Almost three decades after the enactment of the Local Government Code of 1991, many local governments still face difficulties in addressing the most basic needs of their constituents. One can remember that it was through this Code that the national government devolved some basic services to local governments.

Planning is an important factor for effective local governance. However, a study by Domingo and Manejar (2018) found that barely a third of cities and municipalities in the country had the approved comprehensive land use plans (CLUP). Moreover, these plans were not the enhanced plans with inputs from climate and disaster risk assessment.

Moreover, a study by Diokno-Sicat et al. (2020) identified policy and governance gaps in infrastructure and planning of local governments. It found a low revenue effort and the inadequate use of the mandated funds for development across municipalities, which contributed to their delayed development.

Innovations and other interventions have also been introduced to local government units (LGUs) to improve their performance. However, most LGUs have experienced difficulties in adopting these interventions.

One of these interventions is the Performance Challenge Fund (PCF), an incentive fund to LGUs in the form of counterpart funding for their high-impact capital investment projects. It is funded out of the 20-percent Local Development Fund. While majority of the municipalities appreciated the PCF, Diokno-Sicat et al. (2020) found that about 20 percent of them were not eligible to receive it. Most of these municipalities were low-income LGUs in Bicol and Central and Eastern Visayas regions.

Socioeconomic Issue on Spotlight
Local Governance

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PARTNER-INSTITUTION ON SPOTLIGHT
UP National College of Public Administration and Governance (NCPAG)

The UP National College of Public Administration and Governance (NCPAG) is a leading institution that conducts instruction, research, and extension services in public management and public policy. The NCPAG has expanded the field from an exclusive focus on governmental management to the broader concern of governance for the public interest. It studies not only the role of the bureaucracy but also that of the state and civil society in enhancing public service.

The NCPAG’s core functions are carried out through four dedicated centers: Center for Public Administration and Governance Education, Center for Policy and Executive Development, Center for Local and Regional Governance, and Center for Leadership, Citizenship, and Democracy. Meanwhile, the Publications Office (PO) of UP-NCPAG is the publishing arm of the College which functions as an avenue for the dissemination of knowledge in public administration theory and practice.

SERP-P FEATURED RESEARCHER
Dr. Alex Brillantes Jr.

Dr. Alex Brillantes Jr. is a professor and the former dean of the UP-NCPAG and the president of the Asian Association for Public Administration (AAPA) where he represents the AAPA in the meetings of the Committee of Experts of Public Administration in the United Nations. He was the executive director of the Local Government Academy of the Department of the Interior and Local Government, commissioner of the Commission on Higher Education, and chairperson of the Boards of 24 state universities and colleges in the Philippines. He has served as consultant for international agencies including the Asian Development Bank, United States Agency for International Development, Australian Agency for International Development, Canadian International Development Agency, United Nations Development Programme, and Japan International Cooperation Agency. He has written three books including Innovations and Excellence in Local Governance. He was a visiting professor and researcher and has given lectures in several universities in Japan, Indonesia, Thailand, Korea, China, Australia, Taiwan, France, and the United States. He was awarded a Doctor in Public Administration (honoris causa) by the Polytechnic University of the Philippines.

Dr. Brillantes was also awarded the International Publications Award from 2003 to 2019 by the University of the Philippines. He obtained his AB and MPA from the University of the Philippines and his MA and PhD from the University of Hawaii.

To check the publications of Dr. Brillantes in SERP-P, simply type “Brillantes, Alex” in the search box of the SERP-P website.
Another study by Diokno-Sicat et al. (2020) also looked at the use of the community-based monitoring system (CBMS) as a tool in drafting the comprehensive development plan (CDP). The results of a nationwide survey revealed that majority of municipalities used the CBMS not just for ecological profiling in development planning but also for budget preparation and priority setting. However, local governments did not regularly allocate funds for CBMS data collection.

Meanwhile, Manasan et al. (2017) assessed the impact of the bottom-up budgeting (BUB) program on LGUs’ poverty alleviation and the strengthening of social capital. Their study found that BUB was not associated with a greater increase in per capita household income at the provincial level. However, the household respondents had a positive perception of BUB projects implemented in their communities in terms of having directly benefited from the projects.

In terms of LGU adoption of innovations, Iglesias (2010) reported that the volume of work related to services provided by LGUs could be made more efficient, effective, transparent, accountable, and equitable using relevant technologies. Factors that may slow down the use of information and communications technology (ICT) for providing public service were the high costs of preparing a transactional website and issues on acquiring skilled employees and staff turnover.

Effective leadership is also an important driver for the local government to adopt innovations. Capuno (2010) found that observable qualities and possible incentives of incumbent mayors were empirically linked with their reported number of innovations. These included the incumbent’s age, educational attainment, experience in the public sector, reelection status, and term in office, controlling for other factors. The fiscal capacity of the local government and the poverty status of the local population were also found to be statistically significant.

Several policy recommendations have been proposed to assist LGUs in improving their performance.

To address policy and governance gaps, Diokno-Sicat et al. (2020) urged the Department of the Interior and Local Government to enforce strict compliance among the LGUs in the regular updating of their of their multisectoral development plans.

Meanwhile, Domino and Manejar (2018) urged LGUs to enhance their major planning documents, such as the CLUP, and to reflect their climate change and disaster risk reduction and management initiatives in the CLUP and CDP for proper planning and investment programming.

Diokno-Sicat et al. (2020) also called for the conduct of reorientation of local partners on the CBMS and the regular updating of development indicators to increase the system’s relevance for development planning. They added the need for the government to revisit the objectives and design of the PCF and the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG). This step will ensure that no LGU is left behind given that more financially able municipalities qualify for the SGLG compared to poorer municipalities.

Iglesias (2010) emphasized e-administration to ensure that organizational processes exist to support public service delivery over the internet. He also called for the development of LGUs’ information policy and the institution of a system for identifying, anticipating, and preventing problems and failures in local ICT investments.

Capuno (2010) also recommended honing the leadership qualities of incumbent mayors for greater adoption of innovations through capacity-building programs.

Finally, Lavado et al. (2009) noted that meaningful and genuine local autonomy would mean the economic empowerment of the people as contributors to inclusive economic growth in their localities and catalysts of positive change in the country. Thus, local governments must provide an enabling environment and facilitative conditions to realize such economic and political potential.

Some SERP-P Resources on Local Governance

- Assessment of the Performance Challenge Fund and the Seal of Good Local Governance: Perceptions from Municipalities
- Disaster Preparedness and Local Governance in the Philippines
- Assessment of the BUB Program: Improving Access of Local Communities to Basic Services and Strengthening Social Capital
- The Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS) as a Local Planning Tool: Results from the PIDS-DILG Baseline Study on Policy and Governance Gaps for the Local Government Support Fund Assistance to Municipalities (LGSF-AM) Program
- e-Government Initiatives of Four Philippine Cities

For more studies, just type “local governance” in the search box of the SERP-P website.
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- Technology and Investment Profile of Soya Chips (SEARCA)
- Technology and Investment Profile of Soy Baby food (SEARCA)
- Technology and Investment Profile of Seaweed Products (SEARCA)
- Technology and Investment Profile of Improved Native Garlic (SEARCA)
- Technology and Investment Profile of Malunggay Products (SEARCA)
- Technology and Investment Profile of Pinoy GOURmix (SEARCA)
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SERP-P
Email: serpp@mail.pids.gov.ph

SERP-P Team at PIDS:
Sheila V. Siar, Project Manager
Jachin Jane Aberilla, Project Coordinator
Célia M. Reyes and Aniceto Orbeta Jr., Technical Advisers

Philippine Institute for Development Studies
18F Three Cyberpod Centris, North Tower
EDSA cor. Quezon Ave., Quezon City