



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
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MEMORANDUM

FOR : The Regional Executive Directors
Regions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
NCR, CAR, Regions 4A and 4B, Region 13 (CARAGA)

FROM : The Assistant Secretary for Policy, Planning and
Foreign-Assisted Projects

SUBJECT : **DRAFT DENR ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER ENTITLED
“IMPLEMENTING GUIDELINES RELATIVE TO THE
OPERATIONS OF THE RIVER BASIN CONTROL OFFICE
(RBCO)”**

DATE : 15 JAN 2021

This refers to the draft administrative order prepared by RBCO entitled **“Implementing Guidelines Relative to the Operations of the River Basin Control Office (RBCO)”**.

Following the issuance of E.O. 510 and Executive Order No. 810, RBCO was mandated as the lead agency for integrated planning, management, rehabilitation and development of country’s river basin and was declared as the oversight agency for all government effort and initiatives within the country’s river basins and to lead the implementation of the Integrated River Basin Management and Development Framework (IRBMDF).

As the lead government agency to implement the IRBMDF, DENR-RBCO other activities also includes: (i) formation and operationalization of the River Basin Organization; (ii) harmonize all relevant national river basin policies and formulate new policies for effective and efficient management and governance of the country’s river basin; (iii) establishment and maintenance of river basin data; (iv) capacity building; and (v) creation of the River Basin Management Office at the Regional level.

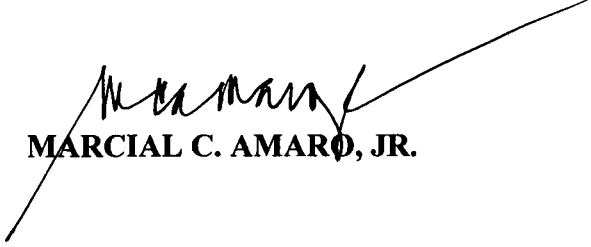
Due to the above-mentioned enormous tasks, DENR-RBCO faces some challenges in its operations such (i) as lack of plantilla positions at the Central Office; (ii) limited institutional mandate and capacity; and (iii) some regions have not established their Regional River Basin Management Office and its structure.

The draft DAO was drafted in order to address and provide coherent guidelines towards the functional operation of the RBCO, one of which is thru the institutionalization of the said Office and its units down to the CENRO level.

The draft was already reviewed by the DENR Policy Technical Working Group (PTWG) in September 2020 and was recommended for endorsement subject for vetting of the Undersecretaries prior to Secretary's approval. However due to the establishment of the Regional River Basin Project Management Office (RBPMO) which falls under your jurisdiction, it would be essential to solicit your inputs and/or concurrence on the draft guidelines.

In this regard, please submit your inputs and/or concurrence on the draft DAO guidelines on or before 29 January 2021, otherwise, we shall consider the lack of feedback at your end as your concurrence to the same.

For your preferential and appropriate action.



MARCIAL C. AMARO, JR.



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DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
NO. 2021 - _____

SUBJECT : IMPLEMENTING GUIDELINES RELATIVE TO THE OPERATIONS OF THE RIVER BASIN CONTROL OFFICE (RBCO)

Pursuant to Executive Order No. 510, s. of 2006 creating the River Basin Control Office (RBCO) under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Executive Order No. 816, s. of 2009 declaring the RBCO as the lead government agency for the integrated planning, management, rehabilitation and development of the country's river basins, Executive Order No. 192 otherwise known as the "Reorganization Act of the DENR", and consistent to the provisions of Republic Act 9742 to integrate the concept of climate change in various phases of policy formulation, development plans, poverty reduction strategies and other development tools and techniques by all agencies and instrumentalities of the government, the following institutional mechanism for the efficient and effective operation of the RBCO is hereby established for the guidance of all concerned.

SECTION 1. Basic Policy. It shall be the policy of the State to pursue economic growth consistent with the conservation, protection, development and regulation of the country's water resources to achieve social development, economic progress and ecological stability. In view hereof, the State shall strengthen, integrate, consolidate and institutionalize government initiatives to achieve coordination in the implementation of plans and programs to address climate change in the context of sustainable development.

SECTION 2. Objectives. This Order aims to provide a coherent guideline towards the functional operation of the RBCO, particularly:

- 2.1 To institutionalize the RBCO and its units providing a concrete structure and functions of the River Basin Management Offices or Units (RBMOs/RBMUs) down to the CENRO level;
- 2.2 To provide effective, climate-resilient and gender-responsive strategies for the sustainable management and development of the Philippine River Basins;
- 2.3 To provide basis for the strategic planning, programming and budgeting of PAPs within river basin approach;
- 2.4 To promote and harness stakeholder collaboration and cooperation through holistic efforts in conserving and protecting the river basin under the thematic areas namely; water resources, watershed, wetland, disaster risk reduction, economic and institutional development;
- 2.5 To encourage other government agencies, Local Government Units (LGUs), civil society organizations, business sectors, corporations, academe and other stakeholders to take an active role in river basin and river system management; and

- 2.6 To maximize the use of public information and education on river basin and river systems management as a mechanism for active participation of the stakeholders

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms. As used in this Order, the following terms shall be construed as follows:

- 3.1 *Coastal and Wetland Resources Management* - a strategy that manages areas that are submerged or soaked by enough surface or groundwater to support ecosystems such as mangroves, coral reefs, swamps, rice paddies, estuaries, lakes and reservoirs.
- 3.2 *Disaster Risk Reduction and Management* – the systematic approach to identifying, assessing and reducing the risks of disaster. It aims to reduce socio-economic vulnerabilities to disaster as well as dealing with the environmental and other hazards that trigger them.
- 3.3 *Economic Development* - the process by which a state improves the economic, political, and social well-being of its people
- 3.4 *Forest Ecosystems and Biodiversity Management* - the conservation management and planning approach that organizes land, people, and other resources in the watershed to provide goods and services without harming the soil and water.
- 3.5 *Integrated River Basin Management and Development (IRBMD) Master Plan* - a management and development plan formulated in a particular river basin with the application of an integrated river basin management approach intended to address several concerns related to watershed conservation, river basin rehabilitation, flood control/ mitigation, and water security for domestic, irrigation and industrial use, livelihood and economic opportunities in the area.
- 3.6 *Major River Basin* - a river basin area of more than 1,000sq.km.
- 3.7 *Principal River Basin* - a river basin area of 1,000 sq.km and below.
- 3.8 *River Basin* - an area drained by a river and all of its tributaries. A river basin is made up of many different watersheds.
- 3.9 *River Basin Project Management Office (RBPMO)* - a planning, monitoring and coordinating office in the regional level.
- 3.10 *River Basin Project Management Unit (RBPMU)* - a planning, monitoring and coordinating unit within the PENR and CENR Offices.
- 3.11 *River Basin Organization (RBO) or River Basin Management Council (RBMC)* a decision-making body or organization for basin-wide integrated river basin management.
- 3.12 *River Restoration and Enhancement* – is the process of managing rivers to reinstate natural processes to restore biodiversity, providing benefits to both people and wildlife
- 3.13 *River System* -consists of a system or group of rivers so united that the water carried by minor component streams finally unites in one body of flowing water which empties into a larger bodies of water.

- 3.14 *Water Resources Management* - the sustainable management of fresh water as an economic and public good while recognizing its vulnerability and limited supply

SECTION 4. Scope and Coverage. This Order shall cover the implementation of EO 510 series of 2006 and EO 816 series of 2009 on the roles and functions, structure and operation of the RBCO as the Lead Agency for the integrated planning, management, rehabilitation and development of the country's river basins including the following 18 Major River Basins namely:

- 4.1 Cagayan River Basin;
- 4.2 Mindanao River Basin;
- 4.3 Agusan River Basin;
- 4.4 Pampanga River Basin;
- 4.5 Agno River Basin;
- 4.6 Abra River Basin;
- 4.7 Bicol River Basin;
- 4.8 Apayao-Abulug River Basin;
- 4.9 Tagum-Libuganon River Basin;
- 4.10 IlogHilabangan River Basin;
- 4.11 Panay River Basin;
- 4.12 Tagoloan River Basin;
- 4.13 Ranao (Agus) River Basin;
- 4.14 Davao River Basin;
- 4.15 Cagayan de Oro River Basin;
- 4.16 Jalaur River Basin;
- 4.17 Buayan-Malungon River Basin; and
- 4.18 Other Principal River Basins

SECTION 5. River Basin Control Office (RBCO). The RBCO created under the DENR shall act as the Lead Government Agency for integrated planning, management, rehabilitation and development of country's river basins. It shall be headed by an Undersecretary to be assisted by the Executive Director of appropriate rank. (Annex 1)

- 5.1 **Roles and Functions of the RBCO.** The RBCO shall have the following functions
- a. Rationalize and integrate all national plans, projects and programs within the country's river catchment basins, with the authority to serve as the oversight office of all various government agencies and corporations with relevant and related river basin initiatives, projects and programs such as, but not limited to, river basin infrastructure development, flood control, disaster risk management, environmental protection and integrated water resources management. To this end, such government agencies and corporations shall coordinate their planned and ongoing river basin initiatives with the RBCO, to which the RBCO shall review and endorse approval and funding from the national budget thereof, as may be provided under existing laws, rules and regulations;
 - b. Harmonize all relevant national river basin policies and formulate new policies and create enabling policy environment that shall allow effective and efficient management and governance of the of the country's river basins.
 - c. Enhance partnerships through program convergence, technical assistance or any form of collaboration with national government agencies and

corporation with the assistance of NEDA, DILG, DOST, DPWH, DA, DENR, DHSUD and OCD, and the other concerned Local Government Units to undertake risk assessments of river basins using the Climate and Disaster Risk Assessment (CDRA), Rapid Earthquake Damage Assessment (REDAS) or other appropriate hazard and risk assessment tool, in the conduct of proper risk assessments as a basis in the identification and development of various programs across its thematic areas and incorporating methodologies and tools to assess threats posed by solid waste, liquid waste and habitat degradation;

- d. Serve as the National Policy Coordination Office for Local Government Units (LGU) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) in the development and sustainability of all river and catchment basins, for which the RBCO shall recommend the approval and funding thereof of national government agency and corporations' support to such local and non-government river and catchment basin initiatives;
- e. In-charge of the coordination, convergence, monitoring and evaluation of DENR's programs and projects within the country's river basins as indicated in the RDC-endorsed Integrated River Basin Management and Development Master Plan in which include but not limited to water quality management, potable water systems, agricultural irrigation, sanitary interventions, hydropower generation projects, river restoration and enhancement, flood control, forecasting and mitigation initiatives, ecotourism and recreation activities, economic livelihood programs and navigation. ;
- f. Serve as the government's Central River Basin Database Management Agency, to which all government agencies and existing river basin organizations with relevant mandates and developmental initiatives within the river basins are required to cooperate and regularly submit their updated databases for integration and consolidation by RBCO using a River Basin Integrated Information Management System.

SECTION 6. Roles and Functions of the National Government Agencies in River Basin Management.¹ Planning and assessment of water resources is a collaborative effort by several agencies of government. The following are the roles and functions of the different government agencies and their specific unit in relation to the development and sustainability of all river and catchments basins in the country:

6.1 DENR

- a. Regulates water service providers including some LGU-managed water utilities in terms of water supply tariff and coverage and services;
- b. Supervises and regulates operations of water utilities outside jurisdiction of LWUA;
- c. Formulates and recommends policies on water resources;
- d. Formulates environment quality standards for water, air, land, noise and radiation;

¹Source: JICA-NRWB Study, 2011 and NEDA, "Philippine Water Supply Sector Roadmap", 2010

- e. Approves environmental impact statements and issues Environmental Compliance Certificates;
- f. Manages, develops and conserves the country's mineral resources;
- g. Monitors and maps groundwater resources;
- h. Formulates and recommends policies and programs for the effective protection, development, management and conservation of forest lands and watersheds;
- i. Undertakes the protection and conservation of natural wetlands such as lakes, marshes and swamps;
- j. Plans for the development and management of the country's river basins; and
- k. Conducts integrated surveys, mapping, charting, oceanography, land classification, aerial photography, remote sensing, among others.

6.2 NEDA – NEDA Infrastructure Staff and Regional Development Councils

- a. Formulates and recommends for approval policies on water resources; and
- b. Sets direction of economic and social development in region through which regional development efforts are coordinated.

6.3 DPWH - Unified Project Management Office (UPMO)-Flood Control Management Cluster

- a. Undertakes project implementation, technical research on water and sediment related disaster mitigation;
- b. Formulates programs on capacity building in flood management and sabo engineering;
- c. Evaluates the flood control system in river basins; and
- d. Prescribes guidelines on the conduct of post-disaster survey and assessment.

6.4 DA - Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM), Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) and National Irrigation Administration (NIA)

- a. Undertakes assessment, development and preservation of existing and potential soil and water resources for agriculture; and
- b. Formulates plans for the proper management, accelerated development and proper utilization of the country's fisheries and aquatic resources.

6.5 DOE – National Power Corporation (NPC) and National Electrification Administration (NEA)

- a. Develops electric power generation facilities including hydroelectric and geothermal power;

- b. Constructs dams, reservoirs, diversion facilities, and plans and watershed management;
 - c. Promotes, encourages and assists public service entities to achieve service objectives, implements mini-hydro projects.
- 6.6 **DOST - Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) and Philippine Council for Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCAFNRRD)**
- a. Disseminates atmospheric, geophysical and astronomical data for use by economic sectors, the scientific and engineering communities and the general public; and
 - b. Formulates national agricultural, forestry, and natural resources research and development programs on multidisciplinary, inter-agency approach for the various commodities including water resources.
- 6.7 **DILG - Water Supply and Sanitation Program Management Office under the Office of the Project Development Services**
- a. Supports the provision of water supply and sanitation services by LGUs.
- 6.8 **Department of Finance (DOF)/ Government Financing Institutions (GFI)**
- a. Provides financing support for the water supply sector, where DOF oversees performance of GFIs (e.g. DBP, LBP, and LWUA).
- 6.9 **Local Water Utilities Authority (LWUA) and Local Water Districts (LWD)**
- a. Provides capacity building support to water service providers which include technical advisory services and financial assistance to water districts; technical and institutional support to LGUs and WSPs.
- 6.10 **DND - Office of Civil Defense (OCD) and Philippine Air Force**
- a. Monitors safety of dams and other water resources projects;
 - b. Prepares and supports the general public in emergencies; and
 - c. Undertakes rain enhancement through cloud seeding
- 6.11 **LGUs–Provincial/Municipal/Barangay Governments**
- a. Promotes the development of infrastructure including irrigation, water supply, electric power and roads;
 - b. Promotes municipal and barangay WSS, watershed and other programs; and
 - c. Undertake river restoration and enhancement projects which includes ecotourism and navigation programs

SECTION 7. River Basin Project Management Offices and Units

7.1 Establishment of the River Basin Project Management Office (RBPMO) and River Basin Project Management Units (RBMU). Relative to the funding and implementation of the formulated and endorsed IRBMD Master Plan, the following Offices/ Units shall be established in the DENR Regional Offices:

- a. **Regional River Basin Project Management Office (RBPMO)** shall be established under the Office of the Assistant Regional Executive Director for Technical Services in which the Planning and Management Division (PMD) Chief of the Regional Office shall be assigned as the permanent focal person and the Conservation and Development Division (CDD) Chief as the alternate focal person.

The RBPMO shall be responsible for, but not limited for the following:

- i. Carryout river basin activities as per target in the Work and Financial Plan;
- ii. Provide technical assistance to stakeholders and LGUs in the formulation of local policy and plan on sustainable River Basin and River System Management as well as in the implementation of ENR laws, rules and regulations that are within their mandate
- iii. Development and maintenance of the River Basin Integrated Information Management System (RBIIMS) and maintain the database of all records and statistics for the efficient management and monitoring of the river basin;
- iv. Promote appropriate activities related to the river basin and river system management such as the encouragement of environmental investments, the establishment of institutional mechanisms, ensuring sustainability, the conduct of workshops, conferences and training and information, education and communication activities;
- v. Oversee and monitor development activities, programs and projects based on the IRBMD Master Plan introduced or implemented by the government agencies and private sector concerning the conservation, development, protection, rehabilitation of the River Basin and River Systems in the Region; and
- vi. Facilitate and assist in the conduct of Executive Committee, Technical Working Group and Council Meetings for the information and implementation of the Master Plan.

- b. **Provincial River Basin Project Management Unit (RBPMU)** shall be established under the Office of the Technical Services Division to which the Planning Section Chief of the PENRO shall be assigned as the permanent focal person and the Conservation and Development Section Chief as the alternate focal person.

The RBPMU shall be responsible for, but not limited for the following:

- i. Integrate various river basin programs and projects implemented by the stakeholders within the River Basin/s within their areas of jurisdiction;

- ii. Provide technical assistance to stakeholders and LGUs in the formulation of local policy and plan on sustainable River Basin and River System development and management as well as in the implementation of ENR laws, rules and regulations that are within their mandate;
 - iii. Assist in the development and maintenance of the River Basin Integrated Information Management System (RBIIMS) within their areas of jurisdiction and maintain the database of all records and statistics for the efficient management and monitoring of the river basins;
 - iv. Promote appropriate activities related to the river basin management such as the encouragement of environmental investments, the establishment of institutional mechanisms, ensuring sustainability, the conduct of workshops, conferences and training and information, education and communication activities;
 - v. Assist in the monitoring and assessment development activities, programs and projects as per IRBMD Master Plan introduced or implemented by the government agencies and private sector concerning the conservation, development, protection, rehabilitation of the River Basin and River System in the Region; and
 - vi. Assist and participate in the conduct of Executive Committee, Technical Working Group and Council Meetings for the information and implementation of the Master Plan.
- c. **Community River Basin Project Management Unit** shall also be established under the Office of the CENR Officer. The Development Management Officer (DMO) IV or Assistant CENR Officer shall be assigned as the Permanent Focal Person and the Conservation and Development Section Chief as the Alternate Focal Person to assist in the various river basins and river system programs and projects within their areas of jurisdiction.

The RBPMO shall be assisted by the respective RBPMUs of the PENRO Technical Services Divisions and the Office of the CENR Officer in the development of the Annual Work Plan for implementation of project and activities, including milestones, budgeting, timeframe, monitoring and reporting strategies and evaluation criteria of the Programs, Projects and Activities (PPAs) implemented within the river basin.

The support to operationalize the activities of the RBPMOs and RBPMUs shall be funded complementary to the Annual Regional Budget under the DENR Current Appropriations.

SECTION 8. Creation of the River Basin Management Council (RBMC). In order to effectively manage and provide smooth implementation of the IRBMD Master Plans, a River Basin Management Council shall be created by the DENR for each Major and Cluster Principal River Basins. (Annex 2)

The DENR-RBCO with the assistance of the Regional Offices as counterpart shall facilitate the creation of the River Basin Management Councils (RBMC) through Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC), Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) or other legal binding instruments.

SECTION 9. Functions of the RBMC. The RBMC shall act as the Governing Body of the river basin in the regions. It shall formulate policies, approve plans and provide oversight function on the implementation of the IRBMD Master Plan. Specifically, the RBMC shall have the following the functions:

- 9.1 Harmonize the activities of all local government units and government agencies as well as the efforts of civil society groups to undertake Integrated River Basin Management and Integrated Water Resources Management;
- 9.2 Facilitate or cause the collection, processing and dissemination of data including maps on land and water resources as quantitative inputs to decision support systems that the body may utilize for decision-making on water resources and river basin programs and projects;
- 9.3 Promote broader multi-stakeholder participation and involvement in water resources and river basin and river system management by providing necessary mechanism to improve governance thereof and establish coordination with the RDC in the planning, monitoring, evaluation and assessment of regional programs and projects align with the endorsed IRBMD Master Plan;
- 9.4 Initiate the review of water resource and river basin management policies and recommend appropriate amendments to harmonize them with the master plan for consideration and possible adoption by the concerned agencies and appropriate bodies;
- 9.5 Lead in the sourcing and mobilization of financial assistance from external sources (international and local) for the implementation of PAPs; and
- 9.6 Provide a venue for complementation and collaboration with other river basin and water-related bodies/ councils for the harmonization of their plans and programs.

SECTION 10. Structure, Compositions and Operations of RBMC. In order to have an effective and efficient management of the river basins, the DENR shall coordinate and facilitate the formation of the RBMC for the Major and Clustered Principal River Basins.

The RBMC shall be headed by the DENR Undersecretary as the Chairperson supported by a Co-chairs and Vice-Chairs elected from the regional government agencies which includes but not limited to DPWH, DA (NIA, BSW, BFAR) DOE (NPC-NEA-NREB-PNOC), DOST (PAGASA), DENR-EMB, DENR-MGB, NEDA, LGUs, Local Water Districts (LWD), NWRB, MWSS, Civil Society Organizations, Business Sector, Academe/SUCs and other Stakeholders within the river basin.

The RBMC shall create Sub-councils/ Committees and Technical Working Groups (TWG) as may be necessary to discharge its functions effectively. The head of the sub-council and TWG shall be elected by the members through voting election process. The TWG shall have an organizational structure necessary to fulfill its functions in the review and implementation of the IRBMD Master Plan.

The RBMC shall have a Secretariat which shall be composed of the Regional River Basin Focal and Alternate Focal Person from the DENR Regional Offices. The Secretariat shall provide a coordinative functions and services in the organizational operations, and information dissemination and database management.

The DENR-RBCO and the Regional Permanent and Alternate River Basin Focal Persons as counterparts shall be in charge of the invitations to convene the members of the RBMC and

the preparation of minutes of the meeting. The Secretariat shall facilitate the drafting of the Resolutions and the preparation of agenda for the meeting.

SECTION 11. Meetings. The RBMCs shall meet twice, every 1st and 4th Quarters of the year, to discuss and address the different issues and concerns arising in the basin and Master Plan implementation.

SECTION 12. Manual of Operations. The DENR-RBCO shall initiate the formulation of a Manual of Operations to be used by all the RBMCs as a guideline on its day-to-day administration and management.

SECTION 13. Funding Support. The support to operationalize the activities of the river basin management office and river basin organization shall be funded complementary to the annual regional budget under the DENR Current Appropriations.

SECTION 14. Inter-Agency Cooperation. The departments, bureaus, offices, LGUs, agencies or instrumentalities, including government-owned or controlled corporations, are hereby directed to extend such assistance and cooperation as the RBCO may need in the discharge of its functions.

SECTION 15. Separability Clause. Should any of the provisions of this Order be subsequently declared invalid or null and void, the validity of the other provisions not affected shall not be impaired and shall remain to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 16. Repealing Clause. All orders, rules and regulations inconsistent with or contrary to the provisions of these implementing rules and regulations are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 17. Effectivity. This Order shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in a national newspaper of general circulation and fifteen (15) days after registration with the Office of the National Administrative Registry (ONAR).

ROY A. CIMATU
Secretary

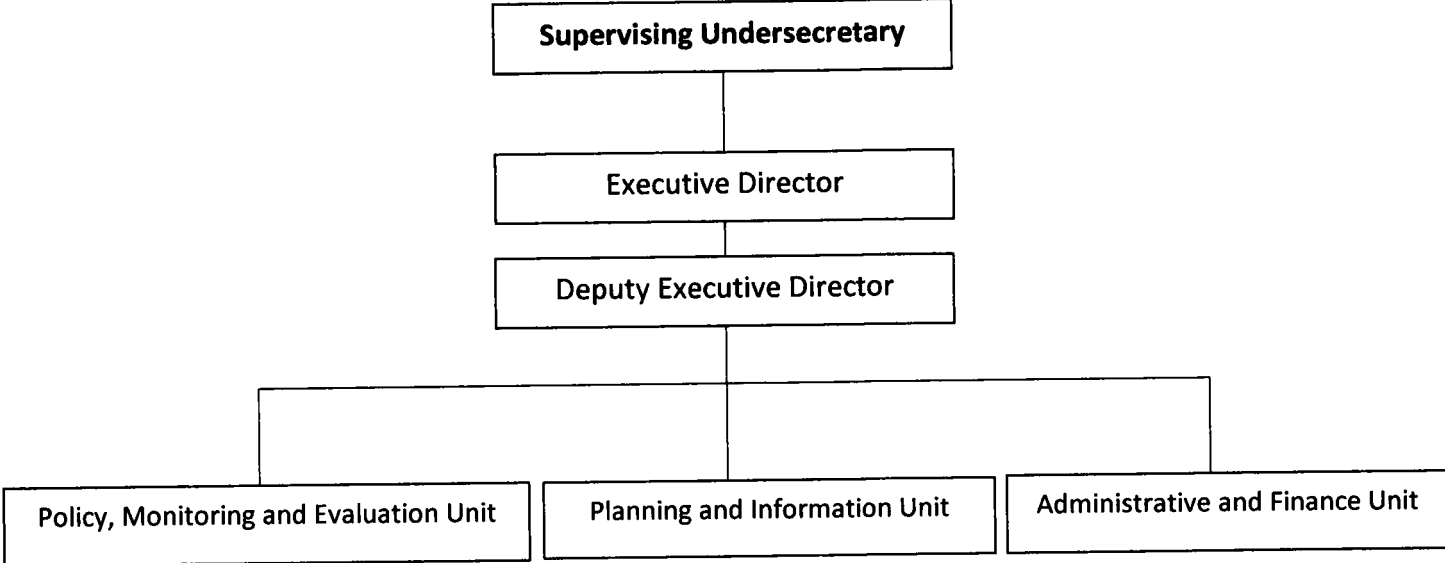


Figure 1. RBCO Organizational Structure

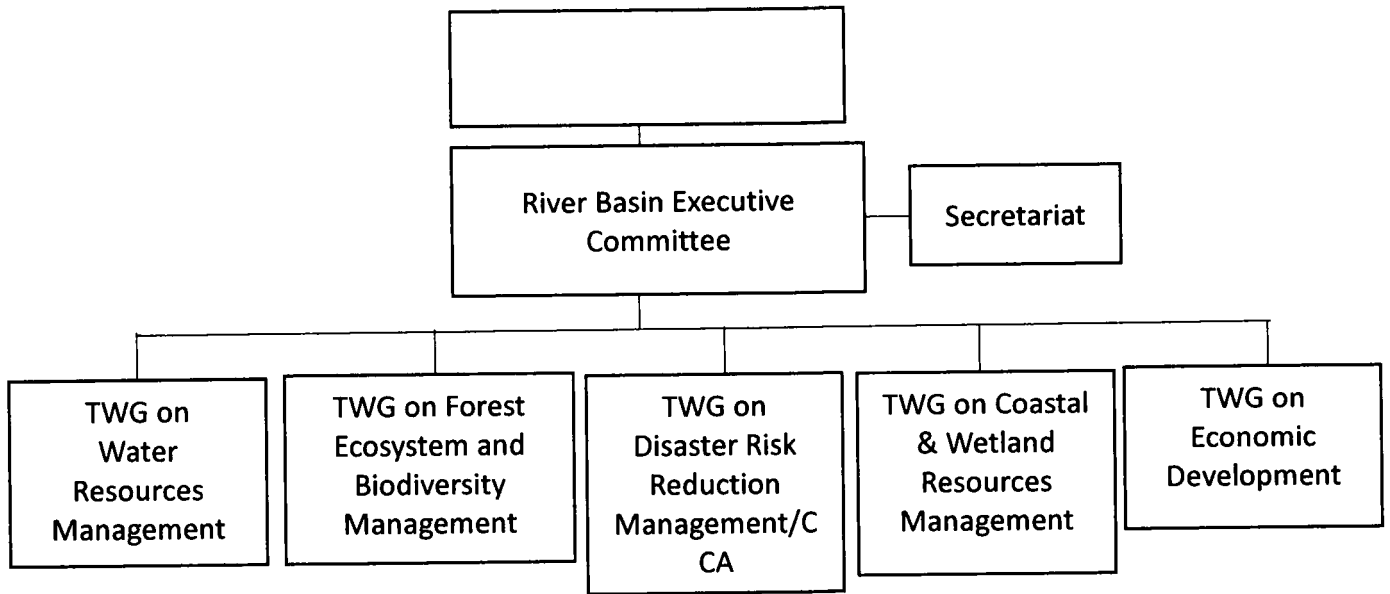


Figure 2. River Basin Management Council Structure