

GUIDELINES IN THE CONDUCT OF PLEBISCITE FOR THE CONDITIONAL JOINT VENTURE AGREEMENT OF THE SOUTH COTABATO II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE (SOCOTECO II) AND IGNITE POWER AND ENERGY HOLDINGS INC. (IGNITE)

ARTICLE I – GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 1. Applicability - These Guidelines shall govern the conduct of the plebiscite to determine whether the qualified member-consumers of SOCOTECO II approve or reject the Conditional Joint Venture Agreement between SOCOTECO II and Ignite dated 23 July 2026.

These guidelines were promulgated by the Members of the Overall Plebiscite Committee II pursuant to SOCOTECO II Board Resolution No. 111, series of 2026.

These guidelines were deliberated, passed and approved by the Overall Plebiscite Committee on 10 August 2026.

Section 2. Definition of Terms. The following shall be construed to have the following meaning as used in these Guidelines, unless a different meaning clearly appears on the context:

- a) Plebiscite refers to the electoral process by which the bona fide member-consumers within the franchise area of SOCOTECO II authorize or reject, through secret balloting, the Conditional JVA between SOCOTECO II and Ignite.
- b) Board of Directors is the body composed of duly elected district representatives of SOCOTECO II to promulgate policies, rules and regulations necessary for the operation of the electric cooperative (EC).
- c) Eligible Voter refers to a bona fide member-consumer in good standing of SOCOTECO II who possesses all the qualifications to vote and none of the disqualifications prescribed under these Guidelines, as further provided in Article III, Section 3 hereof.

For purposes of these Guidelines, a member-consumer in good standing shall mean, as follows:

- Active consumer whose service connection was neither terminated nor meter removed as of 06 August 2026; and
 - Has never been apprehended for electricity theft, pilferage, or meter tampering;
- d) Ineligible voters shall refer to any of the following:
- Member-consumers whose service connections were retired, terminated, pulled out, inactive, or disconnected as of 6 August 2026;
 - Member-consumers apprehended for electricity theft, pilferage, or meter tampering; or
 - Member-consumer whose meters had been removed as of 06 August 2026

An Ineligible Voter shall be excluded from the final Master List and shall not be permitted to register or vote in the plebiscite.

- e) Juridical person refers to any firm, corporation, association or local government unit.

- f) Joint Membership/Account refers to a husband and a wife who applies for a joint membership and avail the services of the SOCOTECO II, subject to their compliance with the existing EC by-laws.
- g) Member-Consumer refers to a person, either natural or juridical, adhering to the principles set forth under Presidential Decree No. 269, as amended by Presidential Decree No. 1645 and Republic Act No. 10531 and in the Articles of Incorporation and By- Laws of the EC of which he/she is entitled to all the rights and privileges thereof. For purposes of these Guidelines, the term may also refer to the duly authorized Proxy of a member-consumer or the duly authorized representative of a juridical member-consumer.
- h) Master List refers to the official roster prepared by SOCOTECO II's Institutional Services Department (ISD), based on SOCOTECO II's billing records as of 6 August 2026, indicating their respective service addresses, account numbers, and other relevant identifying information, as verified and finalized in accordance with these Guidelines.
- i) Plebiscite Centers refer to the designated places where the plebiscite for the Conditional JVA will be conducted.
- j) Plebiscite Precinct refers to the designated place in the plebiscite center where the Eligible Voter within a designated territory register and cast their approval or disapproval on the JVA.
- k) Overall Plebiscite Committee (OPCOM) shall mean the body composed of five (5) members of the incumbent members of the Board of Directors of SOCOTECO II, selected from among themselves, who shall exercise supervision and control on the overall conduct of plebiscite for the Conditional JVA, pursuant to SOCOTECO II Board Resolution No. 111, series of 2026.
- l) District Plebiscite Committee (DPCOM) shall mean a body composed of three (3) members, who shall be school principals of the Department of Education (DepEd) in a particular district, which shall exercise supervision and control on the conduct of plebiscite in the district level for the Conditional JVA.
- m) Precinct Plebiscite Committee (PPCOM) is a body of three (3) members deputized by the DPCOM, who shall be teachers of the DepEd, to take charge of the registration and voting in the precinct.
- n) Voting dates or days of voting is the designated days a member-consumer may vote in a particular district where he or she is a member.

ARTICLE II – PLEBISCITE ACTIVITIES

Section 1. SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES – The OPCOM shall formulate the Calendar of Activities relating to the conduct of the plebiscite. The SOCOTECO II ISD shall spearhead the implementation of all the activities in relation to the conduct of the plebiscite.

The voting dates shall be for eight (8) days, namely, September 5-6, 12-13, 19-20 and 26-27, 2026 between the hours of 8:00 in the morning to 3:00 in the afternoon subject to the relevant provisions embodied herein.

The Calendar of Activities for the conduct of the plebiscite is attached hereto as **Annex A**. The Calendar of Activities is subject to change at any time, as the need arises.

Section 2. POSTING AND PUBLICATION OF NOTICE OF PLEBISCITE - The Notice of Plebiscite shall contain the purpose, date, place, time of the plebiscite, and the qualification to vote, among others.

The Notice of Plebiscite shall be published at least four times (4x) in two (2) newspapers of local circulation within the franchise area of SOCOTECO II, in accordance with the publication schedule set forth in the Calendar of Activities.

The Notice of Plebiscite shall also be posted in conspicuous places at all SOCOTECO II offices and suboffices, in every barangay, and at the respective municipal or city halls within SOCOTECO II's franchise area, as well as in SOCOTECO II's official website and social media page. To ensure greater opportunity for member-consumer participation, the foregoing postings shall be maintained until the close of voting on the last voting date.

Section 3. CONDUCT OF INFORMATION, EDUCATION CAMPAIGN – Prior to the plebiscite, the SOCOTECO II Board of Directors and Management shall undertake a massive Information Education Campaign (IEC) on the Conditional JVA at the district level within the EC franchise area, in accordance with the schedule set forth in the Calendar of Activities.

This may be held simultaneously or sequentially in all districts utilizing any communication medium such as but not limited to radio/tv broadcast, newspaper publication, brochures, leaflets, social media posts, recorida, meetings, etc.

The IEC shall commence immediately following the posting of the Notice of Plebiscite. The IEC activities may thereafter continue until the last day of the plebiscite.

As part of the IEC, SOCOTECO II shall: (i) cause the publication of the full text of the Conditional JVA, once (1x) in two (2) newspapers of local circulation within its franchise area; (ii) post the full text of the Conditional JVA on the official SOCOTECO II website; and (iii) publish the salient provisions of the Conditional JVA and other relevant informational materials on the SOCOTECO II's official social media page.

The foregoing activities shall be duly documented and form part of the records of the plebiscite.

ARTICLE III – MEMBER-CONSUMERS

Section 1. MASTERLIST OF MEMBERS – It shall be the responsibility of the ISD to prepare the Master List of member-consumers at least twenty (20) days prior to the 1st day of plebiscite.

The Master List shall contain the names of all member-consumers in alphabetical order and classified according to districts, cities, municipalities, and barangays to facilitate the registration and voting.

The Master List shall be verified by the head of the ISD or his/her duly authorized representative.

Initial posting in the barangays shall be made at least ten (10) days before the first day of voting. To ensure the transparency of the Master List, the same shall be posted in conspicuous places for verification of the member-consumers and shall likewise be made available in all of SOC2 offices and suboffices.

The Verification Period shall commence upon the initial posting of the Master List and end ten (10) days before the last voting date. Any queries to the list shall be filed in writing with the ISD, which queries shall be evaluated based on submitted documents.

In the event that there are changes to the initial Master List, such changes shall be accordingly posted, indicating the change/s made therein. Otherwise, the initial Master List shall be deemed the final Master List for purposes of the plebiscite.

Section 2. CUT-OFF DATE - Only member-consumers whose names appear in SOCOTECO II's billing system as of 6 August 2026, who are included in the final Master List, and who are not otherwise disqualified under these Guidelines shall be entitled to vote in the plebiscite.

Section 3. ELIGIBLE VOTERS – All persons whose names are included in the Master List of member-consumers are qualified to register and vote in the designated precincts upon presentation of proof of identity. The PPCOM, however, may require the presentation of the latest SOCOTECO II power bill solely to authenticate the identity of the person voting or being represented. Included in the Master List are bonafide member-consumers in good standing as defined in Section 2 (c) of Article I.

If, for any reason, a member-consumer has been inadvertently excluded from the Master List, such may still be allowed to vote upon approval of the District Plebiscite Committee, provided that the member-consumer possesses all the qualifications of an Eligible Voter and is not an Ineligible Voter, as defined in Article I, Section 2(b) and (c), respectively, of these Guidelines.

Only one (1) vote shall be allowed for a member-consumer who is a natural person, whether in a single or joint membership.

For a joint membership/account either one may vote but only one shall vote. Where the spouse or common-law partner of a member-consumer is not named in the SOCOTECO II account, he or she may be allowed to vote upon presentation of a marriage certificate, marriage contract, or affidavit attesting to the common-law partnership, as applicable; provided, that only one (1) vote shall be cast for the account.

A juridical person/entity may vote through its duly authorized representative upon presentation of a valid ID and any document supporting the authority.

Proxy voting shall be allowed upon presentation of a duly notarized authorization of the member-consumer he/she the Proxy is representing, subject to the pertinent provisions of the preceding paragraphs. The ID of the person being represented as well as the proxy shall be presented before being authorized to vote.

The PPCOM shall verify the identity and eligibility of the member-consumer and the proxy and confirm that no vote has previously been cast for the same account. The photocopy of the ID of the person represented, together with the original duly notarized proxy form, shall be presented to the PPCOM for verification.

The Proxy may vote as many as the number of principals who authorized him/her to vote subject to the identification and authentication provided in this Guidelines.

ARTICLE IV – PLEBISCITE COMMITTEES

Section 1 – PLEBISCITE COMMITTEES – At least ten (10) days before the plebiscite, the OPCOM shall appoint the District Plebiscite Committees.

The Plebiscite Committees shall be assigned specific tasks as determined by the EC, with the following composition:

- Over-all Plebiscite Committee shall be composed of five (5) incumbent members of the Board of Directors of SOCOTECO II, selected from among themselves pursuant to SOCOTECO II Board Resolution No. 111, Series of 2026.
- District Plebiscite Committee – At least ten (10) days before the first day of voting, the OPCOM shall appoint one DPCOM for each plebiscite district. Each DPCOM shall be composed of three (3) school principals of the Department of Education (DepEd), who shall designate from among themselves a Chairperson, Secretary, and Member. Alternate members may be designated for vacancies, if any.
- Precinct Plebiscite Committee – At least ten (10) days before the first day of voting, each DPCOM shall deputize one PPCOM for every plebiscite precinct under its supervision. Each PPCOM shall be composed of three (3) teachers of the DepEd, who shall designate from among themselves a Chairperson, Secretary, and Member. Alternate members may be designated for vacancies, if any.

ARTICLE V – FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Section 1 – OVERALL PLEBISCITE COMMITTEE (OPCOM) – To ensure the proper implementation of the voting guidelines, the function and responsibilities of the Overall Plebiscite Committee are the following:

- a) Exercise supervision and control over the Plebiscite and ensure the enforcement and implementation of this Guidelines and relevant rules and procedures;
- b) Exercise supervision and control over DISTRICT PLEBISCITE COMMITTEE and PRECINCT PLEBISCITE COMMITTEE;
- c) Determine the Plebiscite voting centers and precincts in consultation with the ISD;
- d) Cause the Distribution of all plebiscite materials and paraphernalia;
- e) Determine the place where the final canvassing and consolidation of plebiscite returns from all districts shall be held;
- f) Accomplish and submit relevant plebiscite forms;
- g) Perform such other duties as may be deemed necessary in order to carry out their functions and ensure an orderly conduct of plebiscite;
- h) Acts as overall Board of Canvassers during the overall canvassing;
- i) Resolve any matter of controversy brought before it, the majority votes of its members shall prevail;
- j) Decide all protests or issues raised during the conduct of the overall canvassing. Any decision of the OPCOM thereon shall be final and immediately executory for purposes of completing the overall canvass and proclaiming the plebiscite results, without prejudice to the filing of a post-plebiscite protest under Article X of these Guidelines;

- k) Proclaim the overall results of the plebiscite. The proclamation shall proceed notwithstanding the pending appeal, if the judgment thereof will not substantially affect the outcome of the plebiscite; and
- l) To ensure the safety and integrity of the ballots thus canvassed, the OVERALL PLEBISCITE COMMITTEE shall coordinate with the Provincial Police Directors of the Provinces of South Cotabato and Sarangani for their safekeeping.

Section 2 – DISTRICT PLEBISCITE COMMITTEE – the functions and responsibilities of the District Plebiscite Committee are the following:

- a) Exercise supervision and control in the assigned plebiscite district;
- b) Distribute all plebiscite materials and paraphernalia to the Precinct plebiscite Committee;
- c) Decide on protests/issues raised during the conduct of district canvassing;
- d) Act as the District Board of Canvassers during the district canvassing;
- e) Proclaim the results of the votes in the district. The proclamation shall proceed notwithstanding the pending appeal, if the judgment thereof will not substantially affect the outcome of the plebiscite;
- f) Accomplish and submit relevant plebiscite forms;
- g) Perform such other duties as may be deemed necessary in order to carry out their functions and ensure an orderly conduct of plebiscite;
- h) Serve as appellate body for protest/appeal emanating from the Precinct Plebiscite Committee. The appeal shall be decided within eight (8) hours from receipt thereof;
- i) Resolve any matters of controversy brought before it, the majority votes of its regular members shall prevail; and
- j) The Decisions of the DPCOM on any protest, appeal, or matter of controversy brought before it shall be final and immediately executory for purposes of the continued conduct of the plebiscite, district canvassing, and proclamation of the district results, without prejudice to the filing of a post-plebiscite protest under Article X of these Guidelines.

SECTION 3. PRECINCT PLEBISCITE COMMITTEE. Functions and responsibilities of the Precinct Plebiscite Committee:

- a) Exercise general supervision and control in the assigned Plebiscite precinct;
- b) Handle verification, registration, voting and counting of votes in the assigned Plebiscite precinct;
- c) Decide on all matters arising during the registration and voting of member-consumer in the assigned precinct;
- d) Accomplish and submit relevant Plebiscite forms;
- e) Perform such other duties as may be deemed necessary in order to carry out their functions and ensure an orderly conduct of Plebiscite;
- f) Resolve any matters of controversy brought before it, the majority votes of its regular members shall prevail; and
- k) The Decision of the Precinct Plebiscite Committee may be appealed to the District Plebiscite Committee. The appeal shall be duly verified in writing, and shall be filed within 24 hours from the time the controversy arose.

ARTICLE VI - MATERIALS AND PRECINCTS

SECTION 1. OFFICIAL BALLOT. The EC shall cause the printing of the official ballot. It shall be uniform in size and color, and shall consist of two portions. The bigger portion of the ballot shall contain the options with corresponding space for the member-consumers to mark, while the smaller portion which is also referred to as the stub shall provide for a space for the member-consumer to affix their right thumb mark. Both portions of the ballot shall contain identical serial numbers in consecutive order. Upon casting of the vote, the two portions of the ballot shall be separated and dropped in designated slots of the ballot box.

SECTION 2. PLEBISCITE MATERIALS. The ISD shall prepare and furnish the Plebiscite Committees all the materials and paraphernalia necessary for the Plebiscite such as the sanitized Master List of member-consumers, official ballots, ballot boxes, tally boards, all to be distributed in every precinct on the day of the Plebiscite.

The procedures governing the distribution, receipt, handling, custody, safekeeping, and return of all plebiscite materials shall be as prescribed in **Annex "B"** hereof.

ARTICLE VII - CASTING OF VOTES

SECTION 1. VOTING HOURS - Registration and casting of votes shall promptly start at 8:00 am and end at 3:00 pm. Notwithstanding the prescribed closing time, member-consumers who are within a thirty (30)-meter radius of the plebiscite precinct and intend to vote shall be allowed to cast their votes.

SECTION 2. PRELIMINARIES TO VOTING

- a) On the day of plebiscite, the Precinct Plebiscite Committee shall convene at the designated precinct with the appropriate materials and paraphernalia to be used during the plebiscite.
- b) The Precinct Plebiscite Chairman shall announce the start of voting, open the ballot boxes and empty all the compartments. After exhibiting the emptiness to the public, the ballot boxes shall then be locked.
- c) The ballot boxes shall remain locked until the end of voting and counting of votes. If there should arise a need to make room for more ballots, the Precinct plebiscite Chairman shall open the ballot box in the presence of the other members of the Precinct plebiscite Committee, press the ballots with his/her hands without removing any ballot, and lock the ballot box again.

SECTION 3. PERSONS ALLOWED INSIDE THE PLEBISCITE PRECINCT.

Only the members of the Precinct Plebiscite Committee and the voters are allowed inside the Plebiscite precinct. The Precinct Plebiscite Committee shall limit the number of member-consumers inside the precinct to prevent crowding.

The Precinct Plebiscite Committee shall require all bystanders and member-consumers who have already cast their votes to immediately leave the plebiscite precinct and may take all necessary measures to prevent overcrowding and maintain peace and order.

SECTION 4. ORDER OF VOTING. Upon verifying and establishing the identity and the eligibility of the member-consumer or the principal of the Proxy and the identity of the Proxy himself, in the case of a voting by proxy, the Precinct Plebiscite Chairman shall then issue an official ballot and fold it before handing it over for the member-consumer to accomplish.

SECTION 5. MANNER OF ACCOMPLISHING THE OFFICIAL BALLOT. The member-consumer upon receipt of the official ballot shall proceed to the seat provided for to accomplish the official ballot and mark the plebiscite option of choice.

It is prohibited to display, take a picture or otherwise record the choice indicated by the member-consumer, to compare and to speak to anyone while accomplishing the ballot.

SECTION 6. PREPARATION OF BALLOTS FOR THE ILLITERATE AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITY. A qualified voter (either a person with disability or illiterate) who is physically unable to fill up the official ballot may be assisted by an accompanying relative within the 4th degree of consanguinity and affinity, or any member of the Precinct Plebiscite Committee.

SECTION 7. SPOILED BALLOT. A voter who accidentally spoils or defaces the official ballot in such a way that it cannot lawfully be used shall surrender the ballot to the Precinct Plebiscite Chairperson who shall note it in the corresponding space in the voting record. The voter shall be entitled and be given another ballot to accomplish after the Precinct Plebiscite Committee shall have entered the serial number of the new ballot in the voting records.

SECTION 8. CASTING OF VOTES. After the voter has filled up the official ballot, it shall be folded in the same manner that the Precinct Plebiscite Committee has given it. In the presence of all the members of the Precinct Plebiscite Committee, the member/consumer shall affix his/her right thumb mark in space provided and deliver the ballot folded to the Precinct Plebiscite Chairman, who shall, in the presence and plain view of the members of the Committee, shall verify the serial number from the voting records where it was previously recorded. Finding everything in order, the Chairman shall detach the stub and hand both the ballot and stub of the member-consumer for depositing in the designated compartments of the ballot box. After which, the member-consumer shall leave the precinct.

SECTION 9. MINUTES OF VOTING AND COUNTING OF VOTES. The Precinct Plebiscite Committee shall prepare and sign a statement in four (4) copies setting forth the following:

- 1) The time the voting commenced and ended;
- 2) The number of official ballots received;
- 3) The number of official ballots used and left unused;
- 4) The number of votes cast;
- 5) The time the counting of votes commenced and ended;
- 6) The number of official ballots found in the compartment for valid ballots;
- 7) The number of excess ballots as compared to the register of votes;
- 8) The number of valid ballots, if any, retrieved from the compartment for the stub;
- 9) The number of ballots read and counted;
- 10) The record of protest, if any, and action taken by the Precinct Plebiscite Committee.
- 11) The results of the voting.

ARTICLE VIII - COUNTING OF VOTES

SECTION 1. COUNTING OF VOTES. As soon as the voting day ends, the Precinct Plebiscite Committee shall count the votes in public and without interruption until fully completed.

SECTION 2. MANNER OF COUNTING. The Precinct Plebiscite Committee shall take out the ballots from the ballot box and form piles of fifty (50) ballots each to be held together by rubber bands. The Chairperson of the Committee shall take the ballots according to piles and read the contents one by one. The Secretary and the member shall record each vote on the official plebiscite returns and on the tally board as the votes are being read. After all the ballots have been read, the Precinct Plebiscite Committee shall sum up the totals recorded for each option and the aggregate totals both on the tally board and on the election returns. The Precinct Plebiscite Committee shall then place the counted ballots in an envelope which shall be closed, sealed and signed by the entire members of the Precinct Plebiscite Committee.

SECTION 3. APPRECIATION OF BALLOTS. The Precinct Plebiscite Committee shall observe the following rules:

- 1) If one of the spaces/boxes is marked with a " / " (check) or an "X", or written with the word "Yes", or is shaded, or appears with such other markings clearly indicating The voter's choice or answer, while the other is left blank, the vote is valid and shall be counted in favor of the option to which the space/box with the marking or written with the word "Yes" is intended for;
- 2) If both of the spaces/boxes are marked differently or written with different words, the " / " or "Yes", the vote is valid and shall be counted in favor of the option to which the box with the " / " or "Yes" is intended for;
- 3) If one of the spaces/boxes is written with the word "Yes", while the other is left blank, the vote is valid and shall be counted in favor of the option to which the space/box left blank is intended for;
- 4) If one of the spaces/boxes is written with the word "No", while the other is left blank, the vote is valid and shall be counted in favor of the option to which the space/box left blank is intended for;
- 5) If both of the spaces/boxes are filled with similar markings or words, the ballot shall be deemed invalid;
- 6) The accidental tearing or perforation of an official ballot shall not invalidate it, provided the answer can be legibly read;
- 7) Failure to remove the detachable stub from the official ballot shall not invalidate it.

SECTION 4. PLEBISCITE RETURNS. The Precinct Plebiscite Committee shall prepare simultaneously the plebiscite returns with the counting of the votes as provided for in Section 9, Article VII hereof. The Plebiscite returns shall be prepared in four (4) copies and in the prescribed form to be certified by the Precinct plebiscite Committee.

SECTION 5. PLEBISCITE RECORDS AND DOCUMENTS. The District Plebiscite Committee shall canvass the plebiscite returns with the counting of the votes. The District Certificate of Canvass shall be prepared in four (4) copies and in the prescribed form to be certified by the District Plebiscite Committee, and to be distributed as follows:

1) The original copies shall be placed in a separate canvass box, distinct from the ballot boxes containing the used ballots. The canvass box and ballot boxes shall be sealed and signed by the Precinct Plebiscite Committee and submitted to the District Plebiscite Committee for canvassing.

2) Duplicate copies shall be submitted to the ISD Manager or his/her equivalent.

SECTION 6. FINAL CANVASSING. The Overall Plebiscite Committee shall canvass the final results of the plebiscite based on the consolidated returns submitted by the District Plebiscite Committees and shall prepare and certify the total number of votes cast for each option.

The OPCOM shall turn over all the Certificates of Canvass to the EC Board President who shall certify the veracity of the result through a "Certificate of Membership/Consumers Decision". The EC Board shall then issue a Board Resolution declaring the decision of the member-consumers.

Unless otherwise directed by the NEA, pursuant to Section 36(b) of Presidential Decree No. 269, an affirmative vote by the majority of the eligible member-consumers (50%+1) is required for the approval of the Conditional Joint Venture Agreement.

On 28 September 2026, or earlier depending on the conduct of the plebiscite, the OPCOM shall convene and conduct the final canvassing of the plebiscite results based on the consolidated returns submitted by the DPCOM. Upon completion of the canvass, the OPCOM shall prepare and submit its report to the SOCOTECO II Board of Directors, together with the certified plebiscite results and all Certificates of Canvass.

The Board President shall then certify the veracity of the plebiscite results and the SOCOTECO II Board of Directors shall issue a Board Resolution declaring the decision of the member-consumers. Immediately after such certification, SOCOTECO II shall submit to the National Electrification Administration the certified plebiscite results, together with the OPCOM Report, and the corresponding Board Resolution.

Unless otherwise directed by the OPCOM, all original plebiscite documents shall be turned over to the ISD Manager for safekeeping and record purposes.

ARTICLE X - REMEDIES

SECTION 1. REQUEST FOR REVIEW. Except as provided in Section 2, Article X, a party aggrieved by any decision of the DPCOM, or by any other matter concerning the conduct of the plebiscite which is prejudicial to such party, may file a Request for Review with the OPCOM, which shall resolve the same by a majority vote of its members. The decision of the OPCOM may be appealed to the NEA; provided, that the filing of request for review or an appeal shall not stay the implementation of the decision unless otherwise directed by the NEA.

SECTION 2. POST-PLEBISCITE PROTEST. Pursuant to Section 4(q) of Presidential Decree No. 269, as amended by Section 5 of Republic Act No. 10531, the NEA, thru the Office of the Administrator, shall have the exclusive jurisdiction over all post-plebiscite protest.

A Post-plebiscite protest shall cover any question on the conduct of the plebiscite which must materially affect the results thereof. Such a protest must be filed within three (3) calendar days after the proclamation of the result of the plebiscite.

SECTION 3. VERIFIED PROTEST. A protest shall be verified by an affidavit executed by the protestant attesting that: (a) the allegations therein are true and correct based on the affiant's personal knowledge or authentic documents; (b) the protest is not filed to harass, cause unnecessary delay, or needlessly increase the cost of the proceedings; (c) the factual allegations therein have evidentiary support and; (d) the allegations materially affect the results of the Plebiscite. The verified Protest shall be filed with the OPCOM together with proof of payment of the prescribed protest fee. Within five (5) days from receipt thereof, the OPCOM shall transmit the verified Protest and the protest fee to NEA.

SECTION 4. FILING FEE. A protestant shall pay SOCOTECO II a non-refundable filing fee of Three Million Pesos (PhP3,000,000.00), in cash or manager's/cashier's check, to defray the expenses to be incurred in the resolution of the protest.

SECTION 5. DECISION ON PROTEST. Unless a longer period is required, within sixty (60) days from the date of receipt of the Verified Protest, the Office of the Administrator of NEA, either sitting singly or as a committee and after due notice and hearing, shall decide all post-plebiscite protest brought before it. The decision of the Office of the Administrator shall be final and executory without prejudice to the provision of Section 8 of RA 10531.

ARTICLE XI - FINAL PROVISION

SECTION 1. SEPARABILITY CLAUSE. If for any reason, any article, section, sentence, term or word used in these Guidelines is declared to be invalid or illegal, such part/s not affected by such declaration shall remain in full force and effect.