

## 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Every development program seeks to generate a positive impact on beneficiaries' lives. One aspect that all these programs have in common is that they are always designed with the ultimate goal of improving the quality of life of a targeted population (Lima, et al, 2015).

The Laguna De Bay Institutional Strengthening and Community Participation (LISCOP) project is one such development program aimed at improving the environmental quality of Laguna Lake and its watershed and strengthen the development of institution that will support the lake's sustained management. LISCOP project started in 2004 and lasted until April 2014.

This study entitled 'Impact Evaluation of LISCOP Project', is essentially an assessment of how the LISCOP project, (being considered in here as an intervention), being evaluated affects the outcomes, the effects of which maybe intended or unintended. More generally, this evaluation establishes whether the intervention has a welfare effect on individuals, households and communities, and whether this effect can be attributed to the concerned intervention.

The objectives of the LISCOP's impact evaluation study were to measure the environmental impacts; participation and involvement of communities and other stakeholders in watershed planning and management; environmental compliance of regulated establishments; and LLDA transformation as an apex organization for lake basin management.

Specifically, the scope of work aimed to:

- Identify and assess if there was a decrease in the negative environmental impacts;
- Assess if there was an increase in the participation and involvement of communities and other stakeholders in watershed planning and management;
- Assess if there was an improved environmental compliance of regulated establishments;
- Assess the transformation of LLDA as an apex organization for integrated lake basin management; and
- Identify other benefits and gains (both planned and unplanned) and impacts (intended and unintended) of the project to the beneficiaries.

Moreover, the study evaluated and identified lessons learned in the implementation of the program in support of decision-making in the conduct of similar program/projects in the future.

Qualitative evaluation survey was predominantly utilized to draw inferences for reviewing LISCOP project with its various sub-project implementation thru interviewing project beneficiaries to get their personal opinions, conducting focus group discussions (FGD), key informant interviews (KII), analyzing supportive secondary data, etc. Out of the 25 LGUs, 24 LGUs participated in FGDs conducted in 19 sessions. Participants in FGDs included key persons from the LGU Offices such as Planning and Development, Environment and Natural Resources, Engineering, Tourism, Administrative and Finance, among others. For the KII, the Team was able to conduct 29 KIIs from 22 LGUs which were participated by representatives from barangays such as Barangay Captains and/or Barangay Councilors. Two separate FGD sessions were also conducted for LLDA officers and staff from the different divisions such as Policy Planning and Information Management, Project Development Management and Evaluation, Community

Development, Environmental Laboratory and Research, Legal and Adjudication, Surveillance and Monitoring, Administrative and Finance. Household surveys from direct (previously involved during the planning and implementation of the LISCOP sub-projects or presently involved in the sub-project) and indirect (community) beneficiaries were conducted to assess the responses of individuals, households and community members concerning the intervention. Further, the assessment utilized a counterfactual (control group) where outcomes were also analyzed as to what would have been in the absence of such an intervention. The control group was the same as the treated/treatment group in terms of demographic, location, life stage, etc., and that it is not in any way been exposed to LISCOP program or to any of its sub-projects. A total of 300 respondents were covered in the household survey. Seventy five (75) of which were direct beneficiaries while 125 were indirect beneficiaries. The remaining 100 respondents came from the control group.

In a scale of 0 to 5 with five being the highest, more than 89% of the direct beneficiaries have indicated that LISCOP project, through its sub-projects, was able to address environmental concerns in their localities. Participation and involvement of communities and other stakeholders increased (i.e. 76% direct beneficiaries and 60% community members) in watershed planning and management activities. Target compliance by enterprises improved from 30% in year 2010 to 92% three years after when compared with the baseline.

More than half (58%) of the community members surveyed have indicated socio-economic contributions of the LISCOP sub-projects. Increase in income brought about by the direct employment of some households and other related economic and livelihood activities were experienced by the respondents. The respondents claimed that LISCOP has enhanced their social interaction and unity through their engagement in the project itself. The sub-projects were implemented safely and did not pose any danger to the community. As regards institutional and management of LISCOP project and sub-projects, the investigation indicated that Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) can still able to function effectively in dispensing its mandate of management and promotion of institutional arrangements through coordination and planning at a basin level. Economically, LISCOP sub-projects generated an economic internal rate of return (EIRR) of 12%.

Best practices and lessons learned were extracted from interviews, surveys and consultations with selected stakeholders. Topping the list of best practices across all four project types were the regular collection of waste/garbage and instilling discipline to the community and the LGUs. Aside from regular collection of wastes, the respondents also mentioned the strict implementation or enforcement of policies, rules and regulations.

Other best practices cited, include: promoting collaboration and cooperation between LGU and community in project planning and implementation, unity for promotion of tourism and conservation of environment, continuous IEC activities in partnership with schools, and other prominent establishments in the communities to increase awareness on the sub-project and its benefits, immediate action to the problems i.e. livelihood and health problems, and regular monitoring during establishment/construction of the sub-project.

Lessons learned shared by respondents during survey and interviews vary among the sub-projects. In general, the following important lessons learned were captured during the study:

- LGU's leadership and political will are very vital to properly plan and implement the sub-projects;

- Participatory and consultations with stakeholders allowed for better understanding, stakeholder cohesion, open channel of communication and exchange of information as well as sustainability of actions;
- The introduction of an incentive/reward system could further encourage community to actively participate and cooperate with the program/projects;
- Continuous provision of trainings on various livelihood opportunities for the people as an offshoot of the sub-project activities and subsequent linking them with established markets;
- Continuous partnership with other organizations for planning and implementation of related projects; and
- Proper management of the sub-projects may generate not only immediate monetary benefits but has significant impact to the community in terms of environmental benefits and the LGU as a whole.

Specifically, the respondents mentioned several lessons in waste management and sanitation, ecotourism and soil erosion, and localized flood control but few for natural resource management projects. Common lesson learned to all was the unity among community members to facilitate project operations and conservation of environment. They also learned that it is important to carefully plan, design, and improve structures to make it usable; the importance of proper waste/garbage segregation, composting and other MRF operations; and organic agriculture; cleanliness on project areas for improved aesthetics / presentability to attract visitors; report problems immediately; need for better selection/screening process for project contractors/stakeholders, and trainings on communication and safety measures.

Based on the objectives of this impact evaluation study, the following policy recommendations are hereby endorsed:

- *For responsible municipal and barangay units:*
  - Promotion of integrated ecosystem services and adaptive management;
  - Advancing cost effectiveness and environmental benefits of waste management through composting and recycling;
  - Develop solid waste operations and incentive-based programs;
  - Dedicate a staff position to serve as sustainability coordinator to work with municipal and community efforts in waste reduction and other sustainability activities;
  - Develop inter-local cooperation for improved service delivery i.e. on waste management and other related environmental protection and conservation;
  - Fostering good local governance, transparency and accountability;
- *For responsible DENR-LLDA units:*
  - Modify municipal and barangay land use codes to require commercial developments to provide space and access for recycling and composting;
  - Continue to provide capacity building activities for concerned elected LGU officials as regards improved service performance (decision-making process and iteration), risks and sensitivity analysis and project/program implementation / monitoring; and
  - Consolidate / innovate a network of technology transfer support structure for target LGUs.

Overall, the study proceeded with success despite the shortcomings. Data were collected, assembled and analyzed in a transparent, rigorous fashion, and in accordance with the established framework free of any pre-determined bias to address the concerns and objectives that were intended to be addressed.