

# Philippine Cities Driving Climate Action through Participatory Citizen Engagement

## *Ambitious City Promises National Project Launch*

27-28 November 2017 | Joy-Nostalg Center (Oakwood Hotel), Ortigas, Pasig City

## Executive Summary

The Ambitious City Promises (ACP), a three and a half years international project implemented by ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability, aims to support selected large cities in Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam to establish strong greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction commitments, local climate action plans directed by concrete targets, enhanced multi-stakeholder engagement, and integrated strategies.

First launched before a global audience last 20 October 2017 at the Seoul Mayors Forum on Climate Change, ACP is funded by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB) through the International Climate Initiative (IKI) program. Last 28 November 2017, a national project launch was organized in Pasig City, Philippines.

Pasig, Parañaque, and Marikina – the three project cities in the Philippines – signified their commitment to the ACP during the national launch. Present were representatives of the project cities led by Mayor Bobby Eusebio of Pasig City; Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), which serves as the project's political partner in the Philippines led by Assistant Secretary Corazon Davis; Climate Change Commission (CCC); ICLEI Southeast Asia Secretariat (SEAS); and ICLEI World Secretariat.

Through the ACP, project cities will receive assistance from ICLEI and Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) in establishing and implementing GHG emissions reductions strategies, taking into account the cities' development pressures and local context while also emphasizing the importance of citizen engagement and working with relevant national ministries.

The national launch was preceded by a one-day leveling off workshop which gathered key national and local government partners to provide an overview of the ACP project, level off expectations, and identify areas for collaboration. The workshop was divided into three sessions:

- Session 1: Optimizing Synergies to Achieve Ambitious Climate Actions
- Session 2: Mitigating Risks and Barriers, Forging Solutions
- Session 3: Citizen Engagement Driving Local Climate Action

Session 1 employed the World Café approach where participants discussed in detail the project's five work packages. The session yielded discussion points related to GHG activity data collection, partnerships, capacity building needs and gaps, as well as policy development and implementation. This helped identify entry points for ACP project implementation both at the national and local level, as well as determine synergies with existing initiatives of development partners such as the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and League of Cities of the Philippines (LCP). Highlights from the discussion of each work package include:

**Work Package 1: Assessment of cities' LED profile and setting up baseline.** The project can initiate a rapid data gap assessment of the cities' existing GHG emissions inventory to aid in identifying alternative measures to address challenges experienced in data gathering. The project can also support the cities as they update and enhance their respective inventory reports in ensuring alignment with the Global Protocol for Community-Scale GHG Emission Inventories (GPC) through the provision of technical guidance and review. The project will continuously support the cities in enhancing their cCR profiles as the project progresses.

Supported by:



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**Work Package 2: Stakeholder Engagement.** There is a need to stock-take existing stakeholder engagement strategies that the cities are implementing to identify audience they usually focus on, channels and media that they use to target these audience segments, as well as reach and engagement of these strategies. Stakeholder engagement strategies should always put premium on the city's context, culture, and development pressures. Discussions failed to produce an idea for a platform that can be used to collect pledges from the citizens. In-depth dialogues and brainstorming with the respective cities should be conducted to develop this.

**Work Package 3: Development of “City Promises” and action plan.** Local governments identified capacity gaps and needs while representatives from national government agencies presented synergies with ongoing programs and opportunities to access technical support on specific low emission development (LED) areas. Initial capacity gaps and needs as well as potential areas for collaboration were identified including:

- local green building code
- waste and resource management including waste-to-energy technology
- low carbon project proposal development
- IRRs for local low carbon policies
- updating of GHG inventory
- enhanced LCCAP including the development of a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework

**Work Package 4: Outlining and starting implementation of the “City Promises.”** Local governments were asked to identify potential LED projects that they think will be beneficial to their respective cities. From the long list of projects, four were shortlisted by ICLEI SEAS with due consideration to the project objectives as well as funding availability including:

- Incentives for a bike-to-work/school program
- Incentives for solar powered households
- Incentives for green building practices for the private sector
- Stakeholder summits for climate and food waste (Marikina)

**Work Package 5: Scaling-up and Dissemination.** Project outputs including but not limited to knowledge products can be used by relevant stakeholders (national, subnational, and local governments) even beyond the project life. As such, it is important that the ACP project has a defined strategy to implement this and eventually, come up with a dissemination plan. There is a need to utilize different forms of communication medium to maximize project outreach. However, such decisions need to be taken with due consideration of the platform's relevance, strategic impact, and associated cost. Where there are readily available means to disseminate and scale up the project outputs and lessons learned, ICLEI SEAS will maximize these. Some examples include partnership with WWF and continued engagement with the LCP.

Session 2 focused on the perceived risks and barriers of the three project cities in relation to project implementation. Risks and barriers were categorized into four: mandates of the local government, GHG emissions inventory and reporting, local implementation of low emission development strategies (LEDS), and citizen engagement. The cities were also asked to identify potential solutions to the said risks and barriers. The upcoming 2019 local election was identified by the three project cities as a potential risk in terms of implementation continuity especially if there will be a change in political administration. The cities recommended that the project fast tracks the conduct of local-level activities in 2018.

Session 3 highlighted successful citizen engagement initiatives implemented by local development partners such as WWF Philippines, Rappler, and Climate Reality Philippines. These completed and/or ongoing initiatives can hopefully serve as springboard for brainstorming appropriate strategies for citizen engagement of the ACP project. Citizen engagement strategies should always put premium on the city's context, culture, and development pressures.

## National Project Launch November 28, 2017



(L-R) Mr. Ranell Martin Dedicatoria of ICLEI SEAS, Mr. Sunandan Tiwari of ICLEI World Secretariat, Pasig City Mayor Bobby Eusebio, Parañaque City Environment and Natural Resources Office Assistant Head Mr. Isabelo Mojica, Jr., Department of Environment and Natural Resources Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning Service Corazon Davis, and Marikina Planning Officer Mr. Jun Aguilar signed the Ceremonial Commitment Board for the Ambitious City Promises project.

Three Metro Manila cities namely Pasig, Parañaque, and Marikina signified their commitment to the Ambitious City Promises (ACP) during the project's national launch held last November 28 at the Joy-Nostalg in Pasig City.

Through the ACP, the three cities will receive technical assistance from ICLEI- Local Governments for Sustainability and Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) in establishing and implementing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions strategies, taking into account the cities' development pressures and local context while also emphasizing the importance of citizen engagement and working with relevant national ministries.

DENR Assistant Secretary Corazon Davis assured the cities of the department's continuous support for the project and future activities. Lauding the cities' noted programs on local climate action, the Assistant Secretary deemed Pasig, Parañaque, and Marikina as "trailblazers when it comes to environmental sustainability." "We are not reinventing but rather, we are continuing the momentum that these cities have done in safeguarding their environment and striving to make their cities livable and sustainable."

Mr. Sunandan Tiwari, Senior Program Manager for Global Projects of ICLEI World Secretariat provided an overview and progress of the ACP project. Mr. Tiwari emphasized the importance of scaling up national and local collaboration and action in the context of increasing climate change and rapid urbanization in Southeast Asia.

On behalf of the three project cities, Pasig City Mayor Eusebio then gave a declaration of support to the ACP project. He expressed full support for the project; citing that ACP can be an instrument in integrating climate strategies into the city's planning processes. Focusing on their citizenry, the mayor said, "We would also like to strengthen how we engage with our citizens so that they are able to take part in crafting an ambitious climate action plan, something we'd like to call 'City Promises.' Pasig City is committed to establish ambitious climate reduction targets and engaging our citizens to achieve these goals."

City Environment and Natural Resources Assistant Head Mr. Isabelo Mojica Jr., speaking on behalf of Parañaque Mayor Edwin Olivarez, confirmed the city's eagerness to participate in the project, citing this as "a worthwhile peer-learning opportunity with Pasig and Marikina."

Planning Officer for Marikina, Mr. Jun Aguilar, speaking on behalf of City Mayor Marcelino Teodoro shared the city's hopes to "secure our path towards low emission development by building a culture of community participation and respect for the environment."

ICLEI SEAS Regional Program Manager Mr. Ranell Martin Dedicatoria explained that the ACP implementation is led by ICLEI SEAS based in Quezon City, Philippines in close cooperation with ICLEI World Secretariat based in Bonn, Germany and ICLEI East Asia Secretariat based in Seoul, Korea. SMG is also considered a project partner. The ACP aims to integrate low carbon emission considerations in the development planning of Philippine cities. He further explained the role that citizens play in this initiative, "...we aim to help strengthen cities' public engagement, vis-a-vis, responding to climate change. We adhere to the principle that when we are able to engage more citizens, together, we can drive climate action."

A brief press conference followed the ceremonial project launch.