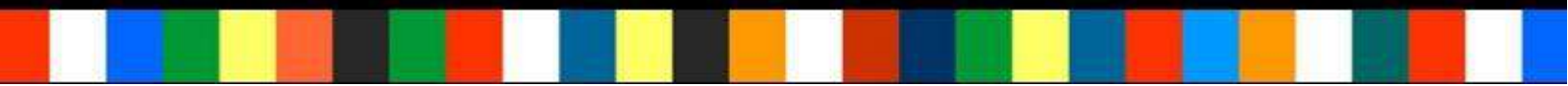




Open
Government
Partnership



SOUTH COTABATO OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP ACTION PLAN 2018-2020



South Cotabato Open Government Partnership Action Plan (2018-2020)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Table of Contents</i>	1
<i>List of Acronyms</i>	2
Chapter I Introduction	3
Chapter II Open Government Efforts to Date	3
Chapter III Action Plan Development Process	8
Chapter IV Commitments	12
1) <i>Open Information: Increasing Inclusivity in Public Access to Government Information</i>	12
2) <i>Open Monitoring and Evaluation: Open and Participatory Monitoring For Quality Infrastructure</i>	18
3) <i>Open Contracting: Enhancing Efficiency and Transparency of the Public Procurement Process</i>	23
4) <i>Open Mining Information: Engaging Citizen's Participation by Developing EI-TECh (Extractive Industry-Transparency E-system & Channels)</i>	26
5) <i>Open Legislation: Establishing Online Channels to Broaden Civic Engagement and Increase Relevance of Local Legislations</i>	30
List of Tables	
Table 1. Thematic Area: Open Information.....	12
Table 2. Thematic Area: Open Monitoring and Evaluation.....	18
Table 3. Thematic Area: Open Contracting.....	23
Table 4. Thematic Area: Open Mining Information.....	26
Table 5. Thematic Area: Open Legislation.....	30
List of Figures	
Figure 1. South Cotabato's Good Governance Framework for Good Governance....	4
Figure 2. South Cotabato's Integrity Model: The Integrity Web of Institutionalization..	6
Figure 3. Convergence Framework for Poverty Reduction.....	7
Figure 4. Results Framework for South Cotabato's OGP Action Plan.....	11

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
BDC	Barangay Development Council
CMGP	Conditional Matching Grant to Provinces
CPM	Critical Path Method
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DENR	Department of Environment and Natural Resources
DRR-CCA	Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation
ECCP	European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines
EI-TECh	Extractive Industry-Transparency E-system and Channels
EITI	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
EMB	Environmental Management Bureau
FOI	Freedom of Information
GIDA	Geographically Isolated and Displaced Area
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
iSEPPS	Interactive Socio-Economic and Programs Profile System
ITU	Information Technology Unit
LGU	Local Government Unit
LITS	Legislative Information Technology System
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MFI	Mahintana Foundation, Inc.
MGB	Mines and Geosciences Bureau
MOOE	Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses
MPSA	Mine Production Sharing Agreement
MSF	Multi-stakeholder Forum
NCIP	National Commission on Indigenous Peoples
ODK	Open Data Kit
OGP	Open Government Partnership
PBO	Provincial Budget Office
PCOO	Presidential Communications Operations Office
PDC	Provincial Development Council
PEMO	Provincial Environmental Management Office
PEO	Provincial Engineering Office
PERT	Programme Evaluation Review Technique
PHILGEPS	Philippine Government Electronic System
PIO	Provincial Information Office
PLGU	Provincial Local Government Unit
PMRB	Provincial Mining Regulatory Board
PPDC	Provincial Planning and Development Coordinator
PPDO	Provincial Planning and Development Office
PPMC	Provincial Project Monitoring Committee
PPMC	Provincial Project Monitoring Committee
REM	Research, Evaluation, and Monitoring
SCIC	South Cotabato Integrity Circle
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SP	Sangguniang Panlalawigan
SPD	Special Projects Division
SRMA	SOCCKSARGEN Responsible Miners Association
TMC	Tribal Mining Corporation
TWG	Technical Working Group

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Province of South Cotabato has become one of the most progressive and competitive provinces in the Philippines. It has been a 4-time awardee on Good Governance (*Galing Pook Award*) that resulted from its efforts in promoting and practicing transparency, accountability, partnership and proper management of resources. All these undertakings are deeply rooted in the belief that good governance as the enabling environment is the key in reducing poverty in the province.

South Cotabato is composed of ten (10) resource-rich and competitive municipalities and one (1) rapidly growing component city, Koronadal, which is also the Provincial Capital and Administrative Seat of Region XII. With an estimated population of 970,000 by the end of 2018 growing at an annual average rate of 1.94%, the provincial government is confronted with bigger challenges that 21st century settlements face today such as persistent poverty, particularly in far-flung communities with rapidly growing population and where more than half of families are below the poverty threshold; disparity of income and growth across the component local government units (LGUs) with the poorest left far behind the economically-primate LGUs; inadequate access to some basic yet important services; forest degradation due to scarcity pressure and encroachment of protected areas; increasing HIV-AIDS cases; and climate change vulnerability and disaster risks, among others.

The people of South Cotabato constantly endeavor to weave together their dreams in order to create a beautiful masterpiece of a home – one they can truly call ‘the Land of the *Dreamweavers*’. This can only be made possible by putting good governance at the core of South Cotabato’s development framework. Hence, in support of the shared vision of a caring, resilient, functionally-integrated, and equitably growing province that is highly responsive to the socio-economic needs and environmental concerns of every self-reliant South Cotabateño, the provincial government is committed in improving its efforts to promote participatory, transparent and accountable governance through open government.

CHAPTER II

OPEN GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO DATE

In a country beset by economic, political, social and environmental instabilities and discontinuities, *good governance* has become a compelling agenda. Governance can be defined in various ways and may be viewed from different perspectives. Oftentimes, governance is used interchangeably with government. While definitions may vary, it is important to understand “*governance*” as a set of arrangements – be it systems, traditions, authority and power, or values – necessary to ensure that the affairs of the state are managed for the “*common good*” where intended outcomes for the stakeholders are defined and achieved.

Importantly, development is not only the function of governments in the public sector. Governance points to the dynamism of interactions within and among the ***government or the public sector, the business or private sector and the civil society*** as the major actors of managing the affairs of the state for the common good. However, the question remains, when is there good governance and when is there none?

Hence, taking off from the Philippine's Good Governance Framework, South Cotabato developed its own Framework for Good Governance showing the relationships between and among the principles of governance focused on the understanding of governance as arrangements necessary for the government, the private sector and civil society to effectively define and achieve intended outcomes for stakeholders. The framework captures the measures of good governance in terms of three (3) components: 1) *elements or principles*, 2) *primary actors*, and 3) *resulting socio-economic development outcomes*.

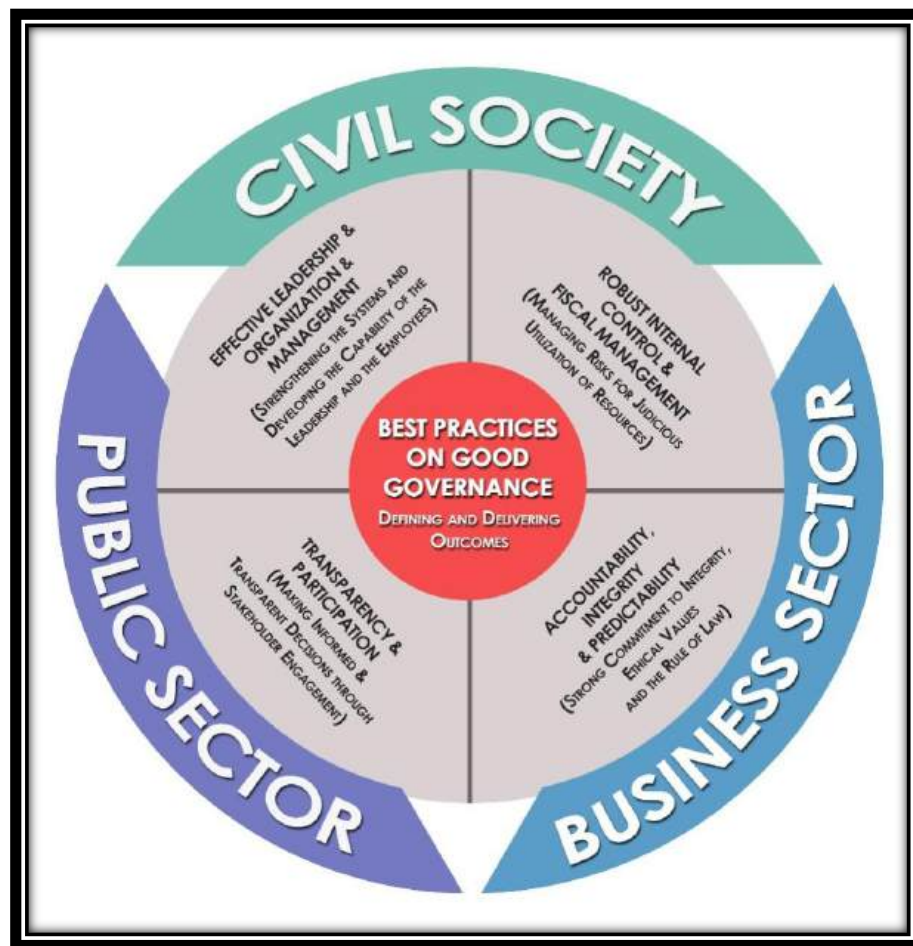


Figure 1. South Cotabato's Good Governance Framework

South Cotabato's Framework for Good Governance adopts four (4) clusters of principles, referred to as elements of good governance, namely: **1) Effective Leadership & Organization and Management; 2) Robust Internal Control and Fiscal Management; 3) Accountability, Integrity and Predictability; and 4) Transparency and Participation.** These core principles will serve as parameters in assessing how well good governance is manifested in the province, and in developing action plans for improvement. When all these principles are embodied by all *three (3) actors of governance* – public sector, business or private sector and civil society, good governance will definitely manifest by way of impacts and outcomes to communities in terms of economic, social and environmental benefits. Significantly, awards and recognitions for *best practices in governance* are indicators of achieved developmental outcomes.

Hence, guided by South Cotabato's Good Governance Framework, the current administration focused the first year of the first term in 2013 on advancing good governance initiatives, in addition to

putting in place the development direction of the province for the next 3-6 years. Along this line, the administration has pursued the principle that good governance is fundamental in bringing about change, and in pursuing a kind of development and a brand of leadership that truly matter to people.

Transparency and participation are highly manifested in the province's primary local special body - the **Provincial Development Council (PDC)**. The PDC is a policy-making and primary planning body whose main concern is the overall socio-economic development of the province. It serves as the counterpart of the Regional Development Council (RDC) at the provincial level. The PDC acts as the primary institution that coordinates and sets the direction of all economic and social development efforts in the province. At the same time, the PDC serves as a forum where local efforts can be related and integrated with provincial and regional development activities.

Provincial development planning is necessary to address the uneven economic and social development in the region and in the country. This stems from the recognition that growth and advancement over the years remain unevenly distributed and that progress has been concentrated in a few provinces.

Currently, the PDC is composed of five (5) sectoral committees (economic, social, infrastructure and land use, institutional, environment and DRR-CCA) with representatives from the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and local government units and agencies. The civil society has a 48% representation in the PDC, with the Vice Chair coming from the private sector, and the five (5) sectoral committee chairs from the civil society.

The provincial government of South Cotabato has been practicing the basic values and principles of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) through its various mechanisms and initiatives in order to address societal issues, on top of which is poverty reduction. Among these initiatives is the Integrity Program, dubbed as, "*iSouthCotabato or South Cotabato for Integrity and Jobs*". The overall objective of this project is to contribute in the reduction of poverty through integrity and sustainable creation of jobs.

The province accepted the challenge to be one (1) of the nine (9) pilot local government units in the Philippines to take part of the said program. *iSouthCotabato* is the province's own version and local adaptation of Project I4J or Partnerships for Integrity and Jobs. The three (3) major strategies and approaches under this Integrity Program are: **1) the creation of the South Cotabato Integrity Circle; 2) the adoption of the Web of Institutionalization Model in mainstreaming integrity themes in governance; and 3) the conceptualization and development of twenty four (24) Integrity Mechanisms to be implemented in the province.**

The South Cotabato Integrity Circle (SCIC) is the formation of network of friends – representatives of government, businesses, and civil society organizations who are active in the community – who are committed to the ideals of honesty, simplicity and professionalism, and who could contribute good ideas on integrity. By bringing together the network of friends from the local government, the business sector, and the civil society, the Integrity Circle was formed to serve as supervisory and partner body in the integrity and good governance efforts of the LGU by promoting exchanges of best practices and strengthening the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of South Cotabato's Integrity and Business Promotion Mechanisms.

South Cotabato adopted the Web of Institutionalization Model introduced by Dr. Caren Levy in 1996 as the province's conceptual framework to mainstream integrity in provincial governance and development. Guided by this framework, the *iSouthCotabato* TWG designed the Integrity Web of Institutionalization as the province's Integrity Model where specific sets of mechanisms have been identified for each of the four (4) spheres of the web to ensure successful mainstreaming and institutionalization: **1) the Citizen Sphere, 2) the Policy Sphere, 3) the Organizational Sphere, and 4) the Delivery Sphere.**



Figure 2. South Cotabato's Integrity Model: The Integrity Web of Institutionalization

Despite what seems like insurmountable challenges especially for the political leadership, South Cotabato remains steadfast in successfully implementing its 24 integrity mechanisms. The SCIC, with its Chairperson, initially meets regularly every other month, and later, on a quarterly basis. Significantly, an overwhelming response from the members of the SCIC representing the business sector and the civil society has fuelled the initial activities of the Integrity Circle despite the lack of approved funding for the integrity program on its first year.

To date, about 92% or 22 of the 24 mechanisms are already either completed or being implemented.

All these initiatives and important accomplishments on integrity made South Cotabato the leading implementer of integrity and business promotion mechanisms among the nine (9) pilot LGUs. It is the first pilot LGU to conceptualize and develop its own Integrity Framework and Integrity Mechanisms following Caren Levy's Web of Institutionalization Model. Thus, South Cotabato was positioned as the model for other LGUs in Project I4J's replication phase to 300 more LGUs in the country initiated by Konrad Adenauer Stiftung.

Another initiative of the province in addressing its own poverty issues is the **Convergence Program for Poverty Reduction**. This program focuses on coordinating and consolidating efforts by mainstreaming programs and services of the provincial government and converge towards the

achievement of equitable growth and social equity through poverty reduction. Deeply rooted in the principles of good governance, this initiative is a community-driven approach that basically aims to focalize the different programs and services of the provincial government and other public and private organizations in a specific geographically isolated and displaced area (GIDA). Its main strategy is to converge initiatives and resources of both the public and private sectors in order to reduce poverty one *sitio* at a time.

The program consists of seven (7) dimensions of poverty namely: **1) Livelihood and Employment, 2) Food Security and Nutrition, 3) Health and Sanitation, Reproductive Health, Responsible Family Life and Gender Sensitivity, 4) Environmental and Human Security, 5) Education, 6) Community Empowerment and Participation, and 7) Spatial Integration**. Each dimension is composed of the different departments of the provincial government as well as other partner agencies that provide programs or services relative to their dimension.

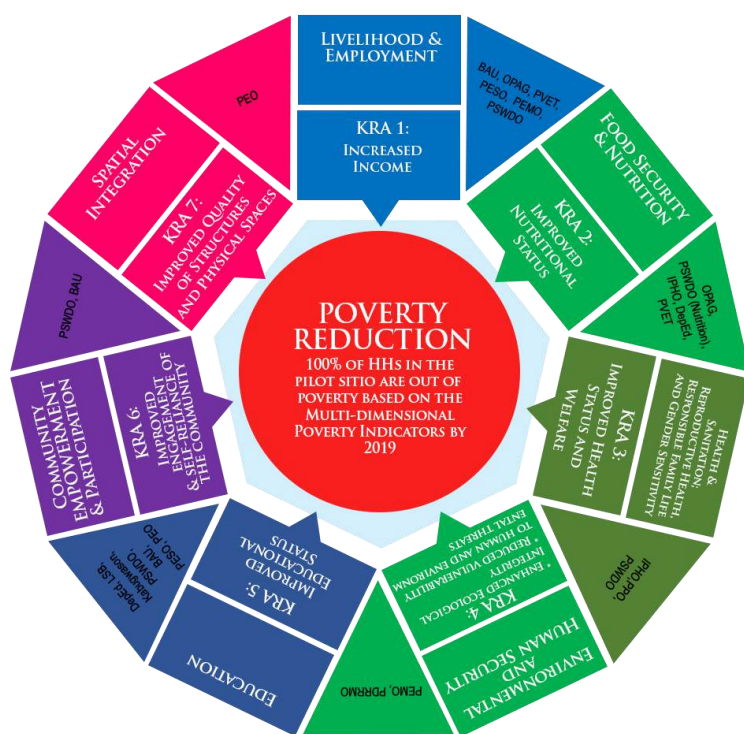


Figure 3. Convergence Framework for Poverty Reduction

Sitio Traan Leteng, Barangay Kematu in the Municipality of T'boli was chosen as the pilot area for the said program. Currently, it has already expanded to two (2) more areas, namely, Sitio Blit, Barangay Ned and Sitio Datal Ligaw, Barangay Tasiman, both of which are located in the Municipality of Lake Sebu.

All these initiatives for good governance occupy an important place at the core of South Cotabato's developmental framework. Weaving all these good governance initiatives together with its vision for responsiveness in service delivery, and the mission to promote participatory, transparent and accountable governance are some primary thrusts in transforming the province to become a premier agro-industrial and tourism hub in the region.

By weaving the individual strands of standards, values, and systems that shape the principles and dimensions of good governance, people are indeed weaving their dreams together for a brighter and stronger South Cotabato.

CHAPTER III

ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The development of the Province of South Cotabato is guided by the shared aspirations of its people for a safe and livable settlement that supports, nurtures, and promotes the sustainable and competitive growth of its city and municipalities. With this developmental direction, the province aims to achieve equitable and rational distribution of population, resources, income and opportunities across its eleven component local government units – small and medium-sized city and towns are supplemented with primary strategies for achieving poverty reduction and social justice. Significantly positioned at the core of the province's developmental framework is good governance. South Cotabato is committed to promote participatory, transparent, and accountable governance as its primordial purpose towards the realization of its collective dream.

The co-creation of the South Cotabato Open Government Action Plan 2018 – 2020 has been based on this very framework. On May of 2018, four (4) commitments were initially presented during the Open Government Partnership Week Celebration of the OGP-Philippines based on previous discussions and consultations in the Provincial Development Council meetings of South Cotabato. The following were the initial commitments: 1) Open Information, 2) Open Monitoring and Evaluation, 3) Open Contracting, and 4) Open Mining Information.

On June 21, 2018, the provincial government conducted a multi-stakeholder co-creation workshop for the South Cotabato Open Government Partnership Action Plan. The workshop was actively participated in by the members of the South Cotabato Integrity Circle (SCIC), the different partners from the civil society, business sector, and, national and regional government agencies. In addition to the initial four (4) commitments, two (2) thematic areas were introduced by the participants. These commitments are: 1) Open Legislation, and 2) Open Planning and Budgeting. The participants were given the opportunity through a reasoned response process to choose which commitment or commitments they find has the most impact in society. Five (5) commitments were prioritized based on four (4) criteria: a) Relevance to a Priority Governance/ Public Problem or Issue; b) Relevance to OGP Values (Transparency, Accountability, Public Participation, Technology); c) Completion within the AP Cycle (2 years); d) Can be implemented within the existing PLGU-CSO-Private Sector Resources. The five (5) prioritized commitments were: 1) Open Information, 2) Open Monitoring and Evaluation, 3) Open Contracting, 4) Open Mining Information, and 5) Open Legislation. Small group workshops were then done to initially draft these commitments. During the co-creation workshop, it was agreed that the existing Integrity Circle would also serve as the Multi-stakeholder Forum for the OGP. Thus, the SCIC was also oriented on the OGP and the functions and responsibilities that they will also assume as the Multi-stakeholder Forum (MSF). On September 18, 2018, Ms. Ivy Ong of the OGP-Support Unit conducted a more detailed orientation of the functions of the MSF with the SCIC members.

After the OGP Summit in Tbilisi, Georgia, the Point-of-Contact introduced another relevant mechanism that could further ensure the delivery of relevant services and programs to the general public – Open Planning and Budgeting that aims to allocate the amount of P20 Million annually to fund project proposals directly generated from the public through both online and offline voting.

Two (2) consultations meetings/dialogues were then conducted with the SCIC as MSF in order to prioritize the five (5) commitments that will be submitted to OGP for implementation as well as to deliberate further the specific deliverables and milestones of each commitment. During the first consultation on August 2, 2018, a simple voting was made after each of the six (6) initial commitments

were presented, with the following results: 1-Open Information, 2-Open Planning and Budgeting, 3-Open M&E, 4-Open Legislation, 5-Open Contracting, 6-Open Mining Information. During the second meeting on August 29, 2018, the initial commitments were further deliberated including the comments from the OGP Support Unit.

In order to ensure grassroots-level consultation and participation in the co-creation process, a multi-sectoral public consultation with the different barangay captains of the province was conducted on August 3, 2018. There were one hundred sixty (160) barangay captains in attendance to the said activity out of the 199 barangays. The OGP, as well as the six (6) initial commitments, were presented to the barangay captains through a “Thematic Area Marketplace” method. A simple voting scheme followed to determine which among the commitments are deemed as more relevant for the community leaders. The following is the result of the voting according to rank: 1-Open Information, 2-Open Monitoring and Evaluation, 3-Open Contracting, 4-Open Planning and Budgeting, 5-Open Legislation, 6-Open Mining Information. The primary reason of the barangay captains for prioritizing last the Open Mining Information commitment is that not all barangays have extractive industries (mining and quarrying) in their respective jurisdiction.

While the commitment on Open Mining Information has consistently ranked last in both the voting conducted with the SCIC members and the village chiefs, further discussions with the lead implementing actors of the commitments lead to the decision of dropping the commitment “Open Planning and Budgeting” from the five priorities to be submitted for the first cycle of OGP implementation (2018-2020). Feasibility of the commitment would require a wide range of manpower for online and offline tasks, tedious process to generate, process and conduct voting of the submitted budget proposals, and sufficient budget to fund the prioritized proposals. Given the time frame of 2018-2020, it would not be feasible to implement the commitment within such period since the Annual Plan and Budget for 2019 was already finalized. Further, ownership of the commitment cannot be handled by a single governing body – either the Provincial Budget Office (PBO) or the Provincial Planning and Development Office (PPDO) cannot take full responsibility in implementing the commitment since PPDO will already be the main implementing office of OGP as the secretariat while PBO cannot solely work for the commitment without PPDO. In addition to its secretariat and coordination functions to the implementation and monitoring of OGP commitments, the PPDO also is the lead implementer for two (2) more commitments – Open Information and Open Monitoring and Evaluation. This absence of a lead implementer that would fully own the implementation of the commitment would hinder the implementation success of the commitment considering OGP’s standards and timelines. However, despite its removal from the commitments to be submitted to OGP, the provincial government will still implement and find ways to pursue this commitment but will lie outside the scope of OGP. The provincial government will still pursue its implementation but outside the set guidelines, standards and timeframe of the OGP since manpower and financial requirements of the commitment will have to be considered.

Since mining is one controversial topic yet in need of rightful actions to be properly understood by the people, it was decided that Open Mining Information will be retained as a commitment. Misconceptions and allegations surrounding the platform of mining lead people to being skeptical on *whats, whys, and hows* of such activity. The Provincial Environmental Management Office (PEMO), as the lead implementer, has the leadership capacity, manpower and resources to ensure the success of the commitment. A co-ownership between PEMO and its CSO partners (EITI, Bantay Kita and BanToxic) in the implementation of the commitment is also already assured. This commitment’s success rate is high and will lead to the resolution of conflicts between the opposing sides of mining. Not only will the people benefit on this but as well as the government, for it can be a platform where discussions and concerns are much welcome than it will be before.

Other commitments that were retained include Open Information, Open Contracting, Open Legislation, and Open Monitoring and Evaluation.

Limited information leads to limited knowledge. Limited access to information is an important and timely issue that needs to be addressed. The general public does not have open access to basic data and information on the provincial government (i.e. SEP). PLGU data are not fully integrated into one database that would be fully available online for easy access. Sometimes, there is also difficulty in gathering data from different offices when there are requests. Giving access to essential and up-to-date data will create an open interaction between the government and the citizens. It will also give way to improve the services and interventions by the government as people will now be aware of their rights to such actions especially those who are living in the remote areas.

Increased engagement of CSOs, business sectors, and most especially the people, will be attained upon the implementation of this commitment. Giving them enough access will be beneficial as they can track the projects and raise concerns met along the way, from planning until the completion of projects. The projects to be conducted can now be done within its time-frame unlike when these are left unchecked. Presentation in a manner where it is easily understood by the people is also the key to the success of the commitment. When done properly this commitment can lead to lasting growth in putting to life significant and timely projects for the people.

Open Legislation was selected as a commitment because it is perceived to be a significant problem that is in need of immediate action. Lack of participation from the citizen in creating and evaluating the policies and ordinances leads to unsuccessful implementation and sustaining of such protocols. Word of the mouth is the most common source of legislative information that results in additional and deducted data; but with this commitment. The public will now have access and participation in formulating and assessing policies and ordinances. Providing an accessible platform for the people will definitely increase their interest to take part in this interactive process that can pave way for a brighter future.

Infrastructure projects sometimes suffer from delayed implementation and completion. There are times when project quality is poor. Ideally, isolated communities should have better access to basic social services while being economically interdependent. Most of these projects are unable to hit the supposed standards and therefore have poor quality. Mobility of people, goods and services should also be improved. During PDC meetings, the Provincial Project Monitoring Committee (PPMC) raised a number of issues concerning project implementation. If only access to project monitoring results would have been done in real-time, such issues would have been resolved. Hence, there became a need to keep the Open Monitoring and Evaluation commitment to resolve such problem. Public access to near real-time project monitoring results will significantly reduce incidence of poor implementation of projects. The public can also give feedback and comments on infrastructure project status. Improved collaboration will help address issues faced in project implementation. Findings and recommendations will be publicized for better accountability.

Significantly, the participatory process of co-owning and co-creating the commitments across five (5) thematic areas and of identifying the specific deliverables for each commitment is always anchored on South Cotabato's Good Governance Framework and Convergence Framework for Poverty Reduction as illustrated in the Results Framework for OGP (Figure 4). These frameworks guide the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all services, programs and projects of the provincial government as a public sector entity with the ultimate goal of promoting inclusive growth and reducing poverty among its people. In effect, all strategic interventions in the provincial government, as in any public sector agency, is focused on effecting tangible results and impacts to our people measured in terms of reduction in poverty incidence.

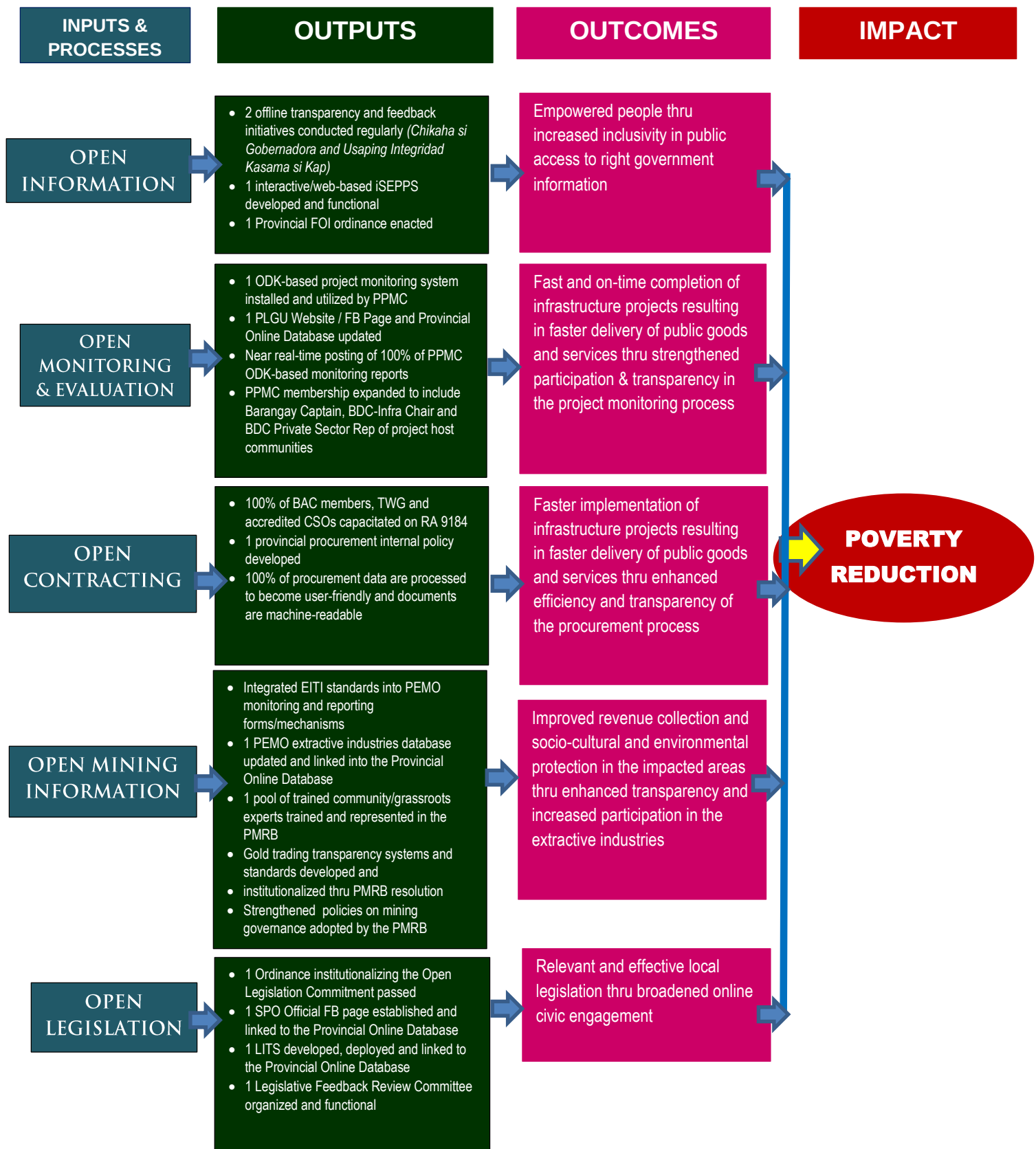


Figure 4. Results Framework for South Cotabato's OGP Action Plan

CHAPTER IV

COMMITMENTS

Commitment Template	
Thematic Area: Open Information	
1. Increasing Inclusivity in Public Access to Government Information	
31 August 2018 – 31 August 2020	
Lead Implementing Agency/Actor	Provincial Government of South Cotabato – Provincial Information Office
Commitment Description	
<i>What is the public problem that the commitment will address?</i>	Among other factors, limited access to government information greatly hampers the delivery of the right services and interventions that would respond to the real needs of the people. Having access to the right information has a direct and reinforcing relationship in ensuring the delivery of the right interventions and services to the public. For instance, having limited access to the right information from the government, the public tends to get these information from secondary sources that are not always right, hence, they only get to access services or projects that they “think” are only available for them even if these are not relevant to address their real needs. Similarly, many remote communities without access to radio, television, internet or other means of communication have limited knowledge on government data, projects and services that could help empower them to become self-sufficient. Similarly, while the provincial government has the relevant programs and information to bring about lasting results and achieve economic progress to reduce poverty at the household level, the majority of the general public especially those without access to radio, television, internet or other means of communication has limited knowledge of government interventions, and on how these can be accessed and maximized to improve the quality of their lives. In addition, there is also limited formal mechanisms for providing feedback on government services and programs. Currently, the general public is able to access provincial government data by requesting through the Provincial Planning and Development Office (PPDO) or directly through the concerned department or office supported by a written letter of request. For walk-in clients, requests are being recorded through a Logbook. The Socio-economic Profile of the province is also available through a provincial government published book that can be bought at a very affordable price. Due probably to the inconvenience in accessing information and limited knowledge on how to access the information, only 83 formal requests for data were made through the PPDO in a period of five (5) years from 2014 to date

	where 72 of these or 86% have been provided by the PPDO while the remaining 11 have been referred to appropriate offices. Further, in a rapid survey conducted by the Provincial Information Office during the first quarter of 2018 on Audience Research and Listenership in South Cotabato, about 42% of the 7,252 sample respondents in the entire province (with a projected population of 969,599 in 2018) listen to the radio everyday while about 27% do not own a radio or has no access to other means of communication. Out of the 42% who listen to the radio, almost half or 47.29% are not aware of, hence, are not listening to the provincial government's radio program where the local government's programs, projects and services are being broadcasted for public information. About 81% of those who listen to the provincial government's radio program feel that it is a good source of information about the programs and projects of the province. Among the reports in the radio program, the top 6 information that the respondents find useful are on agriculture, health and sanitation, social services, education and scholarships, barangay/sitio assistance and livelihood programs. It is also useful to note that aside from radio, people get much of their information on government programs and services from other people or through word of mouth (22.53%) and through barangay announcements (22.37%). Ultimately, it is hoped that increased access to government information through both online and offline channels will significantly contribute in further reducing poverty incidence in the province recorded at 19.8% in 2015, especially in the geographically-isolated and disadvantaged communities.
<i>What is the commitment?</i>	The commitment aims to establish both online and offline channels to expand public access to government information, and to enable citizens to give feedback on government programs and services. More and improved quality of information will be disclosed to include not only those required under the Philippine's Full Disclosure Policy and basic data on the socio-economic profile of the province, but also information on programs/projects/ services and project monitoring reports. It entails the development of an interactive online platform for the general public to access, view, save and print government data and information on programs and services right at their homes free of charge, with a special feature for the general public to provide their feedback on government services and programs. Part of the commitment includes the conduct of workshop to develop a mechanism for responding to feedbacks from the public. To further utilize the information from the processed feedbacks, the commitment shall be expanded in the second cycle for the feedbacks to inform development planning, budgeting and program implementation. The commitment also entails localizing the national government's Freedom of Information (FOI) policy through a provincial ordinance, institutionalizing the people's right to information.

	As an offline mechanism, a direct community participation program shall be launched for communities without access to internet, where the citizens' questions to the Governor will be recorded during the weekly conduct of the Outreach Program to poor and remote communities where the provincial government brings some of its services directly to the communities, and the Governor's responses to these questions will be recorded and aired through the province's official radio program on a weekly basis and on a specified date that will be announced to the community. Capability-building and public engagements shall be conducted to popularize the people's right to information and how to access these information.
<i>How will the commitment contribute to solve the public problem?</i>	The development of the interactive online platform for people to access government information and communicate their feedback/opinion on public services right at their homes, which will be further advanced by the enactment of the FOI ordinance, will provide the people with the right information they need for better decision-making for their economic, social, and institutional development. The commitment will also ensure that the feedback loop is closed by designating a staff who would immediately respond to comments or by coordinating with the appropriate offices in addressing the communicated feedbacks in order to help improve public services and influence government decisions. Further, through public consultations during the regular conduct of the Provincial Outreach Program in the different villages, questions and messages of the citizens especially from remote communities without access to internet shall be recorded and responded to by the Governor through the radio, in addition to posting the responses through South Cotabato's Facebook Page and the OGP Facebook Page. Increased inclusivity for access to right information will engage and empower people at the grassroots.
<i>Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values?</i>	● Increased inclusivity in public access to government information is relevant to transparency. ● The commitment shall employ technology through the development of an interactive online system for the public to access information right at their homes.
<i>Additional information</i>	President Rodrigo R. Duterte issued Executive Order No. 02 (series of 2016) or the Freedom of Information Order to institutionalize the people's right to information as enshrined in Article III of the Philippine Constitution on the Bill of Rights. This operationalizes in the Executive Branch the people's constitutional right to information and state policies to full public disclosure and transparency in public service. Freedom of Information or FOI is part of the 2017-2022 Philippine Development Plan under "Ensuring People-Centered, Clean, and Efficient Governance" specifically on "Subsector Outcome 4: Citizenry fully engaged and empowered".

The commitment localizes the Freedom of Information (FOI) by passing the Provincial FOI Ordinance and making information accessible through both online and offline platforms, expanding it to include not only demand-driven information but makes readily accessible all available data and information on the provincial government programs and services. Hence, the Presidential Communications Operations Office – the lead agency for the implementation of Executive Order No. 02, is the lead partner of the provincial government in the implementation of this commitment, particularly in terms of providing both technical guidance and financial assistance. The commitment will contribute to all the 17 SDGs but particularly on Sustainable Development Goals 1 (No Poverty), 2 (Zero Hunger), 3 (Good Health and Well-being), 4 (Quality Education), 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), 10 (Reduced Inequalities) and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).				
Milestone Activity with a Verifiable Deliverable	Responsibility	Source of Fund	Start Date	End Date
1. Roll-out of “ <i>Chikaha si Gobernadora</i> ”, an offline transparency initiative where the Governor will regularly respond to recorded questions from the general public especially from remote communities) through the radio as well as through South Cotabato’s Facebook Page and OGP Facebook Page.	Provincial Information Office	PGO-PIO	July 2018	August 2020
2. Conduct of workshop on information management and needs for producers, users and custodians. - Identify data/information for disclosure, information that are part of the exceptions in the Data Privacy Act should be included in the agenda. - Specify mechanisms to ensure that feedback mechanism is established for the delivery of programs and services, and to ensure that these are immediately responded to for	Provincial Information Office (PIO)	PGO	November, 2018	November 2018

enhanced public service delivery.				
Milestone Activity with a Verifiable Deliverable	Responsibility	Source of Fund	Start Date	End Date
3. Development and operationalization of the Interactive/Web-based Database where the public can access, view, save and print provincial data and information right at their homes. This web-based automated system will be called Interactive Socio-Economic and Programs Profile System (ISEPPS). This shall be the Central Provincial Online Database. • This includes system programming, encoding of socio-economic profile data and digitization of other PLGU documents and records based on the workshop outputs. • Information on citizens' data needs and government programs/ projects/ services, plans and budget, procurement, financial, legislative, etc. shall be prioritized.	PPDO-ITU and PPDO-REM	PPDO	January 2019	December 2019
4. Conduct of consultation and updating of provincial government services and programs with the 199 barangay captains through the <i>"Usaping Integridad Kasama si Kap"</i> at least once a year.	PGO-BAU / PGO-PIO / PPDO-SPD	PGO	August, 2018	December 2020
5. Enactment/Passage of Provincial Freedom of Information (FOI) Ordinance.	Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO),	Office of the Vice Governor/ SPO	October, 2018	December 2018

• Conduct Multi-stakeholder fora on the proposed FOI Ordinance (c/o Hivos)	Sangguniang Panlalawigan Office (SPO) and Office of the Vice Governor		September, 2019	September, 2019
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Commitment Template	
Thematic Area: Open Monitoring and Evaluation	
2. Open and Participatory Monitoring For Quality Infrastructure	
31 August 2018 – 31 August 2020	
Lead implementing agency/actor	Provincial Government of South Cotabato – Provincial Project Monitoring Committee (PPMC)
Commitment Description	
<i>What is the public problem that the commitment will address?</i>	Annually, the Provincial Government of South Cotabato is implementing development projects, which consist of both infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects, sourced from both local funds as well as funds from the national government. Infrastructure projects normally get the big chunk of the budget pie. However, many infrastructure projects suffer from delayed implementation and completion, poor quality, hence, poor utilization of funds. In 2017, the provincial government was able to complete only about 4.10% or 5 out of 122 local development projects at the end of the budget year, which results in slow or poor utilization of funds at the end of the year. The Provincial Project Monitoring Committee (PPMC) of the provincial government, composed of members from the provincial government and the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), conducts quarterly monitoring of infrastructure projects with more than -15% slippage or way behind schedule as per PERT-CPM. Thus, monitoring of these projects should be regular, efficient, transparent, and participatory. Likewise, monitoring results should be available to the public for comment and feedback. However, the results of the monitoring are only confined to the members of the PPMC and to the Provincial Development Council (PDC) during PDC meetings. These are usually presented to the PDC a quarter after the conduct of monitoring. While the PDC is represented by accredited CSOs, not all CSOs are informing their members of the status of the projects. As such, there is no way the general public will know the real time status of the projects since the monitoring results are not posted or available online for public comment/feedback. With this, the public has limited opportunity to provide feedback on the actual status of the projects (e.g. delayed implementation, poor quality of materials or poor utilization of funds) or if the recommendations as reflected on the monitoring results are implemented/acted upon by the concerned agencies. These issues in the monitoring and implementation of infrastructure projects hinder the immediate delivery of intended results and outcomes to the intended beneficiaries especially in improving mobility of people, goods and services,

	increasing access of lagging, poverty-stricken and geographically isolated rural communities to basic social services, and supporting the economic inter-dependencies between the rural and urban communities. Ultimately, realizing these expected results/outcomes would contribute in further reducing poverty of the 19.8% families or about 43,000 families below the poverty threshold based on the 2015 Census.
<i>Main Objective</i>	The commitment aims to strengthen participation and transparency in the project monitoring process.
<i>What is the commitment?</i>	The commitment involves making the monitoring results of the Provincial Project Monitoring Committee (PPMC) more open and accessible to the general public by posting these for the general public to provide feedback/comment and/or access the monitoring results. This entails posting the monitoring results to the provincial government website the day after the conduct of the quarterly monitoring of the PPMC in order to provide near real-time status of projects to the public. With this, the PPMC shall adopt the Open Data Kit (ODK) or mobile-based project monitoring system for near real-time monitoring of projects. The commitment also involves updating the website of the provincial government as well as its facebook page for posting and/or accessing of project monitoring results by the public for feedback/comment/recommendations. The general public will also have the opportunity to upload pictures of on-going projects in their communities and post status of these projects online. The commitment will also cause the enhancement of the monitoring process and composition of the PPMC to strengthen engagement of the public or the directly impacted communities.
<i>How will the commitment contribute to solve the public problem?</i>	The commitment will provide a wider space for citizens and CSOs to collaborate with the provincial government to address issues on project implementation such as delays, poor quality of projects and poor utilization of funds. Participation in this process will allow the public (citizens or CSOs) to provide feedback to improve project implementation. As the monitoring findings and recommendations are made public, contractors and concerned government officials will be held accountable for the project delays or slippages or for non-compliance of other concerned agencies/sectors to the recommendations in the report. In line with this, the existing grievance redressal mechanism/s (e.g. blacklisting of contractors or filing of cases) of the province will be strengthened to ensure accountability
<i>Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values?</i>	The commitment is consistent with the OGP values of promoting transparency, accountability, civic participation and technological innovations at the sub-national / local government level. It will make the local government and the project contractors more open, accountable, responsive and efficient in project implementation and monitoring.

<i>Additional information</i>	The EU-funded RESOURCEGov2 Project, implemented by Mahintana Foundation, Inc., has been using transparency tools/technologies, such as Open Data Kit (ODK) in project monitoring. The project has published a documentation on replicable practices on good local governance highlighting the use of ODK in increasing transparency, accountability and CSO participation in project monitoring of locally-funded projects of LGUs. The Mahintana Foundation, Inc., through the RESOURCEGov2 project will be providing technical and financial assistance in the implementation of this commitment. The improved quality of infrastructure projects will increase rural-urban integration, support economic growth and improve access of the poor to basic socio-economic services as health, education and livelihood development. Hence, this commitment supports the achievement of all the sustainable development goals, particularly goals number 1-10 and goal number 17 on partnerships for the goals.				
Milestone Activity with a Verifiable Deliverable	Responsibility	Source of Fund	Start Date	End Date	
1. Conduct Users' Training, install and operationalize the ODK-based project monitoring system. <i>The training will be conducted/supported by Mahintana Foundation, Inc., through EU-funded RESOURCEGov project and will be participated by all members of the Provincial Project Monitoring Committee (staff from PLGU and CSO representatives)</i> <i>ODK is a user-friendly mobile-based monitoring platform which non-programmers can easily learn. Android phones/tablets (commonly used by many) are used for ODK-based monitoring.</i>	Mahintana Foundation, Inc.	RESOURCEGov	September, 2018	December 2018	
2. Update the website/page or Facebook page of the provincial government/SC-OGP to allow posting of and/or accessing of project monitoring results by the public for feedback.	PIO, PPDO-ITU, ECCP	ECCP	September, 2018	June, 2019	

3. Conduct ODK-based project monitoring of locally-funded infra projects at least once every quarter. <i>The locally-funded infra projects that will be monitored quarterly will be those projects with more than -15% slippage. The amounts of projects are based on the Annual Investment Program (CMGP).</i>	PPMC, PEO, PPDO- REM, PPDO-SPD,	PLGU	December, 2018	September 2020
4. Post monitoring results at the provincial government website and/or Facebook page for public access and feedback (online posting of results the day after the conduct of quarterly monitoring inspection). <i>As designed/by default for ODK portal at provincial government website/page, monitoring results can be presented/viewed in charts/graphs, maps and/or tables/spreadsheets and can be accessed/downloaded by the public through xls, csv, zip and kml formats.</i>	PPDO- REM, PPDO-SPD, PPMC	PLGU	August, 2019	September 2020
5. Expand participation of the public to the PPMC through the participation of the Barangay Chairman, BDC-Chair of Infra and BDC Private Sector Reps during the monitoring/inspection where the project is located. <i>Aside from the usual members of the PPMC (PLGU staff and CSO representatives), the PPMC will invite the barangay chairmen, BDC Chair on Infra and BDC private sector representatives to participate in project monitoring where the infra projects are located in their respective barangays. This is to ensure that the monitoring process will be more transparent and participatory and that their feedback will be considered and responded to.</i>	PPMC	PLGU	February 2019	September, 2020

Implementing Actors		
<i>Lead Implementing Office/ Agency/ Organization</i>		Provincial Government of South Cotabato – Provincial Project Monitoring Committee Mr. Eleazar Abellera – PPMC Head Secretariat +639177909564 +6383-2286323
<i>Other Actors Involved</i>	<i>PLGU / Government Actors</i>	PEO, PPDO-REM, PPDO-ITU, PIO
	<i>CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups</i>	Mahintana Foundation, Inc., South Cotabato Integrity Circle, Regional/City/Municipal Project Monitoring Committees Mr. Jobe Tubigon

Commitment Template	
Thematic Area: Open Contracting	
3. Enhancing Efficiency and Transparency of the Public Procurement Process	
31 August 2018 – 31 August 2020	
Lead implementing Agency/ Actor	Provincial Government of South Cotabato – Bids and Awards Committee
Commitment Description	
<i>What is the public problem that the commitment will address?</i>	In 2017, the provincial government was able to complete only 4.10% or 5 out of 122 development projects funded under the 20% Local Development Fund at the end of the budget year as reported in the Audit Observation Memorandum issued by the Commission of Audit in 2018. Most of the projects that are still on-going or not started are infrastructure projects. Among others, the delayed completion of infrastructure projects (slippages) may be attributed to issues on the procurement process such as limited number of suppliers/contractors participating in bids and delayed delivery of services related to contractors. While the provincial government has disclosed 100% of the bidding documents required by law through the Philippine Government Electronic System (PHILGEPS), its website and in three conspicuous places, these, however, cannot be accessed in machine-readable or editable formats by the public. These technical documents are also not presented in a manner that would be interesting or easier for the general public to understand. Hence, the limited transparency of procurement documents further contributes to the identified procurement issues. There is also a limited number of capacitated CSO and business sector representatives who are engaged in observing the bidding process and monitoring the implementation of contracts. If not addressed, these delays will continue to hinder the timely achievement of expected results for the intended beneficiaries such as increased mobility of people and goods, improved access to basic social services, and strengthened rural-urban integration.
<i>What is the commitment?</i>	The commitment aims to make the public procurement process more efficient and transparent through the development of online and offline open contracting mechanisms, such as: • tracking system to be made available to the public; • conduct regular market survey; • integrated internal process from planning to implementation; • expansion of accredited CSOs as observers; • proactive capacity building of CSOs as observers; • submission of observer's report;

	• improvement in publication of procurement documents; and • feedback desk.			
<i>How will the commitment contribute to solve the public problem?</i>	Making the procurement process more open and efficient will enhance the capacity of the provincial government to implement quality infrastructure projects as scheduled, and consequently, deliver effective and efficient services to the public. The improved quality of procured goods and services will increase local competitiveness and accelerate local economic growth. The improved procurement process will enhance the quality of infrastructure projects and ensure the timely implementation of these projects for socio-economic growth, hence, contribute in the achievement of all SDGs, particularly goals number 1 (No poverty), 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).			
<i>Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values?</i>	• CSO participation and disclosure of documents (transparency) will enhance the integrity of the procurement process. • Technology will be used as a medium to enhance transparency & promote efficiency in procurement. • The commitment will encourage the public to provide feedback & participate in the government procurement processes. It will increase and enhance government response to citizens' feedback.			
<i>Additional information</i>	The Province of South Cotabato with the support of the European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (ECCP) conducted a series of consultation and focus group discussions with the contractors, Bids and Awards Committee, business sector and CSOs on how to improve the procurement process of the Province last June 2018. Among the major results are the need to improve its efficiency and transparency. The commitment will be implemented by the provincial government, in partnership with the European Chamber of Commerce in the Philippines (ECCP) (funded by Hivos Philippines) and the South Cotabato Integrity Circle (SCIC), formalized through a signed Memorandum of Understanding. Under the Open Contracting project of the ECCP in South Cotabato, the ECCP shall assist in the co-creation process and implementation of the integrity commitment under the Open Procurement Framework as well as design the monitoring and feedback system for the full and effective implementation of the open procurement commitment.			
Milestone Activity with a verifiable deliverable	Responsibility	Source of Fund	Start Date	End Date
1. Conduct capability-building on RA 9184 and consultations with BAC	ECCP	ECCP / Hivos	May 2018	June 2018

Members, BAC-TWG and CSOs.					
2. Develop an internal policy that will be an input to the Provincial Procurement Manual to enhance efficiency and transparency in the procurement process.		ECCP / BAC	ECCP / Hivos	Sept 2018	March 2019
3. Increase number of CSOs and business sector monitoring the procurement process from planning to implementation.		ECCP	ECCP / Hivos	February 2019 onwards	
4. Upload procurement documents from planning to implementation in machine readable format.		ECCP	ECCP / Hivos	February 2019 onwards	
Implementing Actors					
Lead Implementing Office/ Agency/ Organization		Provincial Government of South Cotabato – Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) Mr. John Magbanua +63832289951			
Other Actors Involved	PLGU / Government actors	Provincial Administrator’s Office, PBO, PEO, PACCO, PTO, PGSO, PPDO			
	CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups	ECCP, Hivos, SC Chamber of Commerce, SC Contractors Association, SCIC Ms. Zyra Fastidio zyra.fastifio@eccp.com			

Commitment Template	
Thematic Area: Open Mining Information	
4. Engaging Citizen's Participation by Developing EI-TECh (Extractive Industry-Transparency E-system & Channels)	
31 August 2018 – 31 August 2020	
Lead implementing agency/actor	Provincial Government of South Cotabato – Provincial Environment Management Office
Commitment Description	
<i>What is the public problem that the commitment will address?</i>	Inadequate access to and misinformation regarding the mining and quarry activities equate to revenue losses, environmental degradation and social conflicts. Oftentimes, communities in nearby illegal mining and quarrying activities would presume the regularities of these operations until such time when these communities have already been directly affected by the social and environmental impacts of these practices or if the illegal quarry and mining operators have been apprehended by the authorities. In fact, the province's annual extractive industry report shows that 3 to 5% of the total collection of the provincial government are generated from fines and penalties from apprehensions of illegal mining and quarrying averaging at least five (5) incidents per month. Aside from limited manpower of the provincial government to monitor these illegal activities, citizens' participation in monitoring and reporting illegal extractive activities in their communities is low because they either lack access and capacity to understand information on mining and quarrying activities or they just simply lack the information on how and where to lodge or channel their complaints. Further, majority of the citizens lack appreciation on extractive industry information because figures are not translated into something they can relate to or something that has of importance to them, for instance, information on whether the quantities of production/extraction are converted into tangible incomes or benefits to the host communities. This is further aggravated by issues relative to the degradation of the environment and conflicts in the application of mining and quarrying rights.

	Presently, there are more or less 40 quarry operators with regular and special permits operating in the province. Further, there are two (2) declared “Minahang Bayan” or legal Small Scale Mining areas with more or less sixty (60) active tunnels in the Municipality of T’boli. These areas are also situated inside the Mine Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA) contract area of Tribal Mining Corporation (TMC), a large scale mining company. The mining and quarrying industry in the province generated about P21 Million in 2017 consisting of taxes, fees and permits, and fines and penalties. From this total collection, the host municipalities and barangays will have a share from the tax revenues from mining and quarrying of about P19 Million. Transparency with regards to taxes paid, land disputes, mining and Indigenous People’s rights are among the common source of conflicts and issues in the area. These issues are all forwarded to the Provincial Mining Regulatory Board (PMRB) with merely five (5) mandatory members, one of which is a CSO representative, discussing and trying to resolve these conflicts.
<i>What is the commitment?</i>	The commitment would be focusing on policy development and creation of transparency e-systems and channels (EI-TECh) to further engage citizens to participate in mining governance. Access to mining and quarry information will be developed and enhanced through the website, social media and print ads, among others, to help promote public interaction. Stakeholder consultation will be conducted as to what data are of public interest, relevance and appeal that would need to be disclosed. CSO and general public participation in the Provincial Mining and Regulatory Board (PMRB) will be expanded to include grassroots or impacted community participation. Transparency initiatives, incentives and branding (Compassionate Gold) will be institutionalized through a Provincial Mining Regulatory Board Resolution.
<i>How will the commitment contribute to solve the public problem?</i>	Through technology- and participatory-driven systems, standards, channels and branding, there will be increased disclosure on social, environmental, and economic information, hence, strengthen public awareness and involvement on decision-making related to the extractive industries. This will result in increased access to information and grassroots participation in mining governance, minimised mining and quarry related disputes and conflicts, and the

	growth of a culture with citizens-engaged monitoring system. Consequently, all these will improve revenue collection and promote socio-cultural and environmental protection in the impacted areas.			
<i>Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values?</i>	• Access to information on the extractive industries promotes transparency that leads to increased public participation and action. • Public awareness leads to greater accountability and compliance of mining operators and concerned government agencies. • Technology will enable easy access to information on mining and quarrying operations.			
<i>Additional information</i>	The commitment will be implemented by the provincial government, in partnership with the CSOs, people's organizations, Bantay Kita, and Bantoxics. Bantay Kita will be providing technical and financial assistance in software development, policy development and capacitation of identified grassroots leaders within mining and quarry impacted communities in extractive industry governance to include monitoring of standards and systems. Bantoxics on the other hand will be providing technical and financial assistance in developing transparency standards, branding and incentive mechanism through its Caring Gold Project. Further, the commitment is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals particularly on goals 1 (No Hunger), 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), 10 (Reduced Inequalities), 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).			
Milestone Activity with a Verifiable Deliverable	Responsibility	Source of Fund	Start Date	End Date
1. Update PEMO mining and quarrying reporting and monitoring forms to include relevant transparency information and integrate EITI standards in consultation with key stakeholders.	PEMO / PH-EITI	PEMO-MOOE/ PH-EITI	September, 2018	December, 2018
2. Update and enhance South Cotabato-PEMO software/database in managing information on mining and quarrying operations (mining, quarrying, energy industries) and	PEMO/Bantay Kita/Bantoxics/ PH-EITI	Bantay Kita/ Bantoxics/ PH-EITI	November 2018	September, 2019

link/disclose information through the Provincial Online Database.					
3. Develop transparency standards and systems in gold trading and institutionalize “compassionate gold” branding through a Provincial Mining regulatory Board (PMRB) resolution.		Bantoxics/PMRB	PEMO-MOOE/ Bantoxics/ PH-EITI	October, 2018	March, 2019
4. Conduct stakeholder outreach, dialogue and capacity-building activities for policy development/ improvement to strengthen participation and engagement of impacted grassroots sectors within the PMRB by developing a pool of trained community experts.		PEMO/Bantay Kita	Bantay Kita	September, 2018	September, 2020
5. Institutionalize grassroots participation/engagement in quarrying and mining governance by expanding the membership of the Provincial Mining Regulatory Board (PMRB) to include representatives from the impacted communities from the pool of trained community experts.		PMRB/ Bantay Kita	PEMO-MOOE/ Bantay Kita	October, 2018	June, 2019
Implementing Actors					
<i>Lead Implementing Office/ Agency/ Organization</i>		Provincial Government of South Cotabato – PEMO Mr. Siegfried Flaviano: cgfred8@gmail.com +6383-5202220			
<i>Other Actors Involved</i>	<i>PLGU / Government actors</i>	Provincial Treasurer’s Office, PPDO-ITU, DENR-MGB XII, DENR-EMB XII, NCIP XII			
	<i>CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups</i>	PH-EITI, Bantay Kita, Bantoxics, OND HESED Foundation, JP SAC, South Cotabato Foundation Inc., SSM Association, SRMA Beverly Besmanos(Bantay Kita): fbesmanos@bantaykita.ph Atty. Karla Espinosa (PH-EITI): mklespinosa@gmail.com			

Commitment Template	
Thematic Area: Open Legislation	
5. Establishing Online Channels to Broaden Civic Engagement and Increase Relevance of Local Legislations	
31 August 2018 – 31 August 2020	
Lead implementing agency/actor	Provincial Government of South Cotabato – Sangguniang Panlalawigan Office and Office of the Vice Governor
Commitment Description	
<i>What is the public problem that the commitment will address?</i>	In democracy, the involvement of the citizens in the political process is essential. Ideally, when citizens participate, they themselves must assess their own needs and inform the local government what these needs are, may it be through an online or offline public channel. The same must also go with the legislation process. Despite the gains realized in reducing poverty incidence, 19.8% of families remain poor in 2015. The nature and quality of local policies and legislation greatly influence and shape the process and outcomes of local development administration. Hence, for governance to be effective in reducing poverty, only relevant ordinances and policies that can effectively alleviate poverty based on the outputs of intensified engagement with the general public must be enacted and implemented. Currently, involvement of citizens to provide input on proposed legislative measures as well as to propose possible new legislative measures that matter to them is limited since the constituents have limited knowledge on passed and proposed legislative measures especially that public hearing is not mandatory for all legislative measures. For legislative measures that require public consultations, only a small percentage of the local population is reached due to limitations of funds in sending communications and conducting face-to-face (offline) assemblies and gatherings. There is a lack of understanding and awareness among the general public that they can actually be involved in the formulation of local policies and ordinances, and on how to access existing policies/ordinances. Further, records of existing legislations (resolutions and ordinances) are also not readily accessible and available both offline and online. All these lead to majority of people not actively participating in the decision-making process during legislation. While those who are aware of their right to participate or access legislative information lose interest since the process is not clear on how to voice out essential opinions.

<i>What is the commitment?</i>	The commitment aims to create more space for citizen engagement in order to improve the local legislative process through online channels, hence, increase the relevance of local legislation in addressing the people's felt needs and perceived development issues. This can be done by first establishing an automated database for legislations – Legislative Information Technology System (LITS) - that would serve as the central database for all current and on-going legislations that can be easily accessed. Information on the status of on-going legislations will also be viewed through the system. The Sangguniang Panlalawigan Office will set-up a computer where researchers and the general public may search, query and access records on existing and on-going legislations. The LITS will serve as a database for legislative records where people can readily search current and on-going/pending policies and ordinances. This legislative database will also be linked to the Provincial Online Database so that this can be accessed by the public anytime online. Online platforms also include setting-up of an official Facebook page for the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of South Cotabato and linking this to South Cotabato's official website and Facebook page where anyone can suggest new policies and ordinances as well as give comments on current or existing policies and ordinances. This will be the platform for the general public to be consulted and propose ideas on new legislations, and provide feedback both on existing and proposed local policies and ordinances that will truly make a difference to their lives. This is in addition to the face-to-face public consultations being currently conducted for legislations that require public consultation.
<i>How will the commitment contribute to solve the public problem?</i>	Establishing both online media/channels to disseminate and consult citizens on legislative processes and measures will further broaden citizen engagement in legislation and ensure the passing and implementation of relevant pieces of legislation that will be truly effective in responding to the real issues and development problems of communities.
<i>Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values?</i>	1. Increase transparency and citizen participation by providing more avenue/platform for citizens to access relevant information on local legislative processes and measures. 2. Leveraging technology for better governance by establishing online mechanisms and digital information systems to open legislative processes.
<i>Additional information</i>	The commitment under open legislation will be implemented in partnership with a local CSO, Mahintana Foundation, Inc. (MFI), as lead partner. MFI has already developed an automated system for the legislative records and processes of the Office of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan but would only need to enhance it in order to make the system more open and accessible online by linking it to the Provincial Online Database. As relevant policies and legislation provide the environment for equitable and inclusive growth to prosper, this commitment will significantly contribute to the

	realization of all the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly on goals 1 (No Poverty) and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).			
Milestone Activity with a Verifiable Deliverable	Responsibility	Source of Fund	Start Date	End Date
1. Draft and pass ordinance institutionalizing the open legislation mechanism.	Vice Governor/ Sangguniang Panlalawigan Office	Sangguniang Panlalawigan Office	Nov. 2018	December 2018
2. Establish and link the Official Facebook Account of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of South Cotabato as an online platform for Open Legislation to the Official FB Page and Website of South Cotabato. This is where the general public can make comments and give feedback on both existing and proposed legislations to promote and establish people-powered legislations.	Vice Governor/ Sangguniang Panlalawigan Office	Sangguniang Panlalawigan Office	January 2019 onwards	
3. Establish the Legislative Information Technology System (LITS), an automated database for the legislative records and processes of the Office of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan that will be linked to the Provincial Online Database for easy access of the public. A desktop computer will also be set up at the Office of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan for walk-in researchers and clients.	Mahintana Foundation, Inc., PPDO-ITU	Mahintana Foundation, Inc.	Nov. 2018	March 2019
4. Form and designate a committee that will review and act on the feedbacks from citizens on proposed legislative actions and ensure online publication of status report of	Vice Governor/ Sangguniang Panlalawigan Office	Sangguniang Panlalawigan Office	November, 2018	December, 2018

actions taken on the citizens' feedback through the SP Official Facebook Page. The committee will also act on inputs solicited from the general public for new legislative measures that can be crafted which needs actions and are identified as priority by citizens during the regular conduct of Outreach activities by the provincial government (offline / face-to-face channel).					
Implementing Actors					
<i>Lead Implementing Office/ Agency/ Organization</i>		Provincial Government of South Cotabato - Sangguniang Panlalawigan Office and Office of the Vice Governor			
<i>Other Actors Involved</i>	<i>PLGU / Government actors</i>	Senior Accountable Officer: Hon. Vicente R. De Jesus – Vice Governor +639209622158 +6383-2283448 Technical Focal Person: Felicitas F. Bigcas, Secretary to the Sanggunian +6383-2282338			
	<i>CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups</i>	Partner CSO: Mahintana Foundation, Inc. Martiniano Magdolot - +639173059060 Jobe Tubigon - +639173059063 Media Partners: Tri-media Association Partner LGU Offices: PPDO- ITU, PIO			

Action plan – South Cotabato, Philippines, 2022 – 2025

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September 6, 2021



[South Cotabato, Philippines](#)

Overview

At-a-Glance

[Action Plan](#): Action plan – South Cotabato, Philippines, 2022 – 2025

Action Plan Submission: 2022 Action Plan End: August 2025

Lead Institution: Sangguniang Kabataan Federation of South Cotabato, Bids & Awards Division of South Cotabato, Provincial Information Office of South Cotabato, Provincial Population Office of South Cotabato, [Youth](#) Alliance for Freedom of Information

Description

Duration

April 2025

Date Submitted

30th August 2021

Foreword(s)

South Cotabato is one of the progressive provinces in Region XII doubling as its regional center. The influx of migration from neighboring provinces and the investments pouring in created a paradigm shift in its manner in all aspects of governance having to cater to diverse cultures and needs. With progress, however, comes varied challenges in all aspects of governance. The coping mechanisms of both the local government as well as the other players that steer the direction of the LGU come to the fore. It reflects the system that defines the people behind it. The Open Government Partnership of South Cotabato has arrived at an opportune time resulting in a synergetic and holistic approach to governance anchored on a forged relationship among all the sectors of society present in the locality. It does not deviate from the vision and mission of the province but rather complements them through various commitments in the course of its implementation. The foundation of the OGP established on integrity, [transparency](#) and [citizen participation](#) present a clear-cut definition of what an ideal government should be. This boils down to collaborative efforts from all sides — government, business, NGOs, and the private sectors. Participatory measures to strengthen citizens' involvement in local government policies and frameworks are given new meaning and direction. Along this line, new commitments are being scoured of which from the OGP South Cotabato, commitments on open information, open [legislation](#), and [open contracting](#) open avenues for the youth involvement in the mentioned areas for partnership. This spells greater responsibility for them to be part of a significant undertaking shaping the province's future. This second action plan, therefore, highlights the youth empowerment and their alliances with other stakeholders setting the path for diversified interests forming a concrete action in elevating the responsibilities and involvement of the new generation to greater heights.

Open Government Challenges, Opportunities and Strategic Vision

What is the long-term vision for open government in your context and jurisdiction?

South Cotabato's development direction is aligned with the international agenda for sustainable development – 2030 [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs). South Cotabato localizes the SDGs by working on the perspective that achieving Goals #2-16 by forging strong partnerships – which is Goal # 17, will ultimately result in achieving Goal # 1 of No Poverty where no one is left behind. The vision is also anchored on the national government's vision of a "Matatag, Maginhawa at Panatag na Buhay" (Strongly Rooted, Comfortable and Secure Life) as captured in AmBisyon Natin 2040 that envisions the Philippines as a prosperous middle-class society where no one is poor. In order to achieve the vision, it is the role and development mission of the provincial government to highlight good governance and promote transparency, accountability and participation as a way of

making people co-own their government. By providing the enabling environment for growth to thrive, this brand of governance – focused on creating spaces of integrity and open government – will increase the chances of producing tangible outcomes to our people and positive impacts to our communities. The Vision Statement describes both the outward-looking and inward-looking elements of the envisioned long-term role and development direction of the province. The desired role of the province in the wider region or the best contribution it can make to the development of the nation is captured.

What are the achievements in open government to date (for example, recent open government reforms)?

- In 2015, South Cotabato already successfully pioneered the implementation of an integrity program at the local government level through the iSouthCotabato or South Cotabato for Integrity and Jobs program. The South Cotabato Integrity Circle (SCIC) was formed and developed twenty-four (24) integrity mechanisms following Caren Levy's Web of Institutionalization model.
- In 2018, with the help of our government, civil society and private/business sector partners, we were able to co-create five (5) commitments to the Open Government Partnership like the [public procurement](#) process as well as in the monitoring of provincial infrastructure projects.
- Along with the procurement data system, we also developed a system for the monitoring of provincial infrastructure projects and the online disclosure of monitoring reports near real-time, particularly those that have negative slippages or implemented beyond the target schedule of [completion](#).
- The development of the Integrated Provincial Online Database (iPOD), which is both a supply-and-demand driven online database where the public can access, save and print provincial data and information right at their homes.
- The South Cotabato-COVID-19 Contact Tracing System (SC-CCTS) is a locally-developed e- logbook system that does not require smartphones, internet or Bluetooth from the general public and provides accurate information for efficient and expeditious contact tracing.

What are the current challenges/areas for improvement in open government that the jurisdiction wishes to tackle?

We can safely say that the open government seed we have planted is slowly growing. In order for it to continue to grow and thrive, we have to nurture and sustain the already existing open government mechanisms and improve on areas that require more work.

What are the medium-term open government goals that the government wants to achieve?

The [education](#) and capacitation of many individuals to what open information, open contracting, and open legislation are, are very crucial in attaining a genuine open

government.

Educating the citizens about what Open Information, Open Contracting, and Open Legislation are and how these can affect their lives can deepen their appreciation and move them to engage more in the province's open government initiatives.

Capacitating the people on how they can implement, monitor, and assess where the government is when it comes to its open government goals can help a lot in achieving them.

How does this action plan contribute to achieve the Open Government Strategic Vision?

The Provincial Government of South Cotabato continues to work with civil society, youth leaders, and other members of the [private sector](#) in engaging the youth on OGP Local program commitments by educating them by introducing and deepen their knowledge and awareness with the concepts of FOI and Open Contracting. It will also involve the youth leaders and organizations in activities on Open Government initiatives, converge them to co-create and collaborate with fellow youth sectors and other community members, and leads them in advocating FOI and Open Contracting as ambassadors to the community. Those activities contribute to achieving the Open Government strategic vision as it promotes good governance and promotes transparency, accountability, and participation as a way of making people co-own their government. By providing the enabling environment for growth to thrive, this brand of governance – focused on creating spaces of integrity and open government – will increase the chances of producing tangible outcomes for our people and positive impacts on our communities

How does the open government strategic vision contribute to the accomplishment of the current administration's overall policy goals?

Good governance is at the core of South Cotabato's Development Framework. Among the 5 Development Priorities of this administration is "Strengthening Good Governance," where we advance grassroots-focused or bottom-up, open, participatory, and digital-driven governance to reduce poverty and build lasting peace.

Engagement and Coordination in the Open Government Strategic Vision and OGP Action Plan

Please list the lead institutions responsible for the implementation of this OGP action plan.

- Sangguniang Kabataan Federation of South Cotabato
- Bids & Awards Division of South Cotabato
- Provincial Information Office of South Cotabato
- Provincial Population Office of South Cotabato
- Youth Alliance for Freedom of Information

What kind of institutional arrangements are in place to coordinate between government agencies and departments to implement the OGP action plan?

South Cotabato has since had a strong relationship with its private/business sector, even 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. This particular relationship has enabled balance in the [co-creation process](#). Since there is already an existing partnership between the provincial government and its private and business sectors, it was never difficult to ask for their support. There were also a number of ideas and suggestions from them during the co-creation process that was incorporated in the action plan. The provincial government also has a functional and active Provincial Development Council (PDC) that is mainly the policy-making and primary planning body. Its main concern is the overall socio-economic development of the province. Consisting of five (5) sectoral committees (economic, social, infrastructure and land use, institutional, environment and disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation) with representatives from civil society organizations, local government units, and agencies, the PDC acts as the primary institution that coordinates and sets the direction of all economic and social development efforts in the province. At the same time, the PDC serves as a forum where local efforts can be related and integrated with provincial and regional development activities.

What kind of spaces have you used or created to enable the collaboration between government and civil society in the co-creation and implementation of this action plan? Mention both offline and online spaces.

With the SCIC acting as the main stage for immediate collaboration between the provincial government, civil society, and its lead partners in implementing this action plan, different online and offline mediums were used for constant engagement. Given the present global situation with COVID-19, the use of online platforms was heavily considered to curb the spread of the disease. Online platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, and even Jitsi Meet was used along with limited physical meetings at the Provincial Development Council Hall in the Provincial Capitol were done for a more inclusive and comprehensive discussion without risking the health of those involved.

As the primary body that serves as the [multi-stakeholder forum](#) of the South Cotabato – Open Government Partnership, the South Cotabato Integrity Circle is also the ideal space for government and civil society collaboration. Since the body meets on a quarterly basis, it opens up opportunities for in-depth discussions on how to improve good governance mechanisms and systems.

What measures did you take to ensure diversity of representation (including vulnerable or marginalized populations) in these spaces?

Section 34 of the Local Government Code of 1991 underscores the importance of promoting the establishment and operation of people and non-governmental organizations to become active partners in the pursuit of local autonomy. To become legitimate partners in local governance, CSOs such as NGOs, people's organizations, cooperatives, and professional groups must be accredited by the provincial legislative body, the Sangguniang Panlalawigan. Further, the Department of the Interior and Local Government issued a Memorandum Circular, MC No. 2013-70, which provides the clarificatory guidelines relative to the accreditation of CSOs and in the selection of their representatives to the local special bodies (LSBs). Only accredited CSOs are qualified to become members of LSBs such as the PDC and SCIC.

The SCIC and PDC have since been promoting inclusivity and diversity through the representation of vulnerable and marginalized groups, particularly from indigenous peoples, women, and senior citizens. Both these local special bodies empower CSOs to take part in the decision-making and development processes of the provincial government. By allowing them a space to converse, they can directly express their concerns as well as opinions on certain issues and thus create a holistic system of decision making.

Who participated in these spaces?

The two types of groups who attended the co-creation workshops are from the government and the private sector.

- National Agencies
- Provincial Offices
- Municipal and Barangays
- NGOs/Academe/Private Sectors

How many groups participated in these spaces?

37

How many public-facing meetings were held in the co-creation process?

3

How will government and non-governmental stakeholders continue to collaborate through the implementation of the action plan?

Due to the pandemic, most collaborations will still be done online. Since we have the necessary contact information needed to communicate with our partners, we could still get in touch with them through sending emails, chats, or text messages and making phone calls too.

Please describe the independent Monitoring Body you have identified for this plan.

The purpose of monitoring is to track implementation and outputs systemically, and measure the effectiveness of the implemented programs. The monitoring team will determine the progress of the activities and should be the basis for modification of interventions and assessment of the activities being conducted. The youth being the key player in the Second Action Plan, it is deemed proper that the identified independent monitoring body is from the academe being the bastion of activities for the new generation.

Provide the contact details for the independent monitoring body.

Raphael S. Tanseco, RPh, Program Director, Psychology Department of Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Colleges, raphaeltanseco@gmail.com

What types of activities will you have in place to discuss progress on commitments with stakeholders?

Monitoring is very essential, this will serve as an instrument to measure the effectiveness of the program. Targets will help stakeholders focus on the results and motivate counterparts in ensuring that all objectives were properly accomplished.

Nonetheless, a regular collaboration meeting will be conducted or a special meeting to discuss developments of the implementation of [commitment](#)/s, and Identify problems and recommend solutions to ensure that all problems are aided with preferential actions and to resolve them effectively.

Initiating activities like campaigns and projects that will introduce and deepen the knowledge and awareness of the youth when it comes to the concepts of Freedom of Information and Open Contracting, furthermore, will let youth leaders take the helm in advocating them and serving as ambassadors of the advocacy by constantly involving them into the conversation and activities surrounding the Open Government initiatives of the province.

How will you regularly check in on progress with implementing agencies?

Aside from the collaboration meetings with the monitoring team that will discuss updates, progress status, and work changes, it will also be presented during the conduct of Quarterly meetings of South Cotabato Integrity Circle (SCIC) with our partner Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to ensure the progress of the initiative, to maintain its momentum and to further capacitate the people involve.

How will you share the results of your monitoring efforts with the public?

Good communication is needed, this strategy is the best approach to share information with the public. On-time information dissemination can be an effective medium of communication. Thru the Integrated Provincial Online Database (IPOD) the Provincial Government of South Cotabato can properly disseminate information and thru social media

pages managed by the PGSC and its partners. With this initiative, a huge amount of citizens can easily access all the posted information. We can also reach out to more people through the following:

Endorsement from Non-Governmental Stakeholders

- Arch. Carlito Y. Uy, Secretary, South Cotabato Chamber of Commerce, Inc.
- Ms. Belen S. Fecundo, Executive Director, South Cotabato Foundation, Inc.
- Mr. Dausay S. Daulog, Executive Director, Maguindanaoan Development Foundation, Inc.
- Mr. Eugenio G. Pamplona, President, Association of Vocational Education and Technical Institutions in South Cotabato

[Letter from the Governor of South Cotabato](#)

Commitments:

- [Harnessing Youth Power in Integrating Open Government Values and Mechanisms to Respond to Local and Community-Interest Issues in the Province of South Cotabato \(PHSC0001\)](#)
- [Enhancing Transparency through Information and Cybercrime Education \(PHSC0002\)](#)
- [Increasing Access to Participation in Monitoring Infrastructure Projects at the Barangay Level \(PHSC0003\)](#)

Comments (1)
