

Developing Indicators of Local Governance in the Philippines: Towards an “ISO” for LGUs

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The importance of setting standards for local governments is manifested by the various performance measurement systems that have been initiated by different sectors, including the national government through the Department of the Interior and Local Government, the academe, various non-governmental organizations and other institutions that are supported by donor and international agencies such as United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). And with the development of the International Standards Organization (ISO) certifications for generic management system standards in the private sector, there is a move to apply this ISO concept and framework for local governments to attest that they have passed this set of performance-related standards.

The paper discusses the participatory nature of the development of appropriate measures and indicators of good governance at the local level. The effort of the various stakeholders in local governance to develop performance criteria has largely been related to the development of performance indicators and performance measures. The paper proposes the ten major indicators of effective local governance, which were developed by local government officials themselves after a series of workshops were held throughout the country. These indicators are broken down into specific activities to serve as a checklist. Finally it enumerates several issues and challenges in the implementation of these performance measurements, including the issue of convergence of all the efforts in the performance measurement of local governments.

Introduction

In one of his public pronouncement before the local governments of the Philippines, the Secretary of the Interior and Local Government and former Governor of Laguna, Secretary Jose D. Lina advocates the possibility of developing some kind of performance standards for local governments that would serve as some kind, of what he called, an “ISO” for Local Government Units (LGUs).

ISO (International Standards Organization) has been developing voluntary technical standards for the business, industry and technology sectors since 1947.¹ ISO begun with mostly technical standards for engineering (e.g., use of bolts, nuts,

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screws, pins, rivets, etc.) to be used consistently as rules, guidelines, or definitions of characteristics to ensure that materials, products, processes and services are fit for their purpose. It was fairly recently that ISO introduced standards for general management systems through what was labeled as ISO 9000 in 1987, and in ISO 14000 in 1997. Hence ISO was brought to the attention of the broader business community. Both ISO 9000 and 14000 are known as "generic management system standards." This means that the same standards can be applied to any organization, large or small, whatever its product. Management system refers to what the organization does to manage its process or activities. Management system standards provide the organization with a model to follow in setting up and operating the management system. Building upon this concept and framework, Gov. Lina suggested that a similar set of standards be applied to management systems of local governments that would eventually be certified. This would lead to some kind of certification (similar to the ISO) for local governments attesting to the fact that they have "passed the bar of universally set and recognized standards." It is within this context that "ISO" is being used in this paper.

Setting standards for local governments has been a relatively new phenomenon in the Philippines. Many initiatives from many sectors have been made by many sectors towards this general effort. These include the Department of the Interior and Local Government itself, the academe, including the University of the Philippines and the Ateneo de Manila University, a number of which are supported by donor and international agencies such as United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Appendix one is a matrix developed by the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) reflecting all these initiatives.

This paper discusses one of the most critical issues of contemporary politico-administrative history: the development of appropriate measures and indicators of good governance. Effective governance has been described by the UNDP as the "missing link" between national anti poverty efforts and poverty reduction (UNDP 2000). A number of international agencies, such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank have likewise identified the promotion of good governance among the pillars of their development work. This discussion paper hopes to make a modest contribution to the continuing discourse on developing indicators for good governance.

Governance has been defined in the *Philippine National Development Plan* as "the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage the nation's affairs at all levels. It comprises all the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights and obligations and mediate their differences. Governance is not the sole domain of government but transcends government to encompass the business sector and civil society."² The notion of governance has been operationalized in three levels: administrative governance, economic governance and political governance. The Plan emphasizes that "governance xxx shall be increasingly relied upon to level the economic, political and administrative playing fields" (NEDA 1998: 8-2).

Many institutions and individuals have initiated efforts to develop indicators of governance. Dinesh Mehta in "Urban Governance: Lessons from Best Practices" (1998) traces the concepts of governance and reviews the various characteristics of "good governance." He discusses the lessons learned from some best practices and provides a strategy for encouraging a new mode of partnership. Mehta presents the following matrix on Good Governance Indicators Based on Capacity which has been adapted from Grindle and Hildebrand (1994) and Razon Abad (1997):

Capacity	Good Governance Indicators
1. Institutional Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability • Transparency • Adaptability • Judicial Independence
2. Technical Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perspective planning and projecting future investment needs • Management of services and infrastructure • Financial management and accounting practice
3. Administrative Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grievance redressal system • Personnel policy • Flexible and decentralized decisionmaking • Performance evaluation
4. Political Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulation of local needs in the context of organizational capacity • Mechanism for participation of stakeholders • State-local relations in policy formulations and fiscal transfers

The following matrix³ summarizes some of the major indicators and elements of good governance that may be considered in developing governance performance criteria for local governments:

Author and Title of Publication	Indicator/Elements of Good Governance
Root, Hilton, Managing Development through Institution Building, ADB Occasional Paper No. 12, October 1995 World Bank, Governance and Development, The World Bank: Washington DC, 1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability • Transparency • Predictability • Capacity and efficiency of the public sector • Accountability

<p>Lander-Mills, Pierre and Ismail Serageldin, "Governance and the External Factor" in Proceedings of the World Bank Annual Conference on Development Economics, 1991, Washington D.C.: World Bank, 1992</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal Framework for development • Transparency and information • Political and bureaucratic accountability • Freedom of association • Objective and efficient judiciary • Freedom of information and expression • Efficient public institutions
<p>Huther, Jeff and Anwar Shah, "Applying a Simple Measure of Good Governance to the Debate on Fiscal Decentralization," Policy Research Working Paper 1894, Washington D.C.: World Bank, 1998</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen exit and voice • Government orientation (judicial efficiency, bureaucratic efficiency and lack of corruption) • Social development (human development in the tradition of UNDP plus equity) • Economic management

Manasan, Gonzales and Gaffud (2000) developed their own criteria for good governance. According to them, the criteria that may be considered are the following:

- Accountability and participation
- Transparency and information
- Predictability, presence of legal framework
- Efficiency of public sector
- Social development
- Sound economic management
- Catalytic and community owned government
- Competitive, enterprising, anticipatory, results oriented governance
- Decentralized decisionmaking and fiscal responsibility

Choong Tet Sieu (1998) notes that the following constitute good governance:

- *Rule of law.* Legal frameworks are both fair and fairly enforced
- *Transparency.* A free flow of information so that members of the public can understand and monitor the institutions and processes affecting their lives
- *Responsiveness.* Serving the interest of all stakeholders
- *Consensus.* Mediating different aspirations to reach broad agreement in the best interest of the community
- *Equity.* Opportunity for all men and women to improve their well being

- *Effectiveness and efficiency.* Meeting needs through the best use of resources.
- *Accountability.* Decisionmakers (in government, private sector and citizen groups) must answer to the public as well as to their own organizations
- *Strategic vision.* A long term perspective on what is needed for society to grow.

Capuno, Garcia and Sardalla (2001) have been developing what they called the Governance for Local Development Index (GOFORDEV) intended to be an instrument to promote local development and welfare. Villareal (2001) reviewed benchmarking efforts of selected local governments in Asia arguing that benchmarking is a continuous, systematic process for identifying best practices to improve performance. The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) has its Local Productivity and Performance Measurement System (LPPMS). Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP) has advocated quality awards for local governments.

The effort to develop performance criteria has largely been related to that of performance indicators and performance measures. In fact, John Fenwick in *Managing Local Government* (1995) raises the question: "Are performance indicators and performance measures the same thing?" He adds that "the language of performance tends to slip rather easily between "measure" and "indicator." If we might add, these are also loosely interchanged with "criterion/criteria" and "benchmarks."⁴ While they may be used interchangeably as is being done in this paper, Fenwick, citing Rogers, suggests that measures tend to be seen as "precise and direct assessments of performance" and indicators as "more indirect assessments." He adds that "although the essential distinction between direct and indirect is intelligible enough, the reference to measures as 'assessments' is unfortunate. Indicators and measures (and we may add, criteria) describe. They do not assess—people do that, assisted by available information."⁹ Thus, performance criteria may be used interchangeably (albeit loosely) with performance indicator and performance measures *but within the broad context of performance management.* Finally, the performance management process can be broken down into three specific steps: (1) performance plan; (2) performance manage; and (3) performance appraise.

The notion of performance measurement has also been taken into consideration by programs and projects that aim to recognize outstanding local governments in the Philippines. For instance, in 1994, the Galing Pook Awards Program was jointly launched by the Local Government Academy of the DILG and the Asian Institute of Management. The Program had two major objectives, i.e., (1) to give public recognition to local government initiatives that successfully deal with urgent social and economic needs and (2) to inspire other communities into undertaking similar activities. Among the criteria used to choose the local government awardees were the following:

- Effectiveness of service delivery, i.e., the extent to which the program made good on its promise;
- Positive socio-economic and or environmental impact, i.e., the improvement the program made on the life of the community, and the effort of the community to improve the environment;
- Promotion of people empowerment, i.e., how the community was encouraged to participate in activities meant for the common good; and
- Transferability, i.e., the likelihood of the program's inspiring other communities to adapt or replicate the program.

As far as governance criteria are concerned, effectiveness, participation and empowerment are among those considered in the Galang Pook program. The program is now on its 7th year and has recognized close to 200 local governments throughout the country.

A Simple Set of Governance Indicators

Schiavo-Campo and Tommasi (1999) have argued that good performance indicators must meet the "CREAM" test. These means that they must be:

- **Clear**, i.e., precise and unambiguous (not necessarily quantitative)
- **Relevant**, i.e., appropriate to the objective at hand (and not used simply because it is readily available)
- **Economic**, i.e., the data required should be available at reasonable cost
- **Adequate**, i.e., by itself or in combination with others, the measure must provide a sufficient basis for the assessment of performance
- **Monitorable**, i.e., in addition to clarity and availability of information, the indicator must be amenable to independent scrutiny

The authors emphasize that if "any one of these five criteria is not met, performance indicators should not be introduced and other ways of assessing and stimulating good performance are needed—including the old-fashioned method of open dialogue with competent and honest managers" (Schiavo-Campo and Tommasi 1999: 465).

It is within the context of the above that the following may be considered among the major indicators of effective governance at the local level.

1. **Transparency**, availability of reliable information (the provision of appropriate, necessary and relevant information to stakeholders when needed and upon demand).

2. Participatory, partnerships with civil society. Provision of a voice for all stakeholders in the formal and informal decisionmaking processes.
3. Accountability. Decisionmakers are answerable for their actions and violators penalized accordingly.
4. Leadership. Provision of clear and strategic long term vision. Vision and mission are owned by all and are arrived at consensually and in a participatory manner.
5. General organization and management. Existence of clear organization and management institutions and processes characterized by absence or minimum of red tape.
6. Intergovernmental relations, i.e., vertical and horizontal, including clustering. Presence of coordinative relationships (from simple sharing of information to activity sharing to clear delineation of hierarchy between and among national and local institutions, or among co-equal levels of local government.)
7. Rule of law, legal systems in place. Stable and legal framework fairly and impartially enforced.
8. Continuity in the implementation of programs, predictability and sustainability. Appropriate programs and projects initiated by previous administrations are continued after proper evaluation.
9. Preference for the poor, availability of local poverty alleviation programs. Manifest bias to address the pervading problem of poverty in the community.
10. Effective, responsive, provision of basic services. Basic services, especially those identified under Section 17 of the Code, are provided.

Each of these indicators can be further broken down into specific activities that may also serve as some kind of checklist. The following is an indicative checklist per criterion which was developed by local government officials themselves after a series of workshops were held throughout the country.

TRANSPARENCY (Availability of reliable information. The provision of appropriate, necessary and relevant information to stakeholders when needed and upon demand.)

- Presence of a management information system, legislative tracking mechanism, business-related procedures, catalogue of services, annual accomplishment report, community-oriented Management Information System (MIS), complaint desk and/or suggestion box, etc.

- Accomplishment reports measured against stated targets, proposed and on-going projects and other vital information are clearly posted in conspicuous places.
- Reports of cashflows published.
- Use of computer technology in preparation of socio-economic profile.
- Creation of a municipal information office.
- Openness to participation of media.
- Presence of community data board and spot map (e.g., MBN survey) and updated regularly.
- Publication of a municipal news magazine/newsletter.
- Accessibility of officials to media through regular press conferences.
- Conduct of regular citizens' assemblies, especially at the barangay level.
- Presentation of the municipal budget and the Annual Investment Plan (AIP) to every barangay. Public hearing on the Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP).
- Weekly meeting with head of offices for updates and regular consultation with the vice-mayor and the Sangguniang Bayan members.

PARTICIPATORY (Partnerships with civil society. Provision of a voice for all stakeholders in the formal and informal decisionmaking processes.)

- Sectoral meetings and public consultations/dialogues conducted.
- Functioning local development council.
- Performance monitoring and evaluation committee institutionalized with technical NGO members.
- Preparation of the CLUP, Executive Agenda (EA) and all other programs and activities are attended not only by officials but by NGOs, POs, and the civil society as well.
- Beneficiaries are always involved and consulted in programs and processes.

- Presence of inventory of civil society organizations and their joint undertakings with the private sector.
- Visibility of local officials not only in the municipal hall but also in their respective barangays to elicit public participation at the barangay level.
- Presence of suggestion boxes in built-up areas such as the municipal hall, plaza, public market, and the like.
- Vision and mission are formulated with the participation of other local officials and the public.

ACCOUNTABILITY (Decisionmakers are answerable for their actions and violators penalized accordingly.)

- Presence of performance measurement and appraisal system. Recognize good and penalize bad performance of local officials and employees.
- Public accountability operationalized through Ethics and Accountability Law and Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act.
- Presence of local ombudsman, grievance and other committees.
- Use of Performance Audit.
- Audit report of the COA posted in conspicuous places.
- Assets and liabilities well accounted for.
- Issuance of memorandum receipts.
- Complete and available financial and LGU accomplishment reports.
- Proposed and on-going projects and its implementation are posted in bulletin boards and closely monitored.

LEADERSHIP (Provision of clear and strategic long-term vision. Vision and mission are owned by all and are arrived at consensually and in a participatory manner.)

- Presence of clear and consistent vision, mission, goals and objectives clearly articulated by the Local Chief Executive (LCE).

- Participatory approach in the formulation of vision, mission, strategic plan and the like.
- Leadership by example such as attending flag ceremonies, reporting to office on time and going home late.
- Visibility in all LGU affairs.
- Openness of the LCE to suggestions and the ability to act on feedbacks and constructive criticisms.
- Allowing one's self, the personnel, and the barangay officials to build capacities through seminars, training and short courses.
- Participation in activities of the Leagues of LGUs.
- Ability to network with National Government Agencies (NGAs) and LGUs and donor institutions.
- Attainment of planned targets inspite of constraints.
- Ability of LCE to harness civil society and business sector for support.

GENERAL ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT (Existence of clear organization and management insitutions and processes characterized by absence or minimum of red tape.)

- Presence of and the display of a clear organizational structure.
- Performance evaluation periodically conducted.
- Staff/department meetings conducted regularly.
- Regular consultation with the Sangguniang Bayan.
- Presence of local government profile.
- Presence of a Master Development Plan with quantifiable and measurable targets.
- All mandated offices provided for in the constitution are present and functional.
- Devolved employees absorbed properly.

- Delegated tasks clearly stated.
- Clear delineation of responsibilities between executive and legislative.
- Visibility of SB members and other heads of offices in municipal and barangay activities.
- Organization of committees to address intercultural conflicts.
- Employees and local officials undergo strategic planning workshop, team building, people skills and values enrichment, and capacity-building programs.
- Implementation of projects that minimize red-tape such as one-stop shop, computerization of Real Property Tax Assessment (RPTA), or the institutionalization of DART (Doing Away With Red Tape) in general.

INTER-GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS (Vertical and horizontal, including clustering. Presence of coordinative relationships from simple sharing of information to activity sharing to clear delineation of hierarchy between and among national and local institutions, or among co-equal levels of local government.)

- Functioning coordinative mechanisms such as local development councils, local special bodies.
- Presence of inter-LGU programs and projects for economic and commonly beneficial purposes with responsibilities of each level clearly defined such as sisterhood programs, collaborative undertaking in concreting projects, involvement in the unified zone undertaking of Department of Health (DOH), etc.
- Memoranda of Agreement with other LGUs.
- Local NGA functionaries tapped by the LGU for technical assistance.
- Close linkaging and coordination with DILG, National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) and other national government agencies and with the academe, NGOs, POs as well.
- Networking among officers and among personnel officers.
- Adoption of convergence approach such as an alliance of neighboring coastal towns to manage the coastal resources of a province.

- Adoption of the one-village-one-product movement among neighboring municipalities.
- Presence of an intra-governmental alliance or relations between and among barangays.
- Support to provincial and national government through implementation of its intensive campaign (e.g., increased tax collection campaign, campaign against drug addiction, etc.).

RULE OF LAW (Legal systems in place. Stable and legal framework fairly and impartially enforced.)

- Ordinances periodically implemented and enforced, reviewed and updated.
- Existence of legislative tracking mechanism.
- Establishment of work flow prominently posted for the guidance of all.
- Legal, fiscal, environmental and cultural laws effectively implemented.
- Customary and ancestral laws, e.g., Shariah Law, respected.
- Functioning People's Law Enforcement Board (PLEB), *Katarungang Pambarangay* and Peace and Order Council. Creation of an anti-graft body.
- Availability of information and statistics (re: crime arrests and convictions, number of cases filed in court for traffic violation, etc.).
- Coordination with government agencies for congruence in policies such as the titling of resettlement area at Pulanglupa for the security of HABITAT recipients.

CONTINUITY IN IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAMS, PREDICTABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY (Appropriate programs and projects initiated by previous administrations are continued after proper evaluation.)

- Continuing efforts to augment resources through short-term and long-term grants and loans.
- Continuous consultation with local constituents.
- Programs and projects subject to regular evaluation and continuous enrichment.

- Development plan updated on a regular basis.
- Continuous monitoring of on-going projects, and evaluation of the sustainability of completed projects by the private sector.

PREFERENCE FOR THE POOR (Availability of local poverty alleviation programs. Manifest bias to address the pervading problem of poverty in the community.)

- Use of poverty mapping conducted and updated regularly.
- Program prioritization to mitigate poverty such as the use of minimum basic needs (MBN) surveys in designing local programs and projects.
- Provision of livelihood programs.
- Funds set aside for poverty alleviation projects.
- Presence of poverty reduction programs such as health insurance of indigents, assistance to senior citizens, livelihood, etc.

EFFECTIVE, RESPONSIVE, PROVISION OF BASIC SERVICES (Basic services, especially those identified under Section 17 of the Code, are provided.)

- Services identified for devolution under the Code (e.g. agriculture, health, social services, employment, protective services, economic services, infrastructure, etc.) actually devolved.
- Devolved services adequately funded.
- Equitable and rational distribution of basic services among beneficiaries as evidenced in the budget.
- Better accessibility to basic services distributed in the area.
- Implementation of the Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (CIDSS) program.
- Representation of religious, business, and professional sectors in program implementation.
- Collaborative partnership between the LGU and the NGOs in the delivery of basic services.

Some Issues and Concerns and Next Steps

Among the major concerns that should be addressed as we proceed to the next steps of the project are the following.

- There is a need to identify an institution that would orchestrate the whole standards setting movement. It may be an NGO - such as the Galing Pook Foundation - that has recognized excellence and innovations in local governance. It will be recalled that the only local governments that have received the Philippine Quality Awards administered by the Development Academy of the Philippines - Marikina and Makati - were themselves Galing Pook Awardees, leading Mendoza and Gonzales to raise the question, "Is Galing Pook a stepping stone to PQA?" (Mendoza and Gonzales 2000). Other "lead" institutions may also be the academe (such as the the UP-NCPAG-CLRG, or the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP). However, it is imperative that the "lead" institution work in close partnership with appropriate institutions such as the DILG and the Leagues of Local Governments themselves.
- At the local level, it is important to identify local partners in determining whether or not an LGU meets the criteria for "good governance?" Various modalities could be considered. One is through the appropriate committee of the Local Development Council, e.g, committee on good governance, which is composed of representatives of appropriate national government agencies, and local governments, and non-governmental organizations (e.g., the church, sectoral representatives, etc.). Where possible and available, local Institutes of Local Governance, or Centers of Local Governance, could likewise serve as partners in the effort.
- Administratively, there might be a need for agencies concerned to get together, and to use a contemporary term, "converge" their efforts to developing performance indicators. In the DILG alone, efforts are being made to coordinate and converge the performance and capability indicators projects of the Bureau of Local Government Supervision and the Bureau of Local Government Development. Additionally, there are also efforts in the DILG to develop a comprehensive set of indicators that would measure the performance of local government "for all sides," i.e. the local productivity performance measurement system (LPPMS), which is actually a self-assessment tool for local governments; the citizens satisfaction index, which is an assessment by the citizen of the performance of local governments; and the local development watch which monitors the progress of implementation of devolution among local governments. These then should be linked to the overall efforts

emanating from various NGAs (such as the Bureau of Local Government Finance) and even lending and donor institutions (such as the ADB and WB) if only to obviate confusion among the LGUs.

- Still in relation to the “convergence” issue, it may be possible to regularly convene the various institutions working on indicators of good governance simply to share notes and experiences in their work. These may be in the areas of methodologies, selection of pilot areas, or even in validating each others findings.
- The concern to develop “quantifiable” (and hence “objective”) measures of good governance must be addressed considering that in one sense, good governance has been considered by some as “soft” (or as mentioned above, “intangible”) and difficult to quantify in relation to traditional quantitative indicators. However, it is entirely possible to use the criteria as a “checklist.”
- Another issue that must be addressed is one that pertains to generating acceptance of, and sustaining the use of governance indicators should be addressed. This is where legitimacy and credibility come in. As in Galing Pook, the credibility of the program arose mostly from its perceived impartiality, and the credibility of the screeners and selection committee itself.
- The issue of developing governance indicators that would “cut across” various levels of government (national and local) may be further examined and developed. The Civil Service Commission in partnership with the Department of Budget and Management may be the national government agencies that may take the lead in this direction.
- Finally, this study intends to pilot the implementation of the application of the indicators to certain local governments. Such piloting will include the following steps:
 - determination of selection criteria of pilot LGUs
 - selection of the institution that would essentially serve as the base for the implementation of the project
 - identification of partners, such as the leagues, the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP), or appropriate agencies of the DILG (such as LGA or BLGS)
 - identification of local partners of the endeavor

Endnotes

¹ The discussion on ISO is based on articles on ISO in <http://www.iso.ch/iso/en/iso9000-14000/tour/beginnin.html>

² "Governance and Institutions Development," in *The Philippine National Development Plan. Directions for the 21st Century*—National Economic and Development Authority, 1998. Note that the definition and operationalization of the notion of governance squares with that of the UNDP. See *Reconceptualizing Governance. Discussion Paper 2.*, New York: UNDP, January 1997: 8-10.

³ Developed from the review conducted by Manasan, Gonzales and Gaffud entitled *Indicators of Good Governance: Developing Index of Governance Quality at the LGU Level* 1999.

⁴In fact, *Roget's International Thesaurus* allows "measure" and "criterion" to be used interchangeably. It is therefore within this context that performance criteria measures and indicators may be used loosely.

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