

Application Form

CATEGORIES IN WHICH YOU WANT TO APPLY THE EXPERIENCE

1: TYPE OF EXPERIENCE: *choose the most important element (choose only one element which you consider the most outstanding of your practice).*

A) Deliberation Citizen assembly / deliberation workshop / lottery / legislative theater / participatory planning	
B) Decision Participatory budget / referendum / consultation / participatory process with vote	✓
C) Citizenship Citizenship / community action / permanent council / civic education / associationism / other initiatives to reinforce local democracy	

2: TYPE OF GOVERNMENT: *choose one only.*

A) Up to 50,000 inhabitants (towns, small cities, rural areas).	
B) Cities between 50,000 and 250,000 inhabitants.	✓
C) Cities between 250,000 and 1,000,000 inhabitants.	
D) Large cities or urban areas of more than 1,500,000 inhabitants.	
E) Supralocal, regional, provincial governments	

Experience data: *complete the information below in a clear and concise manner.*

Title of the experience: People's Budget Ordinance and Voluntary Local Review of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Naga City
Name of the city or region: Naga City, Camarines Sur, Bicol Region
Inhabitants of the city or territory: 209,170 (Philippine Statistics Authority 2020 Census)
Country: Philippines
Institution presenting the candidacy: (name of the municipality, department, government, institution leading the candidate experience) City Government of Naga

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Website of the experience or institution: https://www2.naga.gov.ph/		
Profiles in social networks of the experience or the institution: https://www.facebook.com/NagaCityGovernment https://twitter.com/nagacitygov		
Start date of the experience: October 10, 2017		
End date of the experience: (if operational, indicate "ongoing") Ongoing		
Budget of the experience: (indicate the budget of the experience or the resources mobilized for its development and implementation) PHP 425000 or US\$ 7,727 for the period 2018-2022 (at the exchange rate of PHP1 to US\$55)		
Type of candidacy <i>(mark with an X in the right column)</i>	New experience	
	Innovation on an existing experience	X
	Continuity of an experience	
Type of experience <i>(mark with an X in the right column, you may choose more than one)</i>	Participatory budgeting	X
	Participatory planning	X
	Standing council	X
	Workshop / meeting for diagnosis, monitoring, etc.	
	Public hearing / forum	X
	Poll / referendum	
	Assemblies / Citizen juries / Deliberation spaces	
	E-government / Open government / Digital platforms	X
	Citizen initiative	
Other (specify):		

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Objective of the experience <i>(mark with an X in the right column, you may choose more than one)</i>	To achieve higher levels of equality in terms of participation		
	Including diversity as a criterion for inclusion		
	Community empowerment		
	To empower non-organised citizens		
	To increase citizen's rights in terms of political participation		X
	To connect different tools of participation within a participatory democracy "ecosystem"		X
	To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the mechanisms of participatory democracy		
	To improve the quality of public decision-making through the mechanisms of participatory democracy		X
	To improve the evaluation and accountability of the mechanisms of participatory democracy		X
To improve any public policy through the active participation of the public			
Territorial area <i>(mark with an X in the right column, you may choose more than one)</i>	All the territory	Local	X
		Regional	
	District		
	Neighbourhood		
Thematic area	Governance		X
	Education		
	Transport		
	Urban management		X

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<i>(mark with an X in the right column, you may choose more than one)</i>	Health	
	Security	
	Environment / Climate change and/or urban agriculture	
	Civic associations, grassroots and new social movements	
	Culture	
	Housing	
	Job creation	
	Decentralization	
	Local development	X
	Training / learning	
	Economy and/or finances	
	Legal regulations	
	Social inclusion	
	All	
Other (write the topic)		
Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) associated with the practice <i>(mark with an X in the right column, more than one option can be chosen, you can also add the specific</i>	SDG 1 - No poverty	X
	SDG 2 - Zero hunger	
	SDG 3 - Good health and well-being	X
	SDG 4 - Quality education	X
	SDG 5 - Gender equality	X

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target)	SDG 6 - Clean water and sanitation	
	SDG 7 - Affordable and clean energy	
	SDG 8 - Decent work and economic growth	X
	SDG 9 - Industry, innovation and infrastructure	
	SDG 10 - Reduced inequality	X
	SDG 11 - Sustainable cities and communities	X
	SDG 12 - Responsible consumption and production	
	SDG 13 - Climate action	X
	SDG 14 - Life below water	
	SDG 15 - Life on land	X
	SDG 16 - Peace, justice and strong institutions	X
SDG 17 - Partnership for the goals	X	

PART 2: DESCRIPTION OF THE EXPERIENCE

Fill in the following fields clearly and concisely. You can add links, images or graphics if you consider it appropriate.

Context:

In a **maximum of 300 words**, present the cultural, geographical, historical, institutional and socioeconomic context of the city, region or territory in which the experience takes place.

Naga is an independent component city in the Bicol Region of the Philippines. Even before the arrival of Spanish colonizers, it was already a flourishing community off Naga River. The

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name is said to have derived its origin from narra trees, which were then in abundance. A former president of Ateneo de Naga University however advanced an alternative theory linking the name to the Nagas, a serpent-worshipping Indian tribe that settled near or around water springs.

The modern town was established in 1575 on order of Governor-General Francisco de Sande, a native of Caceres in Extramadura, Spain. It was named Ciudad de Nueva Cáceres in his honor, becoming the third royal city in the Philippines after Cebu and Manila.

Nueva Caceres served as the capital of Ambos Camarines and later of Camarines Sur province. In 1919, the Americans reclassified the city into a town and restored its former name. It regained its status as an independent component city by virtue of Republic Act No. 305, which became law on June 18, 1948.

Naga City is also known as a Pilgrim City due to the largest Marian pilgrimage in Asia focused on the 320-year old devotion to the Lady of Peñafrancia, the Bicol patroness.

Managing the city is its local government, which directed the city's transformation into a center of good governance in the Philippines. For the last two decades, it has earned national and international awards for innovations and excellence in diverse areas of local governance.

Naga is also the core of Metro Naga, an official designation given the city and 18 towns that comprise the Metro Naga Development Council. Metro Naga also includes Pili, the provincial capital, and other towns spanning four districts of the province, as well as San Pascual in the neighboring Masbate province.

Precedents:

*Explain the precedents and origins of the experience: if it is the innovation of an existing experience, what are its origins; if it is a new experience, what are the antecedents in participation in your city, region or territory. You can also indicate if you have been inspired by experiences in other cities/countries. (In a **maximum of 300 words**).*

The People's Budget Ordinance and Voluntary Local Review of SDGs in Naga City builds on the People Empowerment Program (PEP), a 2002 initiative of the city government that sought to promote political empowerment of its citizenry, inspired by the 1986 EDSA Revolution in the Philippines.

The PEP successfully concretized the abstract concept of "people power" by empowering and engaging the community in governance processes, leading to the development of a participative society in Naga.

Under the program, the administration regularly conducts dialogs and consultations with various sectors at the city and village levels, mainstreaming them in local governance.

Naga also pioneered the first and only citywide referendum in the Philippines on August 6, 1993, in the process demonstrating that direct participation at this scale works, especially in deciding development issues with long-term impact.

Finally, with enactment of the Empowerment Ordinance on December 20, 1995 that mandated partnership between the local government and nongovernment sectors, a form

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of direct democracy was established to work with representative democracy—the first of its kind in the Philippines.

Through the non-partisan Naga City People’s Council (NCPC), close to 100 civil society organizations (CSOs) are now actively involved in governing the city. They include the 27 barangay people’s councils organized by the NCPC at the village level, in the process expanding program reach down to the grassroots.

In 1998, the program’s Naga City Participatory Planning Initiatives earned the Dubai International Award given by UN-Habitat and the Municipality of Dubai as one of the 10 best practices worldwide.

Participatory budgeting is a concept that originated in Latin America, specifically the Brazilian city of Porto Alegre. By building on the PEP, which also won the 2002 Galing Pook Award as one of the Philippines 10 most outstanding local programs, it showed that the Philippines can have its own version of that good practice.

Objectives of the experience:

*What is the objective listed in Part 1 that you think is the most important, and indicate other outstanding objectives of the experience. (In a **maximum of 100 words**).*

From the list, the program’s primary objective is to connect different tools of participation within a participatory democracy “ecosystem.” This was articulated in the People’s Budget Ordinance itself:

1. **Results-oriented.** “Public funds shall be allocated only for public purpose which must be clearly defined.”
2. **Evidence-based.** “The annual budget shall be responsive to the situation of the community as reflected in the Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS) or other local data.”
3. **Participative budgeting.** “Constituents are given the opportunity to comment on the budget and these are considered by the approving authority prior to approval.”
4. **Plan-budget link.** “The annual budget is the lifeblood of the local development plan and annual investment program formulated in consultation with local constituents.”

Methodology:

*Describe the methodology of the experience: phases of the process, participation channels. (In a **maximum of 300 words**)*

The People’s Budget Ordinance and Voluntary Local Review (PBO-VLR) of SDGs in Naga City further strengthens the city’s participatory governance by ensuring that local plans and budgets are responsive to the needs of its citizens; are prepared and approved through a transparent participatory process; and are also monitored participatively.

Enacted on October 10, 2017, City Ordinance No. 2017-072, popularly known as the People’s Budget Ordinance, covers both city and barangay budgets.

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Indeed, Naga City has been known for participatory governance. In 1997, it established the NCPC that selects its representatives to all local special bodies and standing committees of the city government. Consequently, its planning documents are crafted with strong people's participation. But ensuring that these plans are translated into budgets truly responsive to people's needs remained a huge policy gap for two decades. This is what the program sought to address.

The foray into the Voluntary Local Review (VLR) of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in Naga is a logical outcome of the policy. In 2020, it took on UNESCAP's offer to pilot a voluntary local review of the SDGs in the Philippines. A VLR is a process through which local governments willingly undertake a review of their progress on the 2030 SDGs.

Thus, the program pursued the following strategies:

1. **Voluntary local review.** Naga pioneered a voluntary review of the SDGs. As a result, it has adopted the VLR as a monitoring tool for its new 2022-30 Comprehensive Development Plan.
2. **Regular CBMS surveys.** Since 2011, Naga has already implemented three CBMS surveys. They are being used by city government agencies in formulating their plans and budgets.
3. **Two-tier public consultations.** The NCPC organized a two-tier public consultation process, providing a platform where the public provides feedback on what city agencies are planning to carry out in the next fiscal year.
4. **City statistics committee.** The city government organized the Naga City Statistics Committee (NCSC) to become the institutional home of the VLR process, as well as the critical monitoring of its plan and budget outcomes.

Innovation:

*Explain what you consider as the most innovative aspect(s) in the practice. (In a **maximum of 150 words**).*

The program's innovations are evident in the following:

1. **People participation and empowerment is in its DNA.** The program is the logical evolution and leveling up of the PEP, Naga's 2002 Galing Pook award-winning program which had the NCPC as its core.
2. **Community-wide consultation.** The two-tier consultation process – starting with the 56 individual city agencies and capped by the city level presentation of the proposed budget by the city budget officer – under the auspices of the NCPC in partnership with the city planning department actualized micro and macro scrutiny of the city budget.
3. **Participatory budgeting is feasible in the Philippines.** Participatory budgeting originated in Porto Alegre, Brazil albeit using a different approach. But the program showed that the Philippines can have its own version of that good practice.
4. **Philippine pilot for VLR.** After its selection by ESCAP as pilot Philippine city for a voluntary local review of the SDGs, Naga undertook a VLR and ensured that it would align

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with the Philippine Voluntary National Review (VNR) being prepared by the central government.

5. **City statistics committee.** The city government organized the NCSC to become the institutional home of the VLR process, as well as the critical monitoring of its plan and budget outcomes, using the SDGs and other local indicators.

Inclusion:

*Point out the importance of including as many groups and diverse populations as possible, and how you have achieved it. (In a **maximum of 150 words**).*

Participatory planning, budgeting and performance monitoring was enabled through the following:

1. **Organizational mechanisms.** Under the program, the NCPC and the NCSC are the two major institutional vehicles that individuals and organizations can join as empowered participants in governance processes of the city in respect to planning, budgeting and performance monitoring.

2. **Citizen influence in decision making.** In 2023, five city agencies adjusted their plans, programs and activities (PAPs) to better respond to the needs of their stakeholders, demonstrating that individual citizens can influence how the local budget is being fashioned. Clearly, the PBO-VLR processes are powerful accountability mechanisms that should get better over time.

3. **Private and marginalized sector participation.** Lastly, the local business sector is one of the 12 basic sectors of the NCPC, where they are represented by the Metro Naga Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Likewise, the NCSC has private sector representation, including two privately owned academic institutions. And thus far, program gains have benefited the marginalized.

Communication:

*What has been the strategy and communication channels of the experience for engaging the population. (In a **maximum of 150 words**)*

The program uses the respective networks of the city government and the NCPC in popularizing and disseminating the departmental and city level presentations of plans and budget to target sectors and the population at large.

The city government network would be driven by official directives to city government agencies relative to the budget forum. It also deploys the various social media platforms of the city government, and its relationship with the traditional media to ensure widespread coverage. The former includes Facebook live and Zoom meetings, which became extremely useful at the height of covid in 2020 and 2021.

The NCPC would do the same. Care is made to make sure that the relevant sectors participate to match the departments and offices presenting their plans and budgets for a given day.

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Schedules, in the form of graphic arts, are posted both in the Facebook pages of the Naga City Government and NCPC. To ensure that discussions are grounded on evidence, the series of budget fora would start with the presentation of the latest CBMS numbers by the city planning department.

Articulation with other actors:

*Explain how the experience was articulated with different actors and simultaneous or pre-existing processes. What roles did these participants assume? Explain the degree of success of this articulation. (In a **maximum of 150 words**)*

The program's starting point is the passage of City Ordinance No. 2017-072 authorizing the planning, budgeting and monitoring reforms. The original proposal was actually vetoed by the incumbent mayor at the time, who argued that the central Philippine government already has sufficient laws and regulations guiding the process. The Sangguniang Panlungsod (city council) however overrode the veto.

The next step involved the different agencies of the city government in the preparation of the 2019 city government budget. Under the leadership of the city budget officer, the different agencies were told about the reforms and encouraged to review the new requirements under the ordinance. The budget call for 2019 already incorporated these new requirements and processes, which everyone eventually complied with.

The city planning department and the NCPC, meanwhile, met to finalize the schedule of the first ever public presentation of departmental and city-level budgets to the latter's 12 basic sectors and the general public. Despite the initial birth pains, the first round was a success.

And the rest is history. And not even the advent of covid prevented the new process to take root.

Evaluation:

*What evaluation mechanisms have been implemented? Develop whether the citizenry has participated in the evaluation of the practice. (In a **maximum of 300 words**).*

Participative monitoring is the third anchor of the program. As explained above, it is being performed by the Naga City Statistics Committee (NCSC), which helped the city government pursue its VLR in partnership with local and national government agencies, the local academia and private sector representatives.

Per recommendation by the Special Committee on the SDGs of the Bicol Regional Development Council (RDC), the highest planning and policy-making body in Bicol region, the NCSC's membership will be expanded to include the NCPC and other local and national government agencies essential in gathering SDG indicators and other performance metrics of the city government.

Chapter 7 of the new CDP, 2022-30 expressly identifies the NCSC as the entity that will define performance indicators for the plan, built around the SDGs, and report them to the Sanggunian and the City Development Council. It also sets the preparation of two evaluation reports (midterm in 2026 and end-of-term in 2030).

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It should be pointed out that the organization of the NCSC was prompted by findings during the CDP planning workshops in May 2022 that monitoring and evaluation is a lingering weakness of the city government. This led to the adoption of engaging external third-party entities as the plan's major evaluation mechanism.

Program evaluation will be conducted in conjunction with these timelines. Consistent with the city's participative tradition, individual citizens and organized sectors will be engaged in the evaluation process.

Impacts and results

*Describe the impacts and results of the process. How many people have participated, and what are their profiles? What have been the impacts on public policies, the functioning of the administration, and the citizenry? (In a **maximum of 300 words**).*

After five years of implementation, the latter two under the difficult and trying Covid19 pandemic, the program produced the following positive results and impact:

1. **Participation can improve government plans, programs and activities.** Even under trying circumstances, the program demonstrated that public participation, especially by stakeholders directly affected by the service being provided by government, can help improve delivery. We can see this in the experiences of the city's population, information technology, disaster risk reduction, parks and recreation, and arts, culture and tourism agencies who all adjusted their services to improve response. With improved quality of participation, this should only get better over time.

2. **Participation can improve the quality of life, especially of marginalized and vulnerable sectors.** Again, this is most evident in the case of the city nutrition program. Since its inception, this highly decorated agency focused its nutrition program solely for the welfare of mother and children, in line with the global Maternal, Newborn, Child Health and Nutrition (MNCHN) strategy. Little did it realize that senior citizens are also faced with nutritional challenges, and the consultations surfaced this. As a result, the agency reconfigured its program offerings to accommodate the sector, which it has long ignored albeit unintentionally, within the same budget ceilings – thereby contributing to a better quality of life for the 1,000 needy members.

3. **Participants can have a better appreciation of how government works.** The consultation process enables participants to see how government works up close and the challenges being faced by implementors. Consequently, it opens up the possibility for them to see public service in a different light.

4. **Third-party monitoring can be actualized – the local statistics committee can be its vehicle and the VLR its platform.** Finally, by closing the loop and implementing the pioneering voluntary local review of the SDGs in the Philippines, the program also demonstrated that participatory monitoring of local plans and programs can be pursued through the Naga City Statistics Committee and using the VLR as reporting platform.

PART 3: EXPERIENCE SUMMARY

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*A summary of the experience: origins, objectives, operation, results, monitoring, and evaluation. (Do not hesitate to repeat aspects that have already been written before. This summary will be shared on the digital platform for open evaluation and in the publication of the award). (In a **maximum of 500 words**).*

Program Brief

The People's Budget Ordinance of Naga City is an innovative program that further strengthens the city's participatory governance by ensuring that local plans and budgets are responsive to the needs of its citizens; are prepared and approved through a transparent and participatory process; and are monitored participatively.

Consequently, it drove the city government to pioneer a Voluntary Local Review (VLR) of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in Naga, which the policy mandated to be part of an enhanced planning and budgeting process.

A two-tier public consultation on departmental and city plans and budgets and the pioneering 2022 VLR lie at the heart of this innovation.

Background

Enacted on October 10, 2017, City Ordinance No. 2017-072 covers both city and barangay budgets. In her explanatory note, former City Councilor Mila Raquid-Arroyo said that a good budget should not only fund public purposes but "should also be truly responsive to the needs of the people."

Indeed, Naga City has been known for participatory governance. In 1997, it established the Naga City People's Council (NCPC), the federation of civil society organizations that selects its representatives to all local special bodies and standing committees of the city government. Consequently, its planning documents were crafted with strong people's participation.

But ensuring that these plans are translated into budgets truly responsive to people's needs remained a huge policy gap for two decades. This is what the program sought to address.

The foray into the VLR is a logical outcome of the policy. In 2020, it took on UNESCAP's offer for Naga to pilot a voluntary local review of the SDGs in the Philippines. A VLR is a process through which local governments voluntarily undertake a review of their progress on the 2030 SDGs.

Program Objectives

The program objectives were laid down in the ordinance itself. These are:

1. *Results-oriented.* "Public funds shall be allocated only for public purpose which must be clearly defined."
2. *Evidence-based.* "The annual budget shall be responsive to the situation of the community as reflected in the Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS) or other local data."
3. *Participative budgeting.* "Constituents are given the opportunity to comment on the budget and these are considered by the approving authority prior to approval."

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4. *Plan-budget link*. “The annual Budget is the lifeblood of the local development plan and the annual investment program formulated in consultation with local constituents.”

Program Strategies

To achieve them, the program pursued the following strategies:

1. *Voluntary local review*. Naga pioneered a voluntary review of the SDGs. As a result, it has adopted the VLR as a monitoring tool for its new 2022-30 Comprehensive Development Plan.
2. *Regular CBMS surveys*. Since 2011, Naga has already implemented three CBMS surveys. They are being used by city government agencies in formulating their plans and budgets.
3. *Two-tier public consultations*. The NCPC organized a two-tier public consultation process, providing a platform where the public provides feedback on what city agencies are planning to carry out in the next fiscal year.
4. *City statistics committee*. The city government organized the Naga City Statistics Committee (NCSC) to become the institutional home of the VLR process, as well as the critical monitoring of its plan and budget outcomes.

Supporting documents:

- [The People’s Budget Ordinance of Naga City, Philippines](#)
- [The Voluntary Local Review of the SDGs in Naga City, Philippines](#)
- Powerpoint presentation - [The Naga City People’s Council and the People’s Budget](#)

Pictures

- [Mayor Nelson Legacion presents the PBO program during the Policy Forum on Development \(PFD\) Asia Regional Meeting in Katmandu, Nepal in Sept 2019](#)
- [Face-to face budget consultation events in 2019](#)
- [City Agriculture Office presents its plan and budget in hybrid PBO event in 2020](#)
- [Vice Mayor Cecilia “Nene” de Asis joins the Sangguniang Panlungsod plan and budget presentation in 2021](#)
- [The 2021 live public presentation cover used during last year's PBO events](#)

Thank you for participating!