

Chapter 11

Electric Public Transport in Puerto Princesa City: Enabling Factors for Institutionalizing Low- Carbon Transport

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This chapter examines the factors that enabled a low carbon initiative from a non-government organization (NGO) to be institutionalized by a local government in the Philippines. In 1991, the Local Government Code was passed and this devolved responsibilities to local governments. While the national government supports local administrations in terms of policies, it is the latter, which carries out political action on the ground. Puerto Princesa City's cooperation with the Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities (iCSC) implemented a closed-loop electric public transportation. This effort demonstrates the local government's willingness to cooperate with sectors other than the national government, as long as this endeavor is in sync with the local government's priorities.

ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

With the autonomy given to local governments by the Local Government Code of 1991, in the Philippines, local administrations have taken on more responsibilities and are given more opportunities to govern their constituency effectively. While the national government supports the local government in terms of policies, it is still the

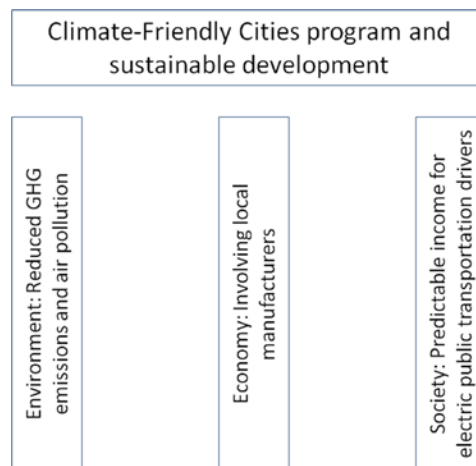
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local government, which carries out political action on the ground. The Philippines is said to be one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change. In 2011, the United Nations University Institute of Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS) World Risk Report ranked the Philippine islands as the third most exposed country in the world. The extreme weather events that the country has continuously experienced during the recent years confirm this vulnerability but also introduced the “existence” of climate change to the majority of the population.

One of the responses to climate change was initiatives through non-government organizations. One such initiative was the Climate-Friendly Cities (CFC) program of the iCSC, a non-government organization based in the capital of the Philippines. The CFC program aims to create a closed-loop, low-carbon electric public transportation that integrates waste management, energy generation, and electric public transportation. Energy is produced from organic wastes through anaerobic digestion and is used to power locally assembled electric public transportation. The features of the CFC program have positive impacts to the environment, economy and society, the so-called three pillars of sustainable development (Figure 1). The electric public transportation fleet contributes to lower greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector, with a co-benefit of reduced air pollution thereby upholding the environmental pillar. The electric public transport is locally assembled, which is beneficial to the local economy. Additionally, drivers of electric jeepneys are able to generate predictable income compared to traditional jeepney drivers, whose income are affected by oil price fluctuations.

Figure 1. Sustainable development pillars and electric public transportation (©Matias, author's construct)



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