

MISSION:

With God's grace and through people empowerment and good governance, Bani commits -- to ensure high quality services to all stakeholders, be responsible stewards of our God-given natural and community resources; and provide fair & adequate opportunities for prosperity to all – in strong partnership and solidarity with local, national and international communities.

Bani by 2030

Summary

The Institute for Solidarity in Asia (ISA) worked with the municipal government and constituents of Bani to introduce the Performance Governance System (PGS). To date, Bani, being the first municipality ever to be inducted in ISA's PGS, is now in its second stage of adopting the PGS, after it sought and successfully attained support from its internal and external stakeholders. The municipal government has established partnerships with all its stakeholders to be part of the governance process with clear deliverables and accountabilities.

The Municipality of Bani, dubbed as the "Golden West" - an epithet given to the municipality in the 60s and early 70s, is the westernmost town of the 45 municipalities of Pangasinan, a province of about 2.2 million peace-loving and God-fearing people of the Republic of the Philippines.

Like other municipalities, Bani is not excluded from having a complex local government structure, as described by the existence of having an executive and legislative branch cascaded into the 27 *barangays* of the municipality. Consensus-based policy making within the local government, therefore, is inherently difficult to start with. The challenge is put to a higher scale if one would also consider the diversity of the local government's external stakeholders, each with oftentimes conflicting interests and whom the latter should solicit support from in order to have a seamless policy formulation and implementation.



At the onset, development is the primary goal of the Municipality of Bani. Interestingly, the roadmap of the municipality (see Annex 1)

envisions a “Model Green City in Southeast Asia” by 2030. Their mission commits to: (1) ensuring high-quality services to all stakeholders; (2) becoming responsible stewards of God-given natural/community resources; and (3) providing fair & adequate opportunities for prosperity for all. Bani’s mission is anchored on having people empowerment and good governance, and viewed to have strong partnership and solidarity with local, national & int’l communities.

The Municipality of Bani, despite the emerging challenges of widely diverse stakeholders and quite complex government structure, was on its way towards positioning itself towards attaining its vision; until when the tropical depression “Emong” critically hit the city in May 2009. The typhoon was seen to leave a verifiable sea of chaos in the municipality: houses totally demolished, rooftops blown away, people fled for safety, trees uprooted and or fell on houses or along roads, electric posts fell along highways, no electric power, no communication lines including cellphone signal.

A total of P411.24 million in agricultural losses in Luzon was recorded. While it is still unknown how much of which can be attributed to the damages in Bani, an alarming number of about 9,313 homes were affected, not to mention the tragic has left six people dead and seven injured. While these figures may not speak sufficiently well of the great pain, shock and anxiety has dawned upon Bani’s people, especially the many poor ones.

This case study will try to elicit how Bani, despite the devastation brought by “Emong”, was able to course its path and continue its journey of becoming a “Model “Green City in Southeast Asia” by 2030. This case study will also try to show the PGS of this second-class municipality has brought together a multi-sectoral coalition of stakeholders bent on attaining its scorecard targets and thus overcoming the barrier of governance complexities inherent in the locality.

This case study note has the following sections:

- ⊗ The Partner need;
- ⊗ Process followed;
- ⊗ Challenges faced; and
- ⊗ Outcomes achieved.

The Partner need...

The municipal government of Bani, Pangasinan is primarily concerned on making the municipality the “Model Green City of Southeast Asia”. Whilst laudable, the local government had difficulties bringing together their sectors into work for a collective and progressive vision, along with well-defined and strategic measures on how the said vision will materialized.

Subsumed in the above vision are three (3) principles that the local government greatly desires for its constituents to adhere on. These include (i) ensuring high quality services to all stakeholders; (ii) being responsible stewards of their God-given natural and community resources; and (iii) providing fair & adequate opportunities for prosperity to all. Nonetheless, there is a need to align these principles with their core competencies and strengths in order to become effective and instrumental in bringing attaining their vision. This makes the task for the local government to become daunting, and at the surface, infeasible.

In the immediate term, the municipality of Bani needs to craft a strategy that would support the above principles and ultimately attain their mission. On top of this already strenuous deed is the difficulty of soliciting support from different stakeholders, which can be readily obtained by involving them both in the design and in the implementation processes.

Reform movers (in this case, the municipal government) lacked the device that would provide both the clarity of strategic purpose that the locality needs, and the mechanism necessary to allow stakeholders to take part in the reform processes.

Reform movers felt that adoption of ISA’s PGS would be the way forward for a more integrated locality-wide performance management approach. This approach could then provide a venue for multi-sectoral governance coalition participating in forming the locality’s vision and translating this into an operational roadmap, with each sector having a stake and responsibility in the overall performance of the locality.

Challenges faced in this project...

The locality of Bani faced several challenges particularly in involving their external stakeholders to the PGS reform process. Among these challenges that greatly affected how the work was carried out include the following:

- Sectoral/organizational representation. As in the case of other localities building inter-organizational partnerships, Bani also had difficulties finding representatives and/or key personalities to serve as focal persons from each concerned sector or organization. Skepticism to the new reform and its effectiveness in addressing their respective issues has been prevalent from these entities. Perhaps, such behavior stemmed from the lack of understanding and information on the PGS and its usefulness in drawing strategies through inter-organizational consultations and collaboration.

- Lack of understanding on the concept of objective performance evaluation. Related to the difficulty in finding sectoral or organizational representatives is the challenge face by Bani municipal government in helping the participants understand the concept of objective performance evaluation. Normal response to having performance-based evaluation is to take the same as an accountability, in which case stakeholders often refrain from participating in. Paradigm shift from this misconception to having a sense of ownership to the reform needs to be instilled amongst different stakeholders.
- Complex governance. In common with other localities in the country, the locality of Bani is characterized by a complex management structure, here we have three elements – an overall municipal council, local government unit (LGU) and the individual committees with members’ representatives coming from the government and private sector. This kind of management structure led to the need of the reform movers to participate in internal marketing activities for the project in order to solicit support from the LGU’s constituents and other stakeholders.

Fortunately, the PGS process, coupled with continuous efforts from the reform movers, was effective in overcoming the above challenges, thus aligning each stakeholder’s interests around clarified locality-based priorities and accountabilities.

Outcomes achieved...

In terms of output-based performance, Bani already accomplished the following:

- Established their Big Hairy Audacious Goals;
- Validated through a multi-sectoral assembly their strategy map; and
- Submitted their sectoral and department scorecards.

Broadly, the PGS instituted by ISA delivered not only to Bani’s municipal government but to all stakeholders the kind of perspective that the locality needs in order to move ahead with its development agenda.

Close consultation with Bani’s municipal government revealed that “people in Bani now actually believe to some extent that [they] can succeed as a town and that investments will be coming in. In terms of performance, department heads now have a guide on what is expected of them, as they now have a scorecard to base their actions on”.

On top of the above newly-formulated perspectives is the framework by which a multi-stakeholder coalition is functionally working within. PGS brought together a wide array of

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stakeholders driving towards their specific objectives, yet geared towards a common goal while others are viewed to best work on sectoral partnerships. (An illustration of the first- and second-level scorecards with identified commitments and metrics is found in Annex 2).

Conclusion

Involving different stakeholders and even conducting consultations is indeed a cumbersome process to initiating a particular reform. It was seen in this case study that steps towards drawing inter-organizational integrative strategies are extremely challenging, mainly because of the often diverse interests of stakeholders coming from different organizations with different goals and objectives. In addition, profound reform measures, such as the PGS, often requires persistent information and education campaign which then becomes more challenging when coupled with the already lack of support from constituents.

Nonetheless, this case study highlights the value of including internal and external stakeholders in the design process (PGS endorsement), amid the challenges arising from the different perspectives held by the executive management, the individual committees and the overall council.

Overall, the project was seen as successful:

"To say that the PGS has been a success in Bani would be an understatement. It has galvanized all our sectors into working for a collective and progressive vision which has eluded our town in the past. Everyone is excited about the prospects of Bani now that we can clearly see that the path to economic and social progress is not as daunting as previously assumed.

With the ISA and the PGS guiding us, we are confident of adding another historical footnote—being the first municipality to become a model city under the auspices of the program."

HON. MARCELO E. NAVARRO JR.
Municipal Mayor