

2ND ACTION PLAN 2022-2025

FINAL

LEARNING EXERCISE

SUMMARY REPORT

PROVINCE OF SOUTH COTABATO



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01

LOCAL CONTEXT



“ The main positive factor that impacted the overall implementation was the existing relationship with South Cotabato’s active civil society.

The first commitment of the second action plan highlights youth empowerment and their alliances with other stakeholders as it is a sector that was not considered to a certain degree in any of the five commitments of the 1st Action Plan of South Cotabato. On the other hand, the Youth Alliance for Freedom of Information (YAFOI), aimed to collaborate with the Provincial Government of South Cotabato to sustain and to develop the Open Government Partnership initiatives that were already planted in the province.

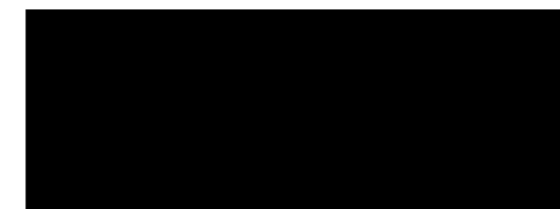
The presence of South Cotabato OGP Local’s multi-stakeholder forum (MSF), the South Cotabato Integrity Circle (SCIC), also contributed to the efficiency of both the co-creation and the implementation of the Action Plan. As a group of representatives from the government, civil society, and the business sector who are committed to the ideals of honesty, simplicity, professionalism, and integrity, the regularity of SCIC meetings aided in the coordination of the stakeholders for the success of the plan.

Later on, it was ascertained that the 2nd Action Plan can be revisited and subsequently strengthened, hence the additional commitments. As for the two (2) additional commitments finalized in 2024, the Provincial Government’s existing relationship with People’s Organizations, and the formation of the Provincial Cooperative Development Office (PCDO) both came into play.

These two factors resulted in a participative civil society, which in turn formed the willing audience who can be educated on certain topics. Additionally, the civil society sector in the province is active and all sub-provincial government units—City/Municipal Local Government Units (C/MLGUs)—have activated their People’s Councils, in accordance with the Department of the Interior and Local Government or DILG’s Memorandum Circular 2021-054.

Because of the strong relationship between the Provincial Government and the CSOs, most of the civil society are appraised of the proper communication channels for issues and concerns. However, most are apprehensive about utilizing them due to lack of visibility and promotion.

The main positive factor that impacted the overall implementation was the existing relationship with South Cotabato’s active civil society, while a factor that negatively impacted the implementation were the logistical constraints.



Here is a summary of the commitments under this action plan:

Co-creation Period: July 2021 – August 2022

Commitment Title: “Harnessing Youth Power in Integrating Open Government Values and Mechanisms to Respond to Local and Community-Interest Issues in the Province of South Cotabato”

Lead Actor/s: Sangguniang Kabataan Federation of South Cotabato, Provincial Governor’s Office- Bids & Awards Division, Provincial Population Office, Provincial Governor’s Office- Provincial Information Office, Youth Alliance for Freedom of Information

Implementation Period: November 2022 – March 2023

Milestones:

1. Open Government Youth Ambassador Program for the Youth of South Cotabato
2. Issue-based Freedom of Activations – in Collaboration with the Youth of South Cotabato and the People of the Province of South Cotabato
3. Focus Issues Citizen Participation Drives
4. Issue-Based Open Government Capacity-Building Activities – for the Youth and Community Leaders of South Cotabato

Co-creation Period: September 2024 – January 2025

Commitment Title: “Enhancing Transparency through Information and Cybercrime Education”

Lead Actor/s: Provincial Government of South Cotabato - Provincial Information Office

Implementation Period: March – April 2025

Milestones:

1. Conduct of orientation on information management and needs for CSOs located in the Three Congressional Districts
2. Inform CSOs/participants of data/information regarding disclosure, information that are part of the exceptions in the RA 10173 or Data Privacy Act of 2012
3. Inform CSOs/participants of the relevant provisions of the Cybercrime Prevention Act of 2012 or RA 10175
4. Inform CSOs/participants of the relevant provisions of the FOI Ordinance for proper application

Co-creation Period: September 2024 – January 2025

Commitment Title: “Increasing Access to Participation in Monitoring Infrastructure Projects at the Barangay Level”

Lead Actor/s: Provincial Government of South Cotabato - Provincial Planning and Development Office - Research, Evaluation, and Monitoring Division

Implementation Period: March – April 2025

Milestones:

1. Conduct of Orientation on DILG MC 2020-070 on the Organization of Project Monitoring and Evaluation Committees (PMECs) in Barangays to prospective Committee members



02

ACTION PLAN CO-CREATION PROCESS

Major Challenges and Opportunities

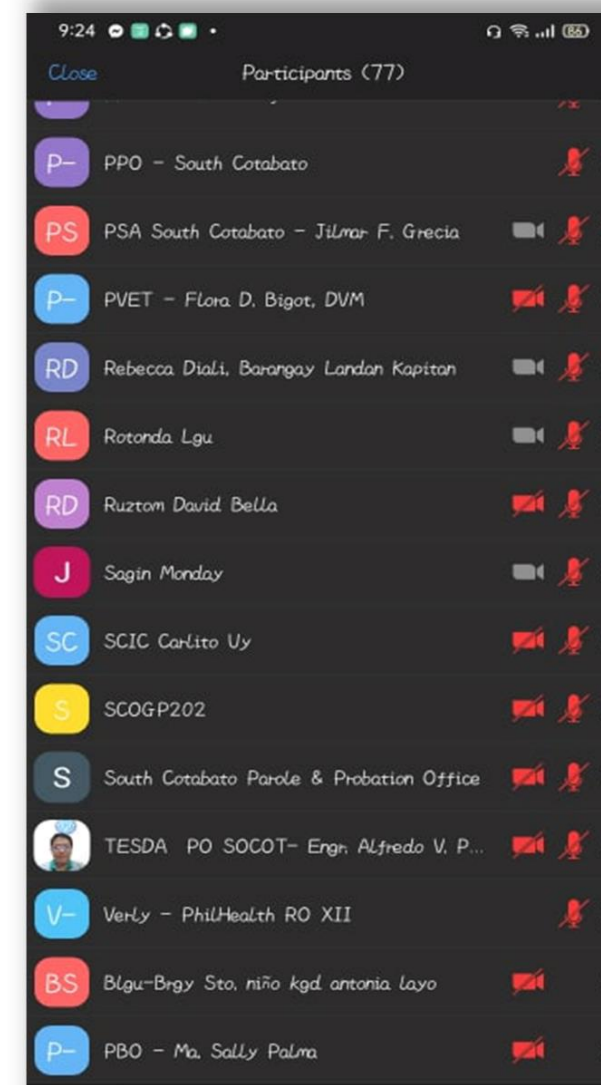
For the first commitment, participants hailed from different organizations and government agencies during the Co-creation and thus, held different values and perspectives, as well as varying levels of understanding of OGP. Initially, this resulted in conflicting interests and multiple advocacies they wanted to champion, which delayed the process. Lastly, availability and commitment are also challenges due to the variety of stakeholders.

As for the co-creation process of the second and third commitments, the scheduling of activities from the first scoping activity to the finalization and the presentation of the action plan was not well thought out. There was a gap of a couple months between some activities which resulted to a loss of momentum and the waning of interest of other CSOs.

Despite the challenges encountered in the co-creation process of the first commitment, it was concluded successfully, with different interests and inputs being adopted through the sharing of ideas and interaction among the participants. Presentations of grassroots concerns and raising of individual concerns bridged the gap involving the stakeholders and the Provincial Government of South Cotabato with the involvement of government officials.

Meanwhile, during the other co-creation process, participants were attentive and participative, with the co-creation perceived as a safe and open space for discussions which resulted in previously unconsidered topics such as cybercrime. There was a palpable thirst for knowledge and dialogue during the multiple discussions. Some CSO members also mentioned that trainings on local processes, i.e., the milestones in these two commitments, made them feel important.

“ [P]articipants were attentive and participative, with the co-creation perceived as a safe and open space for discussions which resulted in previously unconsidered topics...”



Excerpt of the Zoom participants during the Co-creation activity for the first commitment last July 28, 2021 showing participants from provincial offices, national line agencies, local government units



The first activity for Co-creation for the second and third commitments last September 25, 2024 attended by representatives from government offices and CSOs from multiple sectors



After the Secretariat has prepared a draft of the commitments, it was presented during another activity last November 22, 2024



A commitment-finalization-cum-coordination-meeting was held with the lead actors last January 21, 2025

Compliance with Minimum Requirements and Recommended Practices

Both co-creation sessions met the minimum requirements of the MSF (via the existence of the SCIC) and the subsequent endorsement of non-government stakeholders.

When it comes to recommended practices, there are areas for improvement, especially when it comes to the website and advanced documentation. These two are supposed to work hand-in-hand: the latter is about sharing information on OGP “to stakeholders in advance to facilitate informed and prepared participation in all stages of the

process,”¹ according to Section 3.1.2.2 of the Independent Reporting Mechanism or IRM in a Box. This can be accomplished via posting on the website. While the website was active during and after the implementation of all 3 commitments, no information about the co-creation process or about OGP in general was posted to inform prospective participants ahead of time.

Regarding participation, collaboration, inclusivity and diversity, both co-creation sessions were attended by a wide array of sectors, from the youth, women, religious, and agricultural sectors. Feedbacking during action plan development was also executed for both sessions; after initial workshops, the secretariat would consolidate input for the action plan from the participants' input and present an initial draft of the plan to the stakeholders for comments for the finalization.

One good practice during the implemented during the co-creation of the first commitment was inviting prospective partners to present proposed commitments to stakeholders.

The Co-creation process for both batches of commitments benefited from the strong relationship of the Provincial Government with its private/business sector, which existed before joining the OGP. The provincial government has always been keen on engaging both its civil society organizations and the private and business sectors through their inclusion and participation in the different local special bodies.

¹ <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/irm-in-a-box-a-toolkit-for-ogp-local-monitoring-bodies/>

Both discussions also involved open communication and a variety of sectors were present during the Co-creation sessions, such as those from religious, youth, women, and agricultural sectors.

Co-creation process recommendations

Since the issue mainly rest with the website, a calendar of activities and scheduled posts will be forwarded to the Provincial Information Office (PIO) so they can include it in their communication plan and thus, inform more stakeholders about OGP Local and the co-creation process via the website.

The OGP Local Secretariat also plans to tag along the Provincial People's Council meetings to reach more CSOs and involve them in OGP Local. The aforementioned DILG MC 2021-054 defines the People's council as “a body composed of representatives from CSOs that are, at least, recognized by the LGU, and which shall be created in every province, city, and municipality.”²

To address the logistical constraints, the 3rd Action Plan will be finalized early in time for the budget hearing so that the proposed budget can be properly defended or rationalized to the Sangguniang Panlalawigan or the Provincial Council, the legislature at the provincial level.

² https://www.dilg.gov.ph/PDF_File/issuances/memo_circulars/dilg-memocircular-2021519_8242c8e0e9.pdf

03

ACTION PLAN COMMITMENTS



INTRODUCTION TO THE OPEN GOVERNMENT YOUTH AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

NOVEMBER 12, 2022



Documentation for the activity for the first milestone of the first commitment at the Provincial Capitol Gymnasium last November 12, 2022

Challenges and Opportunities

Internet connectivity was one of the main issues for both speakers and participants for the implementation of the first commitment. Since the activities during implementation were either completely virtual or utilized a blended mode, some would lose their connection during the sessions.

For one implementation activity, the CSO partner YAFOL was not able to attend on time and the secretariat was not informed of their activities ahead of time. There was also a period of time where there was no focal person which resulted into delays in preparing certain documents.

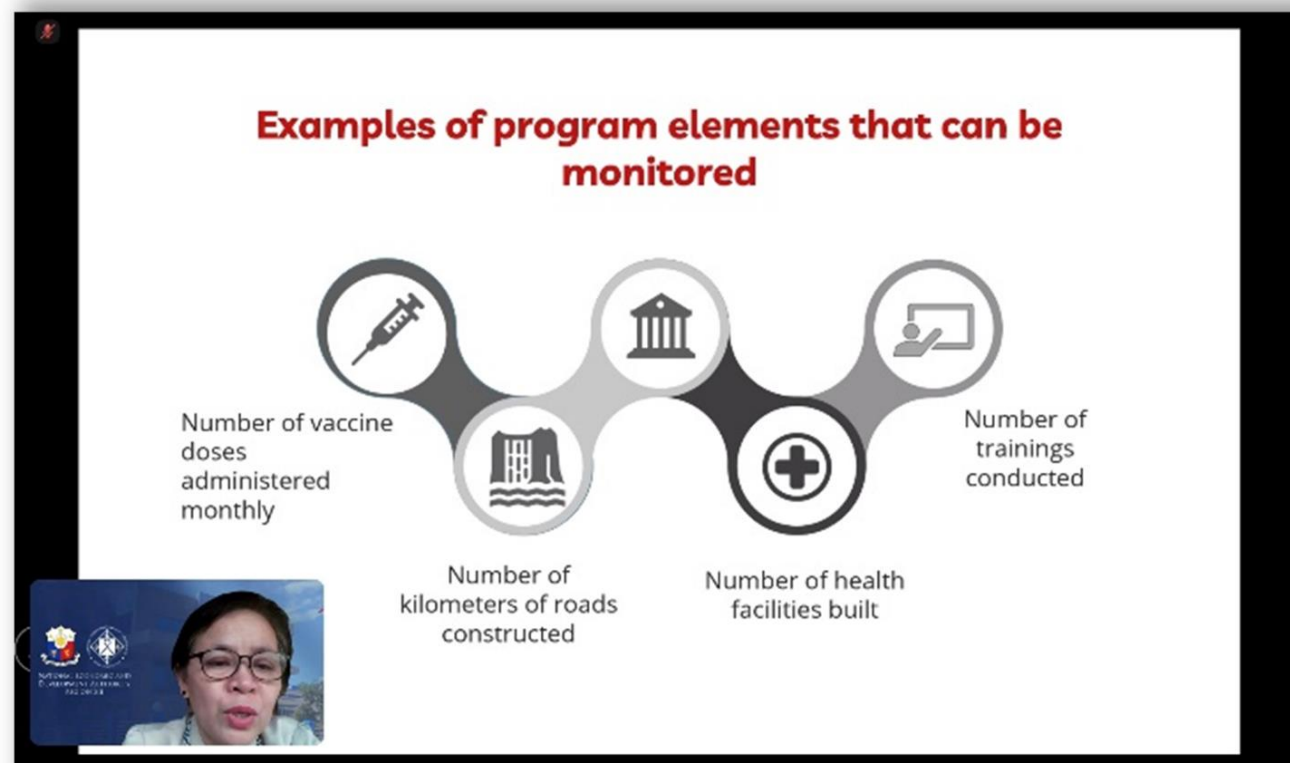
For the 2nd commitment, it had its share of challenges and opportunities. One opportunity utilized was how cooperative the C/MLGUs were, especially the Local Chief Executive (LCE)—the Mayor—and the CSO Desk Officer. Three (3) LGUs committed to hosting the events for their respective districts, and also provided meals and snacks for the participants and resource speakers. The implementation was blended, as a way to involve more participants while also circumventing the budgetary restrictions. However, the venues sometimes were not enough for the 50 participants who attended the face-to-face sessions. During the schedule of implementation, the internet service provider for the area also underwent maintenance, which limited the number of online participants.

As for Open Monitoring, the main issue was the gathering of key participants. South Cotabato has 200 barangays and 7* prospective members per barangay should have been invited to the activities. With the limited time of the lead implementers, they were only able to send out invitations a week before the activity. As a result, only certain sectors were able to make time for the session. Additionally, no C/MLGU was willing to host the sessions for this commitment hence, they were held completely virtually, which in turn, further limited the participants that can join the event. The events for both the 2nd and 3rd commitments were also streamed on Facebook Live, but unfortunately, the participants who joined via this medium were not recorded.

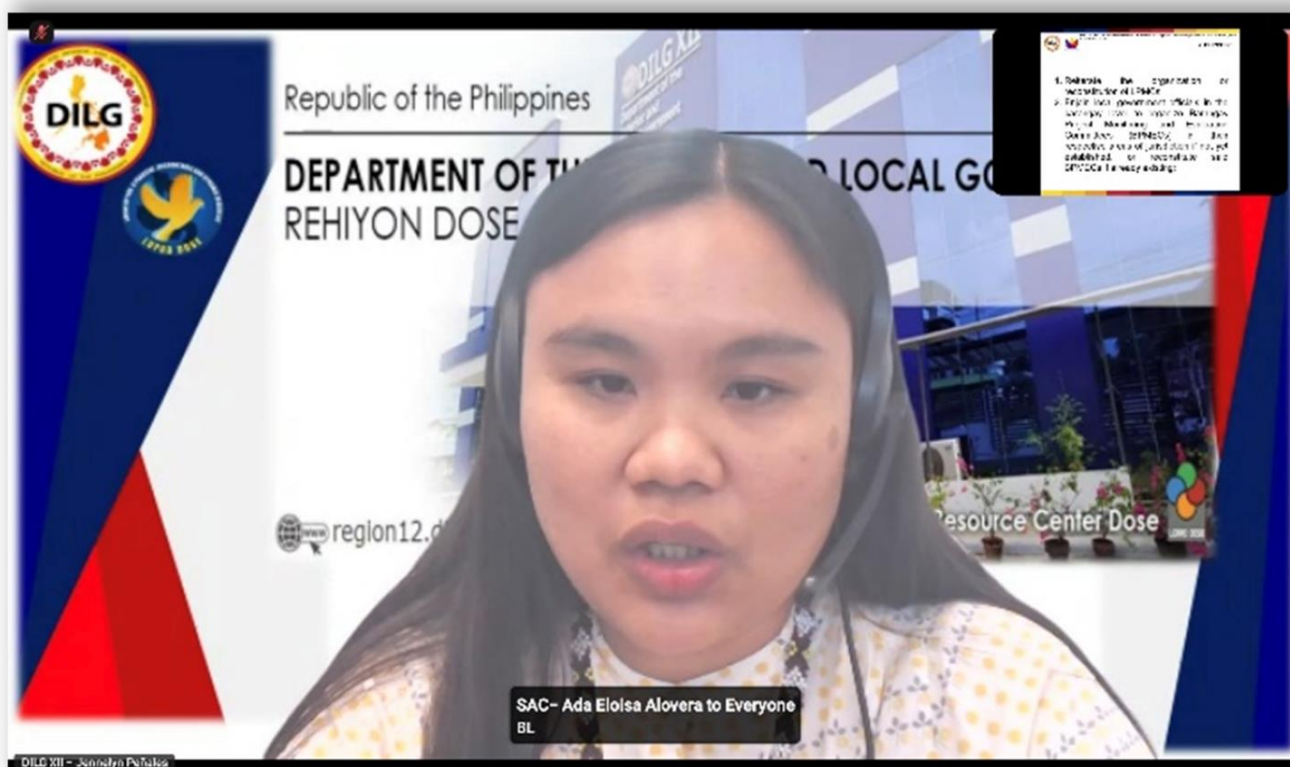
“ One opportunity utilized was how cooperative the C/MLGUs were, especially the Local Chief Executive (LCE)—the Mayor—and the CSO Desk Officer.



February 26, 2025 –
Courtesy Visits to
MLGU – Surallah
(top) with Municipal
Administrator
Benjamin S.
Datinguinoo, CLGU
– Koronadal (middle)
with City
Administrator Atty.
Rene Jumilla, and to
MLGU – Tupi
(bottom) with Mayor
Romeo Tamayo



Excerpt from the capacity development presentation of Chief Economic Development Specialist Desiree T. Jacinto from National Economic and Development Authority XII on monitoring and evaluation



Engineer III Jennelyn M. Peñales from Department of the Interior and Local Government XII presented the DILG MC 2020-070

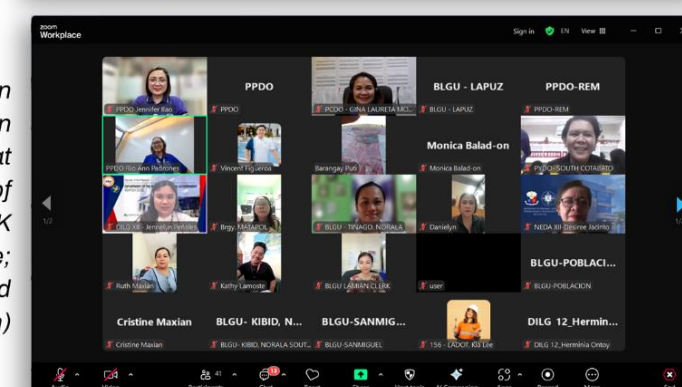
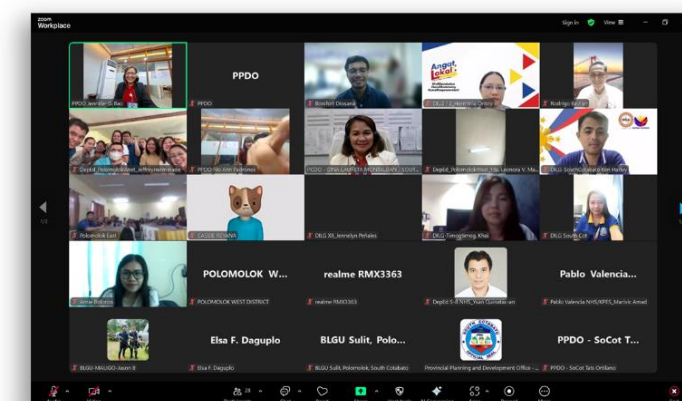
Desired outcomes

The milestones of the first commitment were clearly defined and were met during the implementation period. The output of all four (4) milestones at the end were the proposals that the groups of youth participants were able to come up with at the end of the period.

For the second commitment, desired outcomes were also met to some extent. All three milestones were met but there was no separate discussion on data privacy or on Republic Act 10173, because of a misunderstanding with the Department of Communication and Technology (DICT), the prospective provider of resource speaker for the topic. The budgetary constraints also limited the duration of the event to half a day, which left less time for the open forum portion of the session. On the other hand, for the third commitment on Open Monitoring, the one identified milestone of “Conduct of Orientation on DILG MC 2020-070 on the Organization of Project Monitoring and Evaluation Committees (PMECs) in Barangays to prospective Committee members” was supplemented with an additional comprehensive presentation on the fundamentals of Monitoring and Evaluation to capacitate the participants (the prospective members of the BPMEC) on their roles and responsibilities.

Participants of the Webinar on Increasing the Access of Participation on Monitoring Infrastructure Projects at the Barangay Level with comprised of BLGUs, School Head, and SK Federation Presidents of the province; District1 (top), District2 (middle), and District1 (bottom)

By enforcing participative governance across the 3 commitments, specifically involving the youth and engaging the civil society, it can be said that strides have been made towards the direction of the Strategic Vision, which emphasized alignment with national and international goals. For the former, Ambisyon Natin 2040 emphasizes a “*Matatag, Maginhawa at Panatag na Buhay*” (Strongly Rooted, Comfortable and Secure Life) while Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), were identified for the latter, highlighting Goal number 17, Partnership for the Goals.



Commitments recommendations

For the first commitment, time, proper funding, clear communication, and connection shall be considered to carry over to the next action plan. Moreso, the OGP values shall be continued. The “Information Center: Integrating Moral Accountability, Inquiry of Financial Information and Development Program” increases access to information, gives people the authority to hold public authorities accountable, promotes transparency, enforces accountability, and improves the right to information as enshrined by the Constitution.

As for the other second batch of commitments, their relevance cannot be understated so efforts will also be made to carry them over to and scale them up in the next action plan.

Massive IEC on OGP Local and the subsequent commitments will also be done such as the calendar of activities, social media and radio announcements, and visiting LGUs. Additionally, CLGU-Koronadal also has their Barangay Information Officers (BIOs) at the barangay level who are vital to the LGU's communication channel: they can efficiently cascade information down to the



March 11, 2023 – Facebook publicity material for the culmination program of the OGP Youth Ambassador Program under the first commitment of the second action plan, held at PDC Hall, 3rd Floor, New Building, Provincial Capitol Compound, Alunan Ave., City of Koronadal



lowest political unit of the government. Other LGUs can activate their BIOs, aiding in making governments more transparent and information more accessible, which will lead to a more participative citizenry.

As for the budget, aside from the aforementioned early finalization of the Action Plan, financial assistance will also be requested from the Local Disaster Risk Reduction Management Fund (LDRRMF).

Other things noted during the implementation, especially for seminar or workshop-type activities is to keep the audience small to allow for a higher quality exchange of ideas. Enough time for the participants' questions and sessions will also be structured in such a way that give participants ownership over what they learned. This should enable them to cascade the topics to their local groups and at the same time, a formal monitoring plan for cascading should also be put into place. ##

Group photos of the participants of the orientation on the FOI Ordinance of the Province of South Cotabato and Cybercrime Law with resource persons from Provincial Legal Office and the National Bureau on Investigation – Central Office; District 3 at MLGU-Surallah (top), District 2 at CLGU-Koronadal (middle), and District 1 at MLGU-Tupi (bottom)



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Province of South Cotabato**