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A Region's Local Economic Development and Competitiveness Index

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ABSTRACT

The nationwide survey on local economic development and competitiveness index shows the local government unit's competence in three major dimensions namely; economic dynamism, government efficiency, and infrastructure. It focuses on 30 pre-identified indicators of economic development and

competitiveness from the National Competitiveness Council (NCC) reflecting the local government unit's (LGUs) financial growth and stability, and examines the potential reinforcing factors as well as the hindering factors on business licensing competitiveness. The survey was conducted in Mindanao to gather secondary sources of data from various local government offices, private sectors and regional agencies. The findings revealed that the quality of performance in terms of economic dynamism, efficiency and infrastructure is highly relevant but not excellent. The progressive LGUs have shown responsiveness on efficiency in terms of government policy on service, client demands, consistent with the national policies to improve support on the government economic programs, however, it failed to have an excellent rating. Thus, there are still more lacking areas in promoting tourism support, business and industry promotion, and transparency on entrepreneurship. The scope of economic development and competitiveness provided opportunities on the plurality of factors to describe increase accountability among key local authorities on systematic recording and archiving of financial data.

Keywords **–** Local economic development and competitiveness index, economic development, business licensing, economic dynamism, government efficiency, basic infrastructure, descriptive design, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

This survey is an initial attempt to compile local indicators for the region and to information on financial progress of businesses, government management, local infrastructures, and other major factors used to determine economic growth. It is highly selective in terms of the cities and municipalities covered indexing the economic and development indicators on financial and administrative data from the local government units (LGUs). It was conducted to provide timely data with a comprehensive assessment of all aspects in the economic development of regions. It is important to identify the given specific indicators at the local level to help recognize in detail the strengths and weaknesses of their local economy. It will also allow local level comparison across areas which continued to lag behind. It is, therefore, imperative for Local Government Units (LGUs) to focus on the gaps and provide interventions to trigger catch-ups (Arslan, et al., 2012).

To characterize the unique and dynamic essence of the country's economic development and competitiveness, 30 identified indicators were outlined to

describe the major contributions to development and competitiveness. These specific indicators helped identify local financial competencies and allowed a local level comparison for the identification of gaps, eventually adapting best financial practices among developed LGUs leading to financial stability. Likewise, ranking the competitiveness of LGUs per region spurs market interest for investment and commercialization making cities or municipalities more comparable.

To answer the growing need for economic comparability, Executive Order Number 44 (series of 2011) tasked the National Competitiveness Council (NCC) to execute steps to improve the country's international competitiveness ranking, towards the goal of enhancing and upgrading the Philippine Competitiveness ranking. The NCC consequently organizes Regional Competitiveness Committees (RCC) to aid the goal of the national government. Eventually, it has implemented a task force to develop and institutionalize a template of standard indicators to serve as a diagnostic tool for assessment of the level of competitiveness among LGUs.

The total paradigm to which the entire project rests is based on the conceptual framework outlined in, "The Competitive Advantage of Nations," by Professor Michael Porter of Harvard School of Business. Porter (2011) defines that the competitiveness of the location as the productivity that companies located there can be achieved. This definition of competitiveness stresses the drivers of sustainable economic prosperity at a given location. Porter's idea of competitiveness focuses on prosperity "created" from economic activity—activity that creates value by providing products and services at prices above their cost of production.

Prosperity depends on the country's economy-wide productivity—the level of GDP generated for each unit of factor input available for economic activity at market prices. Individual productivity—the level of GDP generated by each person (or factor input) employed—is only an incomplete measure of this impact on prosperity. If markets for factor inputs are efficient and all factor inputs are employed, the two measures of productivity will be the same. If there are distortions, however, the individual productivity reported in many statistics will overstate the prospects for prosperity (Ketel, 2006).

The main rival to the productivity-based definition of competitiveness is the market share-based definition. It defines competitiveness as the ability to sell on international markets and is fundamentally concerned with the sustainability of the economy's overall external balance. While the external balance is clearly important, especially for international financial institutions, it is critical to

understand that exports do not automatically indicate underlying prosperity or productivity because they are also driven by the economy's real exchange rate.

A criticism that disproportionally affects the productivity-based view of competitiveness with its fundamental interest in the prosperity is that it is narrowly economic and takes no account of social and environmental concerns. However, the intuition about competitiveness and social/environmental goals as being unrelated is very misleading. Social and environmental problems are often indicators of low productivity in the use of resources and they tend to be much more pronounced when competitiveness is low (Porter and Van der Linde, 1995 as cited in Ketel, 2006). Furthermore, economic, social and environmental goals are not mutually exclusive: for a significant range of issues there is an overlap of policies to increase economic competitiveness and policies to address social and environmental objectives.

The second key element of Porter's definition is its focus on geographic location as a key determinant of company productivity; a notion it shares with other concepts and theories interested in the sources of prosperity and growth differences across countries. The role of location has been challenged lately by what can be described as the death of distance"-hypothesis (Cairncross, 2001). It argues that the reduction of transportation and communication costs as well as of many policy barriers to international trade and investment have made geographical location and proximity inconsequential for companies. Therefore, companies seem to undermine the effects of transportation and utilities expenses to the over-all economic development of a region.

Factors that determine the productivity of a company differ significantly across sub-national regions with countries; that is one of the reasons why there are large and often persistent prosperity differences within them. Sub-national regions are, therefore, the central geographic level for competitiveness. However, other geographic levels—nations as well as cross-national regions (Ketels and So¨ lvell, 2005)—have an important impact on the business environment in these sub-national regions. Both for analysis and for policy it is, therefore, important to consider their different roles and focus on the geographic level with the most impact on the respective priority issues for competitiveness.

This study focused on assessing competitiveness and economic development of one region in Mindanao. The survey encompasses three provinces with only three municipalities and five cities as study sites. The sampling sites were purposively pre-selected, particularly, first class cities with the highest annual generated income and are centers of commercialization. The five component cities were also the capital of the province, hence by and large, the urban centers and major location

of commerce and industries of the province selected. The three municipalities, on the other hand, were selected ranging from relatively "progressive to relatively developed" which provided the criterion a higher incidence of business licensing application to generate revenues in their respective LGUs. As to its economic, situation the cities served as the centers of trade, commerce and education in the region.

Data retrieved from various LGUs are records as of January 1 to December 31, 2012. The Competitiveness survey is a quick survey providing a snapshot of trending estimates.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of this research is to collectively provide the regional data for the indicators laid down by the National Competitiveness Council E.O. 44 (series 2011) towards enhancing and upgrading the Philippine Competitiveness ranking in various global initiatives. Specifically, it imposes to provide the region's indicators for economic development and competitiveness, subdivided into three factors: a. Economic Dynamism; b. Government Efficiency; and c. infrastructure.

METHODOLOGY

A combined method of quantitative and qualitative design was used as the basis of analysis of the survey. The collection of quantitative data was based on the pre-identified 30 variables following the common framework for local economic development and competitive indicators on three factors respectively, economic dynamism; government efficiency; and infrastructure. The selected indicators were reviewed and finalized by the National Competitive Council (NCC) and Regional Competitive Committees (RCCs). Other methods in gathering data included "informal procedures" such as focus group discussions (FGDs), personnel interviews and review of secondary data from LGU reports, accomplishment reports and websites as sources of information obtained within the two weeks data collection.

Data collection of secondary data was gathered from public and company records of the following regional offices and companies: Department of Trade and Industry; Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas; Treasurer's Office; Planning Development Office; City Mayor's Office; the Local Governance Performance Measurement System; LGUs and Municipal units; Land Transportation Office, National Telecommunications Company, Local Government Units, Electrical companies, water district companies while other data were obtained from National Statistical Coordination Board, and the National Statistics Office. The selection considered most the convergent factors/ dimensions, common indicators readily available at the LGU level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Economic Dynamism

Economic Dynamism is referred as the activities that create stable expansion of businesses and industries and higher employment. It is the combination of the entrepreneurial spirit and the financial institutions that channels economic progress. Localities are the centers of economic activities, where business expansion and job creation are easily observable in local settings.

Table 1. Size of the economy & growth of economy and investments

Factor	Indicators	Measurement	Cities	Municipalities
Size of economy	Number of annual business registrations (new and renewal)	number	14,757	806**
	Amount of Money in Circulation (city level)	Value in PhP	14,629,378,200.00	NA
	Total Capital of newly registered and renewal business	Value in PhP	1,257,858,068.00**	510,812,981.49**
Growth of Economy and Investments	Percent Change in Gross Sales (Total) of registered business (Renewal) from past year	Percentage	-2.43%**	-14.8%*
	Percent Change in the Number of construction permits and/ or occupancy permits approved for business and non-business	Percentage	+5.6%** -2.5%**	no data
*** Some cities/municipalities provided no data; * Data shown for 1 municipality only*				

The indicators for economic dynamism included the size of the economy which measures the total goods and services produced in the locality represented by the number of annual business registrations (new and renewal); and the value of local tax collection. Table 1 shows the results for indicators on the size of the economy and growth of economy and investments.

Annual business registrations show an estimate of at least 14,000 applications for a business permit in the cities and 800 in the municipalities. The amount of money in circulation is the total withdrawals from the Central Bank regional offices showing at least 14 billion pesos worth of withdrawals; while total capital of businesses amounted to 1.2 billion pesos for cities and at least 500 million for municipalities. There is also a decrease in the gross sales of businesses in cities and a larger decrease of gross sales among municipalities by 14%. Construction permits increased by as much as 5.6% in cities but decreased in occupancy permits by 2.5%, implying that more buildings are constructed but with less completed establishments for businesses to start. This data shows that the LGUs did not perform fairly well in their economic activities, while access to the data on some municipalities were not provided by some LGUs and others failed to record total gross sales of business as reflected in their business permits applications data.

Table 2 presents the data on the number of employment, the inflation rate, number of commercial banks, rural banks, microfinance institutions, cooperatives, registered lending companies and the number of organized business groups, which were also reflects economic dynamism.

The number of jobs from new businesses only shows a portion of the region's data, since there was no clear agency handling the record for this indicator in the region. The cost of living supports the outlook that the inflation rate was manageable based on the 2012 Philippine inflation rate in Dec 2012 of 2.9% bringing the full year average at 3.2% according to the National Statistics Coordination Board. The values reflected on the table simply suggest that the risks to inflation over the policy horizon remain fairly balanced. Accounting for the total number of financial institutions helps estimate liquidity in the locality. Financial institutions become channels by which expanding capital and investments can be dispersed quickly to business and productive units. An abundant number of financial institutions support expansion of long term investments, which is evident in cities (908), but lesser among municipalities (173). The data on business groups' are record of LGU recognized organizations with Sanggunian Approvals. However, other identified private business and professional groups do not intend to be recognized as evidenced by the lesser

number of accredited organizations in the Sangguniang Bayan or Panglungsod, only a few were accounted in this indicator.

Table 2. Employment, cost of living, financial deepening, business groups and associations

Factor	Indicators	Measurement	Cities	Municipalities
Employment	Number of jobs created based on new business registration	Number	1,227*	1498*
Cost of Living	Cost of Living (main measure should be the provincial or city inflation rate)	Inflation percentage	2.4 - 2.8	2.4 - 3.3
Financial Deepening	Number of commercial banks, rural banks, microfinance institution ns, cooperatives and registered lending companies	number	908	173
Business Groups and Associations	Number of organized business groups	Number	41**	-**
** Data shown for only 1 city/ municipality;* *** Some cities/ municipalities provided no data*				

Government Efficiency

For the government efficiency factor, the transparency score in Local Government Performance Management System (LGPMS), economic governance score on entrepreneurship, business and industry promotion were obtained from the LGUs together with the awards relative to the competitiveness conferred to the LGU. The business registration scheme was also dealt with to evaluate the pace of new business registration processing. Data on crime incidence, capacity of secondary schools and health services were gathered to address safety, education and health in the locality.

Table 3. Transparency and accountability, public finance, recognition of performance and responsiveness to business

Factor	Indicators	Measurement	Cities	Municipalities
Transparency and Accountability	Transparency score	Validated LGPMS score	4.6 - 5	4.7 - 4.8
	Economic Governance score		3.71 - 5	2.06 - 4.44
Public Finance	Real Estate Tax and Business Tax to total LGU revenues	percentage	15.7%	5.8%
Recognition of Performance	Relevant to Competitiveness Awards Conferred to LGU	Number of Awards	1=Gawad Pamana ng Lahi 1=Seal of Good housekeeping	1=Seal of Good housekeeping
Responsiveness to Business	Business Registration System	Number of days and steps	2 days / 4-7 steps	1 day/ 4-5 steps
	total new application			
	renewal permit		1-2 days / 5-7 steps	1-2 days / 5-6 steps
	construction permit		1 -7 days / 3-7 steps	1-15 days / 5-9 steps
	Presence of an Investment Promotion Unit/Center	Binary answer (Yes or No)	3= Yes 2= No	1= Yes 2= No

From the transparency scores, the indicators were very evident in the city and municipal LGUs with the following criteria; presence of billboards, photo galleries of activities and accomplishments, display areas of trophy, certificates and other symbols of awards and recognitions and the presence of the information office or desk. The Economic governance score reflected for entrepreneurship, business and industry promotion showed ratings from high, fair and poor performance, reflecting a substantial evidence of very high to bad performance rating in all the five areas on economic and administrative governance.

Data for public finance shows Own Source Revenue (OSR) with averages reflected fair between 1 billion for a chartered city and 300 million for fourth class city. The figures revealed do not consistently validate revenue generation with lack of data to benchmark with other cities. Cities have a higher percentage of taxes against revenues indicating expanding local capacity to generate resources and less dependence on grants, but municipalities indicate more dependence on the national government. Most of the LGUs reasons for not being able to

raise higher OSR were the following: 1. their limited power of taxation; 2. lack of entrepreneurial activities especially levying taxes, fees, and charges for their resource poor barangay constituents; 3. lack of political will to innovate alternative methods of revenue generation on the optimal use of their powers; 4. The locally generated revenue could not be easily access because of the absence of time series data on the local-domestic product of the cities and municipalities.

As to business application system, the number of procedures or steps is variable from four to seven steps in all the LGUs. The same number of days for business renewal and steps in the renewal were reflected in all the survey responses. One municipality requires 15 days for construction permits, while the other LGUs required as least one to eight days with a variable number of steps. The presence of an investment center is also seen mostly among cities and less among municipalities signifying seriousness in attracting investments from both local and foreign sources among the cities.

Table 4. Basic government services

Factor	Indicators	Measurement	Cities	Municipalities
Basic Government Services	Effective Local DRRMC Plan	Validated score of Seal of Disaster Preparedness	4 out of 5 failed (1.54-2.90) 1 passed (4.45)	2 out of 3 passed (4.21-4.38) 1 failed (3.75)
	Crime Incidence	Crime Index	1442	498
		Police to population ratio	1:446	1:1294
	Capacity of Local Secondary Schools	Average Class Size of Secondary Public Schools	50	45
	Availability of Health Services	No. of health manpower / population	483/1,222,445 pop.	149/160,568 pop.

An effective local Disaster Risk Reduction Management (DRRMC) plan assesses the capacity in terms of preparedness and ability to respond to a disaster as evaluated by the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG). Most of the cities in the region had failure ratings while most of the municipalities passed. Crime incidence is higher among cities, as well as the police to population ratio.

The average class size ranges from 45 to 50 in the region indicating a poor capacity of the school to absorb students in terms of facilities. Moreover, the availability of health manpower according to population is really limited in most cities as well in the municipalities. It also revealed that the majority of the LGUs have not properly distributed the appropriate health staff needed for health service provision.

Basic Infrastructure

The infrastructure factor provided data on the size of local road network, given by the ratio of local roads to total land area. The travel time in minutes from the city or municipality's center of commercialization to major transportation hubs (bus terminal, airport, wharfs or port) was also measured along with the number of registered vehicles. Data on availability of water and electricity and percentage of household connected to these basic utilities were also obtained. Information on basic infrastructure is presented in Table 5.

Most roads among cities have fair to high density road networks, while municipalities have narrower roads, which may signify lesser interconnectedness within the business locality. Travel time to major ports lies approximately from less than five minutes to 20 minutes maximum in cities whereas municipalities show more time spent on traveling to the airport and the wharf. As to the annual investment in infrastructure, cities have less than 10% to as much as 70% of investment to infrastructure projects. Moreover, major municipalities appropriate only as much as 20% of LGU budget, indicating that cities have prioritized infrastructure projects than among municipal LGUs, which may be attributed to more priority for agricultural development in provinces.

Other factors included in basic infrastructure indicators are the number of registered vehicles, percent of household with basic utilities and the average hours of availability of water and electricity. There are more private registered vehicles in both cities and municipalities as much as 72,000 in cities, with only 9% for public transportation in cities and 6% in municipalities from the range of private vehicles.

Household basic utilities range from at least 75% with electricity connection, 50% with water connection and less than 12% with a landline connection. Internet connectivity shows the least patronized household utility. Availability of water and electricity are from at least 20 to 24 hours per day.

For technology infrastructure, the number of cell site regardless of service providers and number of ATM machines in the locality were identified. Tourism and social infrastructure data were also gleaned that includes the number of hotels and restaurants and ratio of hospital beds to population (Table 6).

Table 5. Basic infrastructure

Factor	Indicators	Measurement	Cities	Municipalities
Basic Infra-structure	Size of local road network as a share of total land area of municipality or city (km of road per 100 sq. km of land area)	road density	82.98	38.17
	Travel Time from Center/CBD to Major Ports nearest to the LGU	Time in hours/ minutes	2-15 mins to wharf 5-20 mins to airport 5-10 mins to bus terminal	10-45 mins to wharf 5-55 mins to airport 1-10 mins to bus terminal
	Annual investment in Infrastructure by local institutions in the locality	Percentage	8.65% - 73.6%	5.55% - 21.95%
	Number of Registered Vehicles (public and private) servicing the area	Number	1,572 to 6,622 for hire 5,197 to 72,250 private 65 to 1,273 gov't vehicles	139 to 1,199 for hire 11,290 to 17,339 private 52 to 356 gov't vehicles
	Percent of households in LGU with connection to basic utilities: a) local landline b) water c)electricity, and d) internet	Percentage	2.11% - 12.6% w/ landline 12.9% - 54.8% w/ water 66% - 76.17 w/ electricity 0.04 % w/ internet**	0.57% - 3.91% w/ landline 12.3% - 44.02% w/ water 37.3% - 75.4% w/ electricity no data for w/ internet
	Average hours of availability of electricity and water per day	Ratio	20 - 24 hrs	24 hrs

Table 6. Technology infrastructure and social & tourism infrastructure

Factor	Indicators	Measurement	Cities	Municipalities
Technology Infrastructure	No. of Cell sites	Number	5 to 127	4 to 9
	Total number of ATM in the locality	Number	5 to 89	4 to 7
Social and Tourism Infrastructure	Ratio of hospital bed/population	Ratio	1:11,817	1:1,887
	Number of hotel rooms and restaurants	Number	7 to 116	9 to 28

There are a low number of cell sites established in the region, especially among municipalities indicating slow progress in technological advancement. Similarly, ATM in locality is minimal suggestive of poor financial sophistication and instability of network infrastructure. On the other hand, the LGU's health response capacity as evidenced by the ratio of hospital beds to population is low, catering to as much as 11,817 in cities and 1,887 in municipalities per one hospital bed. There is an inefficient capacity among health facilities in the region.

The number of hotels ranges from less than 10 to more than 100 in one particular city. This number is still low considering the number of population served. Data for social and tourism infrastructure shows that there is a need to improve the number of the infra-support to boost tourism like presence of hotels, number of hotel rooms available, and restaurants in the municipalities covered.

The data collected for this research dwells primarily on indicators on economic dynamism, government efficiency and infrastructure. The indicators for economic dynamism included the size of the economy which measures the total goods and services produced in the locality represented by the number of annual business registrations (new and renewal); and the value of local tax collection. Growth of economy and investments was measured through the capital of current and newly established businesses; the total change in gross sales from the past year; i.e. 2011 and 2012 and the change in number of construction permits and/ or occupancy permits approved for business and non-business. The number of employment, the inflation rate, number of commercial banks, rural banks, microfinance institutions, cooperatives, registered lending companies and the number of organized business groups was also obtained.

For the government efficiency factor, the transparency score in LGPMS, economic governance score on entrepreneurship, business and industry promotion were obtained from the LGUs together with the awards relative to the competitiveness conferred to the LGU. The business registration scheme was also dealt with to evaluate the pace of new business registration processing. Data on crime incidence, capacity of secondary schools and health services were gathered to address safety, education and health in the locality.

The infrastructure factor provided data on the size of local road network, given by the ratio of local roads to total land area. The travel time in minutes from the city or municipality's center of commercialization to major transportation hubs (bus terminal, airport, wharfs or port) was also measured along with the number of registered vehicles. Data on availability of water and electricity and percentage of household connected to these basic utilities were also obtained. For technology infrastructure, the number of cell site regardless of service providers and number of ATM machines in the locality were identified. Tourism and social infrastructure data were also gleaned that includes the number of hotels and restaurants and ratio of hospital beds to population.

Data for indicators on economic dynamism and government efficiency were difficult to obtain among government and private companies due to non-disclosure of some companies and also because most of the requested information were non-validated raw data still subjected to management recapitulation.

CONCLUSIONS

Many of the LGUs covered in the survey have identified greater challenges in the areas of Economic dynamism, government efficiency and infrastructure development. The areas for improvement include revenue generation, through efficient collection of taxes and other fees, and the development of infrastructure to support local tourism seen as the potential of the city or municipality being part of the economic boost of the region.

The findings of the study revealed that overall, the LGUs quality of performance in terms of economic dynamism is highly relevant but not excellent. The progressive LGUs have shown relevant and responsive aspect of government efficiency in terms of client demands consistent with the national policies to improve support to the government economic programs, ratings were high but not excellent. Thus, there are still want areas especially for transparency of financial data, business and industry promotion and the infra support for tourism. A greater need to focus and revisit to improve the quality of permitting

the licensing, ensuring the ease of doing business.

There is a need for the LGUs covered to strategize the effect of issuance of building, occupancy and business permits in a more expedient manner. There is also a need to establish an administration support body to take the lead in marketing the investment potential of the local government to provide or cause the provision of direct support services to business particularly those categorized as micro, small and medium enterprises.

The provision of support services in the form of tax incentives, product labeling, product packaging, training, job fairs and trade fairs. It is seen that the high time civil society align with GOs and NGOs in creating economic opportunity. Economic empowerment must be viewed as a stepping stone to political empowerment.

The LGUs economic development has so many areas for improvement like the infrastructure support, irrigation systems, farm to market roads, health facilities, credit facilitation services to local farmers and other beneficiaries.

In summary, the scope of economic development and competitiveness provided opportunities on the plurality of factors to describing increase transparency among local key authorities on systematic recording and archiving of financial data related to doing and transacting business and like processing license business permit. It will also provide future recommendations for a systematic and standardized form of data banking in local development in various areas.

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