

Assessing Accountability of Local Governance Practices in Environmental Protection in the Municipality of Concepcion, Iloilo, Central Philippines

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Abstract

This paper presents the results of a study that examined accountability in local governance operations in environmental protection in the municipality of Concepcion, Iloilo. As a marine protected area, Concepcion stands to benefit from the results as it provides empirical basis for potential reforms in environmental governance. Results also contribute to the literature on accountability in public administration and local environmental governance. The assessment covered clear responsibilities and mandate, transparency, political oversight, citizen control, and checks and balances. Data generated from key informant interviews and focused group discussions reveal the availability of national legislations and local ordinances that provide the appropriate policy mandates on environmental protection and spell out responsibilities of actors involved in local environmental protection; transparency mechanisms in the multisectoral consultations; the political oversight of the mayor through the Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office; citizen control exercised through the active participation of civil society organizations in the management of local environmental programs; and the collaboration of multisectoral and multilevel organizations, including those from the island *barangays* acting as check and balance in environmental governance. However, problems and issues in accountability of environmental governance include the lack of adequate budget to sustain programs and projects, limited project monitoring mechanisms, and the under representation of the Coastal Resource Management Office in comprehensive land use planning and development, among others. The study recommends for a strategic approach in the local governance operations for environmental protection and greater exercise of political oversight in collaboration with civil society and private sector organizations.