

Quality of Governance: Assessing the Municipalities in the Province of Abra towards the Seal of Good Local Governance

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Abstract

The importance of good governance cannot be overstated. To guarantee the community's rights, improvements must be made to the government's varied implementation processes from the various service delivery domains (Eid, 2015). Accountability and transparency are the marks of good local governance. This program has been designed to oversee the local government units to establish a tranquil community that would safeguard its residents from dangers, preserve the environment, and boosts investment and employment (DILG, 2013). In this study, the descriptive research design was used. To assess the local government units' compliance along the ten (10) governance areas, the researcher used the SGLG tool. Interviews were conducted with the staff members of the various LGUs.

The findings indicated that the local government units had gathered the various pieces of information needed for the ten governance areas. In the 10 governance areas, the local government units have complied with the various required data. To comply with the whole collection of required data under the banner of excellent local administration, the LGUs must still review the numerous indicators. The majority of local government entities adhered to the two (2) governance areas of environmental management and health compliance and responsiveness. The LGUs should take different programs and activities to comply with all the indicators established by Republic Act No. 11292 or the SGLG Act.

Keywords: Compliance, Governance, Local Government Unit, Seal of Good Local Governance

Introduction

Since the year 2000, it has been recognized that good governance is essential. Governance was described as the state's ability to govern the affairs of the country (Left-wich, 1993). Fukuyama (2013) said that for an institution to comply with the requirements, it must implement several various governance mechanisms.

A method of evaluation that rewards effective local government is the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG). Seven (7) governance areas were examined in the earlier review of the assessment on the seal of good local governance. The criteria for SGLG were increased to ten (10) governance areas for CY 2022. The local government units are commended for their honesty and effective implementation of local governance reforms for significant local development.

The SGLG emphasizes the value of honesty and excellence in performance for the LGU as it works toward independence and growth. This is particularly crucial since LGUs are recognized for their exceptional performance by the benchmarks established by the Department of Interior and Local Government. reforms for significant local development.

The SGLG was a forerunner of the Seal of Good Housekeeping (SGH). This serves as the foundation for the implementation of performance-based accountability among the nation's local governments. Different governance areas were created in 2014 as part of the evolution of the SGLG, which served as the foundation for the evaluation. Additionally, the rewards given to the winning

LGUs have helped increase accountability and transparency, promote quick response to disasters, and change LGUs' behavior toward providing better services to the public.

Since the passage of Republic Act No. 11292, every LGU has desired the SGLG reward, incentive, honor, and recognition. It also inspired people to strive for ongoing improvement in all aspects of government. The SGLG Award originally had 7 governance elements to be met. The SGLG Act now consists of 10 governance areas. Financial management, social protection and sensitivity, disaster readiness, health compliance and responsiveness, sustainable education, business-friendliness and competitiveness, safety, peace and order, environmental management, tourism, heritage development, culture and arts, and youth development.

The research was done to determine the compliance of the 8 municipalities in Abra. The study's findings will be used to create new patterns for the municipalities' human development objectives and goals.

The study's objectives are as follows: To determine the compliance of the different municipalities in Abra; along the governance areas on financial administration and sustainability, disaster preparedness, social protection and sensitivity, health compliance and responsiveness, sustainable education, business-friendliness and competitiveness, safety, peace, and order, environmental management, tourism, heritage development, culture, and arts, and youth development; to determine the overall compliance of the selected municipalities on the 10 governance areas; and to determine programs and activities that would help improve the services of the LGUs and comply with the required indicators on SGLG.

Materials and Methods

The descriptive research design was used for this study. In the Province of Abra, there were 27 Municipalities that underwent the Good Local Governance Seal Assessment. Prior to the assessment, a Sub-Regional Assessment Team was formed to assess the different municipalities. The team is composed of DILG employees, higher education representatives, NGO, representatives, and from the League of Executives in the province. There were four teams formed. The researcher was a member of the team that assessed the eight (8) municipalities: San Isidro, Tayum, Pidigan Sallapadan, Malibcong, Lacub, and Lagayan. The DILG Form CM 3.1 was used to assess and conduct interviews with the department heads. This was utilized to assess the performance of the various local government units. To verify the information supplied by each of the municipalities, interviews were also performed (see Appendix A.4). In addition, a table evaluation was done before the onsite validation. A series of interviews and validations of the presented documents with the relevant functionaries were placed during the on-site validation. After the validation, an exit conference was held. The acquired information was summarized and subjectively analyzed.

Results and Discussions

The Compliance of the Local Government Unit Along the Ten Governance Areas

Financial Administration and Sustainability

The table above shows the compliance of the eight (8) municipalities on financial administration and sustainability. Under this governance area, all the municipalities complied with items no.2 and 5, there is an approved CY 2022 annual budget and the LGU has utilized the 20% Development Fund component of CY 2020. The result was supported by the document shown by the LGU on using the 20% IRA for Local Development Programs (see Appendix A.2). Since all of the docu-

ments were posted on their bulletin boards, it appeared that the LGUs have complied with the Full Disclosure Policy and followed the accounting and auditing regulations. On the required data on the LGUs have fully complied with the posting, there were only 4 municipalities that were able to comply and four (4) that did not meet the requirements. Under this requirement, the LGUs need to show to the FDCP board the submission of electronic SRE and display it in three (3) well-visible locations within the municipality. The FDCP board complies with the assertion made by Fox and Meyer (1995) that financial administration is a significant aspect of public administration that operates to cover the entire budgetary cycle by displaying the annual budget report, statement of debt service, and other financial documents.

Table 1. Financial Administration and Sustainability

Required Data	Complied	Not complied
1. The LGUs have fully complied with the posting	4	4
2. The LGU has utilized the 20% Development Fund component of CY 2020	7	1
3. The LGU is a beneficiary of the 2020 Assistance to Municipalities program and fund utilization	5	3
4. All funds received in the previous years (CY 2017-2019) are fully disbursed and liquidated	5	3
5. There is an approved CY 2022 annual budget	7	1

Disaster Preparedness

This result builds on existing evidence from Berl (2017) that disaster preparedness requires a thorough awareness of the needs and strategies for readiness, response, and recovery. On indicators nos. 5, 7, and 9, there were seven (7) municipalities that complied while only one (1) did not comply due to the lack of evidence shown. These indicators were underlined by the IFRC (2010) in saying that risk reduction strategies are ingrained in disaster preparedness operations that can prevent disasters and save lives and livelihoods. Additionally, it complies with LGA's (2017) assertion that the LGU should put its local climate change action plan into action to address climate change concerns. It made local government units (LGUs) determine how to deal with climate change and incorporate it into local development plans. Its main focus was on climate change adaptation and mitigation. Only two (2) municipalities complied with the indicator, the LGU has an approved Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP). As mentioned by the functionaries, the LGUs draft is still under review and has to engage component barangays in the planning process.

Table 2. Financial Administration and Sustainability

Required Data	Complied	Not complied
1. The LGU has an established and functional Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council	6	2
2. The LGU has an established Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office	3	5
3. The LGU has an approved Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP)	2	6

4. The LGU has an approved Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan and Budget	3	5
5. The LGU has a Local Climate Change Action Plan	7	1
6. The LGU has a Contingency plan for its hazards	5	3
7. The LGU has utilized at least 50% of the 70% Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation component in its FY 2021 Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund	7	1
8. The LGU has pre-emptive and forced evacuation mechanisms	5	3
9. The LGU has a Search and Rescue or Emergency response, the team	7	1

Social Protection and Sensitivity

Table 3. Social Protection and Sensitivity

Required Data	Complied	Not complied
1. The LGU is a 2021 Seal of Child-friendly Local Governance recipient	6	2
2. The LGU has mechanisms in support of gender and development	6	2
3. The LGU has mechanisms in support of efforts against trafficking and violence against women and their children (VAWC)	7	1
4. The LGU has a Code for Children	7	1
5. The LGU has different efforts in Early Childhood Care and Development	7	1
6. The LGU has physical features and a local office promoting accessibility for persons with disabilities and older persons	6	2
7. The LGU has a local office that heads the programs, projects, and activities for PWDs	6	2
8. The LGUs accomplished PPAs/ utilized funds	7	1
9. The LGU has a Local Social Welfare and Development Office and staff	3	5

Table 3 details how the local government entity complies with social protection and sensitivity. LGUs mostly complied with the criteria set in these governance areas. It indicates that the LGUs have exerted more efforts to provide social protection to the people. The effort of the LGUs to provide more Child Development workers or Day Care Workers has helped to meet the criteria on social protection and sensitivity. On the required data, the LGU has a Local Social Welfare and Development Office and staff, most of them were designated. A registered social worker should be hired, along with more workers for the social work office. To reduce poverty, the DILG has set a goal in its Performance Governance System to deliver social services and social protection that are coordinated and up to par with global standards. The department is aware of how crucial having LSWDOs that are fully operational to achieve its vision. (DSWD, 2014).

Health Compliance and Responsiveness

From table 4, it appeared that there were seven (7) municipalities with Complete and approved Health plans for 2020–2022. The Health Score Card provided all the information needed for the assessment of Health. This suggests that the majority of the staff members in the seven LGUs' rural health units have created and trained health emergency response teams that are familiar with first aid, basic life support, and other pertinent topics. The LGU has this percentage of households with access to drinking water services that are safely maintained in 2020, only two (2) municipalities complied as is evident from the Health Scorecard presented. To pass under this indicator, In 2020, at least 47.5% of households will have access to services for securely managing drinking water.

Table 4. Health Compliance and Responsiveness

Required Data	Complied	Not complied
The LGU has completed the Local Investment Plan for Health for 2020–2022, validated and approved by the CHD Director	8	0
2. The LGU has the mean stunting rate among children under five in CY 2020	5	3
3. The LGU has this percentage of households with access to safely managed drinking water services in CY 2020	2	6
4. The LGU recorded TB Notification Rates from 2019-2020	6	2
5. The LGU has this TB Treatment Success Rate in CY 2020	5	3
6. The LGU has an institutionalized DRMM-H system	7	1
7. The LGU has a functional Local Epidemiology Surveillance Unit	4	4

Sustainable Education

It is immediately apparent from Table 5 that there were six (6) LGUs who complied with indicator no. 1. It shows that the other LGUs failed to show or produce the important data to support the criteria. An executive order or similar issuances creating the Local School Board and the minutes of the meeting of the LSB were not provided during the assessment. For the other indicators, there were a few municipalities that complied. Some of the LGUs who failed did not show proof of evidence that such activities and programs were conducted. The municipality of San Isidro, Pidigan, Malibcong, Sallapadan, and Lagayan did not provide the accomplishment reports and other important evidence. It implies that there is a need for the LGUs to create a committee for the documentation.

Table 5. Sustainable Education

Required Data	Complied	Not complied
1. The LGU has a functional Local School Board	6	2
2. The LGU conducted collaborative programs, activities, and projects with external partners	3	5
3. The LGU implemented the LSB plan completion and utilized	5	3

the SEF to support the activities of the school		
4. There is a no. of LGU planned PPAs in the LDIP with identified local priority education reform areas	4	4
5. The LGU programs provided an impact that led to the improvement of the pupil's performance	3	5

Business-Friendliness and Competitiveness

Table 6 sought to understand whether the LGUs have complied with all the indicators of Business-Friendliness and Competitiveness. Overwhelmingly, the LGUs have supported local economic development and investment promotion, and the LGUs have an updated Citizens Charter for securing permits for new business and business renewal. This conformity supports the goal of Republic Act No. 9485, also known as the Anti-Red Tape Act of 2007, which establishes recommendations for streamlining the local business permit and licensing systems by the service standards established by the national government.

Table 6. Business-Friendliness and Competitiveness

Required Data	Complied	Not Complied
1. The LGU has been recognized in 2021 for its efforts in business promotion and investments and for enhancing its competitiveness	4	4
2. The LGU supports local economic development and investment promotion	7	1
3. The LGU has an updated Citizens Charter for securing permits for new business and business renewal	7	1
4. The LGU has streamlined the process of doing business using electronic one-stop (e-BOSS)	6	2
5. The LGU has updated the Local Economic Development Data generated	6	2
6. The LGU has a Local Investment and Incentives Code	3	5

Safety, Peace, and Order

As shown in Table 7, there is an overwhelming positive evaluation of the compliance of the LGU on Peace and Order. There were seven (7) municipalities that complied with indicators, the LGU provided logistical support to PNP Office in 2021 and the LGU has Barangay Peacekeeping Action Teams, and barangay tanods. The results of this endeavor also conform to the DILG Act of 1990, also known as RA 6975 which states that it is the State's policy to advance peace and order, protect public safety, and improve local government capacity to efficiently provide basic services to the populace. The policies on public order and safety aimed to shield the populace from lawlessness and other threats to peace and order were also stressed in this law.

On indicator, LGU has a drug-cleared barangay as can be seen in Appendix A.5, 5 municipalities complied with this indicator. This means that they have complied with all the parameters of a drug-cleared barangay as provided by the Dangerous Drugs Board Resolution No.3 Series of 2017.

Table 7. Safety, Peace, and Order

Required Data	complied	Not complied
1. The LGU passed the 2021 Peace and Order Performance Audit	No data yet	No data yet
2. The LGU received a Highly Functional rating in the 2021 Anti-Drug Abuse Council Performance Audit	No data yet	No data yet
3. The LGU has provided logistical support to PNP Office in 2021	7	1
4. The LGU has Barangay Peacekeeping Action Teams, barangay tanods	7	1
5. The LGU has drug-cleared barangays	5	3

Environmental Management

Table 8 sought to understand whether the 8 LGUs have complied with the required data on environmental management. All 8 municipalities complied with the indicator, the LGU has had a solid waste management plan for 10 years. The results also conform to the approved Ecological Plans for managing solid waste from several municipal governments (see appendix A.7).

Under the ESWMP (2017), it ensured that the management of solid waste safeguards the environment and public health. This plan is a systematic approach to dealing with the various aspects of managing each LGUs' waste from the sources to the final disposal to be instituted.

Table 8. Environmental Management

Required Data	complied	Not complied
1. The LGU has a functional Solid Waste Management Board	7	1
2. The LGU operates or has closed an open/controlled dumpsite	4	4
3. The LGU has a solid waste management plan for 10 years	8	0
4. The LGU has access to a sanitary landfill for final disposal	6	2

Tourism, Heritage Development, Culture and Arts

It can be gleaned from Table 9 that there were 7 municipalities with a local tourism officer. This implies that the LGUs have complied with the indicators set for tourism, heritage development, culture, and arts. Executive Order No. 27-2019 was passed ordering the creation of the Municipal Tourism and cultural heritage office and the designation of the Municipal Tourism Officer (see Appendix A.14). Both indicator numbers 2 and 5 have 6 LGUs who complied. To prove it, Executive Order No.03-2019 ordered the establishment of the municipal tourist information and assistance center was shown (see Appendix A.10). This implies that the municipalities are taking full force in developing and advertising the tourist attractions in the province. Furthermore, the results also fit with the statement of the OECD (2013) positive relationship between culture and tourism can increase a location's appeal and ability to compete. Another significant or crucial element of tourism is culture. Culture is also an essential component of tourism. It is therefore important to develop tourist attractions while preserving and enriching our cultural heritage.

Table 9. Tourism, Heritage Development, Culture and Arts

Required Data	Complied	Not complied
1. Presence of a local tourism officer or designated officer	7	1
2. Establishment of a Tourist Information and Assistance desk	6	2
3. Establishment of a Tracking System of tourism data	5	3
4. Existence of a municipal council for the advancement of the arts and culture	3	5
5. There is an approved budget for cultural property conservation and preservation	6	2
6. Existence of an updated property inventory in the LGU	2	6
7. There is a published narrative of history and culture	1	7

Youth Development

Table 10 shows the required data for youth development. The LGU has a Local Youth Development Plan approved by the LYDC appeared to be the most complied area among the other indicators. The LGU has a functional Local Youth Development Council (LYDC) was the least complied. This conforms with the Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) presented by the LGUs. This CDP becomes important since the programs and activities set for the youth would help strengthen their sense of identity, belief in self-regulation, and self-efficacy including their social and emotional competence. Indicator no. 1 becomes the least to comply since the 3 LGUs did not meet the standards set in RA No. 10742 where there LYDC should compose of at least 8 representatives from registered youth organizations. Proof of the leadership training participated by the members was not produced by these LGUs to comply with the required data for youth development.

Table 10. Youth Development

Required Data	Complied	Not complied
1. The LGU has a functional Local Youth Development Council (LYDC)	5	3
2. The LGU has an established Local Youth Development Office	6	2
3. The LGU has a Local Youth Development Plan approved by the LYDC	7	1
4. The LGU provides support to youth development	6	2

Overall Compliance of the LGUs on the Ten Governance Areas

It can be gleaned from Table 11 that from the 10 governance areas assessed, most of the LGUs complied with five (5) to six (6) governance areas. This implies that the LGUs have taken various actions to meet the requirements established by the Department of Interior and Local Government. The LGUs are expected to work on the specific areas presented by the sub-Regional Assessment Team during the exit conference (see Appendix A.1). Six (6) LGUs in the areas of Health compliance and responsiveness and environmental management, complied. This implies that the 6 LGUs met at least 3 of the following required data while at least 2 indicators were met under envi-

ronmental management. This was supported by pertinent documents such as the Health Scorecard, solid waste management plan, and others. The governance areas on safety, peace, and order were deemed to be the lowest in compliance. It implies that there were five (5) LGUs that did not meet the 5 required data to be considered compliant in this area. Under Republic Act No. 6975 or the DILG Act of 1990, the State's policy is to uphold public safety, ensure peace and order, and build local government capacity to effectively provide citizens with essential services. It also highlighted the need for public safety and order laws to safeguard citizens from all sorts of crime, disorder, and threats.

Table 11. Overall Compliance of the LGUs

Governance Areas	Complied	Not Complied
Financial Administration	5	3
Disaster Preparedness	5	3
Social Protection and Sensitivity	4	4
Health Compliance and Responsiveness	6	2
Sustainable Education	4	4
Business-Friendliness and Competitiveness	5	3
Safety, Peace, and Order	3	5
Environmental Management	6	2
Tourism, Heritage Development, Culture, and Arts	5	3
Youth Development	5	3

Measures and Actions to Improve the Services of the LGUs

The table above shows the possible measures or actions that the local government units may undertake to be able to improve the different delivery services in the municipality. These measures were based on the results of the assessment of the ten governance areas of the 8 municipalities. This conforms with the statement of Fukuyama (2013) that there are several different governance measures that an institution needs to meet the standards.

Table 12. Measures and Actions to Improve the Services of the LGUs

Governance Areas	Measures/Actions
Financial Administration	Setting up of a complete FDCP board in 3 conspicuous places
Disaster Preparedness	Approval of a Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP)
Social Protection and Sensitivity	Registered Social Work and additional staff
Health Compliance and Responsiveness	More homes have access to services for appropriately managing drinking water
Sustainable Education	Proper documentation of programs and activities
Business Friendliness and Competitiveness	Establishment of an economic development and investment promotion office
Safety Peace and Order	Increase the total number of drug-cleared barangays in the municipalities

Environmental Management	Operational open/controlled dumpsite
Tourism, Heritage Development, Culture and Arts	Documentation on Narrative of History and Culture in the LGU
Youth Development	Creation of a functional Local Youth Development Council (LYDC)

Output:

To comply with the ten (10) governance areas, Training-Seminar may be done:

- Proposed Training Design on Material and Non-Material Culture

TRAINING SESSION PLAN

Session	Training Workshop on Local History and Culture
Session Objective	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss the meaning of local history, its sources, and how to learn about local history through oral history Create a detailed local history of the municipality Create videos, flyers, and other forms on Local Heritage Sites (Churches, Landmarks, Shrines, etc.) Local Festival Cultural Practices and Beliefs of the Locality
Duration	2 days
Equipment	PC Laptop, USB flash Drive, Internet Modem
Materials	e-copy of PowerPoint presentation
DAY 1	
9:00-9:15	Pre-Test on Local History and Culture “Knowing your Place”
9:15 – 11:30	Talk on Local History and Culture
11:30- 12:00	Open Forum/Sharing of Experiences
1:00- 3:00	Identification of the following Local Heritage Sites (Churches, Landmarks, Shrines, etc.) Local Festival Cultural Practices and Beliefs of the Locality
3:00-5:00	Workshop
Day 2:	
8:00- 8:30	Registration
8:30 – 10:30	Talk on Instructional Materials Development

11:30- 12:00	<p>Workshop</p> <p>Participants will create videos, flyers, and other forms on</p> <p>Local History</p> <p>Complete detail of the history of the municipality from its beginning up to its present state.</p> <p>Picture the old state of the local up to its present.</p> <p>Local Heritage Sites (Churches, Landmarks, Shrines, etc.)</p> <p>Detail the story behind each local heritage site.</p> <p>Pictures of its development.</p> <p>Details on who maintains the sites and how they maintain the sites.</p> <p>Include how tourists can access the site.</p> <p>Local Festival</p> <p>Detail the local festival of the municipality.</p> <p>Ø The start and how do the people prepare for the said festival</p> <p>Ø Pictures of the festivals from years past</p> <p>Cultural Practices and Beliefs of the Locality</p> <p>Detail at least five (5) local practices and beliefs (such as burial, weddings, etc.)</p> <p>The conduct of the practices and beliefs</p> <p>Ø Pictures of the practices and beliefs</p>
1:00- 3:00	Workshop
3:00-5:00	Presentation of Outputs

2. Training -Workshop on Proper Documentation

TRAINING SESSION PLAN

Session	Training -Workshop on Proper Documentation
Session Objective	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss the different types of documentation 2. Discuss the implications of NOT documenting. 3. Describe how to document effectively
Equip-ment/Materials	PC Laptop, USB flash Drive, Internet Modem, e-copy of PowerPoint presentation
TIME	Activities
9:00-9:15	Discussion on Effective Documentation
9:15 – 11:30	Benefits of Documenting

11:30- 12:00	Open Forum/Sharing of Experiences
1:00- 3:00	Workshop
3:00-5:00	Presentation of Outputs

Conclusion

In light of the results of the study, it can be concluded that, in the 10 governance areas, the local government entities have complied with the various required data. The LGUs must still examine the many indicators to comply with the entire collection of necessary data under the banner of good local administration. Furthermore, most of the local government units complied with the two (2) governance areas which are health compliance and responsiveness and environmental management. The LGUs should take a variety of actions to comply with all the indicators established by Republic Act No. 11292 or the SGLG Act.

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I'm grateful for the chance to join the sub-Regional Assessment Team and for the opportunity to work with the Department of Interior and Local Government in the Abra Province. Thank you also to the Abra local government units for participating and being so welcoming during the Sub-RAT Team's scheduled assessment. I first and foremost laud and give thanks to the Lord Almighty, who is the greatest source of knowledge and power.

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