



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. Nos. (632) 929-66-26 to 29 • (632) 929-62-52
Website: <http://www.denr.gov.ph> / E-mail: web@denrgov.ph

MEMORANDUM

FOR/TO : **The Undersecretaries**
Organizational Transformation and Human Resource
Policy, Planning, and International Affairs
Finance, Information Systems and Climate Change
Legal, Administration, and Legislative Affairs
Field Operations – Luzon, Visayas and Environment
Field Operations – Mindanao
Integrated Environmental Science
Special Concerns and Legislative Affairs

FROM : **The Undersecretary and Chief of Staff**
Office of the Secretary

SUBJECT : **Guidelines and Protocols on the Conduct of Cabinet Meetings**

DATE : **FEB 17 2023**

This pertains to the guidelines and protocols issued by the Office of the President regarding the conduct of Cabinet Meetings.

The guidelines are issued primarily to ensure the efficient, effective, and orderly conduct of Cabinet Meetings. Further, the guidelines will maximize the executive time of the President and the members of the Cabinet and optimize the attendance of principals and stakeholders in Cabinet Meetings.

In this regard, please be guided accordingly on the format of Cabinet presentations and other pre-, during, and post-meeting guidelines and protocols.

For your information and compliance.


MARILOU G. ERNI

GUIDELINES AND PROTOCOL ON THE CONDUCT OF CABINET MEETINGS

I. RATIONALE

To maximize the executive time of the President and the members of the Cabinet, it is imperative to optimize the attendance of principals and stakeholders in Cabinet Meetings. Moreover, considering the confidentiality and the risk to national security of Cabinet discussions, there is a need to implement security protocols and impose data and information security.

To this end, the following guidelines shall be implemented to ensure the efficient, effective, and orderly conduct of Cabinet Meetings.

PRE-MEETING

II. AGENDA GENERATION AND PRESENTATIONS

1. **Cabinet Agenda.** To ensure utmost productivity, *there is a need to shift the discussions during Cabinet Meetings from simple agency briefing on facts and issues towards more results-oriented discussions by presenting action plans to address such issues through a whole-of-government approach.*

1.1. Cabinet members are enjoined to raise their respective agencies' specific issues and concerns with the Office of the President for discussion in small meetings, with the aim of coming up with time-bound and realistic action plans. Thereafter, action plans that need further inter-agency collaboration shall be discussed during Cabinet Meetings for information and cooperation of all concerned agencies.

1.2. Except for agenda items identified by the President, the inclusion of items in the Cabinet Agenda requires the approval of the PMS Secretary. Ideally, Cabinet Agenda items should be those that: **a) truly require Presidential or Cabinet attention; and b) is ripe for discussion.**

An item is ripe for Cabinet discussion if it has undergone inter-agency and multi-sectoral vetting and is in anticipation of or response to major developments or impending issues of national importance.

2. **Cabinet Presentations.** To allow for meaningful discussions, and promote informed policy decisions during Cabinet Meetings, all Departments and Agencies are requested to follow the following guidelines for Cabinet presentations:

2.1. Substance

2.1.1. For presentations that require action from the President, please use the following outline:

- Decision Point for the President or the Cabinet. The first slide should present the *requested action*. This should briefly discuss the action that is being requested, e.g., approval of a program or project; or an Executive issuance; or approval and submission of a bill to Congress.
- Problem or Concern. The next slide/s should present a *brief background of the problem or concern* at hand, including supporting data and information, taking into consideration all the dimensions of

the problem or concern. Include inputs gathered from relevant agencies and stakeholders consonant with the principles of the whole-of-government approach and Complete Staff Work.

- **Proposed Solution.** This should present *proposed solutions or ways forward*, the *responsible agencies or officials* for each proposed action, the concerned geographic areas, and the *timelines* for implementation and completion of the action.
- **Recommendation.** This slide should discuss the *details of the recommendation*. This may include key details on the policy, program or project being recommended; salient points of the Executive issuance or legislation being requested or endorsed. The presenter may also cite the legal basis for the President's intervention on the issue or topic being presented.

2.1.2. Presentations that are only for information or notation of the Cabinet shall be tabled as "For Information" agenda items. If the limited time of Cabinet Meetings does not permit presentation of the items for information or for notation, these shall be distributed to the Cabinet Members.

2.2. Form

2.2.1. **Slide Format.** Ideally, slide backgrounds should be white, and fonts should be black. Text color, when used, should be easy on the eyes. Presentations should be in bullet form or table format, whichever is applicable (*see attached PowerPoint template*).

- **Font style.** Arial and size 35, bold for slide title; minimum size 28, not bold for text on the slide body; minimum size 20, not bold for notes on captions and labels of tables and diagrams; and 12, not bold, for slide number.
- **Paragraph Spacing.** Paragraphs on the slide should be in single space.
- **Slide Size and Transition.** Slide size must be in widescreen format (16:9) and the default slide transition setting is recommended. If necessary, alternative slide transitions should be simple and not distracting. Animations, if needed, should be kept at a minimum.
- **File Type.** Presenters must submit their presentations in PowerPoint presentation format (.pptx) for easier navigation during the meeting.

2.2.2. **Presentation Length.** PowerPoint presentations for Cabinet Meetings should only be 25 slides or less. Other details and information, if needed, may be distributed as separate documents to the Cabinet Members.

2.2.3. **Presentation Style.** Present only the main ideas, using phrases or appropriate and simple words instead of sentences. Limit the number of visuals per slide to only one and limit tables and matrices to the most important ones.

2.2.4. **Submission of Presentations.** All presenting agencies shall submit the electronic files of their final presentation (including audio visual presentations, if any) to the PMS five (5) calendar days before the scheduled Cabinet Meeting. Presenters who fail to submit their presentation on the said deadline shall be removed from the agenda. Once submitted, presenters are no longer allowed to make any changes in their presentation.

III. ATTENDEES

1. **Notice of Cabinet Meetings.** The PMS, as Cabinet Secretariat, shall inform the Cabinet Members of the schedule and agenda of the upcoming Cabinet Meeting.

2. **Attendance of Cabinet Members**

- All Department Secretaries, heads of agencies, and officials listed as regular attendees of Cabinet Meetings shall personally attend the Cabinet Meetings.
- A Cabinet Member *may only* be excused from attending Cabinet Meetings in cases of *official travel* abroad duly approved by the Office of the President, *official leave of absence, sickness, or personal emergency.*
- In cases where a Cabinet Member cannot attend a Cabinet Meeting, he/she shall notify the PMS at least a day before the meeting, and provide the name of his/her designated representative, for approval of the President, through the PMS Secretary. The designated representative should, however, have the proper security and health clearances to attend the Cabinet Meeting.
- All Cabinet Meeting attendees should be at the meeting area at least one hour before the scheduled start of the meeting.

3. **Guest List**

- The names of all proposed additional attendees, i.e., representatives of Cabinet Members, resource persons for Cabinet agenda items, and support staff shall be submitted to the secretariat, at least three days before the Cabinet Meeting.
- Only those listed in the **final guest list** shall be allowed entry into the meeting premises, e.g., Malacañan Palace.
- An approved seat plan shall be followed inside the meeting area.

4. **Resource Persons**

- Each Cabinet Meeting presenter is allowed to bring at most *two (2)* resource persons to aid the former in his/her presentation.
- The resource persons can be officials of the agency who have knowledge of the topic or are considered as subject matter experts.
- All resource persons cleared to attend the Cabinet Meeting should be at the meeting premises at least one hour before the scheduled start of the meeting.
- The resource persons shall subsequently be escorted and advised to stay in the designated holding area while awaiting presentation of their corresponding agenda item.

MEETING PROPER

IV. GENERAL PROTOCOLS

1. **Security Stickers**

- The Cabinet Secretariat shall provide all support staff and resource persons with security stickers allowing access to specific areas of the meeting premises. These stickers must be **worn at all times** while inside the meeting area.
- The **resource persons** shall be allowed limited entry to the Cabinet Meeting room when their agenda item is up for discussion. If space allows, a Staging

Area shall be set up by the Cabinet Secretariat where resource persons may stay for a limited time immediately prior to their presentation.

- The presenting agencies should inform the Cabinet Secretariat if they will require the use of equipment other than a projector at least one working day before the meeting. The setting up of all equipment must be completed at least two (2) hours before the meeting.

2. Cabinet Meeting Area

- The Cabinet Meeting area shall be restricted to Cabinet Members and the Secretariat only.
- Should the Cabinet Member have a need to meet his/her staff, he/she may do so in the designated holding areas.
- Only the following support staff shall be allowed inside the Cabinet Meeting room, e.g., State Dining Room: a) Office of the Vice President, b) Office of the Executive Secretary; c) Office of the PMS Secretary; d) Office of the Special Assistant to the President; e) Office of the Press Secretary; f) Cabinet Secretariat; g) Presidential Security Group (PSG); and h) Malacañang Internal House Affairs Office.

3. **Dress Code.** All Cabinet Meeting attendees, including support staff, are enjoined to wear business or formal attire, e.g., coat or *barong*, slacks, office dress,¹ and leather shoes.²

4. Online Attendees

- In cases where a Cabinet Member and/or resource persons cannot personally attend the meeting for meritorious reasons, e.g., health, the Cabinet Secretariat shall set up a Zoom link, for approval of the President, through the PMS Secretary. The Zoom link shall be restricted to Cabinet Members, resource persons, and the secretariat only.
- All Cabinet Meeting online attendees should be at the Zoom meeting room at least thirty minutes before the scheduled start of the meeting.
- The Cabinet Meeting online attendees should keep their microphones on mute and turn them on when need to speak, ensure that their web camera is turned on for the duration of the meeting, and refrain from making unnecessary movements.

V. SECURITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

1. **Confidentiality.** Due to the sensitivity and confidentiality of information raised during Cabinet Meetings, Cabinet Meeting discussions and documents are classified, at the very least, as **CONFIDENTIAL**. Some agenda items are classified as **SECRET** or **TOP SECRET**, depending on the guidance of the President, the Executive Secretary, the PMS Secretary, and/or the Special Assistant to the President.
2. **Cabinet Documents.** Each Cabinet folder is labeled with the name of the specific Cabinet Member/attendee. The Cabinet Member is responsible for ensuring that the contents of the Cabinet folder are secured and properly handled.

¹ Dresses should be formal and below the knee length.

² Leather shoes for men and closed leather shoes for women. In cases wherein health concerns warrant the use of special footwear, please inform the Cabinet Secretariat beforehand.

Should a Cabinet Member be absent from a Cabinet Meeting, his or her representative will be provided only with a copy of the Agenda Page and other presentation materials.

3. **Cabinet Meeting Discussions.** To facilitate a smooth flow of discussions, all Cabinet Members and other attendees shall refrain from congregating in small groups or engaging in "side meetings" to discuss matters other than the tabled agenda during the course of the Cabinet Meeting.
4. **Media Coverage of Cabinet Meetings.** The Radio Television Malacañang (RTVM) or Malacañang's Media Accreditation and Relations Office (MARO), as the case may be, shall oversee the handling of media coverage of Cabinet Meetings. Only the opening of the Cabinet Meeting up to the Prayer shall be covered by the said accredited media.

No other entity or person is allowed to take videos or photos of Cabinet Meetings. Moreover, the following acts are highly prohibited: 1) *taking audio recordings, videos, and/or photos of Cabinet documents and proceedings*; 2) *posting on social media, e.g., Facebook, Facebook Live, YouTube, and Instagram, etc., of Cabinet agreements and discussions*; and 3) *online streaming of Cabinet proceedings using unsecured network*.

POST MEETING

VI. OFFICIAL STATEMENTS ON CABINET MEETING DISCUSSIONS

Only the President's designated Spokesperson shall be allowed to issue statements to the media concerning Cabinet decisions and discussions, unless otherwise directed by the President. All Cabinet Members are enjoined to refrain from issuing statements and are requested to closely coordinate with the Office of the Press Secretary on their concerns.

VII. ISSUANCE OF AND COMPLIANCE WITH PRESIDENTIAL DIRECTIVES

Twenty-four (24) hours after the Cabinet Meeting, the Cabinet Secretariat shall relay to the Cabinet members the directives given by the President during said Cabinet Meeting. Agencies and departments are encouraged to immediately act on said directives *sans* receipt of a particular memorandum directive.

Agencies and departments are likewise directed to submit an initial status report on the directive two (2) days reckoned from the day of the Cabinet Meeting. They are also expected to submit regular updates two (2) days thereafter until such directive has been fully complied with.

VIII. VETTING OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MEETING

The Secretariat shall send to the Cabinet members the Highlights of the Cabinet Meeting via email two (2) working days after the Cabinet Meeting, for vetting/concurrences. They are highly encouraged to submit their comments and/or revisions thereon, if any, within the day of receipt thereof.

Title: Arial 60 and bold

Presenter's name

Agency

Place and Date (Arial 24, Single Space)

Slide Title: Arial 35 and Bold

- Text on the slide body should be Arial 28, not bold.*
- Paragraphs should be in single space.
- Put slide numbers at the bottom: Arial 12, not bold.
- Slide size must be in widescreen format (16:9).

*Notes on captions and labels of tables and diagrams: Arial 20, not bold.

Decision Point for the President and the Cabinet

The first slide should present the action requested.
Example: Requesting the President's approval on the following:

- A ...
- B ...
- C ...

Requesting issuance of an Executive Order on ...

Problem or Concern

- The next slide/s should present a brief background of the problem or concern at hand, including supporting data and information, taking into consideration all the dimensions of the problem or concern.
- Include inputs gathered from relevant agencies and stakeholders consonant with the concepts of Whole-of-Government Approach (including horizontal collaboration) and Complete Staff Work.

Proposed Solution

This should present proposed solutions or ways forward, the responsible agencies or officials for each proposed action, the concerned geographic areas, and the timelines for implementation and completion of the action.

Recommendation

- This slide should discuss the details of the recommendation.
- This may include key details on the policy, program or project being recommended; salient points of the Executive issuance or legislation being requested or endorsed.
- The presenter may also cite the legal basis for the President's intervention on the issue or topic being presented.