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Research Article

The Capacity Assessment of Lower-Class Municipalities in Agriculture Services Towards Full Devolution

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ABSTRACT

In response to Mandanas Ruling, President Duterte signed Executive Order 138 which mandates the local government unit to formulate their Devolution Transition Plans (DTP) from FY2022 to FY2024. The DTP charted the capacity development agenda of every Local Government Unit and National Government Agency to prepare for full devolution in FY2024.

This study covers 11 municipalities in the province of Masbate that belonged to the 4th and 5th classes in terms of income. It aims to identify the capacity development agenda to create a baseline for the capacity development program of the lower-classes municipalities towards full devolution. Specifically, this study highlighted the current state of capacity, the desired state, the alignment of these capacity development agenda to DILG, and, finally, the priority capacity interventions in response to the full devolution of the Agriculture sector.

This study used qualitative and descriptive research approaches. An extensive document scrutinising of the Devolution Transition Plans was structured in each municipality. The study concede that lower-class municipalities have a low capacity to assume devolved services mandated in Section 17 of RA 7160 and other devolution laws in the sector of Agriculture and Extension Services. There are capacity gaps with the proposed specific capacity development agenda. The capacity development agenda were categorized into six (6) capacity pillars. These are the useful baseline in crafting the National Agencies' Capacity Development Program.

Keywords: *Agriculture and extension services, Capacity development agenda, Capacity pillars, Full devolution, Lower-class municipalities*

Introduction

The Supreme Court ruled the Mandanas-Garcia Petition relative to the Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA). This petition has been a persistent effort of local government units and

stakeholders to demand greater autonomy and resources from the national government. The court decision came up from petitions filed by Batangas Governor Hermilando Mandanas and former Bataan Governor Enrique Garcia Jr. in

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the Supreme Court requesting the basis of computation of the IRA of Local Government Units (LGUs) be adjusted to include national taxes (PIA.gov.ph). Mandanas Ruling has directly increased the budget for LGUs because of a larger base for the computation of the National Tax Allotment. Local governments expect to receive an incremental IRA, equivalent to 40% of tax collections that were previously not part of the base. In 2022, IRA was substantially increased by P263.5 billion or 37.9% to a total of P959.0 billion. About P193.7 billion was attributed to collections from the Bureau of Customs (AAG IRA, 2022.)

Executive Order No. 138 recognizes this reality and sets guidelines on the full devolution of certain functions, thus, giving government agencies until FY 2024 to complete the transition. A gradual devolution of functions between 2022 and 2024 will be done by the National Government. This means additional National Government budgetary requirements to support National Government's Programs, Projects, and Activities during the transition (Manalo, et. al 2021).

The goal of recovering from pandemic is coupled with the implementation of the Mandanas ruling by protecting the vulnerable with social safety nets and ensure that local governments contribute to economic recovery, of which infrastructure spending brings the largest multiplier effect (Diokno-Sicat, et.al.,2020).

An increase in LGU allocations would mean diminishing funding for the National Government Agencies. Hence, they asserted that they would no longer exert the same level of effort. If LGUs receive an increase in their budget, they should also begin performing the functions and services outlined for them in the Local Government Code. To aid LGUs in effectively discharging the devolved duties and processes, the role of NGAs will now focus on strategic and steering parts.

The capacity gap is one of the major problems in the decentralization process. All NGAs and LGUs were required to develop and implement their respective Devolution Transition Plans that define their Capacity Development Agenda to ensure the smooth implementation of EO 138. This differing level of financial capacity of LGUs is recognized. For instance, the

increase in National Tax Allotment share for some LGUs may be sufficient to carry out their devolved functions, at the same time, this may not be the case for some, especially for LGUs belonging to lower-class municipalities. The LGUs need to review their financial resources, as well as their expenditure requirements and absorptive capacities, to meet the urgent needs of their constituencies and local economies. LGUs need to develop a transition strategy and identify the capacity development gaps and actions to address them.

From 2010 to 2019, the poultry industry had been the key driver of growth in agriculture, while crops have stagnated. While, fisheries further contracted in 2014–2018, faring even worse than crops. (Biones, 2021)

In the survey of the Association of South-east Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Philippines is far behind in terms of agricultural growth and productivity. The Philippines ranked lowest in agricultural performance at 1.0 percent from 1980 to 1990. According to the Department of Agriculture, the low agricultural productivity is due to several factors, namely: (1) Minimal access to land for the farmers, production inputs, credit, and other resources needed for increasing productivity and farm incomes; (2) Inefficient delivery of government support to the agriculture sector with minimal impact (3) Previous government development policies that have undermined the country's comparative advantage in agriculture have created a biased incentive structure, which favors urban and industrial sectors at the expense of the agriculture sector. The low-income municipalities in the Philippines have big losses compared to those with higher classes. Calamities and disasters brought extreme losses and LGUs are not resilient enough to withstand the mishap that damages crops and decreases productivity yields. Too much rainfall and heat and the changing climate are damaging factors in agriculture. Extreme weather, such as storms, floods, and droughts, have frequently battered Asian agriculture in the recent past. In 2013, Typhoon Haiyan dealt Philippine agriculture over \$1.4 billion in losses. With climate change, the frequency and scale of such events are escalating, as is the damage they cause (Asian Development Outlook 2021)

The researcher wants to support the transition phase of devolution by identifying the capacity development interventions of 11 lower-class municipalities of Masbate as the basis for their capacity development program.

Statement of the Problem

This study aims to determine the Capacity Development Interventions of the eleven (11) Lower Class Municipalities in the Province of Masbate.

Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the current state of the capacity of the lower-class municipalities in Masbate as regards devolved functions in agriculture and extension services?
2. What is the desired state of capacity?
3. Are the capacity development agenda of the LGUs aligned with the DILG criteria/ EO 138 guidelines?
4. What capacity development plan may be proposed to comply with the DILG priorities set in the six pillars?

Methods

Research Design

This research study used a qualitative approach. Using the current state and desired state of capacity in the context of full devolution, the capacity development agenda was reviewed vis-à-vis its alignment with the DILG guidelines and criteria of full devolution.

Based on the LGU capacity assessment and cap dev formulation toolkit from the Local Government Academy, the capacity development agenda has six pillars: (1) Structures. (2) Competencies. (3) Enabling Policies. (4) Management System. (5) Knowledge and Information. and (6) Leadership. To holistically analyze the overall capacity development gaps and agenda of 11 LGUs, the six pillars were identified.

Research Population

This study covered the lower-class municipalities of Masbate Province. The lower-class

municipalities are those municipalities that belong to the 4th, 5th, and 6th classes. However, in the case of Masbate province, there are only 4th and 5th classes. There are 11 municipalities belonging to the 4th and 5th classes.

These are: Baleno, Balud, Batuan, Dimaslang, Esperanza, Mobo, Monreal, Palanas, Pio V Corpuz, San Fernando and San Jacinto. The selection was based on the municipality category of the Cities and Municipalities Competitive Index for 2022.

Results and Discussion

I. Current State of Capacity

The current state capacity was categorized concerning Section 17 of RA 7160 and other special laws related to the sector of Agriculture.

The result presents the current state of capacity of 11 municipalities in Agriculture and Extension Services based on section 17 of RA 7160 and the other devolution laws passed after the Local Government Act of 1991 (RA 7160) Special devolution laws. Special devolution laws that are found in the Devolution Transition Plans under Agriculture and Extension Services are (1) RA 8435- Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act of 1997, (2) RA 9520 Cooperative Code of 2009; (3) RA 1153 Positions of Cooperative Development Officer mandatory in Municipal, City and Provincial Levels (2020); (4) RA 10601 Agricultural and Fisheries Mechanization (AFMech) Law; and (5) RA 10915 - Philippine Agriculture and Biosystems Engineering Act of 2016.

Table 1 indicates the current state of capacities among the 11 municipalities. In the 16 enumerated devolved functions and services in Section 17 of RA 7160, the LGUs have strong performance in terms of fishery laws while very weak in the implementation of artificial insemination and communal irrigation.

The result further implies that despite the enactment of RA 7160 in three decades, the devolved services were not sustained and, LGUs perceived some of the devolved services as not part of their functions (e.g., No data).

Table 1. Current State of Capacity based on Section 17 of RA 7160

<i>Functions , Services and Facilities (FSF) under Agriculture and Extension Services</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No Data</i>
Dispersal of Livestock and poultry	4	4	3
Prevention and control of plant diseases	4	0	7
Provision and distribution of palay, corn and vegetable seed farms	6	4	1
Prevention and control of plant pest	3	2	6
Fertilizer Distribution	4	3	4
Establishment of medicinal plant gardens	0	6	5
Establishment of fruit tree, coconut and other kinds of seedling nurseries/seed farms	3	4	4
Establishment of Demo Farm	3	3	5
Establishment of Artificial Insemination Center	0	4	7
Quality control of Copra	4	6	1
Establishment of Inter-barangay irrigation system	2	8	1
Water and Soil resource utilization and conservation projects	5	5	1
Enforcement of fishery laws in Municipal waters including the conservation of mangroves (to include policies, organization of Bantay Dagat, etc)	8	1	2
Animal Breeding Center	4	0	7
Community fish landing center/Fish port	4	2	5
Provision and dispersal of fingerlings	3	7	1

Table 2. Current State of Capacity regarding RA 9520 (Cooperative Act of 2009)

<i>Functions , Services and Facilities (FSF) under Agriculture</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No Data</i>
Strengthening farmers credit multi-purpose cooperatives	1	0	10
Improvement and Development of Local distribution channels, preferably through cooperatives	2	5	4

Table 2 manifests another weak spot of the LGUs as regards the implementation of RA 9520. The ten LGUs without data expressed the unavailability of these services at present. This further widens the gap between farmers' accessibility to financing and credit support, which is eminent in increasing their farm inputs and productivity. The role of the cooperative is to serve as a practical vehicle for promoting self-reliance and harnessing people's power toward

the attainment of economic development and social justice (article 2, RA 9520). Cooperatives create a network of people unified through a common goal where everyone makes benefits and enables connections through keeping close membership of people in society. The non-existence of cooperatives will separate the LGUs from the vast opportunities it brings.

Table 3. Current State of Capacity based on RA 10601 and RA 8435

<i>Functions , Services and Facilities (FSF) under Agriculture</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No Data</i>
Conduct of applied research, extension, dispersal, management and regulation of agricultural and fisheries machinery and equipment	4	6	1
Agricultural Extension	3	0	8
Rain water collectors and water supply system	4	2	5
Farm Mechanization	3	3	5
Communal Irrigation	1	4	6
Small Water Impounding Project (SWIP)	2	5	4

Table 3 notably predominates the non-functionality of LGUs in implementing RA 10601 and RA 8435. The number of LGUs that affirmed that they implement these acts is far from the LGUs with No and No data responses. The devolution of agricultural extension services to the LGUs has also been identified as one

of the causes of low farm productivity hindering the attainment of agricultural development and food security (Magno, 2001), while low farm productivity is affected by factors such as low farm mechanization, inadequate post-harvest and processing facilities, and lack of irrigation facilities (RDC Bicol 2017-2022).

Table 4. Current State of Capacity based on RA 10915

<i>Functions , Services and Facilities (FSF) under Agriculture</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No Data</i>
Establishment of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering Unit	1	2	8
Agricultural Engineers	1	2	8

Table 4 indicates poor implementation of LGUs in terms of RA 10915. The lack of an Agriculture and Biosystems Engineering Unit is a big menace that will cause failure in the modernization and mechanization goals in the agriculture sector. In addition, the mere fact that LGUs did not consider it as the devolved function (No data) is another manifestation that this is not among their priority services.

The establishment of an Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering unit in the municipality will help the LGUs in preparing engineering designs, plans, specifications, project studies, feasibility studies, and estimates of irrigation and drainage, soil and water conservation and management systems and facilities, agrometeorological systems, agricultural and biosystems power, and machinery, structures, renewable/bio-energy, agricultural and biological waste utilization and management, farming and bio-information system, agricultural and

Biosystems resource conservation and management, and farming and bio-automation and instrumentation system (Sec 5, RA 10915), thus, increasing the opportunities for locals to improve their agriculture productivity.

Out of the 27 Functions, Services, and Facilities (FSFs) from Section 17 of RA 7160 and other laws (Table 1.0), an average of 7.45 FSFs are being implemented by LGUs, 8.18 FSFs are not functional and, 11.36 FSFs have no data, whether they exist or not. This is a clear manifestation that LGUs had augmented those services for a long time however, the three decades of persistence failed the agriculture sectors to reach the locals. Services related to extension and research, artificial insemination, medicinal plant establishment, agriculture and Biosystems unit, communal irrigation, and multi-purpose cooperatives are among the FSFs with the lowest scores.

Table 5. Current State of Capacity in Agriculture and Extension Services

<i>Municipalities</i>	<i>Scores</i>			<i>Total</i>
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No data</i>	
Baleno	9	13	5	27
Balud	4	14	9	27
Batuan	6	9	12	27
Dimasalang	9	8	10	27
Esperanza	4	11	12	27
Mobo	0	16	11	27
Monreal	10	2	15	27
Palanas	16	3	8	27
Pio V. Corpuz	9	8	10	27
San Fernando	10	2	15	27
San Jacinto	5	4	18	27
Average Score	7.45	8.18	11.36	

Table 5 further verifies that there is variation among municipalities based on their current state of capacity. While LGUs have existing devolved FSF which are functional (e.g. Palanas with the highest number of available services with 16 YES), the non-existing and not functionality is also evident (e.g. Mobo with 0 yes,) also implies that all LGUs have services unknown to them as represented by No Data. The “No data” services explicitly affect the result of overall interpretation because it would mean neither existing nor unavailable. Further study is recommended on why some LGUs have no data on those FSF. In the 27 enumerated devolved Functions, Services, and Facilities in Agriculture and Extension in Section 17 of RA 7160 (16 FSFs) and Other Laws (11 FSFs), most LGUs showed strength in the enforcement of fishery laws, water, and soil utilization and provisions of palay, corn, and vegetables. On the other hand, most LGUs are not implementing services like artificial insemination, communal and inter-barangay irrigation systems, and medicinal plant establishment. In the special devolution laws, the 11 FSFs did not exist in the lower-class municipalities. For instance, in the Cooperative Act, ten LGUs with no data expressed the unavailability of these services. This further widens the gap between farmers’ accessibility to financing and credit support,

which is eminent in increasing their farm inputs and productivity. The cooperative serves as a strategy for promoting self-reliance and enhancing people's power to attain economic development and social justice (article 2, RA 9520). The non-existence of cooperatives will separate the LGUs from the vast opportunities brought by it.

I. Desired State of Capacity

The desired state of capacity, as operationally defined in this study is the expected improvement of the LGUs to deliver the devolved functions, services, and facilities (FSF). By 2024, by the execution of EO 138, devolved services in Section 17 of RA 7160 and other special laws will be fully assumed by the LGU. The current state of the capacity of the municipalities revealed that there is a huge gap in the implementation of devolved services under the local government unit. There are underlying factors that can be attributed, one, is the insufficient fund allocation. The scarcity of financial resources, especially in the lower-income municipalities, served as a tremendous deterrent in the full implementation. The 11 towns of Masbate identified the desired state using attachment 1-A in their Devolution Transition Plan.

Table 6. Desired State of Capacity for Agriculture and Extension Services

<i>Desired State</i>	<i>No. of Municipalities</i>
Increased competent manpower to implement the devolved services	8
Increased yield of coconut, rice, corn and vegetable production	4
Established a Municipal Agriculture Office with Training Center and Facilities	4
Presence of Ordinance on management and regulation of agricultural, animal breeding and fisheries machinery and equipment.	4
Achieved food security and promote sustainable agriculture	3
Increased area utilization by for root crops, corn, rice and vegetable production	2
Promoted productive employment and decent work for all	2
Created Agricultural Engineering Unit to perform irrigation & infrastructure services	2
Established and fully equipped slaughterhouse	2
Modern farming technologies to farmers	2
Developed the municipality as the agri-tourism hub to promote economic access and opportunities	2

Table 6 indicates that human resource complement ranked as the most desired state of the capacity of 11 LGUs. In the state of capacity pillars, the hiring of personnel falls under the Structure Pillar. In many cases, existing personnel were designated for multiple tasks because of the lack of human resources. Most often, the designated ones are not capable or lack the competencies needed to efficiently deliver the services.

While other LGUs anticipated enhanced productivity yield, they also considered the need for policy reforms, especially since most of the related laws are seldom revisited for their effectiveness and relevance in the present setting wherein climate change has not been foreseen before as the major threat to the agricultural system. There is also a clear connection between the desired services in agriculture as compared to their current state. This desired state affirmed that their current state is inevitable given the limited resources, but this can be possible with the increased allocation brought by Mandanas Ruling.

I. Capacity Development Agenda

Capacity Development Agenda pertains to the needed capacity development under the six pillars. The six pillars are A. Structure, B. Competency, C. Management System, D. Enabling Policy, E. Knowledge and Learning, and; F. Leadership. The study reviewed and analyzed the Capacity Development Agenda of 11 municipalities as found in their Devolution Transition Plan.

Structure pillar

In the structure pillar, the data reflects the need for workforce complement in the agriculture office. The structure pillar is defined as the office, committee, or work with defined authority to perform functions. The hiring of additional positions is consistent with the desired state of capacity in need of manpower complement. The creation and hiring of jobs entail cost and resources. Modernization and mechanization programs need technical personnel, and hiring costs will surely drain their resources. Consistent with the desired state wherein they

want to increase manpower complement, other services that need technical know-how will follow.

Competency Pillar

In the competency pillar, the LGUs described numerous training as their capacity development agenda. Competency is defined as the knowledge and skills of people needed to perform such functions and equally important capacity needs in all aspects of devolution.

The LGUs identified numerous trainings related to agriculture however, the number of LGUs that identified it is very minimal. Notably, the devolved services under the current state with low implementation are already incorporated in their capacity development agenda in competency.

Management System Pillar

Management Systems are systems, processes, and procedures for managing programs. Programs and services are abruptly deteriorating as presented in their current state. Systematic plans can channel unforeseen changes and improve local governance. However, the process of project formulation is of great essence. In the management system, procedures and systems imply harmonization to rationalization. Among the programs and services that are not implemented by LGUs, they failed to mention the monitoring and evaluation of agriculture programs that were delivered redundantly by both LGUs and NGAs.

Enabling Policy Pillar

Local autonomy, empowerment, and development through the provision of innovative solutions are the promises of devolution. It should be noted that devolution represents a significant ideological shift in policy. Policies for the creation of positions were highlighted by most LGUs. Unfortunately, they failed to recognize the more imperative policies concerning special devolution laws in agriculture and extension. For instance, revisiting the research and extension function of LGUs, and policy in distributing revenue to devolved priority services, among others.

Knowledge and Learning Pillar

LGUs failed to recognize the capacity development agenda for managing the past learning of LGUs in the implementation of agricultural services. Without the system of monitoring and database, it will be hard for the LGU to sustain its capacity. Knowledge and learning collate best practices from among them through sharing and benchmarking. This strategy of capacity development needs can be included in this pillar.

Leadership Pillar

While LGUs affirmed numerous capacity development needs under the first five pillars, they identify few for the leadership pillar. Capacity in LGUs means having a sound plan, communication strategies, and implementation activities intended for communities, groups, and individuals. This area needs transformational leadership from the local chief executives up to the barangay level. The LGUs can associate the poor implementation of devolved services with the lack of leadership competencies of local leaders. Some scholars emphasize local leadership capacity as an important determinant for effective decentralization (Wallis, 1999; Grindle 2007). The leadership pillar in this study pertains to the presence of mechanisms for defining vision and values, setting strategic functions, transparency and accountability, participation, partnership, and collaboration.

IV. Comparison of Capacity Development Agenda of 11 Municipalities viz-a-viz guidelines from EO 138.

From the result, it is evident that both RA 7160 and other laws were represented with capacity development agenda under the six pillars, however, the pillars of Knowledge and Learning and Leadership have very few entries. This means that most of the municipalities identified capacity development agenda mostly in hiring workforce complement, enhancing their competencies through training and seminars, and supporting those interventions with comprehensive enabling policy for legality and sustainability.

The LGUs are firm to demand a workforce as one of the capacity pillars for devolution. Though there are still functions that will

continue to be shared by LGUs and NGAs under Section 3, LGUs' vivid claim for the workforce is very evident in the agriculture sector. Along the workforce complement are other capacity development interventions that contribute to the full assumption of their duties by 2024. The comparison also justifies interventions as instrumental capacity per EO 138. Notably evident as well, these interventions are aligned with the services as stipulated in RA 7160.

V. Priority Interventions per sector in six pillars.

The interventions are listed according to the pillar of capacity. In Agriculture and Extension services, LGUs have identified many interventions in the six pillars, particularly in increasing competency through training, seminars, and technical know-how approaches. The competency pillar showed numerous interventions compared to other pillars. This indicates that the competency cannot be attained in one shot, this has a sequence and hierarchy of order of skills to attain full competency. In contrast, LGUs listed few interventions in leadership. Some scholars emphasize local leadership capacity as an important determinant for effective decentralization (Wallis, 1999 Grindle 2007).

The priority interventions showcase a promising impact on the improvement of the delivery of devolved services both in those included in RA 7160 and other laws in these three identified sectors. There is a clear gap in the prioritization of the capacity development agenda viz-a-viz the current state of capacity among sectors. The effectiveness of such programs can be attained by creating strategic plans and programs built into the pillars. LGUs will absorb several demands from their constituents and this devolution mandate is an opportunity for them to serve better in the future. The following are the priority capacity development interventions identified as the basis for the capacity development programs of the National Government:

Pillar of Structure

- The hiring of agricultural and biosystems engineers, agricultural technicians, meat inspectors, and various administrative positions

Pillar of Competency

- Training in livestock and poultry production, slaughterhouse operation, pest management, farm management, nursery management, and organic agriculture

Pillar of Management System

- Value chain analysis, monitoring system of fingerlings/fishery mechanization plan, food security plan, farmer information technology system.

Pillar of Enabling Policy

- Ordinance on the creation of positions

Pillar on Knowledge and Learning

- Database management, feedback mechanisms

Pillar on Leadership

- Monitoring of agri-fisheries organizations

Conclusion

On the Current State of Capacity: The non-existence, non-functionality, and non-identification of devolved FSFs in the list of functions that the LGUs should have assumed since 1991 imply low capacity in implementing the devolved services. Very evident in the results, that LGUs have minimal capacity in the pillars of structure, competency, policy, and leadership, and they failed to function even in the delivery of basic services.

On the Desired State of Capacity: Increase in the number of competent workforces is the most desired state of the capacity of LGUs in Agriculture and Extension Services. Eight out of 11 municipalities believed that they could strengthen the implementation of devolved services by hiring additional staff. With their current state, we can predict that the desired state is the product of their desired outcome, authority, and capacity. The desired state is the positive outlook of their current state of capacity.

On Capacity Development Agenda: Evidently, the capacity development agenda of the 11 municipalities are responsive interventions following their current state of capacity. LGUs were able to identify specific interventions per capacity pillar. For instance, the need for workforce complement was highlighted under the pillar of structure, while training, policy, systems, and partnership is in the other capacity

pillars. It is also factual to mention that the capacity development agenda will directly impact to improve their current state of capacity and move forward to their desired state of capacity.

On the alignment of the CapDev Agenda based on EO 138 guidelines: The cap dev agenda identified by LGUs were aligned with the criteria set by EO 138. The Implementing Rules and Regulations of EO 138 outlined the devolved services under RA 7160 and services and functions under special laws. The LGUs successfully linked the capacity gaps to the cap dev agenda by supplementing interventions in the six pillars. In full assumption in 2024, the identified capacity development agenda will strengthen the current state of capacity, however, the result shows that there are more agenda to be included, specific for each devolved function. Understandably, LGUs have prioritized capacity development agenda in consideration of their absorptive capacity. One of the considerations is the availability of funds. Despite the increased National Tax Allocation through Mandanas Ruling, lower-class municipalities will not receive much to support such numerous devolved functions, services, and facilities.

On the overall result of Capacity Development Agenda formulation: The 11 municipalities have failed to identify the Capdev agenda on the last two pillars of capacity (Knowledge and Learning and Leadership). Most of the identified interventions fall under structure, competency, management system, and enabling policy. There is a critical gap in the result of the capacity development agenda since most capacity interventions were focused on those pillars only.

Recommendations

1. The LGUs may revisit the result of their current state of capacity and clarify the non-existence of most of the functions and services. The FSFs with No data can be identified based on their existence and functionality.
2. Review the existing programs and services and decide whether these are part of the devolved services mandated to them or just other redundant programs implemented

over the years without much impact. This will somehow show the true picture of the current state of the capacity of the 11 municipalities.

3. The desired state will serve as their vision as to what phase of devolution they will be in three years. In this case, their time frame to full devolution is in FY 2024. The 3-year transition period will be a challenging path for them. Thus, trimming down their desired state will lessen their expectation and will bring them to focus on what to prioritize.
4. Consider interventions in the pillars of knowledge and learning, and leadership.
5. In the pillar of structure, aside from hiring personnel, consider also strengthening the organizations, councils, and committees with oversight functions. This will improve the monitoring system and the quality of services.
6. In developing the competency of personnel, consider the three aspects of competency in selecting participants. Knowledge and skills must be accompanied by the right attitude of the personnel. Embracing the changes brought out by additional learning will result in the optimum application of knowledge and skills acquired.
7. Consider the Commission of Civil Service MC No. 12 series of 2022 or the Guidelines and Standards in the Establishment of Organizational Structures and Staffing Patterns in Local Government Units. LGUs may collaborate their efforts and resources for the delivery of common basic services, maintenance of common facilities, and other purposes beneficial to them. This will augment the financial limitation of the LGUs in hiring additional positions.
8. Strengthen collaboration and partnership with the 11 LGUs as part of the leadership pillar.
9. Showcase best practices of the province in the implementation of devolved functions as a benchmark to the 11 Municipalities (under Knowledge and Learning Pillars).

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