboratories and regional laboratories, through the issuance of Department Order No. 4, s. 2017 *“Department Policy on Rationalizing and Strengthening DA National and Regional Laboratory Services”* and Department Order No. 10, s. 2018 *“Establishing the Institutional Link and Coordination Between the National Laboratories of the Bureaus of Animal Industry, Plant Industry, and Soils and Water Management and the Integrated Laboratories of the Regional Field Offices of the Department of Agriculture”*; but these efforts need to be continued, supported and further strengthened;

WHEREAS, the Department Order No. 4, s. 2017 directed the implementation of policy and approaches to rationalize DA laboratory services, optimize the use of existing laboratory services, and formulate and implement a National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) for DA Laboratories that will rationalize all laboratory services provided by the DA National Agencies, including those by the Food Safety Regulatory Agencies (FSRAs), and the DA Regional Field Offices (DA RFOs) through their Integrated Laboratory Division (ILD); and facilitate the accreditation of the laboratories to the current version of the ISO/IEC 17025 *General Requirements for the Competence of Testing and Calibration Laboratories*;

WHEREAS, the Department Order No. 10, s. 2018 institutionalized the effective and efficient linkage and clearly defined the specific roles and responsibilities of the national laboratories of the Bureaus of Animal Industry, Plant Industry and Soils and Water Management vis-a-vis the ILD of the DA RFOs to promote cooperation on national and regional laboratory development initiatives;

WHEREAS, the Department Order No. 1, s. 2021 *Adoption of the Department of Agriculture Integrated Laboratory Master Plan* was issued to provide a national master plan that will be the basis of construction or renovation of DA Laboratories. It incorporates international bio-risk management standards and best practices for a nominal integrated laboratory campus, in compliance with the National Building Code, National Electrical Code, Philippine Green Building Code, and Code on Sanitation of the Philippines, among others;

WHEREAS, Section 11 of the Republic Act No. 10601 or also known as Agricultural and Fisheries Mechanization Law mandates the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) of the DA, the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), in the enhancement of research and technological development of agricultural and fisheries mechanization, to provide competitive research grants to members of the Network to undertake needs-oriented research as well as institutional development and upgrading of laboratory facilities and equipment;

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WHEREAS, Section 2 of the Executive Order No. 62 s. 2018 Amending Executive Order No. 1 (s. 2016) *"Reengineering the Office of the President Towards Greater Responsiveness to the Attainment of Development Goals, and for other Purposes,"* and Rule 3.4.2 of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of the Republic Act No. 11203 *"An Act Liberalizing the Importation, Exportation and Trading of Rice, Lifting for the Purpose the Quantitative Import Restriction on Rice, and for Other Purposes"* or otherwise known as the Rice Liberalization Act mandate the transfer of and the formulation of guidelines and organizational modification plan on the transfer of the Food Development Center (FDC) from the National Food Authority (NFA) to the Department of Agriculture - Office of the Secretary (DA – OSEC). The FDC, formerly under the NFA, is responsible for providing scientific support on food safety particularly on testing, research and training;

WHEREAS, Rule 16.11 and Rule 16. 15 of the IRR of the Republic Act No. 10611 or the *Food Safety Act of 2013* mandates FDC as the Coordinating Laboratory for DA Laboratories and states that FDC shall provide scientific support in testing, research and training;

WHEREAS, consistent with the Department's "One DA" holistic approach strategies for food safety and regulations, that includes strengthening institutional capacity to implement food safety measures for both local and export products and ensuring industry compliance with various food safety codes, rules and regulations, it is imperative to optimize the utilization and efficiency of DA laboratories, as well as to strengthen the roles of the laboratories in providing accurate data for use in regulations and enforcement, research and development, standards development, production, extension and marketing services for the agriculture and fishery sectors;

IN VIEW THEREOF, this Order is issued to harmonize all prior relevant issuances and redefine the responsibilities and roles for the effective and efficient linkages of the national and regional laboratories, and direct the development and implementation of policy and approaches to rationalize DA laboratory services, optimize the use of existing laboratory resources, and formulate and implement a National Strategic Development Plan for DA Laboratories.

SECTION I

DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. *Coordination and planning* refer to activities relevant to such as, but not limited to the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP), prioritization and evaluation of proposals, monitoring and surveillance, and establishment of Laboratory Information Management Systems (LIMS).
2. *DA Laboratories* refer to all testing laboratories of the DA such as the national and regional laboratories, including service and research laboratories of the DA Agencies and the Integrated Laboratory Divisions (ILDs) of the DA Regional Field Offices (DA RFOs).
3. *Integrated Laboratories* refer to regional laboratories operating under the administrative supervision of the Regional Executive Director of the DA-RFOs. Their operation and laboratory development are guided by the national laboratories of BAI, BPI and BSWM.

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4. *Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS)* refers to a software-based solution with features to support modern laboratory's operations. It is intended for storage and management of information obtained in the course of the work of the laboratory. It is used to control and manage samples, standards, test results, reports, laboratory staff, instruments, and workflow automation, leading to implementation of the Laboratory's Quality Control Program.
5. *Laboratory Services* refer to the services offered by testing laboratories, either service or research laboratories. Laboratory services include physical, chemical and microbiological analyses, and/or animal disease and plant pest and disease diagnostics.
6. *Management Information System (MIS)* refers to a set of combined procedures that gathers and produces reliable, relevant and properly organized data that supports the decision making process of an organization. It shall serve as platform/tool for interlaboratory collaboration and exchange of data to facilitate the cohesiveness of laboratory outputs/services for ease of reporting.
7. *National laboratories* refer to the laboratories of bureaus, attached agencies, and corporations of the DA operating at the national level. These laboratories may have laboratories located either at the national or at their regional offices.
8. *National Strategic Development Plan* refers to the roadmap, plan or list of strategies to achieve the goal of the rationalization and strengthening of DA laboratory services.
9. *Operation* refers to activities relevant to such as but not limited to conduct of laboratory testing, compliance of laboratories to standards, standardization of laboratory fees and services, and reporting of laboratory data.
10. *Rationalization*, for the purpose of this policy, refers to the streamlining and harmonization of laboratory operations (services and fees) to optimize the utilization of funds, facilities, equipment, among others, and efficiency of DA laboratories.
11. *Regional laboratories* refer to laboratories of the National laboratories of the bureau and attached agencies and corporations of the DA operating in the regions.
12. *Research laboratories* refer to those laboratories that analyze samples from experiments performed by the research units within their organization. The analytical work conducted in these laboratories can be a mixture of standard analyses and more specific research analyses of specific commodities mandated to its organization (e.g., PhilFIDA - fibers, PhilRice - Rice)
13. *Service laboratories* refer to laboratories that provide laboratory support to commercial clients and DA stakeholders such as farmers and fisherfolks. These laboratories may collect fees from commercial clients. Service laboratories offer a wide range of analytical services to different commodities and matrices. Its services range from physical, chemical, animal disease diagnostics, and plant pest and disease diagnostics. This type of laboratory pursues acquiring higher throughput scientific equipment to cater the volume of samples analyzed by the laboratory. This laboratory also provides services to the research unit of its organization where a research laboratory was not established.

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14. *Testing laboratories* is a collective term to all laboratories performing testing and analysis of samples either as a support to DA stakeholders or research units of the Department.

SECTION II SCOPE AND COVERAGE

This Department Order covers national and regional laboratories, including service and research laboratories of the DA Agencies and the Integrated Laboratory Divisions (ILDs) of the DA Regional Field Offices (DA RFOs). It also covers the Information and Communication Technology Service (ICTS), Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Engineering (BAFE), DA Planning and Monitoring Services (DA PMS) as support to DA Laboratories.

SECTION III OBJECTIVES

This Order aims to:

1. Establish institutional coordination mechanism for the rationalization of laboratory services and enhancement of the linkage and coordination among DA Laboratories; and
2. Ensure continuous provision of technical support, research grants and guidance on further strengthening of the capabilities and capacities of DA Laboratories to support policies and procedures, regulations and enforcement, research and development, standards development, production, extension and marketing services for the agriculture and fishery sectors.

SECTION IV INSTITUTIONAL AND COORDINATION MECHANISM

Institutional and coordination mechanism to effectively and efficiently implement the rationalization and strengthening of DA national and regional laboratory services is illustrated as ANNEX 1.

4.1 Undersecretary for Policy and Planning. The Undersecretary for Policy and Planning shall have the oversight function in the implementation of this Department Order, and shall provide the overall policy direction for the rationalization and strengthening of DA laboratory services.

4.2 Executive Committee. For this purpose, an Executive Committee shall be established and shall be headed by the Undersecretary for Policy and Planning and composed of the Heads of the agencies enumerated in this Section, with the Food Development Center (FDC) serving as the Secretariat.

The Executive Committee shall establish policies and procedures for the prioritization of resources needed to optimize the utilization and efficiency of DA Laboratories. The Executive Committee shall also monitor and evaluate the accomplishments and status of rationalization of DA laboratory services. The Chair of the Executive Committee shall call for a meeting on a semi-annual basis. Additional meetings may be called upon by the Chair, as deemed necessary.

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The Executive Committee shall provide guidance and ensure unified and aligned efforts in subsequent issuances concerning the DA Laboratories. In the instance of agency modification, the Executive Committee shall ensure that the delivery of services is maintained in accordance with the mandate of the laboratory and the agency.

4.3 Food Development Center (FDC). The FDC in its capacity as the Coordinating Laboratory for DA Laboratories shall also act as the Secretariat of the Executive Committee.

The FDC shall have the following functions relevant to overall coordination, planning, and operations:

4.3.1. Overall coordination and planning

4.3.1.1. Lead in the overall coordination and facilitation of activities relevant to the rationalization of DA laboratory services. This shall include, but not limited to formulation, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and updating of:

- 4.3.1.1.1. NSDP, laboratory policies, protocols for DA Laboratories;
- 4.3.1.1.2. Testing programs, and monitoring and surveillance plans of DA Laboratories;
- 4.3.1.1.3. Management Information System (MIS) in collaboration with ICTS and DA units; and
- 4.3.1.1.4. Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) for DA Laboratories in collaboration with ICTS and respective DA Laboratories.

Outputs of 4.3.1.1.3 and 4.3.1.1.4 shall be made available for DA agencies for use in regulations and enforcement, research and development, standards development, production, extension and marketing services;

The FDC shall ensure the formulation of the NSDP within 1 year upon effectivity of this Department Order.

4.3.1.2. Lead in the overall needs assessment of DA Laboratories, and in the formulation of guidelines and criteria for laboratory development prioritization consistent with the DA overall policy directions issued by the Secretary. Submit reports to the Executive Committee, thereafter, as inputs for the prioritization of laboratories to be given support and resources to develop and/or enhance its capability;

The FDC shall spearhead the creation of the Technical Working Group (TWG) composed of representatives from national DA laboratories as enumerated in Section 4.4.

4.3.1.3. Update the Supplementary Guidelines for the Formulation and Preparation of Plan and Budget Proposals (PBPs) of the DA Laboratories in collaboration with DA PMS;

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- 4.3.1.4. Lead in the overall review and evaluation of submitted Plan and Budget Proposals (PBPs) and Work and Financial Plans (WFPs) of DA Laboratories, and consolidate the PBPs and WFPs for the operation and maintenance of the Integrated Laboratory Division of DA RFOs in coordination with DA PMS; and
- 4.3.1.5. Support the DA Laboratories in their institutional development and upgrading of laboratory facilities, through endorsement of request for research grants from the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) or other funding agencies.

The FDC shall ensure that results of the overall assessment performed by the TWG shall be used as basis in the formulation of their research grant proposals.

4.3.2. Operation

- 4.3.2.1. Lead in the overall assessments of DA Laboratories in compliance with the following:
 - 4.3.2.1.1. Statutory laws or regulations relevant to laboratory operations;
 - 4.3.2.1.2. ISO/IEC 17025 *General Requirements for the Competence of Testing and Calibration Laboratories*
- 4.3.2.2. Provide capacity building activities for, but not limited to Good Laboratory Practices (GLP), Quality Assurance, Equipment Maintenance and Calibration, Method Validation and Verification;
- 4.3.2.3. Coordinate the participation of DA Laboratories to Proficiency Testing and Inter-Laboratory Comparison exercises towards obtaining ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation;
- 4.3.2.4. Spearhead the development and implementation of guidelines for laboratory networking, the harmonization of testing services and facilitate the standardization of laboratory fees among DA Laboratories;

The FDC shall spearhead the creation of an ad hoc TWG for the harmonization/standardization of testing services and testing fees. ANNEX 2 provides the composition, specific functions and responsibilities of the ad hoc TWG.

Other TWGs may be created with corresponding Terms of Reference to address other concerns.

- 4.3.2.5. Serve as the overall administrator of the MIS and shall:
 - 4.3.2.5.1. Engage DA agencies in the operationalization of the MIS;
 - 4.3.2.5.2. Consolidate and analyse the data generated; and
 - 4.3.2.5.3. Facilitate the access of data to relevant DA units for use in regulations and enforcement, research and development, standards development, production, extension and marketing services.

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- 4.3.2.6. Submit semi-annual monitoring reports to the Executive Committee highlighting the accomplishments and status of rationalization of DA laboratory services. The report shall be submitted either in writing and or in electronic form to the Chair of the Executive Committee within 15 days prior to the end of the semester.

4.4. National Agencies with Laboratories.

- 4.4.1. The following are the agencies that have laboratories either at the national or at their regional offices.

- 4.4.1.1. Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA)
- 4.4.1.2. National Dairy Authority (NDA)
- 4.4.1.3. National Fisheries Research and Development Institute (NFRDI)
- 4.4.1.4. Philippine Rubber Research Institute (PRRI)
- 4.4.1.5. Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI)
- 4.4.1.6. Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR)
- 4.4.1.7. Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI)
- 4.4.1.8. Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM)
- 4.4.1.9. National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS)
- 4.4.1.10. National Tobacco Authority (NTA)
- 4.4.1.11. Philippine Carabao Center (PCC)
- 4.4.1.12. Philippine Center for Postharvest Research and Mechanization (PhilMech)
- 4.4.1.13. Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA)
- 4.4.1.14. Philippine Fiber Industry Development Authority (PhilFIDA)
- 4.4.1.15. Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice)
- 4.4.1.16. Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA)

- 4.4.2. The laboratories of the national agencies including its laboratories at the regions shall have the following functions relevant to coordination, planning, and operations:

4.4.2.1. Coordination and planning

- 4.4.2.1.1. Ensure the participation of their regional laboratories in activities relevant to the rationalization of DA laboratory services as specified in Section IV 4.3.1.1 and ascertain that outputs of these efforts are translated and adopted by laboratories in their regional offices;
- 4.4.2.1.2. Participate in activities relevant to the rationalization of DA laboratory services. This shall include, but not limited to:
 - 4.4.2.1.2.1. formulation and implementation of NSDP, laboratory policies, and protocols for DA Laboratories;
 - 4.4.2.1.2.2. alignment of programs to the National Development Plans of DA;
 - 4.4.2.1.2.3. monitoring of work programs and testing activities to ensure compliance of central and laboratories at the region with prescribed laboratory policies, protocols, and standards developed;
 - 4.4.2.1.2.4. submission of reports and recommendations thereof to FDC for consolidation and consideration to the national strategic development plan for DA laboratories;

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- 4.4.2.1.2.5. development and implementation of testing programs, and monitoring and surveillance plans;
- 4.4.2.1.2.6. submission of inputs to the ICTS and concerned agencies for the development of the MIS; and
- 4.4.2.1.2.7. establishment of LIMS of their respective laboratories, in collaboration with FDC and ICTS.

Ensure that outputs of these efforts are translated and adopted by the respective laboratories;

- 4.4.2.1.3. Participate in the overall needs assessment, and in the formulation and implementation of guidelines and criteria for laboratory development prioritization;
- 4.4.2.1.4. Comply with the provisions of the Supplementary Guidelines for the Formulation and Preparation of PBPs of the DA Laboratories;
- 4.4.2.1.5. Formulate PBPs and WFPs that are aligned with the efforts for the rationalization of DA laboratory services.

4.4.2.2. **Operation**

- 4.4.2.2.1. Comply with statutory laws or regulations relevant to laboratory operations and participate in the overall assessments of compliance of laboratories with ISO/IEC 17025 standard led by FDC;
- 4.4.2.2.2. Develop and implement SOPs for their respective laboratories as specified in Section IV 4.3.2.2;
- 4.4.2.2.3. Participate in the development of guidelines for laboratory networking, and implement harmonized testing services and standardized fees for DA laboratory services;
- 4.4.2.2.4. Submit regular reports to FDC for the MIS as inputs for purposes specified in Section IV 4.3.2.5.3; and
- 4.4.2.2.5. Closely coordinate with FDC to ensure the successful implementation of this Order.

4.5. **The following laboratories of BAI, BPI and BSWM shall be linked with the Component Laboratories of the ILD of the DA RFOs:**

1. Animal Disease Diagnosis and Reference Laboratory of the BAI
2. Feed and Chemical Analysis Section of the BAI
3. Crop Pest Management Division of the BPI
4. Laboratory Services Division of the BSWM

The laboratories of BAI, BPI and BSWM linked with the Integrated Laboratories of the DA RFOs shall have the following functions:

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4.5.1. Coordination and planning

- 4.5.1.1. Ensure the participation of the ILD of DA RFOs in activities relevant to the rationalization of DA laboratory services as specified in Section IV 4.3.1.1 and ascertain that outputs of these efforts are translated and adopted by the component laboratories;
- 4.5.1.2. Strengthen their linkage through collaborative efforts towards but not limited to:
 - 4.5.1.2.1. providing assistance in the identification of testing and non-testing activities of the component laboratories;
 - 4.5.1.2.2. establishing and cascading of testing and monitoring protocols that are consistent with national and/or international standards to the component laboratories;
 - 4.5.1.2.3. regular monitoring and evaluation of performance and implementation of work programs and testing activities of the component laboratories of ILDs.
- 4.5.1.3. Organize proficiency testing and Inter-Laboratory Comparison exercises, one of the requirements towards obtaining ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation;
- 4.5.1.4. Conduct needs assessments of the ILD of DA RFOs as inputs to laboratory development prioritization; and participate in the formulation and implementation of its guidelines and criteria;
- 4.5.1.5. Coordinate with FDC in the updating of and complying with Supplementary Guidelines for the Formulation and Preparation of PBPs of the Integrated Laboratories of DA RFOs; and
- 4.5.1.6. Review, evaluate and consolidate PBPs and WFPs of the Integrated Laboratory Division of DA RFOs through its component laboratories, ensuring that engineering designs for infrastructure proposals are reviewed by BAFE or Regional Agricultural Engineering Division (RAED); and submit consolidation to FDC for onward endorsement to DA PMS.

4.5.2. Operation

- 4.5.2.1. Comply with statutory laws or regulations relevant to laboratory operations and lead in the assessments of compliance of ILD of DA RFOs through its component laboratories with ISO/IEC 17025 standard;
- 4.5.2.2. Provide technical support and guidance to the Integrated Laboratory Division of DA RFOs through its component laboratories in the development and implementation of SOPs, as specified in Section IV 4.3. 2.2, for their component laboratories;
- 4.5.2.3. Lead in the implementation of guidelines for laboratory networking, the harmonization of testing services and facilitate the standardization of laboratory for the ILD of DA-RFOs through its component laboratories;

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4.5.2.4. Submit regular reports to FDC for the MIS as inputs for purposes specified in Section IV 4.3.2.5.3; and

4.5.2.5. Closely coordinate with FDC to ensure the successful implementation of this Order.

4.6. Integrated Laboratory Division of DA RFOs. The ILD of DA RFOs through their component laboratories shall be linked to the national laboratories of the BAI, BPI and BSWM through the following mechanism.

1. Regional Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (RADDL) is linked with the Animal Disease Diagnosis and Reference Laboratory of the BAI;
2. Feed Chemical Analysis Laboratory (FCAL) is linked with the Feed and Chemical Analysis Section of the BAI;
3. Regional Crop Protection Center (RCPC) is linked with the Crop Pest Management Division of the BPI; and
4. Regional Soils Laboratory (RSL) is linked with the Laboratory Services Division of the BSWM.

In addition to their existing functions and responsibilities, the Integrated Laboratory Divisions of DA-RFOs shall have the following functions:

4.6.1. Coordination and planning

- 4.6.1.1. Participate in activities relevant to the rationalization of DA laboratory services, as specified in Section IV 4.3.1.1. through the technical leadership of BAI, BPI and BSWM; and conform to the laboratory policies, protocols, and standards prescribed by BAI, BPI and BSWM;
- 4.6.1.2. Strengthen linkage with corresponding national laboratories of BAI, BPI and BSWM through participation in collaborative efforts as specified in Section IV 4.5.1.2;
- 4.6.1.3. Plan laboratory development according to the guidelines and criteria for prioritization set by BAI, BPI and BSWM;
- 4.6.1.4. Comply with the provisions of the Supplementary Guidelines for the Formulation and Preparation of PBPs of their laboratories; and
- 4.6.1.5. Formulate PBPs and WFPs that are aligned with the efforts for the rationalization of DA laboratory services, ensuring that engineering designs for infrastructure proposals are reviewed by BAFE or RAED; and submit these to corresponding national laboratories specified in Section IV 4.5 of this Order.

4.6.2. Operation

- 4.6.2.1. Comply with statutory laws or regulations relevant to laboratory operations and participate in the assessments of compliance of laboratories with ISO/IEC 17025 standard led by BAI, BPI and BSWM;

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- 4.6.2.2. Collaborate with BAI, BPI and BSWM in the development and implementation of SOPs for respective laboratories;
- 4.6.2.3. Participate on laboratory networking, the harmonization of testing services and standardization of laboratory fees among DA Laboratories; and
- 4.6.2.4. Submit regular reports to their corresponding national laboratory, i.e., BAI, BPI and BSWM copy furnished to FDC for the MIS as inputs for purposes specified in Section IV 4.3.2.5.3.

4.7. Information and Communication Technology Service (ICTS). In addition to their existing functions and responsibilities, the ICTS shall have the following functions:

- 4.7.1. Engage in a collaborative effort with FDC, DA Offices for Regulations and Operation in the development and establishment of the MIS in the Department that will serve as instrument/platform for collection, repository, processing and reporting of data generated by the DA Laboratories essential for regulatory and enforcement, research and development, standards development, production, extension and marketing services;
- 4.7.2. Provide guidance to DA Laboratories in the establishment and operationalization of the Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS). The DA ICTS shall also ensure that LIMS of the DA Laboratories will connect with an overarching DA MIS;
- 4.7.3. Ensure the inclusion of the needed ICT resources in the DA Information Systems Strategic Plan (DA ISSP) to support the development, implementation, and maintenance of the DA LIMS; and
- 4.7.4. Coordinate with FDC in the overall implementation of this Order.

4.8. Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Engineering (BAFE). In addition to their existing functions and responsibilities, the BAFE shall have the following functions:

- 4.8.1. Responsible in overseeing and providing technical assistance to the operations of the Regional Agricultural Engineering Division (RAED) of the DA RFOs, as well as providing guidance to the DA bureaus, attached agencies, and corporations on the integration of biosafety, -security, and -surveillance measures in laboratory facilities;
- 4.8.2. Oversee the implementation of engineering and administrative overhead expenses (EAO) in proposals for the construction and maintenance of DA Laboratory infrastructure in accordance with the DA Integrated Laboratory Master Plan; and
- 4.8.3. Coordinate with FDC in the overall implementation of this Order.

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4.9. DA Planning and Monitoring Service (DA PMS)

In collaboration with DA Budget Division, provide guidance to FDC in the performance of their responsibilities in the review, evaluation and consolidation of proposals; and

SECTION V RECOGNITION OF TESTING LABORATORIES

Consistent with Section 30 (e) of the Food Safety Act (FSA) of 2013, DA Agencies may recognize private testing laboratories accredited by the Department of Trade and Industry Philippine Accreditation Bureau (DTI-PAB) to support their testing needs.

Accreditation of a private and non-private testing laboratory shall be in accordance with the definition as prescribed in Section 4, Rule 4.1.a of the FSA. DA Agencies shall formulate guidelines for accreditation, as necessary.

SECTION VI FUNDING

1. The DA, through the assistance of DA-PMS and DA-FMS, shall ensure the provision of necessary funding and/or manpower to support the sustainable implementation of this Department Order.
2. The use of income from laboratory fees to support regular laboratory operations shall be proposed by DA under a special provision of the General Appropriations Act.
3. The DA Laboratories, in partnership with the FDC, shall formulate research grant proposals intended for institutional development and upgrading of laboratory facilities and submit these to the BAR or other funding organizations. The grant proposal shall be guided by the results of the overall assessment.

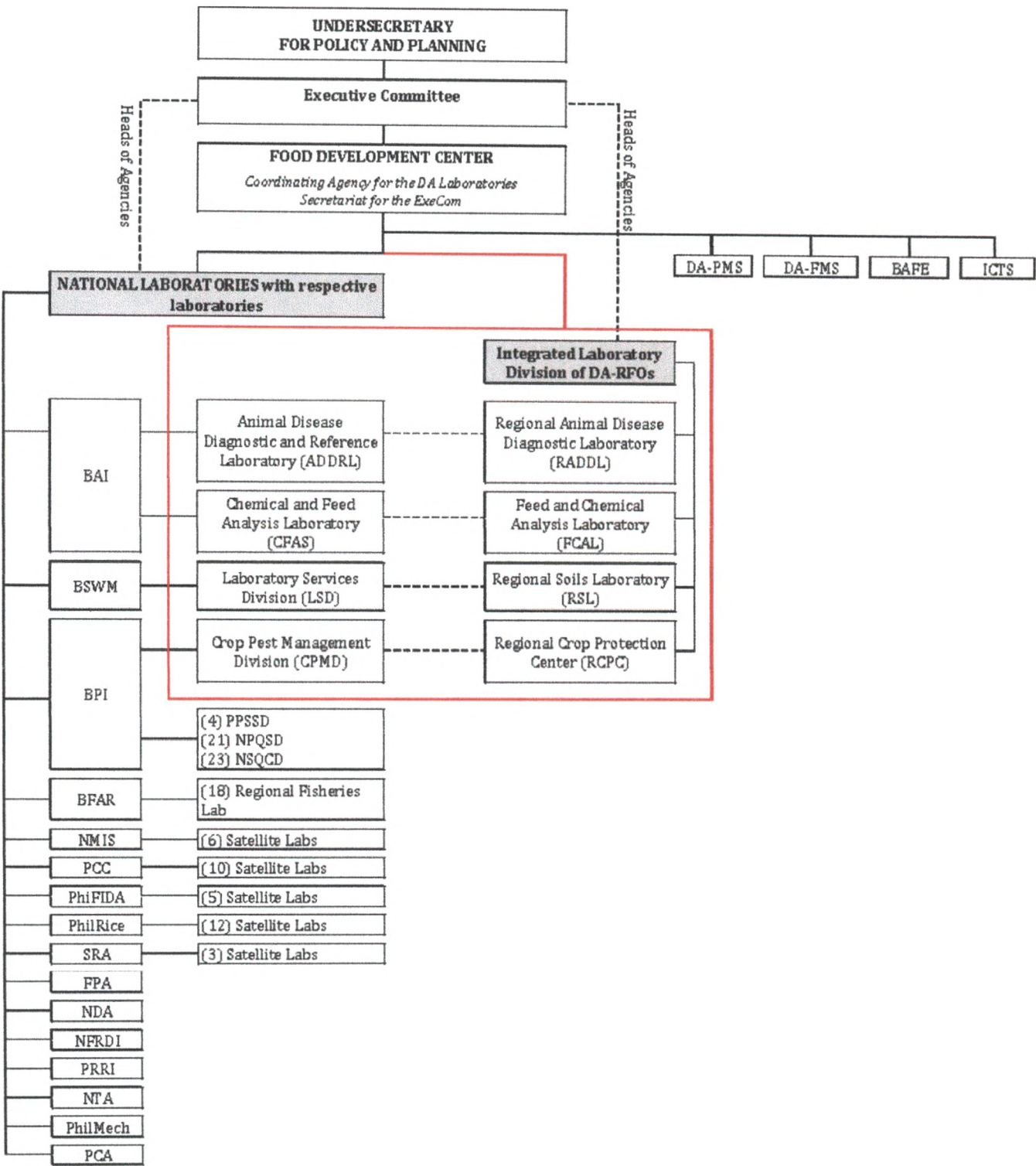
SECTION VII TRANSITION

A transition period of one hundred and eighty (180) days or six (6) months after the effectivity of this Order shall be provided to allow the smooth transition of responsibility from BAFS to FDC; and to allow the FDC to incorporate the provisions of this Order into their organization. The FDC shall allocate manpower and budgetary resources to support and sustain the smooth transition and implementation of this Order. The BAFS shall ensure proper endorsement of all relevant documents on the rationalization and strengthening of DA laboratory services.

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SECTION IV
INSTITUTIONAL AND COORDINATION MECHANISM



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Ad Hoc TWG on the Harmonization/Standardization of Testing Services and Testing Fees of DA Laboratories

Composition:

<i>Lead Coordinator:</i>	Director, Food Development Center (FDC)
<i>Chairperson:</i>	Designated Focal Person
<i>Vice Chairperson:</i>	Designated Focal from the Office of the Undersecretary for Policy and Planning
<i>Members:</i>	Designated Focal Persons of the DA Laboratories listed in Sections 4.4 - 4.6, including the regional laboratories, of this Order
<i>Secretariat:</i>	Food Development Center (FDC)

Functions and Responsibilities:

1. Provide technical inputs for laboratory networking and towards the harmonization of testing services and standardization of laboratory fees among DA Laboratories.
2. Review and evaluate the operation of DA laboratories particularly its testing services and laboratory fees and charges.
3. Coordinate with relevant DA Offices and offices outside DA mandated or tasked to provide assistance on the determination of fees and rates, particularly laboratory services.
4. Conduct consultation and exchange of information on laboratory services within the DA, as well as with other relevant stakeholders from private and public sectors.
5. Monitor the implementation of activities for laboratory networking, harmonization of testing services and standardization of laboratory fees.
6. The ad hoc TWG shall meet on a quarterly basis, or as deemed necessary.

**SECTION VIII
REPEALING CLAUSE**

Department Order No. 4, s. 2017 and Department Order No. 10, s. 2018 are hereby repealed.

All Circulars, Orders and issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Department Order are likewise revoked.

**SECTION IX
EFFECTIVITY**

This Order shall take effect immediately and upon registration with the Office of the National Administrative Register (ONAR) and remain in force until revoked or amended.

Done this 25th day of October, 2021.


WILLIAM D. DAR, Ph.D.
Secretary

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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