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## DBM releases P1.323 T budget in 4 months

MANILA, Philippines — The government released P1.323 trillion in funds to line agencies in the first four months to support the Duterte administration’s operations and programs under a reenacted budget, according to the Department of Budget and Management.

In a statement, the DBM said it has made allotment releases amounting to P1.323 trillion from January to April, which include funds from the 2018 General Appropriations Act (GAA), as reenacted, automatic appropriations, and continuing appropriations, among others.

Allotment releases issued by the DBM enable agencies to incur obligations to finance the delivery of public services, such as education, healthcare, poverty alleviation, and infrastructure development.

As of end-April, the DBM said allotment releases under the reenacted 2018 budget reached P697 billion.

The bulk or P642.44 billion of the amount was released to departments, including those in the Executive branch, Congress, the Judiciary, and other constitutional offices.

The remaining P54.56 billion came from the special purpose funds, including the pension and gratuity fund, budgetary support to government corporations, and the miscellaneous personnel benefits fund.

Meanwhile, the DBM said automatic appropriations amounted to P611.04 billion from January to April. About P575.52 billion of this amount came in the form of internal revenue allotments for local government units.

Moreover, the DBM said it also released P4.27 billion under the continuing appropriations of the 2018 GAA. These include releases from the special purpose fund, as well as funds allocated to the Department of Public Works and Highways, the Department of Health, and other offices.

The agency said unprogrammed appropriations amounting to P9.86 billion have likewise been released in support to foreign-assisted projects of the Department of Transportation.

“These funds covered loan proceeds requirements for the implementation of the Metro Rail Transit Line 3 Rehabilitation Project and Phase I of the North-South Commuter Railway Project,” the DBM said.

Lastly, the DBM said P494.98 million in other automatic appropriations have been released from grants, donations, and the AFP Modernization Program.

The government was forced to operate on a reenacted budget in the first quarter due to the delay in the approval of the 2019 budget in Congress.

Economic managers said this resulted in underspending of about P1 billion a day or as much as P90 billion in the first quarter.

However, with the President's signing of the 2019 budget last April 15, the DBM expects government spending to normalize "in the coming months, especially after the election ban."

The DBM said government agencies will now be able to proceed with the award of contracts and start the implementation of projects, and hopefully implement catch up measures to minimize the impact of the budget delay.