The project “Vertical Integration and Learning for Low-Emission Development in Africa and Southeast Asia” (V-LED) is implemented in Kenya, South Africa and Colombia (phase 2, 2019-2021). It is led by adelphi in partnership with the Institute for Law and Environmental Governance and Sustainable Energy Africa. Phase 1 (2015-2018) included the Philippines and Vietnam with additional partners, UN Habitat and OneWorld Sustainable Investments.

The project is supported by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) as part of its International Climate Initiative.

Ormoc City, centrally featured in this study, partly benefitted from the interventions of international projects (including the V-LED project through UN Habitat).
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### ACRONYMS

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<td>TWG</td>
<td>Technical Working Group</td>
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Local governments in the Philippines use their local climate action plans—and the planning and coordination processes behind them—as a collaborative tool to drive transformative actions on the ground. Despite the existence of an elaborate local planning scheme that municipalities are required to follow, a siloed approach continues to be the norm, which represents a major challenge to effective and collaborative climate action planning at the local level. Cross-sector coordination was improved by the Climate Change Commission (CCC) taking over a role as intermediary between national agencies and local government. But the CCC does not yet have the full capacity to fulfil this role and effectively facilitate two-way communication.

This case study offers insight from the practical experience of Ormoc City, the second most-populous city in Leyte Province. It introduces local-level strategies and measures that can facilitate collaborative climate action and inform initiatives aimed at improving climate action planning across different contexts. The study presents Ormoc City’s experiences related to planning and implementing a successful climate response. It delves into Ormoc’s experience delivering practical solutions for addressing barriers and opportunities to strengthen the city’s technical capacity, improve coordination structures, promote participatory and meaningful engagement, and approach planning with implementation in mind.

**RELEVANCE**
The local climate action planning process in the Philippines is a remarkable model for other municipalities worldwide embarking in climate planning processes. Ormoc City’s experiences show that a local climate action plan is not merely a piece of paper that is required by their national government, but a key process that can help the city attract green funds, build its internal expertise, gain buy-in and allies in society and improve local governance processes.

**PROBLEM**
Too often, the Local Climate Change Action Plan (LCCAP) in the Philippines is seen as a mere requirement that in some cases ends up on a shelf. Cities occasionally rely on consultants, one city office or even just one staff member tasked with writing the plan. In this way, cities are missing the chance to use collaboration with key local agencies and partnerships as avenues to build internal capacity and achieve stronger, agreed-upon results that secure buy-in, along with more effective approaches for transformation and climate change adaptation.

**VISION**
Ormoc City wants to continue its strong efforts for transformation and climate change adaptation. The government is using the local planning process to increase the ownership of the plan through the meaningful engagement of relevant local agencies and society, strengthening internal capacity and collaborative problem solving, increasing the chances of securing the necessary financial backing, while giving clear policy signals to steer investments to align with the city’s climate targets.

**PRACTICE**
Ormoc City has established a collaborative climate planning process that engages local government departments and stakeholders in sharing knowledge and making decisions. Key departments of the local government were mobilised through an executive order that created an institutional innovation: the interdepartmental climate change Technical Working Group (TWG).

The broad involvement in planning and decision-making resulted in public officials’ heightened knowledge and skills for climate advocacy, collaborative problem solving, and the use of climate science and information in policymaking. Ormoc City used its LCCAP formulation process as a tool to access funds, which helped secure finance for the implementation of the adopted climate actions.
KEY ACTORS
The core of Ormoc City’s strategy is the broad engagement of key actors within local government and in different sectors of society:
• The Local Chief Executive and the Sangguniang Panglungsod (policymaking body of the Local Government Unit of Ormoc).
• Heads and staff of the technical offices of LGU Ormoc: City Planning and Development Office, City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office, City Environment and Natural Resources Office, City Social Welfare Development Office, Office of the Building Official, and City Health Office.
• Members of the City Development Council: Barangay Officials, representatives from the private sector, representatives from national government agencies, and citizens.

VALUE & OUTCOME
Since the establishment of a collaborative climate planning process that engages and gives concrete responsibility to local agencies and stakeholders, the city has rapidly implemented 80% of its climate projects detailed in the LCCAP approved in February of 2019.

REPLICATION
Without strong leadership from the local executive and a strong coordinating body, most local implementing agencies outside of the offices developing the LCCAP are unaware of its contents. A siloed approach continues to be the norm and represents a major challenge to effective, collaborative climate action planning at the local level in several cities in the Philippines. Ormoc City developed its own way of addressing these challenges and its experience can shine light on the options that other cities in the Philippines have.

KEY RESOURCES
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ABOUT THE V-LED REAL PRACTICE SERIES ON COLLABORATIVE CLIMATE ACTION

We believe that local governments are crucial to addressing climate change. As frontline responders to the effects of global warming, they create sustainable development pathways and opportunities for resilient communities. The climate actions of cities and regions are vital to pioneering transformative decarbonisation processes and achieving the objectives of the Paris Agreement, but we must join forces across governing levels to ratchet up efforts and bring successful initiatives to scale.

The V-LED Real Practice series responds to the growing demand for real-life examples and practical knowledge about multi-level climate governance. The series answers the question: How have local and national governments addressed challenges in their collaborative climate actions? By delving into the details of practical initiatives, examining the challenges they face and highlighting key lessons for replication, the series extends knowledge to policy makers and implementers in order to improve collaborative action between local, national and global actors.

The Real Practices from Kenya, South Africa, the Philippines and Colombia are produced by the V-LED project. Visit www.localclimateaction.org to learn more.
The Philippines is one of the most vulnerable countries to extreme events worsened by climate change. Over the last two decades, typhoons have increasingly resulted in loss of life and devastation of local economies. Projected changes to weather patterns and sea level place the country among the most vulnerable to climate change. Based on current global high-emissions trajectories, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration estimates that average temperatures in the Philippines will increase 1.2 to 2.3 degrees Celsius by mid-21st century and rainfall will vary by as much as 40% in both wet and dry seasons. Despite only emitting 0.33% of global GHG emissions, the Philippines’ Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) wants to commit to a 70% reduction by 2030 relative to business as usual. Importantly, this commitment is conditional on receiving international aid and technology transfers.

The forefront climate priority in the Philippines is adaptation, specifically in response to record-breaking typhoons and disastrous flooding. This priority has been embraced politically and embodied in landmark legislation. For example, the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction Management Act of 2010 has increased funding for disaster risk reduction. While grassroots communities have well-established mechanisms for disaster preparation, response and recovery, climate mitigating behaviour is still minimal. In the public consciousness, the affirmation “climate change causes disasters” finds more resonance than “greenhouse gas emissions, from driving my own car or not separating my waste, causes climate change”.

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) leads climate change governance and policy coordination in the Philippines. It is an executive body chaired by the President, composed of three commissioners and supported by an advisory board representing 23 government agencies. The CCC was established by the Climate Change Act of 2009 (Republic Act 9729) which mandated the government to establish and implement a national climate action framework. Article 2 of the same act specifies that national policy must engage local governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), local communities, and businesses.

1 Eckstein et al. (2019).
3 Ibid.
4 At the time of publication of this study, the Philippines had not submitted its INDC to the UNFCCC, thus we do not yet speak of an NDC.
5 Recabar et al. (2019).
The Climate Change Act requires each Local Government Unit (LGU) to plan and prepare for climate change by developing a Local Climate Change Action Plan (LCCAP). The National Framework Strategy on Climate Change further directs LGUs to align their local climate plans with national policies such as the National Climate Change Action Plan as well as to integrate their LCCAPs into local development plans. However, when the Climate Change Act and Framework Strategy were published, no local government body or national department had the mandate or capacity to guide local climate planning. Rather, LGUs struggled to comply with the existing requirements from siloed national departments concerning planning, development and environmental regulations. Finally, in 2014, the Local Government Academy of the national Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) published the first LGU Guidebook on the Formulation of Local Climate Change Action Plans. DILG has also begun providing capacity building and training services for LCCAP formulation, but has limited capacity to reach the more than 1,500 cities and municipalities across the country.

According to existing national guidelines, the LCCAP should focus on both climate change adaptation and mitigation and describe how LGUs plan to mainstream climate change into local development plans. At a minimum, the LCCAP should be able to define the LGU’s strategies for addressing identified risks and vulnerabilities, set climate change targets, and identify priority adaptation and mitigation actions in support of development goals and priorities.

Under the National Rationalised Planning System (see Figure 1), national and provincial governments in the Philippines are expected to extend technical assistance to LGUs. National agencies play a role by facilitating and encouraging inter-LGU collaborations, such as the ecosystem-based “ridge-to-reef” resiliency programme. An important development was the establishment of the Peoples’ Survival Fund (PSF) in 2011 (launched in 2015), a finance mechanism that LGUs and local accredited organizations can access to fund climate change adaptation programs and projects.

While national policy clearly names LGUs as frontline responders to climate change, the directives have not issued clear guidelines on local climate planning and implementation. Even with the enhanced 2014 LCCAP Guidebook, LGUs are overburdened with the more than thirty sectoral, area, and thematic plans required by different national departments and the multiple—sometimes conflicting—guidelines provided by them.

A COMPLEX LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING MODEL

LGU staff face enormous challenges when it comes to creating an implementable and transformative local climate action plan that is integrated into the complex landscape of local plans. Generally, environmental or planning offices assume responsibility for the LCCAP, but these offices already have considerable workloads. Aside from the LCCAP, LGUs are also required to prepare 33 other local plans representing sectoral and thematic concerns which must all be integrated and interfaced with the two mandated comprehensive plans—the Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) and the Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP). Integration of the plans, in theory, ensures that identified projects, activities and programs are budgeted and translated into concrete allocations in the LGU’s Local Development Investment Program (LDIP) and the Annual Investment Program (AIP).

Since LGU technical offices work principally with counterparts at the provincial and national levels and not their local peers, they rarely have experience coordinating the input and managing the political will of various technical departments, agencies and political bodies. Without strong leadership from the local executive and a strong coordinating body, most local implementing agencies outside of the offices developing the LCCAP are unaware of its contents and prioritise their own agenda over climate action.

The Philippines’ Rationalised Planning System aims to coordinate cross-sector planning, but a siloed approach continues to be the norm and represents a major challenge to effective, collaborative climate action planning at the local level. Multiple national agencies have mandates to guide local climate change planning: the CCC, the Department of Interior and Local Government, the Housing and Land Use Regularity Board, and the National Economic and Development Authority. Because these agencies have different institutional arrangements, implementation mechanisms, and rules of engagement with subnational counterparts, guidance to LGUs has created overlapping responsibilities and even resulted in contradicting instructions.

Figure 1: The Complex Local Planning System in the Philippines – the “Rationalised Planning System”
Source: Adapted from Department of the Interior and Local Government (2017).
ELUSIVE VERTICAL COORDINATION AND SUPPORT

Recognising the challenges of siloed planning and contradictory guidance to LGUs, the CCC worked to convene actors across national agencies. Drawing on a 2007 interdepartmental Joint Memorandum Circular (DILG 2007), the CCC began coordinating among national agencies before passing on guidance to LGUs. Relevant agencies have since jointly produced knowledge products and resources to aid LCCAP formulation. While all this has been a big step in the right direction, LGUs still have limited technical capacity and too few simplified tools to implement national climate change policies. This also reflects limited national capacity to reach the more than 1,500 LGUs with needs-based support.

While cross-sector coordination at the national level has significantly improved, the CCC has limited capacity to facilitate two-way communication between LGUs and national government. As such, national plans and strategies may not reflect on-the-ground realities and locally identified needs. For example, the CCC is currently unable to systematically evaluate the content of LCCAPs and track implementation in order to inform NDC revision and update the National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP).

THE GAP BETWEEN CLIMATE PLANNING AND ACTION

The low technical quality of most LCCAPs, the limited capacity to propose finance-ready “packaged projects” that meet funding requirements, and poorly coordinated funding mechanisms to increase the availability and accessibility of climate finance contribute to the financial gap between climate planning and implementation.

For LGUs, even after they formulate their LCCAPs, the lack of access to funding is a barrier to implementation. There are available sources of funding to support LCCAP implementation, but the national government has yet to significantly increase the flow of climate finance to the local level. On average, 70% of LGU income is derived from national tax revenues (known as Internal Revenue Allotment), and the poorer LGUs rely on national transfers for nearly 90% of their income (World Bank, 2013). In principle, LGUs should integrate LCCAPs into local development planning, and the Climate Change Act authorises LGUs to use nationally transferred funds for climate action. In reality, climate programs, activities and projects compete against the many other development priorities such as basic infrastructure, education programs, and economic development.

The People’s Survival Fund is a notable effort to fund local adaptation efforts. However, the Fund has been criticised for burdensome project screening criteria and a lengthy application and approval process. As of the end of 2019, six municipalities had successfully received funding (Del Carmen, Surigao del Norte; Lanuza, Surigao del Sur; Gerona, Tarlac; San Francisco, Cebu; Kitcharao, Agusan del Norte; and Province of Saranggani) totalling PHP 310 million (approximately 5.4 million Euros at current exchange rates) out of the PHP 1 billion fund allocated in 2015 when the People’s Survival Fund was launched.

Finally, reflecting local priorities as well as limited technical capacity, local governments have not integrated their low-emission development strategies and GHG mitigation actions in their LCCAPs. Most LCCAPs concentrate on adaptation—particularly disaster risk reduction—and miss straightforward mitigation actions and key adaptation-mitigation co-benefit opportunities. Climate-related severe weather and disasters drive the bias for adaptation and are further underscored by national policies that frame mitigation as a function of adaptation. As a result, local governments are more likely to classify mitigation actions as environmental protection, waste and pollution management, health, or transportation. This fragments and potentially weakens GHG emissions reductions and can shift responsibility from local to national policy.

Sicat et al. (2019).
Ormoc City has established a collaborative climate planning process that engages local government departments and stakeholders in sharing knowledge and making decisions. By including them in the planning process, Ormoc City ensures ownership and increases the chances of financial backing and support—and ultimately successful implementation. As a result, the city has been able to implement to date 80% of its climate projects detailed in the LCCAP adopted in February 2019.

This broad involvement in planning and decision-making empowers public officials and increases their knowledge and skills for strong climate communication with communities, advocacy and collaborative problem solving, not to mention improves their technical expertise on the use of climate science and information.

Most Philippine LGU’s own-source revenues are too limited to finance significant climate projects. Ormoc City sees its planning process as a tool to help the city access funds and support. By engaging in broad conversations with the public, the private sector and other partners in and outside of government, Ormoc City has been able to secure funds from the Local Government Support Fund (LGSF) to implement its climate actions.

A quality planning process is not only a means to having a good strategy, it is so much more. The existence of an involving process itself heightens skills, secures buy-in and increases the chances of financial backing and thus of implementation success.
A LOCAL WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT APPROACH IN ORMOC CITY

Throughout the formulation of the LCCAP, a series of activities engaged the department heads, staff, and elected officials. For example, GHG inventory trainings, the climate and disaster risk assessment, and consultations in developing and prioritising climate programs, projects and activities were inclusive of several different local institutions. According to one city official, the engagement approach in developing the LCCAP was a “starting point” for discussions related to governance and climate change challenges and enabled city officials and staff to participate in a meaningful way.

BOX 1: ORMOC CITY INSTITUTIONAL INNOVATIONS

The Ormoc City government used the LCCAP formulation process as a means to deliver transformative climate actions on the ground and approached planning with the implementation of climate actions in mind. In doing so, it found its own institutional innovations while strengthening the city’s technical capacity, improving its coordination structure and promoting participatory and meaningful engagement.

A dedicated LCCAP planning team and a city-wide climate change strategy made it easier for the traditionally siloed city departments to collaborate with each other and across senior management, beyond their established job descriptions and departmental mandates.

To combat siloed climate and environmental governance, the Ormoc City Mayor mobilised key LGU offices through an executive order that created the interdepartmental climate change technical working group (TWG).\(^8\) Led by the City Planning and Development Office, the TWG coordinated and effectively assigned specific responsibilities to relevant LGU offices. For instance, the City Environment and Natural Resources Office conducted the GHG inventory while both the City Planning and Development and the City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management offices led the climate and disaster risk assessment. In parallel, the City Social Welfare and Development Office ensured the social preparation of communities through awareness activities. A member of the City Ormoc Council or Sangguniang Panglungsod, the highest policy-making body in the LGU, is also part of the LCCAP TWG.

According to the city planning and development chief, the TWG effectively coordinated joint priorities across different city departments. For example, according to the health representative in the TWG, the LCCAP process urged the health department to additionally consider the public health impacts of climate change in relation to education and youth.

"We used the new data that we gathered during the development of our LCCAP to update our Comprehensive Land Use Plan and Comprehensive Development Plan. In that way we were able to see how the city’s economic growth will be affected if we do not manage our [GHG] emissions or do something for example about our forest cover or our transportation."

CPDO Chief
Raoul Cam

\(^8\) Ormoc City (2017).
The whole-of-government planning process increased expertise and skills, promoted evidence-based policymaking and enhanced overall coordination, not only for climate issues.

BOX 2: BENEFITS OF THE ORMOC APPROACH TO LOCAL CLIMATE ACTION PLANNING

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<td>Communication with citizens and societal actors</td>
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<td>Evidence-based policymaking</td>
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<td>Improved local governance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buy-in in city-wide administration (see Box 1 in the previous page)</td>
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Stronger technical and coordination capacity within the city offices

With the technical support of national agencies and international projects, Ormoc City carried out its climate and disaster risk assessment and GHG inventory, held consultation meetings, and developed climate resilience programs, projects, and activities as part of the LCCAP formulation process. As one key informant shared, the information and learnings from those activities and trainings equipped them to confidently facilitate and explain climate information and technical matters like GHG emissions and climate change vulnerability during public consultations and hearings for the LCCAP. As a result, “they found themselves conducting capacity-building and transferring lessons to local elected officials and the community at large to build commitment around climate change goals”.

Communication with citizens and societal actors

Interviews with key city officials in Ormoc showed that improved knowledge allowed TWG members to better communicate climate change issues to a wider audience, including those living in high-risk communities exposed to climate hazards.

Impact on city government decisions

Improved capacity also positively influenced government policy. According to an official from the environment office, climate change capacity-building activities helped get some of the city’s environmental policies approved. “The city team had been equipped to advocate their positions to decision makers—the Mayor and the Ormoc City Council — “to produce policies”. For example, after the LCCAP’s approval (which contained projects on increasing forest cover), the Environment and Natural Resources Office pushed for the approval of its forest land-use plan. This plan became the basis for multi-stakeholder mangrove development and reforestation projects and this result was partly achieved because of the city team’s increased ability to advocate for its approval.

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Footnote:

9 The Ormoc City's LCCAP was supported by the United Nations Human Settlements Program through two projects: Building Resiliency through Urban Plans and Designs (BCRUPD) and the V-LED project.
Evidence-based policymaking
An additional result of this process is that the LCCAP has a good-quality evidence base. It includes new climate information from the recent climate change projection data generated by the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration, and local mitigation targets and low-emission development strategies based on the city’s first GHG inventory. Its adaptation actions are based on the climate and disaster risk assessment applying new methodology released by the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board.

Improved local governance
Coordination of activities between and among different city departments have improved, enabling the team to effectively achieve their environmental goals and come up with resilient solutions, even for projects that are not climate-specific.

According to the city's public health official, the capacity training has taught them to “think analytically, [...] use climate data in the LCCAP for health planning and [...] develop policy instruments based on climate and health surveillance data such as the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management in Health Plan.” Similarly, a social welfare and development technical staff member recounted how he learned the importance of teamwork and coordination of several functions in developing policies that would require collaboration of different local government offices.

Figure 2: The City of Ormoc

Ormoc City is a city and Local Government Unit in the province of Leyte in the Eastern Visayas region. It has 110 Barangays (smallest administrative division in the Philippines) and a population of approx. 215,000.
SECURING TRANSFORMATION THROUGH FINANCE AND CLEAR POLICY SIGNALS

According to the City Mayor, the city enforces consistent policies that steer investments toward activities that are aligned with their climate targets to complement and enhance its LCCAP. For instance, the city has stated its commitment to not allow coal-fired power plants to set-up in Ormoc while pro-actively promoting renewable energy projects. Ormoc City also has an ordinance requiring new buildings, houses and subdivisions to have rainwater harvesting and collecting facilities. In removing conflicting policy signals, the city government is sending the message that the city aspires to be the “agro-commercial and industrial gateway in Eastern Visayas” while forging a path towards sustainable development.

Ormoc City successfully used its LCCAP to mainstream climate change into local development planning, which allowed it to drive implementation, attracting public funding for climate-related projects. Today, one year into the approval of their LCCAP, Ormoc City is in the process of redesigning its Old City Plaza Complex, and has accessed funds through the Local Government Support Fund (LGSF) – Assistance to Cities from the national Department of Budget and Management and with technical assistance from UN Habitat. The designs include an esplanade that will use a newly constructed rainwater capture and storage system.

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS FOR CLIMATE ACTION IMPLEMENTATION

LCCAP implementation not only involves local governments but also requires the engagement of communities, the private sector, and civil society. For Ormoc City, engaging communities in a series of public presentations conducted over several months increased public awareness and encouraged its residents to adopt climate-friendly and environmentally efficient practices. For example, local site visits and consultations provided valuable opportunities for resident input and increased local buy-in. As a result, a widely supported urban gardening project led to the conversion of empty lots into vegetable patches and community gardens.

Local governments can face challenges in establishing an effective working relationship with the private sector and encouraging green business. In the case of Ormoc City, the active engagement of the private sector has paid off. For its solid waste management project, the city government issued a “no plastics” policy on certain days within the city, enforced through its partnership with the Ormoc Chamber of Commerce and others in the business community. Other examples are mangrove conservation and forest rehabilitation projects that are supported by the Energy Development Corporation (a private company and one of the top geothermal operators in the country) and a local university.
**A STRONG LOW-EMISSION TARGET WITH BROAD SUPPORT**

Ormoc City stands out in the Philippines for its GHG mitigation goals. Based on its GHG inventory, the city was able to set a reduction target of 151,493.2035 tonnes of CO₂ equivalents (10% of the 2017 baseline). The city plans to do this by promoting renewable sources and energy efficient technologies. Ormoc City is presently working on three projects: (1) the installation of solar panels on government buildings; (2) the scale-up of a pilot project involving electric jeepneys (small public buses common throughout the Philippines); and (3) waste-to-energy technology deployment in partnership with the private sector.

In developing mitigation-related projects, the city integrated the climate and disaster risk assessment with its GHG emissions profile to highlight the co-benefits of climate adaptation projects. One example is a project targeting the development of a housing policy promoting the use of low-emission design and solar panels in housing areas that are at-risk of flooding.

Having a technically sound climate change planning document with empowered champions was key to building support.

“We used the LCCAP as a weapon to advocate to our decision makers, the business community, and the general public the importance and urgency of cutting down or managing our emissions. During the public hearing for the adoption of the emission reduction target in the LCCAP, we showed evidence of how our economic growth will put pressure on essential services such as energy, transport, and health if we do not address or manage them. Presenting the science behind the projects we proposed in the LCCAP helped in its approval; and now, implementation.”

Member of Ormoc City’s Interdepartmental Climate Change Technical Working Group.

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Ormoc City (2019).
Many LGUs struggle to develop high-quality, implementable LCCAPs. A major barrier is low technical capacity, lack of climate expertise and limited time available to relevant staff. In order to deal with their limited human resources and comply with national mandates, LGUs commonly rely on one city office or even just one staff member or sometimes on external consultants to develop their LCCAPs. The problem lies in a writing process isolated from local policy, planning and political processes. In extreme cases, the authors have handed over finished products to offices without local climate champions, expertise or a plan for concrete action.

Ormoc City addressed its capacity challenges by maximising opportunities from partnerships with national government agencies and international projects. The city used connections with national government agencies for technical methodology and planning tools (e.g. the climate and disaster risk assessments, the GHG inventory) and updated climate data and information. The city was also able to benefit from the interventions of international projects (the V-LED project through UN Habitat), which included peer learning between cities in order to stimulate good-practice exchange and replication.

Technical LGU staff commonly lack experience coordinating participatory processes across sectors and with different stakeholder groups, which is a highly demanding set of tasks. But local climate planning necessitates the meaningful participation of political and technical actors, as well as the engagement with the general public—especially vulnerable communities. The Ormoc City TWG members learned by doing. Their task required flexibility and responsiveness as they collaborated from their respective departments to interpret data and translate the results into action priorities. Importantly, the TWG received official recognition as the coordinating unit for climate change issues. Other cities in the Philippines seeking to begin this process could learn and greatly benefit from Ormoc’s experience.

The LCCAP formulation and targeting of actions require wide stakeholder engagement. Leaders must effectively communicate scientific information and action planning to colleagues, residents and elected officials. To address this, the city TWG used local vernacular during meetings and consultations and in conversations with political leaders when the plan was submitted for legislative approval. Ensuring that communities and their leadership were consulted and engaged in setting local climate action goals and initiatives were crucial factors in legitimising and institutionalising the climate plan.

Political leadership is an important factor for local climate action, but with local elections every three years, climate change decisions may be politicised and discontinued by new leadership. This could easily happen if there is no permanent committee tasked with driving and monitoring climate action, but becomes more difficult when a broad base of support and buy-in have been achieved through a local whole-of-government approach. Ormoc City’s TWG has proposed the creation of a Climate Change Action Council through a local ordinance. The council would be in charge of implementing and monitoring the LCCAP, reviewing climate data, identifying current and future impacts, and developing a comprehensive local ordinance on climate action.

Access to climate finance for large scale investments remain out of reach for most local governments. Ormoc City technical staff had limited expertise in developing bankable low-emission, climate-resilient infrastructure projects. Enhancing the bankability of the LCCAP-identified programs, projects, and activities requires apt project proposal preparation, demonstrated good management and implementation experience, and a strong business case to attract investment. Securing partnerships to achieve this level of bankability is key. For example, Ormoc City is currently building its technical team’s capacity to package climate resilient urban design projects into projects that are ready for investment and access financing with the support of UN Habitat.¹¹

¹¹ The “Building Climate Resiliency through Urban Plans and Designs” implemented by UN Habitat project supports the Philippine government in the promotion of climate-responsive, sustainable urban development plans and designs. For more information, see the KEY RESOURCES section of this study.
Ormoc City’s participatory and cross-sector LCCAP experience presents a positive model for collaborative governance. It offers insight into local challenges and solutions that can be adopted by other LGUs in the Philippines and local governments all over the world.

It validates multi-stakeholder and citizen participation in climate planning and cooperation between levels of government. Ormoc City’s LCCAP exemplifies policy coherence between initiatives and actions, and facilitates cross-learning among climate actors.

In building strong partnerships with national government agencies and local government associations—like the League of Cities of the Philippines—Ormoc City was able to access funding for various climate change projects. It saw the value of creating multi-stakeholder committees that facilitated dialogue between city departments and with local communities. These activities helped the city government gather support and participation from key constituents that led to the acceptance and implementation of its climate projects.

Most Philippine LGU’s have limited funds to finance their climate and environment projects. Accessing private and public sources of funding for local climate projects requires strong, bankable proposals. It is therefore crucial that LGUs stop thinking about the LCCAP as a mere compliance plan and seize it as a tool to access funds and support. Ormoc’s LCCAP prioritised actions and investments to mitigate GHG emissions and enhanced co-benefits that increase residents’ quality of life. Such an integrated approach paved the way for the city to use its LCCAP to access funding opportunities such as the national “Green, Green, Green” program, a PHP 2.5 billion assistance program (approximately 44 billion Euros at current exchange rates) targeting cities in the Philippines to make them liveable and sustainable through the development of public open spaces. Ormoc City further plans to access the People’s Survival Fund with a well-crafted project proposal that bundles LCCAP priorities.
Local governments are required to develop climate change plans either by law or as a prerequisite to access sustainable development or climate change finance. In the Philippines, although LGUs face a number of barriers, good practices in collaborative planning can produce an LCCAP that facilitates strategic climate change decision-making and fast-tracks implementation.

Some key lessons and concrete suggestions for other local climate planning processes based on the Ormoc experience are summarised below.

- **Identify climate champions** in the political system (elected officials) as well as the agencies that will do the technical legwork, develop expertise, facilitate dialogue and ultimately drive the implementation of activities and projects forward.

- **Create a coordinating focal point across city departments and with national and regional agencies**, such as Ormoc City’s climate change TWG. The focal point should consult with the public, convene stakeholders and interests within and outside of government, and strategically network with national governing actors. This breaks down silos and encourages cross-sector implementation. Moreover, an LCCAP focal point can monitor and evaluate implementation for continuous learning.

- **Organise forums for communities** to participate in identifying climate change priorities. Implementation of the plan can also be a collaborative effort with different stakeholders, especially at the neighbourhood or street-scale. Therefore, planners should involve and collaborate with communities throughout LCCAP formulation to foster local ownership and shared responsibility with residents, businesses and other members of civil society.

- **Engage the private sector to tap into their resources, innovation and know-how**. Involving the private sector throughout the planning and implementation process provides the opportunity for local governments to have an LCCAP that becomes a reference document for private sector actions—which in turn increases options for joint efforts and makes more finance/funding available.

- **Problem solving can actually be part of the action that subnational actors can take**, from developing and enforcing decisive policies, to connecting climate policies to issues of concern in the community, to ensuring the actions’ effective implementation through partnerships. These are needed in order to achieve results and hasten implementation.

- **Policymakers should be able to establish an effective mechanism for connecting national and local levels** through streamlined planning guidelines that would encourage and direct local climate actions. This would ensure that feedback and contributions from local actors/authorities are reflected in higher-level plans and strategies, while national policies and regulations are implemented at the local level.
The Local Government Academy of the Department of Interior and Local Government has developed the Enhanced LGU Guidebook on the Formulation of Local Climate Change Action Plan (LCCAP) Book 3, which provides step-by-step instructions on how to prepare local climate change action plans. It offers guidance on developing adaptation and mitigation strategies and actions, including on the process for conducting climate and disaster risk assessments and GHG inventory, as well as prioritizing identified climate programs, projects and activities. It includes standard forms, templates and checklists that are ready to use for those who will undertake a climate change planning process. 

Link here

A key point of contact on climate change concerns in the Philippines is the Climate Change Commission. All correspondence may be addressed to Secretary Emmanuel M. de Guzman, Vice Chairperson and Executive Director, Climate Change Commission: osec.ccc.ph@gmail.com.

The City of Ormoc created a dedicated Technical Working Group (TWG) to coordinate its climate action planning process. Information may be requested from the City Planning and Development Office: lguormccmo@gmail.com.

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