

Capacity Status on Biodiversity Protection Related Services among Local Government Units in Region 10

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ABSTRACT

The high diversity of environmental situations in the Philippines demands that local environments and natural resources be governed in depth, in their specific circumstances, and in each location. No state agency has the ability, mandate, and capacity to do this task more than Local Government Units (LGUs). This study focused on determining the capacity of the Province of Bukidnon to assume bigger roles by analyzing its capacity development (CapDev) agenda for environmental management, the capacity status of the Province, its common and unique CapDev agenda, and its direction of the prioritization of the CapDev agenda. The study utilized the document analysis approach. The result revealed a HIGH CAPACITY status on the part of the Province of Bukidnon in terms of implementing the devolution requirements on environment services and biodiversity protection-related services, which means the LGU has evident and developed 60– 79% capacity in implementing the devolution requirements. LOW CAPACITY status on the part of Cities means LGU has basic and limited or 20– 39% capacity in implementing the devolution requirements. NO CAPACITY status on the part of Municipalities means the LGU has very little to no or 0 – 19% capacity in implementing devolution requirements. Programs, activities, and projects which fall under the pillar of competencies call for prioritization. In the full implementation of the devolution of functions, indicative capacity development priorities in the Province of Bukidnon focus more on the prioritization of capacity development interventions under the capacity pillar on competencies followed by management systems, structure, and enabling policies.

Keywords: Environmental management, Biodiversity Protection, devolution, capacity development, environmental services

INTRODUCTION

Devolution of functions allows Local Government Units (LGUs) to respond to their constituents' concerns, given that LGUs are assumed to be in the best position to understand and provide for residents' needs (Laforga, 2021; Poblador, 2000). It is the reason behind the efficiency argument favoring decentralization (World Bank, 2013; De Vera, 2021; Gonzales, 2020), in which local services are tailored to the needs of a locality. The idea sums up the subsidiarity principle in the literature, suggesting the advantage of local governments in identifying peoples' needs and delivering them (Flora, 2021; Meniano, 202; Magno, 2001).

One of the major services devolved to LGUs is environmental management, like other basic services such as agriculture, health, public works, and social welfare. ENR management was devolved to the LGUs because of their essential role in biodiversity conservation and the management and protection of natural resources in general. LGUs are directed to integrate environmental aspects in local development planning and implement environmental protection programs and projects as well as enforce laws and regulations (Laforja, 2021; Dela Cruz, 2021; Mayuga, 2021). They are deemed in the best position to act as frontrunners in biodiversity conservations and the management of environment and natural resources given their geographical proximity to their respective jurisdictions

The extremely high diversity of environmental situations in the Philippines demands that local environments and natural resources be governed in depth, in their specific circumstances, and in each different location. No state agency has the ability, mandate and capacity to do this task more than LGUs.

One important aspect of local governance espoused by the Local Government Code is environmental management. LGUs are mandated to integrate environmental aspects in local development planning, implement environmental protection programs and projects as well as enforce laws and regulations (Bureau of Local Government Finance, 2016; Cudis, 2021). The Mandanas ruling enhanced LGUs' function as implementing field units to regulate and develop, singly or jointly, the use and development of environmental amenities and natural resources within their jurisdictions and ensure the highest possible levels of environmental quality and quality of natural resources. within their respective LGUs (DILG, 2021; Sison 2021).

The six (6) from the eight (8) functions to be assumed by the Municipalities on Environmental services in the Province are (1) Ecological Solid Waste Management, (2) Inspection through Survey and Monitoring on various air pollution sources, (3)

Conduct of Water Quality Monitoring to all bodies of water (rivers, lakes, coastal) within their jurisdiction, (4) Survey and Monitoring of Water Pollution Sources, (5) Establishment and Effective Operationalization of Material Recovery Facility, and 6) the Establishment and Effective Operationalization and Monitoring of Sanitary Landfill. The other two functions will be included in the cities are (1) Management of communal Forest and (2) Management of Integrated Social Forestry (ISF) Programs, respectively.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study focused on determining the capacity status of the Local Government Units (LGUs) on the service area related to biodiversity protection and the Common and Unique Capacity Development (CapDev) needs on the service area related to biodiversity protection across LGUs.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Design

This study utilized the descriptive method of research employing quantitative design. The Document Analysis Approach was used in determining the capacity status of the LGUs on the full devolution of services related to biodiversity conservation. The capacity of the LGUs was determined and rated using the Capacity Matrix Tool (CMT), which is patterned after the functions and performance targets set by the concerned national agencies in their National Devolution Transition Plan presented during the regional roll-out. The primary resources for this were the records coming from the LGUs in Region 10.

Data Collection Tool

The functions/services were extracted from the DTP prepared by the concerned national agencies. For the entries for the Current State and Desired State were gathered from the DTPs of the locale LGUs. The remaining parts, remarks and the capacity status were be filled by the researchers through scrutinizing documents from the locale LGUs as means of verification (MOV), and were rated using the scoring matrix or the Capacity Criterion Matrix (CCM).

Data Analysis

This study used a scoring procedure adopting a 5-point Likert scale in rating

the capacity of the LGUs on the full devolution of services. For the Qualifying statement, a unique criterion was constructed for each function or indicator, which was based on the national standards found in the legal basis and DTP. This is because each function has unique requirements, as provided by the supporting laws or guidelines. The researchers calculated the basic descriptive statistics for the CMT. The scoring procedure for the Capacity Matrix Tool is shown below:

Table 1

Scoring Procedure

Scale	Mean Interval	Qualitative Description	Interpretation *Capacity Matrix*
5	4.21-5.0	Very High Functional Capacity (VHC)	LGU has well established and extensive or 80-100% capacity in implementing the devolution requirements.
4	3.41-4.20	High Functional Capacity (HC)	LGU has evident and developing or 60-79% capacity in implementing the devolution requirements.
3	2.61-3.40	Moderate Capacity (MC)	LGU has some existing and enabling or 40-59% capacity in implementing the devolution requirements.
2	1.81-2.60	Low Capacity (LC)	LGU has basic and limited or 20-39% capacity in implementing the devolution requirements.
1	1.0-1.80	No Capacity (NC)	LGU has very little to no or 0-19% capacity in implementing the devolution requirements.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Capacity Status of the Municipalities

Table 2

Capacity Status of the Municipalities on Biodiversity Protection related Services

Environment Functions to be Assumed	Mean	Qualitative Description	Qualifying Statement
Ecological Solid Waste Management	2.26	Low Capacity (LC)	LGU has basic and limited or 20 – 39% capacity in implementing the devolution requirements.

Table 2 continued.

Environment Functions to be Assumed	Mean	Qualitative Description	Qualifying Statement
Functions devolved such as inspection through survey and monitoring on various air pollution sources	1.08	No Capacity (NC)	LGU has very little to no or 0 – 19% capacity in implementing devolution requirements.
Conduct water quality monitoring of all water bodies (rivers, lakes, coastal) within their jurisdiction	1.33	No Capacity (NC)	LGU has very little to no or 0 – 19% capacity in implementing devolution requirements.
Survey and Monitoring of Water Pollution Sources	1.05	No Capacity (NC)	LGU has very little to no or 0 – 19% capacity in implementing devolution requirements.
Establishment and Effective Operationalization of MRF by providing necessary logistical and operational support in line with the Policy guideline of the National Government	1.69	No Capacity (NC)	LGU has very little to no or 0 – 19% capacity in implementing devolution requirements.
Establishment and Effective Operationalization and Monitoring of Sanitary Landfill	1.35	No Capacity (NC)	LGU has very little to no or 0 – 19% capacity in implementing devolution requirements.
Overall Mean	1.46	No Capacity (NC)	LGU has very little to no or 0 – 19% capacity in implementing devolution requirements.

Table 2 reveals that Ecological Solid Waste Management capacity status is *Low Capacity (LC)*. The Municipalities have basic and limited or 20 – 39% capacity in implementing the devolution requirements. The lack of resources (human, financial and technical), a basic prerequisite in delivery of public service, is evident in the Capacity Development Agenda of the municipalities, specifically the need to establish a MENRO Office equipped with the financial and technical capacity to take responsibility in the environmental management of the LGU. Outdated policies and to be updated Environment Code and Solid Waste Management Plans affect the capacity status of the municipalities to assume the functions of the different service areas under Ecological Solid Waste Management.

Functions devolved such as inspection through survey and monitoring on air pollution sources capacity status is *No Capacity (NC)*. The municipalities have very

little to no or 0 – 19% capacity in implementing devolution requirements. The lack of policies, equipment, technical personnel that would promote and maintain air quality are the underlying reasons of their no capacity status.

The conduct water quality monitoring of all water bodies (rivers, lakes, coastal) within their jurisdiction capacity status is *No Capacity (NC)*. The municipalities have very little to no or 0 – 19% capacity in implementing the devolution requirements. The lack of policies, equipment and technical personnel limit the municipalities to conduct the said function.

Survey and Monitoring of Water Pollution Sources capacity status is *No Capacity (NC)*. The municipalities have very little to no or 0 – 19% capacity in implementing the devolution requirements. The non-enforcement of policies and lack of capacitated personnel on Monitoring and Evaluation are contributory factors in the low capacity of the province to undertake the function.

Establishment and Effective Operationalization of MRF by providing necessary logistical and operational support in line with the Policy guideline of the National Government capacity status is *No Capacity (NC)*. The municipalities have very little to no or 0 – 19% capacity in implementing the devolution requirements. The need to procure MRF machineries and equipment with recycling machineries such as bio composter and shredder, plastic shredder and washeries, wastewater treatment facilities and cyclone dryer and extruders and plastic molders in all the barangays of the municipalities as reflected in their Cap Dev interventions validate the Low capacity status to absorb the function.

Establishment and Effective Operationalization and Monitoring of Sanitary Landfill capacity status is *No Capacity*. The municipalities have very little to no or 0 – 19% capacity in implementing devolution requirements. The lack of equipment and technical personnel contributed to the no capacity status rating.

Table 3

Capacity Status Summary of Cities on Biodiversity Protection related Services

To Be Assumed Functions	Mean	Qualitative Description	Qualifying Statement
Ecological Solid Waste Management	3.79	High Capacity (HC)	LGU has evident and developing or 60- 79% capacity in implementing the devolution requirements.

Table 3 continued.

To Be Assumed Functions	Mean	Qualitative Description	Qualifying Statement
Functions devolved such as inspection through survey and monitoring of the following air pollution sources	2.00	Low Capacity (LC)	LGU has basic and limited or 20 – 39% capacity in implementing the devolution requirements.
Conduct water quality monitoring of all water bodies (rivers, lakes, coastal) within their jurisdiction	2.67	Moderate Capacity	LGU has some existing and enabling or 40 – 59% capacity in implementing the devolution requirements.
Survey and Monitoring of Water Pollution Sources	1.00	No Capacity (NC)	LGU has very little to no or 0 – 19% capacity in implementing devolution requirements.
Establishment and Effective Operationalization of MRF by providing necessary logistical and operational support in line with the Policy guideline of the National Government	1.75	No Capacity (NC)	LGU has very little to no or 0 – 19% capacity in implementing devolution requirements.
Establishment and Effective Operationalization and Monitoring of Sanitary Landfill	1.33	No Capacity (NC)	LGU has very little to no or 0 – 19% capacity in implementing devolution requirements.
Overall Mean	2.09	Low Capacity (LC)	LGU has basic and limited or 20 – 39% capacity in implementing the devolution requirements.

Table 3 shows a *Low Capacity* status in implementing the devolution requirements in cities of the province. The overall result is affected by the *No Capacity* status of Survey and Monitoring of Water Pollution Sources, Establishment and Effective Operationalization of MRF by providing necessary logistical and operational support in line with the Policy guideline of the National Government and Establishment and Effective Operationalization and Monitoring of Sanitary Landfill. It is evident in the documents analyzed that functions to be assumed under the above-enumerated service area are not being implemented yet by the cities.

A *High Capacity* status in implementing the devolution requirements on

Ecological Solid Waste Management is evident in the Cities. The monitoring system of plans and programs is not established in the documents analyzed.

Capacity Status of the Province

Table 4

Capacity Status of the Province on Biodiversity Protection related Services

To Be Assumed Functions	Mean	Qualitative Description	Qualifying Statement
Management of Communal Forest	5.00	Very High Capacity (VHC)	LGU has a well-established and extensive or 80 – 100% capacity in implementing the devolution requirements
Management of Integrated Social Forestry (ISF) Programs	4.00	High Capacity (HC)	LGU has evident and developing or 60- 79% capacity in implementing the devolution requirements.
Ecological Solid Waste Management	5.00	Very High Capacity (VHC)	LGU has a well-established and extensive or 80 – 100% capacity in implementing the devolution requirements
Functions devolved such as inspection through survey and monitoring of the following air pollution sources	2.00	Low Capacity	LGU has basic and limited or 20 – 39% capacity in implementing the devolution requirements.
Conduct water quality monitoring of all water bodies (rivers, lakes, coastal) within their jurisdiction	4.00	High Capacity (HC)	LGU has evident and developing or 60- 79% capacity in implementing the devolution requirements.
Survey and Monitoring of Water Pollution Sources	4.00	High Capacity (HC)	LGU has evident and developing or 60- 79% capacity in implementing the devolution requirements.
Establishment and Effective Operationalization of MRF by providing necessary logistical and operational support in line with the Policy guideline of the National Government	4.00	High Capacity (HC)	LGU has evident and developing or 60- 79% capacity in implementing the devolution requirements.

Table 4 continued.

To Be Assumed Functions	Mean	Qualitative Description	Qualifying Statement
National Government			
Establishment and Effective Operationalization and Monitoring of Sanitary Landfill	4.00	High Capacity (HC)	LGU has evident and developing or 60- 79% capacity in implementing the devolution requirements.
Overall Mean	4.00	High Capacity (HC)	LGU has evident and developing or 60- 79% capacity in implementing

Table 4 reveals a *High Capacity* status on the part of the Province in terms of implementing the devolution requirements on biodiversity conservation related services. It is evident on the table that the Management of Communal Forest and Management of Solid Waste Management shows a *Very High Capacity* status of the Province to implement the devolution requirements. Considering that they have a system mechanism, procedures, programs, activities, and projects, in place and strict compliance with policies and laws is being observed.

Functions devolved such as inspection through survey and monitoring of air pollution sources has a *Low Capacity* status. The province doesn't give much focus on this because carbon sequestration is presumed to be very high in different municipalities and cities because of the greening program. However, plans and initiatives are in place.

The Conduct of water quality monitoring of all water bodies (rivers, lakes, coastal) within their jurisdiction. Survey and Monitoring of Water Pollution Sources, the Establishment and Effective Operationalization and Monitoring of Sanitary Landfill and Establishment, and Effective Operationalization of MRF by providing necessary logistical and operational support in line with the Policy guideline of the National Government show a *High Capacity* status of the Province to implement the devolution requirements.

Common and Unique Capacity Development Interventions

Table 5

Common and Unique Capacity Development Interventions among Local Government Units

Functions to be Assumed	Common	Unique
1. Ecological Solid Waste Management	1. Establishment of MENRO	1. Tracking system for program beneficiaries
2. Functions devolved such as inspection through survey and monitoring on various air pollution sources	2. Hiring of Technical Personnel	2. Linkage with higher education institutions for environmental studies/ Conduct of research, linkage in the formulation of local policy, guidelines
3. Conduct water quality monitoring of all water bodies (rivers, lakes, coastal) within their jurisdiction	3. Technical Skills Training and Seminars (SWM- Recycling, Composting, Air and Quality Monitoring, Communal Forest and Integrated Social Forestry Management)	3. Linkage/Inclusion of NGOs and the Private Sector in Environmental Councils
4. Survey and Monitoring of Water Pollution Sources		4. Strengthen community involvement
5. Establishment and Effective Operationalization of MRF by providing necessary logistical and operational support in line with the Policy guideline of the National Government	4. Purchase of equipment (IT and Laboratory, firefighting) and supplies	5. Reconstitution of ESWM Board
	5. Acquisition of service vehicle	6. Review and update existing ordinances on the environment
	6. Installation of Weight bridge and CCTVs linked to EMB Central Office	7. Modification of Existing Organizational Structure
6. Establishment and Effective Operationalization and Monitoring of Sanitary Landfill	7. Development of monitoring mechanism	8. Sending of non- eligible personnel to review centers
		9. Training on enforcement strategies
		10. Trainings to improve the interpersonal and communication skills

CONCLUSIONS

The existing capacity of LGUs to perform their biodiversity protection related functions and in ENR management vary across Municipalities in Provinces. Their needed capacity includes having personnel with the competence to know what to do with their function, the ability to finance what needs to be done, the mandate to act on the newly assumed functions, and having the public support to do so. The lack of substantial data in the DTPs of every municipality has greatly affected the capacity status rating. Moreover, there are Municipalities which has no data on ENR Programs, Activities and Projects (PAPs) and Capacity Development Agenda while others have failed to reflect their PAPs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Policy-making and standard setting shall emanate from the DENR during the First Phase of Devolution to prescribe the processes for how LGUs might develop a program of action to achieve prescribed conditions of biodiversity protection and environment and natural resources as a result of the devolution at the soonest possible time.

2. Ready technical assistance to LGUs should be made available in each phase of the devolution by the DENR.

3. Monitoring of LGU performance and compliance to national policies and standards and how they conduct the prescribed methods and procedures for governing environmental amenities and natural resources be prioritized by DENR.

4. Organizational Development in the Environment and Natural Resources service area be prioritized.

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